



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

The HEAL Mission

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

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

HEAL Newsletter team

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Heal

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature



AMWA Mural

Designed and Drawn by Noona Leavell

Painters: Melissa McDole, Noona Leavell, Alexa Buchanan, Judy Lin, Li Li, Amanda Abaira, Dr. Suzanne Harrison

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.

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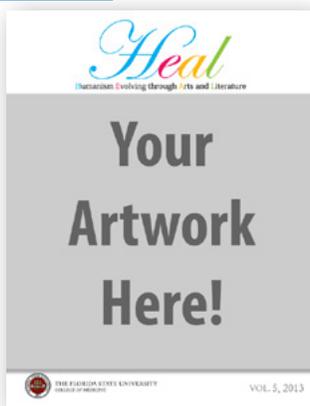
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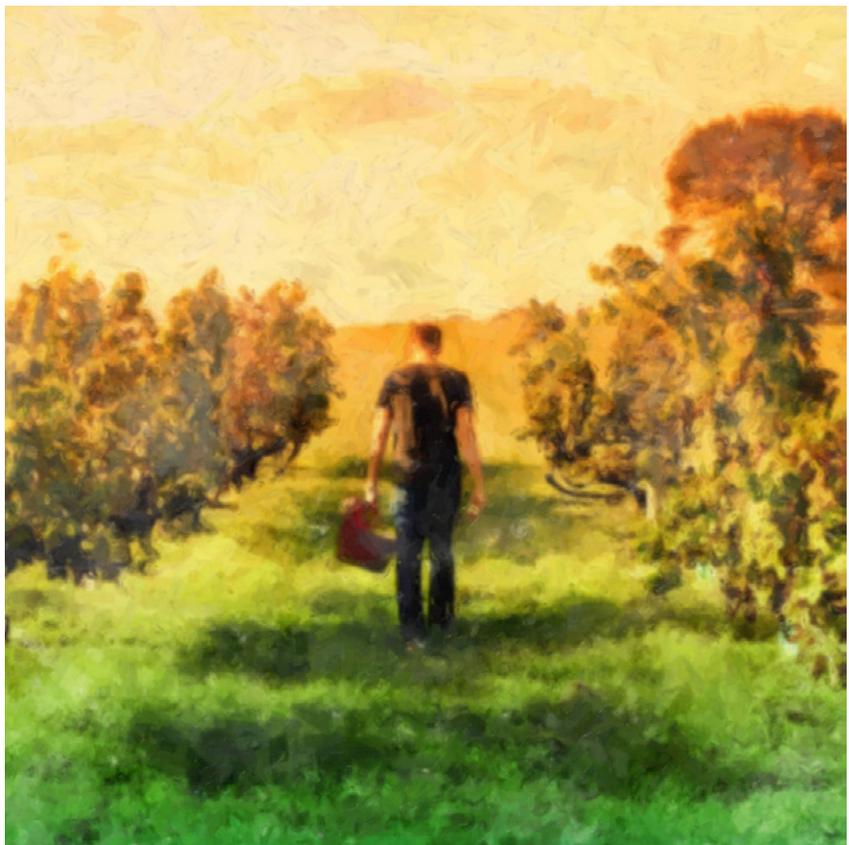
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HEAL: Humanism Evolving through
Arts and Literature

HEAL Newsletter, Summer 2013



The Winer **Jesse O'Shea**

Knees on Bend

Valerie DeShazier

I never saw tears until I saw my own running 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 ■

The New Storm

Kathleen Wood, Class of 2016

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 are formed 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?



Symphony in Peril Jesse O'Shea, Class of 2015

The New Storm, cont'd

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.

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. ■



Blooming Life **Chanel Davidoff**



Stems of Life
Chanel Davidoff

The Hot Water Bottle

Ricardo Jose Gonzalez-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 and, 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.

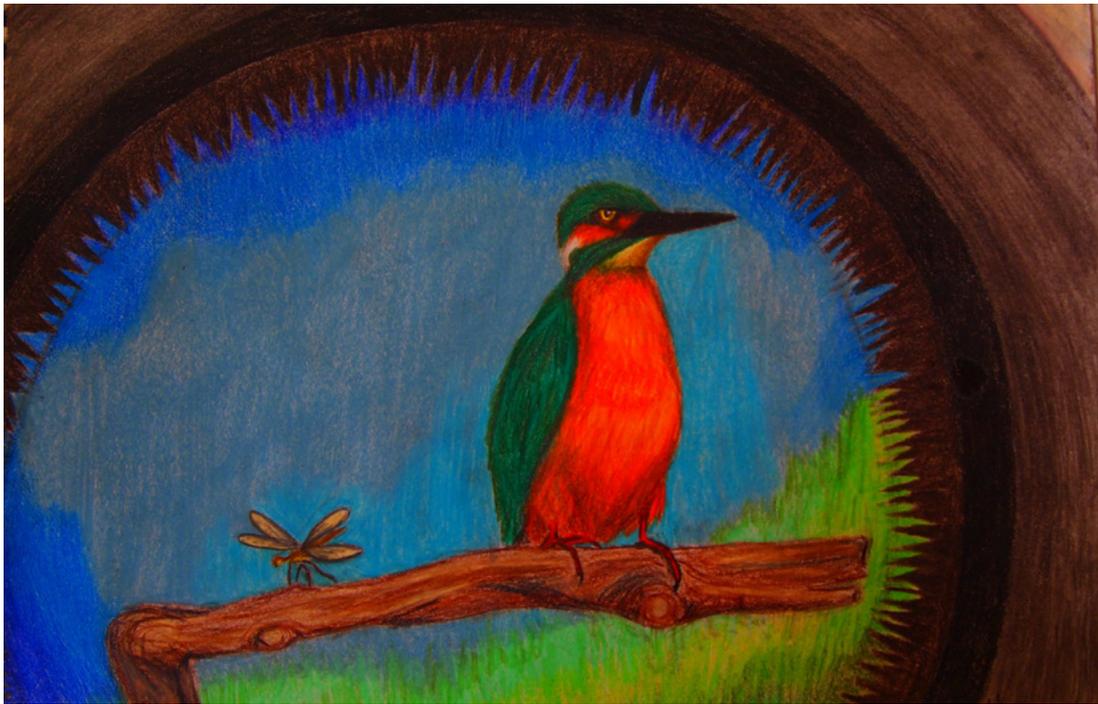
She would place tap water into one of the big pots she had hanging from the ceiling hooks in her kitchen. Then she'd put a handful of charcoal from the pail she kept outside the door into the stone charcoal grill pit. She would crumple up a

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.

Luciernagas (Lightning Bugs) **Verónica Andrade Jaramillo**





The Hot Water Bottle, cont'd

Antes de Comer **Verónica Andrade Jaramillo**

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 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 whether this had 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.... ■

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. ■



A COM Garden Bouquet
Adam Baptiste, Class of 2016
Ann Maruzak

Health

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr., FSU College of Law

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. ■

Birthday

Guimy Alexis, Class of 2014

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 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

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.



Beauty and the Bones Chanel Davidoff

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. ■

Oh, Genevieve

Michael Sierra, Class of 2014

I 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 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.

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.



Melrose Collage & Spain Collage **Gayle Anne Bone**



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 phrase “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. ■

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 ■