

Sitting Here, Deaf

Published May 10th, 2023

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You hearing care professionals joke about us, among yourselves, I know you do.

We're the people who delay doing anything about our hearing loss for years. Yet, once we have become used to our hearing aids and cochlear implants, we can't do without them for a moment. Dead batteries or our hearing aids 'sounding funny' can send us into a panic until you, the HCP who is at that moment our most favourite person in the world, fix the problem.

But laugh all you want, because I know you understand the very real panic we go through.

A few years ago, I spent three interminable hours while my hearing aids were 'being looked at' by technicians at the manufacturer's offices.



Sitting Here, Deaf

I'm sitting here, quietly and deaf

Waiting for my hearing aids to come back.

They are being examined, possibly repaired

By technicians who may not know

They have my life in their hands.

This may be the twentieth set

They've worked on today

Under their magnifiers and lights,

Looking for what's wrong and

What might be fixed.

But really, do they know

They're poking at my insides,

Dissecting organs of communication

That connect me to the *world*?

I'm waiting here, nervous and deaf

In a temporary vacuum, void of sound

I clear my throat, but cannot hear it.

I'm worried –

Perhaps there's something seriously wrong

And if it *can* be fixed,

Things will sound so different and loud

That I'll startle at car horns

And cringe at the cat's howl.

I'm pacing, anxious and deaf

Half cursing my dependency

On these two bits of digital technology.

I feel as if I'm separated from my children

Unable to focus on anything but them,

Worrying and wondering how the technicians are doing...

Perhaps having coffee and joking with colleagues?

But hopefully focused and intent, because

Surely they've been trained and sensitized

To know that what they're working with

Goes beyond a fusion of wires and plastic and chips -

These are creations of human genius

An eloquent expression of our ability to make

Something from nothing – to create communication out of silence.

Do they *know* that?

I hope so but I won't *know* so

Until she comes back with my ear-babies and says,

"Here, try them now."

I'll put them in and start the ritual

That tells me how they're working.

I clear my throat – once for sound, twice for assurance –

My voice will rise and fall, whisper and boom –

As I test myself with a fragment of nursery rhyme.

Mary had a little lamb,

Lamb, lamb, LITTLE LAMB!

Mary, mary, MARY, mary...

Then I'll know that I can hear, and maybe hear well...

But whatever happens, whatever the verdict,

I hope she brings them back soon

To where I'm sitting and waiting –

Deaf, quiet and anxious.