



THE AIL

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

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Reflections in Paint

Jared Rich, Class of 2012

What better place to start than at the beginning. The first step in our long path to becoming doctors is Gross Anatomy. It is our first class in medical school, and the cadavers that we dissect are often called our first patients. They are also called our silent teachers. We learned more from them than any professor's lecture or any picture in a text-book could ever teach us. Studying



our cadaver was not like reading words on a page or looking at an image on a screen. It was actual personal interaction with a human being, a human being that so generously donated their body so that we could learn. When that person died, it was one life lost, but in their death, they have given life to countless other people, and they have done that

through us. There is an exchange that occurs between cadaver and student. Through death they willingly extended out to hand us the gift of life, and we reached out to graciously accept. They have passed on to us the foundation of our education, and for this we are forever grateful. This exchange of knowledge begins in the anatomy lab, but continues on throughout the entire medical school experience. It lives in every classroom, study hall, and library. This is the place where death delights to help the living, and it is our responsibility and our honor to make sure that the death of our first patient

will be a help to all those that we serve. The tremendous amount of knowledge we gain from our silent teachers is the first step in our pursuit and our conviction to become protectors of life. We must always continue to learn, for there is no limit to our abilities, but it is important to never forget where we began, and those who helped us along the way.

Golden Globes Jordan Rogers, Class of 2012

I love watching awards shows. Gaudy outfits, millionaires, mindless entertainment: what more could a person want? My life consists of none of the aforementioned things and all of us like to leave the realms of reality every once in awhile.

No, my life is not an awards show. There are deadlines, truckloads of information, disgruntled professors, even a few token neurotic colleagues. Anxiety, an old friend of mine, enjoys paying me regular visits. I even find it lying in bed with me when tossing and turning for fifteen minutes somehow turns into all night. Yes, my life is very real.

Funny, but this reality is all I have ever wanted or dreamed of doing. Don't get me wrong, on those sleepless

nights I sometimes let my mind wander to what other people my age are doing with their lives right now. Making money? Going out to eat? Coming home at five and being done for the day? Having a social life? I can assure you they are not up until eleven on any given night pouring over "The Proper Technique of the Prostate Exam." At least for their sake I hope not.

Yet, I wouldn't be anywhere else in the world. Why? Because no one can help my patients the way I will be able to. And it would be a tragedy to leave the people who are meant to be in my care up to someone else. No amount of sleepless night will hold me back from the care I can give

someone someday. At some point I will save someone's life. And they will be very glad I hung in there.

I can compare medical school, then, to my Golden Globe. Since it is the pinnacle of my hard work, and it took a struggle to get here, it is a fitting analogy. Even after winning the award, there is always work ahead. Yet, acceptance into medical school was the universe giving me a pat on the back and saying, "Yes you can. You are working hard enough. Keep going." The universe and the Screen Actors Guild, same difference, right?

We don't get to make acceptance speeches after getting in to medical school, but we should. At least, I know I didn't get here alone. I can't thank a producer or co-star, but I can thank one very important woman. My mom made my dream reachable. Even if the universe wasn't going to say it, my mom over and over said "Yes you can. You are working hard enough. Keep going." Not everyone has a biggest fan. I do.

Portrait of War

Joshua Counihan, Class of 2011



First Patient

Allison Poimbouf, Class of 2012

Hic locus est ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitae. “This is the place where death delights to help the living.” As a student of Florida State University’s College of Medicine Class of 2012, I recently learned this lesson. Although not an idea tested on in my Clinical Anatomy class, this lesson was taught through my professor’s guidance, letters from family members about their loved ones, and my own firsthand experience this summer. Most people would agree with the idea that death is not necessarily a delightful thing. However, in a laboratory filled with 120 new medical students on the ground floor of the College of Medicine, I saw a different side of this part of life.

Through the selfless nature of our “silent teachers”, those that donated their bodies to medicine, I learned the intricate anatomy of the human body.

Endless hours were spent in the lab learning the paths of nerves and arteries, the actions of muscles, and the different features of the heart to name a few. As my Clinical Anatomy professor described it, it was during this time that we learned more about these individuals’ bodies than they would ever know. It is this exact knowledge that will serve as a foundation for my education and follow me throughout my career.

However, possibly more important was the lesson of generosity. Before meeting our “first patients”, as they are sometimes called, we were introduced to them through the family members of these considerable individuals. Listening to letters read that were written by daughters, sons, wives, and husbands, I learned that these people were no different than any one of us. They were housewives, businessmen, court re-

porters, teachers, mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers. They enjoyed music, gardening, and life and wanted to give back to others through this meaningful contribution. Hearing these words showed me that such a gift was not only from the individuals whose bodies I learned upon; it also came from their family members. Considering many family members expressed hesitation in following through with their loved one’s wishes, the appreciation I feel for their ability to honor such a request must also be expressed. Without the strength of these family members, this powerful learning experience would not be possible.

So how exactly is it that death delights the living through such a process? Through the honoring of these silent teachers at a special memorial ceremony hosted by my class, one teaching assistant described it fit-

tingly: “When thinking about the location and path of the portal vein, you will not think back to a textbook or lecture. You will think back to the body you saw it on and studied so extensively. That sense of reasoning is what will stick with you throughout your life as a physician.” Nothing could be more true. Although only a medical student with plenty of years to go, I owe so much to these individuals for the gift of knowledge they gave to me. It is this knowledge that allows me to carry out the task that all physicians take on to improve the quality of life of patients. Just as I benefited from the education our silent teachers gave me, future patients will benefit from this unselfishness as well. For this reason, I will always remember my first patients—our silent teachers.

Oh, The Places You Will Go

Taalibah Ahmed, *Class of 2009*

When I graduated from Florida A&M University in May 2004, my sister, the first grade teacher, gave me a copy of Dr. Seuss' *Oh the Places You'll Go!* to signify my new journey into medical school. I would later read the book for the first time to my third grade class not realizing the significance of my sister's small gesture.

Oh the Places You'll Go! And the places I have been. But I always believed somewhere in that book Seuss should have added "and the people you'll meet." With the stress of medical school, it is easy to get discouraged. But often it is the one patient out of the hundreds you see that lets you remember the reason you decided this path.

Oh the people I have met!

I stood outside exam room number seven and read the chart of my next patient, Mrs. P.

Ok she is 89 years old and she is here for a follow-up.

I focused my attention to the summary page where there is conveniently placed a brief past medical history. *She is a patient with hypertension, hyperlipidemia and diabetes. What questions to ask? What exam do I need to perform? Ok I'm ready.*

I walked into the room and did my initial five second survey of my patient. I see my patient. She is an elderly Caucasian woman. Very small. She appears to be frail. Her hair of blue-gray curls is neatly groomed. She is wearing a long-sleeved blouse with elastic waist pants and what look like Velcro nursing shoes. I think to myself, *Oh please let shoe designs be a little more fashionable when I am old.* Her eyes are bright and there is the hint of the faintest expression of a smile on her face. And there is someone with her. Perhaps her daughter or caregiver? I wonder? *Oh well here I go.*

"Good morning Ms. P. My name is Taalibah Ahmed. I am a third year student doctor at Florida State University working with your doctor this year. I am going to take a brief history and perform a quick exam and then the doctor will come in and join us." *Ok Taalibah breathe and slow down.*

Mrs. P looks at me, smiles and says, "Hello."

I smile and turn to her companion. I find out that this is her eldest daughter. She accompanies her mom to all of her doctor visits.

"You are a girl," Mrs. P chimes in.

"Yes I am. Is that a problem? If you prefer to see the doctor, I completely understand."

My patient explains. "No it's fine. It's just nice to see a woman doctor. When I was young, women were not doctors."

I smile and attempt to redirect the encounter. "So you are here for follow-up of hyper-

tension. I am sorry high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes."

"Yes I have that. I take pills for those."

"Are you taking your medication as prescribed?"

She looks at me strangely and her daughter interjects. "The nursing home manages her meds. So she is taking everything. They have not called me with any concerns so I am certain everything is going well with her."

I turn to my patient and realize that she continues to look at me strangely. Before I can speak, she asks, "Are you the doctor?"

"No ma'am I am the student doctor. My name is Taalibah."

"Oh you are studying to be a doctor. That is nice. When I was young there were not too many women doctors."

I smile and realize that something is not right. I look at the summary page of her chart in search of a reason for this experience of *déjà vu* I am having but there is nothing. While I frantically look through the chart, I simultaneously attempt to elicit information concerning orientation. "Mrs. P, do you know where you are."

"Why yes, the doctors office."

"And do you know the month."

"Why it is January. It's 1954. My husband and I are going dancing."

Unh ok. There is definitely something not right about my patient. I hate when this happens. You walk into an encounter thinking you are dealing with one problem and then oh there is something else wrong with the patient. Ok what to do? I can just ...

Her daughter interrupts my thoughts. She must have recognized the look of confusion on my face. She tells me her mother has Alzheimer's. The family noticed a change in her about 8 years prior to this visit. She would forget things like her grandkids names, or that she had a dog. She was becoming dangerous to herself and they were concerned about her grandchildren when they were visiting. She has been in a nursing home for the past 5-6 years. She remembers other things though. "Oh the stories my mother can tell you," her daughter says.

My patient looks at us and it is apparent she does not like being spoken about in this way. But her expression suddenly changes to one of wonder and once again she asks me.

"Are you the doctor?" I smile and remind her again that I am the student but it is not like reminding her at all. Now I understand to her it is like the first time she has met me. Our previous conversation is lost. She once again tells me how nice it is to see a woman

be a doctor and tells me of all the great things woman have done. Her daughter tells her to tell me about the great things she did as a woman. Suddenly this frail elderly woman becomes strong in my eyes. Her eyes are the brightest I have ever seen. I look closely and notice as they have popped open I can now see the faintest sign of green. I now see her young self.

"I was a pilot during World War II."

No way.

She tells me about what it was like growing up as a woman in the 1940s. Men often did not recognize their talent. As women pilots and the only pilots not participating in combat, they were often asked to test new planes. She tells me of one of the planes she flew. The men heard of it and could not believe it. Men had a difficult time recognizing their achievements. She reports that even now after all these years sometimes it feels like she still isn't recognized for her achievements. *This is understandable when I think of a news story 2006, the Air Force proudly showcased their first woman pilot in the Thunderbirds.*

But, she, my patient was one of the first female pilots in the military. She was a member of the Women Air Force Service Pilots. She flew in several missions which were considered non-combat. Her job was very important. She flew in many of the supplies the military men needed. Many of the women were injured and they had 38 deaths among a little over 1000 women. She states that even after all the women did and the sacrifices they made, it took years for them to be recognized by Congress. In fact she began to fly in 1943 and was not recognized as a female pilot in the military until 1979.

She grew up in the South on a farm in Texas. She told me she came from a large family and that she always knew she would fly. Her father had a small plane and she loved to go up with him. When it was reported that they needed women to take a part in the war she was excited. It was later that she will discover that they also needed pilots. She was very young. She had just finished school and like many women at that time, her beau was off fighting in the war. There was nothing to keep her from joining up so she went to school and became trained as a pilot. She discusses every detail like she is still there.

I was amazed. This woman who is having difficulty remembering who I am is telling this amazing story of when she was young. All of a sudden this frail woman became strong in my eyes. I continued the encounter and attempted to illicit more information from her. I now understood the reason for her daughter's presence. Much of the information I obtain from her daughter. Her daughter states that despite her having

hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes, she was still very active. Those conditions were manageable. It is the Alzheimer's that has limited her.

I recognized how much her Alzheimer's had affected her. Yes she was taking medications for this but it is a progressive disease. And it was obvious she was not aware of how much her illness was affecting her. Her Alzheimer's took away her adult children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and replaced them with her young adult sisters and brothers and school aged children. It took away her independence. She was coping well with her other medical condi-

tions, but as her memory began to fail her she was unable to care for herself and she became a danger to not only herself but to her family. For a moment I felt sorry for her and I empathized with her daughter. I could not imagine what I would do if my mother did not recognize me. But then I began to understand that Alzheimer's took away many of her memories but left the wonderful ones that made her the woman she is. I smile as she wants to continue to tell me different stories of her missions. I see the expression on her daughter's face and realize that it is difficult for her to cope with a mother that often does not recognize her as her adult child but simultaneously she is very proud of the person her mother is. Her daughter boasts of her mother

ongoing achievements. She is resident of the month. She suggests I visit the nursing home to see all the pictures of when she was a young woman, when she was a WASP.

Later in the week, I make a trip to the nursing home. Although Mrs. P does not recognize me, she is happy to share more stories about when she was young. She shows me a picture of her in front of one of the planes she has flown and tells me the story of how she met her husband, that handsome gentleman in the wedding photo in her bedroom. She tells me of her children. Of her wonderful career later as a school teacher.

I complete my history and exam. And prepare to leave the room. I think of the amazing woman I have just met. The woman who paved a way for all the female pilots in the military today. And smile as I think of how happy she was to see me in my position, the female student doctor. I prepare to leave the room but as I place my hand on the door knob Mrs. P asks

"Are you the doctor?"

I smile at her and say. "No I am not the doctor. My name is Taalibah Ahmed. I am the student doctor. The doctor will be with you in just a moment."

She smiles at me and says, "It's nice to see a woman doctor. I am proud of you."

"She smiles at me and says, 'It's nice to see a woman doctor. I am proud of you.'"

Jamaica CAMEO Spring Break 2009

Andy Lane, *Class of 2012*

A child waiting to see the doctor, Rocky Pointe



Residents in Celebration



Final patient of the day, Portland Cottage



Patients awaiting service, Rocky Pointe

Tired *Author Unknown*

If ever Accepted, I thought about what I might do: Sprint through the streets screaming at the top of my lungs I thought. It made me smile.

Then, It really Happened.

With bubbling excitement I transcended on to medical school

"Well, Hold onto that feeling, you'll Need to remember it someday" said a Second year.

And then, there it all was before me.

Death, dismemberment with honor; Vick's vapor rub jammed up my nose to get through it all - Honestly the most Difficult hours of my life ... my cadaver had not been preserved appropriately

Timeless months spent feverishly trying to absorb EVERY thing.

After all, it was a matter of life or death: Life or death for my patient. Or, for me?

For certain death of who I once was, I would be no longer.

Back home, I was the medical student.

I was different. How weird.

Who was I now? Did I have time to think about it? Probably not...hah

OK. Three hours left till sleep, two hours left till sleep, negative two hours since I was supposed to be asleep, negative 3 hours... Aren't you going to sleep? Get up 2 hours earlier, you can study then. Fine. Fruitless hours. What day is it? What month is it? Beats me...

You forgot to verbalize your inspection before auscultation.

You forgot the current data on first line treatment for HTN

You forgot how to unfold a drape correctly

You forgot the leading cause of hereditary anemia in Southeast Asia

You forgot to ask specifically about use of homeopathic remedies, acupuncture, or chiropractors

You forgot to wash your hands again after touching your hair

(Do you really have ANY talent?)

USMLE Step 1: Eight hours of torture in

a Bona Fide Prison;

Possible Water Boarding during breaks.

PASS: Onward and upward = ...whew; Wow...

Survival worked.

Take a breath.

Real live patients... Holy Gosh; kids too!?

I couldn't really stop... the curriculum honestly didn't allow for it.

What if I hurt someone or scarred them for the rest of their lives?

Could I bear that burden? Wait a second, was that likely?

I kept going... the alternative was Not an option.

The constant variable of Time... I continued to Age

I met Real people

Darkest secrets and every body system reviewed in less than one hour

This was my skill; that I was given Time.

I motivated, I encouraged, I laughed

I learned that I healed others simply because of my enthusiasm to help. How easy!

...even while on my PDA to look up the generic of Lasix...again...

Yet, if I do not progress appropriately,

Heavy weight of ever looming incompetence is Crushing

I want my patients to have a Great Doctor.

They deserve this, I demand this.

To me, this still requires a considerable gauntlet. Can my body take it?

Arching against muscle memory every single day

Uncertainly, hopefully

Damn it!

Something BIG within me has started to return, though.

Sometimes, I want to run through the streets screaming at the top of my lungs

As I think about what a beautiful career this will be.

If only I wasn't so Tired...

Risin'

Amanda Percy, Class of 2012

A week ago Wednesday had a day I will always remember

Hadn't realized I'd hear a word back from class in September

She was 13 and spoke with a Southern accent and a deep drawl

She was in for a checkup, not a break, bruise or a fall

Pretty as the dark sky as it shines with the moon at its peak

Not knowing me from Adam, she looked at me so meek

For telling your business to a stranger is tough

But she spoke with trepidation and began with a laugh

Hey Doc, I got a problem and it's giving me fits

My legs got a risin' and its hurting me to sit

A risin'? Oh my what the heck is that?

Am I in over my Doctor-to-Be Hat?

Oh no, on no, I want to help this girl so much.

To be the physician with the healing touch.

Am I trying too hard? Is this job not for me?

I asked her to show me scared for what I would see

I waited baited, throat with a lump

Relax she said....it's just a bump.

I stood almost dead center of this woman's vagina!

My left hand, like a robot guided the suture string as my attending repaired her tear

What an event!
I thought to myself
I could never do it

There must be a place where women go to get this strength

I just haven't found it yet

I guess you can tell that I have never expelled a human being from my own orifices

Ah, but will I ever?

I saw this woman three times before her birthing

'They' call it a "delivery!"
I call it war!

Her lacerations, proof of her battle and proof of her victory

As the miniature being finally emerged,

I thought to myself—
"How beautiful!"

Then I saw the agony that masked her true aesthetics
And recalled the moments before this war...

I thought - You little parasite!
Leaching on this poor woman's

energy and blood
Inflating her corpus into a helpless waddling land whale
Inducing uninvited nausea, a slowly a bating fatigue,
With growth of an appetite larger than a giant's,
And for icing on the cake, you trick her into spending money on you

And in gratitude, you kick her!
But in return she smiles?

But why?
Didn't she realize that she might be losing?

I withdrew my blank stare from her repaired battle scar
And gazed at mother and son
They suddenly no longer seemed like opponents

A euphoric aura exuded from their togetherness
The thirty nine weeks of slow human torture
Literally ending in a vivacious burst of life.

The war was over.
All of a sudden it seemed worthwhile.

But still I wondered where she went to find that strength.

My North Star

Michelle Miller, Class of 2012

To my North Star,
For all my years to come.
Whilst variations may be eminent,
Tho' not predictable,
I will hold your charts closest to my heart
During high seas and clear skies alike,
Whether in uncharted territory or well-traveled routes,
I will look to you,
For the guidance you have bestowed to me

How to Submit to HEAL

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

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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.

Birthing a Parasite

Camille Hippolyte, Class of 2010