Malaria—A Survivor’s Account

Saher Lalani, MPH

Listless I lay in the hospital ward
And atrophied among the masses

Too frail to rise and walk
My body shriveled with fever and shock

Blood drawn and tests performed
Prognosis debated over my precarious state

Physicians rushed in hurry and haste
Plugged needles into my visible veins

The IV bag hung over my head
Drowsily I blinked in utter despair

‘Malaria it is,’ pronounced the doctor
‘Cerebral Malaria,’ precisely he confirmed

Malaria I heard and shivered with fear
My face choked with emotions and tears

Hostage I became to Malaria the Killer
Chance of survival unknown and unclear

I had lost many a friend
The perished included neighbors and strangers

Bodies enslaved and souls stolen
For Malaria had killed millions of people

The sting of quinine hurt each time
Sending chills and pain down my spine

My body cried for rescue and release
Fighting this vector-borne, infectious disease

Silent I lay under a mosquito net
Breathing fumes of pyrethrum in the air

Alas, I’m in the survivor’s camp
My heart filled with profound thanks

Infected mosquitoes continue to bite
Crossing over national borders and lines

With the passing of each day the clock ticks on
Mission to defeat and eradicate malaria must go on