

The scars on my chest tell a story I was too young to remember, but that I know I lived.

I was born with a glucose-galactose malabsorption ailment that stumped diagnosticians for the first year of my life. The culprit was by no means obvious, but it was with great diligence and discovery that the physicians were able to unearth the specificities of my genetic ailment.

The following years, while growing up on a no carb, no candy diet, the questions of “why” and “how” came to me often—and not only as they pertained to food. The inquisitive and investigative nature propelled me through my youth, where I began to take on a deeper interest in the mysteries of the human body.

When I was 16, my parents agreed to let me travel to Lebanon with my younger cousin to visit our family. Little did they know weeks into our trip, we’d find ourselves trapped in the middle of a war zone. The headlines came, the news blared and we stared out from the roof: the swift thundering of fighter jets streamed overhead, the muted echoes and rifts of gunshots and bombs, the smell of cooked blood in the air, the aftermath of silence in the streets, the smoke and debris lingering behind. I put my hand on my cousin’s shoulder reassuringly, as we watched the ambulances blister through the dust into the scorching blur of the horizon. I remember following the noise in my mind—envisioning where it was going. I stood there quietly a moment, then decided I was going to follow it.

For the remainder of my stay in Beirut, I tagged along with a village doctor, delivering supplies from the mountains to hospitals in need. There we would see the faces—pain, resignation, grief—see the families crying—the victims, bloodied and injured—the physicians scurrying without pause. It was here in these moments of tragedy and vulnerability that I felt more connected with people than ever before. And I saw in this unfiltered and dire world the resiliency of people, the unforgiving nature of injury, and the sacrifice and passion needed from physicians to navigate such circumstances. Little did my parents or I know that my summer vacation to Lebanon would become my introduction to Emergency Medicine.

This calling initiated my eagerness to work with a specific type of patient—high acuity patients requiring efficient management. In college, I was afforded the opportunity to work in the ED as an employee of a neurological study. I recall a young patient with a history of acne presenting with dizziness. As part of screening for the study, I examined a positive nystagmus indicative of a central pathology. I notified my principal investigator and suggested he should examine the patient for possible enrollment. My exam ultimately led to my PI recommending an MRI which showed a CVA.

During my medical school rotations, I excelled under the fast pace and high stakes that forced physicians to recall knowledge from an encyclopedia of subfields at a moment’s notice. Some shifts involved simple repairs while others hinged on immediate diagnoses and efficient action to producing life-changing results. The hands-on procedural environment invigorated me, and the trauma and resuscitation bay stabilization satisfied the idea of seeing a problem through to its

solution. But with all the patience and rapidity, the teamwork and individual pressure, at the root of our responsibility was an obligation—to provide the best possible care under the circumstances. And while sometimes the mysteries and tragedies of medicine may prevent the “fixing” of all ailments, like a condition that prevents a child from enjoying the sugary joys of a lollipop after a doctor’s visit, it is our duty as physicians to bring to light the “whats” hiding in the dark, and to put our hand on a young boy’s shoulder and explain to them the “hows” and the “whys” of it all, reassuring them, that we’ve done our best.

A strong residency program can offer a stimulating environment full of mystery, opportunity and cutting-edge teachings. It is my hope to train alongside physicians who share a similar humanitarian and analytical outlook on medicine, and are willing to open up their encyclopedias to a devoted lifelong learner. To absorb such applicable information from some of the best ED physicians in the country would be a blessing and an extraordinary way to begin my medical career. With years of experience, an adaptability in dealing with diverse groups of people, and an unbending will to perform my obligation at its highest level, in my most aspired clinical setting, I am hopeful I can contribute a unique perspective and skillset to your program, and I would be honored to begin the next chapter of my career training in such an opportunistic environment.