

Recitation E

Hospital Window

Two men, John and Frank, both seriously ill, shared a hospital room. John was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to improve his breathing. His bed was next to the room's only window. Frank had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their families, their homes, their jobs, and places they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when John could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. Frank began to live for those one-hour periods when his world would grow by hearing about all the activity and color of the world outside.

John described a park with a lovely lake. He said ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm among flowers of every color, and a fine view of the city could be seen in the distance. As John described all this in detail, Frank would close his eyes and imagine the beautiful scene.

Days and weeks passed.

One morning, a nurse discovered that John had died peacefully in his sleep. Frank felt very sorry, but a little later he asked the nurse if he could be moved into John's old bed next to the window. The nurse made the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Carefully, he moved onto one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. He slowly turned to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

Frank told the nurse how his roommate had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse said John was blind and could not even see the wall. Later, Frank closed his eyes, and started walking around John's lake.

(316words)

