

# Healing Rainbows

Jo Marie Reilly, MD

“I am purple today.”

Her flowery skirt twirls in front of me.

“What do you think? All the viejitas wear black and I’m 86 and I like color!”

“*Like a purple flower?*”

“Si,” she laughs, “y como una berenjena por una salsa.”<sup>1</sup>

The next visit she is bright yellow.

“Como la yema de un huevo,”<sup>2</sup> she tells me.

“*Like yellow dandelions blowing in the field or a lemon ready for lemonade on a hot summer day?*”

“Si, y como pedacitos de calabacitos, listo por mi sopita,”<sup>3</sup> she banter.

She returns again wearing green.

“Hoy, estoy verde como la lechuga y las espinacas en mi ensalada,”<sup>4</sup> she says playfully.

“*Like leaves growing on a new spring tree?*”

“Si!” she counters, “Como el crecer de judias verdes y sandia en mi jardin.”<sup>5</sup>

I refill her medications. I listen to her heart, her blood pressure, and check the edema in her legs. I do “the doctor things.” But it is the color games that she comes for.

The color games paint a picture of vibrancy, warmth, and tenderness. A zest for life that sparks her imagination and defies the lonely existence of the neighborhood *viejitas*. Each week, I wonder what color she will be. Each week she brings her palette, ready to create a new work of art. She splashes her colors humorously. Her creations fill the room with smiles and laughter.

A kaleidoscope of colors.

Colorful rainbows that heal.

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<sup>1</sup> and like an eggplant for a sauce

<sup>2</sup> like the yolk of an egg

<sup>3</sup> like little pieces of squash, ready for my soup

<sup>4</sup> Today I am green like the lettuce or spinach in my salad

<sup>5</sup> like green beans and watermelon growing in my garden