Doctor's diary card

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Release from severe neuropathic pain.

It's Tuesday and I'm filling in my diary,
recording programmed activities again—
this contract counts me in four-hourly slots.
New drug works faster than Japanese bullet train.
Soon I will write, speak, teach, doctor, sleep
in particles of four hours. I read what it takes
to become a toxicologist, brush up
my cardiology, take a diploma in genetics.
Release from severe chronic pain.
Superior efficacy due to dual inhibition.

The House of Lords spars about whether
to legalize euthanasia, while the Commons
grinds over disabled people's powers,
bans foxhunting and invades another country.
Alcohol in moderation protects against death.
Patient Orientated Evidence that Matters
is the new POEM. As the evening shift arrives
I visit Elsebeth, nil by mouth at 96 in a hospital
ward that needs painting. There are no flowers
even though they are not yet banned.
Woman aged 66 gives birth. Patients gain
new rights to choose their hospital.

It's 60 years since Auschwitz—Elsebeth escaped,
her parents, sisters died. *I want to go home.*
If I can't go home I want to die.
A distant siren severs the cold night calm.
Firm withdraws promotion of two drugs—
failure to disclose risks.
Alcohol increases death and disease.
Sequential genetic disorder of the synapse.
Life expectancy in homeless falls to new low.
Morphine shortage due to company mishaps.

Danielle Hope is the writing name of a doctor practising in London. Her latest collection of poems is The Stone Ship (Ware: Rockingham Press, 2003). Another of her poems appears on p. 228.

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