

## Vaso Vagal

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I don't remember the drive to the doctor, or the consequent trip to the hospital. But I remember the icy metal of the wires they stuck all over me, clown face stickers on their circular adhesives.

I don't remember the splinter that caused it—how it got there or the discomfort of having it removed—but I do remember the paranoia I felt for the rest of my childhood, walking barefoot on decks and running my hands down wooden handrails.

I don't remember the sliver of skin left over from the splinter. I don't remember messing with it on the tip of my finger. I don't remember walking back to the bathroom because I didn't feel well. I don't remember the shriek I let out.

I only remember waking up on my parents' bed to the sound of my mother's voice on the telephone, alternately calling the doctor, my father's office, the daycare, and my godmother. I heard what I thought were the words, "white as a sheep," and for years I thought that was the expression.

My mom told me she had never been so scared. My dad told me he felt guilty since I had inherited it from him. He shouldn't have; this rare neurological disorder bonds us more tightly than anything else in our lives. It's a burden we share, and only he and I can understand the weight of it.