

## **Leslie Fish**

# **"The Day It Fell Apart"**

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Just a little general hospital, in a little factory town.  
The board put me in charge for mainly keeping prices  
down.  
I hadn't touched a patient since 1982,  
But the day of the explosion I remembered what to do.  
At eleven in the morning, we all heard the factory blow.  
The blast took out the windows, and the shrapnel fell  
like snow.  
We could get no help from out of town for half a day or  
more.  
We had near a thousand casualties and beds for  
ninety-four.

Chorus:

And can you keep your head, your backbone, or your  
heart?  
We all found out the answer on the day it fell apart.

It was worse than combat medicine; supplies were  
draining fast.  
Bandages ran out and antiseptics wouldn't last.  
I took all the able-bodied I could catch inside the door  
And made them help the doctors to go scrounge  
supplies and more.  
I invented laws to tell them saying in such emergency  
Forget your usual job and boss, your orders come from  
me.  
I sent the cops to commandeer anything in reach:  
Food or disinfectant cloth or alcohol or bleach.

The janitor ran cleanup squad, the cook maintained  
supplies,  
The garbageman removed the ones who died before  
our eyes.  
The clerks burned all our papers to boil water on the  
fire  
For sterilizing instruments, as the body count went  
higher.  
A local healthfood herbalist brought everything he had.

The painkillers were useful, and the poultices weren't  
bad.

A smack and cocaine pusher handed us his whole supply.

The quality was lousy, but a few more didn't die.

We did triage in the parking lot, ranked minor, major, grave.

A sad-eyed fireman gave the stroke to those we couldn't save.

Then sometime in the chaos, a director wandered in  
To tell us we were breaking rules, what trouble we'd be in.

But if we'd swear the factory was not the fire's cause,  
And the harm was accidental, he'd forget the broken laws.

The staff sneaked up and grabbed him, and tied him to a door.

He gave them blood transfusions 'till he hadn't any more.

(musical interlude)

When that day was over, and we'd saved all that we could,

We saw that law and politics would hang us where we stood.

We'd saved eight hundred lives but shattered all authority.

I told them, "People, save yourselves, put all the blame on me."

I took my books and instruments, and a few supplies beside,

Packed my car and ran away to open countryside.

So now I live an outlaw, condemned by righteous men,  
But for all the lives I saved that day ... I'd do it all again.

And can you keep your head, your backbone, or your heart?

You'll all find out the answers on the day it falls apart

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