

NINE MONTHS IN A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF

STAGE I

Not feeling too well and without much wealth,
I place my trust in the National Health.
To my family Doctor first I go
Hello, what's wrong?
I say I don't know.
OK then, we'll check and test,
Some here and now, hospital for the rest.
This caused me concern, I must confess,
To get the full Monty from the great NHS.
There's been Doctors, Consultants, Locums, Nurses and things,
Stretching further and further the NH purse strings.
Blood tests and samples of various kinds,
Have drawn some conclusions from various finds.
'You're slightly diabetic', one person has said,
'But more than that, you're well overfed.
A tablet a day will help the first of the two,
But a low salt and fat diet is all down to you.
Less sugar, more fruit will also enhance,
The loss of some weight so you're in with a chance.
We're still not quite certain you're in the clear,
So more rigorous tests are called for I fear.

STAGE II

Another appointment is put in my planner,
With a Technician this time for a trip through the Scanner.
Came hospital day, dressed in gown white and loose,
I was asked to swallow a gallon of juice.
This would show up, they said, my bits inside,
As I went for my slow, laborious ride,
Through the machine, I had no choice,
Breath in and hold, to recorded voice.
Breath out, move on, not very nice,
But this Scanner views only slice by slice.
They now check these results with a fine toothcomb
While I await development back at home.

STAGE III

Came a letter requiring another test and check,
Through an optical tube in your mouth, down your neck.
This takes some time to do the job right,
So you'll need to come in, at least overnight.
Please phone on your entry day, by ten,
We'll know if there's a bed by then.

I pack overnight bag, but what to take?
I really need no mistake to make.
I'll take normal pyjamas that I rarely wear,
As my Daffy Duck night-shirts may cause quite a stare.
Whatever you take there's no need to worry,
The staff all too busy, so much in a hurry,
Change your clothes please and pop into bed,
We've tests to make and things to get read,
There's blood pressure and temp, no time to linger,
Oh and sugar content that's a prick in your finger.
After that there's a form to read and sign,
In case things go wrong, the fault is all mine.
I've also signed to self medicate,
To take my tablets at the usual rate.
After all that I partake of a brew,
Then tick up my supper on the proffered menu.
I've ordered gammon salad with boiled new pots,
Ticking large portions so there should be lots.
After this meal there will be nought going south,
As from midnight tonight it's 'Nil by mouth'.

Time to settle down for the night,
With two nurses on duty to keep everything right.
They come round to do all the things that matter,
Whilst engaging in continuous chatter.
To each other they have a lot to say,
But realise this, our night's their day.
All through the night they tiptoe about,
Administering to each painful shout.

With the dawn comes the first cup of tea.
But I realise there is none for me.
I'm given a jab in the rear, not too high,
To make, I'm told, my mouth very dry.
Then off for my tests from specialist Mister,
Gently ordered about by sweet talking Sister.
After a while I come to in bed,
Remembering nothing of what's just been done or said.
My wife comes to visit, But still not quite right,
I'm told I must stay in for one more night.

This is a new experience for me,
My first early morning cup of tea.
Then purgatory from my NHS host,
No bacon for breakfast and more important no toast.
The Doctors come round before you can go,
Having taken a sample from which they will know,
What to do with my body to help it get better.
In a short space of time they will send me a letter.

The letter came and it couldn't be nicer,
Saying would you please come again,
For a trip through our Slicer.

STAGE IV

From the poem before you may draw some conclusions,
The hospital staff are superb,
But have no illusions,
There needs to be more of them and materials to,
To help most of all their patients (You).
I would, therefore, ask in my most humble manner,
Please give generously for the 'Magpie Scanner'.
After all, you must realise, It would be much nicer,
Not to have to go through that Scanning Slicer.

N.A.P.