

# The Day Nixon Died

by Philip F. Clark

I was in the hospital  
the day Nixon died.  
I remember thinking, 'Good.'  
I was filled with thin red tubes,  
like the red licorice strings  
of candy, as a child, I ate  
nibbling like there was no  
tomorrow.  
I watched the television news  
of his death: the face of a man  
I never liked because of the war.  
But I was now in a war, to survive.  
The body is such a simple thing;  
take care of it or die.  
Nurses quietly crept in to ask,  
"How do you feel?" I felt fine,  
attended to, and for a while away  
from anything but the urge in me  
to get better. To get what was  
inside me, out: an empyema,  
having grown its hard liquid  
in me like a stone.  
And so my blood was infused;  
cool medicines resided  
in my veins, air-conditioning  
my blood with something  
without pain. The stone subsided  
day by day. "How do you feel?"  
"I feel fine."  
Sleep was never constant;  
someone in the other bed would moan,  
or late attending guests of the dead

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Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/philip-f-clark/the-day-nixon-died>»*

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would linger long past their time.  
I watched nurses fret and doctors frown.  
Day after day, the news droned.  
"His legacy . . ." My legacy  
had yet to be. Blood is thicker  
than water they say. Not to me.  
I rose one day, the stitch in my  
side gone. The fever had crept  
away. My sweat was dissipated,  
and so I lifted out of the bed  
and the sun was up. I watched  
the last of the news. I felt fine.

