



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.

Thank you,

HEAL Newsletter team

## In This Issue:

### Prose

#### Another Adventure

by Fernando Guarderas ..... 1

Aftermath by Mary Moore Braunagel.... 4

Aunt BJ by Laurie McCort..... 6

#### We Are the Cracks

by Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr..... 8

#### HEAL and \$4.00 Gasoline

by Carol Faith Warren..... 9

### Poetry

Laugh by Cathaley Nobles..... 3

#### The Man from Sierra Leone

by Zachary Williamson..... 3

Found by Saritha Tirumalasetty ..... 5

#### Let's Hear It for the Health Care System

by Jane R. Opel ..... 7

### Artwork

HDR Naples Pier by Ryan Humphries..... 1

Palmeras by Ana Gabriela Lujan..... 2

Flowers by Ryan Humphries..... 3

Flower at Crew by Ryan Humphries..... 4

Shoes by Joshua Greenstein..... 6

#### Orange and Black & Chasing the Sun

by Ana Gabriela Lujan..... 7

#### Summer Wave (Cocoa Beach)

by Michael Joseph Muszynski..... 8

# Heal

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature



HDR Naples Pier **Ryan Humphries, Class of 2015**

## Another Adventure

*Fernando Guarderas, Class of 2015*

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 said, "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 a 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, if you are a woman over 35 years of age, it becomes much riskier to have children because of genetic problems like Down Syndrome. If you are finished having children, modern inexpensive surgical treatments will 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.

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## Submit to HEAL

at [journals.fcla.edu/HEAL](http://journals.fcla.edu/HEAL)

Register as an “Author” and click “New Submission”

*Thank you and we look forward to your excellent submissions.*

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## HEAL Volume 4 released!

Look for HEAL Vol 4, our 2012 anthology of artwork, poetry, and prose, now out in print and online! CLICK the cover below to read:



 Find Us on Facebook @  
HEAL: Humanism Evolving through  
Arts and Literature

*Palmeras*  
**Ana Gabriella Lujan**

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. There were very few who 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 be badly received by the people. It is ignorant to think that people do not want to talk about sex. In actuality, since everyone could be better educated about it, 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. ■



## Laugh

*Cathaley 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

## The Man From Sierra Leone

*Zachary Williamson, Class of 2014*

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.



## 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 sister and the ugly scar jumped to my belly, reaching from my breastbone to my pelvis.

**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.**



*Flower at Crew* **Ryan Humphries, Class of 2015**

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.

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." ■

## Found

*Saritha Tirumalasetty, Class of 2015*

*"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 freezoly.



## 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

*Shoes* Joshua Greenstein, Class of 2015

**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.**

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. ■

## 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.



*Black and Orange & Chasing the Sun*  
**Ana Gabriella Lujan**

## We Are the Cracks

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr., FSU College of Law

### 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

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

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. ■



*Summer Wave  
(Cocoa Beach)*  
**Michael Joseph  
Muszynski**



## HEAL and \$4.00 Gasoline

Carol Faith Warren, *Circulations*

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.

Dr. Jose Rodriguez, 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. Rodriguez 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. ■



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