I am a first year medical student at the University of Toronto and a self-trained artist, from South Korea and raised in Southern Ontario. My artworks aspire to capture the human experience as figures in surreal spaces and often functions to move me to deep introspection. In some of my first attempts to recreate an individual’s expression or a background that complements their character, I found the challenge demanded observation and empathy that was much more than surface-deep. It encouraged me to practice visualizing the subject in a more holistic manner; not just as a person, but also as their emotions, choices, environment, past and future.

“In her own time” is one of these attempts to capture a story and was inspired by a recurring theme from my first year in medicine, regarding my experiences in clinic. Being trainees, younger and healthier patients are often asked to be our bedside teachers to facilitate ease of learning, but as a consequence, I found it uncannily natural to see myself in them in the process. Each patient and their tale of tenacity, misery, sanguinity or bravery would leave me lost in thought for days to follow. *What if that were me?*

This piece describes a story about a girl, whom I found to be unjustly young to be a patient and my hope for her to slip free from the weight of time and inevitability to find solace. As the subject emerges from the room, her eyes and expression depict a solemn relief, reflecting her harrowing journey. Although as a trainee, I was not able to follow her case longitudinally, this painting allowed me my own escape as well by acting as a medium for exploring her story further and finding closure in my own experiences.