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‘The Others’: A Poem by Rosalie Cattermole¹

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The Others

“You have cancer”.

But what about the others

My son

My brother

My Husband

My mother

How are they?

“It is untreatable”

But what about the others

How shall I treat *them*?

Don’t tell them

Do tell them

I’m worried about them

“We cannot operate”

But how will *they* operate?

If I tell them the truth

How will they cope?

Just when they need me

I can’t need them.

“We are aiming for comfort”

But I have such discomfort

Do I have to tell them?

I'm treating *them* for comfort

I'll wait a bit longer

"You have weeks to live"

Weeks to tell the others

I'm already a burden

My son's too sensitive

I'm hiding my pain

"You're in the hospice now"

Where are they?

I'm ready to die

But what about them?

"What about you?"

What about me?

I forgot about me

I was worried about them

Rosalie Cattermole, Final year medical student from Leicester Medical School. About to undertake Academic Foundation Programme in Cellular Pathology in London. She wrote this poem during her 4th year Cancer Care block where she found it so important to consider the emotional impact of Cancer. Interested in Paediatrics, and especially the impact of the Doctor-Family relationship in Child Safeguarding.