

# HEAL and \$4.00 Gasoline

Carol Faith Warren

**T**he year was 2008. The sign at the gas station said \$4.16. Twenty-five miles to work, and twenty-five miles back, was distressing my budget. The only solution was to walk, ride a horse, or carpool. I'm afraid of horses and Lord knows if I had to walk I would only get to work once a month. Carpooling seemed to be the best solution.

Presently, I am the designated driver and have three regular riders. There are a few fingerprints in the upholstery where they cling to the seats but, all in all, we are a happy group. Granted, gas prices have fluctuated widely since then but the carpool remains. We believe in living green. Environmentalists talk about a carbon footprint and we're size 5 ½. Remember the sigh of relief you gave when prices fell below the two dollar mark? Now we are pleased if we can find gas for \$3.59. Next time you drive to work in your big car, all alone, think of me.

Spending forty-five minutes every morning and every afternoon, confined in my small Hyundai Accent with three other people, creates interesting new friendships. It creates a very intimate atmosphere for conversation. Still sleepy and fuzzy headed in the morning, and yearning to decompress in the afternoon, we tend to reveal more about ourselves than we might in other situations. We talk about our jobs, our children, what "Zulu time" really means, and where the term "blue Monday" originated. We talk about stars in the sky and the ones on TV. We try to stay away from politics and religion, never safe subjects for mixed company. I would hate to make someone walk just because they voted wrong. Our conversations range from the ridiculous to the sublime.

I have been a circulation associate in the Maguire Medical Library at the Florida State University College of Medicine since 2002. I love working with the incredible medical faculty, staff and students. In 2009 I saw a copy of *HEAL* magazine, a literary publication of stories, poetry, and art created by the students, faculty, and staff of the College of Medicine. I was an English Lit major and love writing, but am often shy about sharing my work with others. As writing is such an intimate thing I wondered if anyone else would want to read my scribbles. However, overcoming my fear, I submitted a poem called "Faith" early in 2010.

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Dr. José Rodríguez, the editor of *HEAL*, really seemed to like what I wrote (I won't say anything about his taste) and included my submission in the spring 2010 newsletter. I can't begin to tell you how pleased it made me to see my words in print. So, of course, I wrote more! The compliments and encouragement I received helped me realize that I too have a voice. I continued to submit my works as the muse struck. It seems to me she/he bops me over the head with words from time to time in a totally random manner. But when she does he must be answered (excuse the confusion of gender; she/he really does not like being called IT. No-one messes with Mother/Father Muse!).

I have several pieces of poetry and prose in the 2010 print issue of *HEAL*. After getting over my initial shyness about sharing my work, I have become very proud of what I write. (Dr. R, you have created a monster.) When I received my copies (yes, I get several to share), I shared them with my car mates on the way home. Plato Smith, one of my carpoolers, is the head of the Digital Library Center at Strozier Library. He picked up the 2010 issue lying on the back seat and began to peruse the stories and poems. I, of course, was more than happy to tell him all about it and point out my own pieces. His first thought was that it should be added to Florida State's digital collection. He explained that his department was looking for material, published within the university, to add to the digital collection. The collection would then be indexed and accessible on the internet. I told him I thought Dr. Rodríguez would be thrilled and gave him his contact information. They have since met on several occasions with Barbara Shearer, the Maguire Medical Library Director, and Roxann Williams, the Maguire Medical Library Special Projects Librarian, to facilitate moving the *HEAL* collection into the FSU Digital Archives. Two issues of *HEAL* and all of the *HEAL* newsletters are now a part of the FSU digital collection and available on the World Wide Web. Woo! Hoo! I can now Google ME! The world can hear my voice.

And it all started with \$4.00 gasoline.

■ **Carol Faith Warren** worked in FSU's Maguire Medical Library for over ten years. She retired in 2013.