

This is a story and illustration from the upcoming book *100 Little Stories of Big Moments* published by The Permanente Press.

Most of the stories and poems were written by clinicians in 15 minutes in writing workshops about meaningful moments in their work and life of practicing medicine. Professional artists were asked to create a visual representation of the story.

## A Ukulele Appears From Somewhere

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I've been busy in Hawaii for 6 months. I'm exhausted. Every Thursday I wake up at 3:45 am, ensure my travel bag is stocked, and head to the airport.

Flying to Oahu, renting a car, and staying in a hotel outside Waikiki has already lost its charm. I actually go directly from the airport to Mapunapuna Clinic to do surgery. I check into my hotel at 7:30 in the evening, gulp down some dinner, and fall asleep in front of my Kaiser laptop. Friday brings another day of surgery and—joy!—my trip home.

A particularly long and busy Friday finds me frantically negotiating the Nimitz freeway aiming for the Avis rental car return office.

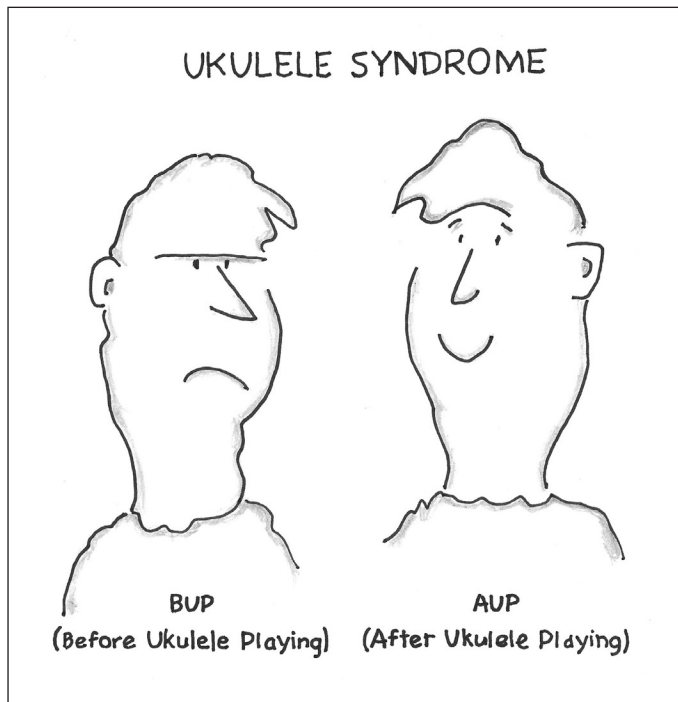
The waiting area is packed. A local family with a young man, several aunties, and perhaps a grandfather stands smiling and chatting in the sun. Two very tan tourist ladies and their young female charges sit and squint in the direction of the shuttle bus. They wear gold and carry floral luggage. The 2 young women are 2-thumbing their iPhones. I admit I am judging them and scowling.

The patriarch of the local family tells the young man to help the tourist ladies with their luggage. He is one of those big, thick, handsome Polynesian boys. He hops to attention, and soon we are all on board.

The young man asks the tourists where they are from, but I don't listen because I don't care. He then asks the shuttle bus driver to turn off the radio because he will entertain our guests.

A ukulele appears from somewhere in the local family's bundles. The young man begins to sing in a loud, sweet voice. It is a sappy Jack Johnson song or some such ballad. The tourists have put away their phones. They are no longer as irritating to me as they had been.

The local aunties start asking me where I live. They recommend that the tourist ladies visit Maui next time. The local family had just come over for a funeral. I resolve to smile at tourists more often. ❖



Accompanying artwork:  
**Ukulele Syndrome**  
by Phil LaBorie

### How to Cite this Article

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### Artist Information

Phil LaBorie is an artist living in Murrels Inlet, SC.