



While Moonlighting

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A rural hospital on windward Oahu,
where I worked weekends long ago
to earn a few bucks,
down payment on a house.

Three stretchers under spotlights,
a doctor's small office, outdated texts—
not much for an ER
far from the medical center.

Saturday night. Pineapple fields
yielding to darkness,
as a mom and dad, two sons
drive home from the movies.

A drunken sailor runs a light.
Thud of metal, tinkle of broken glass.
Silence...
then the wail of sirens.

How do you say, "Your wife is dead"
after stitching the lacerations
on her husband's face?
What do you say

to the man unharmed but for bruises,
who does not know what he has done?
You want to shake him, yell at him.
"Do you know you have killed someone!"

And the boys, the battered boys.
Who will help their father
tell them? You will. It is all
up to you.

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