

Is There a Patient in the House?

There was no one in the doctor's waiting room at our local hospital near Los Angeles when I got there the other day, the first time I can remember that ever happening.



usually I have to steel myself for an hour of shutting my ears to the drivel of daytime television. The biopsy I was there for was over before I knew it so, dodging the raindrops of the longed-for break in our drought, I went into the cafeteria to wait out the hour before my ride home was scheduled. (I hate the thought of killing time. Remember that time is also killing us, as Christopher Hitchens pointed out.)

Sitting at tables that can accommodate perhaps a hundred and fifty, there were four other people. "Is it usually this quiet just before Christmas?" I asked. "No. We've been very busy," I was told, "it's because of the rain."

Rain! Rain!! If a little extra discomfort takes precedence over procedures, ops, diagnoses, check-ups and the rest. I conclude we're not as sick a people as we pretend, just fragile. In a rough world we need to toughen up a bit.

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