One day I was 4 and then the world went black. Horsey was the name of the game and we never played it after that. My brother,3, my dad, and I were playing a rodeo style, buck-you-off game of horsey in the middle of the day. I had just been bucked of and was laughing waiting for my brother come crashing into the pillows like I did. Change of plans, my brother missed the pillows and came crashing into me. The last thing I saw was the back of his head and then, like the middle of the night, it was dark.

**Fast forward.**
I got to ride in a firetruck because all the ambulances were busy that day. There was only 50% darkness after all, my brothers head only directly connected with my left eye. The concussion left me in the hospital bed for 4 days before they decided to do the surgery for the blowout fracture in my left eye to turn the light back on.

Hospitals are normally scary and cold. I didn’t think so. Everything was clean, crisp and the hallways smelled like the expensive hand sanitizer. I remember it like a dream, like heaven. In a wheelchair riding down the hall to my next adventure then the doctors staring over me telling me I was going to be sleepy soon. They were kind to me, and I felt safe with them. There might not be much a 4 year old carries in their memory for 2 decades but the feeling of calm the hospital and doctors brought me was one of them.

I had never been in a hospital before that but the same awe lives in me 20 years later. Since then, there has been a funny draw for me to become like the people who helped me during that time. I wanted to be a vet, like every 4 year old, mainly because I loved my family dog so naturally becoming a vet seemed fitting. But that shoe didn’t seem to fit after that.

I have focused my life on the goal of being a more responsible for people’s lives than the normal person might be. A lot of people fear the hospital, clinics, and medical attention in general. The vulnerability can be enough to keep people away. The illness is scary, the pain is terrifying, but the doctors and medical team are the ones who ease those feeling into comfort. Some people have felt pain so intense they thought it might be the end, me included. Hospitals and doctors, to me, are a safe place, almost like a sigh of relief. I desire to be a sigh of relief.

I have no immediate family that practice medicine, my mom teaches kindergarten, and my dad was a painter. Medicine is a difficult road to navigate especially when it feels like you’re doing it on your own. I grew up poor, I have found in my collage years that most people do. Being poor and wanting to be a physician are not a match made in heaven. I joined the military to bridge the financial gap between high school and medical school. The navy has given me more than I expected to get out of it. The military has taught me balance, we work on airplanes not people. It has taught me time management, being full time in airplanes and full time biomedical science studies and somehow not being terrible at both. It has taught me to be flexible, there is no predicting what will come through the hospital doors, so being efficient, confident, and resilient can ensure that the people who require care get what they need. The pace of navy is slow, deployments have the potential to put things on hold. I was fortunate enough to continue my studies while deployed to the middle east. The environment and work needing done while overseas is overwhelming, stressful, and scary. I am grateful I was able to experience that while continuing school, I was able to adjust to working and being proficient under stressful and demanding circumstances.

I am lucky for the darkness, in all connotations that might mean. The darkness brought light, or maybe it was the anesthesia.
Perhaps an experience is all it takes to realize the direction someone wants to take their life. In midst of the chaos, the calm lives in me and I want to share that with patients so maybe they will be able to feel their strength through me.