

Lisa Jernigan, MD

55 words

The gastroenterologist, the cardiologist, and the neurologist all told her to ask me to explain their tests to her. I know they tried, but left frustrated. So I begin, slowly, asking questions to see what she understands. She gets it, and is suddenly confused, and then afraid. This will take way more than fifty-five words.

Coochie

“my Mama’s coochie is hurting her” says the three-year-old child. Mom sees my brows come together as I look at her. “She’s just sayin’ what she’s hearin’” she says in defense of my glare. Yes, she is, and that is the whole ugly problem as another cute little girl grows up too soon.

Doorknob

“One more thing,” she blurts out, my hand on the doorknob, the minor allergy problem addressed. The words burst from her mouth, as if ejected against her will. Closing the door, she is crying and scared looking. Now the real reason she came in is going to come out. “Doctor, I found a breast lump”....

Hot Dog

“Doesn’t that look just like a hot dog with ketchup and mustard?” The image on the screen is a cervix, bleeding post biopsy, with Monsel’s paste dripping downward. The patient, bravely tolerant with the speculum and time of procedure, grimaces. I glare. Another learner discovers that comparing anatomy to food is never a good idea.

■ **Dr. Jernigan** has been on the faculty of the TMH Family Medicine Residency Program for almost 20 years. Her patients are often the inspiration for her writing, as she reflects on the meaning to be found in their situations and interactions with the world of medicine. Beyond writing, she enjoys the creative process of cooking, and performing music with her husband Doug, who encourages her to sing, and recently, to play stand-up bass.



Letters Abroad

Karen Kawar

■ **Karen Kawar** is a Program Associate at the FSU College of Medicine. She enjoys traveling, writing and photography.



Healing Hands

Jesse O'Shea