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## MIGRATION

“To move from one part of something to another.”

People migrate. They move from one place to another, often to find a job or a more pleasant climate. Animals migrate as well. They move from one region or habitat to another according to the seasons. But I have learned that cells can migrate as well. For example, cells that can form pigment migrate beneath skin. I see evidence of this on my face when I look in the mirror.

My brother-in-law, Dave, has lymphoma, and cancer cells are migrating throughout his lymphatic system, invading his brain. There are many small tumors, so surgery is not an option.

This is a cruel migration. Months of chemotherapy have resulted in an almost complete remission; which will buy time but is not a cure. The next step is brutal; a destruction of the entire immune system which will be replaced by new immune cells harvested for this purpose. It is a new and somewhat experimental procedure, but it is all that is left.

My husband and I visited him today. His immune system was healthy enough for him to give both of us a hug. After rounds of tests, he will be admitted to the hospital on February 1 for a three week stay. Having been a sturdy and athletic man, he appears shrunken and frail, protecting himself from the cold.

Dave's bed has been moved downstairs for convenience, and the air in that room is too warm. We sit there, ashamed of our flagrant good health. It feels as if his illness has migrated, cell by cell, to both of us. The sun outside the window is bright, but a blue haze seems to surround us. It is hard to leave.

On the way home I can almost feel my own cells migrating from one part of my body to the other. I can feel them moving from place to place and wonder at the random journey that they are on. When we arrive at our house the sun is still shining and our dog is waiting. We drive to our favorite hiking trail to take advantage of what is left of the day. The trail is steep and icy, but I take pleasure in feeling my legs straining to keep up with the slope. As my breathing becomes more labored my mind repeats "this is for Dave." For when summer comes, and the migration is finally over, I want to walk with him, on this trail, once more.