



In May 2016, I began volunteering with a community of artists who help patients and their families use artistic expression as a means of addressing life's challenges. We co-create art with patients in waiting rooms and also install uplifting pieces in patients' rooms. This program is called "Art a la Carte" (AALC) and my piece pays an homage to a patient I met at the Tom Baker Cancer Institute. Every shift at AALC is extraordinary in its own way, but something about this patient stuck with me for a long time. I met Ms. P in August 2016 while on my rounds. I was changing artwork in patient rooms and she had requested a Mediterranean landscape, a place that she'd recently visited with her daughter. It wasn't long till she sparked a conversation about her recent adventures and how they all started due to her cancer diagnosis. A year prior, she received her diagnosis; the doctors gave her the option of an early admission or a delayed palliative therapy route for treatment in five months. During those invaluable days, she checked off as many things as she could from her bucket list. She travelled, dined at the finest restaurants, met old friends, took several trips with her daughter and partner, and focused on self-love. As I was leaving, she said something along the lines of, "It's funny to me now, that had it been a lottery ticket or a cancer diagnosis my destiny for the next three months was decided." Such a powerful goodbye. It wasn't until I got home and realized the level of self-actualization she had reached. The words "I accept the terms and conditions" below her portrait imitate the wordings that you'd find on a lottery ticket, and the words "of reality" juxtapose them. She did something so morbidly beautiful at such a dire stage in life. This to me illustrated precision and individualized care. As health care providers, we strive to save lives and sometimes it can come at the cost of pain, lesser quality of life and innumerable other complications. As difficult as it might be, we must learn to respect the wishes of the patient and provide the best care possible at all stages of an illness.

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