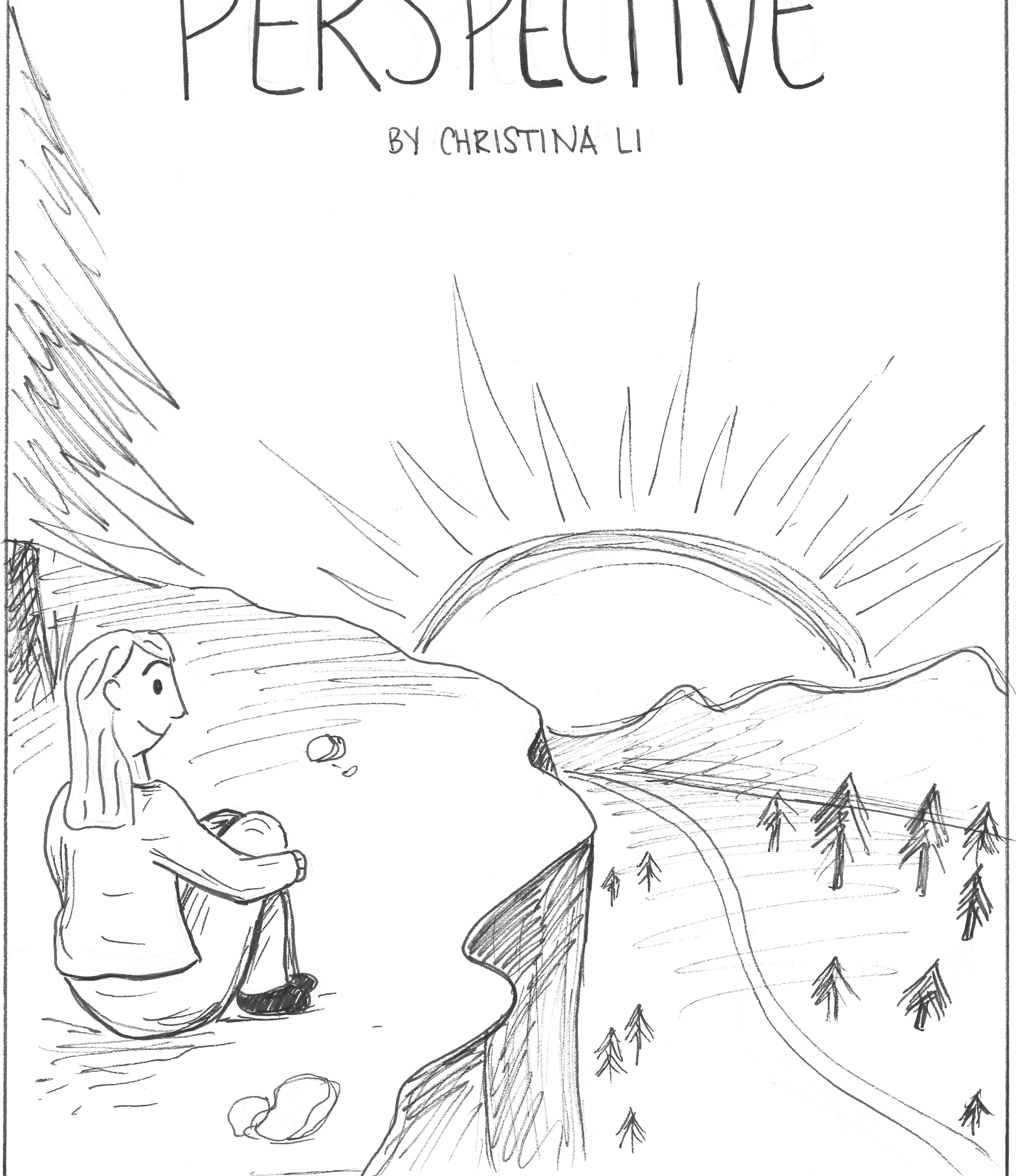


PERSPECTIVE

BY CHRISTINA LI



BEGINNING OF THIRD YEAR

GOALS

1. BECOME TOP IN MY FIELD.
2. BECOME CHAIR OF MEDICINE.
3. GET INTO TOP FELLOWSHIP.
4. GET INTO TOP RESIDENCY.

AT FIRST, I WAS ENGROSSSED IN MY LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

NO TIME FOR A BREAK.
UNWORLD, THEN CASE FILES...



RM. 6430

ATTENDING
DOCTOR

SENIOR
RESIDENT



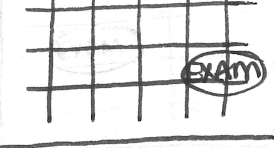
I WAS FOCUSED ON GETTING
"HONORS" ON EVERY ROTATION.

I KEPT THINKING OF THE NEXT
STEP... THE NEXT SHELF EXAM...
THE NEXT SOMETHING.

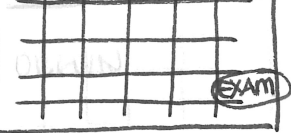
SEPTEMBER
PEDS



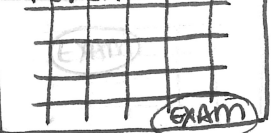
OCTOBER
SURGERY



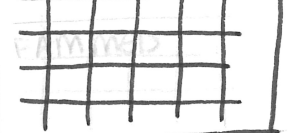
NOVEMBER
OBGYN



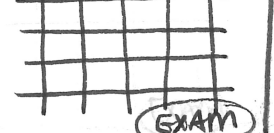
DECEMBER
PSYCH



JANUARY
EP



FEBUARY
NEURO



UNTIL...

I MET MR.F ON MY INPATIENT
PALLIATIVE/HOSPICE CARE
ROTATION AT THE VA HOSPITAL.



HE WAS DYING.

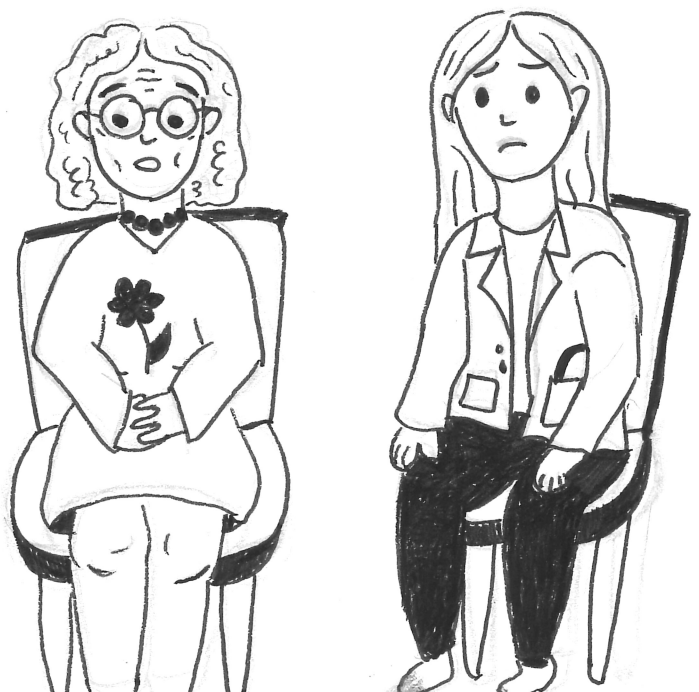


I FOLLOWED HIM FOR THE
ENTIRETY OF MY 4 WEEK
ROTATION.

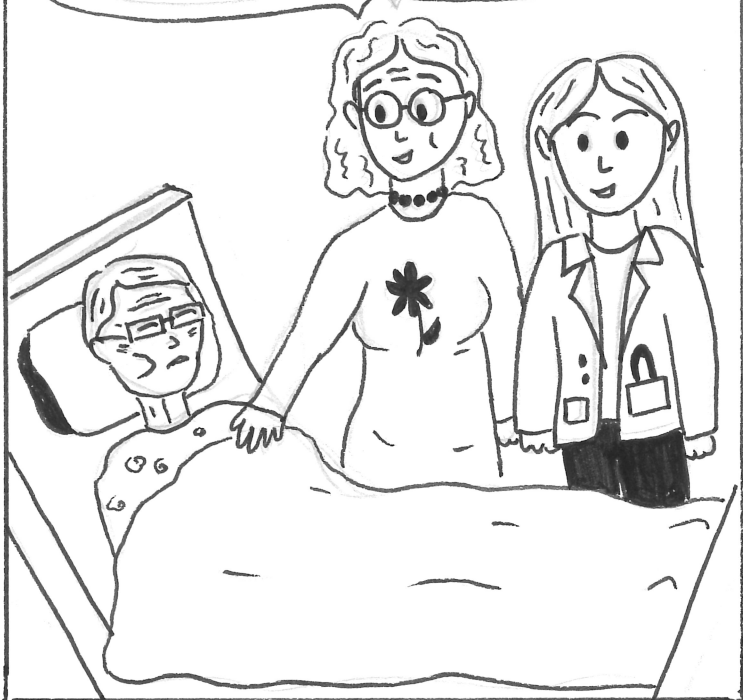


I CHECKED UP ON HIM
MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY.

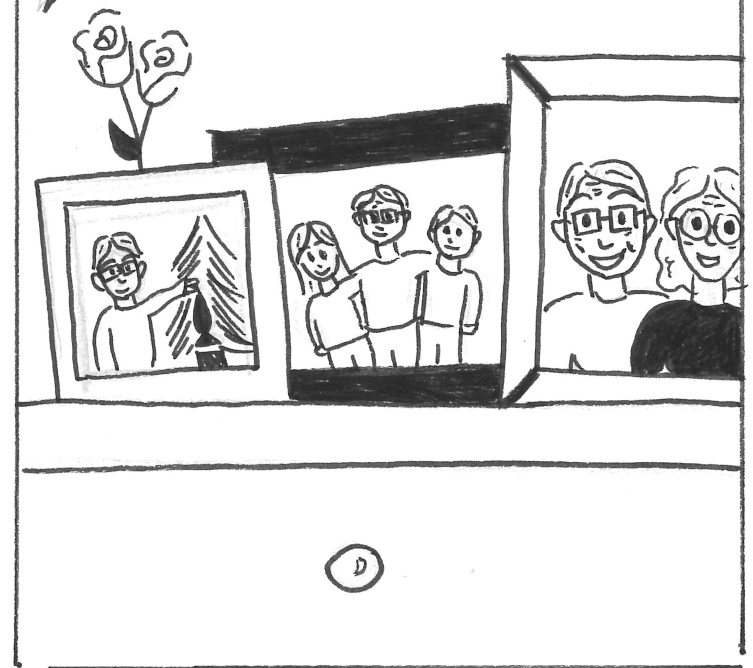
I ALSO GOT TO KNOW MR.F'S
CARING GIRLFRIEND, SUSAN,
WHO WAS AT HIS BEDSIDE
EVERYDAY.



WE MET WHEN HE ACCIDENTALLY
CALLED MY NUMBER. THEN WE
FOUND OUT WE LIVED IN THE
SAME TOWN. WE'VE BEEN
TOGETHER EVER SINCE.



HE HAD HIS DEMONS, BUT
HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
HE LOVED HIS CHILDREN,
HIS FAMILY, HIS FRIENDS.



SUSAN WAS STRUGGLING TO
COPE WITH MR. F'S EVENTUAL
DEATH. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY
ANSWERS TO HER QUESTIONS...
BUT I LISTENED.

WHY SO SOON?

...HOW CAN I GO ON?

THERE WAS SO MUCH WE
WANTED TO DO TOGETHER...

I'M SO SORRY
SUSAN...

THERE WAS ONE THING SUSAN
SAID THAT STUCK WITH ME.

MAKE SURE YOU SPEND
TIME WITH YOUR LOVED
ONES... DOING THE THINGS
YOU ENJOY. LIVE EACH DAY
TO ITS FULLEST... BECAUSE
LIFE IS TOO SHORT.

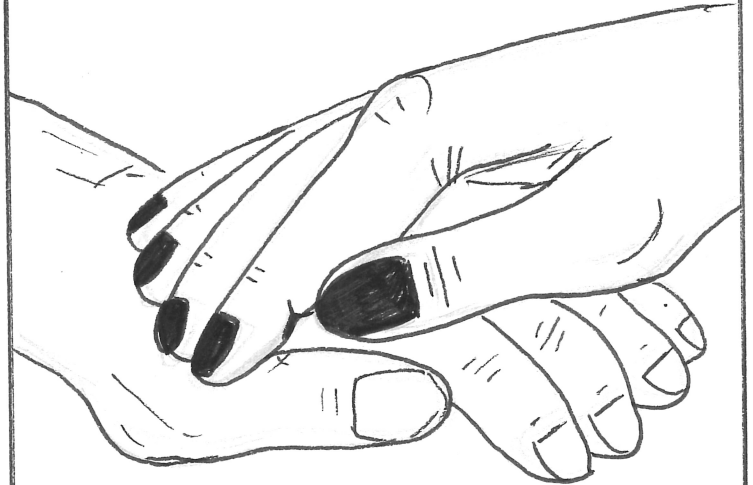
THAT NIGHT, I CALLED MY
PARENTS AND HUGGED
MY BOYFRIEND EXTRA TIGHT.

MOM?

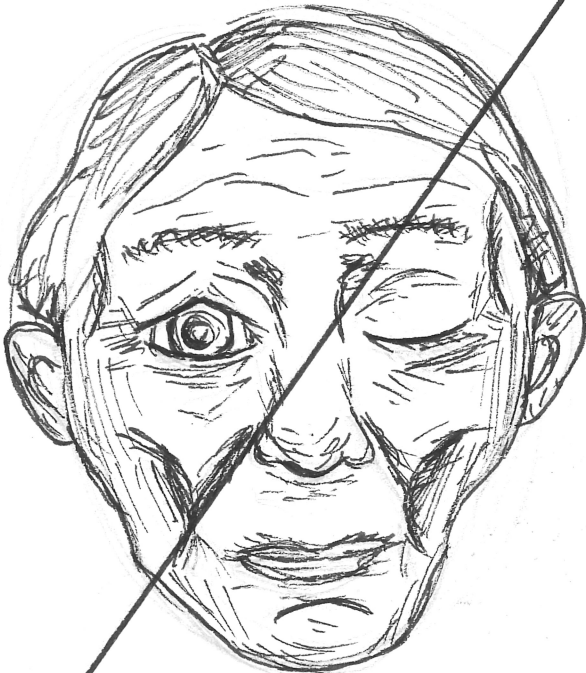
CHRISTINA! IT'S SO
GOOD TO HEAR YOUR
VOICE - I WAS GETTING
WORRIED. HOW ARE
YOU?

I'M OKAY.
I MISS YOU AND DAD
THOUGH.

AS MR. F PROGRESSED TOWARDS
END OF LIFE, HIS BREATHING
BECAME MORE RAGGED, HIS
SKIN MORE MOTTLED. HIS
PULSE GREW FAINT AND THEN
DISAPPEARED. DISAPPEARED.



SOME DAYS, MR. F WAS LUCID
AND COULD HAVE SHORT
CONVERSATIONS...

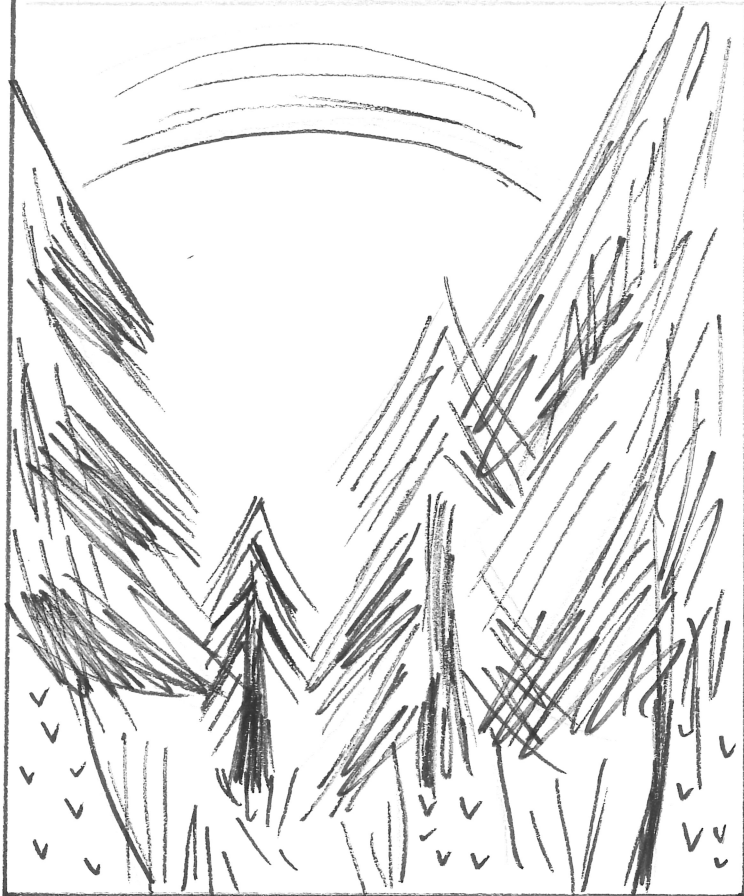


... OTHER DAYS, HE WAS
IN DEEP SLEEP AND
UNRESPONSIVE.



WHEN HE WAS AWAKE, HE
WOULD ASK FOR SUSAN. HIS
SMILE WAS THE BRIGHTEST
WHEN SHE WAS AROUND.

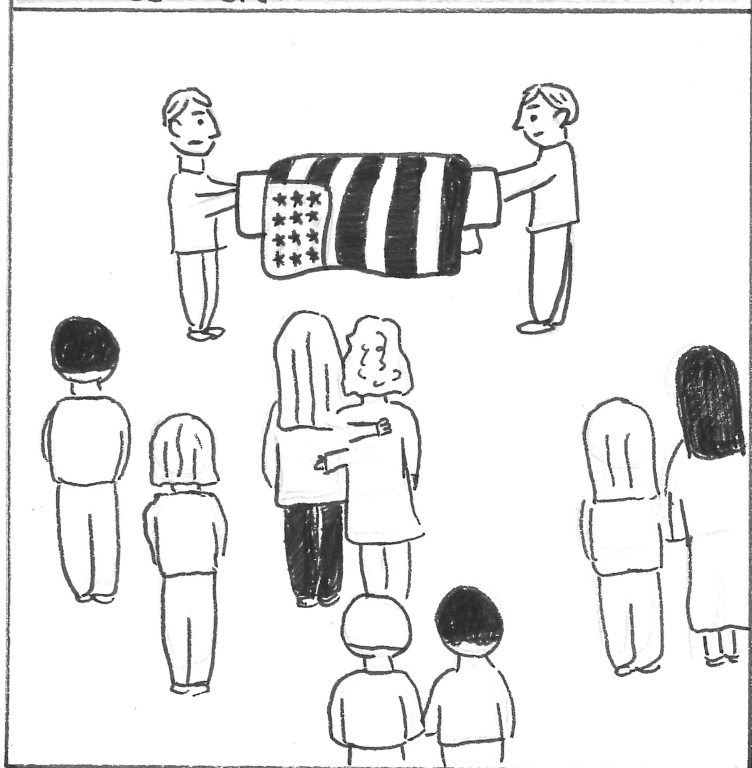
MR. F PASSED AWAY ON A
BEAUTIFUL AUGUST MORNING.



THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS
DEATH, SUSAN SAID MR. F
WOKE UP AND TOLD HER
TO PACK HIS BAGS... BECAUSE
HE WAS READY TO GO.



THE ENTIRE UNIT, SUSAN, HIS FAMILY
AND FRIENDS ALL GATHERED TO
SEND HIM OFF. IT WAS A
BEAUTIFUL, EMOTIONAL MILITARY
PROCESSION.



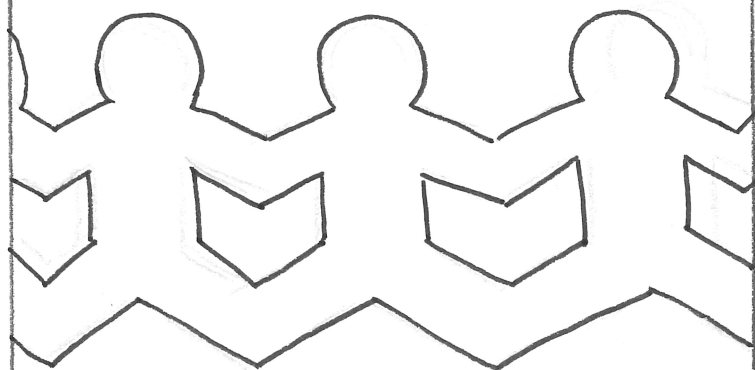
IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SAY
GOODBYE TO SUSAN, WHO I HAD
GOTTEN CLOSE TO. IT WAS EVEN
MORE DIFFICULT TO WALK BY MR. F'S
VACANT ROOM. IT WAS ONCE FULL
OF LIFE AND LOVE... AND NOW WAS
COLD AND EMPTY.



MY ROTATION ENDED, AND
I MOVED ON TO THE NEXT.
BUT I NEVER STOPPED
THINKING ABOUT MR. F
AND SUSAN.

THEY TAUGHT ME ABOUT
THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN
LIFE - NOT MONEY, CAREER,
OR FAME, BUT FAMILY, FRIENDS,
AND HAPPINESS. I LEARNED TO
LIVE LIFE TO ITS FULLEST
AND TO SAVOR EACH MOMENT.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, I LEARNED
ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF
LOVE AND HUMAN CONNECTION.



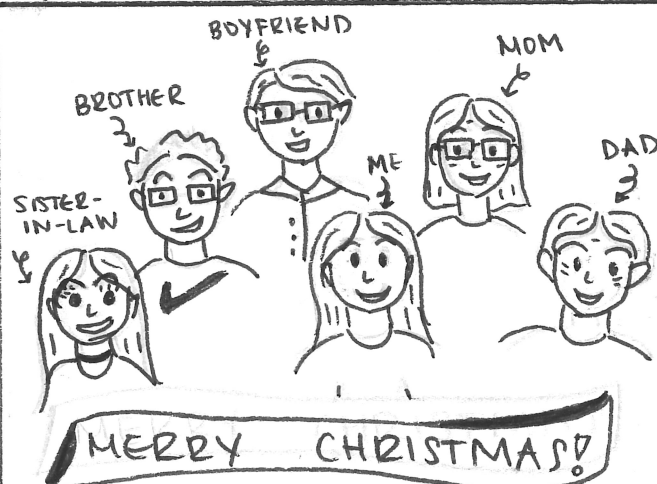
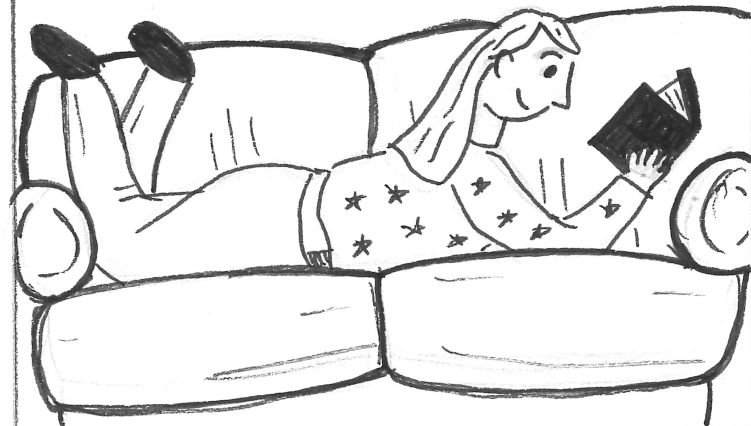
THE REST OF THIRD YEAR

HOSPITAL
MAIN ENTRANCE

EMERGENCY
←

I JUST GOT OUT OF
CLINIC. WANT TO
GRAB DINNER?

SURE! I JUST
GOT OUT TOO.
MEET IN 10?



END OF FOURTH YEAR

GOALS

1. BECOME A COMPASSIONATE DOCTOR.
2. SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.
3. ENJOY EACH DAY TO ITS FULLEST.
4. BE HAPPY.