

Gifts of Wisdom

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“I feel that I become stronger through listening. I must become better at pregnant pauses.”

– *Yvette Warren*

“Unacknowledged, unspoken pain can eat away at the very commitments that enable recovery from catastrophic injury and political struggle against injustice. Representing pain and acknowledging losses that we must grieve will allow for a richer conversation, and a deeper commitment to creating the conditions necessary to sustain fully livable lives for us all.”

– *Christina Crosby*

Welcome to the fourth issue of JHR. One of the hallmarks of this journal is our dedication to creating a shared platform for both clinician and patient experiences of rehabilitation. Each of these quotes emerges from patient-driven stories, guiding us

deeper into the lived experience of disability, and offering insightful gifts of wisdom that draw us closer to a more complete understanding of each other. In a time when civil discourse is challenged by an atmosphere of socio-political unrest, the humanities provide a landscape to foster mindful reflection, to hear our shared stories of suffering and resilience, and to see the expansive potential of art to create meaning in our lives.

In the piece, “Art Saved My Life”, we discover the inspiring story of Bill Forester, who learned to paint *after* his stroke. The embedded video interviews provide the reader an intimate sense of Bill’s language recovery as he thoughtfully measures his words to express his unyielding motivation to drive past expectations in rehabilitation. Providing a unique perspective on disability theory, Wesleyan University professor Dr. Christina Crosby reflects on her own experience with a spinal cord injury and the importance of acknowledging pain and loss as part of recognizing disability as an identity. Yvette Warren struggles with severe aphasia, yet shares with us an incredibly powerful poetic reflection of the beauty of communication in “Sharing spirits” and “Silence as strength”. Working collaboratively with researcher Dr. Bernadette Gillick, stroke survivor Eva Froehle reflects on the use of language in study recruitment

material as she shares thoughtful insights from a research participant perspective. Dr. Vinette Cross and colleagues bring a poetic voice to the experiences of patients with chronic low back pain in the article “It sounds like a drama”. The researchers create a performance out of qualitative research focus group discussions that bears witness to the frustration, sadness and resolve of these individuals. In her caregiver narrative, Dr. Holly Huye shares a poignant reflection of her mother’s struggles with dementia and a family’s dedication to preserving memories. Through his clinician narrative, physical therapy professor Dr. Jodan Garcia reflects on his learning, both professionally and personally, during his time caring for south Georgia farmworkers.

Our Historical Perspectives on Art section editor Dr. Sioban Conaty provides a fascinating exploration of the renowned French artist Henri Matisse and the impact of his disability on his craft. In our regular Poet in Profile series, we highlight a contemporary poet, John O’Donohue, an Irish writer and priest who spoke eloquently of the “redemptive power of beauty, ambiguity and suffering” (Markley, 2016).

Expanding as an interdisciplinary journal, we are excited to welcome contributions from occupational therapy, nutrition and dietetics, speech language pathology, and nursing professionals in this issue. As a nurse historian, Dr. Kylie Smith underscores the importance of embedding history in curricula to foster reflective practitioners who demonstrate awareness of the social, political and historical context of their practice. Jacqueline Laures-Gore describes how speech-language pathologists have sought to use modes of artistic expression to link humanistic endeavor with the science of clinical work. Dr. Lisa Kerr Dunn describes her interprofessional health

humanities class as a unique avenue to build bridges across the university and offer a creative pedagogy that fosters empathy, compassion and communication across disciplines.

Finally, the story of Philippe Pozzo di Borgo, a man living with spinal cord injury and his caregiver, Abdel Sellou provides a rich opportunity for learning, both in Alison Cogan’s Perspectives article on the use of narrative in patient-centered care and in Sarah Caston’s review of the film of their lives, *The Intouchables*.

If you are interested in submitting your work to *JHR*, please review our [Submission Guidelines](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) sections. 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.

And so, as you read this issue in the midst of hectic teaching schedules, research demands and clinical productivity quotas, may be you gently reminded of Bill Forester’s reflection on his rehabilitation:

“People will ask me what is my secret to recovery... it’s love!”

– Bill Forester