

The Road Not Taken

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“With illness or injury, life gives us situations to overcome which we have never faced before. When a therapist tries to assist a client to get past these obstacles, the poet becomes an ally in the patient’s healing by allowing the patient to see beyond the immediate injury. She takes some of the isolation away that the patient feels and substitutes a new image in the patient’s consciousness. Perhaps poetry should be part of every therapy program?”

– *Maria Birdseye*

Welcome to the third issue of JHR. We have taken extra time since our last issue to refine our editorial process and hone our purpose, using our individual and collective commitment to the humanities as a landscape on which to build our reflections and evaluations. We have renewed our mission to provide a platform that equally values our academic ideals and the patient experience and voice. At times, this commitment has found us within uncharted territory, and we have clung tenaciously to our poetry section editor and Poet in Profile, Marilyn McEntyre’s

words: “We negotiate meaning as we go along, weaving happenstance with intention.”

Within her exploration of Robert Frost’s frequently misunderstood classic poem, “The Road Not Taken,” she charges us to consider our choices and our actions more than once, whether it be in the reading of a poem or in the evaluation of our patients – or ourselves. She encourages us to use his words to gain understanding of the importance of both being present with our choices and in re-examining the extent of their impact.

We have embraced this directive during the past several months in our review of patient submissions to JHR. In doing so, we have found that these roads, the academic and the patient perspective, have not diverged but have mysteriously drawn together, creating a sometimes uncomfortable juxtaposition of scholarly expectation with the lived experience of those we serve. However, we have also found within humanities a common language and this convergence has offered us opportunity for growth and understanding. More importantly, perhaps, we have learned how to trust – to trust that if we create a supportive and open framework, this collaborative environment allows our patients’ wisdom and insight to flow with words and imagery that capture the

human experience of disability and healing with more vibrance and meaning than we could offer solely ourselves.

As we were busily “weaving happenstance with intention,” these articles came together to reveal an underlying theme grounded in patient experience and perspective.

Beginning with our Historical Perspectives on Art, section editor Dr. Sioban Conaty offers a perspective on aging through the artist Rembrandt van Rijn’s eyes, opening our understanding of the source of inspiration of his paintings and the deep appreciation of his scholarly study of anatomy. Ted Meyers’ story of his illness experience and his painting project, *Scarred for Life*, illustrate how art can uncover humanity in the midst of personal trauma recovery. Linda Brown’s experiences during her father’s rehabilitation after a stroke are captured through her use of cinematography, as she courageously explores the complexities and challenges of family history. Enduring the challenges of Parkinson’s disease, Maria Birdseye joins with her speech therapist Rita Lor to remind us of the healing power of poetry. Veteran poet Hugh Suggs, who wrote long before the loss of his legs, offers his poetry as a way to show readers that “people can move on successfully and offer the world something of value after shame, poverty and severe loss. Every word is important.”

From our clinicians, we received Dr. Zoher Kapasi’s poem, which was written in response to India’s stark healthcare inequality in the 1980s, and challenges us to see the limitations that arise from our own perspectives. Dr. Amanda Lalonde’s clinical narrative reflects on the power of her patient’s resilience, and its impact on both his recovery and her sense of self as a clinician. In a joint collaboration between faculty,

students and mentors, sociology scholar Dr. Ellen Idler and colleagues share an innovative interprofessional education program that engages older adults as mentors to physical therapy, nursing, physician assistant and medical students. New Zealand professor Katrina Bryant and colleagues describe the process of disseminating research as a collaborative process between study participants and researchers, resulting in an art exhibit that conveys a cultural experience of disability and, within the process, provides a wonderful example of truly patient centered research. Finally, Dr. Kimberly Manning joins with colleagues from various health science departments to share how the value of the reflective writing process enables faculty to learn from one another in order to more effectively teach their students the value of interprofessional education.

Expanding *JHR*’s global reach, we are introducing a new international editorial board consultant, Arlette Doussoulin, PT, Msc, PhD. Dr. Doussoulin is physiotherapist in the Medicine Faculty at Universidad de La Frontera-Chile and currently serves as the Editor of the Journal of Physical Therapy in Chile. Her presence helps to deepen our publishing expertise and broaden our reach into the Southern Hemi-sphere communities.

A new interprofessional educational scholarship has been established for *JHR* – the *Frank S. Blanton, Jr., MD Humanities in Rehabilitation Scholar*. Created by his family, this scholarship honors the life and impact of Dr. Blanton by supporting an annual position for a graduate assistant. His love of the humanities and devotion to humanism in medicine helped to shape the vision for this journal. We are honored to name Stephanie Larson, *JHR* Graduate Managing Editor and doctoral student in English as the first recipient.



Frank S. Blanton, Jr., MD



Stephanie Larson receives the inaugural Frank S. Blanton, Jr., MD Humanities in Rehabilitation Scholar award

If you are interested in submitting your work to JHR, please review our Submission Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions sections on our website at www.journalofhumanitiesinrehabilitation.org. If you are considering being a reviewer, please contact Dr. Sarah Blanton: follow the Contact link, indicate the content area you are interested in reviewing and attach your CV.