

Heal

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature



ALEXANDRA LAW



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COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

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Heal

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

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On the cover

Tree Reflection

Alexandra Law

■ **Alexandra Law** is a first year medical student
at Florida State University.

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Letter from the Editor

Who would have thought back in 2008—when *HEAL: Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature* was nothing more than a collection of writing and art that I carried around in a binder—that 2014 would bring us the 5th Anniversary Edition of *HEAL*! This 5th volume contains over 100 pieces of visual art, poetry, and prose. We tried a few new things this year as well: We held a cover art contest, which brought in photos and artwork from community members, students, and faculty alike. It was very difficult to choose the winner, but we congratulate Alexandra Law for her work “Tree Reflection” which was selected for the front cover, and Kevin Yan, for his piece “My Summer” which is featured on the back cover. You will see the other submissions artfully displayed throughout this volume.

We also invited our readers to celebrate our 5th anniversary by contributing 55-word stories—a kind of micro-vignette that uses few words to convey powerful experiences. We received 55-word stories from many “teachers of medicine,” giving Volume 5 the highest participation from faculty in *HEAL*’s history. In another milestone set by Volume 5, more than one-third of the published submissions came from contributors who are not currently faculty, staff, or students at the Florida State University College of Medicine. This signals *HEAL*’s emergence into the outside world. So even though we are only 5, this is our “coming out” party, our “debut.” We hope you’ll celebrate with us as you read and enjoy this landmark edition of *HEAL*.

José Rodríguez, MD
HEAL Editor-in-Chief

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HEAL and \$4.00 Gasoline

Carol Faith Warren

The 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.

**I can't begin to tell you how
pleased it made me to see my
words in print. So, of course, I
wrote more!**

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.



Melrose Collage

Gayle Anne Bone

■ **Gayle Anne Bone** teaches private art classes and Art for Educators at Saint Leo University in Gainesville, Florida. She lives on beautiful Lake Santa Fe in Melrose, Florida with her husband Terry Bone.



A View from the FSU College of Medicine
Trung Tran

■ *Trung Tran* is a fourth year medical student at
Florida State University.

Forever Blind

Luke Stowers

With worry and fear, I met you that day
Holding in tears as I saw how you lay
I knew we'd get to know each other
But I also knew you were someone's mother
As I held your hand, oh so cold
My only thought was of your story untold
You lived your life, but it was far too brief
You were here teaching me despite such grief
Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free.

My pain and sadness were soon replaced
At the joy of learning what you had faced
Joy because I understood
How one day I could do some good
For another will face a similar fate
And because of your gift I may yet save
The life of someone else's mother
Father, Sister, Child, Brother
Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free.

As I look back at what you gave to me
My only regret is I could never speak
With you to hear what made you smile
And what made you cry once in a while
To hear that for which you dreamt
To hear of how your life was spent
I knew everything of you and yet I missed
What made you You!
I only know this:

Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free.

*Written for the
Florida State University College of Medicine
2013 Cadaver Memorial Service
In Honor of the Men and Women
who Donated their Bodies to Science*

■ **Luke Stowers** is a second year medical student at
Florida State University.

Starry Sky

Tyler Wellman

We descend into a windowless
lab lifting bodies from sterile steel
coffins. Retracting a pale green

tarp to expose a nude
body, leaving a small cloth
to cover the face.

We cut to uncover a mosaic
of cells, tissues, organs.
Like Adam in the garden,

we give names to all we
see. The lab is
loud: names proclaimed,

functions recited, nerves mapped out.
"This Orion's Belt, this the Big
Dipper, over there the Little."

I find solitude in the shuffle, silently
contemplating the mystery: this
from union of sperm and egg.

For a moment please, do not
talk about constellations,
Let me gaze.

Let me know mystery.
The human body,
my starry sky.

■ **Tyler Wellman** is a first year medical student at
Florida State University.



Pamplona Alta-Lima, Peru

Mauricio Parra-Ferro

■ **Mauricio Parra-Ferro** is a medical student at
Florida State University.

Another Adventure

Fernando Guarderas

After an entire month of backpacking with 250 condoms around Peru and Ecuador, I was finally going to use them. I wasn't going to talk myself out of it again even though I was as nervous as a high schooler on his first date. I had to stop using the excuse of too old or too young; everyone has sex. And what better place to start than a rickety old public bus filled with guys? With fifteen minutes left and my pupils dilated, I asked the driver to turn down the music.

My fifteen minute speech about sexual health carried a simple message tailored to my catholic crowd with the aim to educate but not offend. I would say, "Listen to me for just a moment and at the end I will give you 3 free condoms. You should not have premarital relations, BUT if you do, you should use a condom." It will protect you from some of those awful diseases you hear about like 'SIDA' (AIDS). It will protect you from becoming pregnant young and unprepared, only to be forced into shotgun wedding with a high risk of divorce and suffering. You do not have to have ten children, because public health has made it so that most of your children will survive. Also, over 35 years of age, it becomes much riskier to have children because of genetic problems like Downs. If you are finished having children, modern inexpensive surgical treatments can allow you to enjoy sex without fear of conception. My last major point was to tell them to talk to their children about sex as even our own patients and parents back in the USA need to be told.

After a moment, the teenage driver's response, "God, I just ran out of those!" broke the silence. All of a sudden, conversation and laughter filled the bus. The passengers cracked jokes at the expense of the driver; poking fun at his dance moves and his status as the resident ladies' man. The dam construction worker next to me lamented his solitary state and then brightened up at the prospect of what he'd do the next month when he finally got to see his wife again. Later in the day, the driver saw me in the central plaza and introduced me to some of his girl friends. I'm pretty sure he was using me to look cool.

My favorite part of sex education on public buses? Handing out the condoms. The younger, traditionally clad women

would not meet my eyes, but their open palms belied their downcast gazes. I felt as though they wished they had been masked for this opportunity. Others looked up, beckoning me down the aisle with a knowing smile on their faces. The less traditional young adults had a proud glint on their face on account of what I was doing. They also thought that sexual conversation did not have to be so taboo. Very few downright did not take the condoms. Best of all was the old woman who blurted out, "Now I only need a man!"

As the ride continued, people would come up to meet the condom-bearing foreigner and I'd get to hear a little about their lives. A nurse, commenting on a reference I had made about Lina Medina, talked about how she often saw children give birth to children in her practice. Lina Medina is the youngest documented mother in the world, having given birth at just 5 years and 7 months of age. In fact, two of the top ten youngest mothers are Peruvian. On the other end of the spectrum, I saw several women over 55 with their infants on their laps. These women represent one of the many realities that helped me decide to do this project despite all the warnings that it would

In the absence of informed conversation, we are left to learn from our amateur friends or the movies – suspect sources at best.

be badly received by the people and thus should not have been done. It is ignorant of us to think that people do not want to talk about sex. In actuality it is something that most people want to talk about but which common practice prevents. In the absence of informed conversation, we are left to learn from our amateur friends or the movies – suspect sources at best.

I wasn't with an organization. I didn't write a grant, or apply to an international aid program. In the end I was just a backpacker rolling the dice to see what good he could do while getting to know the locals better. Maybe I did some good, maybe I didn't. But hopefully one old lady got lucky, and decided to use a condom.

■ **Fernando Guarderas** is a third year medical student who hopes to become either an ophthalmologist or infectious disease doctor.



Signal Box Art Pro

Annie Chau & Camilo Fernandez-Salvador

Fourth year medical students, Camilo Fernandez-Salvador and Annie Chau, painted the utility box outside the Orlando regional campus. The signal box painting is part of a public art project headed by the Mills 50 District and the City of Orlando to help highlight the creativity and cultural diversity of downtown Orlando.

■ **Camilo Fernandez-Salvador** is a fourth year medical student. Camilo started drawing and painting at an early age. Throughout his undergraduate and medical education, he has continued to exercise his passion for the arts.

■ **Annie Chau** is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University.



A COM Garden Bouquet

Adam Baptiste, Debra Danforth, & Ann Maruzak

■ **Ann Maruszak** is a Program Associate for the Clinical Learning Center. She and 2nd year medical student **Adam Baptiste** partnered to promote gardening at the College of Medicine. Photo taken by **Debra Danforth**, Director of the Clinical Learning Center.

THANKFUL

Valerie DeShazier

With you I can go above and beyond with no doubts
When I call you, you are always there
Never have you gave up on me, even when I did
Every day I get another chance to do it right
Again and again you are always there

Thankful is an understatement but the best statement
Grateful indeed, one day I shall make you pleased
Peace of mind is what you give to me
A life of blessing just for me

A name that can be called at any time for sure
Seeing me through the good and bad
A father of all and the best I could ever have
A joy to know that you are on my side
A love that is truly one of a kind

Thankful, not the best word but the right word
Happy to know you daily
What a pleasure that is, favor is on me
You never lie because your word is true indeed

You created me in love and I know this to be true
You pick me up every time I fall
I get up because I just have to keep going so I can please you
I live because of you
So what word should I use to say just how I feel?
THANKFUL

■ **Valerie DeShazier** is a community contributor to HEAL.

He Sees Me

Cathaley Nobles

--for AAJJ

He lives in two worlds
He's strong when strength is needed
He's generous with his time
He knows my weaknesses
He accepts me as I am
He Sees Me!

He has chosen spirituality as his blueprint for life
He's sensitive and in tune to the needs of others
He unselfishly shares his life experiences
He constantly finds the good within me
He gives me courage when I have none
He Sees Me!

He has an inner peace at the early age of 48
He is independent and self-assured
He has taught me to expect more of myself
He makes me laugh and celebrate life
Half of his life he has been blind, and I love him
For He Sees Me!

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

Happy Travels

Cashana Betterly

didn't know what I was doing.

Structured chaos is the only phrase that came to my mind when I stepped inside the homeless shelter for the first time. I had never volunteered in a place like this before. I was as nervous as ever, but I didn't quite know why. Well, maybe I do.

For starters, I arrived 30 minutes before all of the other students. This was the first anxiety provoking event of the night. I knocked on the side door. Maybe it was the back door. Or the front door, for that matter. I really wasn't sure. But I knocked and knocked until a younger Black gentleman in his late 20's approached me from behind, noticing how clueless I looked.

"Can I help you?" he asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"Um...yes, maybe. Sorry. Uh, I'm a med student and

I'm here to help with giving health screening tests and doing blood pressures," I said, not really knowing if that description adequately covered my tasks for the night.

"Oh right! Today's Monday! Come in here through the kitchen."

And off we went.

The smell of meat and potatoes filled my nostrils. It was humid. Pots and pans were hanging off of the walls. Clinkings and clankings were heard all over the place. We weaved our way through narrow walkways between cupboards and stoves. We eventually arrived to a common area at the bottom of a staircase.

"The women live upstairs. Sometimes they bring their children with them. The men are right over there."

I peered into the adjacent room and took in the sight of about 40 homeless men sitting at picnic tables, all in their 50's and 60's.



I could tell she had a story. Everyone there did.

Sound was blasting from a small television set in the middle of the room. Fans were scattered about, cooling down the men while they waited for their food to be ready.

“Where do I even start?” I thought to myself.

Just as I was about to walk in, the physician overseeing the event and the other students arrived. Many of the other students decided to start doing health screenings in the men’s living area, so I wandered upstairs to work with some of the women.

Upon reaching the top of the stairs, I saw a room containing four bunk beds. The women’s living area was in a room adjacent to that. This one was much smaller than the men’s living area, much more humid. Same picnic tables, complete with more fans and a tv. And connected to this room was the back porch, where the women were allowed to take ten-minute smoking breaks.

To this day, and I don’t exactly know why, there was one woman in particular who stood out to me. She was in her late 40’s with sandy-silver hair. I think she reminded me of a babysitter I once had. The half-moons under her eyes exposed her fatigue and stress. At the same time, I could sense a comfortable warmth about her. I could tell she had a story. Everyone there did.

“Excuse me, ma’am, would you like to have your blood pressure taken today?” I said to her, knowing deep down how much I actually stink at taking blood pressures.

“The doctor is coming to me this time instead of the other way around! How wonderful!” she joked.

She ended up being the only woman I spoke with that night. We talked in the women’s common area, we talked in the back porch during her smoke break, and we talked in the common area again. As it turns out, alcohol was the demon that brought her to this homeless shelter. She once had been a stewardess for a well-known airline. Her daughter is a current college student. She hadn’t spoken with her in years. An unstable marriage combined with an already existing addiction led to the trying circumstances she’s living with now. Last I

spoke with her, she was doing well on her anti-depressants, staying sober, and getting ready to re-take her stewardess exam.

This was a year ago.

I have no idea where she is or what she’s doing now. I would like to, though. I would like to know all of these things. I told her that I would try to visit her again. So far, I have not kept that promise.

I don’t want her to be there when I return to the homeless shelter. I want her to be reunited with her daughter. I want her to be on airplanes again, putting new and nervous passengers at ease with her warmth and sense of humor.

To the sandy-silver haired woman, I wish you safe and happy travels.

■ **Cashana Betterly** is a second year medical student at Florida State University.

Laugh Cathaleyn Nobles

Never knew my father
Was told he disowned me
Mother never wanted me
Because he disowned me
Older sister died
My only source of love and support

Fear, loss, and anger consumed me
Repeated molestation by a family member aged me
Start of alcoholism by 12th grade

First bout with cancer – lung – told no one
Serious drug addiction – cocaine
Cut remaining hair off – hated treatments
Cancer in remission – still a drug addict
Eight times in drug rehabilitation –
Eight times non-completion

Second bout with cancer – abdominal – told no one
Serious drug addiction – cocaine – crack – alcohol
Head already shaved – hated treatments
Cancer in remission – drugs and alcohol not

Made a meeting – made new friends
Started to know and love myself
Still making meetings – still sober and clean
I laugh everyday – mostly at myself

Naples Pier HDR Ryan Humphries

■ **Ryan Humphries** is a third year medical student at Florida State University.

Pelicans A-posing

Harry Moulis, MD

■ **Dr. Moulis** has been practicing gastroenterology in the Daytona Beach area since 1992. He's had images published in Audubon and National Geographic Society publications. His website is: www.photosbythedoc.com



Neot Semadar

Toby Davine

■ **Toby Davine** is the Communications and Outreach Metcalf Foundation Intern at Local Food Plus, Canada's Local Sustainable Food System Organization. She holds an honors degree in International Development and Environmental Studies from McGill University. Her partner, Juan Lopez, is a first year medical student at FSU.



AMWA Mural

Amanda Abaira, Alexa Buchanan, Noona Leavell, Li Li, Judy Lin, Melissa McDole & Suzanne Harrison, MD

AMWA officers at FSU College of Medicine painted a mural at Refuge House Free Clinic in March 2012. Refuge House offers safe haven to victims of domestic and sexual violence. The clinic provides a confidential place for patients to receive medical care without leaving the safety of the shelter. These women and children have survived domestic violence and are either currently living in emergency shelter, transitional housing or involved in outreach through Refuge House. The mural represents a bright beacon of hope and encouragement for those who seek medical services during their stay in shelter. The mural was designed and drawn by Noona Leavell. Mural painters included Melissa McDole, Noona Leavell, Alexa Buchanan, Judy Lin, Li Li, Amanda Abaira and Dr. Suzanne Harrison.

The Hot Water Bottle

Ricardo José González-Rothi, MD

My grandmother had an amazing ability to heal. I was convinced she could cure any illness, and neighbors and friends of our family always sought out her many intricate home remedies. I used to suffer periodic bouts of painful and violent stomach cramps for which Dr. Pancorvo had told my mother to give me paregoric. I did not care for elixir of paregoric, for even though I liked the way it tasted, it always made me groggy and odd feeling. As a five-year-old, seeing things that weren't really there when I took that medicine always terrified me. Since my mother was generally away teaching school, and my grandmother was not particularly fond of medicines anyway, during those times when my cramps would seize me, Abuela would bring out her magic water bottle.

She would place tap water into one of the big pots she had hanging from the ceiling hooks in her kitchen. Then she'd put a handful of charcoal from the pail she kept outside the door into the stone charcoal grill pit. She would crumple up a sheet of used newspaper, light it with a match and heat up the water. She would dip her index finger into the pot at intervals, just to make sure it was hot enough, but not scalding.

For all the years we lived in Cuba, my grandmother never owned a stove or cooktop. She had learned to cook on charcoal

from her mother and grandmother. She could make eggs, grill steak, fry fish or boil water very efficiently. Besides, she used to like to buy charcoal from Ignacio's father who three times a week would swing by with his creaky wooden cart pulled by a lanky-looking bay hag with a large Roman nose and mule ears. Abuela knew I felt sorry for the old ugly horse and liked petting him and feeding him apples and she also knew that Ignacio's father was very poor and could use the money so I think that for those reasons she kept cooking with charcoal. Besides, Abuela, like most Cuban "Islenos" (descendants from the Canary Isles), was known to be very tight with her money, a trait she clearly inherited and passed onto me. She always insisted she didn't like the smell of cooking gas when resisting my grandfather's efforts to buy a gas stove, but I really think she just used this as an excuse to save money.

When my cramps were tolerable I would sit on a wood crate in the corner of the kitchen and watch Abuela go through the water-heating ritual in wonderment. When the pain was unbearable she would carry me over to her bed in the room beside the kitchen where she knew I could hear her and she me. I can still remember the soothing gurgling sound of the hot water as she would pour it into the red rubber bottle—the sound a thirsty person makes when they chug a large drink. With a towel, she put a special strangle hold around the neck

of the bottle, holding the neck just so, ensuring the hot water would never spill as she poured it in. I could see the dense steam column condensing as she screwed the top on and tested the flank of the flat red rubber bag against the skin of her face.

"There is power in that bottle," I thought as I watched



Luciernagas
Verónica Andrade
Jaramillo, MD

■ **Dr. Jaramillo** is a practicing physician in Ecuador, South America.



Antes de Comer

Verónica Andrade Jaramillo, MD

her. Within seconds, she'd square my hips flat on the bed, undo the top button of my trousers, look directly into my eyes, always carefully delineating exactly how I was supposed to hold the bottle just so over the lower part of my belly. She always insisted I must lie very still and listen to make sure the water inside the bottle didn't slosh as it rested on my abdomen. I can remember being ever so careful to breathe slowly so I wouldn't make the water slosh. Abuela would then sit on the edge of the bed with her knees together. She would place the palm of her hand softly on my shoulder. Her wire rim glasses encircled her brown eyes which made them look big and round and kindly looking, like those of a cow. She would gaze downward, almost as if in prayer and then she would begin to tell me stories—like how little birds liked sitting on the wires near the electric poles in the street when it rained because they could feel the noise of the rain on their feet. Without fail, and within minutes, the waves of piercing cramps would slacken as I balanced that water bottle on my abdomen and she continued her stories.

It was not unusual for my eyes to get heavy during these water-bottle-balancing acts, like when I took the elixir of paregoric, but there were no hallucinations. Sometimes I would awaken and find that I had fallen asleep for one or two hours and hadn't even realized this. By this time the cramps were generally gone, and the water bottle, which had usually toppled off the bed onto the stone floor in the bedroom, was no longer warm. I might hear Abuela tinkering in the kitchen and I would feel completely back to normal and be ready to go out

and play with my friends or feed the animals before my uncle Yayo came home. Sometimes I felt so good she made me warm sweet lemonade with fresh squeezed lemons she picked from the lemon tree by the kitchen.

My grandmother died when she was 96. Every night before she went to bed she insisted on drinking a tepid glass of water with two tablespoons of sugar dissolved in it. I don't know if this had anything to do with her longevity. I do know that she was a major influence in my becoming a physician and that from her I learned the meaning of good bedside manners and of caring.

I have often wondered what must have gone through my young daughters' minds when they were little as I would heat the water in the microwave just-so, and choke that red rubber bottle with a towel, pouring the steaming water without a spill, invoking all the healing powers that my grandmother so deftly ingrained in me. I have also often wondered if they really bought into the stories about the little birds sitting on the wires in the rain....

■ *An academic physician for over three decades with a primary emphasis on a career of scientific writing, **Dr. González-Rothi** is a relative newcomer to creative prose. Silver hair and a busy career have not deterred him from his love of the written word and the magic of the tale. He has work published in Acentos Review and HEAL.*



Palmeras

Ana Gabriela Luján

■ **Ana Gabriela Luján Balarezo** was born in Perú. She is an 8th grader at Trinity Catholic School in Tallahassee. Ana Gabriela's art has been showcased in two exhibitions: *Latidos del Perú* (Heartbeats of Perú) in 2012 at FSU Oglesby Union as part of Hispanic Heritage Month, and again at Strozier Library in the summer of 2012.



Summer Wave (Cocoa Beach)

Michael J. Muszynski,
MD, FAAP

■ **Dr. Muszynski** is the Orlando Regional Campus Dean and the Associate Dean for Clinical Research at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

Aunt BJ

Laurie McCort

My sister and I are going to visit my Aunt who has end stage Alzheimer's disease. Although mentally prepared for this outing, I have to ready myself for the lack of connection with the woman who taught me the importance of laughter and singing. My Aunt BJ, who on Saturday nights would grab an umbrella for a cane and, along with my mother, dance to old show tunes to the delight of us kids. I am prepared to go find my Aunt BJ in a room that seems wrapped in heat, smelling of old people with distant looks. I understand that she is eating very little now, spending most of her time sleeping. I am ready and we plan only to stay a few minutes. I just need to touch her and then we can go.

My sister and I enter the nursing home through the front foyer. Several of the folks are sitting at tables with American flag stickers on their clothes and the more awake are wearing top hats with red, white, and blue on them. One lady is asleep, sitting in her wheel chair with her arm extended, holding a drinking glass. Suspended in time, she rests easily among all the noise. My Aunt is among this group. She is up and eating. An aide is feeding her a pureed lunch of baked beans, hot dogs, and carrots. Her complexion is smooth and soft with the natural color of her youth. I take over the feeding for the aide and my Aunt BJ opens her mouth for a spoonful of food like a tiny bird. I stroke her cheek and kiss her forehead and encourage my fledgling to finish her pureed hot dog. Her eyes are searching for something in my face she can remember. There is a volunteer playing the accordion, weaving in-between the older people, encouraging everyone to sing along. They don't understand his request. They do not connect. Only my sister and I sing. The accordion player loves our participation and gets more

animated. It's so contagious that we in turn sing louder. Some of the elderly wake and they start to smile. From the next room appears a very large male aide in his green scrubs and he starts to dance in front of the group. His grace and style is astounding. He is a New York City Rockette out of space and time. "Just call me Diva," he croons.

"Give her some applesauce," the aide passing by interjects, "She'll eat better if you give her something sweet." But it's not necessary. My Aunt has connected somehow to the touch on her cheek, or perhaps it's the music, and she is taking all her food. Now the Diva is skipping around the room to "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy," slapping his rump as if he is riding a horse, and the accordion player is giving a running narrative, "Oh, I love the horse thing."

My sister and I sing louder. I personally will my Aunt to finish her food. Let this be just a little thing I can do for her. The Diva pirouettes. Holding the food cart for support, he struts and swings his leg above his head in a high kick. My Aunt BJ is almost finished with all her food, except for her carrots. When I try to feed her carrots she closes her mouth in a solid lock and I cheer her ability to exert her will. I don't like carrots either. Now the Diva is going down in a slow split, and the accordion player, my sister, and I groan at how he will pay

for that later. I continue to kiss my Aunt on her forehead as she takes her last bites. I feel I have connected in some soulful way that only parental instincts can understand. The accordion player finishes his last song. The Diva limps off and the aide tells me its time for my Aunt's nap. Thank you, Aunt BJ, for reminding me of what is truly significant.

■ **Laurie McCort** is a social worker and counselor in Tallahassee, Florida.



The Amazing Technicolor Giraffe

Kevin Yan

Oh, Genevieve

Michael Sierra

made a patient cry today. She wept and sniveled and wiped the tears that coursed down her soft, fat, wrinkled cheeks. I couldn't believe it. It wasn't because I had disclosed a dire diagnosis or an ominous result of a test or lab. She wasn't depressed. It wasn't because I had brought up a sensitive topic, or poked her in the eye, or anything. I told her that this was the last time I would be rounding at the nursing home in which she resided. After 11 months of rounding every Wednesday at one of the nursing homes scattered throughout the Treasure Coast of Florida, my Chronic Care Clerkship had come to an end. It was time for me to move on to my fourth and final year of medical school. I never imagined that I would have created this strong of a relationship with a patient this early in my medical career. It was an amazing and humbling experience I will never forget. What follows is a biographical homage to Genevieve, the first non-pediatric and non-psychiatric patient I brought to tears, and the first patient that ever told me, "I'm going to miss you."

When I first walked into Gen's room, I saw a gray haired, fair-skinned woman trapped in adipose. She lay sound asleep, her head tucked away in superfluous amounts of chin and neck. Her sheets created the silhouette of what resembled the shell of a full-grown Galapagos tortoise. I felt bad for her. I didn't even know her, but I felt bad for her. There was no way

I never imagined that I would have created this strong of a relationship with a patient this early in my medical career.

It was an amazing and humbling experience I will never forget.

she could get out of bed, even with assistance. And compared to the other patients in the nursing home, she looked relatively young, maybe early 70s. My eyes scanned the room, noticing the bathroom was about 10 feet from her bed. There was no bedside commode. I wondered how she urinated or defecated. I probably would have known this answer had I read her chart before entering her room. She began to stir and awaken. I thought I better introduce myself before she wakes to find some creepy guy in a white coat watching her sleep. "Hi, Genevieve. My name is Mike Sierra. I'm a third year medical student working with Dr. Brenner. He's asked me to introduce myself to you. I will be working with him for the next year and, with his assistance, will help take care of you and the other patients in the nursing home." Her powder blue eyes flashed behind her slowly blinking and waking eyelids. Eventually they focused onto mine and time stood still as I waited for her response. It dawned on me that I didn't even know if she was too demented to respond. I cursed myself for not having read her chart. "Well, why don't you tell Dr. Brenner that I'm pissed off at him. He doesn't come by my room to say hello anymore. I haven't seen him in weeks!" The door behind me opened and Dr. Brenner entered the room. Before he could say anything, Genevieve snapped, "You know, Dr. Brenner, since you obviously don't care to see me anymore, I've decided to change physicians. His name is (she stared at my nametag) Dr. Michael Sierra. And he's way younger and better looking than you are, by the way." They both erupted in laughter. Dr. Brenner went over to her bed to give her a warm hug, and I thought to myself, this lady's a trip.



Black and Orange
Ana Gabriela Luján



Chasing the Sun

Ana Gabriela Luján

Gen and I got to know each other very well over the course of the year. Since she was one of the more spritely patients of the nursing home, I made an effort to round on her as often as I could. I tried to use my encounters with her to gather chief complaints, histories, physical exam findings, relevant information from her past medical history, and all the other things a medical student in training needs to compose a good oral presentation for his attending. However, Gen always found a way to derail me from my medical endeavors and sprout conversations about personal matters. She told me she was an only child who was raised in Vero by loving parents. She grew up to marry a handsome businessman and raise a wonderful son, who is currently a successful restaurant owner and philanthropist. They traveled, they lived, they laughed and they loved, catching some medical snags along the way: a tonsillectomy here, a cholecystectomy there, back surgery for a degenerated disc, a knee replacement for an arthritic knee. Her ulcerative colitis eventually resulted in a proctocolectomy and permanent ileostomy, and her hypothyroidism, diabetes, and hypertension eventually resulted in obesity and heart failure for which she was paced. Even after all of that, her spirits were high and her body was strong enough. It wasn't until her husband died suddenly of a heart attack that things began to turn south. She moved into her son's guest house and tried her best to adjust. She made less of an effort to take care of herself and got a little heavier and a little heavier. With all that weight, what once was her good knee became her bad knee and she needed her second knee replaced to complete the set. She recovered, but shortly after returning to her son's house, she

fell and broke her hip. She was admitted to the hospital, and a hip repair, a deep vein thrombosis, and a pulmonary embolism later, her son thought it best she go to a facility that could better rehabilitate, care, and supervise her. He decided to put her in a nursing home. Her son decorated her room with a nice sofa, a recliner, and the biggest TV in the entire facility. She was stabilized, but only minimally rehabilitated due to her weight and weakness. She went on to develop overflow incontinence and began to use adult diapers. Physical therapy began using a harness to stand her up but she could not walk more than a few steps. She acquired a large wheelchair that was big enough for her to sit in, just to discover she was too heavy and too weak to roll herself. And then, finally, she met me.

I followed up on her rehabilitation, treated her for recurrent UTIs, managed her diabetes, treated her for an infected decubitus ulcer, looked over her labs, and did my best to be someone she could talk to. What made the biggest impression on me besides the size of her body was the size and strength of her heart – figuratively speaking, of course. She never once felt sorry for herself, or showed any signs of depression. She never complained about wanting more mobility, or to see her son more often. She never became frustrated about her weight or medical conditions. She never even complained about the food! Everybody complains about the food. She had this sense of acceptance, resilience, and positivity. She was a personification of the old adage, “If life gives you lemons...” There were weeks where school, assignments, lack of sleep, and rotations I didn't truly enjoy would bog me down, but walking in her room would flush away my frustrations. Her laughter, conversation, and passion for life would make me realize that I didn't have much I should complain about. Many would claw at the chance to be in my position and health.

I guess what it boils down to is that she made as much of an impression on me as I did on her. I learned to be grateful and appreciative. She helped me learn medicine as well as a new perspective. I will never forget Genevieve. She helped me to realize the kind of relationships I can build going forward in my career are the kind of relationships where the learning goes both ways. She showed me how strong the human spirit can be, and the importance of reviewing a chart before entering a patient's room. She's going to miss me, and I'm going to miss her too.

■ **Michael Sierra** is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University.

The New Storm

Katy Wood

It is a force of nature not fully understood.
It comes like a tornado
from clear skies and quiet moments.

But it does not tear apart houses or uproot trees,
instead it rips away my beloved.
Takes her to another place
where time and space have no meaning.

Like a storm, the force is terrifying to behold.
Craters form in the grass
as a giant sphere of swirling wind rages.
And in the center floats something small,
a glowing pink lotus.

It is a new force of nature that both tortures and enriches me.

When she appears it is like a dream.
Raging winds and violent deafness,
then suddenly she arrives and the air falls flat.
It is the glass lake after the hurricane,
the destruction after the earthquake.

Except in place of death and ruin
there is beauty and love
because we are together again.

And oh it is so sweet,
but I know it will not last long.

Our moments are golden but trimmed with tension.
Even now as I hold her and relish her embrace,
I know soon it will end.
Is that the wind I feel, the beginning of our terrible storm?

No, only a summer breeze
sweetly licking our skin and letting us know
we have a few more minutes together at least.
How I wish it could always be this peaceful moment,
this golden drop in a pool of so much grey.

Please, whoever holds us and maintains us together,
let us have 5 more minutes, no days. Wait, please, months.
What is it you require?

I feel the wind begin to stir and it strikes fear in my worn heart
because this feels like no summer breeze.
No, please not yet. Not again.



Symphony in Peril

Jesse O'Shea

I hold her tight against my chest.
My shirt is soaked with her sweet tears.
Fingers digging into forearms,
we hold onto this moment so tightly
but cannot stop it from being peeled away.
The golden future stolen drop by drop,
condemning me to grey,
to useless waiting and constant yearning.

Our muscles strain and we try to fight.
The flower illuminates violent light,
filling the crater, adding to the destruction.
I feel her body being ripped from mine.
Our muscles are fatigued.
Suddenly the storm surges.
She is ripped away and disappears before my eyes.

The air goes still.
My arms are extended, reaching out
into that precious space where she last was.
My fingers are cooling, her warmth leaving.
My chest is cold as her tears evaporate.
I let my hands fall to my side and they strike with a
resounding thud.

I collapse to my knees as all around
the long grass begins to resume its former shape
as the crater slowly disappears.
It brushes my ankles and tickles my side.

■ **Katy Wood** is a Tallahassee local and a current second year medical student. She majored in Spanish Literature at the University of South Florida before pursuing medicine at FSU.

Found

Saritha Tirumalasetty

“Found” poems take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. The following poems were “found” in passages of the book *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

[Poem created from a scene in Florida during a hurricane.]

In the Company of God

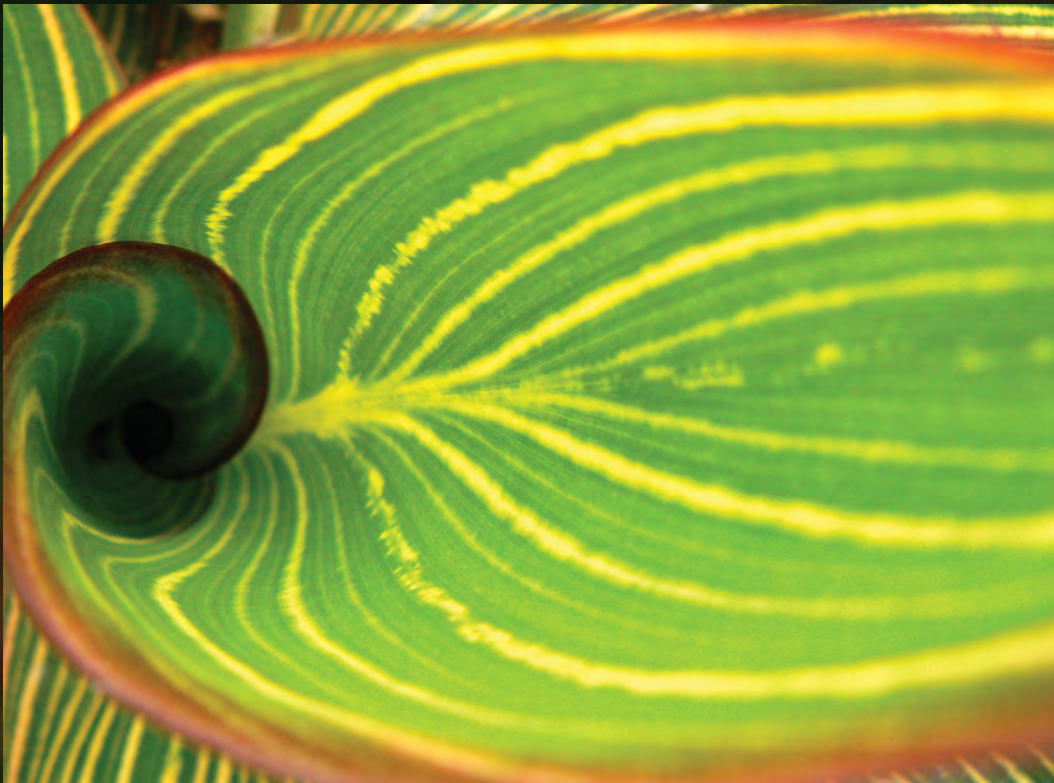
They heard things crashing,
Hurtling, and dashing
With unbelievable velocity.
Huddled closer,
They stared at the door.
Their eyes were questioning God.
God opened the door
And put out the light for the last time.
They seemed to be staring at the dark,
But their eyes were watching God.

[Poem created from the scenes that introduce the main character, Janie, to Logan Killicks.]

Logan Killicks

The angel with the sword is coming
To finally take Nanny.
Logan offers a new protection
With high ground like Nanny dreamed of
And sixty acres to match.
But Janie don't love him at all.
He looks like a skullhead in the grave yard.
His vision desecrates the pear tree.
He stops talking rhymes to her
And tries to suppress her freezology.

■ **Saritha Tirumalasetty** is a joyful, radiant, and dazzling orb of life. She's as witty as a biting retort, cool as a soft-serve, warm like freshly laundered sheets, soulful like a jazz tune, and charming like a Disney princess. In her spare time, she enjoys flying her goldfish (-shaped kite), pirouetting with fireflies, smiling at the sun, wandering under the stars, letting the rhythm take over her feet, laughing at absurdities, chasing dreams, loving her family and friends, and frolicking on this magnificent earth with infinite wonder. [Saritha's bio provided by Dimple Patel]



Kampala, Uganda
Tyler Wellman

Innate Curiosity

Jesse O'Shea

During my first delivery while on my Ob/Gyn rotation, questions arose on life, suffering, and universal truths as the baby surfaced for its first breath. While it was a complicated delivery with much to tell, I could not help questioning. Why did the mother have to sustain injury and harm during this experience? Why did the newborn have its cord around its neck? Is this the miracle of life? Innate curiosity. I realized then that men are equal in suffering and in the boundaries of need. They are not born equal—that is, they are not born with equal genetic bequest, physical, or intellectual states. They are equal in the sense that they are born to live, endure, and die. Physicians, who have witnessed men in their naked loneliness, know that perhaps better than anyone else on earth. Physicians will have to help and lead us all in cherishing and restating that final core of human faith. Likewise, it is imperative to understand that as humans we are all interconnected; we are connected in the sense that we are all equal, as stated above, and therefore every life is significant. In the end, despite all the questions raised, despite all of this thinking, I looked onto the newborn, and the newborn looked back at me with curious eyes, and all thoughts were vanquished.



Innate Curiosity

Jesse O'Shea

■ **Jesse O'Shea** is a third year medical student. Since a young age, he has acknowledged the power of art as an expressive outlet for healing—exploring forms of writing, photography, painting, and digital/graphic design. Medical school has only confirmed his belief that art is medicine, and medicine is art. *HEAL*, and other publications, have provided a means of communication for thought. *Innate Curiosity* is also scheduled to appear on a future cover of *Academic Medicine*.

Birthday

Guimy Alexis

The hallway leading toward the Labor and Delivery Unit is long and separated by a series of doors that require keycards or the nurse “buzzing you in.” This was the second week of my Ob/Gyn rotation and I was just at the beginning of my call night.

“Alexis, go see what all that noise is about next door!” said the Intern. I had literally just walked into the Physician’s Lounge to introduce myself to the Residents when labor screams pierced

through our conversation. As I entered the room, a breeze of warm air hit me, fogging up my glasses. The rooms on the Labor and Delivery Unit are kept very warm. I guess this is for the comfort of the mother and the newborns. As for the rest of us, we’re just plain uncomfortably hot. The nurse appeared cool, calm, and focused amidst the screams of pain coming from the young woman in labor—a girl who looked no older than 21. As I would later find out, this was her second pregnancy and her first full-term without any complications. But eight hours into labor, this pregnancy seemed and felt different, not to mention this was a very big baby!

I stood there, off in the distance, wondering what I should do, how I should participate, how much I should get involved. I mean, this was my second week. What should I do? I definitely did not want to catch the baby. It felt like an eternity until the Resident came in and said, “Gown up!” So there I was: second assistant to what seemed to be a very complicated delivery. “Push! Push! One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine! Ten!” Screams of pain pierced the air. The baby wasn’t budging. The baby wasn’t moving. I thought, This can’t possibly be what the textbook said it’s supposed to be like. This seems different. Now, I’d studied before, and the textbook didn’t really describe a delivery like this, so the feeling that something wasn’t quite right hit me early on. I wanted to ask the Resident what he thought, but I decided maybe this wasn’t the best time for 21 questions. The doctor shook his head, looked at the Resident, and said, “I’m going to have to cut her.” Cut her? Does he mean episiotomy? Yes, he did. And just like that, within 30 seconds, the baby started coming out.

The head was delivered. Next were the shoulders, and while the right shoulder was being delivered, the episiotomy tore and resulted in a fourth degree perineal laceration. More importantly, the baby came out covered in meconium

So there I was: second assistant to what seemed to be a very complicated delivery.

and floppy and flaccid rather than flexed with good tone. I immediately thought, Well, that doesn’t look right either! He’s not crying. He didn’t make any sounds. They took him over to the warmer and began suctioning his mouth, and I thought, I want to go over there. I want to make sure everything is

okay. Is the baby okay? I kept thinking to myself, Is he alright? Is he going to breathe? Is he going to move? Then weak cries entered the room. The baby was crying faintly, then the cries grew

louder and stronger, then he began to move more vigorously and behave as a newborn should behave. I immediately felt relief. I mean, today was his birthday, and quite the birthday he had. He came in and rearranged his mom’s anatomy in the process. I wondered what they’re going to name him. I don’t think I ever heard, in the midst of all the chaos, I never heard. All I remember is that he cried, that he did what babies should do.

Next, the Resident tapped my shoulder and told me he was going to do the change-over with the other Resident coming on duty and that I was going to assist the doctor directly with the fourth degree laceration repair, which had to be done immediately in order for the mother to avoid issues of fecal incontinence or possible development of a rectovaginal fistula. Unfortunately for mom, she refused the epidural much earlier during labor; and in this area, local anesthesia had little to no impact in reducing her pain. She had to remain very still. With each stitch, I could see her grimacing, and I empathized with her. She just went through a long, difficult labor, had a tear, and now a needle was piercing through her skin in a sensitive area. She felt every single stitch. She felt every time I had to dab the area to remove blood from the surgical field so that the doctor had clear visibility. But she made it through.

After walking out, which must have been about an hour and a half later, I felt exhausted. This was the beginning of my night on call. This was the beginning of OB. But more importantly, this was someone’s birthday. This was the beginning of whatever the future held for this young mother and her very large baby boy. This was his beginning, and I’m happy that I got to be a part of it.

■ *Guimy Alexis is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University.*

What Can I Do?

Kelleigh Elizabeth Helm

The story of the working poor is the story of life on the margins. Where a single event on an ordinary day can bring a life crashing down. A car breaking down or an illness can take someone from barely scraping by to living in a car or a homeless shelter.

More important than a change in location is the change from being able to support a family, to having children ask for food that you can't afford.

What is the real cost of cheap corn flakes at that big box store? Many are working 20 hours a week at minimum wage with no health insurance. The misery is certainly not confined within the borders of the United States. Ask the families of people working in the factory in Bangladesh, who died to produce Walmart's "Always Low Prices." These people live and die to provide cheaper consumer goods for an ever greedier American public. The poor pay the price; the rich get more for less.

When someone's life is ruined by a need for healthcare they can't afford, if they are lucky, they end up at my office. If they are less lucky they end up working 40 hours a week at

the Chelsea House Shelter for room, board, and seven minute showers. Or, more likely, they become homeless. When I meet people they are at the lowest point of their lives. I cannot heal years of abuse or congestive heart failure, but I can do something.

What I can do is make calls to doctor's offices. I can fill out paper work. I can cross T's and dot I's. I can navigate the papers and deadlines and legal jargon. I can listen and tell you that I see the same tears of frustration from everyone—men, women, young and old—that you are not alone, that maybe the only thing to do today is cry. But tomorrow, we will work together to make things better.

What I can do is navigate the social security system, a

**When someone's life is ruined by a
need for healthcare they can't afford,
if they are lucky,
they end up at my office.**



Pieces of Iota

Thomas Edmondson Whigham, Jr.

system seemingly designed to be inaccessible to those who need its services most. I can use my privilege to help those without it. It doesn't make life fair. It doesn't change the fact that I can have a \$40,000 surgery for \$140. Worse is that I can get the treatment at all, something not available to most of my clients. Even worse is knowing that they are alone. People end up on the streets because they don't have people to lean on, people that are there to provide a home for those with broken lives.

The story of the working poor continues. It lives on in millions of lives and is passed down through countless generations. How can I make life fair? How many people do I have to help get social security disability before I even the score?

I will never make life fair. But I can try.

■ **Kelleigh Elizabeth Helm (Simpson)** is a third year law student at the FSU College of Law. She participated in the Medical Legal Partnership for 2 years and hopes to work on solutions to global poverty issues.

In a systematic way the
erosion of the barriers between
her emotional composure
and self-assurance and
the callous disregard the rest of the world conveyed
and
the sense that the world felt
if it bothered for feelings at all
a barely hidden contempt or hatred
was more than enough to
through the lengths of time
eliminate all notions of shared humanity.
And it was enough to break her.

■ **Thomas E. Whigham, Jr.** is a bespectacled fugitive from the deadlines of adulthood hidden in a Guatemalan slim fit suit made entirely from wool. A young wolf in sheep's clothes, he remains inspired by the vast humanism of others and hopes to honor those who came before.

Central Park from Above
Trung Tran



Knees on Bend

Valerie DeShazier

I never saw tears until I saw my own run down my face
So now I see that they are real, now there is fear as well
How does one get them to stop flowing so fast? I need answers this day
I look up to the sky and see nothing because my eyes are full
Not knowing what to do I drop down on my knees to pray
Lord I can't keep going on this way so please help me to stand
Knees on Bend

Strength is what I am in search of, just want to get through
Feel so alone even though there are people around, how could this be?
So many faces are looking at me but they can't see the pain that I hide
The walls are closing in on me, so what am I to do?
Where is help in my time of need? Who do I call on?
This can't be how things end for me, damn I need peace
Knees on Bend

Fighting just to get up daily, if this is not me, then who?
Open my mouth to call out for help, but no words come out
What is going on? Is this the end? Where is the voice I once had?
Does anyone see me? Do I see me? Am I here? Who is near?
Bound up in so many thoughts and feelings, need a release
The tears are still coming and there is nothing I can do to stop them
Knees on Bend

We Are the Cracks

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr.

Journal 4

This week was the first time I realized the level of intimacy that comes with being a human's advocate. If you open yourself to them, they open themselves to you. They are also marginalized, lonely, discarded, used up, burnt and hurting, in and out, and worse than anything, they are ignored. They suffer in the darkness, between the cracks of the world. They suffer with shame, and dignity, and a sense of purpose and a greater sense of its absence. They live as we would want but we give them nothing to show for it. Valiant struggles and battles are mere medical reports, scars are scribbles on pads dated callously in type. They exist as the burden of society because of their burdens, and we burden them with this every step of the way. We hate them, the idea of them shames us, or makes us care between commercials, or angers us. Romney says 47% are addicted to entitlements and pay no income taxes. They'll vote for Obama.

I speak with real humans, mothers, women who've endured your worst abuses. They are the collective fault of every darkness, every piece of our society the sunlight cannot and will not touch. We can't control everyone.

I spoke to women proud and broken. "How can you explain how they hold me down at night and I can't scream and I can't move?" The demons do this. The uncle who forced his dick in her mouth when she was nine, behind the shed. After a cousin or his friend got her pregnant, years into her teens, after her mother forced the abortion, another uncle came, in the dark, and broke her will. When she told her grandmother, her aunt and cousin told her she was stupid. She could have got money, they said. Like they had. The memory bleeds tears across her face, the

shame wracking the frame as I hold her. Words are ashes. This is a pain to be touched only gently, softly, the merest of comforts.

Another tells of the brother-in-law, and the husband who stabbed her lungs and forced himself upon her. "I was too scared. I waited for him to divorce me." The knife missed her heart by a centimeter.

These are not even the pains of their complaint. These are just the scars of a brutal life. And I must make the case, sure, tie the thread, make a knot of it. She cannot trust people so she cannot work with them or for them, and we have this diagnosed, her brain is paranoid and schizophrenic. Her brain is the aftershock of the trauma. And she held it together through this, still determined to be the good person her grandmother raised her to be. But her grandmother didn't know the truth about people.

She is great. And the best she can hope for is that we will, one day, blessedly, call her disabled.

I speak with real humans,
mothers, women who've endured
your worst abuses.

Shoes

Joshua Greenstein

■ *Joshua Greenstein is a third year medical student at Florida State University.*



I Complain Too Much

Charles Howze

(this poem was written while I was in prison)

I complain when I'm out
I complain when I'm in
I complained to the judge and still didn't win

Complaining, complaining that's all I ever do
I complain when they count
I complain when they're through

I complain when I'm awake
I complain when I'm asleep
I complain about the clothes and the shoes on my feet

I complain about this
I complain about that
I complain the center gate Sarge took my hat

I complain about the food
And it's a well-known fact
That the chicken is so small, like it was strung out on crack

I complain about the weather
I complain about the storm
I complain about the officer who inspects our dorm

I complain about the schedule and what's coming on
I complain when I phone home
And no one accepts the call

I complain about visitation because they never call my name
I complain when my folks turn their backs on me
I complain when I'm to blame

Now, you can ask the children of Israel
Trapped at the Red Sea
Why they're still complaining
When God done set them free

Or, you can ask the five thousand
Hungry souls they fed
While on the banks of the river
Complaining about 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread

Yes complaining and complaining
That's all I ever did
Like the children of Israel
Who served a 40 year bid

But the Lord changed the fact that I complain too much
He healed me with His love, with His word, with His touch
Now that I've given my life to Christ
I don't complain so much.

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

Flowers
Ryan Humphries



HEALING IN

55 Words

I am a Family Physician. Our discipline has a strong narrative tradition, and as we get busier we need to find a way to preserve that tradition.

A few years ago, the medical journal *Family Medicine* published a series of 55-word stories about medicine and all it touches. Those stories were gripping, poignant and easy to read. But most

of all they seemed fun! Looking for a unique way to celebrate our fifth anniversary, we asked our readers to submit 55 word stories (you know, 5 years—55, get it?). You, our readers, responded in abundance with almost more than we could publish. You talked to our soul as you shared your loves, your frustrations, and your awe of the profession of medicine. You moved us as you shared your gratitude, your longing to give back, and your infallible hope for better tomorrows. Reading through these, I was invigorated, renewed and inspired. These simple, beautiful expressions of powerful emotions remind me of the joy of this profession, and what a privilege it is to participate intimately in the miracle that is healing. We hope you enjoy these stories, and we look forward to reading more of them. Thank you for participating in *HEAL* and making it a special experience for all who read it.

-José Rodríguez, MD
HEAL Editor-in-Chief

Julia Fashner, MD

5 Stages of Change

Stage 1: Precontemplation

What a world of billions served
Oh, the arches!
Weight is not conserved
The diagnosis of diabetes in 25.8 million people* for the states united in flab
Is it deserved?
No end, calories add up and up
Exercise—why be disturbed
Complications for all organs in all families
No, I am not being heard.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National diabetes fact sheet: national estimates and general information on diabetes and prediabetes in the United States, 2011. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011. Available at: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf.

■ **Dr. Fashner** is Associate Director of the Florida State University College of Medicine Family Medicine Residency at Lee Memorial Health Center in Ft. Myers, Florida.



Dreamweaver

Caitlin Hare

■ **Caitlin Marie Hare** is a studio art major at Florida State University. More of her art can be found at <http://caitlinmhare.deviantart.com>.

Anushi Patel

Tuesday Afternoons

Tuesday. Chronic care. Family Medicine. Walk in. Check schedule:

Jacobs, age 81- 2:40.

Smile. Makes 35 minute drive worth it.

AfibDiabetesCADHypertensionAnemiaArthritisHearinglossChronicpainGERD. Lives alone.

2:40: Not here. 2:50: Worried. Usually early. 3:00: Had a fall? 3:10: In the ER? 3:30: Had an MI? 4:00:

Closing time. Call. No answer. Pray.

Next Tuesday. “Oops, forgot my appointment!”

■ **Anushi Patel** is a third year medical student. She has enjoyed writing since an early age and thanks her teachers, in high school especially, for nurturing and encouraging her to explore her creative side. Fortunately, this creative side is still a big part of her life and she is thankful she attends a medical school that offers students an outlet for that creativity.

Judi Traynor

“It’s Cancer.”

Those words pierced my soul. I was only 38. I kept asking “Why me?” Then something clicked. That 6-letter word became my healer. It made me change, inside and out. I learned how to live—how to really live. And how to love. Because in the very end, love is all that matters.

■ **Judi Traynor** is the Administrative Support Assistant at the FSU College of Medicine Fort Pierce Regional Campus. Judi is a 15-year cancer survivor, and enjoys music, painting, gardening and spending time with her husband and their Scottish Folds.

Mark Weatherly, MD

Second Grader

I arrived for sign-outs to cover call in the PICU for the night. The sickest kid was on a ventilator, tubes everywhere, numerous drips. I noticed a consult from the pulmonologist, my mentor. It began: “This second-grader...” Where I saw disease, technology, tubes, he saw a second-grader. I never viewed a patient the same way again.

■ **Dr. Weatherly** is a Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at FSU College of Medicine and enjoys time on short term medical mission trips with medical students.

Melissa Geary

Living Out My Thank You

Your wounds have healed, your scars have faded, but the fear I felt turned into a fire. At 8 years old, I couldn’t understand that your doctors were painting my future. My eyes full of tears still see the blurred images of those white coats that helped bring you back to me.

■ **Melissa Geary** is a second year medical student at Florida State University.

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



Yosemite

Alyssa Woodward

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



Reflection

Jason Miles

■ **Jason Miles** is a second year medical student who enjoys photography because it is an art that is rooted in science. He prefers to take photographs of wildlife and nature.



Walkway

Danny Bernabe

■ **Danny Bernabe** is a second year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine. Since high school, Danny has had a passion for photography. He enjoys the challenge of telling a story through a single photo, and being able to share his work through HEAL.

Jill M. Prafke, MD

Download One Bowl of Alphabet Soup and...

Doctor, hear me...

CPT, DRG

Where does it hurt?

EHR, CPOE

Doctor, see me...

CT, MRI

Doctor, help me to heal...

■ **Dr. Prafke** is Clinical Assistant Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Florida State University College of Medicine and in general practice with the Women's Group in Pensacola, Florida.

Julia Fashner, MD

Stage 2: Contemplation

Your tug of war

Discomfort and torture throughout the body

Spare tire from the snacks gobbled at the store

The mirror shows heartache, mental and physical pain

But dollar menus are ached for

Can this load be easily lifted?

Nip – tuck – band: restore

Alone to fix the fat

Consider that life is so much more.

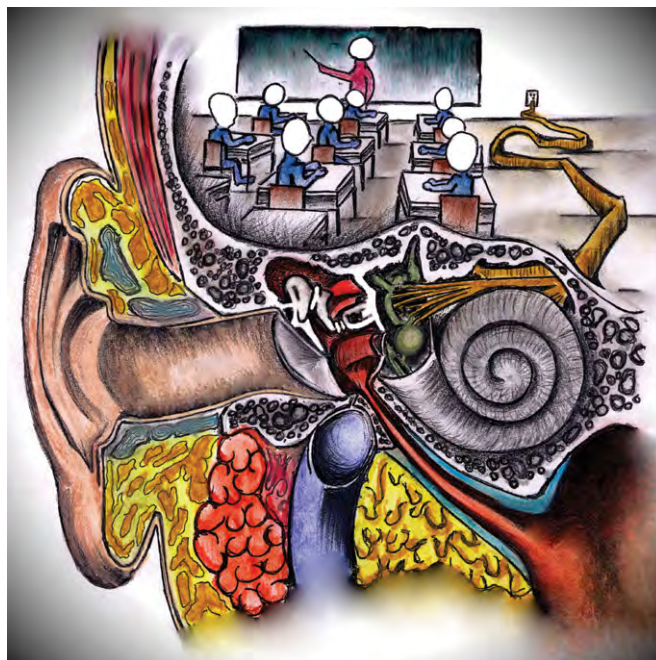
Amaryllis Sánchez Wohlever, MD

my life

loved
created
known
hurt
abandoned
b-r-o-k-e-n
sustained
seen
lost
pursued

d
e
s
p
a
i
r
i
n
G
n
i
y
a
r
p
heard
called
found
embraced
forgiven
surrendered
comforted
restored
renewed
m-e-n-d-e-d
healed
loved

■ **Dr. Sánchez Wohlever** is a wife and mother of three who loves rainbows, seashells, and coquís. As a doctor, she strives to care for the soul and minister to the spirit while treating the body. She is the author of *Walking with Jesus in Healthcare* and blogs at www.DrMarisFaithStop.com.



Listen Up

Camilo Fernandez-Salvador



Healing Heart

Joanna Louise Meadors

■ **Joanna Louise Meadors** is a third year medical student at Florida State University.

J. Steven Johnson, MD

HAND of HOPE

With frightened eyes and trembling hand,
A youngish lass and loving mate
Struggled to understand
The tenuousness of their fading fate.
And all involved with sadness sang
About the harshness of the cure,
And breadth and depth of treatment's scope;
Except that one who wasn't sure,
Who offered out a hand of HOPE.

■ **Dr. Johnson** is the Director of Radiation Oncology in Thomasville, a position he's held for 25 years. "Dr. J" brings a natural passion and empathetic approach to his patient population and thus, believes a better quality of life.

Junelle Cumberbatch Gallon

The Mind of Healing

Healing is a conscious thought—
What the mind believes, the body acts out.
Medicine heals various illnesses,
But God made the body intricately marvelous.
Only the mind can heal your heart—
What you think about is brought to light,
You can heal yourself from cancer;
Watch the doctor try to figure out the answer.

■ **Junelle** is an Accounting Representative in the Department of Finance and Administration at Florida State University College of Medicine. She was born in Barbados, West Indies and enjoys writing poetry and learning about other cultures. In her free time, Junelle mentors young girls at her church and teaches color and skin care techniques through Mary Kay.

Matthew R. Neth

In Honor of Becoming a Doctor

16 days ago he was clinging to life in the operating room.
As he walked into the office I could not help but think what a gift we are afforded
in becoming doctors.
We have the honor of learning the skills and knowledge to heal the sick.
To impact someone's life that much is special!

■ **Matthew R. Neth** is a third year medical student at Florida State University.

Julia Fashner, MD

Stage 3: Preparation

Cut out my bacon cheeseburger and french fries—no way
How much weight will it take?
Diets make you stray
What goes in?
The stomach tells what to put on the plate
Muscle strain, sweat, low back pain
Exercise is more work than play
Walk to use up the calories
Really, decide to change today?



Wes Tindell

■ **Wes Tindell** is a first year medical student at Florida State University.



Feeding of a One-Day Old

Harry Moulis, MD

Xan Nowakowski

Birds from Ashes

Long past diagnosis,
I still rebuild.
Surgery replaces destroyed
gum tissue, but not stubborn
pride. I flail, insisting
nopainkillers I don't needem.
My partner, undeterred,
wraps me in blankets.
Smiling he rubs my throat,
whispers Swallow, I got you.
Diplopia, exhausted, I trust him
no less. I sleep.
He watches over me,
a tender hawk,
and healing begins.

■ **Xan Nowakowski, PhD, MPH** is a little sociomedical scientist with a big passion for research on the experience and management of chronic health conditions. She has appointments with the FSU College of Medicine and Department of Sociology.



Savannah Angel

Rebecca Shriver

■ **Rebecca Shriver** is Assistant Director of Curriculum Development and Evaluation at The Florida State University College of Medicine.

Julia Fashner, MD

Stage 4: Action

You didn't eat cake
Your family asked why?
Change is not easy to take
But the body will like new food, new shape
What's next to break
Less sugary sweet southern ice tea
Walking the dog around the block for his sake
Keep it up, it's all you need do
Diet pill, no that's fake.



Korean Winter

Katie Longardner

■ **Katie Longardner** is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University.

Sarah-Ashley Robbins

A Journey

It started at age 12.
Something wasn't right.
I limped to class and couldn't explain why.

An indescribable pain controlled my hips.
Stiffness limited movement.

Doctors: stumped.
Labs: normal.

At 17, X-ray revealed ankylosing spondylitis.

A diagnosis,
An explanation,
Physical relief is healing.

Hope in a new future is healing.

Now, I will pay it forward.

■ **Sarah-Ashley Robbins** is a third year medical student at Florida State University.



Il Duomo di Firenze

Catalina Zapata

■ **Catalina Zapata** is a first year medical student at Florida State University.



Christine McLaughlin

■ **Christine McLaughlin** is a second year medical student at Florida State University.

Adam Baptiste

Live a Life of Love

Is the 1st more important than the 5th?
That's like asking if a Hug is more important than a Kiss
Life without Love
...is like Water with no Fish
So Live a Life of Love
B4U Live Life Amiss

■ **Adam Baptiste** views himself as a permanent student. He strives to seek and promote truth and justice at all times; and hopes to have an influence on all those he comes in contact with to do the same. LOVE & LIVE LIFE.

Julia Fashner, MD

Stage 5: Maintenance

The scale tells it all
Under 200 pounds WOW
No longer a big blue beach ball
Family and friends notice
You may still see-saw
Going for a daily walk, out of breath is not so close
The portion looks big because the plate is small
Be strong
The person to impress has done it all

Tamra Travers

There is More

The hope of healing is but a distant dream and yet her ever constant prayer. Symptoms, side effects, and altered functional capacity now creep in and take charge of her days. However—in the presence of these lifestyle changes—resiliency, strength, and hope reign the most powerful of all. Healing may not be everything.

■ **Tamra Travers** is a second year medical student at Florida State University.

Bruce Berg, MD

Night Call on M3 Pediatrics

Rattling metallic bars released my fugue state to see a four-year-old-child standing in a fully caged crib. “Mister, mister . . . can I have some juice?” He was all alone in an indigent hospital asking for help, but too young and too sick to be so strong and fearless. I should be so courageous.

■ **Dr. Berg** is a pulmonary and critical care physician who moved from full time practice to becoming a hospital Chief Medical Information Officer, then the Patient Safety Officer, and now he is the Dean of the Sarasota Campus of the Florida State University College of Medicine.

Miranda C. Mack, MS

Laryngeal Carcinoma

Voice silenced by tracheostomy tube.

Frail 90-year-old hand scribbles on a pad: “Pull me as high as you can.” I comply, then as trained I ask, “Is there anything else?”

His eyes grow soft as his hand grasps onto mine— tightly.

I realize that the only other thing he needs in this moment is...Me.

■ **Miranda** is a third year medical student at Florida State University. Her ‘55 Words’ were inspired by a patient she met on her Community Medicine rotation at Covenant Hospice, Pensacola, Florida.

Michael Swor, MD

The Optimal Healer

It’s the power of the universe that heals our wounds. The infinite web of energy controls our psychological, emotional and physical states. The optimal healer focuses these energies with a combination of treatments such as medication, therapy, surgery, and the all-important human connection. The optimal healer uses the potency of empathy, understanding, and simply knowing his or her patients.

■ **Dr. Swor** is an Assistant Clinical Professor at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



White Floral

Laura Varich

■ **Laura Varich** is the medical director of pediatric radiology at the Florida Hospital for Children. Her interest in the visual extends well beyond the black and white of medical imaging. She enjoys using the bold application of color to create works of landscape and figurative abstraction.



Love

Denise Clark

■ **Denise Clark** is the Associate Medical Director of the VITAS Innovative Hospice Care, Central Florida Program.

AFTERMATH

Mary Moore Braunagel

The Alaska Airlines pilot angled the plane so we passengers could see Mt. Saint Helen's exploded side. Debris spilled out from the still smoldering hole. I looked out over the Cascade Mountain range as the plane, powerful and heavy, leveled off and barreled northward from Seattle to Fairbanks. I was going to visit my sister, Patty. We would be backpacking on the Chilkoot Trail in the Yukon Territory for the second week of a two week vacation financed by our father. She had made all the arrangements and warned me that women backpacking had to take extra precautions during their menstrual periods to avoid grizzly bear attacks. That was unnerving; I didn't want life and death situations depending on my attention to detail.

The plane landed and I immediately felt how different the terrain and the ambiance of the location were from Atlanta, my home. Men were dressed in jeans, plaid shirts, and boots rather than business suits. It was the second week of July, and the sun had set about two hours earlier at 10:00 pm, settling in the chill. I wished I had a jacket. Isolated snatches of time float in my memory like collage entries. Isolated scenes: no before, no after. I remember driving up to the A-frame house that my sister had built with her ex-husband. Sleeping on the fold-out sofa in the living room for a week. There is one scene of an open-air halibut fish fry with Patty's co-worker, a red haired girl named Judy, and another was dinner at Patty's boyfriend's place.

On what seemed to be the day after the dinner but was really thirty days later, I opened my eyes to take in my sister at the foot of my hospital bed. Patty was a nurse at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, but she was visiting me as a family member. The whole room was not right. My sister looked different; she had packs of white gauze protruding from her nostrils. An ugly red scar stretched down her torso, although she was fully clothed. A bouquet of Black-Eyed Susan's jutted out of the TV; my sister was simultaneously at the right foot of my bed and at my right elbow. Instinctively, I slammed one eye shut. Now the flowers settled in the vase on a side table. There was only one



On what seemed to be the day after the dinner but was really thirty days later, I opened my eyes to take in my sister at the foot of my hospital bed.

sister and the ugly scar jumped to my belly, reaching from my breastbone to my pelvis. Patty told me I was being transported to another hospital for rehabilitation and another nurse, Doris, would be escorting me. When I opened both eyes but didn't answer, she burst into tears.

All planes from Fairbanks to the lower forty-eight left at night, so the next evening at 1:30 am, Doris and I inched our way up the air stairs from the runway to the door of the jet destined for Seattle. Mountains, barely visible in the pale moonlight, encircled us, eerily whispering, "Goodbye, thanks for visiting the Land of the Midnight Sun."

I couldn't understand why she opened the carton and poured my orange juice when breakfast was served, why she buttered my biscuit. Why did she accompany me everywhere, bolstering up my left side as I walked to transfer planes in Seattle? She even accompanied me to the bathroom. I remember catching a glimpse of a nurse and a patient in a mirror, the patient had her head shaven and was hunched over and limping. I reached to touch my head and felt the indentation where the shunt had once entered my skull.

Flower at Crew

Ryan Humphries

With one arm hanging uselessly in a sling, one leg in a cast, one eye looking straight ahead while the other wandered aimlessly in my shaved head, Doris and I entered the lobby of Emory Hospital's Center for Rehabilitation. Like celebrities being swarmed by news crews, the rehabilitation team surrounded us. Bold sunlight streamed in through the tall windows and hit the gray marble floors. The mellifluous southern accents were so soothing and familiar. Young men and women in scrubs and flowered tunics milled around as if they had been expecting me. Upturned smiles and upswept hair greeted me as they approached cautiously asking how my trip here had been. When I answered, "Fine," it surprised me to hear the word slur and my voice blare.

One question startled me: "Do you know why you are here?"

I might have been told about the automobile accident in which I was injured, but it hadn't solidified in my long-term memory. I knew I had been on a trip to celebrate having earned a master's degree in Math, and now I couldn't tie my own shoes. The thought about my master's degree was a sizzling

griddle, too painful to touch; better withdraw my fingers from that thought for a decade or two.

I looked out at the circle of expectant young men and women who would restore my body and mind to a near approximation of my former self. I could feel my heart expanding with gratitude. I was going to be okay. Whatever was wrong with me, they would know how to fix it.

I thought again about the question, "Do you know why you are here?" I gave the only explanation I could, "I was attacked by a bear."

■ **Mary Moore Braunagel** received further rehabilitation services at Emory University and the Cognitive Development Center in Atlanta. She attended the Georgia Computer Programmer Project at Georgia Institute of Technology and then worked as a computer programmer for the State of Florida for 6 years. She has been a member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at The Florida State University since 2011 where she began writing as a Member of the OLLI Writers Group.



Papua, Indonesia

Tyler Wellman

Let's Hear It For the Health Care System

Jane R. Opel

Today I am mad,
Mad at the health care system.
My bladder cancer was under control,
Under control for several years.

Now it has spread.
Due to circumstances
Beyond my control
The cancer has grown.
My case has become terminal.

How did this happen?
I no longer have any control.
I am at the mercy of the Doctors.
You could try chemo.
You could try radiation,
But there is no cure.
The cure requires removing the bladder.
You're too old for that.
I refuse the chemo,
And the Dr. says hold off on radiation.
So here I am
Waiting for this thing to kill me.

I read some books,
I change my thinking,
I revise my diet,
I try to exercise.
Does any of it do any good?
Yes, the test shows the tumor has not grown.
Hurray – a positive step.
Now I must try to shrink the tumor.
Maybe I can do it.

Take me to China,
Take me to India
Where they cure such diseases.
Must I just wait to see what happens?

Are there no holistic remedies?
How do I find them?
Should I search the Web?
Can anyone help me?

Today I am mad.
The Dr. says “mad” is good.
Only time will tell.

■ **Jane Opel** is a retired widow who spends her winters in Florida near her son and his family. Jane worked for nineteen years at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was the Executive Director of the Radcliffe College Alumnae Association. Jane has been keeping a journal for the last several years, and continues to write poems and short pieces on her life experiences.

The Divorce

Joseph M. Limback

They awoke at 4AM in different beds
With what that day was to bring in their heads.
They both, separately, kneeled to pray,
that God would be near and guide them through that day.

You see, in the beginning, everything went well.
There were some bumps in the road, but nothing to tell.
In time things became gray, between black and white,
Where no person can tell whether things are wrong or right.

Then, from the shadows, the thoughts like an ember,
burned into passion, though hazily remembered.
Although unclear that anything really went wrong,
this didn't keep them from the courts for long.

This story ends with hearts of the same passion,
to heal and move forward, in any sort of fashion.
However, one has to win and one has to lose,
but that was up to the court to choose.

They pleaded their cases, that the judge may concede,
that neither had acted out of malice or greed.
Out of this hazy gray mess, the judge eventually resolved,
a settlement, that for patient or surgeon, saw nothing solved.

■ **Joseph Limback** is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University.

¿Preguntas?

Stephen M. Quintero, MD

What do I do?
What to decide?
Which of the two kills the cancer inside?

Which is better?
Which is right?
Which one will help me continue the fight?

What if there's nausea?
What if I puke?
Will I lose weight or all of my hair?
What if it fails? Will anyone care?

Could it end in a coma or perhaps in a stroke?
Will someone be with me?
Will I burden my folks?

So many visitors, yet I'm alone
Some of them linger, some of them stay
Most of them tell me I'll be "OK"

How can they know?
None of them can
Will anyone be here to hold my hand?

Oh, what should I do?
What to decide?
Will anyone come and stand by my side?

Is there a way out?
Some "mistake" in a test?
Overworked doctors in need of a rest?

Perhaps it's an error?
So please double check
To suffer this terror for some lens with a speck
I just wait to hear that it's not too late
Perhaps I needn't suffer this uncommon fate

Why me? Why me?
Is it for sins I atone?
Or for some grave past, I must die alone?

Oh, what to do?
Oh, what to decide?
How from fear and death can I hide?

You've heard my concern, but not my cry
You've answered my questions and not my why
No comfort here, just treatment and dope
I'm not afraid, I know I will die
Something is missing—how will I cope?

Oh, what to do?
Oh, what to decide?

■ **Dr. Quintero** is a family physician and assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health at the Florida State University College of Medicine.

What My Doctor Tells Me

Stephen Quintero, MD

You're very sick

slilp ruoy ekat ot tegrof t'noD
shtnom eerht ni kcab emoC
neht erofeb nward doolb ruoy evaH
stset ruoy erofeb knird ro tae t'noD
llip tsrif ruoy htiw doof diova ot deen uoY
doof htiw enicidem dnoce ruoy ekat tub
su llac htaerb fo trohs ro hguoc teg uoy fl

You're very sick

taht ytiralugerrit elttit a evah snacs ruoY
pu dewollof eb ot sdeen
tsigolonircodne eht ot uoy dnes ot deen eW
ecnarusni evah uoy oD
drawrof dneb ro tfil t'nac uoY

You're very sick

Mother

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr.

As alienating and degrading as everyday experience could feel, it was substantially worse once the spark of defiance had died out, once the toughening sense of anger and disenfranchisement became fear, once that fear turned on loss, because this loss hurt deeper than the skin could thicken.

The world had taken something dear and beloved, her child, and the memories of him were fresh in her heart; the smile, the fact that she had held him and raised him, fed and clothed him, delighted in his growth, worried and loved and cared for him. With this loss came the recognition that life and this society were painfully beyond her control. It was not just the ever present assaults on dignity and identity that worked against her. It was also her emotional machinery. It could not sustain, nor

They said the tree could grow in Brooklyn, through the concrete, through the dirt and heavy traffic, but once the heart was broken it was a wonder it kept on beating for any reason but to ache.



endure, without even the merest scrap of nourishment and encouragement.

They said the tree could grow in Brooklyn, through the concrete, through the dirt and heavy traffic, but once the heart was broken it was a wonder it kept on beating for any reason but to ache. And yet that ache was the last solemnity, a refusal to surrender the love felt, a refusal to move on and accept it. It was so hard to grieve, and so unfair, and another reminder of the sick injustice of this place and time.

And it hurt so bad, to even think of this loss, and yet she rose each morning and walked, unsteady at times, into what had become her life. Strong and sick—at the same time.

She took some small comforts in the care and compassion expressed by those near to her. But in the quiet, private corners of her heart, she knew she was broken in a way that would never be fixed. It could maybe heal over, in time, through the reaching of acceptance and the grace of god, and god willing, one day it might. But it would never be whole. And it would never beat and glow and delight with the life of her son, not in this life. He was only in her memory now, and in her mind she wondered, and hoped and prayed, that these did not become poisoned also. The pain of dwelling there would be her companion in grief, but she also knew that she would never fully let that go. On his birthday. On the day he died. She would always remember.

And so what are we to do with this woman? What is our society to think of her? What are we to do with all of these masses, these people, each one a lifetime of stories, each one a volume of love and loss, mistakes and triumphs? How can we bear to endure that we all are aching, hurting, struggling, and yet we know each other little, if at all. And yet we can know we are all hurting and struggling and striving. Not as equals, and not equally. But what are we to make of this?

What are we, with all that is left undone, to do?

Naked Branches

Naomi Salz

■ *Naomi Salz is a fourth year medical student entering the field of Family Medicine after graduation. She enjoys photography, acrylic painting and jewelry making.*

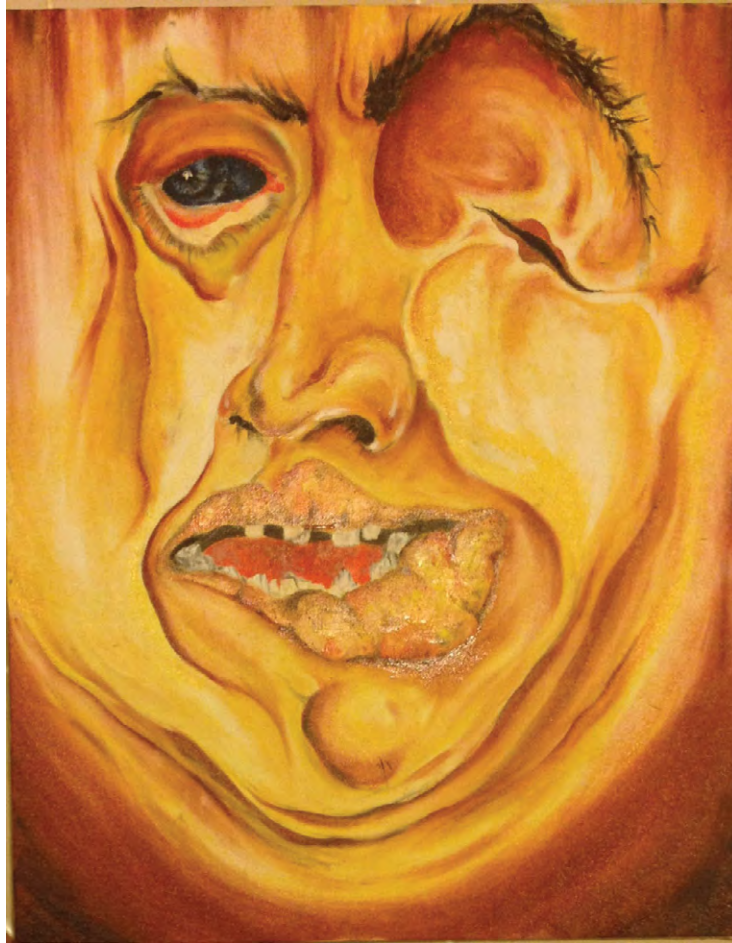
Pen Strokes

Christopher T. Martin

Devastation plowed through his brain, his heart, his soul—
When a simply uttered phrase took its toll.
Although he knew this made him a foolish son,
He had to deny the end would ever come.
“I’ve got tumors all over my lungs,” she said.
The day had arrived, that for years he did dread.
The cancer had spread; it would not relent
And quickly a strong woman’s health fell into descent.
To be sedated and intubated was a reluctant choice,
But she wanted one last time to hear her son’s voice.
Her son came scrambling to arrive
Only to find her barely alive.
She was without faculty, he was told, more tumor than tissue.
Doctors said no option; allopathic treatment was no longer the issue.
He wept at her side for days, saying everything for the last time,
All the while agonizing over to what next he was consigned—
The most difficult pen strokes he’d ever laid to paper.
The son will never forget those, he’ll surely always remember.
He often thinks about what those marks brought to an end,
And the wounds that would scar but never mend.
For those strokes of the pen, tremulously scribbled and wrought with tears,
Were the way a med student had to end his mom’s life in his first year.
Yes, he knew they would never again speak and he was done hoping,
But family, friends, and Mom’s dog helped with coping.
And the next morning he awoke with another deep breath,
Forever conscious of the frail balance between life and death.
Exquisitely reminded that blood still runs through his veins
As he meets new challenges and will someday smile again.
Time has some way to heal without letting him forget
Where he has come from and the sorrow he has met,
All the while still training to help his patients survive.
Someday he might even be your doc, but he’ll never forget why.

In memory of Jeanette C. Lorinzn

- **Christopher Martin** is a fourth year medical student originally from Lake Worth, Florida. He plans to go into Emergency Medicine.



Pathology

Yaowaree Leavell

■ **Yaowaree (Noona) Leavell** is a third year medical student at Florida State University.

Health

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr.

The fractal of a steady state of cascading sequence
 That reverberates in space as the health of human beings
 On the metric never tested all generic guidelines
 Studies meta analyzed marginalized on side lines
 Creature comforts in the same approach
 Moving with a chain approach
 Dying cuz we try to live alike and like the same result
 A metastatic cancer of the innate cell state
 Propagated by the state, genetic rates and food intake
 The ache of diabetes and obesity is great
 And far away from contained to individual fate
 Consumption is a social influence we can't escape
 Cuz influences that shape create and make the social norm
 We conform, fluorides for sweets and sweetened fructose corn
 make it better for the brighter day, right away, like right away
 Take away the pain and the rage and die away
 On the inside, arteries bloated, neurons frozen
 Consuming mutilations of self to immolate the broken
 Open wounds of an existential pain left unspoken.

The Man from Sierra Leone

Zach Williamson

Forty-nine-year-old male for a physical,
Who is taking no pharmaceuticals.
His exam unremarkable,
And a history notable
For hemorrhoids, the treatment empirical.

This man from Sierra Leone
Reports bumping his funny bone.
His fifth digit went numb,
But he would not succumb,
And for two weeks he's had not a groan.

My impression is ulna compression.
Resolved, no treatment to mention.
A flu shot consented,
And patient contented.
Return in twelve months for prevention.

■ **Zach Williamson** is a fourth year medical student at Florida State University



Beauty and the Bones

Chanel Davidoff

■ **Chanel Davidoff** is the Wellness Outreach Student Director at Florida State University Campus Recreation. She is an aspiring physician who appreciates the connection between creativity and understanding.



Blooming Life

Chanel Davidoff

Formaldehyde

Tyler Wellman

Down in the lab
formaldehyde penetrates
nostrils, odor attaching first to
clothes, then to skin. Sterilizing
effects slowly seep into spirits.

Start dissection on back,
slice with scalpel into flesh to
remove the only clothes
cadavers have left, toss
skin into steel bucket.

Nil Per Os

Lisa A. Cunningham, MD

“Well, aren’t you a pretty young thing,” Thad exclaimed as I walked into his room that morning. Having been lost in my thoughts, I was startled and pleased by this greeting. The last four patient rooms had been quite somber, so this was a happy departure from my mind’s path.

I greeted Thad warmly, explaining that I was there to get his story from the beginning. His reply, “I’m having a hard time eating and I can’t swallow too good.” To which I responded, “We’ll get to that, but I know your story started long before”.

Thad was born in a sleepy town outside Baltimore, Maryland in 1929. He grew up the son of a builder who had deep roots in the community. His mother stayed at home with Thad and his younger brother and sister. They didn’t have much, but nobody did during the Depression. They made it work though, because they had each other.

In high school, Thad worked with his father on construction sites learning the trade, but never felt that construction was his calling. After graduation, Thad chose to enroll in the Army with the hopes of having big adventures outside his small town. Instead, he found himself in post-war occupied Germany, a bitter place for a small town boy with big dreams. He found solace in the company of his American comrades while consuming heavy German food and pints of strong beer.

After returning to the states he began working as a police office for Baltimore County, where he continued to eat and drink to his content. Thad described himself as a “true meat and potatoes guy, light on the starch.” During his time on the force he reconnected with and married a girl from his hometown. After a few happy years of marriage they decided to start a family. They thought they had met with success when she began to feel that her belly was getting full. What they thought was the beginning of a new life turned out to be the end of hers—that heaviness was advanced ovarian cancer.

Thad remained single for many years, eschewing romantic love for the comfort and routine of work. He lived the life of a true bachelor, going to the bar with the guys after work every day for his standard two gin and tonics, and ordering take out nearly every

evening. He also started to smoke, initially just socially at the bar, but then regularly one pack per day. He didn’t care much about his health and the effects were starting to show. His blood pressure and cholesterol started to creep. During this time, in a cruel twist of fate, Thad’s mother was also diagnosed and died from ovarian cancer. Many years later his sister would be taken by it, too.

As Thad reached retirement age he longed for companionship. He was lucky to meet and marry a woman who had lost her husband to cancer, sharing a story similar to his. They were a happy pair as she loved to cook as much as he loved to eat. After Thad’s retirement, they moved to

Thad described himself as a
“true meat and potatoes guy,
light on the starch.”



Southern Ground Hornbill

Katy Wood

Florida to take advantage of the warm sunshine that permitted year-round backyard barbecues. Neither worried about the health consequences of their culinary actions even as Thad developed diabetes, underwent open heart surgery for three vessel disease, and developed CHF. These bodily abuses continued until Thad realized he was having progressive difficulty swallowing. Now, no longer able to enjoy his most favorite activity, he sought the help of his doctor.

Over the next few years as Thad's ability to swallow further declined, his doctors performed many tests. An esophagram showed frank aspiration and a speech pathology exam showed severe pharyngeal phase dysphagia. No specific cause could be found for Thad's problem, so it was classified under the fall back catch-all term "idiopathic." Although the cause was undefined, Thad's history of smoking and drinking, as well as his other comorbidities, were frequently mentioned as likely contributors. Thad, however, preferred to focus on the unknown causes, not the probable suspects.

Eventually, Thad's condition declined enough that he began to lose weight and develop deficiencies from lack of eating. He was no longer able to enjoy his steak and (some) potato diet; instead his meals were reduced to purees, applesauce and puddings. Although food presented a problem to Thad, he was still able to enjoy his daily cocktails. Ultimately, these too were taken from him.

Over a few days, I saw a progressive decline in Thad's health at the hospice care center. That first day we met, he still had vague hopes of miraculously "pulling through," despite having opted for palliative care. Those hopes were soon lost as he continued to deteriorate and began to understand the reality of our conversations. Within three days, Thad was reduced to a diet of fortified shakes and thickened orange juice because

everything else caused him to gag and aspirate. After another four days, he was reduced to nil per os, which should have been a hard blow to someone who loved food. However, Thad realized death had come knocking, so the loss was inconsequential.



Spain Collage
Gayle Ann Bone

**That first day we met, he still
had vague hopes of miraculously
"pulling through," despite having
opted for palliative care.
Those hopes were soon lost...**

Thad died on a Wednesday a few days later. I was at my chronic care preceptor's office when he passed away. My preceptor and I were trying our hardest to intervene in other's lives so they could live many long and happy years free of debilitating disease. After a couple of hours, I felt like a broken record counseling people on the benefits of smoking cessation, alcohol reduction, exercise and weight loss. I felt like my pleas for better blood sugar and blood pressure control were falling on deaf ears. Then, the last patient of the morning came in ready to

commit to smoking cessation after numerous frustrating counseling visits. I left the office feeling invigorated knowing that I changed the course of this person's future.

I learned of Thad's passing the next morning when I saw his death certificate on the desk ready for

signature. Although I knew what Thad's outcome was going to be the first day we met, I was still saddened by his death. He was a good man who had made it through some tough times. I only wish there had been someone there years earlier, a nagging, broken record who could have tried to alter the course of his life. Someone who tried, tried, and tried again.

■ **Dr. Cunningham** graduated from the Florida State University College of Medicine in 2013. She is currently a general surgery resident at Halifax Health Medical Center in Daytona Beach, FL.

Psalm XXX

William Wellman

The title reads *Thanksgiving for Recovery from
Grave Illness.*

I decide this shall be my Psalm.
I will be well.
I, with the Psalmist, will be
made well by the Lord.
I take my drugs
as directed.
Psalm XXX every night.

Prednisone, Cellcept,
nothing changes.
I do not improve.
A move to stronger poison,
Cytosan.
Six weeks gone,
nothing changes.
I do not improve.
Psalm XXX every night.

Doubt arises and questions come forth—
What disease did the Psalmist have?
Why does God not hear
my supplication?

Lord be MY helper
Lord be MY helper
a helper.
Psalm XXX every night.

Boston will have answers.
Bombarded by degrees, a second biopsy—
the renowned pathologist finds a new disease.
This disease is not curable.
The voice on the phone mentions future kidney failure
(from across the hotel room, mom quickly reads the
disappointment in my eyes).
Time for stronger poison,
Rituximab.
Signature provided, serious
side effects.
I have not read Psalm XXX for weeks now.

Back to Florida
improvements none.
Rituximab joins the list of
no avails. Prograf because
why not?
My hair thins, falls out
all day, fills my hands. One more,
no avail.
One last treatment,
Plasmapheresis.
Two months—
these nurses, so nice and caring.
Gatorade/TV/two hours/blood out/
albumin in/clockwork.
All to no avail.
I start to look at Psalm XXX again.

I switch doctors,
We wait for kidneys to die.
I will not be healed,
I will not dance,
I will not sing.
Why,
Why in the hell would Psalm XXX be my Psalm?
I switch to Psalm XXXVIII
A Penitent Sufferers Plea for Healing
Psalm XXXVIII every night.

My kidneys fail,
I am strangely happy.
Dialysis,
Catheter projects from my chest, later
I get an AV Fistula.
I feel healthier now than I have in 18 months.
Psalm XXXVIII every night
makes much more sense.

Sitting in the chairs of dialysis clinics, we are icicles.
Dripping yet beautiful. I can always
find some smiles. However,
I can not escape
the fact that 50 years ago
I would be dead.
Night sweats, migraines, constantly in a
cloud. I am sick,
this is who I am.

*There is no soundness in my flesh
There is no health in my bones*
Psalm XXXVIII makes so much more sense.

I am beginning to see grace.
Father Brou and St. Ignatius have pushed me.
Bible studies, theology discussions,
Love alone is credible.
Mom will give me her kidney,
I shall have a transplant.
First, they must remove mine.
I was such a fool to read Psalm XXX.

Kidneys removed.
One laproscopically, one
old fashioned—a nicked blood vessel.
I can feel 100 years of surgical advancements
across my abdomen.
Two more months and I will be *etherised upon a
table, once more spread out against the sky.*
Psalm XXXVIII every night.

My faith strong,
Yet my hope human.
I wish for success instead of
presence.
Surgery completed,
Mom is ok.
For me the ICU: extreme hypertension.
The woman from Barbados flees in and out
with dirty jokes.
I am too tired to read,
I simply pray for no relapse.

Proteinuria.
I am retaining fluid,
I tell no one.
I am
scared.
Almost unheard of levels, 40 grams/24 hours.
The haunting ghost no
longer an apparition. Relapse,
All I envision is a life on machines.
For now it is back to
dialysis and plasmapheresis.
I am in a very dark place.
I am silent.

I talk to no one
outside family and doctors. I send out emails with
encouraging words. Yet I am
in a dark place, ready to fall.
I am crushed, I am
defeated, *my pain is ever with me.* I am
in the dark hole, down to the Pit.
I begin to read Ash Wednesday, Lamentations III,
Psalm XXXVIII over and over, over and over.

I scream f**k you to get well cards
that say it is His will.
Why would someone ever write such things?
I am bottomed out.
My brother prays for those in the hospital
alone. I am thankful.
The church had a prayer service
in the small chapel, it overflowed
with friends and family.
I go to the hospital bathroom and cry
uncontrollably.
I read Ash Wednesday, Lamentations III,
Psalm XXXVIII over and over, over and over.



Stems of Life
Chanel Davidoff

Psalm XXX cont'd

It is not His will.
I acknowledge the
meaninglessness of this world with a yes,
only that I may say yes to the meaning
offered in Christ.
I am learning hope:
At all times, no matter how sick,
Christ has been present.
Dialysis at 8 am, plasmapheresis at 12 pm,
these are marathon days.
Benadryl for itching,
puts me out.
I read Psalm XXX for some reason today.

A third kidney biopsy,
This time the
giant needle enters through my stomach.
During plasmapheresis
I reach a calm not my own.
The doctors come in as a group: solemn, stricken.
Results.
Bad, three weeks and half the kidney is permanently
scarred. I am
fine. I am ok. I know tomorrow I will be fine
as well.
Transplant nephrectomy,
indefinite dialysis.
I read Psalm XXX again.

I heal quickly, three kidneys
have now been removed from my body.
A welcoming calm, a
presence overwhelms me.
I am not yet joy, but
I am hope. Dialysis
has its own issues.
I learn joy, I think
about seminary. Possibilities.
Presence.
*You have turned my mourning into
dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy*
Psalm XXX, my Psalm.

■ **Will** is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and also has a MS in Forestry from the University of Kentucky. A main focus for Will has been connecting faith and ecological communities through shared concerns and goals. Will is also the editor-in-chief at The EcoTheo Review.

The Guide

Carol Faith Warren

You were there to guide
When I did not know the way
The rocks were oh so high
And dark clouds hid the day
Each step took me closer to the edge
To the broken sea below
The midnight sky was closing in
There was no place left to go

You did not tell me what to do
Or even point the way
You listened to my tumbled speech
You listen to me pray
Still afraid to take a step
I fell upon my knees
Yet in those words the clouds did part
And let me stand at ease

A flood of tears has washed the scales
Of grief and pain I wore
My eyes were open now
Much clearer than before
I see a path that takes me back
The brink is not so near
I take a step and take a breath
I now can face the fear

Upon the rocky cliff I stand
And welcome salt and spray
I see the far horizon now
So you must have known the way
Your silent presence spoke
You did not let me stray
My feet are still upon the path
Tomorrow and today

No one can build a life again
Except the one inside
The work is yours
The guide will walk beside
As ever onward goes the trek
The world goes ever on
We walk within its' walls of glass
To touch the rosy dawn



Eyes

Tyler Wellman



El Caballo

Kevin Yan

■ **Kevin Yan** is a third year medical student. About his art, Kevin writes, “When I was younger, I thought it would be really cool to be a comic book artist or illustrator. That dream eventually developed into a passion for art and design using digital media, like Photoshop. I keep that part of me alive by channeling my energy into something fun and creative in my free time.”

Para Ti... For You...

Ana C. Balarezo

Que nunca tengas caminos sin salida en tu vida, y senderos sin bendiciones.
Que nunca tengas días tan breves que no quepen el amor y tu linda sonrisa.
Que nunca tengas mañanas tan sombrías que no puedas mirar las maravillas de la naturaleza.
Que nunca dejes de descubrir y admirar la verdadera belleza, la del alma.
Que jamás la música deje de sonar en tu alma y la poesía en tu silencio.
Que nunca tu corazón deje de tener paz y tu mente lucidez para poder reflexionar.
Que nunca tengas a tus amigos tan ocupados que no te puedan ver, escuchar, ni llamar.
Que nunca tengas a tus seres queridos en circunstancias difíciles que no les puedas ayudar.
Que nunca tengas sueños más allá de tu alcance que tus bellas manos no puedan tocar.
Que nunca dejes de tener la palabra “perdón” en tus labios para los que hiciste daño.
Que nunca dejes de tener la palabra “gracias” para los que te dieron momentos de felicidad.
Que nunca haya luceros que no te puedan alumbrar cuando emprendas un camino.
Que nunca te conformes con menos de lo que puedas ser.
Que tu mente jamás deje de comprender todo pensamiento, palabra y acción, sin juzgar.
Que nunca tengas la insensatez de negar el amor, de afrontar y enmendar tus errores.
Que nunca dejes de tener la humildad para comprender a los que te aman.
Que nunca pierdas la valentía de enfrentar las adversidades y las fuerzas de cambiar para ser mejor.
Que jamás tengas palabras, pensamientos y acciones que ofendan y siembren dolor.
Que nunca se extinga tu capacidad de amar, tus ideales y tu sed de luchar por la justicia.
Que nunca puedas olvidar todo lo que tuviste desde el comienzo y que es y será tuyo para siempre.
Que nunca dejes de tener fe, esperanza y a Dios cerca de ti....

Para Ti... That You May...

Never have dead ends in your life, or trails without blessings.
Never have days too brief for your love or your pretty smile.
Never have a morning so bleak that you can't see the wonders of nature.
Never fail to discover and admire the true beauty of the soul.
Never lose the music in your soul, or the poetry in your silence.
Let your heart be at peace, and your mind find clarity.
Never let your friends stay so busy that you cannot see or hear them.
Never leave your loved ones in such difficult circumstances that you can't help them.
Never have dreams beyond your reach your beautiful hands can't touch.
Never fail to have the word “forgiveness” on your lips for those who hurt you.
Never fail to say the word “thank you” to those who gave you moments of happiness.
Never let lights be hindered from illuminating your path when you begin a journey.
Never settle for less than you can be.
Never leave your mind to not understand every thought, word and deed, without judgment.
Never have the folly to deny love, or fail to confront and amend your mistakes.
Never fail to have humility so that you understand those who love you.
Never lose the courage to face adversity, never run from the forces of change that make you better.
Never have words, thoughts, or actions that offend and sow pain.
Never extinguish your ability to love, your ideals and your thirst to fight for justice.
Never forget that what you had from the beginning is and will be yours forever.
Never fail to have faith, hope and God near you....

■ **Ana Cecilia Balarezo Mesones** was born in Perú and graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Spanish and Multilingual Multicultural Education.

Brass(ket)!

Yaowaree Leavell

The moon in the sky and the sky on the sea
the man on the mountain the mountain in me!
take (your dark (eyes)/
rake) my stark (bones)/
throw) me a zephyr unfettered as thee

my ship is a wind with more eyes than it needs
darting through cloudbanks like fish among weeds
fill (my full (lips)/
trill) my soft (voice)/
light) the way west for my windblown steed

my bones are a basket of sun-forged glass
trilling a song all thunder and brass
feel my long (ing)/
touch) my warm (skin)/
brown) the cliffs and green the grass



Author's Note on Brass(ket)!

I wrote this piece as a sort of poetry experiment in synesthesia, which is a rare neurologic condition in which different sensory modalities fuse. Some people taste asparagus when they hear the number seven, others see color swatches when listening to music. Even for those of us without abnormal brain pathways, language can also be experienced in different modalities. This poem was meant to be all vision and sound: the overlapping experiences of seeing syllables sequestered and broken up on a page, while hearing the brassy, glass shattering loudness of the word sounds, while also (hopefully) seeing the bright, living image series described in the lines.

All of the parenthetical words are body parts embedded in scenic description - a loose reference to various myth cycles in which earth is created from the dismantled form of some large deity, i.e. the Norse Ymir and the Chinese Pangu. What follow after the line breaks are verbs which can be attached to both the body part that precedes them as a descriptor or taken as an imperative beginning the line that follows.

—Yaowaree Leavell

The Challenge

Saritha Tirumalasetty

Tell me a story
One without bounds
Where creatures leap
Across lush fairy grounds

Paint me a dream
With colors untamed
Where wonders are conjured
From worlds unnamed

Sketch me a venture
With discord and chime
Where plot runs wild
Without concept of time

Envelop me in fantasy
While I sit agape
Hold me on edge
Help me escape

Angel Azul

Verónica Andrade Jaramillo, MD

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On the Back Cover

My Summer

Kevin Yan

■ **Kevin Yan** is a third year medical student. About his art, Kevin writes, “When I was younger, I thought it would be really cool to be a comic book artist or illustrator. That dream eventually developed into a passion for art and design using digital media, like Photoshop. I keep that part of me alive by channeling my energy into something fun and creative in my free time.”



KEVIN YAN

Heal Mission:

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