

## Sarah

Nicole De Jesus-Brugman

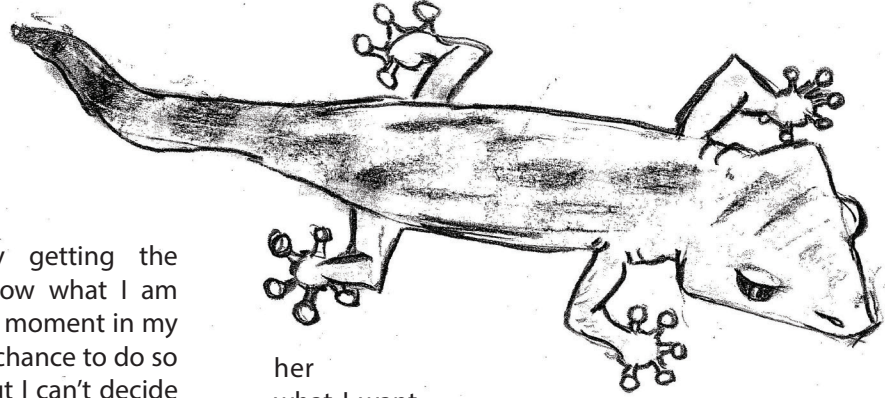
I have pictured this moment—finally getting the opportunity to let those around me know what I am thinking and feeling—I have pictured this moment in my head millions of times. Now that I have a chance to do so there are so many things I want to say, but I can't decide where to start. I guess I should begin by introducing myself. My name is Sarah and I am seven-years-old. I have lived with the same foster family in Sarasota for the past three years since my brother and I were taken away from my mom because someone was worried we weren't being taken care of properly. I don't know much about her, but I've heard my foster mom say that my mom had a problem with taking too many pills. I guess she must have been really sick, I hope she's ok. I haven't seen my brother since we were taken away that day, but I hope that he is in a nice house like I am. My foster mom takes really good care of me and I'll be the first to admit it's not easy. I have Schizencephaly, which not a lot of people know about. The doctors in Sarasota had to send me to another hospital in Tampa called All Children's because they didn't know what was wrong with me when I was born. Schizencephaly is a rare disease and it means that there's something wrong with my brain and because of it I have a lot of seizures and I am partially blind. I have machines that help me breath and I get my food through a tube in my stomach. I heard that my foster mom had to take classes in order to learn how to use the machines and what to do if something bad happened to me, like if I stopped breathing. I spend most of my days sitting in my special chair or laying in bed because I cannot move my body. My foster mom usually turns on the TV in the room so I can listen to it. I wish I could tell her that I would rather listen to music instead, but I can't. The doctors told my foster mom that my disease caused me to be severely developmentally delayed so I will never be able to communicate. I don't think I'm delayed, I know what I want to say, but my body won't cooperate. I get upset when I can't tell

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The Lady  
Ana Gabriela Lujan

■ **Ana Gabriela Lujan** is a community contributor to HEAL. She is in seventh grade.



her what I want, but I would say that the most frustrating part is when I can't tell her that I don't feel well or that something hurts. By the time she realizes that something is wrong I'm usually very sick and end up in the hospital. I've gotten used to going to the hospital by now, though. I've been there more times than I can count. Sometimes I have to spend the night alone because my foster mom needs to go home and get some rest; I don't like it when that happens. The scariest part of my day is when I get the seizures. My body tenses up and I start shaking, but I can't control it. They used to only happen once or twice a day, now they happen a lot more. My doctors have had to change the medicine for the seizures a lot of times, but nothing seems to make them go away.

Lagartijo  
Ana Gabriela Lujan

I really don't know why this happened to me, but I have come to accept that this is the way things are. I know that I will never be able to ride a bike, climb a tree, or go to school like other children my age. I will never be able to dress myself, walk on my own, or even hug my foster mom. I don't know if things are going to get better, but I can tell that my body is getting tired. I've been getting sick more often and my foster my mom has had to take me to the hospital a lot. My seizures have also been happening a lot more often and the medicines the doctor gave don't seem to be working anymore. I can tell things around me are changing, too. My foster mom seems more tired and she cries a lot, especially when we're at the doctor's office. I've been hearing her talk about getting something called a DNR for me, I don't know what it means but I know that it's really hard to get because she spends a lot of time on the phone fighting with somebody. Maybe that DNR will fix everything. I wish I could hug her and tell her that everything is going to be ok, but unfortunately I can't. I'm a hostage in my own body. Maybe the next time you see her you could tell her that I am thankful for everything she has done for me and that I love her.

■ **Nicole de Jesus-Brugman** is a fourth year medical student at The Florida State University College of Medicine.



## Adopted Parents

Carol Faith Warren

Carol for the music  
Faith for answered prayer  
Love a set of parents  
To nurture and to care  
Christmas brought her home  
A child that was not theirs  
They claimed a little daughter  
Their home they chose to share  
She grew in love and comfort  
With beauty round her soul  
She was always their reflection  
Her happiness their goal  
They loved her oh so deeply  
Gave her all the best  
She grew and loved them dearly  
More than all the rest  
She has children of her own  
And passes on her parent's gifts  
Of joy and love and laughter  
A heart the higher lifts  
The love of God eternal  
No fear of day or night  
To care for every creature  
And follow what is right

Chloe's Rose  
Joseph K. Torgesen, PhD

■ **Joseph K. Torgesen, PhD** is Director Emeritus of the Florida Center for Reading Research.

## 2012

Nilda Rodríguez

This poem was written by a woman who was about to celebrate 50 years of marriage to her husband in the year 2012. The year started with her husband having a heart attack while they were 250 miles away from home. She was terrified, but she did what she could to stay calm. After she got her husband to the hospital, she called her physician son and told him to notify his siblings, but not to come. I am that son. This poem is revealing to me, as I had no idea how difficult it was for my mother, and I did not know how scared she was until she shared this work with me. It was written in the middle of the night, while my dad was in the hospital, and she was all alone. —José Rodríguez

January came as expected;  
A dull pain in the chest,  
A drink of water, a rest  
In a corner of the sofa, seated.

Night comes, and with it shadows.  
Heavens brighten the earth  
And dreams of a better morning  
Show up in the bitter night.

Six a.m. comes very fast;  
A pain, a cry for help rings  
In the cool morning of January 3rd.  
A soft I love you is heard.

The phone, the phone, no signal!  
A quick prayer is sent to the Lord.  
Response comes fast, we are on our way.  
The heart, the heart is giving up.

The heavens are flooded with prayers,  
The Lord and Master responds  
With expert care and love—  
He is here to guide and help us.