

POEM

Paroxysms

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A whimsical bark to start,
a slight whistle accompanies,
a burning in the windpipe.
No respecter of Morpheus.

The barks continue as paroxysms,
Becoming more and more frequent,
Poco a poco crescendo
Until all goes quiet

A feeling of eerie hiatus
The pills are swallowed.
The paroxysms eventually begin to dwindle;
But not before another crescendo;

Will it ever end?
The nemetic flute returns,
leader of the orchestra. Beware any silence now,
as Morpheus may never return.

The paroxysms finally pass,
time for Morpheus to return now;
the flute and orchestra take their leave
The opus has concluded.

I suffered from pertussis pneumonia. The symptoms were unpredictable, uncontrollable at times and frightening taking several weeks to subside despite antibiotics. I wrote the poem “paroxysms” after one attack of whooping at night. Dr Medford lives and works as a respiratory consultant in Bristol, UK.

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Published Online First 25 April 2017

Med Humanit 2017;**43**:e28. doi:10.1136/medhum-2017-011245