



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

HEAL

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

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THE PLIGHT OF THE WORKER BEE

Simon J. Lopez, Class of 2018

GO NORTH

Simon J. Lopez, Class of 2018

“I just want to go North.” That’s all he said, at first, in response to the preformed prompt I was told, nay instructed, to ask: “Please tell me what you think I should know about your situation.” Naturally, his response was anything but preformed. My silence would encourage him to speak more, but in those short words I already understood where his story was coming from. After all, this was Immokalee, no longer just a random sign on Alligator Alley (that’s

Interstate 75 for the less initiated), but the beat-up textbook definition of a migrant town.

It’s interesting to think how we were once a nation that believed we were destined to expand throughout the continent. “Go West, young man,” was the rallying cry accredited to American author Horace Greenley in regards to Manifest Destiny: the notion that America’s mission was that of redemption and to make

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HEAL is a place for medical students
to share their growth and development,
for faculty and staff to impart their
knowledge gained from experience, and
for members of the community to express
how health and healing have impacted
their lives.

We hope this work increases your
appreciation for the art of medicine.

3RD ANNUAL HEAL COVER ART CONTEST!

See page 11 for entry details.

the West in the image of the agrarian way of life so that people had an opportunity to succeed. Fast forward a century—give or take a few decades—and you'll find that the high hopes once held on the shoulders of our forefathers have been replaced by crusty, tomato-filled buckets held on the shoulders of a tired, abused, and underserved workforce.

The plight of the Immokalee migrant worker is a somber one. While numerous documentaries and protests have done their best to make the often unheard voices of Immokalee known, to have one of those voices speak directly to me was more impactful than anything I had experienced prior. He was already working full-time at the age of 15, despite suffering from chronic asthma. I saw not a young boy in front of me, but a young man; albeit with some moderate foot pain. A forklift spared crushing this young man's foot, but still left it a 4/10 on the pain scale. However, it crushed his dreams to go northward towards more farms and work to support his mother and siblings. His lungs, sounding bilaterally clear from fancy pronounced medical words like budesonide and albuterol sulfate, created a unitary voice that worried how he would continue to provide for his family.

More often than not, my interactions in pediatrics during my Summer Clinical Practicum course in Immokalee were directed to patient's parents and their responses. "My daughter has a R-A-S-H," and, "My son needs his S-H-O-T-S," were the common alphabet soups of the day that I feasted on most of the time. Yet finally I was able to meet a patient that held, and spoke, his own. I met a young man who was holding down a job so he could hold up his family and replace the plastic bins of tomatoes that normally rested on his shoulders with higher hopes that once manifested the American dream. This was something I wouldn't have discovered had I not asked about his situation, but instead focused solely on his condition (like so many eager medical students checking a mental list tend to do). No tears

were shed as we both sat as men trying their best to be men, each toiling away in our respective fields. With silent nods filling our stomachs more than any alphabet soup could have. I learned not of his problems, but of his story. I couldn't fix his flattened dreams any more than I could've fixed his flattened foot, but I could see his chest well-up with pride as I asked him of his life and how he faced the obstacles that came across his path. We parted ways with a handshake after the doctor came in to examine his foot, his nailbeds dirtied with the type of hard work glorified by Steinbeck. His wrath, and fears, subdued from conversation.

It would be remiss of me to say I didn't find the research I did on Greenely's quote to be a bit more meaningful after hearing my patient's story. When you attend a medical school that prides itself on responding to the needs of the elder, rural, minority, and underserved populations, coincidences tend to fall by the wayside. I'll allow Iowa Congressman Josiah Bushnell Grinnell to elaborate on that quote, as he did in his own autobiography when discussing a conversation he had with Greenely:

"Go West, young man, go West.
There is health in the country,
and room away from our crowds
of idlers and imbeciles." "That," I
said, "is very frank advice, but it is
medicine easier given than taken.
It is a wide country, but I do not
know just where to go."

I can only imagine my patient asking me where to go, where he could possibly find a way to provide a better life for his family. Where he could find work and health in a country that has seemingly forgotten him. I wish I could've given him the advice he deserved, frank as it could of been: "Go North, young man," I'd tell him, "go North."

THANK YOU

Keila Rose Lopez, Class of 2019

In the midst of anatomy I reflected on
Strategies and stress
Arteries and tests
Endless nights of studying
Long days of learning
Praying, yearning, saying
I can't wait
Until I'm done
Until this battle is won
Until I close this chapter of my life where I don't feel so
Lost
Where I don't feel that achieving is coming at too high of a cost.
Where my mind is not a jumble of arteries
The artistry of nerves
Words on pages I've never seen before
Hurdles and challenges just to, get that score
And be done

But I missed something
Let's go back to the beginning
Back to the start
In between the cranial nerves I lost the, heart.
I missed that part, of you.
And here is what I do, have to say
Thank you
For your love.
For being that Godsend of learning from above.
For teaching me those lessons you can't learn on a page.
For opening my mind, spirit, and soul into a new age.
Thank you
For teaching me to cherish every breath
To give all I have in this life until there is nothing left.
To my patients, my peers, and my community
Thank you for giving a gift of love that created unity.

Thank you for teaching me humility
That my abilities should not overshadow His majesty.
For the epiphany that the uniqueness of my patient
Should never be diagnosed as simplicity.



FIGURES

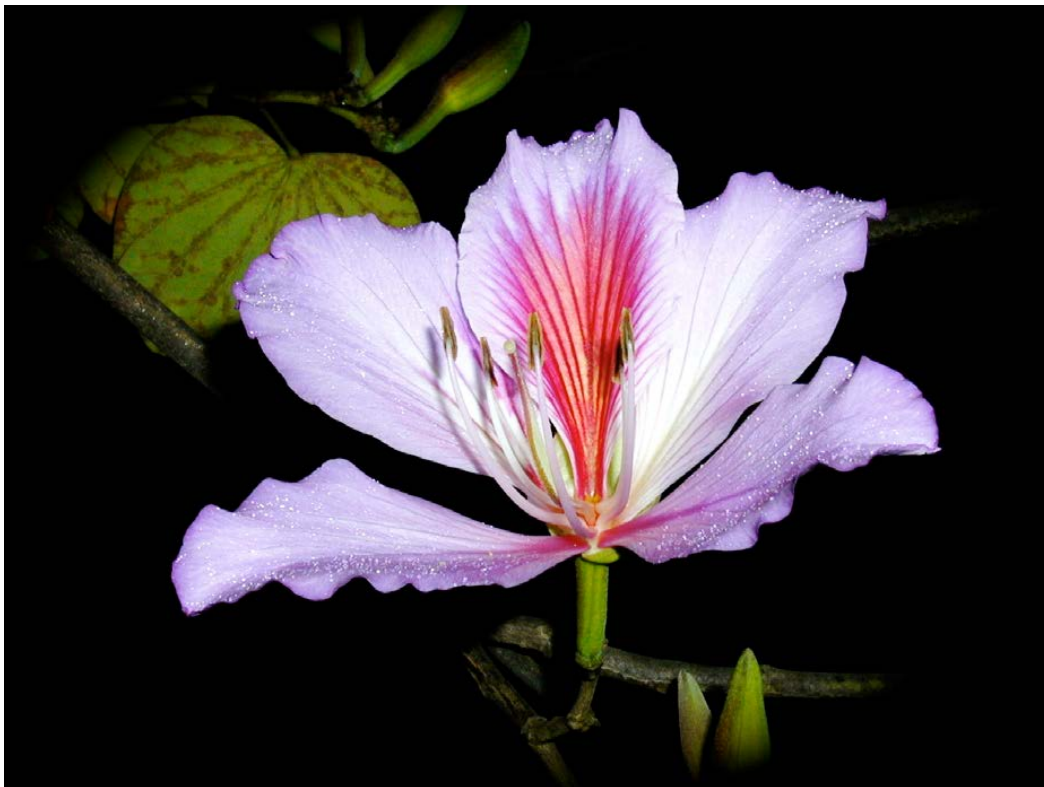
Juno Lee, Class of 2018

Thank you
To the families
For teaching me that the body is temporary
But love and the soul is what carries an eternal legacy.

Thank you
To my teachers and my mentors
For showing me that empathy is an action and not a verb.
That medicine is a science but compassion is the cure.

And to my first patient,
You have changed us as medical students
And as the physicians we will become
Your gift of love will live in us
So your presence will never be gone.
Thank you

Thank you
To the families
For teaching me that
the body is temporary
But love and the soul
is what carries an eternal legacy.



VIETNAM ORCHID

Daniel Van Durme, MD
Chair, Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health



BOYS

Wendi Cannon, Department of
Information Technology



WILLIAM GETS A CHECK-UP (FILIPINA, PANAMA)
Adam M. Field, Class of 2016

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

Amy-Joy Thompson, Class of 2016

Author's Note: This first-person account is written in the voice of a patient who left a great impact on me. We talked for 3 hours about his incredible life living with an extremely rare and (up until recently) very misunderstood condition. I felt honored to speak with such a vibrant and perseverant person. I hope that you will learn from and enjoy his story as much as I did.

"Most things break, including hearts.
The lessons of life amount not to wisdom—
but to scar tissue and callus."
-Wallace Stegner, *The Spectator Bird*

I tried to deny that I was all that different, but the playground kids would always manage to remind me—painfully—otherwise.

Granted, I'll never claim to be bright. I loved playing King of the Mountain when it probably would have been wiser to hang back with the group of "nice girls" who pitied me, girls who would invite me to study with them in the library after school. Instead, I would brush them off and follow the other boys into the patch of woods behind the school. The rules were simple: climb onto the log, grab someone around the waist, hurl them to the ground, and repeat. That one day, I swear I was Captain America, my favorite superhero—I sent every kid soaring and scrabbling face-first into the rotting leaves. I lifted up my spindly arms and roared.

I didn't see Benjamin, ever the sore loser, grab me by the ankles from behind. My feet went tumbling and my torso snapped sickeningly against the log. I crumpled to the ground on my back, and to prove the twisted point, he punched me in the chest, hard. I heard a revolting crunch and felt a wave of excruciating pain that made me convulse against the ground. "Oh, did I make the little King crack? Looks like Humpty Dumpty fell off his wall..."

I thought about correcting him ("It's Humpty Dumpty, idiot!"), but then reflecting on my misshapen body, and my dumpy hand-me-downs, the variation was probably intentional—and it stuck. When I came-to sometime later, it was dark and I was alone.

I first heard the term "Osteogenesis Imperfecta" in the movie *Unbreakable*. I shoved it into my sister's hands and said watch this. My entire body shook as everything finally made sense and came crashing down upon me. Our curse at least had a name.

My youngest brother has it, too. My mother wailed that it was her fault as the doctor ran out of the hospital room with a small cocoon of bloody sheets in his arms. I was sitting on the cold floor in the hallway, and snuck a peek through the door to see my mother sobbing. My father nursed his own hand after my mother had presumably cracked his hand during the delivery.

When I finally met my brother, he was a bundle of bandages, weird angles, and a web of skinfolds, encased in two diaper casts. The doctors reported that he had been born with 42 breaks below the knee. I shifted my own bandages uncomfortably, shaking my head pityingly at my family's sore luck and sighed.

**

I was the least cool kid in class somewhere on par with parasites and the plague. As Dad was more generous with the strap than with wholesome, fatherly wisdom, and Mother was too busy tending to my brother's latest fractures to notice my existence, I searched for other ways to keep myself sane. I tried football. During the first practice, a kid gave me one generous shove and cracked my collarbone. I tried working at a swap shop in 4th grade, and slipped on a puddle, splintering a vertebra. The store owner glared at me writhing about on the floor and snapped, "Hurry up and clean this before a customer slips!" A customer finally took pity on me and called an ambulance, and I was promptly dismissed from the establishment.

As it seemed wise to spend the rest of my childhood trying to be invisible and stationary, I resorted to the safety of my three-hundred comic books—especially Captain America. My sisters, Pea Pod (my flying squirrel), and my uncle have also kept me on my feet. My uncle gave me my greatest escape: the water. Every Saturday I'd wake up at the crack of dawn with a 5-gallon bucket, tennis shoes, a pair of cut-off shorts, and a sack. He took me water skiing. I've never felt so unbreakable! I wound up shaving off one of my skis to a point and I dubbed it my Uniski, for

My entire body shook as everything finally made sense and came crashing down upon me. Our curse at least had a name.

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN (CONTINUED)

even if one leg was aching, I could balance on the other. Then at the end of skiing, I'd push my brother along the pier as he drug the dip net beside his wheelchair catching crab for our Sunday night boil. I owe my uncle the best years of my life.

The rest of those days—they belong to my wife.

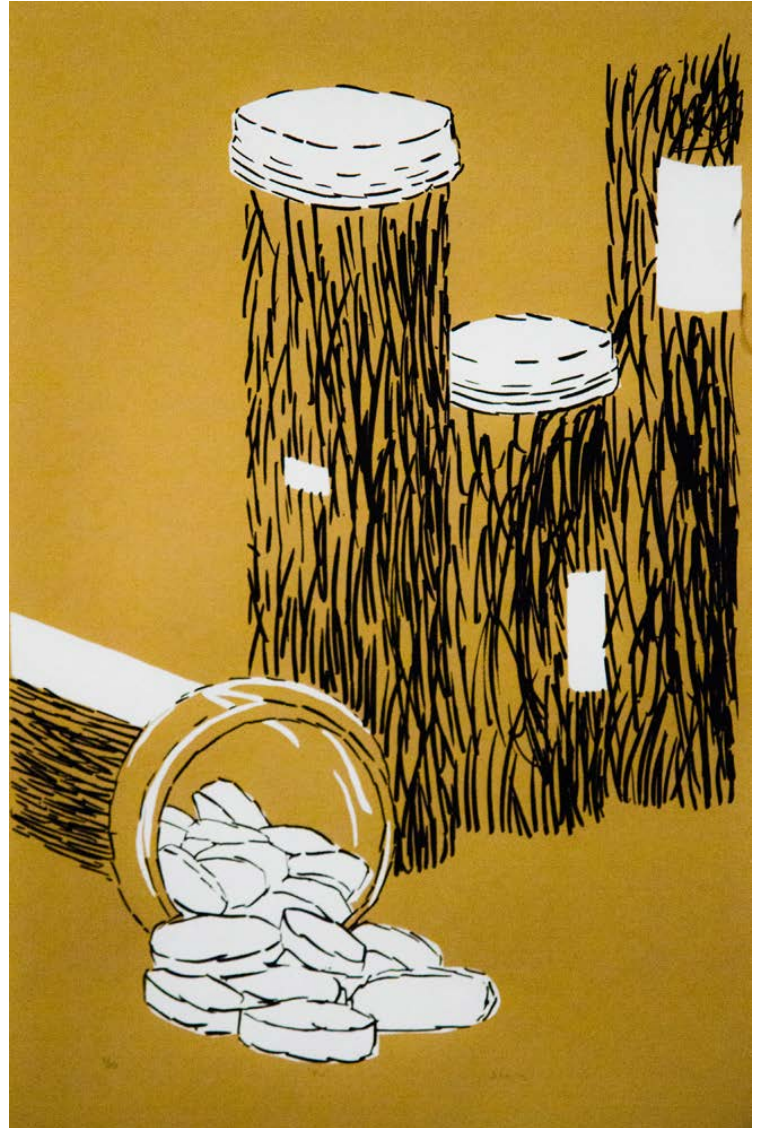
The first marriage was also a casualty of disease. It snapped from the strain, and neither of us had the means to splint it or the patience to let it heal.

My second marriage though...they don't make them like Joyce anymore. She was the most beautiful woman, and it's more painful than any fracture to think of her now. While she lay in Hospice, she made friends with every nurse she met. I stayed by her side almost every moment, but when I couldn't take it anymore, I left and returned with a bright yellow and red tattoo over my left chest—a picture of Betty Boop, her favorite character, with "Joyce" in a curled banner beneath it. I unbuttoned my shirt that was tight around my barrel-shaped chest, and revealed the tattoo.

She lay there, speechless. As a Catholic, she never did believe in tattoos, and I wondered if I had insulted her—but later, she asked one of the nurses if she could have one too. It just so happened that the nurse's husband was a tattoo artist. He gave her one that mirrored my own, with "Butch" (my nickname) on the banner.

Two days later, she passed in my arms. I would have taken a thousand fractures over losing my best friend.

My sister and cousin kept me going emotionally while the doctors kept me going physically. I've had more vertebroplasties than I can remember. At one point, a doctor did an x-ray to scope out my rotator cuff and said, "We have a problem." They saw a lung mass, which for a brief moment, I saw as so ironic that I burst into a fit of laughter in the office and the doctor thought I was crazy. But alas, that too was related to the disease—somehow some bone cement had gotten lodged in my lung and is floating around in there somewhere. I have 4 pins in my arm that won't hold, and my knees are made of more bionic material than bone. So much of me is metal that I might as well be considered a walking



RX RISEN

Juno Lee, Class of 2018

superhero with a metallic skeleton for a suit.

Despite the fact that I am on a first-name basis with most of the orthopedists in this city, I still feel like a foreigner in the emergency room. The last time I was there, I had broken another bone in my back. The convulsions this time just would not let up. I keep a small canister of Percocets that I break in half and store on my belt to try and last me the month, but they didn't even begin touch the pain. The medical students in the ER rolled their eyes when I declared my pain level, and denied the existence of my condition. Oh, I know the damn ER isn't

So much of me is metal that I might as well be considered a walking superhero with a metallic skeleton for a suit.

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN (CONTINUED)

connected to the hospital system, but all they had to do was ask for the records and they would know that I'm not one of the pain junkie pill mill vampires that has made the rest of our lives' miserable. Just when the convulsions started to die down, a tech tried to move me—and I swear I wanted to wring his neck. The pain flared up all over again, and they again rolled their eyes when I screamed.

It makes you hate people, you know. It really does. These are the same people that, standing outside of my brother's deathbed in the hospital said, "Hey, did you see that guy? He looks like big Buddha." I looked away and stood up, walking away from my broken brother with his barrel chest and with fire in my eyes said, "That Buddha is my brother." They simply walked away.

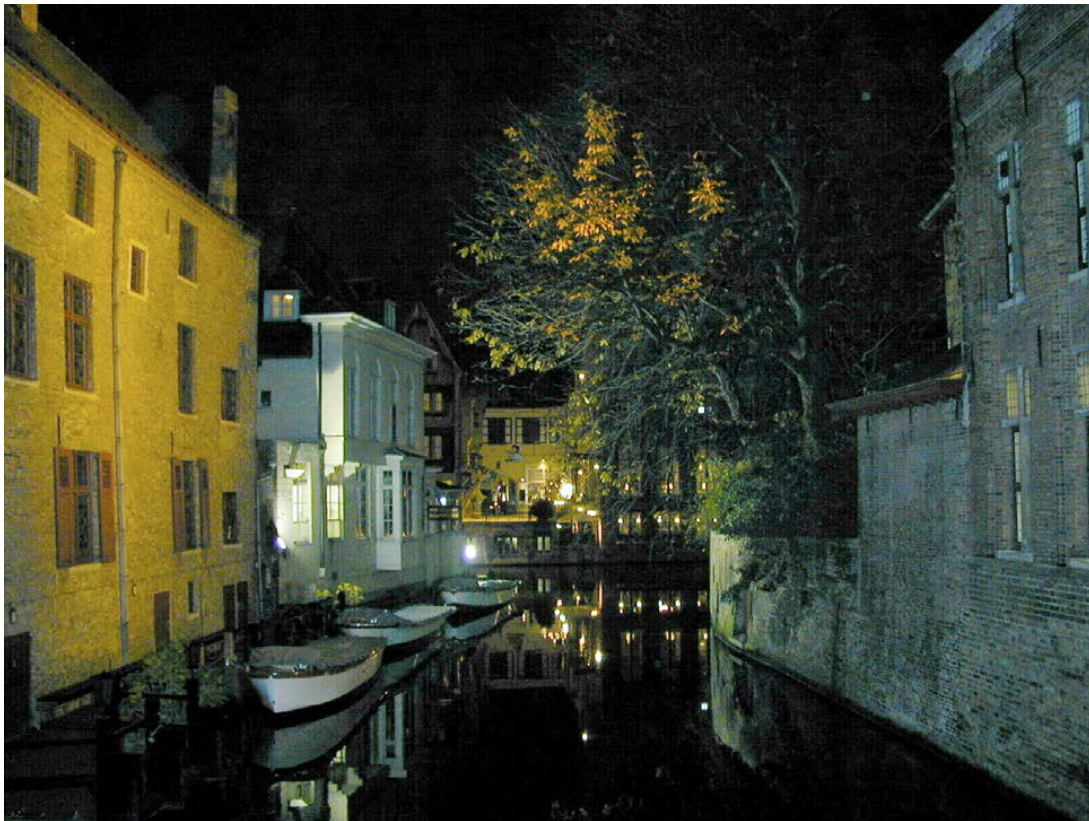
This is Superman's kryptonite. I try to make the best of it—I used to build and fix fiberglass boats before my disability

wouldn't let me anymore, but I was damn well good at it—and I still go fishing and hunting, and I swear buck fever is real and is better than any medicine—but sometimes you want to give up. I wish I hadn't had this disease. The ridicule leaves you scarred.

But I'm still trying. I thank God for my daughter every day. I didn't want any children, but I am so glad that we had her—every time she hit a cabinet or fell to the ground, I scooped her up to check that she was okay. Every cry or whimper had me running in the night to check. I never got any sleep as a parent. But thank God—she is fine. She has three boys now, and they are all fine.

Maybe the generational curse has come to a close. Maybe my superhero power as Butch was to put an end to this cycle.

I guess that makes me the King of the Mountain—I'm the last one still standing.



BELGIAN CANAL AT NIGHT

Daniel Van Durme, MD

Chair, Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health

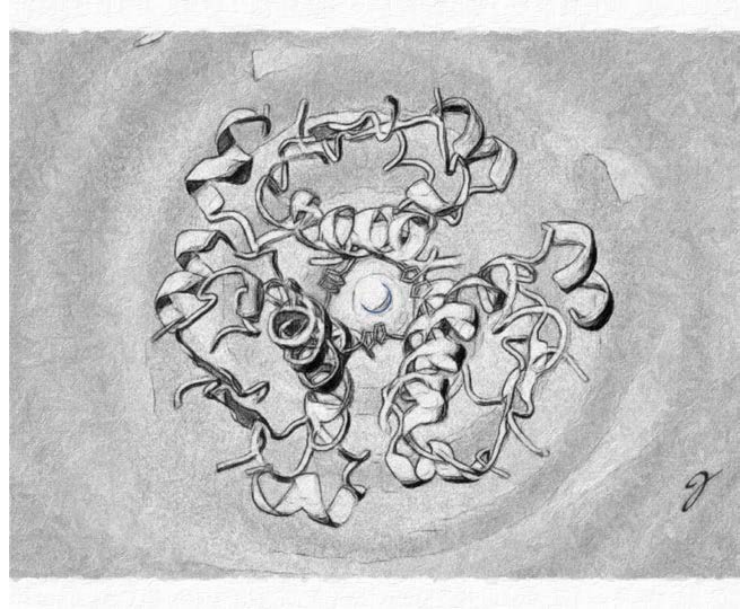
“DOCTORA”: MY EXPERIENCE IN ECUADOR

Julia R. Teytelbaum, Class of 2018

A stray dog barking. Children’s laughter in the streets. Cars honking as if they were talking to each other. The clinging of silverware. The shuffling of feet. This is a short list of the myriad sounds echoing through my memories of Ecuador. However, what I saw in this country cannot be described, replayed or reenacted with mere words. I have to be selfish for a moment and tell you why I decided to go on this trip. I didn’t want medicine; I wanted the culture of medicine. I wanted to know where and how people lived. What was important to them? What do they value? I witnessed my first delivery and bull-fight! I was taught how to dance Bachata and drink Canelazo like a local, but these encounters are just a taste of what I was given the privilege of experiencing. Despite knocking off numerous items on my bucket list, I want to share a story with you. It is an adventure that made me realize two things that seem so simple, but are often overlooked: positivity and teamwork. You may laugh, and think to yourself, “This medical student was in Ecuador taking care of patients for almost 2 weeks, and this is what she got out of it?” Yes, it absolutely is, and I could not be happier with my free souvenirs.

We spent the first couple days in Quito, where Dr. Rodríguez’s family graciously opened their home to two medical students and an additional family of five (bathroom time was oh, so precious). Over breakfast one morning we discussed our next move—the festival. Our trip, Dr. Rodríguez explained to me, coincided with the Alausí festivals—a weekend of bull running, bull fighting, fireworks, and singing and dancing. Alausí held a special place in the Rodríguez family’s heart, and I couldn’t wait to see patients and experience the festivities.

Our first stop was Simbambe, a small town in the Chimborazo province of Ecuador. I cannot speak of Simbambe without mentioning our one and only house call. A woman was concerned about her son, but he was too fragile to make the trip to our clinic. I opened the door and had to move cotton sheets out of my way. There was no electricity, and the house was very dark and dusty inside. Suddenly, I was being gazed upon by three pairs of precious eyes. “Lo siento...I’m sorry,” the mother said as she whisked her other children away from the room. As we turned the corner, we met her 16 year-old son. He was lying down, rolled up in numerous blankets, and very still. His eyes were closed, but his mouth was slightly open; drool ran from the side of his mouth. His mother wiped it away and stroked his jet black hair. Celia, a Spanish medical student, translated for us. She was sad, lonely, and worried about her son. He didn’t eat. His father was hardly home. She was worried about her other children. She had no friends. I heard the words “hydrocephalus” and “brain damage.”



INSULIN: THE MIRACLE MOLECULE

Jesse O'Shea, Class of 2016

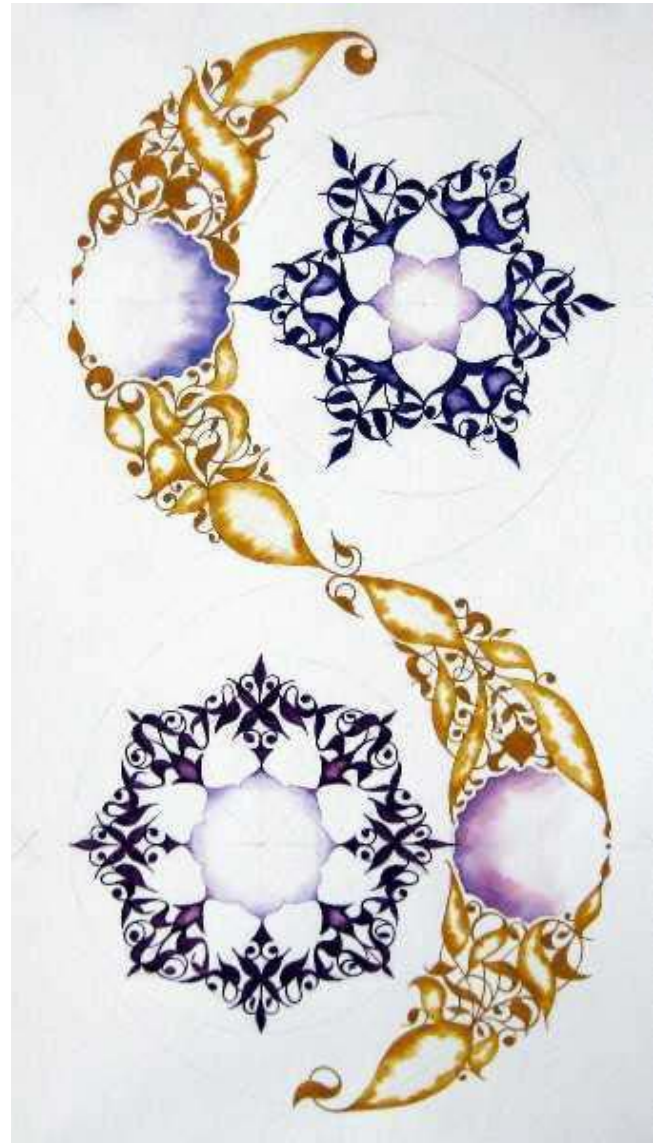
It is an adventure that
made me realize two things
that seem so simple,
but are often overlooked:
positivity and teamwork.

DOCTORA (CONTINUED)

Even as a first year medical student, I knew this woman did not have an easy road ahead. We tried to explain to her that his health was in God's hands, and that the most important thing she could do for him was to make him comfortable. As I held back tears, there was a small voice behind me; her oldest daughter was offering us two large plates of corn and cheese. I thanked her but couldn't hold back my tears anymore. Here we were, three complete strangers in this brave woman's home, and after explaining to her that her son won't likely live to see his next birthday, they were offering us food. My emotions took over as I saw handmade cards and colored paper in the shape of hearts hanging over his bed. I could see that this boy was loved. He was not seen as a burden and his siblings didn't resent him. There was no battle for attention. All there was in that household was love and understanding. "You must stay positive and strong for your three beautiful, healthy children," we explained to her. I could see how much her heart was breaking for her sickly son, but she knew how much her other children needed her. She thanked us all, and we said our goodbyes. In broken Spanish I tried to tell her that I would never forget her and her family.

Each member of our team offered this woman something, and not just something to make her feel better, or temporarily alleviate her pain. Dr. Moore, a plastic surgeon with years and years of experience and a special interest in children, explained to her what other doctors could not. Virginia, Dr. Rodríguez's niece, prayed with her and stayed with her for a few hours after our visit to talk and let her know she had a friend. I hugged her and helped her put her son back into bed after examining him. I covered his cold, thin toes with a warm blanket. I told her eldest daughter how proud her mother is, and that she is her biggest helper. Dr. Rodríguez came and took a look at his medical papers, and discussed resources that could help her situation. We all consoled her and thanked her for letting us into her home, into such an intimate part of her life.

As physicians we want to solve problems and find cures. But in a place like Simbambe, where resources and clinicians are so limited, you have to do your best with what you have. You have to stay positive regardless of how helpless or lost you may feel. You have to work together to help others. I cannot tell you how many times a woman or man walked up to me, held my hands in theirs, and said "Gracias, Doctora." Gratitude is what makes me want to return to Ecuador. Gratitude is universal. No matter what language you speak, people know when you are trying to help. And for some people, your help is all they have.



CRESCENT

Karl David Lorenzen

Gratitude is what
makes me want to
return to Ecuador.
Gratitude is universal.

3RD ANNUAL HEAL COVER ART CONTEST

Runs until November 20th, 2015

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For submission guidelines and to enter, visit <http://journals.fcla.edu/heal/announcement>



*Last year's
winning cover
design on
HEAL Vol 6.
Artwork by
Danielle
Guinan, Class
of 2017*

DESERT CAT

Stephanie Tran, Class of 2018

