

Epiphany

*Rex and John, both Australian neurosurgeons,
were attending a conference in Oxford.*

That high summer day on the deck
of the *Head of the River*
relaxed by his ploughman's lunch and ale
Rex looked into the cloudless sky
saw several far-off small black dots:
maybe Canada geese, if not
maybe, he smiled, a replay
of the Battle of Britain.
Hard to be certain ...
But the dots stood still.

Rex set down his glass
stunned by rapid-fire thoughts
of probabilities.
"I think", he said quietly to John
"I have secondaries in my brain".
Ten years ago Rex had
a melanoma on his back.
There were questions then.
"One never knows",
his surgeon said.

"Are you sure they're not floaters?"
Rex closed each eye in turn.
"Positive." he said.
"Migraine aura?"
"Never before."

Rex knew the drill.
For a decade he had savoured each day
freed it from bureaucracy and strife.
Fancy him, a wise man from the east
receiving this epiphany in *Oxford* —
Oxford, home of Tolkien
and other master weavers of fantasy —
this clear, prosaic sentence!
How ironic that its execution
would be inside *his head!*

"I think that we should finish lunch",
Rex said slowly.
John touched his arm.
Both turned again to their cheese, meat
and bread, emptied their glasses
and left with the calm they assumed
as they emerged from theatre
weary with effort, seeking
relatives in the waiting room
desperate for news of a miracle
to confess that it was not within their powers
to remove all their loved one's tumour
though they'd tried for hours.

Stephen R Leeder, MD, PhD, FRACP, Director
Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney,
Sydney, NSW.

Correspondence: stephen.leeder@sydney.edu.au

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