



# THEAL

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

Fall 2009

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### Invent Yourself

Zach Folzenlogen worked as a graphic artist before joining us in the class of 2013. His work was all created on a computer, and the images are astounding. As we continue forward with forming who we are as physicians, teachers and students, ours is the opportunity to invent what we can become. You can see more of his work on the HEAL website. (See left and below)

### Birth Cortney Whittington Class of 2010

It was my first day of my very first clinical rotation of third year. I was sure that OB/GYN would be amazing. I had never witnessed a live birth and was more than thrilled to be assisting in the process. My first day was also my day of being on call and spending the night at the hospital. Of course a whole new world of unknown adventure lay in front of me. I was excited, frightened and curious. We hit the ground running with a 7:00am scheduled caesarean section. I couldn't believe that I was assisting in this incredible procedure. The parents were elated and baby was perfect! I couldn't believe how fast the procedure went.

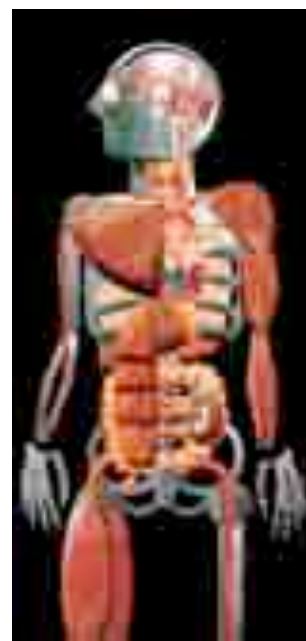
They day continued to be very busy as we checked on all of the women currently in labor. I was learning so much about fetal monitoring and labor progression. At around 11:00pm I was exhausted. I had barely eaten and felt completely drained. My attending told me that one of our patients would probably be delivering in the next 2 hours and to go back to my call room and get some rest. There was no way I could rest. The excitement of day had been too immense and the thought of witnessing a vaginal birth shortly kept my adrenaline pumping. I decided that I would be brave and go visit this woman early on my own to see how she was doing. She appeared different than just hours before when she was calm and somewhat relaxed. Now she was sweating, grunting inaudible sounds and gasping to catch her breath. Her husband by her side, cheering her on as the nurse

coached her to push. In contrast to the earlier C-section, when the baby was so quickly and painlessly brought into this world, my heart went out to this courageous mother to be pushing her heart out. Clearly in agony she pushed even harder as the room filled with screams at the first sign of crowning. Her strength was regenerated by the thought of seeing her baby soon. I joined in the cheers. Anything to keep this poor woman going would be necessary. Then my attending came flying through the door.

*Screams of agony echoed  
Words of encouragement to mellow  
Push and breathe  
So hard in deed  
Soon a cry, a baby's cry  
Another cry, a mama's cry  
The sensation of elation  
Unprecedented joy  
For this baby boy*

He gowned up and was ready to go in under a minute flat. In a world wind of chaotic chants and maternal screams a new voice was heard. An 8 lb 3 oz baby boy made his appearance crying his lungs out. It was the most beautiful sound. A feeling of relief filled the air. Goose bumps bombarded my skin. I didn't even realize that I had been crying before my attending came over to me and asked if I was okay. I replied, I am more than okay!

That was amazing!



**Thank you!**  
*The HEAL executive editors are grateful to all of you who gave your time and your opinions to the selection of pieces for the book.*

*A Piece of Ecuador Photo Journal*  
*Tiffany Vollmer, Class of 2011*

*A tickle and giggle  
that has echoed  
in my heart every  
day since....*



Hogar de Ancianos (Home of the Ancients)



So much confusion,  
my soul needs to rest.  
Pain radiates from my chest  
as I sit back and contemplate the fate  
of the many men and women seen  
suffering from a disease called  
Unfulfilled Dreams.  
A family torn apart by a stigma,  
an apparently uncontrollable enigma.  
A little girl with the world in her eyes  
stares at me as if I were more,  
I just wish I could whisper in her ear and tell  
her I found the cure.  
Children with outstretched arms reach for me,  
not truly understanding that in a moment's time  
they won't be able to see.

Every life lost in this place is a defeat,  
not to an economy  
but to a family,  
just think of what that person was suppose to be.  
Now he or she is just another example in  
a never ending tragedy.

Although death and loneliness surrounds us  
like a blanket on a frigid night around us  
we can't help but to notice the smiling faces,  
relieved, happy even, to see us.  
I think to myself, why are we worth such a fuss?  
but it is because just maybe there is a savior among us.  
Someone who can change their world  
and remove the blinding clouds of dust.

In my heart I know they just need someone  
they can trust.

In this place, Eastern culture and Western knowledge  
engage in a boxing match where there will be no winner.  
For accepting one, means truly abandoning another.  
Leaving one more child without  
a sister or brother  
father or mother.  
Left to roam the street  
with no money  
and no shoes on his feet.  
Or sell your soul  
and become cold and cultureless.  
For a person without culture  
is a person without skin  
desperate to find a place in this world we live in.  
All this while people pretend  
to fight wars that are meaningless.  
Unwilling to feed the desolate deserving masses of  
human beings  
Trapped; or so it seems  
in the black holes of poverty and hypocrisy,  
with blindfolds over their eyes so they can't see.  
This can't be.

***Journey 1: Lost***

**Jason Boothe, Class of 2013**

little black boy  
 sit down.  
 fold your hands into your lap  
 and put your lap into order  
 now cry me a little song.  
 sing me a little note about me  
 caring about what you care about,  
 then dream me a little dream.  
 and when your tears turn into  
 oases and exposed rivers  
 stand up  
 and pour me a little cup  
 fill it with every broken promise  
 and the unfulfilled moments of  
 belated birthdays and first days  
 of the school year when your  
 clothes were unkempt...then  
 tell me a little secret  
 about how--you wish your father  
 bothered enough to be a father  
 or fathered another version of you,  
 so that you could have a friend  
 and then  
 write me a little poem.  
 make me a little rhyme about  
 the places you lived and the schools  
 you've attended

the teachers you've impressed  
 and the classmates  
 you've offended...by simply  
 being a little black boy  
 who could read and speak well  
 and vividly express himself,  
 find clean shirts amongst the dirty ones  
 and dress himself  
 long enough  
 to cover up his little pain  
 and then bring me a little more  
 of whatever it is that you have  
 bundled up in your little hand,  
 stashed away from piercing eyes,  
 tucked inside of your little lap  
 that you peek at every moment  
 you are given a little slack  
 a little chance and little hope  
 a little grade for your little work  
 just...put it in my hand...  
 and trust me,  
 little black boy  
 i promise to give it back--in order.

### *Little Black Boy*

Jimmy Moss, Class of 2010

### **SOLITUDE**

Sarah Mike Grenon, Class of 2012

I watch two crimson orbs slowly fade  
 into the dusty Sunday sky as you drive  
 away with my joy, leaving me restless.  
 We have carried on this way for years  
 but every goodbye stings like the first  
 as we look forward to the last.

This life is a whirlwind, in which we  
 could not be more entangled and still  
 so disengaged.

Most days I feel like a widow, mourn-  
 ing my empty bed until the weekend  
 when you come home to remind me  
 that this sacrifice is noble and our  
 love is strong enough to span this  
 distance.

Tell me, my husband, that the tears  
 are not in vain and the heartache of  
 this insufferable loneliness will pass  
 quickly.

Tell me that we are mere miles, and  
 not worlds apart.  
 Tell me that the dust will settle when I  
 can be called both wife and doctor.



*There is a story about the people of Israel and their leader, Moses. The people were attacked by venomous snakes. Moses made a serpent of brass and he attached it to a pole. Everyone who looked at the pole with the snake survived. When I first heard the story, I was astounded that simply looking at the pole with the snake healed people! Healing comes in many forms. Medicine, however, plays a very small role in the healing that takes place in the medical encounter. Healing comes from the emotional connection that individual physicians have with their patients—listening, validating, and helping people feel better. When medical professionals and patients emotionally invest in each other, they each become a “brass serpent.” Perhaps, patients, family members and friends will see us and feel healed.*



### *Healing*

Jose E Rodriguez M.D.

### *Confidence*

Jennifer Miller, Class of 2013

Everyone has a story to tell. I know that as an absolute certainty, even though it's a statement which is indistinct at best. Most of them never get published, come hardcover or paperback, or even, if you can believe it, without a book tour to promote them. I think for the most part they are told haltingly, over a long stretch of time. Sometimes you tell them to a group of people, to someone special, to yourself, or to no one in particular. Don't they always seem to change, just slightly, from telling to telling? The lines can blur between what actually happened and what is an embellishment. In the end though, it's still your story, part of it anyways. For what it's worth, this is some of mine.

I had some idea of what was in store for me before I started all of this, but in the end I was still clueless. I did my research, as any dutiful student does, by reading brochures, pamphlets, talked to administration, staff, other students, family, and friends. What ended up happening was that I got filled with other people's preconceived notions of what it would be like for me and, if it were the case, what their experiences were like. In all honesty, there was little else that could have happened; you really can't know what it's like until you've done it yourself.

So what hit me first? It wasn't the workload, oddly enough. The material was and continues to be challenging, with an ever increasing volume. Everyone experiences that shock initially, I think it was one of the ties that bound us; a universal, if individually distinct, event. I don't want to make generalities, but I believe that you'll eventually find that what is given to you, what is expected out of you, to be manageable. It wasn't the workload. No one did, or could have in retrospect, prepare me for the emotional impact that this would all be. No matter how hard I had worked or the stress I had been put under compared to this because for the first time in many years, this was a singularly unique educational experience. Again, I cannot speak for others, but I can imagine that, eventually, it will hit everyone. Sometimes it won't be all at once, maybe a step at a time, for some even immediately. When it does hit, it'll be a mélange of your own experiences, fears, weaknesses and even the strengths and joys in your life.

I was exhausted by the end of the first semester. I had never taken anatomy before, the material was very new, but I was eager and put in the hours I needed to. I thought I had accomplished something. The mistake I had

made wasn't in thinking whether I had or had not accomplished something, but rather that I could be any more tired than I already was. I began to have less time for my hobbies, communication began to wane with family and friends and the new semester was only a few weeks in starting. Someone more observant might have noticed the signs, but I was lax in being a steward to myself. Without being cognizant of it, I had built something akin to a cocoon around myself made of studying, class activities, and volunteer work. I had deluded myself into believing that all of this was necessary and that I needed to sacrifice more and more to improve myself, giving false support to this vague notion of professionalism. What I ended up doing was insulating myself from the world that I had known and enjoyed being a part of, until all I could hear was a haunting silence. Even with all of the people I would interact with on a day-to-day basis, I was alone. That moment when I realized I was lost was frightening. That was when it hit me.

In the proper context a new experience can be an exhilarating one. This was not one of those times. I had been turned inward into my own thoughts for a long time. Now my mind was blank. It took everything I had not to start crying.

What happens when you feel so weak and brittle? I reached for a source of strength, which has been for a long time the memory of my father and what he had to do to come to this country. 35 dollars, a wife, two young sons, and a few suitcases were all that he had when he came here. He had trained as a physical therapist in India, working in a burn ward at a children's hospital. Coming to the US would mean a huge jump in his salary and with that a better life for his family.

He came with a lot of hope, but not a lot of

certainty of anything else. My mother recently told me that when we moved into the first apartment, she did not buy a single pot or pan for months. She said the reason was that my father had not taken his licensing examination to be able to practice in the US. If he didn't pass that he couldn't work, this would probably have lead to deporta-



tion. I know that my father could never have seen that as a possibility. It would mean that he had failed his family, returning to India with his head hung low, and more importantly, he would have let himself down. My brother and I were young, but we never remember seeing our father worried about this. He had the drive to succeed even with this unimaginable weight he had to bear upon his shoulders. Of course he passed the exam because he wouldn't have accepted any less. We lived all over Illinois, in apartments

and rented homes, moving from place to place every few years. We weren't well off, but we were better off than most, and when you're a little kid that's all that you'll probably remember anyways.

He died very young at the age of 39. That whole year was a blur and I can't recall much of anything. My uncle and aunt took us into their house in Maryland, where our grandparents were staying already. It was kind of like starting over. My uncle's business forced us to move to Florida, which is where we've been for more than 14 years. We grew up together, helped each other along the way, and in the process became a new family. My brother is now in residency on his way to becoming a surgeon, I'm here, and my mom doesn't have to worry about the future. There is still a lot of ground to be covered, years of work yet to be done, but we've made it. We made it where others might have turned back around. Turned back to where it was safe. Not us and not ever. We had sacrificed too much. He had sacrificed everything.

There are things that I forget, which I can blame on being so young. I can't remember his voice. I can't remember how he smelled. I don't know what made him laugh. However, I do know that sometimes my mom runs her fingers through my hair, stares at my face and tells me that I look like him. I know I've worked hard and gotten to where I am through merit alone. I also know that there are going to be hard days, harder than I've ever experienced, but that I will get through them. I know that I truly enjoy what I'm doing now because it's something I've always wanted and I know I can be good at. The opportunity to do what I'm doing came at an incredibly high price and so I don't take that lightly. The most I can do for his memory and for my own sake is to try my hardest, never betray my character, be grateful for what I have, and love what I do. I love where I am and what I will become. It might be hard for you to understand that now, but I hope that you'll eventually feel the same way. You've had to make your own sacrifices to get where you are right now. Some you might have made and others were made on your behalf. Try and remember them; use them as your strength and a source of comfort.

Try not to forget.

Life, art, music, and love  
HEAL.  
Physicians, medical students, nurses, and health workers HEAL.  
To touch is to HEAL.  
To listen is to HEAL.  
To share is to HEAL.  
To love is to HEAL

Eron Manusov M.D.

Are we special because we can invade and walk where others don't?  
No, but we can HEAL when we do we care with compassion.  
To learn is to HEAL.  
To teach is to HEAL.  
To listen is to HEAL.  
To love is to HEAL.

Medicine is human and to feel is human.  
Can we forget that we are human? Certainly.  
To care is to HEAL.  
To think is to HEAL.  
To listen is to HEAL.  
To really hear, care, and act, HEAL.



View from Above

Shannon Scott, Class of 2013

## How to Submit to HEAL

Interested in adding your art, photography, writing, poem, or other artistic expression to this collaboration?

### EMAIL

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Please note, pieces selected for the HEAL newsletter may be reprinted in our annual book publication. Revision of artistic works to fill space allotment are at the discretion of the editorial staff.

Thank you and we look forward to your excellent submissions.