

# These Problems Are Mine

By Richard Pereira

*This is the first time I have written a poem.  
To many I hope it will hit home.  
Read it slow, take your time.  
It's hard for me to make lines rhyme  
I'm a kidney patient that's what it's about.  
Let's get started and see how it turns out.*

*I run on artificial kidney machines,  
Forever and ever and ever, it seems.  
I do this five hours every other day.  
If not, I will be the one to pay.  
It's no fun, it's rough, I do it and sigh,  
Because I know, if not, I will die*

*When my friends invite me for food and drink,  
I go so they will not think,  
I'm too sick, too tired, or too weak,  
I must go or I will sink.  
I tell them, I will be there, I'm feeling fine,  
Because these problems, they are mine.*

*They say try this and that. Oh no, you see,  
Too much potassium or salt is not good for me.  
The food and drink looked so good,  
But I could tell they understood.  
I know they worked hard on dinner,  
But dialysis machines are hard ways to get thinner.*

*People look at me, they feel bad.  
But they're my friends for that I'm glad.  
We laugh and talk, it makes me feel well.  
I wish I could tell them it's worse than hell.  
As bad as he thinks it really is,  
It's a thousand times worse if the problem is his.*

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*There are some people who understand  
And will give a helping hand.  
They are kidney patients I have met,  
But to talk to them they have no problems yet.  
Like me, they run on the kidney machine,  
Because we know our blood must be clean.*

*I know others understand as well,  
My wife and children, who make things jell.  
Without them I could not go on,  
They love me and show it, like a doe to a fawn.  
The staff at the unit is understanding.  
If I have problems their wisdom is canny.*

*I tell them my problems, but most of the time,  
I tell them I feel good...everything is fine.  
If I take off too much water,  
I'm washed out and in more pain than I otter.  
I must show some kind of good sign,  
Because, I know, these problems are mine.*

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*What am I doing writing about my disaster?  
It's not going to make me well any faster.  
All I'm doing is complaining to someone,  
When I should be thinking of having some fun.  
I'm not going to write anymore of this poem.  
"Nurse, take me off this machine, I want to go home."*