

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

The stories 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.

Blue Eyes

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His blue eyes gazed at me helplessly, hopelessly, and vulnerably. I wanted to read meaning into Robert's eyes, knowing full well that he would never recover. He was a patient with a traumatic brain injury. After graduating high school, he joyfully went on a graduation trip to Canada. He and his buddies drove day and night to get to their campsite. One night after he had just moved to sit shotgun, the truck entered a construction site and slammed into rebar, which lodged in Robert's forehead. Many surgeries later, he now occupied a bed on the neuro floor. Unable to move his contracted body, he only communicated with his beautiful blue eyes. He would blink and squeeze your hand when you asked him if he wanted to go home. His doctors, therapists, and nurses had become his family; we all loved this 18-year-old boy with the uncertain future and cared for him like a brother. ❖

How to Cite this Article

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Accompanying artwork: Blue Eyes by Tatum Howlett.