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## Medicine and Motherhood: The Silent Loads

Gehan A. Pendlebury

*Nova Southeastern University*, gp855@mynsu.nova.edu

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**Gehan “Gigi” Pendlebury** is an aspiring military dermatologist, commissioned Navy ensign (ENS), and medical student at KPCOM and serves in the United States Navy Medical Corps Reserves. As a Navy medical student, she follows her calling to serve current and past military service members with the utmost quality of care using a whole-person approach.

She obtained her bachelor’s degree in psychology with minors in public health and criminology from Rutgers. Her research background includes undergraduate research activities in public health and clinical psychology.

Currently, her research has focused on dermatopathology, operational skin disease, interventional pain management, traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder among combat veterans and military service members.

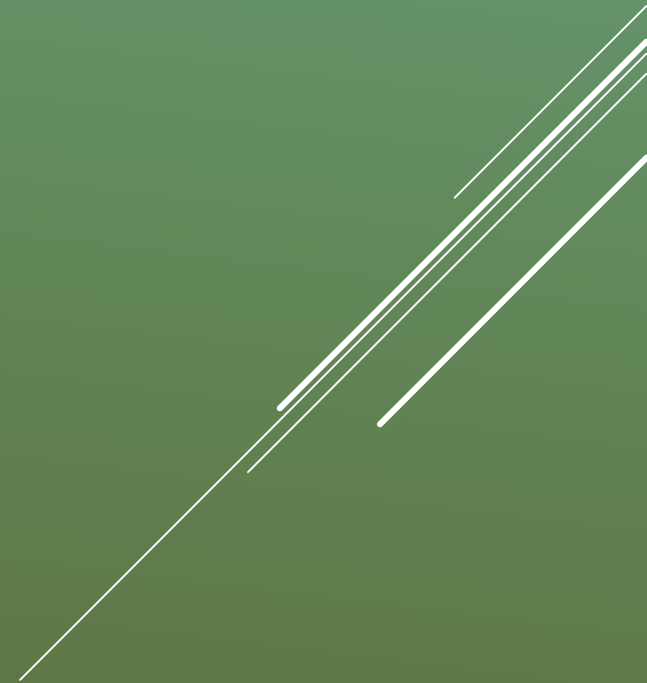
She enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and three-year-old daughter. She loves Cross-Fit and optimizing her athletic performance.

## ABOUT THE POET

Dedicated to [Amira Pendlebury](#), my heart, my soul,  
my universe. *It was all for you.*

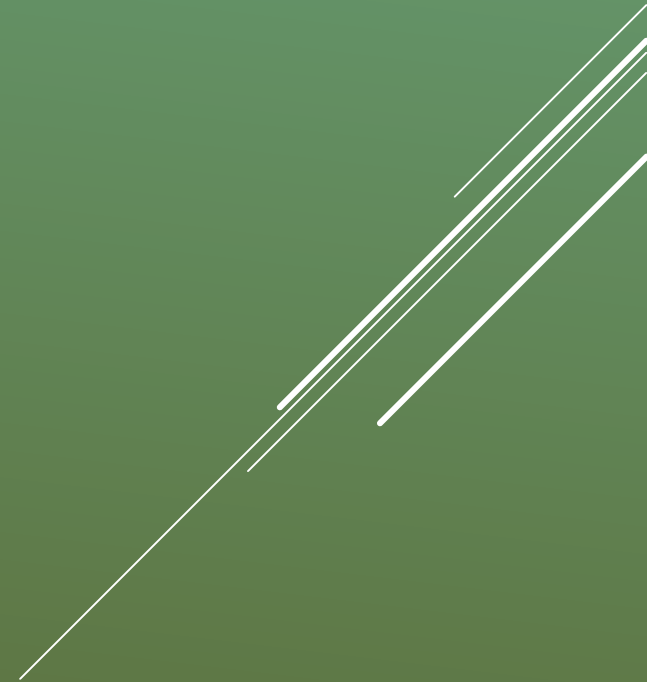
### **The Silent Load**

There's a silent load in medicine  
It ebbs and flows  
Years and years of hard work  
Full of highs and lows.



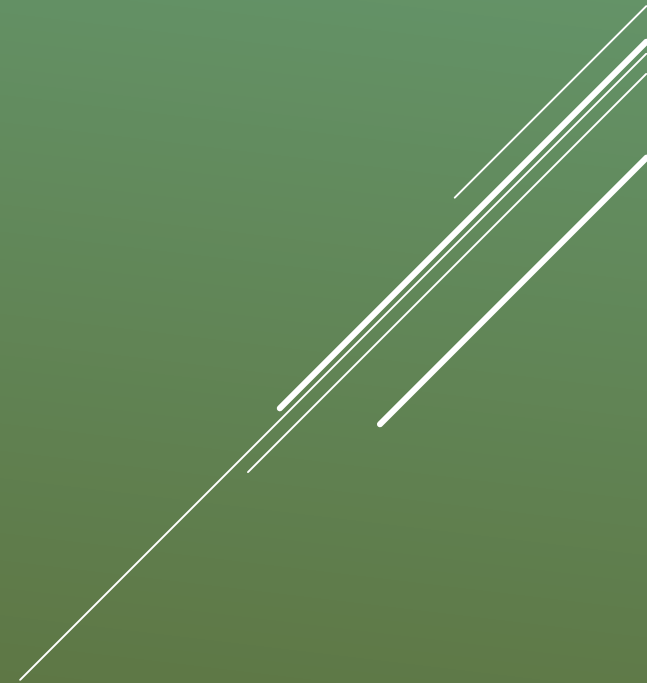
The sacrifices come in so many forms-  
being pulled away from family and my home  
Missed moments, special events, always feeling torn.

Yet, I must keep moving —  
more to learn, more to juggle.  
The mental load builds and builds.  
It often seems there's just no time to struggle.



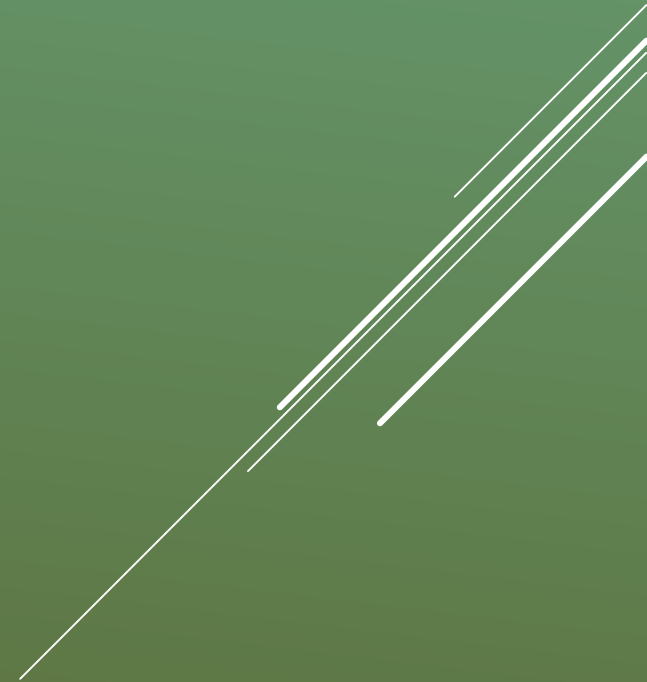
“This too shall pass,” they all say.  
My doubts creep in and I question,  
*Are these feelings appropriate, every day?*

Depleted from burn-out, I ask God  
*Wasn't this supposed to be exciting and fun?*  
M3, out of the classroom and into the hospitals  
And somehow, I just want to be done.



I want to be back home with my baby  
and soaking every moment.  
Cherishing every smile, every hug.  
There's deep anguish within – it all feels stolen.

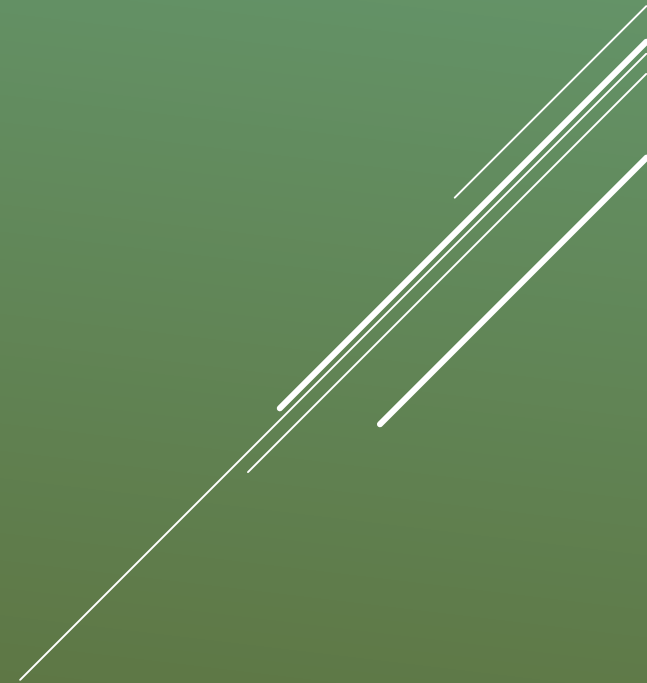
It's the melancholic joy of seeing  
Mommy friends welcome Baby #2,  
while you're out and off to the ICU.



Oh, how beautiful, Baby #3  
and I start to wonder, *Could that ever be me?*

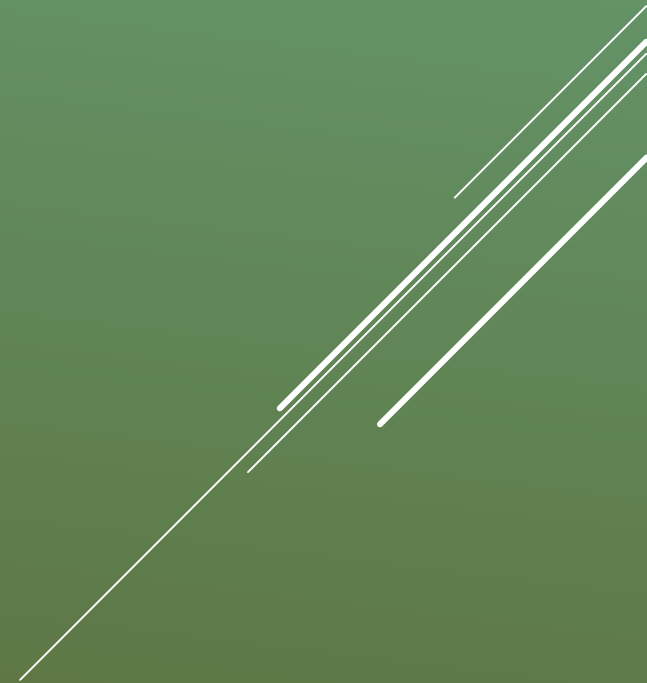
Family support may fail – again and again .  
Medicine says, “Don’t expect them to get it.”  
Perhaps there is strength and courage  
to be found in these moments, if I let it.

Through the silent load, we must find our voice,  
Look within, dig deep, hold on.  
Stay empowered and strong – it’s all a choice.



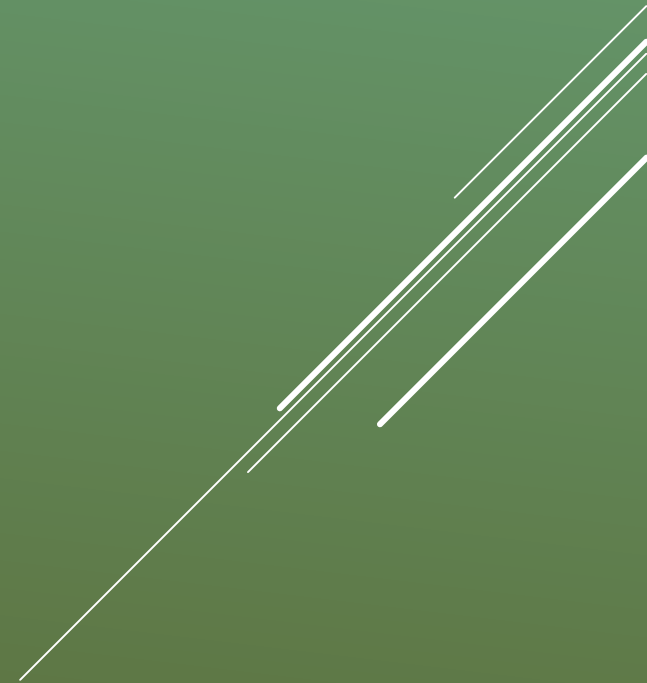
So, for now I will take a deep breath and push onward.  
*You can do this Gigi!* I'll say, again and again.  
Remember why I went into medicine  
it's the same now, as it was then

One more time, *You can do this Gigi!*  
I'll rejuvenate, protect my peace,  
sweat it out,  
and of course, get more sleep.





I pray one day I'll look back  
on a life beautifully designed.  
Full of sacrifices and a love for medicine  
A space where I truly *shined*.





**FIGURE 1.** *"SHE'LL BE SO PROUD OF YOU," THEY SAY.*



**FIGURE 2.** *IF I COULD BUY ANYTHING, I WOULD BUY TIME.*



**FIGURE 3.** *“LOOK, I’M A PRINCESS!”*



**FIGURE 4. SHE IS CLOTHED IN STRENGTH AND DIGNITY, AND SHE LAUGHS WITHOUT FEAR OF THE FUTURE.**



**FIGURE 5.** AND NOW THESE THREE VIRTUES REMAIN: *FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE. BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.*



*“This poem articulates the challenging and often misunderstood experience of being a mother in medical school. It describes a silent load that often takes a toll on mothers in medicine.*

*It describes the feeling of simultaneously being pulled in opposing directions, the pain of missing on special family moments and events. The poem offers hope and solidarity for mothers who are enduring this unique experience.”*

POET'S STATEMENT

GIGI PENDLEBURY

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a dark green background.