

*[One of Chet's last wishes was that this poem be read at his memorial.
His friend, Deirdre Oakley, read it at the service.]*

At the Cancer Clinic

By Ted Kooser Poet Laureate

She is being helped toward the open door that leads to the examining rooms by two young women I take to be her sisters.

Each bends to the weight of an arm and steps with the straight, tough bearing of courage.

At what must seem to be a great distance, a nurse holds the door, smiling and calling encouragement. How patient she is in the crisp white sails of her clothes.

The sick woman peers from under her funny knit cap to watch each foot swing scuffing forward and take its turn under her weight.

There is no restlessness or impatience or anger anywhere in sight. Grace fills the clean mold of this moment and all the shuffling magazines grow still.