



# Grab the Bull by the Horns: Escaped Death to Face Hell

*Martina Robles Gallegos*

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After working as an elementary school teacher for almost eighteen years, Ms. Gallegos suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon at work. Two weeks after her ankle surgery, she suffered a hemorrhagic stroke that almost caused her life. Dr. Zauner, neurosurgeon at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, CA induced coma and performed a craniotomy to suction blood and release pressure from the brain. Ms. Gallegos was not expected to survive the event but she did. She immediately began medical rehabilitation followed by homecare, and outpatient therapy. Immediately after getting home, Ms. Gallegos saw the need to stay socially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually active in order to reach full recovery. She looked for and found volunteer work at her local hospital and elementary school. She volunteered at both places for nine and six months respectively until an unethical psychiatrist put an end to all by making extremely damaging and dangerous remarks. Another psychiatrist had already put Ms. Gallegos's life in danger with her so-called 'harmless natural' medication. The effects of such 'harmless medication brought on further damaging events which, again, placed Ms. Gallegos's health in great danger. Ms. Gallegos had already resumed her Master's degree, one that had eluded her once before. Because it was still too close to the stroke, Ms. Gallegos struggled to accommodate her cognitive and technological challenges that she almost quit the online program a few times. The challenges were further compounded by the return of the litany of senseless and abusive treatment on the part of the staff. This was exactly what she had endured as a teen immigrant to this country, and throughout her school and professional career. Ms. Gallegos could've quit school the first year in the United States, but she chose to use each bad experience as a driving-force to keep going. After her stroke, Ms. Gallegos achieved everything she'd been told she'd never be able to achieve. To begin with, she went to college; got her teaching credential; went back to school; eventually got her Master's degree in education; and has already published a number of poems in different anthologies and online lit magazines. At the present time, Ms. Gallegos is looking for re-employment training; she continues to write; and is joining stroke/brain injury support groups with the hope to become an advocate for survivors.

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