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And You Never Think Cancer Would Be White

By Dealla Samadi

Today in my own two hands I held cancer. I thought it would feel different, guilty for being caught perhaps. It looked like an elementary school project. Or like a child's drawing brought to life. Or a bag of marbles, a shiny pearly-looking bag with dark purple squiggles drawn all around.

At the end of it all, we cut open the bag and inside was thick white. And the surgeon kept cutting and the white kept unfolding, like those foam mattresses you buy in a box stored in a vacuum sealed bag and when you cut the bag it grows and grows. Or those little pills we used to get from the dollar store when you put them in water, the gel cap would dissolve, and then a foam dinosaur would unfold.

And you never think cancer would be white. Or maybe you would. White like heaven. White like the clouds. White like the sky when you look up on the brightest day of summer, white like closing your eyes and rubbing hard on your lids.

Then she was sown shut and the cancer was sent to the cell doctors. They untaped her eyelids and took the tube from her mouth. Then we rolled her back, like the morning all in reverse. She was not very awake, but her body knew something had just been done to it. Her legs kept bending up towards her, trying to find somewhere safe to go.

Dealla Samadi is a first-year resident in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Kentucky. Her passion for medicine is driven largely by her love for humanity, believing art, humanity and medicine know no boundary. This passion was nurtured over the years by her involvement at Ashland Terrace Retirement Home, her work as an intern in the "Artistes en Normandie" art exhibit in Deauville, France, and her research on Jean-Paul Sartre's book *La Reine Albemarle*. Samadi, the daughter of two Lebanese immigrants, believes in the growth and connection found in storytelling and produces the podcast "On Becoming" to share the stories of people at all levels of their medical training.

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