

“Lead Me to the Light”

Music and Lyrics by Emma Torncello

I've been waiting for a sign
Something to let me know
The road that I've traveled up til now
Is the way I'm meant to go

They say that love has all the answers
And I know it must be true
Cause I've got a mind full of questions
And I don't know what to do

Have I lost my way?
Have I lost the flame
To guide me home into the night?
Just lead me to the light

So many times I've tried to find
The road I left behind
As time goes by I've come to see
Maybe I'm in the place I'm meant to be

Have I lost my way?
Have I lost the flame
To guide me home into the night?
I think I might have found my light

Have I lost my way?
Have I lost the flame
To guide me home into the night?
Oh, won't you let me shine my light?

Discussion

Throughout medical school, I often turned to songwriting as a way of expressing myself and reflecting on my experiences. I wrote this song, “Lead Me to the Light” to reflect on how my understanding of a physician’s role has changed over the past several years. I began medical school excited to start a career of healing, and while of course that is a significant part of medicine, I was struck by the amount of personal and systemic tragedy I saw on a daily basis in my work. Working with patients who were unable to afford treatments, who lacked secure access to food, shelter, and transportation, who had severe diseases or terminal diagnoses,

made me question the significance of my impact as a physician for these individuals, when so much of their health seemed determined by things outside of my or their control.

The lyrics of “Lead Me to the Light” discuss how I found myself facing this darker side of the medical field, and how these experiences shaped my understanding of what my role was in helping people who seemed to require so much more than what I could give them. The song opens with the theme of searching for a “light”, i.e. trying to seek out answers to solve the problems that seemingly had no solutions. As the song progresses, the lyrics shift from themes of searching for a light to that of “shining my own light”. My intention with this change was to convey a sense of duty and dedication to supporting my patients, empowering them, advocating for them, and promoting their health and happiness to the best of my ability. The main idea I hoped to express was that perhaps shining my light is not the solution to darkness, but it does make the world brighter for those around me, and that is what I hope to do as a physician.

In addition to writing the lyrics and music, I also recorded, mixed, and produced this song. The instrumentation includes drums, bass, keyboards, organ, and lead and backing vocals, all of which I recorded or programmed myself. In order to complete the song, I also learned the basics of mixing and music production, which I applied in practice for the first time on this project.