

# *Blood and Independence*

by Antonietta Mannarino

"Wake up, Anto. We have to go and get your blood," he said in Italian.

My father was shaking me, trying to wake me up. He repeated it again.

"Come now, you know we have to go to the hospital today."

I pretended to be asleep, but he kept shaking me.

I sat straight up and looked him right in his hazel-brown eyes. "No," I said.

"What, 'no'? Get dressed, you're making us late!"

"No. I am not going."

He looked at me, irritated and dumbfounded. He looked at his watch again. He knew he was in for a battle.

"What do you mean, 'no'?! We need to go! I'm calling the hospital right now!"

When he left to make the phone call, I grabbed a pair of pants and a sweater from my dresser drawer. I laced up my runners and buttoned up my jean jacket. I quietly closed the front door and left without my dad noticing. I always made sure I wore a tee-shirt under my clothes so my arms were bare for my treatment. Wearing long sleeves bothered me because the nurses would roll them way up to put in the IV.