Thursday Memo – May 11, 2017

Finding Light Amidst Darkness – by Anna Chon

A sweet, young Salvadorian woman was systematically beaten and raped for years by her drunk husband.

A devoted nurse midwife was tortured for treating patients that were activists against her country's ruling political party.

A Jamaican mother could not protect herself from her husband, let alone protect her daughter from him.

A Somalian man was kidnapped, detained and tortured, year after year on the anniversary of the totalitarian’s coup d’etat.

My heart sinks into my stomach as I listen to their stories. Hearing the details of how each person was humiliated, assaulted, and left traumatized, leaves me slumped over, feeling the weight of their reality sit heavily upon my shoulders. I don't realize I had been holding my breath until a long, drawn out sigh escapes.

Being punched, slapped, kicked, cut with knives, beaten with batons, scratched by wild animals, suspended in the air, choked, drowned, electrocuted, raped. How much can the human body endure? I don't know.

Isolation, light deprivation, death threats, tormented sounds and images. How much can the human mind endure? I don't know.

Betrayal, disrespect, scorn, humiliation, captivity. How much can the human spirit endure? I don't know.
I look at each survivor and ask, "Why them and not me?" I don't know.

I look at each abuser and ask, "Could that be me?" I don't know.

I am left with more questions than answers.

What I do know, is that more than the unimaginable horrors I have heard recounted, I am amazed and humbled by the resilience of my fellow human beings.

What I do know, is that we are all broken, each in a slightly unique way. There is hope, even amidst our brokenness.

What I do know is that I am called to hear their stories. To acknowledge their scars. To validate their pain. To document their journey. To advocate for them.

And so I do.