

Treatment Room 5

Hospital is not fit topic for a poem.
The chaotic strictures, pitiless lighting,
ambiguous procedures,
tan machines of sinister intent
blink, encourage you to expect the worst.
Warning signals sing out "beepALIVE"
"beepDEAD" "beepALIVE" intone
the driest music of our mortality ---
cross-cut with oddly cheerful repartee
of nurses and intercom squawks calling
Emergency, emergency. Bewildered patients
await news of our fates
("What's going on?"
"Why am I here?") ---
the doctor, professionally calm, says:
"Just bad luck."