

Hurl by T.J. Herlihy

I arrive at the doctor's office with a pink trash pail complete with lid and box of tissues. The receptionist takes one look at me and puts me in a room with a bed.

"I'm throwing up black!" I cry as I show him my bucket.

He sends me across the street to a specialist. I'm examined once again. Some long name is given to me. Words that mean nothing.

I'm losing weight. Lots of weight. The specialist sends me to the hospital for a midline catheter. No access. Nurse after nurse, I.V. nurse after I.V. nurse give it a try with no luck. Finally the head I.V. nurse uses an ultrasound to guide her. I'm now attached to another wet bag, yellow with vitamins. I'm assigned a home nurse and filled with fluids through a backpack with a battery.

Is it worth it? What is this life?

I'm so weak I cannot leave bed to shower. Kevin runs a bath and carries me in. The warm wet face cloth on my back feels soothing. What a good man I have.

I only leave the house to see the physician. The only people I see are Kevin's family and Kevin. I send everyone else away. I am just too ill to talk. Summer is gone as has most of autumn.

Trouble. Pain in my catheter. To the hospital we go again. Phlebitis. Out comes my only access and I am admitted.

Scared, tired, weak, nauseous. Will it never end?

Then there's pain in my abdomen. No worries I'm told. Things are changing.

Back at home a visitor brings me a round watermelon. I eat it all by myself. It's the first nutrition I've had in a very long time. I keep it down too. But the vomiting returns and keeps me homebound. Months pass.

A party for me at Kevin's mother's home. She warns me ahead so I am as prepared as I can be. It was nice to be social for bit but after twenty minutes I have to lie down. The guests join me in the bedroom one at a time for a visit.

Winter is upon us. I've lost thirty five pounds. The doctor says he's never seen such a weight loss.

Pain. Pain again. But different this time. The end is near. I call Kevin at work. I'm rushed to the hospital. Pain and vomiting. "Stay in bed," they say.

At 110:35 on January 5th my beautiful daughter Allison was born. She was 7 lbs 5 oz and very dehydrated at birth. My illness has ended. Hyperemesis gravidarum they called it. I was sick from conception through delivery. These were tough times on my body, mind and soul but the end result was definitely worth it.