

Impact Statement

Dongwoo Jung, Grade 11

***Race Beyond the Limits*, 2025**

Acrylic on canvas board, 18 x 24 inches

Teacher: Jennifer Bitter, Newport High School, Bellevue, WA

Unsung Hero: Terry Fox

Terry Fox is not just a name — he is the symbol of courage. At only eighteen, he was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer, and his right leg had to be amputated. It would have been easy — understandable — for him to stop there, to let the grief swallow him whole. But Fox chose something greater. With the weight of loss pressing on him, he stood up — not just for himself, but for millions. He ran because he had to. He ran because every street, every neighborhood, every city, every nation deserved hope. One man, one broken body, yet he carried the silent dreams of the world on his back.

When Fox ran, he didn't do it effortlessly like an athlete on a track. Every step was uneven, clumsy, and marked by a painful rhythm. Yet there was fire, a heart that refused to give up. His "Marathon of Hope" was not about crossing finish lines; it was about showing that the mindset, once lit, could burn brighter than any fear, any pain, any cancer.

When I created this artwork, I saw more than just Fox's struggle. I saw my own. I have been battling severe varicose veins for years — veins so swollen they have taken over my thigh and are now spreading into my other leg. The pain is not occasional; it's constant and makes standing unbearable. Running feels like a battlefield. Yet, like Fox, I refuse to give up. I dream of running again — not just running, but racing, flying toward a 5:30 mile pace, feeling the wind swoosh past me, proving that pain cannot chain the soul.

Art has always been my way of making sense of pain. Each stroke, each color, each texture reflects a piece of the journey: the fear, the stubborn hope, the moments of despair, and the moments of triumph. My artistic journey has never been about flawless technique — it has been about honesty. About trying to capture the pulse beneath the surface, the quiet battles so many of us fight without anyone seeing.

I chose Terry Fox because, like me, he fought a battle not everyone could see. His struggle wasn't clean, or glamorous, or easy — and neither is mine. It felt deeply personal, almost inevitable, that I would paint him. His story resonates so closely with mine: my mom was diagnosed with colon cancer last year and I've witnessed firsthand her battle through her surgeries and treatments. Learning about Terry's story during such a physically and emotionally draining time gave me hope. It reminded me that

endurance is beautiful. That even in weakness, there is strength. That sometimes the most broken among us can show the world what unbreakable really looks like.

It broke my heart to know that he died during his Marathon of Hope, his body overtaken by the cancer he fought so fiercely. It felt so unfair — and yet, his message echoed even louder. Hope is not measured by survival; hope is measured by the courage to try. Heroes are not born from ease. Heroes are made when pain meets purpose. They do not just cross physical distances. They break mental barriers and light the path for others to follow.

That is the story I wanted to tell through my art. That is the story Terry Fox will tell the world.