



ZOË LOSADA

DAVIN'S ANGEL

I first met Dr. Pedro Del Nido in Boston's Children's Hospital, in the late morning of a Tuesday, at the end of a cold February 2008. My son, Davin, had had a catherization the day before in the same hospital. After the procedure, the doctor who was in charge of the cath, a wonderful doctor who had done at least five catherizations on Davin previously (I've lost count, I'm afraid) did not appear to give us the results. We waited and waited, spoke with the nurses and some residents who came around, all in a hurry to go somewhere else. Davin was discharged from the recovery room and sent to the hospital floor and, still, no report.

I had known, of course, that he was not well. The report from his checkup from the previous summer had been discouraging: a blunt confirmation of my observations. When my daughter and I had visited Vancouver with Davin before the check-up, we could see that he was having a hard time walking and was getting very tired. During the nights, I returned to my old habit of counting his breaths as he slept. Returning to Venezuela, we received the doctor's report full of complicated terms that basically meant that an operation to fix what was wrong with Davin's heart was virtually impossible, and that a transplant might be the only option left for him. We had come back to this hospital, as we had many times before, looking for help.

There are several pictures of Davin in our photo albums, taken when he was around three, lying on our bed, paler and more still than any child should be. He is dressed in striped red and grey sweater that match his grey corduroy overalls—an elegant outfit brought by his grandmother in one of her visits to our home in Venezuela—and his brown hair curls with a life of its own. I asked my husband, later, why he had taken so many of these pictures, and he answered that, at the time, he wasn't sure if he would see Davin again. Looking at these pictures, I feel again that cold desperation in my heart: