

Autumn Tucker

English 3 6<sup>th</sup> Period

Ms. Feher

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### Sick To Death

It felt like a never-ending virus. This sickness felt like a terrible, life-sucking virus that was never going to stop until I was on my death bed. It was so much more than that. As I hobbled my way to the nurse's office the idea that what I had contracted from some possible dirty doorknob, could have killed me never ran through my head. The nurse told me that I probably just had a virus. I believed her. After we left school, my mom took me to the walk-in clinic near our old apartments that we trusted quite often. After they ran a few bizarre tests they concluded that I had a UTI, at the time that made sense because bacteria are everywhere. What their diagnosis was didn't make sense to my mom, I shouldn't have the severe pain that I had, yet they claimed that it was normal.

One night of prescribed antibiotics later and I was in the ER. My Dad arrived roughly the same time that my mom and I did, the first thing that came out of his mouth was something about money. "Instead of it costing \$40 for a doctor's appointment, it's going to be \$400," he said. My mother silently glared at him as we went inside. We waited for about 20 minutes before we were seen, the small bed in the room was surprisingly comfortable compared to my slightly lumpy couch at home. After they got the terrible process of getting blood and urine samples over with, I was given an IV. This was the first visit to the ER that required more than just those tests for me so I was naturally a little worried. The doctor explained the process of a CT scan to me which

sounded harmless. Once they finished, they said some medical mumbo jumbo to my parents who just nodded vaguely and pretended that everything made sense. Everything that they explained after that didn't match up with my other symptoms besides the abdominal pain. Where were my answers? Why was I so confused? These thoughts swarmed my mind as I stared ahead at the blank wall. The silent ride home made me uncomfortable, I just continued to pray for some sign that I was going to see the other side of this infection. My mom took me back home where I went back to bed and tried to sleep. In the morning my mom sent one of her friends to watch me while she went to a face painting gig, it seemed as though things were progressing as the day went on my pain slowly depleted.

Later that night my pain came back and this time I had severe nausea too. I tried not to panic, and I hoped that it would just go away until I threw up on the couch. I made it to the toilet while my mom cleaned up the couch, at this point I didn't have much of anything in my stomach, so it made me weaker. This was probably my third breakdown that week, but I just couldn't handle the roller coaster anymore, I proceeded to bawl my eyes out while I rested my head on the toilet. I felt utterly hopeless and scared out of my mind. I knew that I needed real medical help besides prescribed tyonal so I cleaned myself off, took a deep breath, and took a much-needed shower. My mom didn't say a word as she swiftly packed clothes in a bag and took me to the car. She started driving like a madwoman back to the Smyrna ER where she checked me in and gave me a doggy bag in case I threw up again. As we waited, I threw up twice in the waiting room and gave a terrifyingly dark urine sample. Hours went by with my mom praying and holding my hand as I laid back in one of those comfortable hospital beds. After another CT scan my mom was fuming, she finally put her foot down and said, "she isn't getting any better and she needs to

go to the hospital, why can't you see that you aren't helping her"?! The doctor looked slightly frightened at this point and he finally decided to transfer me to Nashville.

I was weirdly happy at this point because I knew that I was going to get proper help and that they were going to be monitoring me constantly. The two paramedics came and strapped me down to the gurney and wheeled me outside. On our way out, my mom saw something terrible and came to me in tears, we'd never seen anything as traumatic as what she had seen, and it made everything sink in a little more. The ambulance ride was fairly bumpy and the equipment around me was kind of dirty. The paramedics were friendly which made the ride a lot smoother. Once in the pediatrics ER, I was immediately relieved. It had such a pleasant environment compared to the coldness of the Smyrna ER. Light, soothing colors everywhere made me feel at ease. The evaluation of the Doctor's made everything seem so much clearer and they explained everything that they were going to do. The nurse rolled me into my hospital room via a wheelchair. As I looked around it was slightly more daunting than the ER room with the big bed in the middle of the room with dozens of monitors around. My first nurse came in in full scrubs because I was highly contagious. The next three days went by in a blur, I began to feel better but I was still very weak. My hip bones and rib cage became more defined. After the three days passed, I was finally released. A part of me was scared that my health would not improve as quickly as I wanted it to. I left the hospital in a nervous daze. Once I got home, I spent the rest of the week improving my health little by little. My message to everyone is that you can eventually overcome all of your obstacles, no matter how hard they may seem.