

# A Natural History of Infective Endocarditis, Preceded by Decompensated Chronic Liver Disease and Severe Community-acquired Pneumonia

## Indictment in Four Parts and with Right of Reply

Nancy L. Merridew

### **ONE. Trespass**

His stalwart skin, sallow armor,  
    harbored memories and marks  
    of a difficult life.  
His grave affliction, already perilous,  
    he endured alone—  
    ostracized by family and society.  
His swollen belly, crazed by Medusa,  
    pouted taut as artificial breaths  
    stretched rankled lungs.  
His seasoned vessels, illicit euphoria's labyrinth,  
    adorned with plastic portals  
    infused antidote.  
His cloying blood, claret lately poisoned,  
    delivered assassin to lair—  
    Duke in silent carriage alighted at the chamber.

### **TWO. Malice Aforethought**

His haughty foe, ignoble despite the Criteria,  
    stole a vantage of supreme command  
    at the Greatest Vessel door.  
His insistent heartbeat, two sounds once discreet,  
    in rhythmic phrases murmured  
    remarks of furtive progress.  
His ardent doctor, genius clinician,  
    lifted stethoscope to precordium—  
    message received.  
His pliant pulses, company accommodated—  
    Watson struck and shuddered,  
    Corrigan thumped and ebbed.  
His teeming veins, mercurial blood extracted,  
    yielded Duke's identity  
    for precise retaliation.  
His shriveled Liver, nominally ironic,  
    sacrificed to intoxicated sanctuary—  
    Child-Pugh C proscribed surgical reprieve.  
His adept assailant, though exposed for battle,  
    abetted by fickle liver  
    retained advantage for the coup.

### **THREE. Progressive Assault**

His heart, excavated by festering mercenaries,  
    inexorably leached  
    their venomous arsenal.  
His body, conscripted slave to advancing legion,  
    appointed satellite outposts—  
    Streptococcal Empire rising.  
His scent, previously acrid,  
    drifted metallic—  
    life corroding.  
His brain, shadowed by grim delirium;  
    encephalopathic, embolic, prophetic—  
    entombed within cranial vault.  
His eyelids, fluttering shrouds,  
    veiled infinite irises, icteric globes and  
    retinas maligned by immunity.  
His urine, once flaxen,  
    oozed vermilion—  
    tributary of beckoning Rubicon.  
His skin, chameleon canvas—  
    flushed lesions and jaundice  
    defaced faded tattoos.  
His fingers, pulps mottled carmine,  
    uniquely etched tips  
    reached to probe oblivion.  
His nail-beds, fleshy Rosetta,  
    signaled the secret  
    in flecked hieroglyphs.  
His palms, unaccustomed to prayer,  
    denied redemption—  
    pocked, they too bore stigmata.

### **FOUR. Homicidal Ascendancy**

His surgical saviors, glinting mirage,  
    could offer no cure  
    except hastened demise.  
His thwarted physicians, ashen surrender—  
    our elixirs no match  
    for the adversary.

Author affiliation: The Alfred Hospital, Carlton, Victoria, Australia

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1810.AD1810>

His recalcitrant Duke, relentless,  
accomplished unsavory  
feats of cardiac passage.  
His core engine, chambers thus connected,  
ramped to fuel abscessed conduit—  
blood roared relentlessly.  
His slumped neck, kinetically possessed—  
terminally mutilated muscle's  
futile beats rocketed and ricocheted.  
His uncanny figure, cadaveric,  
inevitably bloated;  
Starling forces prevailed.  
His sodden lungs, emancipated from machines,  
hissed and spluttered  
beneath swelling king tide.  
His dying breaths, labored then whispered,  
dim light obscured final chest fall—  
curtains drawn, despite the summer sun.

His only visitor, a community case worker,  
absent that day.  
Alone when he succumbed to the darkness.

### ***Audi Alteram Partem***

Virulent villain—do you admire your conquest?

Dr. Merridew is a trainee in internal medicine at The Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, Australia. Her research interests include infectious diseases, public health, and medical education.

---

Address for correspondence: Nancy L. Merridew, The Alfred Hospital, PO Box 1292, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia; email: nancy.merridew@gmail.com

# EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES<sup>®</sup>

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid)



**To subscribe online:**

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/subscribe.htm](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/subscribe.htm)

Emerging Infectious Diseases is available at no charge to public health professionals

YES, I want to continue receiving Emerging Infectious Diseases

**Email:**

[eideditor@cdc.gov](mailto:eideditor@cdc.gov)

**Fax:**

404-639-1954

**Mail:**

CDC/MS D61  
1600 Clifton Rd NE  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
USA

Number on mailing label: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Capital letters): \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address (Country names in English): \_\_\_\_\_

Please write clearly