First Year Reflections
Class of 2012

March 23, 2009
White Coat Ceremony
# Class of 2012: First Year Reflections

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profession of Values</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Coat (A Med Student’s Song)</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nance Yuan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patti Zadnik</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Reflections on First Year</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmond Fomunung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arun Jose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nichols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Stroh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison Berry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Fields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thurston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Cole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soliloquy for Your Eyes</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne-Marie Rick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untitled 1</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona Rezapour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflections on Patients</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Selonick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eike Blohm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hazards Exist That Are Not Marked</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan Michelle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I Learned During the First Year of Medical School</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Monsen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Collection of Haikus</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Untitled</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiagozie Ononiwu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Untitled
Amanda Morris

Denial
David Do

Untitled 2
Mona Rezapour

Beau Soir
Claude Debussy (1865-1918)

What You Ask
Anne-Marie Rick

Quotes That Inspired Us
Ian Rosenthal
Anonymous Contributions
Profession of Values

We, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Class of 2012, profess our aspiration to preserve, protect, and defend the values that we attribute to this white coat.

Since the physician’s relationship with the patient is the core of the medical art, we will treat our patients to the utmost of our ability, with compassion and respect. We will strive to craft a healthy and open relationship with each patient, keeping in mind each patient’s unique background and remembering that while the good physician treats the disease, the great one treats the patient who has the disease. We pledge to pursue lives of learning and discovery within the medical science, aiming to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients.

We pledge to our colleagues in medicine an equally high level of dedication as we pursue our common goals. Our relationships with fellow physicians and allied health care providers alike will be based on mutual respect and open communication. We will recognize our limitations and will accordingly seek advice and counsel from our colleagues. Similarly, we will aim to provide that same guidance as mentors and teachers.

Our responsibilities as physicians also extend further to include our respective communities – local, national and global. We recognize the universal right to the pursuit of health and pledge to act as stewards of that principle, pursuing our moral obligation to ameliorate health care disparities and to promote attitudes, behaviors and values beneficial to the public’s health. Moreover, we intend to remain active participants in the discourse shaping health care policy, acknowledging that medicine is a public service, undertaken in the nation’s service – and in the service of all nations.

Finally, though we pledge to serve selflessly, we also acknowledge the need to maintain balance amongst the various professional and personal responsibilities of our lives. We pledge to approach this challenge with humility, introspection, and a constant awareness of our limitations and capabilities.

We declare this statement on the 23rd of March, 2009, to our peers, educators, families, friends, the community of Baltimore, and the nation at large. It is an acknowledgment of our commitment to the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and its tradition of excellence.

The Class of 2012
White Coat (A Med Student’s Song)

Colorful crayon scribbles
Posted on the classroom wall
What do you want to be when you grow up?
Was the question for us all.
We were too young then to be sure of our dreams
But we knew from picture books
That a lot of jobs were worth thinking about,
And they came with their different looks.
A police officer’s uniform
A firefighter’s hat
A corporate executive’s business suit:
What do you think of that?
What would I end up wearing?
What job was right for me?
Years and years later I realized
What I wanted to be.

CHORUS
I have other jackets
I have other clothes
But my white coat means a bit more to me than any of those
Clothes don’t make the man
But it simply reminds me
I’m on my way to becoming the doctor that I’m gonna be
I’m almost there; I’m gonna be the doctor that I want to be.

The path to med school was a long one,
But getting in was just the start.
From here the road seems to stretch forever
It’s not for the faint of heart
Anatomy labs and lecture halls and rotations can be tough
But the med student’s job is to learn even when the going gets rough.
Generations of doctors came before
And they were once students too.
It’s not strange that we don’t know everything yet,
that we don’t always know what to do.
Just value each day that comes to you
as a chance to learn a lot more.
Remember why you want to be here
And what your coat stands for.
CHORUS

And even when four years of med school ends,
And we trade our short coats for the long ones
We'll turn and look back at how far we've come
And we'll know that we're not yet done.

Because medicine is always changing
so that improvements can be made.
The body of research keeps expanding
so that more lives can be saved.
The fountain of knowledge we drink from
But we must never quench our thirst
To understand more than we already do
And put our patients first.
In a way we'll always be students
Because the learning's never done.
Every day we'll be put to some kind of test
But I guess that's part of the fun.
The day we started our training
We committed to patient care
Sharing the values of doctors before us
To be worthy of what we wear.

CHORUS

I'll work hard to be an even better doctor than I thought I'd be
~ Just wait and see.

Lyrics by Nance Yuan
Performed by the Note-A-Chords
Untitled

Medical school has made me weird.

At no time was this more evident than when I realized that my cadaver had most likely been a beautiful woman when she was younger. This thought entered my head when we were peeling the skin off of her face, revealing the bone structure beneath.

From repeated flips and general damage during preservation, her nose had been flattened and her skin was marked with age spots and had a sallow color. Her hair was thinned and wispy, and she looked like she was frowning. In fact, we covered her face for 90% of anatomy because it was too freaky to look at her grimace. But that day, peeling off her skin, her nose looked small and delicate. Her cheekbones (zygomatic processes to be precise) were high and the general shape of her face seemed regal. This woman, when she had lived, had been very pretty indeed.

See, these sentences are creepy, right? So creepy that I have never shared them with my family. In fact, before I said anything to my anatomy group, I thought of a way to put it that sounded less freaky.

Now, one thing that my family should know is that anatomy bonds a group of people in a way that few experiences can. These are the people who had scooped poop out of the colon with me, who had thought for 3 full weeks that our cadaver was a man because we didn't pull back the blanket to look "down there," the people who changed with me in the random classroom on the third floor. Together, we unzipped the body bags, uncertain of how we would feel or what was inside. And yet the thoughts of beauty that entered my head as we peeled skin from a human face seemed too strange to mention, even to them.

I said it anyway.

Then, in true anatomy lab fashion, one of the members of my group turned to me and gasped, "Oh my God! I thought the exact same thing!" Because in the spirit of anatomy, and medical school in general, this experience has bound us all. We think alike, and work alike, and are lucky to be surrounded by a group of people who can make even the strangest thoughts feel less foreign. We may be weird, but at least we can all be weird together.

Patti Zadnik
Short Reflections on First Year

I have no regrets about my decision to come here. There is no doubt that the medical school curriculum at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine is challenging. However, the environment here is one that minimizes the stress usually associated with medical school. With accomplished yet easily approachable professors, bright students willing to go out of their way to help, a curriculum that emphasizes essential learning and vast opportunities for extracurricular activities, there is really not much more a medical student can ask for.

Edmond Fomunung

The way I feel during medical school is best described by my feelings on exam day: Exhausted because I spent the night cramming facts in a head filled to capacity, Nervous as I wait, trying not to forget everything I just learned, Awed as the collective force of over 100 brilliant minds presses down on me, Relieved as the tension is released and it doesn't matter anymore, Happy as I drown my hard-fought knowledge at the bottom of a pint.

Arun Jose

Of all the amazing things at Hopkins, I have been most impressed with my classmates, and how many have embraced the idea that we are no longer simply students trying to succeed scholastically, but rather colleagues working together to become the best group of doctors we can be. Obviously some students find it difficult to remove themselves from scores and grades, but as the year progresses, more come to realize that helping each other succeed is the best way to make sure that we, as a class, make an impact within the field of medicine. This transition is difficult, but it is clearly happening, and I am proud of all those who have embraced that change.

John Nichols

I'm still far from an expert on what it means to be a doctor or how exactly we all found our ways to this profession. But for those who have grown up in a world that keeps people at arm's length, increasingly impersonal and detached, medicine still permits (and requires) intimate contact and connection. This is the chance to personally enable a positive outcome in people. It's a responsibility and privilege to handle with care a person's most valuable possession. If we didn't grow up with toy stethoscopes and white coats, we still found our way to them eventually as we turned from other paths without as much heart.

Alex Stroh
I came to Baltimore, my head brimming over with warnings - that Baltimore was dangerous, full of trash, depressing, cold. So the greatest surprise of my first year has been, how much I love it here, how well I fit in with my neighbors and how happy the city makes me. Yeah, Baltimore may be a little rough around the edges, but I'm learning more and more that that's just how I like it. Who can you help but root for the underdog, anyway?

Allison Berry

Medical school has been vastly different than I expected it to be. I was told it would be the most difficult thing that I have encountered thus far in my life. While it has definitely been intellectually taxing, I have found that it has been incredibly enlightening. I have learned much more about myself and my capabilities in the past several months than I have in the past most formative years of my life.

Julie Fields

First year has been a great experience for me. When I first decided to accept the offer of admission to Hopkins, I was a bit apprehensive about what the school and Baltimore would be like. I feared that I wouldn't like it here but thankfully things didn't turn out that way. Today, I can say that I am happy with my choice.

John Thurston

Thinking about our first year, there is one moment that stands out as being particularly special. On January 20th, we took a break from Anatomy lab to watch the swearing-in ceremony for President Obama. We had just finished dissecting a cow's eye and were gathered in our first year lecture hall with images from Washington projected on the large screen in the front of the room. Sitting in the second to last row, looking out at the sea of blue and green scrubs in front of me, I was extremely proud to be a member of our class. There are so many amazing and talented people in our class and to see everyone in the same room, wearing the same thing, smelling the same, nearing the end of one of the defining experiences of the first year, with images of a historical event that was defining our country in the background, was striking. It reminded me that, like our new president, we would face a number of challenges in the coming years but that we would meet these challenges and accomplish our goals together. It may have been a phenol-enhanced moment, but it is one that I will always remember.

Kate Cole
Soliloquy of Your Eyes

I see your eyes burned inside my mind,
Haunting, pleading, screaming inside,
They tell your story, with words you can’t find,
Heartache, sickness, death nearby.

You lay in wait, your time you bide,
Forsaken and lost, in a world that is blind.
Nothing left, not even your pride,
You quiver in fear of a fate that is signed.

I hold your hand, moisten your brow,
Sing soft whispers of a world beyond.

I clean your wounds, change your clothes,
Pray for an end to the pain you know.

How can the world go on turning?
New life, when one so young is ending?
Death and pain! Sickness and hunger!
Why keep trying when so much is blundered?

Nothing to cling to except my faith,
I pray for a miracle, God give you the strength.
Then I see it, a flicker of hope,
A breathe of fresh life, a will to cope.

Gone is the dullness from your eyes,
Replaced by a smile full of laughter.
Peace has found its way to your heart,
No longer alone as you prepare for life after.

I know it is time. I have to let go,
I read it inside the depths of your eyes.
Holding your hand and praying once more,
I smile at you sadly and say goodbye.

Quietly, quietly, I think of you.
Tearfully, tearfully, I cry for you.
Years have passed but you still remain.
I close my eyes and all is the same.
I remember your hand,  
The shape of your face,  
I remember your tears,  
Your voice in that place.

I remember the courage you gave me to live,  
A life of meaning, one worth lived.  
I remember my oath I swore at your bed,  
To care for the sick, no more to be dead.

Now I am here to start that journey,  
To share with others a common humanity,  
To seek a world of peace and hope,  
To cherish life and keep its dignity.

I begin this path with hopeful aim,  
But always keep your story close,  
A story of love, a story of pain,  
A story of life and death the same.

I know the struggle, I hear the sorrow,  
To change this world is no easy tomorrow.  
But when I am still and do not try,  
I hear the soliloquy of your eyes.

Anne-Marie Rick
Helplessness. That’s the only word that comes close to hoping to communicate what I felt, when at the already helpless age of 16, I was diagnosed with Crohn’s.

My body no longer my body.

Everything changed in that small, infinite moment of diagnosis. My relationships with the people and the world around me changed, my relationship with myself changed, and if there was any seed for any kind of belief being built within my young mind, it too was yanked out; it, too, was torn.

My privilege of youth, of ignorance, and of folly, was torn as Crohn’s forced me to experience life from the unprivileged standpoint of the ill.

I was stripped of everything I was holding onto.

But then there I was naked, vulnerable, raw, and for the first time truly alive – stripped of every notion, every idea, every assumption and forced to build, to create, and to discover everything anew, and to earn life, for myself with integrity and truth.

My struggles, my focus, and my inner-strength have allowed me to live with my disease while refusing to be consumed by it. I have surpassed many obstacles and have worked relentlessly to be who I am – a woman with a chronic illness, and an ileostomy, who is more active, both intellectually and physically, and more constructive to society than she had been before her diagnosis.

I intend to use my medical education as a tool for mitigating suffering health conditions in whatever community I work in, and to use my status as a tool for inspiring future generations of health care professionals to understand struggle, and to use it as a source of empowerment rather than defeat.

I know, firsthand, what it means and how scary it is to be stripped of everything that sustains you, and it is with this disturbing but necessary knowledge that I commit my life to helping those who have been stripped of their own gift of life.

My illness brought me much anger and resentment for many years. When I finally accepted the facts of life that had been given to me, however random they seemed, life became simple. And I arrived at one simple truth: We do not have to be obliged to the weakness of our bodies. In whatever small or big way possible, I hope that my life’s work in medicine will aid in bringing equality and justice, in medical care and accessibility, to those who suffer from disease and have little to no access to proper healthcare. It is my personal belief, that there is no other right more essential than the equal right to life.
My outlook on life has as much to do with my health as any treatment and medication that is necessary for the improvement of my illness.

Do not allow your illness to consume your life, to strip you of you.

On the other hand, do not fool yourself into believing that you can live in denial of its presence. Partner with the circumstances of your life, the failing of your body, and use that obstacle as all the more reason to infuse every moment of every day with meaning and purpose.

With that in mind, my last words would be to heal with others, by sharing your struggle with those who are fighting the same emotional and physical battle, as any of us who have experienced illness, know that there is no pain deeper than the pain of isolation; no ileostomy, no ICU, no abscess, no pain is greater than the dark vacuum, the unquiet nooks and crannies of the mind. So, share in empowerment, and refuse defeat.

Mona Rezapour
Reflections on Patients

Out of respect, we conspicuously rub our hands long after the antibacterial gel has evaporated, proof that we bring nothing more into her room than ourselves: one physician and five of us in training. Her room is her sanctuary and the small control she has over its contents and their order keeps her sane. Extra chairs are permitted, as she knows where they are kept. The Get Well Soon cards are hung in perfect three-by-three rows, the hospital’s bedclothes are pulled tight, and her expiration date hair is immaculate. Tuesday, she has been told, will be a day to look at wigs. Seeing the doctor every day, just before her daily morning shower, is her constant and she is grateful for that small consideration. They don’t tell her much in advance, only about three days into the future. Too much more could scare her, she admits. But when pressed, she wants to discuss her distant future: remission, outpatient care, self-care. “How long will I be a patient?” she wants to know. Already two weeks not being the one in charge, two weeks trapped in a hospital with leukemia. Her husband is the sick one. So bad his kidneys were replaced; never been right since, we are informed. She is order on the outside, but deeper down she is chaos. To admit the heart of your bones have betrayed you, to admit you are a cancer patient, to even be admitted to the hospital, to admit all that to a group of young medical students is even more frightening and lonely. But the emotion that flickers on her face is calmed as she smooths the already pristine sheets. She cannot be the one to show how much her life has been tangled, rumpled and trampled, an unexpectedly unmade bed. We leave her room as we found it, removing our jumble of chairs and people, thanking her for letting us learn from her disorder.

Helen Selonick

I remember the moment I truly felt proud to be a medical student at Johns Hopkins. It was not when I walked past the wall displaying how Hopkins was the best hospital in the country for 19 years straight. It was not when I was lectured by a Nobel Laureate. It was not when I learned about all the revolutionary procedures that were pioneered here at Hopkins. Instead, it was when I shadowed a doctor in the pediatric intensive care unit and she presented one of her patients to me. It was the nine-month old son of a mechanic in a small town in South America with a heart condition so rare, no other hospital in the world dared to attempt the surgery. However, Johns Hopkins paid for the medical flight for the infant to the United States, and the doctors and nurses donated their time in an eight hour long surgery and the care that followed. It was then that I felt truly proud to be part of the Hopkins family.

Eike Blohm
Hazards Exist That Are Not Marked

So proclaims the sign posted at a California ski resort. Its brilliant red and yellow colors stand out against the white background of the snow, the obvious focal point in the picture tacked above my desk.

The picture was given to me by a patient I interviewed during our Clinical Skills course. After patiently answering all my nervous questions about his past medical experiences, his relationship with his wife and children, and his summer trips to the nearby mountains, he pressed the picture into my hands. “I saw this sign after I nearly died from a pulmonary embolism on my way to that ski resort,” he said, “It reminds me not to get totally thrown off track by these things. I know medical school is hard. Maybe you can use this as a reminder too.”

The past almost-year has certainly seen its share of hazards: the struggles to remember and make sense of vast amounts of information, the difficulties of making new friends and keeping those friendships in the face of the numerous other demands on our time, the first time that home didn’t feel quite like “home,” the crushing responsibility that comes with seeing patients. Overwhelmed could be a diagnosis for many of us medical students.

Yet when I look at that picture above my desk, I realize that a hazard is not simply a danger, but rather a risk, a chance we take, the outcome of which is not set in stone. And these risks we’ve taken, the hazards we’ve run, have certainly had incredible outcomes. The late nights of study and the post-test celebrations have cemented strong friendships that have made me see in Baltimore another home. While all the concepts learned and all the facts memorized have made the responsibility no less serious, with them has come a sense of increasing ability to make a difference in another person’s life.

Now as I think about this white coat we are soon to receive, I see it not just as a badge of our professed vocation, but also as a symbol of the trials we’ve passed and an indication of our willingness and desire to tackle more.

Hazards may exist that are not marked, but their outcomes depend on how we face them. I have all the faith that this class will rise to the challenge and will find in it all the rewards and joy that I have known thus far.

Harlan Michelle
What I Learned During the First Year of Medical School

Action potentials.

How to hold a pair
of scissors like a surgeon.
Chambers of the heart,
shopping smart,
chromosome inversion.

Couscous and chicken stir-fry,
some of the veins that supply the eye.
The bowels are not a hundred yards long;
when to admit that you are wrong.

Psychiatric disorders.
Save your quarters!
Fifty million uninsured,
infundibulum is a funny word.

Two-Hit and Hygiene Hypotheses.
Where are the zygapophyses?
How the brachial plexus looks,
and when it’s time to close the books.
(Still not always sure when to open them)

Community Aspects of Healthcare and Prevention,
muscles involved in leg extension,
palsy, Bell’s
the way to Fells,
action potentials, did I mention?

How to fix a doorknob
and broken vents,
anaphylaxis
and Venetian blinds.
Interpreting the data
flow cytometry finds.

Vowel rhymes:
the place the gall bladder resides,
aspartate dyad,
the unhappy triad.
Subway taketh away,
but Wikipedia provides.
Some things I've found and others been taught
There may be a few other things that I forgot.
A touch more sentimental as this ends,
the importance of colleagues and family and friends.

Plenty left to gain while I am here.
Maybe I'll learn how
to write poetry next year.

Craig Monsen
A Collection of Haikus

Joe the Cadaver
When did you last eat a meal?
Let me guess, Tex Mex?

Taco and Hot Dog
Throw some curry in the pot
We've got a buffet

Vroom Vroom Vroom Vroom Vroom
It's Wario Stadium
Better jump that wall

McGurks, O'Rileys
PubDog, and The Green Turtle
8AM Lecture

Walking home from Fells
I should visit my old friend,
Edgar Allen Poe

Suffer like G did
But I told him not to go
My friend is inside

Johns Hopkins Med School
Thank you for the memories
I hope I gave back

Anonymous
Untitled

When I think about how quickly this year is going, I'm tempted to stop time. But who am I kidding? I can't. It's only a temptation.

In November it seemed like Anatomy would chew us alive. We got our scrubs, face shields, and boxes of gloves, and as we donned our aprons on the first day of lab, we had but an idea of the roller coaster of a course we were plunging into. The lab was very quiet, and the ride began.

I remember spending what seemed like hours looking for the recurrent laryngeal nerve, and how careful I was to ensure the phrenic nerve was not broken...

Before I realized it, the heart was history; lungs were a story, and my memories of the thorax, abdomen and pelvis were relegated to the "good old days" as I wondered how in the world I would fit two 'legs' and 'gluteus maximus' into a twelve minute presentation. Stuttering had to give, and thank God it shifted - I rattled away from the waist to the toes.

I took a deep breath...

This deep breath took me, headlong, into the Christmas break, and like you remember, nothing excited me more than showing you the pages of Gray's I had to cover. I had to practice my medical Spanish, and you were the patient. I could diagnose your headache and prescribe dos pastillas cada cuatro horas, and the fun we had doing that was a welcome diversion from the brachial plexus that beckoned from my bedroom-turned-study.

Trapezius and supraspinatus became my friends, I said the word "artery" more times than I ever had or, probably, ever will in one day. This time I struggled to fit two "hands" and a back into twelve short minutes, and when it was done for the attentive ears of Dr. Rose, I exhaled.

Then came "head and neck" with twelve pairs of nerves. Trust me I was scared, but I had had a head start - "Olfactory, Optic, oculomotor..." That became my nursery rhyme - a chant I repeated in my head each time I was asked until it became second nature - Don't worry, I didn't do the dance. I followed chorda tympani though the ear, and rode on the lingual nerve like a kid on a water slide as it swept into the oral cavity - those two were my favorite...

And then Anatomy ended... but not until I had learned a thing or two about cricothyroid.

By the grace of God, it has been a great year. Medical school is going by quickly. The greatest fun I've had, however, has come from my knowing that You've been there to watch, to cheer, and to listen! Thank you!

Chiagozie Ononiwu
Untitled

Amanda Morris
Denial

He has cancer with poor prognosis.  
He’s aware but says he will beat it.  
Fighters *always* pull through these things, right?

The thirty years of non-stop smoking,  
How ironic, he thinks, his killer  
Resides elsewhere than the lung or throat.

Then what caused it? Why did you get sick?  
I suggest his drinking, job, lifestyle.  
He proposes luck and happenstance.

I ask, what do you think about death?  
As my father died I nurtured him.  
He for his father too. It’s cyclic.

What becomes of us once we pass on?  
Our souls *go* somewhere, go anywhere.  
And anywhere is better than here.

To traverse the layers of defense.  
The fighter, gambler, and fatalist.  
His façade is wearing thin quickly.

He is pleading for someone to help!  
Then the fighter returns. He loves life.  
Would do anything to cure cancer.

He’s not bona fide, avoids your eye.  
And neglects to mention ambitions,  
For the case that he gets well again.

How to track which mood the patient’s in?  
To encourage hope or assuage pain?  
Fear of collapsing a dying star,  

An inward spiral in its last days.  
But alas, my thoughts do not matter.  
Courage to face truth comes from within.

*David Do*
I remember watching my father walk into his surgery room, his patient awaiting him. As a small child, medicine was revealed to me through my father, whether through access to his endless libraries of encyclopedic information on medicine—antiquated and progressive, from ancient Persia to ultra-modern discoveries in stainless, sleek, modern labs in Japan—or his oak shelves lined with anatomical subjects. The mystery involved in returning physical parts of human life to those who had once lost them, inspired me to aspire to nothing less than what I observed my father do.

Knowing that my father would perform fourteen free surgeries a day during the Iran-Iraq war, or watching him walk into a sterile, stainless room, to greet a blind patient and walk out having given them sight, ingrained in me an intrigue and a reverence for medicine, unparalleled to any other profession. I saw a man change the lives of many others through his craft. The transformations that I witnessed in the lives of countless ailing men, women, and children, through my father’s practice of medicine, were etched in my memory as an introduction to medicine and its potential in improving human lives. However, my passion and dedication to this contention grew exponentially, in depth and commitment, years later when I directly embodied the power of medicine through the paradigm of the ill.

However, after a few years of experiencing life through the filter of a chronic illness, I knew that I could no longer stand on the periphery and watch the precarious conditions of those who suffer, like myself, become more desolate. I knew that my perspective was a unique one that I could utilize to practice medicine differently and help my patients.

Once I realized that my reality could not become a comfortable bed in my parent’s house, a family that functioned as a well-trained medical staff, with perpetual visits to the local hospital, I stopped arguing against the unfairness of reality and decided that my life will be defined by the actions I take toward defending the beauty of the gift of life for the ill. We do not have to be beholden to the illness of our bodies.

Mona Rezapour
Beau Soir

Lorsque au soleil couchant les rivières sont roses,
Et qu’un tiède frisson court sur les champs de blé,
Un conseil d’être heureux semble sortir des choses
Et monter vers le coeur troublé.
Un conseil de goûter le charme d’être au monde,
Cependant qu’on est jeune et que le soir est beau,
Car nous nous en allons comme s’en va cette onde,
Elle à la mer, nous au tombeau.

Translation:
When streams turn pink in the setting sun,
And a slight shudder rushes through the wheat fields,
A plea for happiness seems to rise out of all things
And it climbs up towards the troubled heart.
A plea to relish the charm of life
While there is youth and the evening is fair,
For we pass away, as the wave passes:
The wave to the sea, we to the grave.

Lyrics by Claude Debussy (1865-1918)
Performed by Lisa Lareau
What You Ask

Waiting, watching, willing,
I watch the window hoping,
That in such a vast place,
You won’t forget my face,
And I pray I can go on coping.

Through the years I’ve worked,
Never trying to shirk
The in’s and out’s of the daily grind.
But now my pride must stay behind
And I must face what’s always lurked.

Not the disease, nor the pain.
Not the people, nor the strain.
Death is not what scares me.
Instead it’s what you ask of me,
Give up control, the last thing I retain.

So now I sit here waiting,
Trying to go on hoping,
That in such a vast place,
You won’t forget my face,
And somewhere you’re out there fighting.

Anne-Marie Rick
Quotes That Inspired Us

“To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson
Success
Contributed by Anonymous

"Examinations hinder rather than foster learning. Perfect happiness for student and teacher will come with abolition of examinations, which are stumbling blocks and rocks of offence in the pathway of the student"

William Osler
After Twenty-Five Years
Contributed by Ian Rosenthal

“Emergencies have always been necessary to progress. It was darkness which produced the lamp. It was fog that produced the compass. It was hunger that drove us to exploration....”

—Victor Hugo

Let the emergencies we face in medicine, too, lead us to innovate in our ability to heal.

Contributed by Anonymous