



## Letter From the Editor

### "Firsts"

**T**his volume marks the end of *HEAL*'s fourth year in production. Volume 4 is a milestone in many ways—a series of firsts. It is the first volume that has been completely constructed using our new website at [journals.fcla.edu/heal](http://journals.fcla.edu/heal). It is also the first volume of this journal to be featured in a TED talk, indexed at Florida Online Journals, and published in Florida State's Digital Commons archive, and to be designed by the College of Medicine's Instructional Design team. This edition of *HEAL* includes many other exciting precedents. For the first time, we've included biographical statements so readers can look up and connect with the authors and artists. (You can always communicate with them at [heal@med.fsu.edu](mailto:heal@med.fsu.edu).) We have a 300% increase in participation from practicing clinicians and community contributors. And, there are representatives from every class at The Florida State University College of Medicine and from two different classes at The Florida State University College of Law!

As *HEAL* grows, it seeks to inspire and unite its readers by allowing them to participate in shared experiences. This edition marks another first in that we have many personal narratives from third and fourth year students who have seen patients, and witnessed healing, recovery and death. These narratives reflect compassion and a greater understanding of the affects that conditions like Alzheimer's, Schizencephaly, Broca's aphasia, and colon cancer have on both patients and family members.

A particularly moving story, "Love is Eternal," chronicles one of the hardest journeys for a physician—the death of a spouse. It is riveting and uncomfortable, with redemption and resignation as the resolution of the story. I cried when I read it the first time, and have teared up every time since. There is inexpressible beauty in love.

Volume 4 is loaded with beautiful artwork by both professional and amateur artists. I call your attention to the piece entitled "The Mind" by Zach Folzenlogen, who has been the *HEAL* art director for the last 4 years. The piece, which seeks to portray the complexities of the human mind and our understanding of how it functions, was inspired by Zach's interest and aspiration toward a specialization in neurosurgery. This is his final edition as a medical student, and we thank him and wish him well as moves closer to his goal of becoming a surgeon.

The poetry in this edition comes from many places—professional writers, practicing physicians, medical students, law students, as well as members of the community. Charles Howze' poem, "Haven of Rest," is a self-reflection of the past decisions that have led to his current state of dispossession. As you read these pieces, try to feel their message and enjoy the expressions of love, redemption, resignations, inspiration and guidance.

This fourth edition is full of firsts for us, but we hope that it is not the last time you join us. Enjoy this edition and may you find healing in its pages.

**José E. Rodríguez, MD**

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# Why Heal?

**W**ith the advent of increasingly more complex technologies and procedures, the pressure to specialize both in medicine and in other professions has forced us to narrow our fields of interests. We have moved from the age of the Renaissance Man to the age of the Expert. While this trend towards specialization has allowed for incredible advancements, it threatens to alienate us from each other by ever so insidiously washing out the little details and colorful quirks that make us real to one another.

Knowing every factoid and pharmaceutical tidbit in the universe will not make us better doctors. What separates us from the medical apps on our PDA's is not our superior capacity for memorizing diagnostic criteria and risk percentages. Rather, it is our ability to relate to each other on a uniquely human level that allows us to bring our patients back to a place of health and wholeness, and we do this best not as Doctor and Patient, but as Painter and Potter, Runner and Swimmer, Writer and Actor. This is why it is so important to make time for seemingly frivolous passions and pastimes, even in the face of incredible pressure to pursue perfection in one arena while letting all else fall by the wayside. This is why publications like *HEAL* are such an important outlet for members of a community; *HEAL* allows us to reach out to each other and catch a glimpse of the naked human behind the constructs of social and professional boundaries.

*Yaowaree Leavell*

■ **Yaowaree (Noona) Leavell** is a second year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



*FSU Med White Coat*  
**Trung Tran**

■ **Trung Tran** is a second year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



Birds in Nicaragua

Kevin Yan

■ **Kevin Yan** is a second year medical student. During the most unsure, unadjusted, and impressionable time of my life (high school), I seemed to constantly surround myself with artists and people who admired them and their work. I felt attracted to their colorful personalities and was constantly inspired by their undying passion to further develop their work. I think they are the reason why my most favorite photos usually have rich, saturated colors with unique stories behind them.

## A New Me

Kendall Campbell, MD

The long night has passed  
And now just look at me

The scars and hurt seem to last  
Burned into my memory

Oh, how I thought it would be  
So different, so happy

A life filled with energy  
But without Him, it seemed to be

Pointless, but I couldn't see  
How He poured talent and purpose inside of me

A fresh start, that night is over, now it's time for me to be  
The man You called and see in me

Regroup, head held high, I see possibility  
That I could be just what You want me to be

Old things passed away, the old man had to flee  
All things have become new, yes new, a new me

■ **Kendall M. Campbell, MD** is an Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Rural Health. Dr. Campbell is a practical and compassionate person with motivation to improve lives through patient care and ministry. He is a gifted teacher and inspirational speaker with the ability to energize a crowd and excite them to action. Dr. Campbell receives satisfaction and fulfillment from helping students and patients realize practical and tangible goals. Dr. Campbell fills the role of advisor and mentor and provides guidance concerning school related issues as well as life matters. He is also an avid musician and choir director who teaches singing groups at his church.

## Gratitude

Mia Klein

Reflecting back on the medical mission trip I went on to Nicaragua this past summer with a team of medical students and faculty, I recall one particularly hot day. Feeling sticky from the thick humidity and overwhelming heat, I looked up to see an elderly woman in a wheelchair being pushed down the long field towards our makeshift clinic. I went out to meet her and sat with her while we waited for the doctor to finish with his current patient. She told me about her partial foot amputation nearly a year ago, which left her unable to walk. Losing her independence, she was distressed by the burden her care placed on her family. She had run out of her diabetes and blood pressure meds several days before we got there and could not afford more. When I told her we had the medications she needed, she grasped my hands and thanked me. When I told her that another team would be back in August and she could be seen by a doctor and

Every patient was gracious for whatever we could do for them.

get even more medications then, tears came to her eyes. I realized the true difference our teams were making in these tiny towns in Nicaragua. We are providing continuity of free care to these people and to see the tremendous relief this afforded them was deeply moving.

Every patient was gracious for whatever we could do for them. From the patient with pneumonia and diabetes that needed multiple medications, to the woman that needed a pregnancy test, or the family that needed multivitamins—they were grateful.

Our patients dressed in their very best clothes out of respect for us, and sometimes waited the entire day to be seen, but they always shook our hands and expressed their gratitude for providing medical care in their small town. Now I am the one grateful, for the people we treated in Nicaragua reminded me of the power and joy of medicine.

■ **Mia Klein** is a third year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

## Encore of a Ballerina

Kathleen Wood

Today, I am celebrating. The field spreads before me, a sea of vast green, blowing slightly in the wind, rolling over the contour of the land. Flowers sway, causing different colors to twinkle in and out of existence as I stare out. In the middle of the meadow, massive ancient oaks tower silently, like sentinel guardians. As I turn my head, a leaf drifts near my face, gliding slowly across the field. The wind stirs it and the different colors of green and yellow flicker as it turns in the air. It reminds me of my past—of times when I floated across the stage like a flower in the wind.

Five years ago, I was studying at Julliard, working day in and out towards my dream of being a dancer at a prestigious ballet company. I loved to feel the power in my legs,

**I thought my biggest problem was the few weeks I would have to stay off my ankle, but the look in his eyes caused me to fill with dread. I could tell that he suspected something much worse.**

knowing my movements looked effortless. I prided myself in making my burning muscles, sweat, and ripped toe nails look beautiful and elegant. I danced daily with my class and then spent additional hours practicing in front of the mirror. I was one of the top dancers at my school, chasing my wildest dream.

Things came to a crashing halt. With one misstep my dreams shattered. I was on pointe and doing a jump that should have been easy, but it wasn't. It took all my strength and I came down wrong. Everyone heard the pop. Then, flashing lights. I found myself in the ER. Things happened in a blur, one after another, people filed in—registration, nurse, doctor, x-ray tech—then hours of waiting. I was counting the seconds, terrified of the coming news. Would this change everything? Finally, the doctor came in to speak to me. He explained that I had a common fracture that dancers get and that it would heal pretty quickly. Relief was palpable,

but only lasted minutes. His eyes locked onto my arm and I had no idea why. I self-consciously cradled it; it had no bruises or breaks, only an annoying rash that my dance instructor had given me cream for. Why was he looking at it? I thought my biggest problem was the few weeks I would have to stay off my ankle, but the look in his eyes caused me to fill with dread. I could tell that he suspected something much worse.

The clues quickly fell into place—the fatigue, the “rash” on my arm, they all fit. I had advanced stage skin cancer. I was forced to drop out of my dance program and move back home with my parents. I had surgery, and then was started on aggressive chemo and radiation. I lived on the couch, languid and weak. I spent too much time crouched over a toilet, my head spinning, my stomach rejecting all sustenance. My mom was there with me through it all, holding my hair, delicately stroking my back. I was in a dark place; my once strong body seemed to cave in. I had always been thin, but the pounds fell away and I looked sickly. My beautiful hair thinned. And through it all I felt the hole in my chest ache as I thought of my classmates gliding across wooden floorboards, floating on stage. How I yearned to be with them, how I ached for my dream.

Once I finished my chemo treatments, I started volunteering at a local dance studio, helping with the beginner's classes. It was encouraging to feel my strength building back up. Slowly but surely, I even felt strong enough to enroll in some classes of my own. It was like finding my old best friend again, to be going back through my familiar movements. I continued to help with the beginners classes and was swiftly offered a paid position to teach. A new passion began to emerge as I spent my evenings helping five-year-olds with their pirouettes. I felt their joy for dance grow with each class. I also finally had time for things other than chasing perfection and found that I quite liked it.

I met him in a coffee shop. Michael. We bumped into each other in line, and with our simple conversation, began to fall for each other. He had big blue eyes and a shy smile. We sat together and ended up talking for hours. The next day we went for lunch. From then on, we saw each other almost every day. It was my first time having a real boyfriend. Before, I was too wrapped up in chasing my dreams, sacrificing all other areas of my life. Experiencing love for the first time was such an unimaginable treat. I found myself going to the movies or visiting museums with Michael, when before I would have spent this time dancing for hours, alone, in front of a mirror. Sunny afternoons with sundrenched kisses and lazy picnics thawed out a consuming competitive core I'd had all my life. We stayed up all night, talking and enjoying each

other. All of it was new for me, and I wanted more. As time progressed, I realized that I did not want to let go of my new life, my new love. I was not ready to move back to Julliard and resume the competitive, cut throat life I had always imagined. So I stayed in my hometown, lived life, and loved it.

Today, five years later, I am still cancer free. Five years cancer free. I love the sound of it in my ears, it feels like victory. The path was long and hard, and today my life is so far removed from where I thought I'd be, I could never have imagined it possible. I remember the start of the difficult journey, when I learned that I, a normal young person, had cancer and could possibly die. I remember the dread, the struggle, the pain.

But now, standing in this field, I am a survivor. Spinning across this stage of wild grasses and flowers, with the wind blowing around me, I understand what has brought me to this new and amazing place. In the leaves, I see my mother who rubbed my back when I was sick from chemo. My newfound strength is the wind, pushing me onward, gathering everything around me. My evenings teaching children ballet—something I never thought I would do—is my hair, wild and free, flowing down my back,

**I am a survivor. I am cancer free. And I have my whole life in front of me.**

finally grown back. The petals that adorn my skin are the soft caresses of my newfound love. As I extend my arm and leap forward, all the painful memories like my feverish raking nights and my broken dream of being a star dancer in a company roll off my back. The wild grass I land on is my future, cushioned with my friends and family. I am a survivor. I am cancer free. And I have my whole life in front of me. This is my encore, this is my ultimate applaud to myself. And in this meadow, I hear a standing ovation.

*This story is not based on personal experience, rather it is a creative work of art hoping to reflect the spirit of survivorship and victory.*

■ **Kathleen Wood** is a first year medical student. Katy started writing when she was 18. She has completed a novel, two children's books, and several short stories. In college she majored in Spanish (with an emphasis in Spanish Literature). Now, she combines her two major passions, literature and medicine, as she attends medical school and continues writing.



Round Marsh  
Ryan Humphries

## Immokalee

Sara Mangan

My time in Immokalee was eye-opening. I caught glimpses of both the way the law can be used to fight for justice for the most vulnerable members of our society and of its limitations in achieving that end in its present form. I met people of incredible character—migrant workers, lawyers, nurses, and others, and also witnessed racism and injustice on both individual and systemic levels.

The first day of the trip we set up a table, along with the medical students, at a Migrant Worker Fair at the Immokalee Health Department. Lots of different organizations were there, from the Sheriff's Department to the Susan G. Komen Foundation. The medical students provided free screenings for blood pressure, diabetes, and BMI. The law students listened as Professor Adelson answered the legal questions of the migrant workers present. The first person to ask for help was a Haitian man who had "Temporary Protective Status" (TPS), meaning that he'd been in the US during the earthquake in Haiti, and therefore he was allowed to stay in the US until things in his home country became more stable. The man said that he had not seen his wife or child in seven years. Seven years. I can't imagine that. And there was nothing that we could do for him. There was no legal way for his wife or child to enter the country. Not even for a visit on a tourist visa. So he was stuck. I have no doubt that here, working and earning money to send home to them, he is their lifeline. But it's so awful that it means he cannot be with them.

There was another man who was weeping and pointing to a scar on his abdomen. It turned out that his scar was from a stab wound. We initially thought he needed advice on disability, but what he really needed was an ambulance. He was in so much pain. The ambulance was called and when they got there I was relieved to see the paramedics, one of whom was a young blond woman who was all smiles and friendly to us. The two Spanish-speaking law students, Brandon and Yaima, went with the man to the ambulance to translate for him and the paramedics. Apparently the EMT's friendliness did not extend to the sick man. She made a snap judgment, based on his race, tattoos, or something equally ridiculous, saying, "If he's in so much pain, why is he at a carnival?" and walked back to the front of the ambulance without trying to engage him. Thankfully the other EMT seemed more compassionate. He spoke some Spanish, and climbed in the back with the sick man.

We discussed this afterwards and all hoped that the doctors and nurses did not take the same attitude towards this patient. These are the people who are supposed to help you when you're sick. It's terrible that they can be so dismissive and judgmental. It must have been frightening for this man to be alone and in pain in a place where he could not speak the language. The least the people charged with his care could do was be nice to him. We also worried that he would be not be able to get back to Immokalee. The nearest hospital is 45 minutes away in Fort Meyers. The man said that there was nobody to call to come get him. When we saw the man a few days later he looked a lot better. After being discharged from the hospital he had found a ride home. Everyone was happy and relieved.

Throughout the week we had seen this mixture of sadness and strength, courage and injustice, innovation and bureaucracy. The government seemed to be divided against itself. The Sheriff's Department was doing outreach at the Migrant Worker Fair, assuring people that they were not there to harm them, that their job was to catch criminals, not ordinary hardworking, undocumented farm workers. And I believe that they meant this, as much as they could. Yet they had an agreement with the federal government, essentially deputizing members of the police force to be unofficial ICE agents. And we were told that ICE itself sometimes set up road blocks, once even in front of the clinic that offers free or reduced rate care to members of the community who cannot afford medical care.

There were some wonderful women at the Health Department who went after landlords providing dangerous and substandard housing for migrant workers. Those women were committed to seeing that workers had housing options that were safe and dignified, and they struck me as a force to be reckoned with. Then there was the Farm Worker's Village, which had rows of nice affordable houses that were nearly all vacant because the government department that ran the Village was still using a model from the 60's and 70's that disqualified many of the people who most needed the housing from

Wakulla Springs  
Ryan Humphries

Throughout the week we had seen this mixture of sadness and strength, courage and injustice, innovation and bureaucracy.

taking advantage of it. We also saw a Habitat for Humanity neighborhood filled with families and thriving.

There were farm owners who were good to their employees and a packing plant owner who allowed the workers to take a paid break for health screenings. There was also a local company that cheated employees out of earned sick days.

I really enjoyed meeting with local attorneys who work to help the migrant workers, the undocumented, and the victims of human trafficking. They are some extraordinary people, and I'd love to join them in their work after I

become a lawyer. I also learned about the limits of the law as it is. So often, there was nothing that could be done. Before this trip, advocacy had seemed less important to me than the "hands-on" work helping individuals. But seeing how directly policy affects these individuals have made me realize that systemic policy change is just as critical as work benefitting the individual. Things like the Dream Act and legislation that would create a pathway to citizenship for children brought here by their parents would make a world of difference. So would legislation making it easier for families to stay together.

Environmental concerns also seem to be a very important part of justice for farm workers. Along with poor housing conditions, farm workers are exposed to very dangerous

■ **Ryan Humphries** is a second year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



pesticides. In a documentary we watched about migrant children, a 16-year-old boy matter-of-factly talked about a time when pesticides caused his skin to fall off while working in the fields. And in a local restaurant we saw a little boy who had no arms and no legs. His mother had been working in the fields when the farm owner had the crops dusted with pesticides. She had been pregnant with her son at the time and the poisons caused the birth defects.

I know that any changes to the way that we grow and harvest our crops—less dangerous pesticides, paying farm workers minimum wage instead of by the bucket—would cause food prices to go up. But it seems to me that even though food prices are relatively low, someone is still paying an awful lot for them, and it's not the consumer. Farm workers pay for our cheap food when their toddlers develop brain tumors from the pesticides their mothers were exposed to. They pay for our food with their health because they cannot afford to buy the vegetables their back breaking labor produces for us. They pay through increased vulnerability to those who would enslave and abuse them.

It is so unfair that this group of people is asked to pay so much so that we can have cheap food, and yet they are also reviled and looked down upon—on a local and national level—as criminals intent on entering the country illegally and living off the government.

There are lots of great organizations working for justice and dignity for farm workers, from the CIW to Florida Rural Legal Services to Amigo House and others.

The words of the Bible, especially the book of James, came alive to me as I saw and learned about the injustice this community faces. James warns rich oppressors, "The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty." Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice." I hope and believe this to be true. I believe that God is always on the side of the oppressed and that when people pray "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done," that it is not about some distant spiritual realm where people go when we die, but about making this place good and just.

Farm workers are so important to our society on such a basic level. For all our great inventions and innovations, civilization crumbles without food. And these workers, especially the undocumented, are so vulnerable to oppression. I think a life devoted to working for justice and

dignity for migrant workers and other vulnerable people would be a life well spent. I want to live a life like that.

One last note to this rambling reflection: the day after watching the documentary about the lives of migrant children, we visited Immokalee High School. Some of the kids had experienced things I could not begin to understand. Many had to move frequently and some were

held back because their transcripts failed to reach their new schools in time. Some probably helped their parents in the fields after school and during breaks. It was such a privilege meeting those kids. They had such great questions about college and were so bright. And

they had dreams of doing big things—becoming doctors and lawyers and doing other great things. They inspired respect in my teammates, and I hope they all achieve those goals.

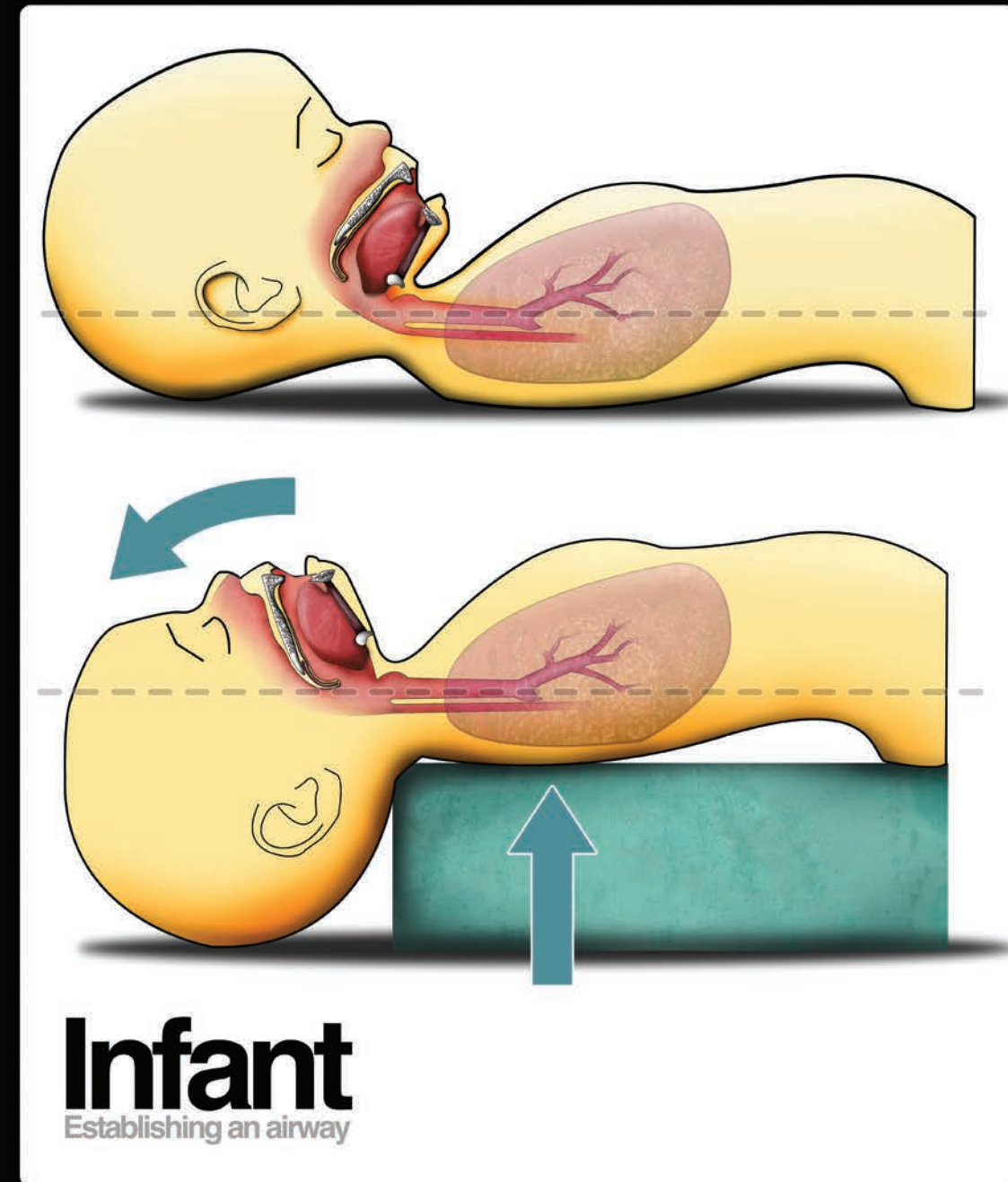
**And they had dreams of doing big things—becoming doctors and lawyers and doing other great things.**



Staff

**Saritha Tirumalasetty**

■ **Sara Mangan** is a second year law student at The Florida State University College of Law. Sara decided to go into law because she wanted to fight for justice for vulnerable members of our society. She's had the privilege of being a part of the Medical Legal Partnership during the Alternative Spring Break in 2012, and of working with the Medical Legal Partnership between Florida State University and Neighborhood Health Services. Sara has been encouraged by seeing the ways that medical and legal professionals can work together for the well-being of patients/clients. She looks forward to fostering that cooperation throughout her career.



*Pediatric Airway*  
**Zach Folzenlogen**

■ **Zach Folzenlogen** is a fourth year medical student and has been the art director for HEAL during his entire medical school career. Zach received a degree in art prior to medical school. He continues to use art as an outlet of expression and enjoys working with

all media. Currently he has transitioned his art into medically applicable avenues by illustrating novel surgeries and intubation techniques for various clientele. He hopes to make medical illustration a large part of his future career.

## Shell

Eva Bellon

There are moments  
In almost every day  
Where I allow myself to forget  
All that I am  
When I first wake  
With the specks of morning  
Shining on my face  
And I smile because I can forget  
My mind will leave behind  
The shell that encases me  
Ignore its creaks and groans  
A storm battered house  
Still standing because of infrastructure  
And when I laugh  
I don't think of the place  
From which that laugh escapes  
The tiny tubes and tunnels  
Miniature balloons of life  
That can cause so much pain  
When ruptured  
I speak of it all from a distance  
I dissociate from the things  
That define what I am  
I rationalize it as my purpose  
In the world I have chosen  
Merely an interesting fact  
On my path to healing  
But sometimes I can forget  
Allow myself to be a past  
That no longer exists  
I push myself to hide away from this  
Inside the Id  
It never forgets  
She screams what I am to the interior  
Deafening roars of protest  
War my forgetfulness  
Then there is my shell  
Tattered and young  
Confused by the violence  
Never forgetting  
Where I have been

■ **Eva Bellon** is a fourth year medical student at The Florida State University and former student editor of HEAL.

■ **Fernando Guarderas** is a second year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

## Cowboy Winter

Carol Faith Warren

Once upon a winter's night  
The snow was blowing hard.  
Throwing kisses made of ice,  
It whipped across the yard.  
It beckoned to a snowman;  
It wanted him to play.  
It raced along the ridge line  
And chased the cows away.  
It sang along the wire  
Until the fences broke.  
It whistled in the chimney  
And curled up in the smoke.  
I stepped outside to ask it  
Please to go away,  
But it shoved me in a snowdrift  
And now I'm here to stay.  
In the spring time  
They'll find me  
As froz' as froz' can be;  
They'll bury me in spring time  
Beneath the tall pine trees.

■ **Carol Faith Warren** is a Maguire Medical Library associate. "As a Maguire Medical Library associate since 2002 I have watched our school and our students grow. It has been an amazing journey. The love and dedication of our students touch me and make me a better, stronger person. I believe in a better world because I see it in our students. Poetry is a reflection of what we feel and who we are. Sometimes, things too profound to express verbally, can be experienced and shared through the written word. For me that is where HEALing begins." -Carol Faith Warren



## LET IT SNOW

Alexandra Mannix

Better, best  
In a race I cannot win.  
Everything must shine  
Like that sparkling pressed carbon  
You so desperately want me to wear.  
You miss the leaves  
And the first perfectly original snow flake.  
You miss the sunrise  
In your tired haze of alarm clocks.  
As the first snow flake falls  
On the autumn colored leaves at dawn,  
I'll hit the snooze button  
And sleep in.

■ **Alexandra Mannix** is a third year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



## Sarah

Nicole De Jesus-Brugman

I have pictured this moment—finally getting the opportunity to let those around me know what I am thinking and feeling—I have pictured this moment in my head millions of times. Now that I have a chance to do so there are so many things I want to say, but I can't decide where to start. I guess I should begin by introducing myself. My name is Sarah and I am seven-years-old. I have lived with the same foster family in Sarasota for the past three years since my brother and I were taken away from my mom because someone was worried we weren't being taken care of properly. I don't know much about her, but I've heard my foster mom say that my mom had a problem with taking too many pills. I guess she must have been really sick, I hope she's ok. I haven't seen my brother since we were taken away that day, but I hope that he is in a nice house like I am. My foster mom takes really good care of me and I'll be the first to admit it's not easy.

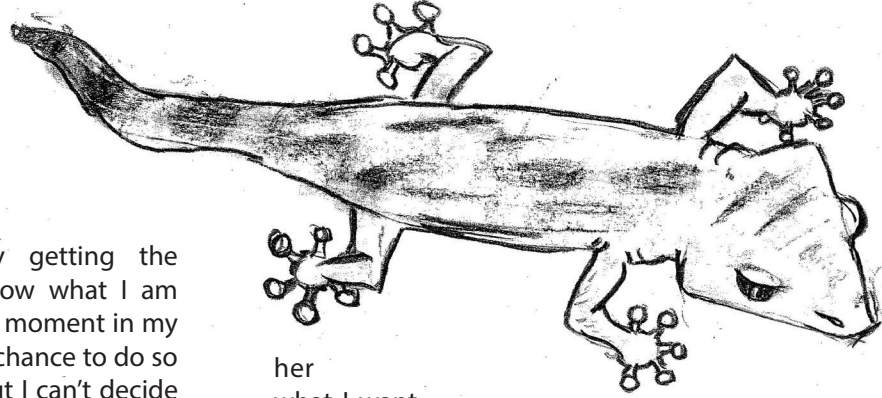
**My foster mom takes really good care of me and I'll be the first to admit it's not easy.**

I have Schizencephaly, which not a lot of people know about. The doctors in Sarasota had to send me to another hospital in Tampa called All Children's because they didn't know what was wrong with me when I was born. Schizencephaly is a rare disease and it means that there's something wrong with my brain and because of it I have a lot of seizures and I am partially blind. I have machines that help me breath and I get my food through a tube in my stomach. I heard that my foster mom had to take classes in order to learn how to use the machines and what to do if something bad happened to me, like if I stopped breathing. I spend most of my days sitting in my special chair or laying in bed because I cannot move my body. My foster mom usually turns on the TV in the room so I can listen to it. I wish I could tell her that I would rather listen to music instead, but I can't. The doctors told my foster mom that my disease caused me to be severely developmentally delayed so I will never be able to communicate. I don't think I'm delayed, I know what I want to say, but my body won't cooperate. I get upset when I can't tell

my foster mom that my disease caused me to be severely developmentally delayed so I will never be able to communicate. I don't think I'm delayed, I know what I want to say, but my body won't cooperate. I get upset when I can't tell

The Lady  
Ana Gabriela Lujan

■ **Ana Gabriela Lujan** is a community contributor to HEAL. She is in seventh grade.



her what I want, but I would say that the most frustrating part is when I can't tell her that I don't feel well or that something hurts. By the time she realizes that something is wrong I'm usually very sick and end up in the hospital. I've gotten used to going to the hospital by now, though. I've been there more times than I can count. Sometimes I have to spend the night alone because my foster mom needs to go home and get some rest; I don't like it when that happens. The scariest part of my day is when I get the seizures. My body tenses up and I start shaking, but I can't control it. They used to only happen once or twice a day, now they happen a lot more. My doctors have had to change the medicine for the seizures a lot of times, but nothing seems to make them go away.

Lagartijo  
Ana Gabriela Lujan

I really don't know why this happened to me, but I have come to accept that this is the way things are. I know that I will never be able to ride a bike, climb a tree, or go to school like other children my age. I will never be able to dress myself, walk on my own, or even hug my foster mom. I don't know if things are going to get better, but I can tell that my body is getting tired. I've been getting sick more often and my foster my mom has had to take me to the hospital a lot. My seizures have also been happening a lot more often and the medicines the doctor gave don't seem to be working anymore. I can tell things around me are changing, too. My foster mom seems more tired and she cries a lot, especially when we're at the doctor's office. I've been hearing her talk about getting something called a DNR for me, I don't know what it means but I know that it's really hard to get because she spends a lot of time on the phone fighting with somebody. Maybe that DNR will fix everything. I wish I could hug her and tell her that everything is going to be ok, but unfortunately I can't. I'm a hostage in my own body. Maybe the next time you see her you could tell her that I am thankful for everything she has done for me and that I love her.

■ **Nicole de Jesus-Brugman** is a fourth year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



Chloe's Rose  
Joseph K. Torgesen, PhD

■ **Joseph K. Torgesen, PhD** is Director Emeritus of the Florida Center for Reading Research.

## 2012 Nilda Rodríguez

This poem was written by a woman who was about to celebrate 50 years of marriage to her husband in the year 2012. The year started with her husband having a heart attack while they were 250 miles away from home. She was terrified, but she did what she could to stay calm. After she got her husband to the hospital, she called her physician son and told him to notify his siblings, but not to come. I am that son. This poem is revealing to me, as I had no idea how difficult it was for my mother, and I did not know how scared she was until she shared this work with me. It was written in the middle of the night, while my dad was in the hospital, and she was all alone. —José Rodríguez

January came as expected;  
A dull pain in the chest,  
A drink of water, a rest  
In a corner of the sofa, seated.

Night comes, and with it shadows.  
Heavens brighten the earth  
And dreams of a better morning  
Show up in the bitter night.

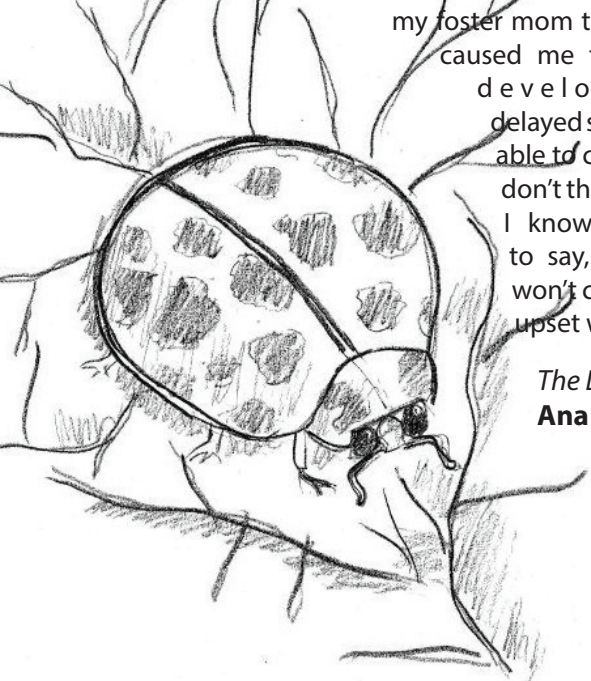
Six a.m. comes very fast;  
A pain, a cry for help rings  
In the cool morning of January 3rd.  
A soft I love you is heard.

The phone, the phone, no signal!  
A quick prayer is sent to the Lord.  
Response comes fast, we are on our way.  
The heart, the heart is giving up.

The heavens are flooded with prayers,  
The Lord and Master responds  
With expert care and love—  
He is here to guide and help us.

## Adopted Parents Carol Faith Warren

Carol for the music  
Faith for answered prayer  
Love a set of parents  
To nurture and to care  
Christmas brought her home  
A child that was not theirs  
They claimed a little daughter  
Their home they chose to share  
She grew in love and comfort  
With beauty round her soul  
She was always their reflection  
Her happiness their goal  
They loved her oh so deeply  
Gave her all the best  
She grew and loved them dearly  
More than all the rest  
She has children of her own  
And passes on her parent's gifts  
Of joy and love and laughter  
A heart the higher lifts  
The love of God eternal  
No fear of day or night  
To care for every creature  
And follow what is right



## Crossing the Pond

Jasmeet Kataria

I still remember when my parents made the announcement to me and my siblings that we were leaving England and moving to the US. The same thoughts crossed our minds at the same time: will it be exactly like the American movies? While our parents continued to ramble on about our reasons for leaving, my siblings and I began to picture ourselves living in a beautiful, sunny place, with a big, luxurious house. We each saw ourselves with our own bedroom, each bedroom with its own bathroom. We could see ourselves never having to travel to the community pool ever again because we would have our own pool in our huge back garden. Although our parents fulfilled all of those dreams for us, we did not realize what we were about to leave behind. When I think back to the excitement I felt about moving to the US, it never crossed my mind that there was no turning back. You see, in my mind, I always thought I could go back to England if, for some reason, the US was not my cup of tea. It was not until we were finally here that I realized how hastily I was able to leave my childhood behind for the luxurious American life I had seen in movies and TV shows. All of a sudden, I started to remember everything I had left behind. Gone was the house in which I had grown up, all my family that lived so close we were practically neighbors, my closest childhood friends, and most importantly, all of my childhood memories. I was not ready to do it all over again, to recreate my home in a new locale. When the time came to start my first day of high school, I was terrified. As if high school isn't hard as it is, what could be worse than starting the first day of the ninth grade without knowing a single soul in the entire school? It felt as though I had a huge stamp on my forehead that read, "I'm an outsider." Although I am sure my hair and clothes had already given that secret away. I didn't even know how to dress outside of the safety of my British school uniform, let alone what to take with me, which building to go to first, where to sit, or who to talk to. I was accustomed to wearing a white shirt with a tie, a skirt, blazer, and the same black shoes every day, with my hair tied back. Now, all the choices were paralyzing. I was used to being with the same classmates all day long, moving from one classroom to another for our different subjects. I was used to one small building, where everybody knew where they were going and it was harder to get lost than it was to find your classroom.

Along with the worries of fitting in, my accent had only made things worse. I could feel myself becoming red in the face when my accent drew too much attention to me. I

When I think back to the excitement I felt about moving to the US, it never crossed my mind that there was no turning back.

would sit through all my classes without uttering a word in hopes of going unnoticed. However, it only took a word for me to give it away. Once the secret about my accent was out, my fears of having a label had inevitably become true. I was known as the "British girl," or the "Brindian" because of my Indian ethnicity. I remember being automatically given the part of Juliet in ninth grade English class while acting out Shakespeare's play. Having an accent like mine has a magical effect on people, even complete strangers are not immune. It triggers something innate deep in their minds that says, "Hey, tell her any random connection you may have to England, she'll like that." Usually, I don't really mind this, but it sure makes it hard to fit in.

Next came my chance to perform in physical education. Given my excellent skills in a famous British sport, netball, which I assumed was also a sport here, I was very excited to participate. I soon came to learn that there was no such thing, that "Rounders" had been replaced by softball or baseball and that netball was really a modification of basketball. I had expected that my Kappa tracksuit bottoms would impress my sporty classmates, but even that failed miserably as that British brand-name hadn't crossed the Atlantic yet.

Although I had heard the famous "potato chips" and "soda" being ordered in the TV shows, I never thought to utter those words myself. When I chose "crisps" and "a fizzy drink" at lunch instead, I was met with a blank expression in the cafeteria. Although I tried to make multiple mental notes to remember this new vocabulary, it proved quite difficult, especially when paired with learning trigonometry and having to catch up

on summer reading assignments of which I had not been aware.

Needless to say, when I returned home from my day at school, I wanted to crawl under the covers and wish myself back to the comfort of my school uniform and a plate of

Date Night  
**José E Rodríguez, MD**

■ **José E Rodríguez, MD** is a family physician and Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health at The Florida State University College of Medicine. He is the founding editor and editor in chief of *HEAL: Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature*. He loves his wife and his kids, and he finds joy in running, writing and producing *HEAL*.

familiar fish and chips. I did not make myself any promises to try to fit in more, I did not resolve to participate in American sports activities and certainly did not start uttering words such as "soda" or "pop." I kept in contact with my family and friends back home and eventually, with much effort, positive attitude and little heartache, I slowly felt myself starting to fit in to the American culture.

After ten years, I have learned to enjoy the small quirks of the American culture, such as the friendly greeting by the clerks when I walk into a grocery store, a pleasantry not afforded in Britain. I also appreciate the ability to make a u-turn at almost any intersection, opposed to navigating a roundabout, and not having to squeeze two cars onto a one-lane road. It almost feels unnatural for me to call a parking lot a "car park," an elevator a "lift," a line a "queue," the movies the "cinema," and to greet my family and friends with the words, "You alright?"

Surprisingly enough, I have become used to being asked the famous question, "Where are you from?" I enjoy

I no longer shrink in my seat when asked a question. I am proud of who I am, my cultural diversity, and my ability to relate to others of various non-American cultures.

talking to others about my origins and nationality, even if they respond with a short story about the trip that Uncle Bob's ex-plumber took to see Big Ben. I no longer shrink in my seat when asked a question. I am proud of who I am, my cultural diversity, and my ability to relate to others of various non-American cultures. My accent and way of speaking do still attract attention, and I find myself having to repeat myself often, but I have learned to make adjustments accordingly. I enjoy living that American dream when swimming in my own pool, basking in the warm sun during winter, or getting dressed in a closet that was the size of the bedroom I shared with my sisters back in England. The funny part is, now even when I go back to England, I have an American accent. I better just embrace being a little different!

■ **Jasmeet Kataria** is a fourth year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



## Sensational India

Saritha Tirumalasetty

Sitting with the fan at its highest speed, I absorb how different life is here. At my place in the United States, I live a very comfortable life. Any little annoyance is immediately resolved by the turn of a switch. More light? Got it. Too hot? AC equals on. Bored? TV is now in operation. I have definitely taken for granted everything I have there.

Now, being in India, I realize I have never sweated so much in my life—and I'm just sitting around! Not to mention I'm in the city; the village weather must be much worse. I feel so completely dirty right now. However, when I bathe, I have never felt more clean. Maybe it's the idea of cleansing all the impurities I've accumulated. Or maybe it's the sensation of being freshly clean, yet still surrounded by so much dirt.

Playful Ganesh

Saritha Tirumalasetty

I don't mind the accumulation during the day though. I feel like I've melted into the earth. I have blended into the dirt, water, and air and have now become one with the earth. It feels very natural. I would probably hate feeling like this in the U.S. Over there, sitting and sleeping in a pool of your own sweat is not ideal and can be easily remedied. In India, I appreciate each drop of water I get whether it's for drinking or bathing. Each gust of wind whether hot or cold is a relief to my perpetually moist body.

My senses seem to be heightened. India is full of smells. A whiff of curry, smoke, dung, and dirt fill the air at different levels. Usually I would pray that any foul smelling odor not linger on my person as it passed by. Now being a part of this earth, I realize that doesn't matter. The smell passes, and I undertake the scent of the next gust that comes along.

The noise pollution is severely different, but it surprisingly doesn't give me a headache. I'm learning to listen differently. Each word that I want to hear is more difficult to understand through the noise. So each word that I am able to grasp becomes more precious even if the idea being expressed has no meaningful value.

My palate has some growing to do. I thought I could handle spicy food with ease. I was wrong. On the upside, I'm doing much better than expected. I have made it through most of a meal without grabbing a glass of water, a sweet, or

yogurt to satiate my burning tongue. Granted, most of the meal consists of me sniffing and tearing up a little. Each bite is packed full of flavors some sweet and spicy, salty and spicy, sour and spicy, bitter and spicy, warm and spicy, cool and spicy, and just plain spicy.

The lighting here is altered also. Instead of the bright lights I'm used to, the natural lighting brings forth earthy hues. My surroundings look more natural, more real. It makes everything seem as though it has sprouted from the earth, including people, clothes, buildings, even cars. It's like there's a place for everything and everything has its place, though anything can move about and still appear as if it has always belonged there.

■ **Saritha Tirumalasetty** is a second year medical student and the current student editor in chief of HEAL. Saritha is from Tallahassee, Florida. She finds comfort in immersing herself in the vibrantly colorful world of the arts. Dancing to striking music, endeavoring the written word, and slowly attempting illustrations has allowed this introvert to express herself. This expression has helped transform her into a person who listens sincerely, cares compassionately, and loves deeply.

## The Brink

Eva Bellon

I'm trapped in the base of my mind  
I exist only where Atlas holds up my world  
I'm sitting in my brainstem trying to claw my way to the front  
I feel pain and I hear you  
Oh I hear you  
But I'm stuck back here  
It's a long thin rope in the dark  
I try to use it to pull myself out, hand over hand  
The more I pull the deeper it seems I stay, an equal force roots me here  
I haven't the slightest clue with whom I am playing this tug of war  
I never reach full submersion  
I don't get swallowed in darkness  
I can still feel the rope in my hand  
But this place doesn't feel like consciousness



Spirit Guide  
Yaowaree Leavell

Dalat City  
Trung Tran





*Two-Day-Old Miracle*  
**Mitali Agarwal**



*Mother & Daughter Love*  
**Mitali Agarwal**

■ **Mitali Agarwal** is a second year medical student. Traveling allows me to challenge myself to step outside my “comfort zone” and expose myself to new cultures. Each place I travel, I am impressed by the uniqueness of each culture, and I am amazed at certain universal joys all humans share. The birth of a new infant, a mother holding her daughter, etc. brings happiness to everyone. I enjoy taking pictures during my travels because it allows me to capture these moments of happiness forever. I try to take photographs that tell a unique story about the locals and their culture: art, architecture, food, and lifestyle.

## Mothers and Daughters

*Andra L. Prum, DO*

I am my mother’s daughter.

I cry,  
 smile,  
 laugh,  
 speak,  
 walk,  
 run,  
 play,

hug and kiss sweetly,  
 cuddle,  
 express,  
 emote,  
 aspire,  
 achieve,

in the eyes of my mother gently guiding me thru life,  
 loving unconditionally.

She passes away.

I am devastated.

I am my daughter’s mother.

She cries,  
 smiles,  
 laughs,  
 speaks,  
 walks,  
 runs,  
 plays,

hugs and kisses sweetly,  
 cuddles,  
 expresses,  
 emotes,  
 aspires,  
 achieves,

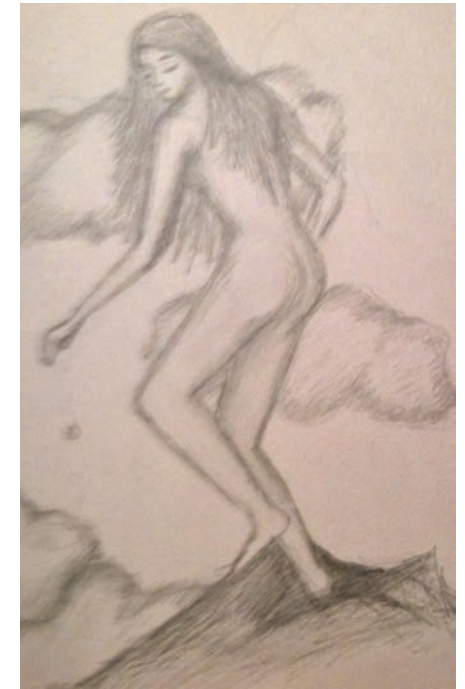
in the eyes of her mother gently guiding her through life,  
 loving unconditionally.

She rejuvenates my soul. She helps me heal.

I am reborn.

*This poem is dedicated in memory of my loving mother, Marilyn Grosser, who blessed my life for the past 38 years and to my daughter, Amber Prum, who continues to do so.*

■ **Andra L. Prum, DO** is the Assistant Medical Director of University Health Services and an Adjunct Associate Professor at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



*Desnuda*

**Veronica Andrade Jaramillo, MD**

■ **Veronica Andrade Jaramillo, MD** is a practicing physician in Ecuador, South America.

*Grandma Marilyn hugging her Granddaughter Amber*  
**Andra L. Prum, DO**





Dew After a Summer Storm  
Ryan Humphries

## Prevention is a Luxury

Naomi Salz

It's been almost a year since I met Carmela. I invite her into my thoughts from time to time, but she also graces my awareness unexpectedly; she is always welcome. It may seem odd, but often in the middle of a rigorous smoking cessation discussion she visits me. I admit it is strange, but hear me out on how cigarettes are indeed related to my past patient Carmela.

On the fourth day of our trip to Los Cedros, Nicaragua it was decided that home visits were in order. Many patients who wanted medical care simply could not make it to the church in the center of the village where our clinic was set up. We divided into groups and scurried off on our separate ways. A shack at the end of a muddied path, deep in a wooded area on top of a hill, was found to be the home of Carmela. Outside the decrepit hut was an equally

decrepit woman appearing to be in her late eighties sitting with a well-known figure of the community, Sister Maria. After brief introductions we began to listen to Sister Maria describe the tale of Carmela's recent medical struggles and ventures into Managua to be seen by a doctor. I gazed off for a moment and pondered how frail Carmela was able to fare the thick roots that covered the dilapidated dirt road we traveled on. As Maria sought our medical advice for her dear friend, Carmela sat hunched over in a plastic patio chair holding a half empty small bottle of water. "That is all she has had to drink in days," Maria said when she saw me looking at the bottle. The details of Carmela's trek into the city led us to understand that she had a long standing pulmonary condition and was likely deteriorating from it. Her breathing had become increasingly difficult which was the reason for seeking medical care. After multiple medications and a nebulizer treatment in the hospital, she was sent back home with instructions to do these treatments when she experienced strained breathing. We exchanged knowing looks with each other because it was clear this withering little lady needed much more

than a watered down breathing treatment. In fact, our thoughts were further validated when Maria went on to explain Carmela had awoke the night before due to a frenzy of coughing and uncontrollable wheezing for which Maria had to run to a home yards away to borrow electricity to merely use the nebulizer. To be frank, I still don't know how she was even able to get the machine. What could we medical students do for this declining patient if she barely had electricity? I began to examine her to get a better idea of what we were dealing with. Each tiny muscle in her neck and chest were

working hard to help her breathe. I delicately lifted her shirt to listen to her lungs and check for consolidation. I can assure you I saw every last one of her thin ribs bracing together her torso. Her heart was beating so hard and fast I can still picture her heart muscle lunging out of her chest. Her lung sounds were dismal at best with crackles, pops, and wheezes and large areas of no air exchange at all. When I held Carmela's hand in support, her bulging clubbed finger tips and icy blue nails caught my gaze. Again, the other students and I humbly exchanged glances, but this time they were of bewilderment. If this scenario were occurring in the United States, this patient would have been admitted to an intensive care unit immediately. To expand further, if we were in the US, this patient would have been a smoker of 2 packs a day for fifty plus years and taking every top dollar prescription drug made for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

Carmela was not in the United States. Carmela had never smoked. She barely had enough electricity in her entire neighborhood to run one albuterol treatment. Carmela was only sixty-four-years young. She worked her whole life raising a family, cooking and selling tortillas to make a living and breathing in filthy smoke from the indoor stove. She did not have the option to quit working, to quit inhaling thick black smoke. She didn't deserve this. It makes sense that when I plead with patients to quit



Kites Joshua Greenstein

She didn't deserve this.  
It makes sense that when I plead  
with patients to quit smoking, I  
picture Carmela writhing in her  
bed at night gasping for air.

smoking, I picture Carmela writhing in her bed at night gasping for air. It is logical why my brain conjures up an engrained visual of Carmela's cachectic body when I see teenagers purchasing a pack of Winstons at the corner gas station. I will not allow my moral outrage to be self-defeating or blind me to the needs of my own community.

I know you are probably wondering what happened to Carmela. We gave her several inhalers so she wouldn't have to scrounge for electricity, showered her in steroids to open her airways, and gave her analgesics to help with pain. I wanted to give her Tums as a source of calcium to help with bone mineralization because we

all knew how frail her skeleton was. In retrospect it should have been obvious, but this pathetic attempt at a preventative care measure would have been of no utility for Carmela. As it was plainly stated by our group leader, she would not live long enough to reap the benefits. This truth stung me.

This brings me to a stark realization. Prevention is a luxury. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to quit smoking. It is a blessing to take vitamins and minerals, let alone bisphosphonates to prevent

bone fractures. It is a marvel we can screen for cancers that kills us in this country. Preventative care is not a lost cause on us. Two weeks after returning to Florida we got news that Carmela died. She is still very much alive to me and brings me patience and encouragement as I try to practice prevention with every patient I meet.

■ **Naomi Salz** is a fourth year medical student. As the daughter of two musicians, Naomi's parents nurtured the artist in her throughout her upbringing. By the time she was in high school, she was exploring Chinese water color painting, acrylics, photography, and graphic art. Although Naomi ultimately decided to pursue a career in medicine, art is part of who she is. HEAL provides Naomi an opportunity for creative expression. She has also developed skills in jewelry making and raises proceeds for medical outreach through "Jewels from the Heart" sales.



*El Haitiano*  
**Rennier A. Martinez**

■ **Rennier A. Martinez** is a second year medical student and president of the Association of Latino Medical Students at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

## Haven of Rest

*Charles Howze*

My name is Charles Monroe, Roe for short

I'm still doing drugs just waiting to get caught

Ducking and dodging my P.O.

While peeping out the window all down on the floor

Now you can find me in a park or in some motel

Still trying to get high or even making a sale

Or you can find me in Frenchtown just walking the streets

With the same clothes on, soles on my feet

I made a wrong turn, and when people ask me where I've been

The only thing I could tell them is, "I've been down that road of sin."

But today, I'm trying to rededicate my life to God

Headed back towards Tennessee Street, I guess

Because like a bird, I'm tired of flying high

So I found shelter in God's Haven of Rest.

■ **Charles Howze** is a community contributor to HEAL.

# Love is Eternal

John Agens, MD

*I wrote this in the last few months of my wife's life. It is a series of journal entries, intermingled with verses from the Holy Bible, a book where I still find hope. This time has been incredibly difficult, and I share this with you so you can see that love is eternal, and that even physicians turn to faith for comfort. Not a day goes by without me missing and loving Sharon. I hope she can see from where she is how much I miss her...."*

*"Lazarus is dead. Now let us go to him."—The Gospel According to John*

## October 2009

"I am very sorry. This is the real thing." The doctor explained as I watched my wife, still sedated, on her stretcher. In her current state Sharon was unable to hear, participate, or respond in this one way conversation. Since I had just stopped listening anyway, I had no problem with the conversation being one way. I just wished we could have heard the news together.

My thoughts shifted to, "Who do I need to tell?" I was, in my heart, feeling "Please help me now!" Having delivered grave news to patients my whole career, I was woefully unprepared for my conversations with our children, my mother, and my sister. Conversely, I dreaded being alone with this secret, even for a moment.

I could sense that, in one moment, my old life was ending. I didn't know whether or not a new life was beginning. I really couldn't imagine a life without Sharon and still breathe at the same time.

*"Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor for your body, what you will wear...Consider the lilies, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."—The Gospel According to Luke*

Sharon knew before the surgery that everything would be OK. My faith was not yet that strong. Our parish priest said, "Don't worry." I was worried. I said the rosary, bead by bead, countless times over the 12 hour period that began with Sharon in the surgery pre-op area and ended when she finally came to the intensive care unit. Putting my faith to work over the next several days, I silenced the alarms of the pulse oxygen sensor whenever Sharon would pull the oxygen from her nose. I walked her to the bathroom, lugging the IV pole behind. I calmed her when the blues came around each evening as the sun went down. I suffered Sharon's wrath when a nurse was unresponsive

during a shift while I got some much needed rest. "Where were you?!" she exclaimed. I hurt. I had to pray for faith every day, but Sharon's was unshaken.

I came to believe, in my vocation of marriage, that my whole life preparing to be and practicing as a physician was for this purpose: to get Sharon well in order to witness to myself and others that Jesus Christ exists, forgives our sins, and has the power to bring life to us in our darkest times—as long as we have faith and do not take our eyes from the ultimate goal.

## August 29, 2012

"You are a survivor," I told Sharon. Only one in five patients with pancreatic cancer is at an early enough stage to have a Whipple procedure. On the average, those lucky enough to have the surgery live a year. These statistics have been rattling inside my head for almost three years.

Sharon doesn't read medical literature. She lives. She doesn't read self-help books. She's the teacher. She is the love of my life and the purpose of my life. She isn't just my right arm, but my arms and legs. The chemotherapy since her June 2012 recurrence of cancer has sapped energy from Sharon, myself, and our children. On the other hand, we have the wedding of our daughter to live for. We have each other. We have eternity together even after death; but how precious each moment is right now!

*"So husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hated his own body. This is why a man will leave his father and his mother and be united with his wife, and the two will be one. This is a great mystery."—The Epistle to the Ephesians*

## September 22, 2012

We are one day into Sharon's favorite season. The rustle of yellowing leaves in the trees, clear air, acorns, and hickory nuts falling one by one—marking time, not waiting. She is once again in the midst of a dream. Anticipating our daughter's wedding at our home, hickory nuts are still falling, not waiting, marking new time, for two become one.

*"For I know well the plans I have in mind for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope."—The Book of Jeremiah*

## October 4, 2012

Our daughter was a stunning bride with the smile of a Hollywood leading lady. She was marrying a wonderful hardworking man from Minnesota. Sharon slept six contented hours that night, knowing the wedding had come to pass, with a smile on her face. She has such joy for a woman who fought so hard to get to this place.

## October 23, 2012

We are up at 7AM, a little earlier than expected. Hot coffee, mostly milk is Sharon's pleasure nowadays. My coffee needs be quite a bit stronger! We are trying to set up our home hospice music therapist visit to coincide with our guitar playing cantor visit to plan our funeral. Since June we have come through our most difficult time, our hearts are breaking; but we have experienced love in a way that is hard to put into words. Our intention is to empty ourselves for the other, letting the Holy Spirit into us and letting Jesus embrace us. Hickory nuts are still dropping from the trees, marking time. We express our regret that even though I have taken leave from my career (and she from hers), there is still not enough time for us to talk. The days accelerate, we have more to say, we need to embrace more. Eating, laundry, bath, body functions, and visitors are all chipping away at our time. We are praying for eternity with no tears, no darkness; but our hearts are breaking. The tears are falling. We don't fight the tears anymore. We embrace. We embrace our weakness. The tears become a torrent, a cascade, a catharsis. Even granite cannot withstand this washing. I ponder how to drink of it without drowning; without us noticing, a great fire is quenched.

## October 29, 2012

*"Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."*

*"Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus is dead. Now let us go to him."—The Gospel According to John*

"Sharon, we were just saying our prayers minutes ago and now you leave me!" Tears are streaming down my face. The nurse washes you and tells me, "She is a beautiful woman." I agree. "Sharon, I have told you how beautiful you are so many times lately. I wish I had said it more. It's too soon, my love. You are beautiful, even in death; but far too soon." Tears drop audibly, hitting the quilt, like hickory nuts dropping from the trees outside, marking time no longer. Suddenly, it is quite cold inside and outside for an October evening at 5PM. I hug you. There is more wailing this time. You are not hugging me in return. You, too, are getting colder. I have to get our daughter to sit with us as I take your notebook out and start working the call list. First, your daughters. But, fortunately, I have to leave a message for them to call back. I can't face this right now, even with Meredith's arm around me. I get their spouses. I get your aunt and uncle in Pennsylvania.... I just found the poem you wrote me in the notebook. It helps, Sharon, but I still need you.

## December 2012

Sharon read me these words before she died, and left them on a recording accompanied by music. I found them after she had passed. It was like she was speaking to me from beyond the grave.

"Hello, my love.

I wanted to give you something to remind you that I am always with you.

I will always pray for you and always be there for you to talk to when you miss me or just need to talk something through.

You are the love of my life. You made me so happy, so complete; and now I hope that this music will lift you back into my arms.

When the sky is starry, I will be calling to you, and during a good thunderstorm, I will be there; but, most importantly, when you need me, I will be there to listen, to love you and to pray for you.

Our relationship began with starry nights. How could you ask for anything more wonderful? I look into the stars and see the origin of an intense love that sustains me, nourishes me, and comforts me more than I could have imagined.

God lit the fire of the stars, and the glow is in my heart forever.

I love you."

■ **John Agens, MD** is an internist and associate professor in the Geriatrics Department in the Florida State University College of Medicine.



*Lightning Over Water*  
Ryan Humphries

## Life

Jason A. Boothe

I saw...  
I watched...  
A person...die today  
She seemed confused  
As if she wondered why I stared at her that way.  
Momentary gasps of air  
Escaping her lungs  
Were the only sounds heard.  
Neither one of us said a word.  
Eyes glossy, skin dry, body frail  
I remember my attending telling me, one day soon,  
He thought her major organs would fail.

But I can't stop thinking  
I'm the one who failed!  
Blessed with what gift,  
My hands are now useless,  
She gripped my fingers with the little  
Strength she had remaining  
As I found myself refraining,  
Or simply holding back tears.  
All of a sudden all of my fears hit me at once.

I could do...nothing  
Nothing in years one or two  
prepared me to do anything like this.  
Years three and four didn't prepare me for much more  
Nothing more than life.  
Death wasn't a part of the plan.  
Now I stand silently holding this woman's hand  
Thinking, God, why does she have to die,  
I don't understand.

Will I ever understand?  
How Cold and Lonely  
Death must be.  
I don't even think this woman has a family  
It's... just me.  
Over the past two and a half weeks  
I've become her son.  
No not just her resident, not just her doctor  
I've become a part of her  
As if I exited her womb  
And I knew someday soon  
I would have to watch as my mother dies  
Consumed by pain,  
How will I ever be the same?

Will I ever be the same?  
I just kept thinking  
To save this woman's life  
There simply must be another way  
Because truly, I don't ever want to say,  
I watched another person die...today.

■ **Jason A. Boothe** is a fourth year medical student.  
*Poetry is his way of speaking for those who cannot or will not express themselves.*



Country Road &  
Sunflowers  
Joshua Greenstein



■ **Joshua Greenstein** is a second year medical student. Joshua graduated from Florida State University in 2011, majoring in Biological Science with a minor in Chemistry. While earning his undergraduate degree, Joshua was involved in leadership of the Alpha Epsilon Delta pre-health honor society and volunteered on a medical mission trip to Buff Bay, Jamaica. There he participated in makeshift clinics designed for people without access to health care. Joshua enjoys playing and listening to music, sports and aviation, recently earning his pilot's licence. He chose to attend the Florida State University College of Medicine because of its mission to train knowledgeable yet compassionate patient-centered physicians.



## My Grandmother's Garden

Brittany McCreery

At my grandparent's house, between the toolshed and what we called the "dollhouse," was a small but abundant garden filled with beautiful flowers. I have this memory, an early memory, with a few frames strung together flickering like old film. I'm walking in the garden, my grandfather not far behind. He didn't walk much longer after that.

As a little girl, I couldn't really grasp what had happened after my grandfather's stroke. Why he could not manipulate construction paper and scissors into magical works of art anymore. Why he would no longer walk with me to the railroad track when we heard the train coming. Why he could no longer help me line the rails with pennies, wait for their flattening, and turn them into jewelry charms. Why he could only stutter out phrases now. Why he was so visibly frustrated when trying to participate in conversations. I shied away from sitting in his lap any more. I didn't know where my grandfather had gone. Sure he was there, in the same chair as always, outwardly. But the man I had loved visiting wasn't there, at least not that my young elementary school self could see.

I remember being sad when he passed away, but not tearful. I understood enough to know that after his multiple strokes and functional loss it was "better this way." But there was more behind the lack of tears. I had detached

**As a little girl, I couldn't really grasp what had happened after my grandfather's stroke.**

myself from him in some way. It had been so long since I had really been able to talk with him, to adore him the way I did as a little girl. I didn't go to the funeral; there wasn't money then for my whole family to make the trip north. Maybe I would have cried then? In the following trips to Ohio to visit my grandmother it just seemed like he wasn't sitting in his chair anymore, that's all.

It wasn't until later, much later, through my grandmother's and father's stories that I could see all that my grandfather was and what he had accomplished. My grandparents moved to the small town of Delaware, Ohio from remote farm country in West Virginia in pursuit of jobs along with my great grandparents and grandfather's brothers. My grandfather expanded their two-room turn-of-the-century house by hand-building a sun room, porch, second story, and garage. He and my grandmother founded a church in their town. To this day, when my family visits that church we are regarded as royalty because of the groundwork my grandparents laid. And, most importantly, I learned that my grandfather loved spending time with me when my family came to visit from Florida.

Not until medical school, when I heard the term "Broca's aphasia," did I begin to understand what had happened to my grandfather. Not until I learned about the progressive decline the sufferers of multiple strokes undergo, could I appreciate why my grandfather seemed to have been taken away from me a little more each time my family visited. After seeing several stroke patients in my clinical

experiences, this wave of guilt washes over me. I hate myself for having an understanding and caring for these patients that I never had for my grandfather. I could have done so much more, though who expects so much from a little girl? Nevertheless, my guilt is there.

It's summer time in Ohio. I'm standing in what remains of the garden. The flowers are scattered now and there is not as much color as there once was. Yet, I find comfort in the beautiful blooms that thrive there. I have good memories in that yard. Piling up leaves in the fall and jumping in, building the greatest snowman of all time, enjoying all the things I couldn't in Florida. My grandfather was there for those things. I sigh, another wave of guilt washes over me. I whisper a prayer. I apologize. I ask for forgiveness. I tell my grandfather I love him. I wish I could have had more time sitting in his lap. I wish he could have taught me how to build things the way he did. I wish I could have heard his stories in his own voice. But, from now on, I'll understand.

■ **Brittany McCreery** is a fourth year medical student. She is a Tampa, Florida native who has wanted to pursue a career in medicine since she was a little girl. In addition to her love of science and medicine, she also enjoys exercising the creative half of her brain, most often through poetry and painting.

*Hydrangea in my Grandmother's Garden & Lily in my Grandmother's Garden*

Brittany McCreery



## She Smiled

Cathaley Nobles

All I saw at first glance  
Was a time long since passed.  
It felt surreal—  
Then she smiled.

A small thin charcoal face  
Etched by the lines of time,  
Reflecting the life she's lived—  
Then she smiled.

Eyes so round and clear,  
Revealing all the love she's yet to give  
To all the world that passes her by—  
Then she smiled.

Her hugs not yet weak and feeble;  
Her mind unclouded by memories  
Of those who had to leave her behind—  
Then she smiled.

Nearly a century she's lived,  
Her days no longer measured in hours.  
Unattended by those she once attended to;  
No calls or visits to express love or concern.  
All she's ever owned decaying around her,  
To this fast world she's unattached and unnoticed—  
Yet she smiled.

We need to save her  
Before her smile is lost.  
Not only to validate her life  
But to serve as a reminder  
Of all we have to smile about.

On 2-13-12 God called her home  
And she was smiling!

■ **Cathaley Nobles** is a community contributor to HEAL.

## I See Myself Alone and No Goodbyes

*Marielys Figueroa-Sierra*

I see myself alone and no goodbyes  
I thought that life could hold on to my dear  
I walk and try to figure where time flies

I see no reason for him to have died  
The solemn sky is blue and crying tears  
I see myself alone and no goodbyes

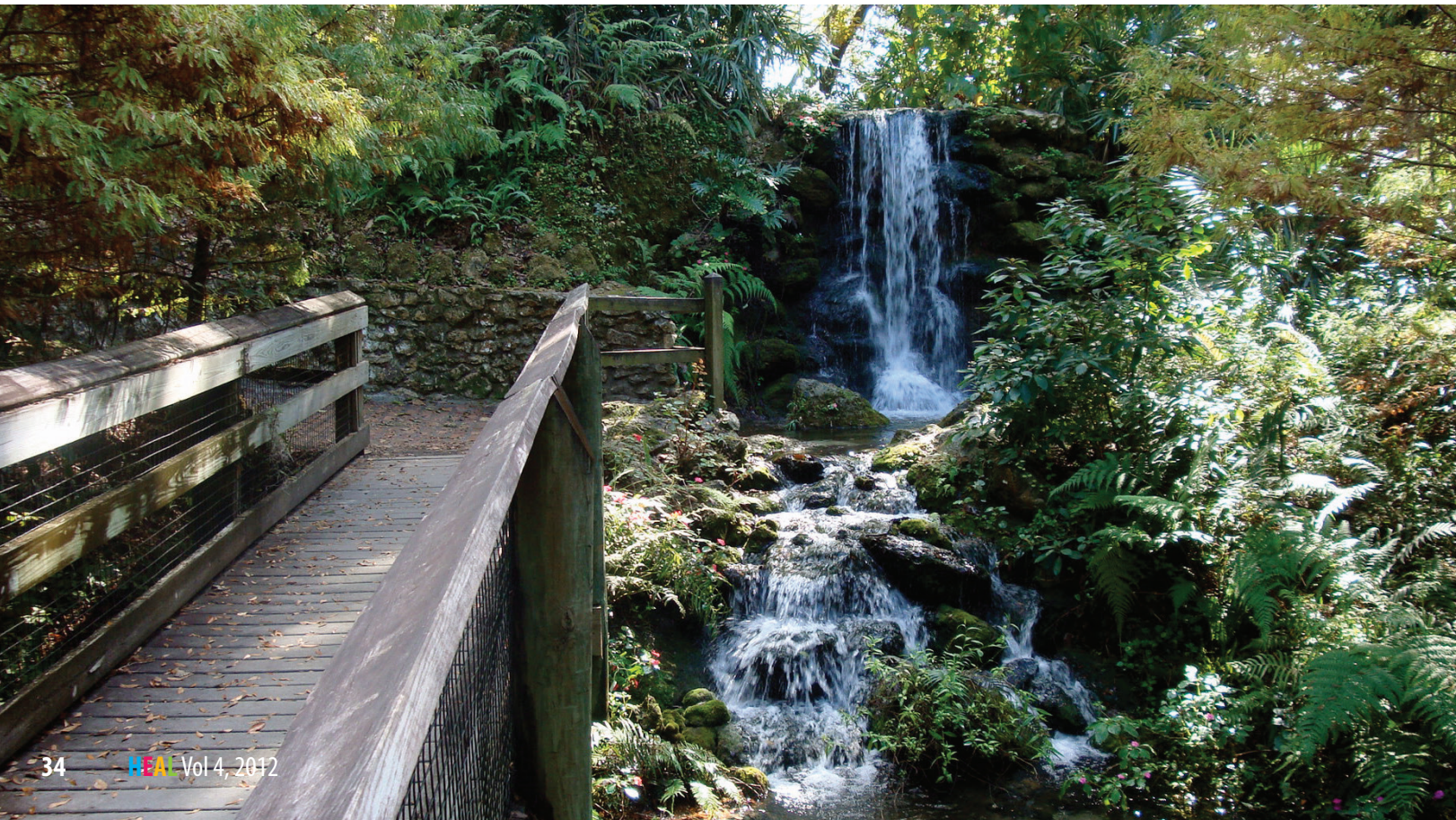
He told me things that carried such great lies  
But things that always brought upon some cheer  
I walk and try to figure where time flies

I saw one day a thing that said a sigh  
I walked towards the night and in my fear  
I see myself alone and no goodbyes

Why do you live among those that are dry?  
If you could live one day, what day is clear?  
I walk and try to figure where time flies

It seems that day is one I can't deny  
I held him close to me but through that year  
I saw myself alone and no goodbyes  
I walked and tried to figure where time flies

*Garden of Colors*  
**Marielys Figueroa-Sierra**



## How Many Times Must We Go 'Round This Tree?

*Kendall Campbell, MD*

How many times must we go 'round this tree?  
The lesson not learned, what could it be?

Here we go again and again you see  
How many times must we go 'round this tree?

We just don't get it or at least it seems to be  
So yet again we have to go 'round this tree

Through faith and patience we will see  
God's plan for us as we go 'round this tree

With brand new mercies, yes that's the key  
That keeps us strong and enduring as we go 'round this  
tree

Understanding our purpose, the purpose that He  
Put in us from the beginning, the beginning you see

So don't be discouraged as you go 'round this tree  
There's purpose in it for you and for me

A plan that's wonderful, great and free  
Full of abundance and love, just bow your knee

To the one who gives life more abundantly  
Lesson learned, here we go, last time 'round this tree

## September

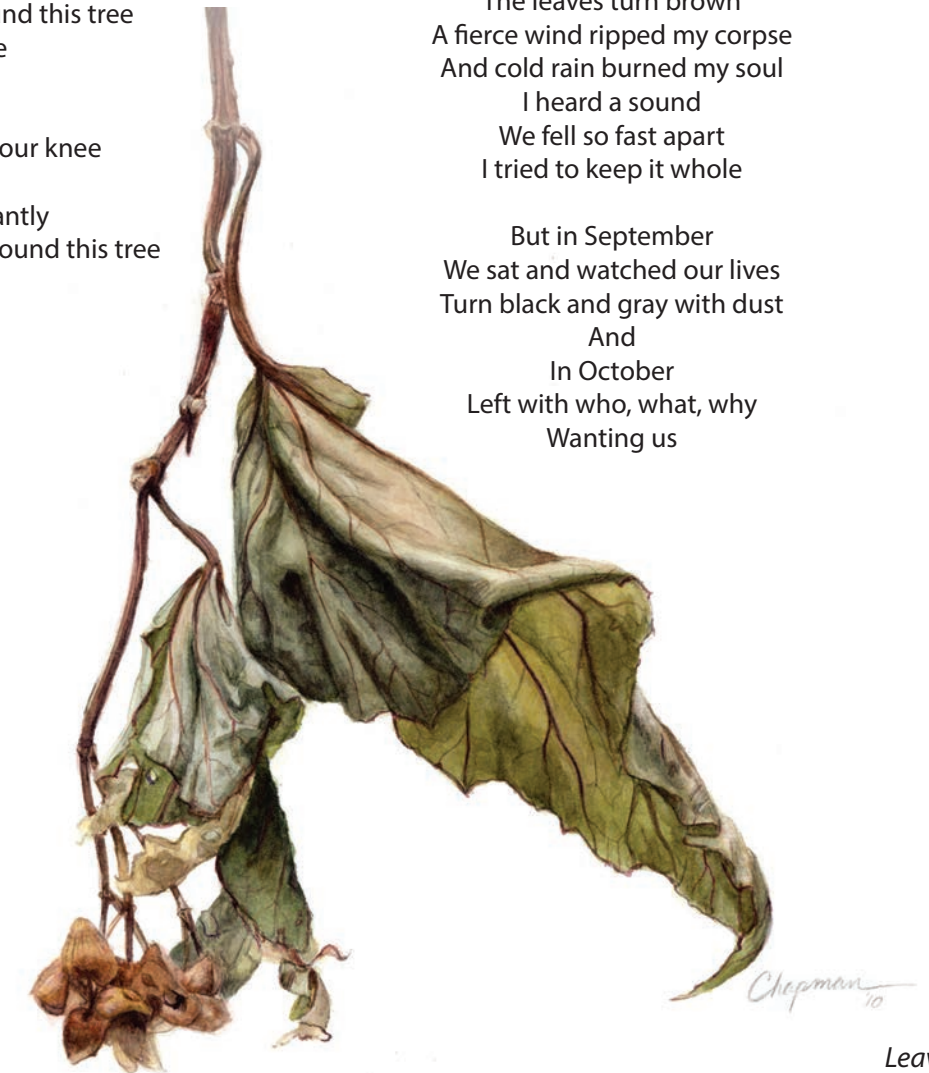
*Alexandra Mannix*

And Sunday  
I spent with you in mind  
Your eyes chiseled in my brain  
And on Monday  
It was finally time  
To erase all my pain

So I wonder  
Now lying in my bed  
With obstructed sight  
Crashing thunder  
Shakes my ears, broken dead  
Reminding me of night

The leaves turn brown  
A fierce wind ripped my corpse  
And cold rain burned my soul  
I heard a sound  
We fell so fast apart  
I tried to keep it whole

But in September  
We sat and watched our lives  
Turn black and gray with dust  
And  
In October  
Left with who, what, why  
Wanting us



*Leaves*  
**Jodi Slade**

## Hazel Eyes

Angela Guzmán

Beautiful hazel eyes greeted me as I entered the room. I shall never forget them. They belonged to a woman whose beauty was profound. She was an avid runner and a powerful kick boxer. These eyes belonged to a woman full of life, and stage four colon cancer. Prior to entering the room I reviewed her chart. I read her story, and yet, her fragility was not immediately a reality for me. Perhaps it was because she called this a minor setback in her life. Or, could it be that her radiant smile overshadowed her current trials? I am certain that it was our seemingly endless conversation about the fullness of her life that made me lose track of time. Our conversation ended abruptly by the entrance of my attending, and my report was severely lacking. I was not brave enough to tell him that we conversed about everything other than the reason why she was here today. In this moment of inadequacy I smiled because this conversation with my patient was worth more to me than my ability to recall her prescription history.

The gravity of my patient's situation had not hit me until my attending enlightened me with the truth. Her prognosis was slim, and God only knows how long she has to live. I felt as though the life had been sucked out of me the moment I was conscious of her situation. Sadly, this shouldn't have come as a surprise. Nonetheless, I was speechless and fought back the tears swelling in my eyes. While my attending offered me constructive criticism about my lackluster performance, my mind drifted back to those hazel eyes belonging to a woman who was turning 55. We jokingly discussed how she would get a Pap smear to celebrate the occasion. How did I miss this prognosis?

**She was not a diagnosis, she was not a woman dying from disease, she is a woman making the most of life, and I will never forget her.**



Watercolor Eye-Age 25  
Jodi Slade

■ **Jodi Slade** is the medical illustrator, animator, and artist for the FSU College of Medicine. She is an alumna of FSU and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where she studied medical illustration until 2011. Jodi came onto the HEAL team in 2012. Jodi has a passion for 3D sculpture, watercolor, and animation, and has been known to watch her fair share of cartoons. Her greatest loves are Disney, football (go Baltimore Ravens), and her husband, Jesse.

Looking back I am confident that I bypassed her history because she chose to focus on the present. We laughed and conversed about jovial things instead of dwelling on the challenges of the past. I suppose time passes quickly when you're lost in good conversation. Although I apologized for my poor report, I do not regret the time spent simply talking to my patient. She was not a diagnosis, she was not a woman dying from disease, she is a woman making the most of life, and I will never forget her. Subsequently, I now realize that there is an invisible emotional barrier present when you are studying diseases in a book because we are estranged from the gravity of its destruction. Today I was reminded that diseases are not inseparable from people. As physicians we are called to manage and treat disease. More importantly we are called to care for the person living with the disease.

■ **Angela Guzmán** is a third year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



Care  
Marielys Figueroa-Sierra

■ **Marielys Figueroa-Sierra** is a first year medical student at The Florida State College of Medicine.

## How to Bait a Hook

Alexandra Mannix

When I say that everything is more rewarding when done alone, people misunderstand. I am neither a loner, nor do I believe I am better than anyone else. I love the company of others, and I enjoy working collaboratively; but I also believe anything worth having is worth working for. Seeing the results of your own merits is more rewarding when accomplished independently.

It was late 1992, I was five and out fishing for the first time. Grandpa and I pulled into the mangroves across the river in our tiny motorboat, just us two. Sharing our little boat was a lunchbox packed by my grandma and our fishing gear. Grandma filled the lunchbox; the gear consisted of three fishing rods, a tackle box full of hooks, line and buoys, and a large bucket like object hanging off the side of the boat (I later learned Grandpa packed an extra rod in case I lost mine in the water). With his talk of the 1940s, the depression in New York City, and my great-grandfathers trucking company, my grandfather changed the way I viewed the world. In later years, I would learn how to drive the boat, change an extinguished light, and tie all the knots; yet, that day I learned only one thing—how to bait a hook.

Before we began fishing, I learned the mechanics of the reel and how to cast a line. Next, we moved on to the bucket hanging off the side of the boat. Grandpa reached into the bucket while it remained in the water and pulled out a small shrimp. As it squirmed in his hands, I learned the purpose of the bucket and its contents. With his bait in hand and my close attention, he baited his hook, cast his line, and began his day of fishing. After this demonstration, Grandpa handed me the other fishing rod, a single shrimp, and left me to my own devices. I was much shorter than the rod, and it was hard to manage with the shrimp in hand. At that moment, I threw a tantrum admirable for any five-year-old.

I was not interested in holding this shrimp (or killing it

for that matter), but he would not help, and at the time I could not understand why. After being pestered by his five-year-old granddaughter, he probably began to wonder the same thing himself. I continued to refuse to put a hook through a shrimp. My behavior was greeted by my grandfather's continued refusal of assistance. He ignored my ranting and continued his fishing adventure. Surely it would have been easier for him to bait the hook himself, but he let me rant and helped me learn. After what felt like hours (as measured in kid time), I gave in. I put the hook through the shrimp (horizontally instead of vertically), threw my line out, and sat on the bench next to my grandpa—rod in hand.



Country Road  
Erin Bascom

...that October afternoon I learned how to fish without his assistance, and more importantly, I learned the value of doing things for myself.

I wonder if he was evoking the creed “give a man a fish, feed him for the day; teach a man to fish and he will eat forever,” or if fishing happened to be the medium for an education in work ethics. Either way, that October afternoon I learned how to fish without his assistance, and more importantly, I learned the value of doing things for myself.

Since that day, I have baited every hook myself, because I could. Now, if I wanted to fish, I could achieve my goal without the help of another. Yet, after 20 years of holding this belief, I realize that few people hold an independent work ethic so highly.

In all honesty, I will never know what Grandpa hoped to teach me that cold afternoon on our small boat.

He could have been using fishing as a way to improve my independent work ethic, with the hope I would become a better support system for my mother. Or maybe he was not interested in baiting twice as many hooks.

Grandpa will never know how much that first shrimp on a hook affected me, but his actions are present in my belief system, work ethic, and lifetime of successful behaviors. Although he is no longer with me, his lesson persists in my daily life. Not only do I believe that anything worth having is worth much more if achieved independently, but I plan to impart this knowledge to future generations. In the meantime, I will prepare my tackle box, extra fishing rod, and my bucket of bait.



Waterfall  
Trung Tran



Golden Window  
Erin Bascom

■ Erin Bascom is a fourth year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

## Numbers :)

Angela Guzmán

I was a 4.3 in high school  
Number 5 in my class  
Maintained a 3.8 for 2 years in college  
but this love affair did not last  
We were torn apart by the second round of Organic Chemistry  
Our relationship  
Too shattered to be mended

I pretended I could win you back  
Licking my wounds, I pressed forward  
Working harder  
Longer hours  
Poisoned relationships  
Broken friendships—  
I lost focus of life  
And I lost faith in my ability to birth  
this dream that lived within me  
I bled for Biochemistry and with Physics  
I went to war  
My greatest enemy was myself  
I did not rest  
I had no peace  
I built my life around a dream  
That revolved around a test  
I must confess that my aptitude was mauled by my attitude  
20 years of self-love torn apart in 2

Into Bridge I was accepted  
Still infected by the mentality of my past  
I harbored an insatiable thirst for perfection  
Desperation permeated my self-reflection  
Despite the smile upon my face  
I struggled secretly with self-acceptance  
Numbers haunted me  
Scores defined me, and I defiled myself  
By refusing to put myself first  
Because I was trapped in a system that used numbers to define my academic worth

Lost and Alone  
I decided that freedom was the key  
So I smashed the definition of the numbers in front of me  
Now I laugh when I used to cry  
And smile at every number  
Through meditation I found definition  
Redefined my self-worth  
And now KNOW that I am so much more than a number on a paper  
From these chains I'm unbound  
Irrevocable freedom  
Eternal Joy  
I embrace this and so much more  
I am MORE than just a score and a number— I've found freedom  
Will you join me?

## Farewell My Heart

Aruna S. Khan

As sunflowers long for incessant sunlight  
And darkness yearns for sparkling starlight,  
I trek mountain tops to catch a glimpse of my knight  
Whose radiance exceeds this incandescent candlelight.

You traverse the contours of my mind each day  
From dawn to dusk you gallop in fine display.  
No rest in sight for you at night  
As you invest my dreams while I sleep tight.

We contrast as starkly as a plebeian and patrician  
Yet you captivate me like a magnetic magician.  
Though crossing paths was beautifully blissful  
I bid you adieu wailfully wistful.

■ **Aruna S. Khan** is a first year medical student and editor of HEAL. Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, Aruna migrated to South Florida in 2003. She graduated from Florida Atlantic University in 2008 with a BS in Biology. Aruna enjoys going to church, likes to run, and she loves writing poetry. About poetry, Aruna has this to say: "Poetry is what I turn to during the ups and downs in life; so for every significant and noteworthy event that has occurred during my time here on earth this far, there is a written piece of art inscribed around it."

## The Art of the Right Turn

Carol Warren

When Left is a peril,  
Slowing and snarling,  
Free flowing traffic  
Turns Right!

When horns are honking  
And drivers scream,  
Take the course that is safest—  
Turn Right!

When your troubles stack up  
like a mountain  
And your road has a hairpin turn,  
Slow it down, take a breath,  
and remember—  
Turn Right!

When the traffic ahead is daunting  
And your route has nowhere to go,  
If on your left hand life is confusing,  
Turn Right!



Stadium and Call  
Trung Tran

# Memories

Raquel Olavarrieta

I softly knocked on her door just to find her sound asleep. She looked so peaceful; her sheets covering her all the way to her neck, hiding the numerous IVs that were placed when she was rushed to the ER. Her teddy bear was next to her pillow, and her daughter was sitting by her side avidly reading Kathleen Negri's *Mom Are You There? Finding a Path to Peace through Alzheimer's*. To me it was Sunday all over again. I was sixteen and it was that day of the week when I got to visit my grandfather. There he was, sleeping comfortably on his stretcher, surrounded by IVs and unable to open his eyes for more than two seconds. Those remarkable two seconds when he might have been able to remember my name.

It was through her daughter that I got to know more about Mrs. J. My assignment was to assess the patient's mental status, perform a depression screening, complete a thorough medication review and report back to my psychiatry attending. I was unaware that my visit would become so much more meaningful than just determining my patient's Folstein Mini Mental score.

I learned that Mrs. J was not the luckiest child growing up. Coming back home from school was the most dreadful time of her day. As she walked in, she would immediately check on her mother to make sure she did not have new bruises, and then quickly hide from her father as she realized that the scotch bottle sitting on the night table was again empty. As soon as she turned 18, she found her escape in marriage and quickly enough became a mother herself; she swore her children would not have to see the things she saw. Mrs. J. had a family and she was amazed to realize that this could be the first time in her life she was happy.

However, she was unable to put behind her the ghosts of her traumatic childhood, so she made sure she remembered to take that pill her psychiatrist had prescribed. Some days she would take one too many, just to stop reliving such dreadful episodes, just to find solace in her dreams. She thought she had found the antidote to her bad memories, until one day she woke up to check her infant's cradle only to find him lying on his chest, lifeless. It was uncertain how she would be able to put her guilt in the past, but she knew she still needed to be a mother to the rest of her children, and she did the best she could. Even though she strongly relied on therapy, the death of her child was a chapter of her life she could not escape from.

Why is it that she is able to remember those episodes that hurt her so much, but she is unable to recognize those who care about her the most?

Now, 60 years later, she lives with her husband who, at 92 years of age, is still her pillar of strength. Only now she is unable to call him by his name. On occasion, she tries to hide from him and when he is close she begs him not to hurt her. She reminds him how good she has been this week and repeats, "Daddy not today, please not today." She does not understand why those two ladies dressed in white have to be at her house so often, and why they make her take those pills every day. She sometimes sits on the couch and wonders what these women are putting in her pills, and maybe next time they come close she will push them away. I am now able to understand why my grandfather would not let me give him his medications and kept referring to them as venom. To him, I was that lady who kept trying to poison him.

Later, during the evenings, Mrs. J. is visited by her daughter and for that time it seems as if she is a different person; almost completely healthy. They can sit and talk about the grandchildren and upcoming birthdays. She has always wanted to be the favorite grandmother. However, these lucid periods are short-lived and she soon returns to her childhood. Tears run down her cheeks and she is again under her bed, hiding because she knows Daddy is mad.

She cries inconsolably and repeats over and over again how badly she wants to go home—but she is home. On occasion, she is found holding her pillow very close to her chest saying, "Please breathe again, please take just one more breath." Isn't Alzheimer's disease supposed to cause memory impairment? Why is it that she is able to remember those episodes that hurt

her so much, but she is unable to recognize those who care about her the most?

I am back in Mrs. J's room talking to her daughter as she explains, in tears, how her mother's condition has slowly declined to the point where her lucid moments are almost completely extinct. She has become increasingly disoriented, weak, and aggressive toward her caretakers and family members. She spends most of her time sitting on her couch at home crying inconsolably; trying to escape from the memories of a cruel past, but unable to recover those that would give her hope for happiness. As I carefully listen to her story I realize that for me it is Sunday again, and even though grandpa has been gone for almost 12 years now, I am here in his room, visiting him one more time.

■ **Raquel Olavarrieta** is a fourth year medical student. She was born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela and has always enjoyed writing, although more so in Spanish than English. Raquel is excited about graduation and will pursue a career in pediatrics. She hopes to train and practice in Florida and to continue to contribute to HEAL in the future.



Character  
Marielys Figueroa-Sierra

## Eye've Seen the Dreamtime, The In-Between Time...

I dreamt of a shadow, grinning and free  
a mirror-dark shape, photo-negative me  
lips lean close to whisper soft and sweet  
"dreams come softly on light-filled shadow feet"

I dreamt I was flying in a watery sky  
rainbow fins fan a smiling moon  
she blinks salt-spray from sly silver eyes  
her piscine suitors blush a shy maroon

I dream that I reach out in invertebrate joy  
A shining horde of old and jellied souls  
frilled we are thrilled at our remembered touch  
long-lost siblings we are many and bold  
I see a sky so bright that the sun goes blind  
floating lovers gasp, wings and fingers entwined  
myriad bells measure endless time  
the blind sun weeps, molten gilt and brine

I dreamt of your siren-voice calling me  
my ear drum snaps in excess of ecstasy  
my snail-curved organs ring in mute elegy  
tattered aural lace, organic filigree

I dreamt of a dreamer who was dreaming of me  
a boat on someone's technicolor R.E.M. sea  
Land Ho Captain, the morning comes  
the sun thunders near on a trail of starlight crumbs

## A.N.K.A.R.A.T.

Once

I was an interstellar manta-ray,  
sailing trailing a rainbow slick  
of plasma  
and blue air  
and possibility  
wings as wide as a galaxy and skin as smooth as oil.

I've seen the dreamtime,  
the in-between time  
and I live in a tree that grows  
up  
and  
down  
at the same time,  
whose roots are pebbled with stars.

They used to call me Ankarat.

I see a brilliant golden grain  
drifting in the wide vacuum of space;  
as I draw near, its hazy glow  
resolves into the hard singularity  
of a walnut shell  
which unfurls like a leather flower.

A small  
sweet  
voice  
issues forth and  
whispers something in a language  
older than stars—

and more beautiful too.

But I am old,  
the moment gone  
like a mote in the eye  
of the universe.



*The Mind*  
**Zach Folzenlogen**

## I Didn't Know

Eileen Sperl-Hawkins

"I'm Dr. T. I will do your open heart surgery."

*My eyes blink in rapid spurts. My husband exhales with a force that echoes in my ears.*

"If I do it Thursday, I promise to have your three chest tubes out by Sunday."

*My teeth dig into my lips; my head pressure focuses in my frontal sinuses.*

"Let's hope the myxoma has not compromised your valve. If so, you should decide if you want a pig or cow..."

*I ask: "Open heart surgery? What's going to happen? How long will I be in the hospital?  
We have a wedding in L.A. in mid-November. What's a myxoma?"*

"Well...you discuss those questions with Dr. S, your cardiologist. He'll let me know your decision. The myxoma could break off at any time; you must have it removed as soon as possible."

[Dr. T pauses.]

"I'll see you again before I operate."

*My husband and I sit. He grabs my hand; he is squeezing it. I've no idea what is involved here.*

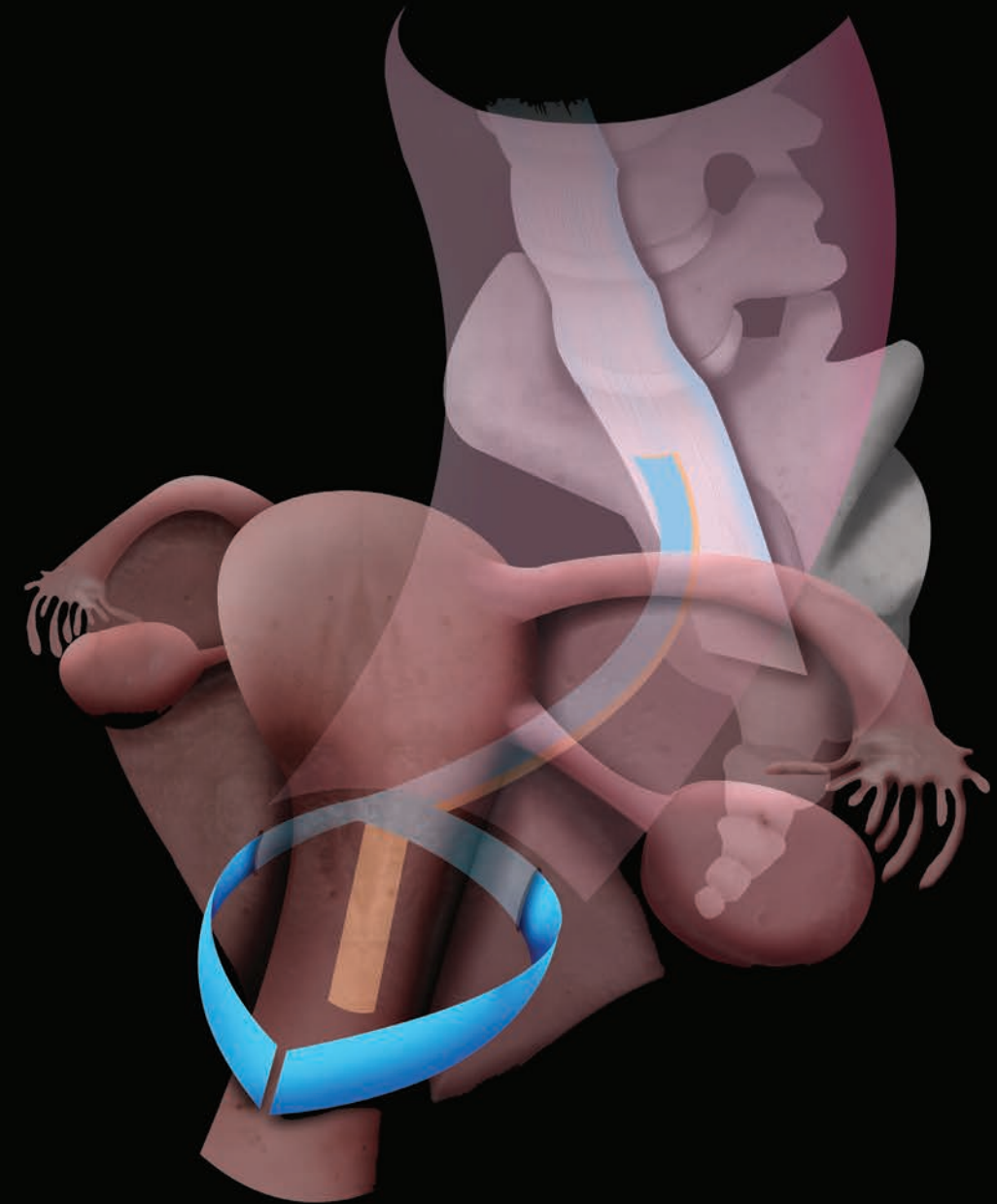
*I didn't know my rib cage would be sawed open and that it would be wired shut.*

*I didn't know my myxoma (the floating vegetation attached inside of my heart) would be scooped out and the hole in my heart stitched closed.*

*I didn't know the myxoma would be the largest one Dr. S had ever seen.*

*I also didn't know that usually doctors only see myxomas in pathology reports after the patient has died.*

■ "For more than seven years, I have chaired the Writers' Group at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Florida State University. Poetic expression shapes my descriptions of daily encounters. Before moving to Tallahassee I worked for New York City lawyers, and educators, and with teenagers in Pennsylvania. Prior to the discovery of the myxoma inside my heart, my health was good. I volunteered in the community, in OLLI and at church. So I was a bit tired; I was almost sixty-five. Now I have published two poetry books, am exploring memoir and can be Googled. Life is marvelous."  
—Eileen Sperl-Hawkins



Sacral Colpopexy  
Zach Folzenlogen



## The Limitations of Medicine

Shawn Shah

It was just another ordinary morning on the fourteenth floor of the Ginsberg Tower at Florida Hospital. Akin to every morning for the past few weeks, I printed out the list of patients, sifted through new laboratory data and scans from the previous day, and chatted with the nurse to learn if any overnight changes had occurred with our surgical patients. It had been nearly three weeks since my surgery rotation started, and I had already developed my own routine. Indeed, I had become adept at condensing an overnight history, performing a pertinent physical examination, answering a few questions, and writing a patient note in approximately ten minutes. I understood this was imperative to being efficient.

However, this morning would transpire to be unlike any that I had experienced.

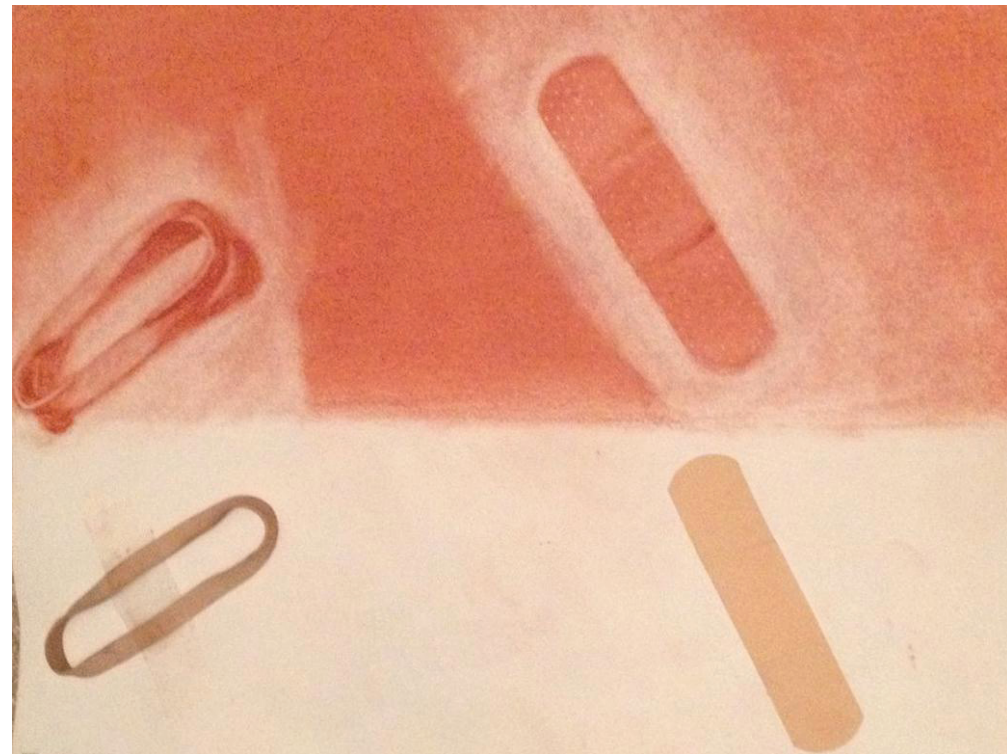
The first room I had visited was that of Mr. R's, who was on day one post-operative from an open cholecystectomy. As I walked into the room, I flicked on the lights, only to illuminate a gaunt elderly gentleman of seemingly Indian origin slumbering in the recliner. As I crept closer, I startled Mr. R as he quickly awoke, still groggy but with a warm smile. I introduced myself and told him that I was a third year

medical student who was working with the surgery team to check on him this morning. "Any trouble overnight, Mr. R?" His deep-set eyes pierced blankly back at mine. "Well, I imagine you are exhausted. Your nurse said that you did just fine last night. I am going to check your belly, and then I will have the attending come by later this morning." Mr. R continued to stare back at me, empty of any expression on his furrowed face. I proceeded with my examination and was pleased to find a well-healing incision site with no signs of dehiscence or infection. As I left the room, I waved goodbye, and Mr. R in response uttered, "Okay, doctor." Moving to the next room, I could not help but think about how peculiar my exchange was with Mr. R. Nevertheless, I continued to proceed with rounds in order to make it to the first surgery on time.

I had been so fixated on Mr. R's biological condition and getting the information that I needed that I neglected to care for Mr. R as a human being.

As I sat down to complete my last patient note, I watched Mr. R's nurse swiftly leave his room. She appeared rattled, and exclaimed, "He will not even stay still to let me do a finger stick!" While uncertain of what to do, I instinctively wanted to help. I vigilantly approached Mr. R and asked him if everything was okay. His face remained devoid of any emotion. I asked, "Mr. R, do you understand what is going on here?" He anxiously began to look around the room as though his eyes were

searching for words. I was baffled. However, just as I too began to frantically look around the room for words, Mr. R broke the silence with, "Indian?" I nodded. He then asked,



Rubber Band and Bandage

Katie Love

■ **Katie Love** is a third year medical student and former HEAL student editor. Katie is originally from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. She graduated from Emory University, majoring in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology and minoring in Art History. In medical school, she continues to enjoy art as well as running, reading, kayaking, and spending time with family and friends.

"Tame Gujarati bolo cho?" which translated to, "Do you speak Gujarati?" Stunned, I nodded yet again. Within seconds, tears began to trickle down the elderly man's cheeks as he bent forward to touch my feet, an act that Jains use to ask for blessings from those who are elderly or deities. I was dumbfounded. I had been so fixated on Mr. R's biological condition and getting the information that I needed that I neglected to care for Mr. R as a human being. And how was it overlooked that he did not speak or comprehend English? Did no one care as long as he was improving?

I explained to Mr. R in Gujarati his operation and prognosis. I explained to him that they needed to perform a finger stick to evaluate his glucose level because of his diabetes. Tears of relief continued to stream down his face.

That night, I could not wait to call my parents and tell them about my day. They too were in awe, but reminded me that patients are human, and like my family and closest friends, deserve my utmost deference and kindness.

The next morning, I immediately went to check on Mr. R. As I entered his room, I hung my white coat on the door and asked him how he was feeling. He responded with a resounding, "Bao saru," which means, "very good." I sat down beside Mr. R and just held his hand. He began to tell me how he worked as a farmer his entire life in Gujarat, India, and had recently moved in with his daughter after his



■ **Dimple Patel** is a second year medical student and HEAL editor. Dimple is a female student from Homosassa. She enjoys music, reading, and crafting atrociously magical items in her spare time.

I came to medical school to absorb as much scientific knowledge as I could, but failed to realize that the limitation of medicine is truly fulfilled by humanism and beneficence.

wife passed away from a heart attack. His daughter and son-in-law worked during the day so they were unable to manage his care until the evenings. However, during the day, he was all alone with different people coming into and out of his room, talking to him in a manner and language that was incomprehensible. This had become routine.

I was about to leave the room, when Mr. R told me that he was pleased to see me again as I had now become a part of his family. Taken aback, I was already in motion before I realized that I was touching his feet, asking for his blessing.

I came to medical school to absorb as much scientific knowledge as I could, but failed to realize that the limitation of medicine is truly fulfilled by humanism and beneficence. In fact, I once had an attending who told me that, "understanding the medicine will be the easy part of your journey." Mr. R showed me that warmth, compassion, and empathy are just as integral to patient care as scientific knowledge. Perhaps, it could be said that my white coat has come to exemplify the medical knowledge that I have accumulated over the past three years, but up until my encounter with Mr. R, it lacked the true art of medicine.

■ **Shawn Shah** is a fourth year student at the Florida State University College of Medicine. He intends to pursue a residency in Internal Medicine.

# Daddy's Little Girl

Jason A. Boothe

## Introduction

*Rape...the very mention of the word conjures up emotions you never thought you held. It is a concept relative to some but foreign to the vast majority. Rape...is defined as the unlawful compelling of a person through physical force or duress to have sexual intercourse, or simply any act of sexual intercourse forced upon another person without consent. Never has a definition been so inadequate. Can any definition truly encompass the range of emotional pain and physical damage inflicted upon victims of rape? Furthermore, how do we treat a victim of rape? Should they be treated like any other patient? Should he or she have a special sticker on their folder indicative of the fact that there is something different about this one? Whether you answer yes or no to any of these questions is a far less important issue. The identification of these victims is what is most important. But ask yourself, just who are the victims of rape?*

*Obviously, there is a physical victim. In addition, one would be hard pressed to find a person who would argue against considering the family of that physical victim as victims in their own right. But what about the rapist's family, or do rapists even have families? Do they have mothers, do they have fathers? Do they have spouses? Do they have children of their own? So often the families of rapists are villainized and ostracized instead of cared for as if they are victims as well.*

*"Daddy's Little Girl" presents a scenario considered by very few. The poem chronicles the emotional state of a teenage girl who lost her father, not to death but to a lifetime of imprisonment. Her father has been found guilty of multiple counts of rape and his victims were young girls the same age as his daughter. As you read, ask yourself how you would feel losing a parent, someone who has done nothing except love and care for you your entire life to a crime that society now blames you for.*

## Daddy's Little Girl

How could I be!  
How could I be  
the seed  
of a man  
who indirectly  
caused so much damage to me.  
He single-handedly changed my whole future,  
Replacing so much happiness with uncertainty,  
Maybe if I didn't grow up normally  
I could see how my life could end up being considered a tragedy,  
but white picket fences,  
a two story home in a wealthy community is my reality.

Fellow students seldom speak  
And it's the same sad story week after week  
Everyone knows, so I have no friends  
Instead just enemies  
The memories  
Of the things he did are like walls closing in  
And I can't even begin  
To imagine  
How those girls must feel  
Or how their family had to deal  
With their child's eternal, internal scars.

And it doesn't help that he is locked up behind bars,  
I'm his child and I want to see him  
Or rather I want him to see me.  
The prison is his safe place  
His captivity  
His home away from the lures of humanity  
I wonder if he were home  
Would he still put me to bed  
Kiss me on my forehead  
Or tell me he loves me over and over again  
Despite the things he did.

I haven't gone to see him yet  
Still unable to get past  
All the faces of the girls I met  
But I often wonder how it would be to visit him in that cell  
His prison, my hell.  
So many questions left unanswered  
Did he think about me  
when he was with them  
See my eyes  
My smile, the dimples he once called cute  
Did he see their innocence and desire to take that away?  
Tell me, what made him act that way?

Maybe it was me  
Maybe he didn't want anyone else to be as special as me.  
He wanted me to be the only one.  
That's not so bad, right?  
Please tell me I'm not wrong.  
Stop saying those things.  
He's not an animal  
And he has a heart  
He just didn't think the crimes he committed  
Would tear us apart.

So forgive me if I sound selfish  
Or maybe a little confused  
I'm just another father-less kid  
Wishing my daddy never did the things that he did.

Yellow Pollen  
Ryan Humphries



Adam and Eve  
 José E Rodríguez, MD

## Trayvon

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr.

Is it a shame or outrage to share a state  
 With this thug bully hiding, telling lies to our face?  
 You've got a nation shaped up in your fate,  
 While you had the balls to claim that you kept a neighborhood safe.  
 Your pathetic rage against a race was motivated by hate  
 And we can see you tellin' lies on the video tape.  
 We heard your self-defense claims, but no mark was on your face,  
 Or your head or your neck, there were no grass stains on your chest.  
 And you left a kid you were told not to follow for dead.  
 And they never tested, never questioned all the evidence left.  
 Never arrested, though Trayvon's mom prayed and wept,  
 Askin' god please tell me what became of my son,  
 Askin' us why justice only coming for some.

A System of Savages.

When I penetrate the paper with pen ink, I'm stressing.  
 I reverberate in sync with the message that I represent  
 Like an image is an echo of the vestige of the essence of the phantom abstraction  
 of the metaphor's presence.  
 Meaning that meaning is an imprint I invent.  
 Meaning I imprinted in a page and twist the image like kick flips.  
 My mental is monumentally demented,  
 Piercing the core as a bore into the visions I live with.  
 Soulful wise your eyes blind like sulfur fire to the unjust—  
 Every hooded son slain means we're coming undone.  
 And if that's right, then I'm sorry that I'm wrong to think it's not right  
 To sacrifice a life and keep the law that lead the sacrifice.  
 I never acted right. I lost my voice and lost the act to write.  
 I gave up this rap whether from envy or a lack of spite  
 But science is a truth for even lost eyes to see,  
 And I'm asking, why are the lost feeling the loss more than the care free?  
 Pain and oppression and scars make poor lessons.  
 Turn to repression fueling the direction of aggression  
 But even a blind eye with fish scale hate can see  
 We've lost society when our losses become statistics.  
 This is vivid non-fiction:  
 Cops walkin' with killers of children,  
 Trying to justify a law that justifies the killing.

■ **Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr.** is a student at the Florida State University College of Law.



Flower Pollen  
 Ryan Humphries

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