

# 55 words

A moment between doctor and patient  
can be captured in 55 words

A collection of 55-word stories debuted in Rochester Medicine in the 2010 winter issue. Written by family medicine faculty and trainees, the stories encapsulate some key moments in health care encounters. This collection features stories about the developmental possessiveness of a plucky 3 year old, the selflessness of a middle-aged woman facing major surgery, the struggle of managing a medication misunderstanding, and the yawning loss of a mother whose infant has died. More than the individual stories of the patients, however, is the impact that these stories have had on their physician-authors. "The very act of writing and sharing the stories enriches us as clinicians and caregivers, and deepens our appreciation for our patients and our work," says Colleen T. Fogarty, M.D., M.Sc., (R '95), assistant professor of family medicine.

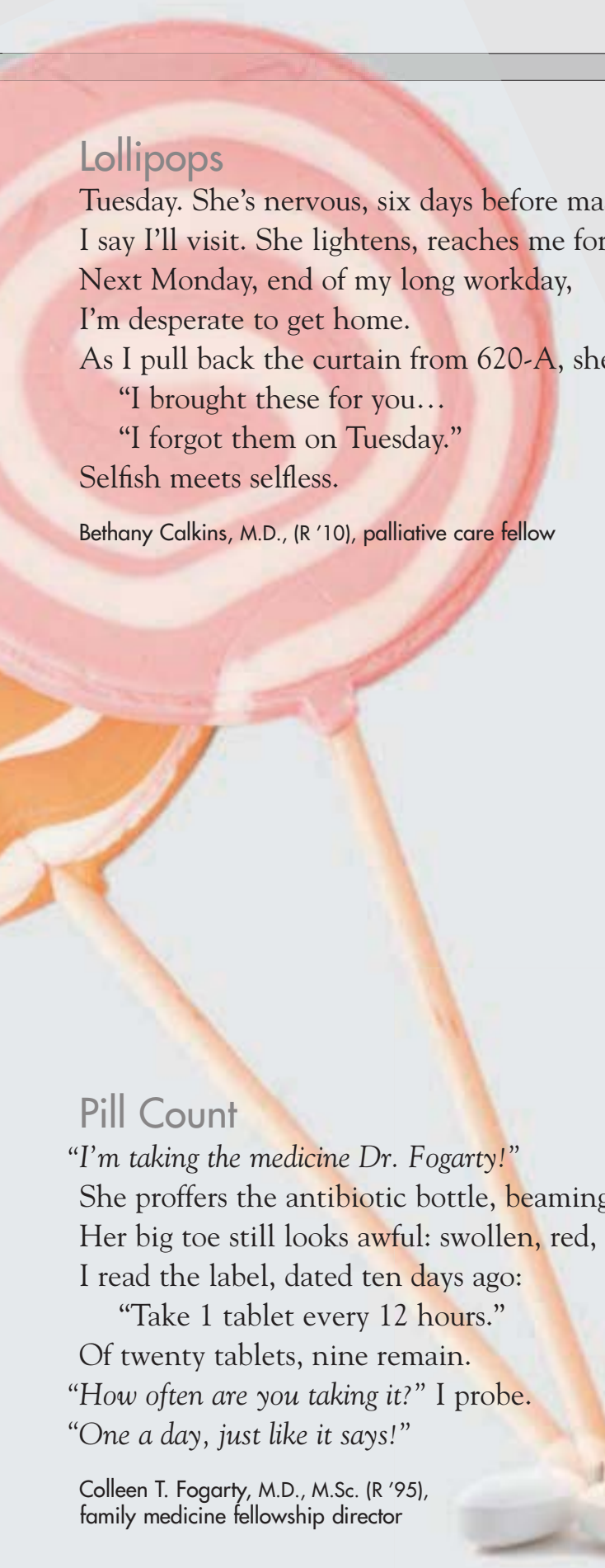
## Mine

In my laboring patient's room,  
Comfortable with epidural,  
Esposo, abuela, hermana – all gathered for support.

When I arrived, her three-year old daughter greeted me: Doctora! Doctora!  
turned to her cousin saying, "she's mine."

Four hours later, viewing her new sister in their mother's arms,  
With bright eyes,  
She again turned to her cousin, "she's mine!"

Melanie Gnazzo, M.D., family medicine resident



## Lollipops

Tuesday. She's nervous, six days before mastectomy.  
I say I'll visit. She lightens, reaches me for a hug.  
Next Monday, end of my long workday,  
I'm desperate to get home.  
As I pull back the curtain from 620-A, she smiles at me.

"I brought these for you..."

"I forgot them on Tuesday."

Selfish meets selfless.

Bethany Calkins, M.D., (R '10), palliative care fellow

## Pill Count

*"I'm taking the medicine Dr. Fogarty!"*

She proffers the antibiotic bottle, beaming.  
Her big toe still looks awful: swollen, red, draining.  
I read the label, dated ten days ago:

"Take 1 tablet every 12 hours."

Of twenty tablets, nine remain.

"How often are you taking it?" I probe.

"One a day, just like it says!"

Colleen T. Fogarty, M.D., M.Sc. (R '95),  
family medicine fellowship director

## SIDS

The baby feels cold  
As he firmly holds the chunky calf  
And grinds the needle  
Through baby fat, and on into bone.

Fluids wide open.  
And he knows this is all futile.

Parents escorted out  
Under the illusion of lifesaving care.

Mother's screams heard  
When she sees us stop, eyes downcast.  
Her baby gone  
Forever.

Stephen H. Schultz, M.D. (R '96),  
associate professor of family medicine and residency  
program director

