

My Name Is Ruthie, Your Nightly Nurse

—Jack Thomas Kirt

I see that you have been in a coma
for two days and I hope you can hear me—
Johnson, I am going to check
your vitals every two hours just to see if
there are any changes. Johnson, my name is Ruthie,
your nightly nurse, and while I'm here with you,
I will see to it you are given the best care—
Johnson, I will clean your wounds and change
your bandages too and when I'm finished
I will comfort you. Johnson, my name is Ruthie,
your nightly nurse, I am going to check your vitals
every two hours just to see if there are any changes. Tears
in her eyes, these are her words. I am going to sit right
beside you. I am going to write to your wife how much
you going to miss her and how she going to miss you. Johnson,
I am going to tell your kids that you love them, that you
wish if it is God's will you can be there to watch them grow up.
I am going to hold your hand while you are here. Johnson, I am
Ruthie,
your nightly nurse. I will be the person you will have talking with
you.
I will be the last person to hold your hand. I'll kiss you for
your wife and kids. I'll tell them how good a soldier
you were, Johnson. I'm going to tell your parents
you are a brave soldier and that you love them very much.

I will write to tell your comrades to keep you in their hearts. And
Johnson,
when it's my time to go, who will sit beside my bed and
hold my hand? Who is going to write my husband and kids
and tell them I'm going to miss them, and who is going to kiss me
one last time? Johnson. I am Ruthie, your nightly nurse.
It's time to unplug you from the machine. I can't check your vitals
anymore. I am going to clean you and dress you
with your dress blues on and pin your awards
on your chest and call for someone to bring
your body out. Pvt. Johnson, you will be missed.
Time of death 1400 hours. Stayed
in a coma for five days.