

A Block in the Finger is worth Five in the Vein
by Richard Ratzan

for Miriam Aschkenasy

A table saw did it! ZZZip!
Then off went half
his left middle finger

Not a pretty sight Nor on
the x-ray which is after all
a two dimensional template
for 3D emotion At least
to a trained eye still attached
to the occipital lobe
attached to the parietal lobe
or whatever the pathway is
for bloody stumps to
beget visual horror
in the eye of the
radiographic beholder

To the OR said hand surgeon
Not yet said the OR
burgermeister whose fiefdom
was

 at midnight
 too busy
by one for his finger repair

Could he have more pain
medicine the nurse asked?
He'd like his finger reblocked
since the five of morphine
intravenously isn't holding him

As far as I'm concerned
I said he can bathe in it
That's gotta smart.

I went in and injected
what remained of his left
middle finger with bupivacaine -
enough to last 'til morning -
and left feeling wonderful

As I told Miriam -
the resident -
 my favorite resident
MY favorite spoiled
 and she knows it
 resident -

as we walked to the garage
at the end of the shift
There is precious little we do
in emergency medicine as
gratifying to a patient as
a digital block for an
amputation -
Pain relief
not cleanliness
is next to Godliness.