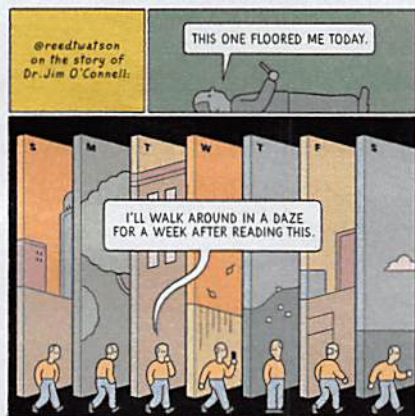


Readers respond to the 1.8.2022 issue.

**RE: ROUGH SLEEPERS**

Tracy Kidder wrote about a doctor's crusade to care for Boston's homeless.



**Thank you, Mr. Kidder,** for this much-needed piece. It's beyond helpful to know that there are others working in the spirit of Paul Farmer, whose early death last year was such a terrible loss. And not to fall into the dead end of cynicism, as Dr. Paul would have said. And to always keep in mind that we can all do a little, imperfectly. Your books have been a light, holding up an idea of models we can aim for in this complicated, selfish and vapid time. I wish that every Harvard M.B.A. grad — actually, every aspiring M.B.A. student — had to spend time with Dr. Jim O'Connell, absorbing some of the lessons of his doctoring: much less McKinsey; more "mankind was my business." Good to be reminded there are wonderful people making a difference.

Jessica C., Connecticut

**Barbara McInnis** was my friend and my inspiration to become a registered nurse when I worked briefly at the Pine Street Inn back in the '70s, driving the big green van to Boston City Hospital and helping out in the lobby and the nurse's clinic. I really loved the description of the foot soaks. I remember the crazy wisdom of that simple procedure, which erases the line between patient and provider. I carried it with me throughout my career: Lead with comfort and connection before trying assessment or diagnosis.

David McGrath, Cape Coral, Fla.

**What an inspiring person and article.** As a former homeless person (now housed

for over 24 years thanks to supportive and homes-first policy and charities), I recognized much in this story. And remember with gratitude the medical care I received from volunteer doctors. They and shelter workers are truly God-sent.

Una, Toronto

**Beautiful story!** Thank you so much for writing it! This is one of those articles that I wish everyone would read. When my son was homeless and addicted for a couple of years, I once had good friends say, "Many homeless people want to be homeless." It caused me to erupt in rage, and to spill my son's story to them. But I wish I had had the words of this article to explain how egregious their statement was. People say such things because it lets them off the hook, so they can dismiss the people they step around on the streets without guilt. Thank you to this doctor for not doing that!

Cait, Washington State

**Boston Health Care** for the Homeless Program also made a space for me to share what I could, just a little bit, and grow in the process. I was fortunate to volunteer at Barbara McInnis House around 2005-6, doing an "art night" with residents every other week. It was unstructured, and I was there largely to prepare the space, facilitate supplies and work with folks if that was what they wanted. A lot of times I simply listened to people telling their stories, or watched as they made cards to give to family members. I was struck by the ways in which people wanted to be heard, but also by the care and generosity they often showed one another, or me. We met in an unthreatening space as fellow human beings, and making these connections, however fragile, was like a balm. Once or twice, back out on the streets, I would



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walk by someone I recognized. It felt easy then to stop and chat for a bit. While an "art night" solves no large problems, it does make space for something good.

Chris, Boston

**In my mid-20s,** living in Boston and not sure of my career path, I volunteered with Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program for two years while working in a dead-end job in publishing. I ended up going to medical school at age 30 and became a psychiatrist. Some of the patients I met almost 15 years ago now still accompany me on my journey today, as they did on my journey to psychiatry, as that was my first experience ever working with — or, honestly, interacting with — the severely mentally ill. It was truly a privilege to work with the organization and to understand what it means to treat every person with the inherent dignity they deserve.

RAL, California

**RE: JUAN TAMARIZ**

Shuja Haider profiled Spain's greatest magician.



**'It was truly a privilege to work with the organization and to understand what it means to treat every person with the inherent dignity they deserve.'**

**I grew up** watching Tamariz on television; when I was in primary school (which we called EGB back then), he was a star in the same league as soccer players or pop singers, at least in the hearts of us children. I remember we imitated his mannerisms as we played during recess, including the iCHAN-TATACHAN! that you quote in the article. Stumbling upon his face in The Times brought a time-traveling smile to my heart. How's that for magic?

Name withheld

Send your thoughts to [magazine@nytimes.com](mailto:magazine@nytimes.com).