What We Carry

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My first black bag too small
to hold my store of insecurities
I traded up to satchel-size.
Mnemonics, formulares, vials
of scent to test that oft-ignored
first cranial nerve, reflex hammer,
tuning forks in several keys.
Eye charts, growth charts, BP
cuffs in several sizes, tape measure
cotton wisp, and a pin.
The medical equivalent
of a hardware store.

I carried it, a heavy comfort
all those years, then left it home.
Lighter now, silver-haired, I enter rooms
alone save for a simple stethoscope
and a pair of ears.