YOU ARE ALL ADULTS NOW, AND WE WILL TREAT YOU AS SUCH.

YOU WILL CONDUCT YOURSELVES AS PROFESSIONALS.

GUYS, WE'RE IN MED SCHOOL. WE'RE GOING TO BE DOCTORS!

I HAD ACHIEVED MY DREAM. I WAS FINALLY GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
THE FIRST PART OF MEDICAL SCHOOL WAS A BLUR.

*WE WERE COERCED INTO COMPLETING THESE SURVEYS TO RECEIVE OUR EXAM GRADE. NO CHANGES WERE EVER MADE BASED ON OUR FEEDBACK.

WHEN A THIRD OF THE CLASS FAILED CARDIOLOGY, WE GATHERED TO POINT OUT THE NUMEROUS FAULTS OF THE COURSE AND HOPED THE ADMINISTRATORS HEARD US OUT.

WHEN I'M DEAN SO I DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS SHIT.

REGARDLESS, THEY CURVED THE EXAM OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF THEIR HEARTS.

BUNCH OF WHINY BABIES.

I CANNOT WAIT UNTIL I'M DEAN SO I DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS SHIT.

NOTHING CHANGED FOR THE NEXT CROP OF STUDENTS.
IN MANY WAYS THE TRANSITION FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE CLINICAL YEARS WAS REFRESHING. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WERE NOT ONLY EXPECTED TO REGURGITATE RELEVANT MATERIAL ON CUE, WE WERE ALSO JUDGED BY A “HIDDEN CURRICULUM.”

MOVE THE CAMERA WHERE I’M GOING TO MOVE!
YOU BASICALLY HAVE TO READ HIS MIND.

I’M REALLY NOT SURE IF SHE’S JOKING.

HAVE WHATEVER I NEED READY AT THE PRECISE MOMENT I NEED IT. MEDICINE IS ABOUT ANTICIPATION.

WHO IS THE BEST PACK MULE? I AM. THAT’S ME. THIS IS THE CULMINATION OF MY LIFE’S EDUCATION.

I’M GOING TO CALL YOU “MED STUDENT” UNTIL YOU PROVE YOU’RE WORTHY TO BE CALLED BY NAME.

Yeah, that patient history looks great.

We were judged on the strangest things, yet nothing we did really mattered.
I was becoming isolated from the friends that had been there earlier in med school. Dating only contributed to a growing sense of loneliness.

Well, the thing is neither of us know where you’re going to be for residency.

Sigh. I know. I’ve had this conversation before.

My dog became my confidant.

That was my first code. He’s in the ICU now. I don’t know what’s gonna happen…

You’re looking at the treats, aren’t you?

Loan statement: You owe $355,000. After interest that’s over $700,000. I’m trapped.
THERE WAS OFTEN A COMPLETE DISCONNECT BETWEEN REALITY AND THE IDEALIZED DISCUSSIONS WE HAD IN HUMANITIES CLASS.

HELP ME. I CAN TELL YOU HAVE A GOOD HEART. PLEASE. LET ME DIE.

THIS PATIENT HAS DISSEMINATED HISTOPLASMOSIS INFILTRATING THE BRAIN. SHE IS REFUSING TO EAT, SO WE ARE GOING TO SURGICALLY PLACE A FEEDING TUBE.

BUT HER ADVANCE DIRECTIVE EXPLICITLY STATES THAT SHE DOES NOT WANT A FEEDING TUBE.

HER HUSBAND WANTS IT, AND HE HAS POWER OF ATTORNEY.

I WANT TO DIE.

NOT TODAY, HONEY!

I FELT LIKE I HAD BROKEN AN UNSPOKEN PROMISE I NEVER HAD THE POWER TO KEEP.
I could take a detour from the meaninglessness.

Some days it was comforting to know the option was there.

It was not hope that kept me going. It was hope for hope to return. Sylvia Plath worried that “The Bell Jar, with its stifling distortions” would descend again, but I was already trapped inside waiting with unquiet patience for it to ascend.
I had to imagine myself happy.

He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster.
And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you. –Nietzsche
Thank you to my close friends, proud family, SSRIs, and the treat-seeking hound that made me laugh even in my darkest moments. I would not be here without you.

Thank you as well to the mentors who helped me discover my path. May there be more people like you in medicine’s future.