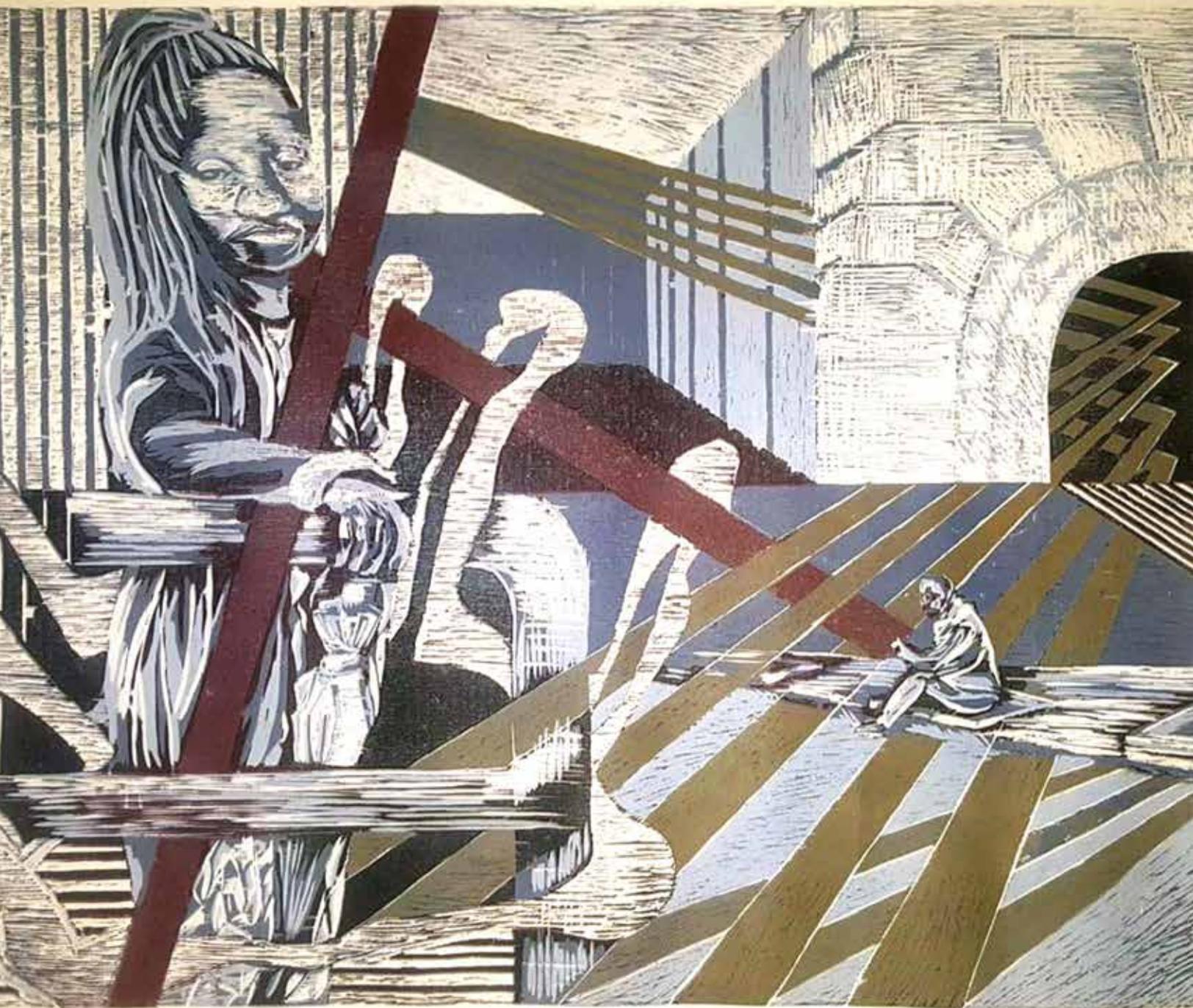


Wild Onions 2018



Identity

The title of our journal has raised a good deal of speculation. The wild onion is a common garden-variety weed, a hardy plant that grows almost anywhere and tends to spring up in unexpected places throughout the woods and fields and roadsides in this part of the country. It blossoms into an unusual purple flower and its underground bulb, if tasted, yields a pungent, spicy flavor. The wild onion is a symbol of the commonplace yet surprising beauty that is living and growing around us all the time, the spice that though uncultivated, unexpectedly thrives and – if we only take time to notice – enhances life.

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Wild Onions

Wild Onions is an annual publication funded by The Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine at Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. It is a journal of poetry, prose, photography, and visual art created by members of the entire Hershey Medical Center community.

Faculty and staff – both clinical and non-clinical – patients, families, volunteers, and medical, graduate, physician assistant, and nursing students are invited to submit original (not previously published) literary or artistic work on all topics. A theme is selected by student Senior Editors to inspire additional submissions each year. The annual theme and our electronic submission form may be found at <http://sites.psu.edu/wildonions>. You may also submit directly to the Department of Humanities by email via wildonions@pennstatehealth.psu.edu. For an unbiased selection process, we ask that the creator's name not be present on the piece. For submissions via email, we ask that you list identifying information separately from the piece (name, relationship to Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, mailing address, email address, telephone number, medium of visual art if submitting images electronically). You may also mail in submissions to the address listed below. If you wish to have your entry returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

No portion of the journal may be reproduced by any process or technique without consent of the author. All submissions, inquiries, and requests for authors and current or past issues of *Wild Onions* can be directed to Managing Editor, Department of Humanities, H134, Penn State University College of Medicine, 500 University Drive, Hershey, PA 17033.

The aim of The Kienle Center is to advance the appreciation, knowledge, and practice of humane and humanistic medicine, defined as health care that is sympathetic, compassionate, and effective. *Wild Onions* serves this goal by encouraging literary and artistic work that seeks to describe and understand, with empathy, the experiences of giving and receiving healthcare.

Activities of The Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine include:

The Kienle Service Grant, co-sponsored with the International Health Interest Group, for medical students engaged in volunteer work with underserved patients.

The Doctors Kienle Lectureship, which brings national leaders in humane medicine to Hershey Medical Center.

The Experience of Care Project, which teaches medical students through participant-observation studies.

The Doctors Kienle Prizes in literature, art, and photography featured in *Wild Onions*.

The Doctors Kienle Collection of materials concerning humanistic medical practice (located in the Harrell Library).

The Medical Student Humanitarian Award, co-sponsored with The Association of Faculty and Friends.

The Mary Louise Witmer Jones Humanitarian Award, given annually to an outstanding resident.

The Nurse's Humanitarian Award, in honor of Lawrence F. Kienle, MD.

Humanism in Medicine Awards, co-sponsored with The Arnold P. Gold Foundation, for a graduating medical student and for a faculty member.

The Kienle Cultural Series, a series of presentations in the arts and humanities.

Patient Portraits, a photography exhibit by Joseph Gascho, MD.

Submissions are due by January 15 of each calendar year and can be sent via email to: wildonions@pennstatehealth.psu.edu. Visit our website to download a copy of *Wild Onions* at <http://sites.psu.edu/wildonions>



Senior Co-Editors

Melissa Haslam, MS4



Melissa Haslam was born in Bethesda, Maryland, and grew up in Stafford, Virginia. She earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology, with a minor in Chemistry, at Virginia Commonwealth University. Melissa went on to attend medical school at Penn State

Hershey, where she was drawn to its overall medical philosophy and approach to patient care. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring local historical towns, listening to music, gardening, and spending time with loved ones. Melissa is excited to begin her OB/GYN residency at Penn State Hershey this summer.

Christina Li, MS4



Christina Li was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania but grew up in East Brunswick, New Jersey. She completed her undergraduate degree at Johns Hopkins University where she majored in Public Health Studies. She then came to Penn State for medical

school because of its emphasis on the humanities and patient-centered medicine. In her spare time, Christina loves to read, paint, and travel. She will be pursuing an Internal Medicine residency at Kaiser Oakland and obtaining her Master of Public Health at UC Berkeley in California.

Who are you?

What defines you? Is it the title on your I.D. badge, the initials after your name? Or is it your role as a parent, a friend, or a teacher? Our identity is multiform and ever-layered, comprised of the various roles we take on throughout our lifetimes and the intermingling of other mental and physical facets. This is particularly true in healthcare: a physician, a nurse, or a pharmacist often take on responsibilities outside of their fields and find identity within other aspects of life and the world.

Patients also have complex identities, with “patient” often being a transient or interweaving role in these individuals’ lives. Family members become caregivers of their loved ones, and juggle various responsibilities in their own lives while trying to maintain their own identities.

The theme of this year’s publication is “Identity,” and what that entails for each member of the Penn State Health community.

Welcome



Guest Editor:

Martha Peaselee Levine, MD
Departments of Pediatrics,
Psychiatry and Humanities

Thank you, Christina Li and Melissa Haslam, 2018 Senior Co-editors, for all your hard work and for asking me to be guest editor. Also thank you to everyone who submitted creative pieces. *Wild Onions* connects our community and provides a deeper appreciation for this fabulous and incredibly complicated world.

Every theme of *Wild Onions* can challenge our identities and views. That is part of what art accomplishes—making us look at something in a different way. Yet this year’s theme is focused on “Identity.” When I googled identity, because isn’t google where we always start, I found this definition, “The fact of being who or what a person or thing is” (Oxford Living Dictionary).

Our identity is, well, us. I am using us as a singular—my identity and yours. But are there facts that make up our being and do they influence our identity? Once I had children, my identity shifted not only in my mind but for others as well. I was suddenly David or Dayna’s mom. My identity as an individual changed. Now it was defined, at least in their school setting, as my relationship to someone else.

With each change in life, our identities can shift. It often takes time for our sense of self to catch up. Within hours of my ex-husband graduating from medical school, he and I were suddenly in an ambulance rushing a patient to the local hospital. On the way, she stopped breathing. One paramedic radioed ahead, “Don’t worry! We’re with MD.” My husband looked stricken—he was an MD by having graduated 3 hours earlier. That part of his identity hadn’t taken hold. That is a challenge with identity—how do we see ourselves and how do others see us?

My identity became unsettled when my mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor. I had to flip between my identities as a daughter to that of a physician working as her healthcare advocate. My mother had to adjust her own view. Much of her identity was her intelligence and academic pursuits. A few months before she died, she gave a 45-minute talk about Frantisek Klácel (a mentor of Gregor Mendel). That had been one of her final life goals. It was both heartbreaking and inspiring. She remembered being able to give off-the-cuff lectures; for this one she needed to practice and practice. Her abilities had changed. How did that affect her identity? Her view of herself? The truth of herself? Did it?

Clearly some of our identity is set when we are born—we are who we are. But identity also grows and changes as we move through life. For now, I invite you on this journey to witness identity through these creative works. Through our interactions with these pieces maybe we will each discover a new part of our identity—A playfulness, whimsy, or a deep reflection.

Best wishes on your travels as you explore your true identities.

Our Judges

Each year, we are incredibly fortunate to receive a number of high-quality submissions, which makes our judging process quite difficult. All entries are reviewed by medical student editors, and a subset is selected for inclusion in the publication. A handful of particularly stellar pieces are identified and sent on to the corresponding art, literature, and photography judges for review. The judges are tasked with picking the first, second, and third place entries as well as an honorable mention for their category and providing comments regarding each winning piece. Below, we introduce you to this year's judges.



ART

Jay Noble, MFA

Jay Noble is a visual artist and educator living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His artwork spans the continuum between abstraction, figuration and seeing as a creative act. He earned his MFA from American University in Washington, D.C., and also studied at the New York Studio School and Chautauqua School of Art. His artwork has been exhibited in solo and group shows up and down the East Coast and the Midwest. Noble is an art faculty at York College of Pennsylvania and Penn State Harrisburg. In 2012 he helped found and now serves as Executive Director of Mount Gretna School of Art and Four Pillars artist residency.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Joseph Gascho, MD

Joseph Gascho has been a cardiologist at Penn State Hershey Medical Center since 1986. He has several permanent displays of his photographs at the Medical Center. He has had numerous exhibits of his photographs. Twenty of his patient portraits have been featured on the cover of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and one of his cover photographs was photograph of the year for *Annals*. He is interested in the combination of word and image, and has written poems to accompany many of his photographs.



LITERATURE

Krista Quesenberry, PhD

Krista Quesenberry is a postdoctoral instructor at Pennsylvania State University, where she received her dual-title PhD in English and Women's Studies in 2016. She regularly teaches courses in medical narrative and technical writing, and she has been a participant in the international, interdisciplinary scholarly meetings of the PathoGraphics Research Project in Berlin, Germany (2016 and 2017). Her recent scholarship on comics, identity, and autobiography appears in *Life Writing* and *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*.

Autobiography

© Sudhanshu Bhatnagar, PGY1
Department of Medicine

As asked,
I will try to define myself:
I am the smoke from a candle,
Painting shadowy maps upon the walls.
I am a staircase folding upward and down,
Ever a choice to advance to decline.
I am a mosaic built of many mistakes,
An uncomfortable masterpiece of lessons learned.
I am an echo not yet unheard,
A past story still bouncing ahead like new.
I am an inkblot in the minds of others,
A memory envisioned uniquely in each mind's eye.
I am frayed rope tied to my anchor,
Securing my harbor until it lets go.



Unanchored

© Aaron Wold, MS3

Tired veins traversed like deep-blue canals under crepe-paper skin
Fingers gnarled like tree roots
Angry with inflammation
She nursed their crooked form, cradling them awkwardly in her lap
“I used to make the best apple pie. From scratch like you should.
Peel the apples by hand and all.”
Now she is disconnected from her world, unanchored – a mere observer unable to hold-on
Able only to watch

Circuitous Journey

© Yan Leyfman, MS4

The Mime

© J. Spence Reid, MD
Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation



Pieces

© Susan Landis, CRNA, Retired, Department of Anesthesiology

You come for me

And I yield pieces of myself.

A kidney, a portion of soft white breast, a progressive excision of dermis.

And now I wonder if you may have returned yet again.

A dark area,

Slowly enlarging, yet protected, under the nail of the left great toe.

They search once again, excavating, the skilled Mohs surgeon peeling back

The cover of unyielding nail;

Elevator, hemostat, cautery...

The digital block expertly removes all the sensations of pain and touch so

The only feelings that remain are cerebral, supratentorial.

In the five years we have battled, I have discarded you.

Donated to the tumor bank, allowed areas that remain to be irradiated,
shed my most female organs, given a bit more to the wide excision.

But I have never given my essence, my "joie de vivre."

I have strolled the lower banks of the Seine on the Isle of St. Louis, walked the
High aqueduct of the Pont du Gard, and along the serene creekside
paths of southern England.

I have marveled at the twisting road that follows the coast of California.
I have photographed the hummingbirds in the gardens of Ragged Point
and seen the clusters of monarchs near Carmel.

I have posed in front of my own photograph as it hangs in a museum.

I have captured the images of wild ponies at the edge of the Atlantic surf.

The majestic birds of Florida are frozen in my camera and in my mind.

I have been blessed with a partner in life that still makes my heart flutter.
A strong and loving man, he makes me forget you as I so happily live each day.

I will wait once more for the call that will tell me of your character,
your pathology, the demands of my time and body parts.

I hope that you leave me enough to continue this marvelous journey.

I want to lace up my hiking boots and follow life's path to many more waterfalls.
You have me limping now, but my mind soars ahead to the next new place to discover.

What It Takes

© Melissa Greene
Center Stage Workshop Facilitator

Survival.
It hits you up the side of the head
before you know it,
sneaks right up, sticks its face in yours and says
“I dare you.”
Tells you to see a new you in the mirror,
one you never dreamt of
but you are beginning to kind of like.
After all, you must!
There you are - ALL of you, now,
sculpted by pain
into someone more solid, more beautiful, yet,
than the person you once thought you were.
“Oh, but not like now, not like this,” you say,
amazed and relieved to realize
survival has made you whole
at last.

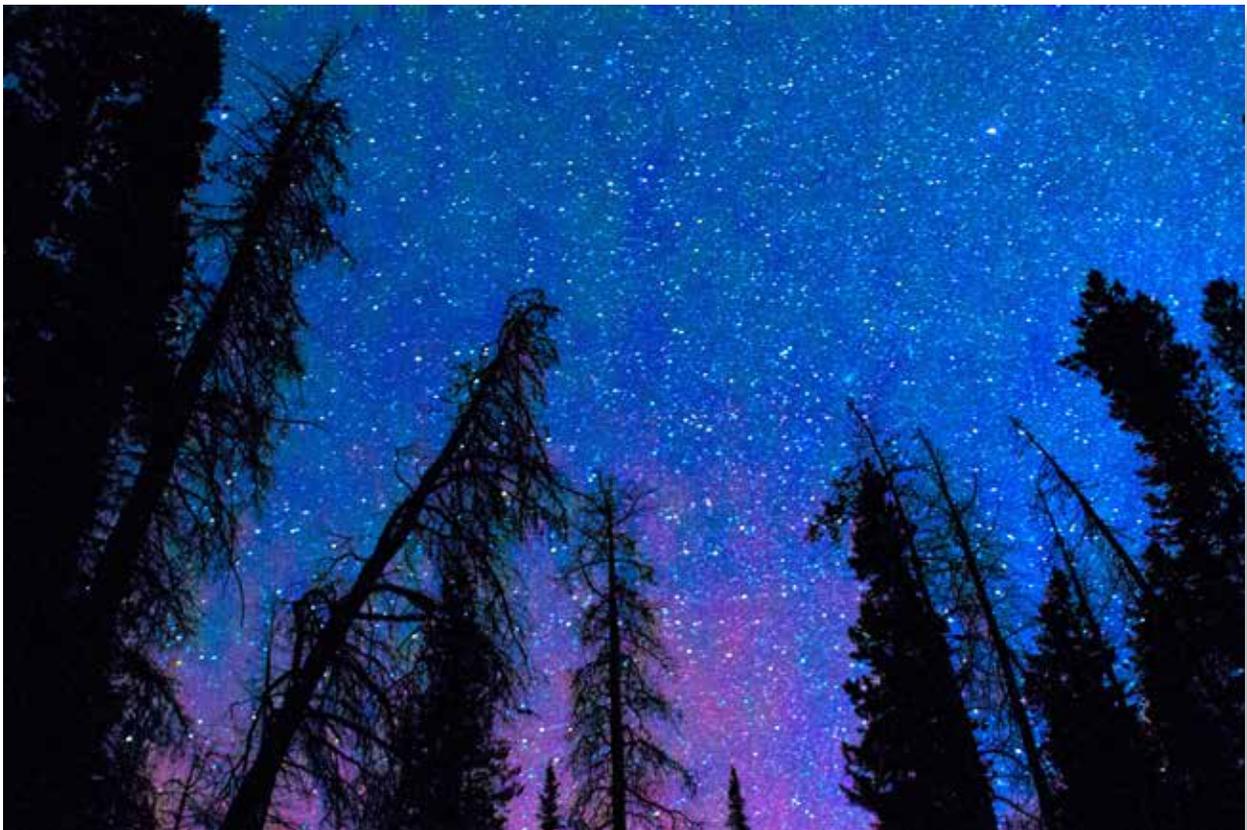
Standing Tall

© Brian Piazza, MD
Resident, Orthopaedic Surgery

The Doctor-Patient Relationship

© Natasha Romanoski, DO
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

He was undergoing rehabilitation following a spinal cord injury.
I was assisting in his rehabilitation.
Life with paraplegia was his new reality.
I was making my daily rounds.
He was a decorated war hero.
I, a young doctor.
Day after day, stories were told.
I would listen eagerly.
His progress continued.
I was so proud of him.
The day came to discharge him home.
I said goodbye.
A phone call came. “He died suddenly yesterday.”
I lost my breath, I was stunned.
A hand written thank you letter eerily arrived the next day.
I couldn't believe it, I was in shock.
That letter sits in a frame on my desk.
I look at it every day.
He changed me.



Gift of Life

© Sarayna S. McGuire, BS, MS3

“Procurement tonight”—a text
I’ve been anxiously awaiting with both excitement and dread,
for on transplant service this means
a life must be lost to save another’s
I’m not prepared for the mid-20s man awaiting us,
a donor after cardiac death, he will be extubated
with his family by his side and allowed to die first before we
procure
The teams set up in the room for
lungs, kidneys, and liver and a prayer
is said out loud in honor of our donor
We prep the abdomen and thorax for surgery
and cover him up for his family
A drape behind him hides the empty basins
awaiting his multiple organs
The harsh OR lights are turned down
and a single soft light illuminates his young face
We step out of the room and wait
With his family surrounding him he is extubated—
away from our partial eyes
Minutes begin to pass and nurses trickle out of the room in tears
I imagine the grief on the other side of the door
and I pray—for a miracle or that his death not be prolonged
Either way, a very ill person will have life after tonight
Ten minutes pass—then twenty—
another team’s surgeon paces back and forth—
back and forth,
weighing organ ischemia with the vitals we are given
At thirty minutes we have lost the liver—
somewhere a notified recipient was waiting
with bated breath and will now continue to wait
Minutes later the donor is deceased
His family leaves, the lights come on,
and the teams flood into the room to procure
With nearly forty minutes ischemic time
there is no time to spare
Chaos ensues as the countdown is on
and I can’t help but think how awful we look,
descending like ravenous vultures,
and yet how absolutely amazing
everything happening in front of me is
The freshest anatomy I have ever seen—
a young life lost just under our drapes—
and I, the medical student,
am overcome with joy and grief all at once

Losing Myself

© J. Spence Reid, MD

Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation



Spooky Gulch

© Brian Piazza, MD

Resident, Orthopaedic Surgery



Identity

© Patricia Smith, Mother of Stacey Carmo, SIM Center

I am from Okanagon apple orchards in Wenatchee, Washington, where my momma was born.
I am from my father reared in Tacoma, Washington.
I am from Momma who gave me birth in Yakima, Washington.
I am from Father who crossed the United States by “Share-the-Ride” in the 1940s to study for his doctorate degree at Columbia University. We settled in Newark, New Jersey.
Father taught me fortitude by example.
I am from the hills of Glenville, West Virginia, where Father became Dean of Fine Arts at Glenville State College. There he taught me tenacity.
In those hills we twelve Orendorffs played Blind Man’s Bluff, Statues, Red Rover, and Got You Last!
I learned to live life!
I always had a playmate. Momma kept having babies--our own live dolls with bottles and buggies.
I learned empathy.
I am from Mumbley Peg, marbles, hopscotch, Jacks and jump rope.
I am from Tarzan swings swung to the rhythms of childhood. I learned resilience.
I am fun loving, able to belly laugh at any moment!
I am from a field of dandelions observing puffy clouds floating high above me.
I am from a Tom Sawyer childhood, barefooted and free through the years.
I am a friend to people since age three keeping in contact through the years.
I am from an education taught by dedicated talented teachers.
I am a college graduate who majored in elementary education.
I am a mother of five talented adults in whom I placed my education and discipline.
I am a stage IV Hodgkin’s disease survivor at age twenty-nine in 1972 while pregnant with my fifth child and later thyroid cancer which was a result of radiation treatments. Dr. Battle and Dr. Antunez taught me endurance.
I am a former nurse aide who cared for the elderly at Mount Saint Joseph in Cleveland, Ohio, to rid my mind of cancer. I learned patience from my patients.
I am an observer who learned from an 84-year-old nun darning patients’ socks at 11:30 p.m. that one is never too old to assist others.
I am a wife who learned endurance and patience through marriage.
I am a survivor of triple bypass and valve surgery, CHF and stroke caused by grief of losing my son to Hodgkin’s disease. I appreciate being healthy. I am blessed at age seventy-four to have learned to trust God in all situations.
I am amazed that I’m still alive. I welcome birthdays!

Break in the Clouds

© Deb Tomazin, Staff, Department of Humanities



Grief Through My Eyes

© David Tringali, Clinical Pastoral Education Intern, Pastoral Services

Do you see what I see
looking at the person in this bed in front of me?

I have known her and loved her for so much of my life
In friendship, companionship, as husband and wife,

Our relationship is steeped in such long history
That the depths of my grief must be a mystery
To anyone looking in from the outside.

I have wept
I have struggled

I have prayed
I have cried

But my emotions,
My soul

Can no longer hide

From reality:

The gravity of this calamity
That has no rationality, it rips at my sanity –

Who knew **tragedy**

Had the capacity, the depravity, the irrationality,
To callously and apathetically destroy a whole family?

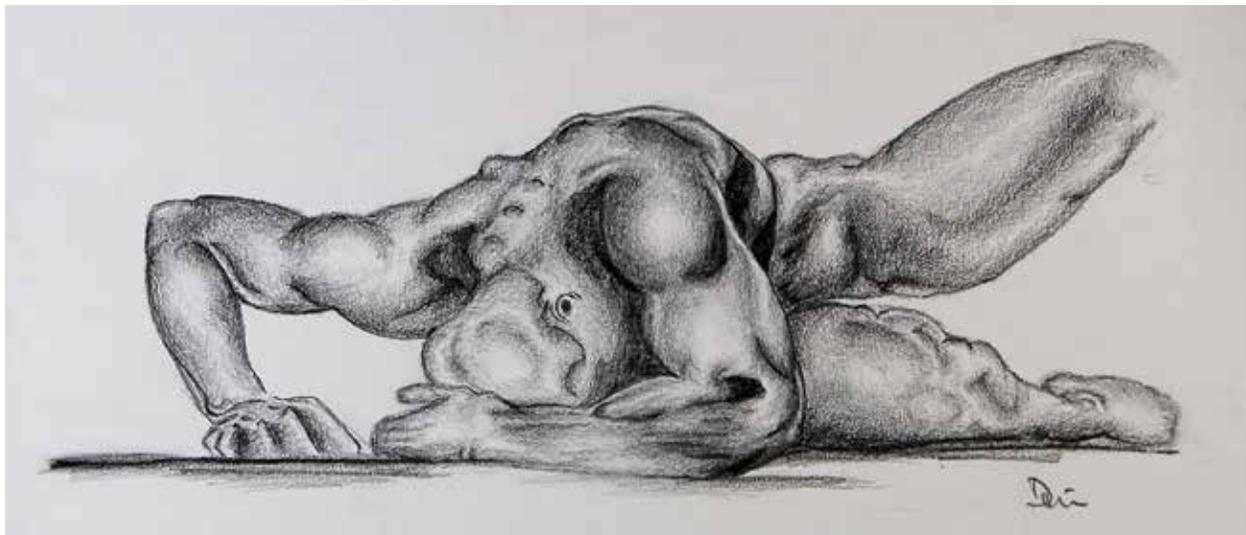
How can you even hope to know
The feelings that are raging in my heart?
Can you comprehend the woe
That is tearing me apart?

Do you know that when I scream at a nurse
It comes from a place of fear?

Because, to me, there is nothing worse
Than seeing my wife here

Moment in Time

© Diana Lin, MS1



Why is it so unfair?
Why does no one seem to care?
All I can do is sit in this room
Pondering her inevitable doom
Powerless
Helpless
Worthless

Then, sometimes, I think, when I've gone home for the night
When everyone's gone, when I've shut off the light
That maybe, maybe, I should just take my own life
Put an end to the strife
I could be waiting for her in heaven above
Where we'd be free from the pain to continue our love

I pretend that I am strong
For family and friend
I've put on this act for far too long
But I can't wish for it to end

Can you understand the reasons that I grieve?

The future that I thought I'd see
Is now just make believe
A figment of imagination, never meant to be

It is harder and harder to look her in the eye
Because I can't seem to figure out the reasons why
She is forced to endure this terrible condition
Is this some form of divine contrition?
All that I value is slipping through my fingers like grains of sand
How can YOU, possibly, understand?

Adaptations with Vincent

© Morris Alexander Aguilar, MS1





Guards of the Caribbean

© Malgorzata Sudol, Staff
Department of Medicine



Time Out

© John Quinn, Patient

The Final Exam

© Jeremiah Johnson, MS4

They are waiting, and have been waiting,
All morning they have been waiting
They shuffle in and out and stare at us
In ones, and twos, and in small groups,
They stand or lean against the wall
An unread magazine held loosely in the hand,
Another cup of coffee never brought to the lips
Some peek out past the curtain, then retreat –
But they are early, and it is not yet time.

We said “10 o’clock” and they are early
Others pass and others stop, but they have eyes only for us
They wait in tired rumpled clothes that match their faces,
Unsure if they silently call us to come, or to stay away
Once or twice, when we move, they stir in expectation
They push off the wall and stand, but we do not come
So, they ease back and wait –
But they are early, and it is not yet time.

They wait for truth to come
But not their truth,
Their truth is hope, and time, and future
They wait for our truth,
A truth that cuts the mind like a blade that will always
 pierce, no matter how often it is touched
A truth that penetrates the armor of strength and wealth
 and family and God
They wait for a truth they already know –
But they are early, and it is not yet time.

This is how it is done;
Twelve hours apart
By two different people
One the night before, and they have been waiting since
Two neurologic exams
The only way to pronounce brain death
She is 8 years old
Drowning accident.

And it is time
We come

First Place Art

Skyline Drive Radiant Remix

© Jonathan Frazier, Center Stage Musician/Performer



Judge's Comments

“Skyline Drive” has rich color range throughout and pictorial interest everywhere in the composition. I was especially drawn to the inventive wavy rhythm of the mountain range and the small sunlit plateau at the bottom of the canvas. The edges of the image remain engaging even though the center of the painting presents itself as the main event.

First Place Literature

What Do I Do?

© Steven Zhou, MS3

Patient

I sit
in the harsh lights of the waiting room
It's 1:43 p.m.
My boss will be mad
I've been gone too long
I missed lunch
I stare at the clock
I think about
my wife
As I kissed her goodbye
this morning
My son
I dropped off at
School
My brother who I haven't spoken to in months
I want to know the results of my test
I'm nervous
My foot starts tapping
The doc walks in with the charts
Cancer
I sigh. I don't know what to do

Doctor

I sit
in my cluttered office
It's 1:43 p.m.
The nurse keeps buzzing
I haven't made it through this morning's appointments
I missed lunch
I close my eyes
I think about
The lady with diabetes
I saw
this morning
The young boy
Who needed an excused absence from
School
The young man who missed his appointment
I pull up my next patient's chart
His test results are in
I start tapping my pen
I walk into the patient's room
It's a tumor
I sigh. I don't know what to do

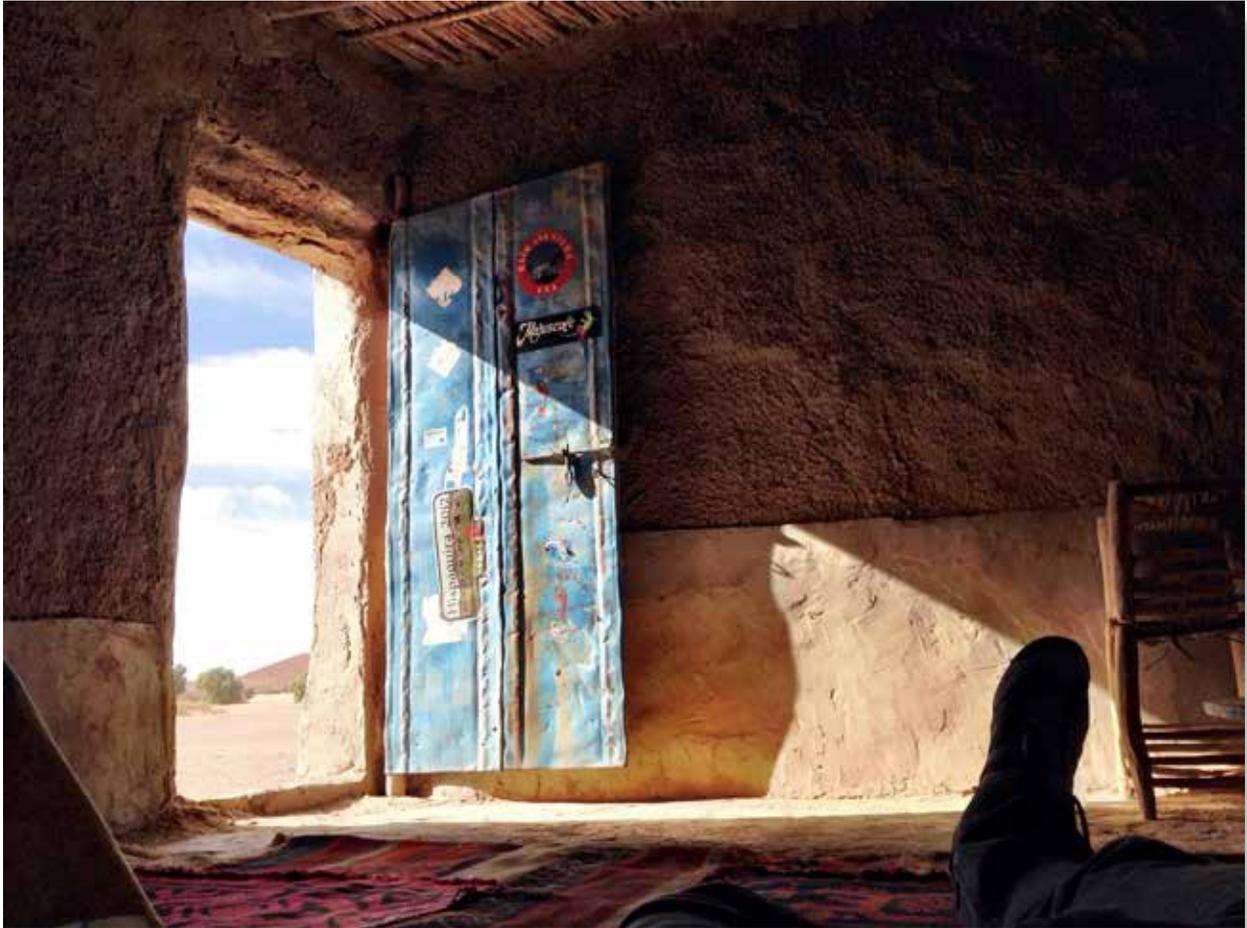
Judge's Comments

This poem is stunning, both for the simplicity of its form and the complexity of its insight. With parallel structure and selective repetition, the author suggests how the experiences of patients and doctors can be at the same time starkly different and exactly the same. Both missed lunch, both have their minds on other things, both are dreading the encounter; and, in the end, both are left with similar feelings of helplessness in the face of a tough diagnosis. The poem speaks to the connections between doctors and patients even at a moment—the moment of diagnosis—that seems to place them at opposite ends of a spectrum.

First Place Photography

Opportunity

© Tracy Scott, MS4



Judge's Comments

This image meets all the criteria for a great photograph. The eyes are drawn to the foot by the triangle. The eye moves back and forth between the light of the open door and almost paradoxically to the shoe: at first glance, one does not see it as a shoe but only a dark shape—but once one realizes it is a shoe, it becomes an object of considerably more interest. The shape of the shadow on the wall, from the door, mimics the shape of the shoe. The photograph leads to questions. Is this a talented but lazy photographer who has slept well past the early morning hour of light that is prime time for a maker of images? Or one who has made his or her images and has come back to rest, contented with the success of the morning accomplishments? Who knows. Maybe it's not a photographer at all. The photograph is all about identity.

How to Know

© Elias Harkins
Son of Gerald Harkins, MD
Department of OB/GYN

How can you truly understand someone?

Listen.

Listen to the way they speak.

Are they lyrical,

Syllables spiraling from the tongue?

Are they short,

Necessitating wisdom in each word?

How do they break silence?

How do they speak emotion?

How do they comfort?

How do they love?

How do others respond to them?

Listen.

Watch.

Watch their face as they speak with others.

Watch how they hear news, show sympathy, and give love.

View them when they are otherwise unseen.

See how they engage with others.

Look at how body language speaks loudest,

Above all voices.

When do they laugh, and how much?

What do they doodle in private?

What are their public masterworks?

Watch.

Learn from them.

Learn their interests,

Those passions that spark conversations going on for hours.

What were their happiest moments?

What can they remember about childhood?

What makes them angry, with a fire-red intensity

Precipitating action from rhetoric?

What gives them hope?

What do they think of other people?

What do they like to learn?

What questions do they burn to ask someone else?

How do they speak of themselves?

How do they introduce themselves?

Learn from them.

With these three skills,

You can know someone.

Know me.

I speak with long-running lines,

And metaphoric prose.

I break silence with questions to someone else.

I speak emotion, comfort, and love with the goal

of healing others,

Helping them find words when they cannot.

While I cannot watch myself

I know I wear emotion on my face.

I laugh often at puns and dry jokes.

Alone I am quiet

And enjoy osmosing the experience of being

somewhere.

I draw straight lines that form curves,

But the straight and curved lines of language

Are what I share with others.

I love to learn in general and find joy in many

subjects.

I love the mind, the body, our world,

Media, literature, language,

Philosophy, science, emotion,

and intersections between all of the above.

I find joy in simple pleasures,

Like a good coffee, lovely conversation,

And a morning spent people-watching in a town.

I remember some of my childhood, both the

momentous and the mundane.

I feel fire when I think of discrimination and

disenfranchisement.

I am hopeful due to the fundamental good of

others,

And how much we can help one another.

I burn to talk of great things, both concepts and

feelings,

And to leave behind small talk for depth.

I speak of myself rarely, but honestly

To those with ears to listen.

And, I like to introduce myself with a poem.



We are One

© Francesca Travagli
 Daughter of R. Alberto Travagli, PhD
 Neural and Behavioral Sciences



Why Must You Stay?

© Aaron Jacobs, MS3

I wish I could shake your hand ...
 Here you are, so close I can touch you
 Yet so far I dare not reach.
 I grasp your hand, hold it so delicately.
 So cold, so pale, no movement, the customary gesture dead.
 Why do you not respond?

I wish I could help you ...
 A mouth, longing for a drink
 Yet no waitress will find you here.
 I try to satisfy your thirst, hydrate your withered frame
 But you remain parched, drained, dry.
 Why will you not drink?

I wish I could laugh with you ...
 Your face, so fragile, so soft
 But no smile it permits.
 My humor absent, amiss
 Laughter lapping at my soul, daring not to come ashore.
 Why must you remain quiet?

I wish I could comfort you ...
 You look with a longing for affection
 And yet you see not, eyes absent of sight, life.
 Love once felt, body warmed from inside out
 Now turned cold, a metal slab stealing any remaining
 remnant.
 Why do you refuse my warmth?

I wish I knew you ...
 I know you better than even your dearest friend
 But yet you remain a mystery, your life untold, unknown.
 My life remains, yet yours has since vanished
 Left adrift in this room, hidden beneath a veil of plastic.
 Why must you stay?

... I stay for you.

Fulani Woman: Togo, West Africa

© Gordon Kauffman, MD
 Retired, Department of Surgery

Dis-Ease

© Joseph Malone, MD

Resident, Department of Neurology

As a neurology resident, I read, say, and hear the word “deficit” a lot when learning neuropathology and meeting patients. We say that this patient will have “deficits X, Y, Z,” from this stroke or “deficits A, B, C,” from this multiple sclerosis flare. While this vernacular keeps physicians on the same page, it often lends to a more materialistic approach to patient-care, where patients are automatons that have certain functions and, when lost, develop “deficits.” If we look at these deficits more closely, we can see that they are more significant than mere absences. For instance, take the ability to walk. For human beings, becoming bipedal is considered a milestone for both pediatricians noting proper development and joyous parents watching their child grow.

When a human being loses the ability to walk, he or she has lost an aspect so familiar to them, so entrenched in their physical identity, that this ambulatory deficit is more of an ambulatory bereavement. I find “bereavement” a more suitable term in describing the loss of capabilities cherished by human beings. It is easy for a well-learned ability such as walking to be taken for granted, to not realize that it is a gift to be able to stroll through beautiful gardens or walk along a seashore with the one you love. We must never forget how patients can feel this loss profoundly, such as a father, now immobilized by a stroke, who cannot walk his daughter down the aisle on her wedding day. It is in this scenario that walking can be seen not only as a basic human function but as part of a sacred rite.

I used the act of walking as a way to demonstrate what disease is and how it affects patients physically and metaphysically. Disease, or dis-ease, if you will, is more than a mechanical disruption of the body. Dis-ease is also a state of mind, an existential uneasiness that has the potential to completely transform a person’s identity. We understand that diseases can have sequelae (i.e., repercussions), such as developing a heart attack from uncontrolled diabetes, but what about the metaphysical sequelae of disease? We need to consider how disease can cause distress in a patient’s personhood, their being in the world. Consider Alzheimer’s disease, when a patient loses years of hard-won humanity yet is too demented to know the totality of what has been robbed from them. Consider amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, wherein the patient is essentially entombed within their body, the ultimate betrayal. To appreciate these aspects of the patient, to see “deficits” as “bereavements” will allow us to comprehend the extent of a disease’s impact on the patient in a fuller, more human way.

In conclusion, the next time we approach a patient lying in their hospital bed and ask them how they are, let us remember that this is a loaded, metaphysical question. When we ask this question of how a patient is doing, we are actually getting insight into the patient’s state of being in the world with their disease. It is no wonder, then, why medicine is the noblest profession, for we have the privilege to bear witness and care for these brave souls.

Timeless

© Justin Etzel, MS4



Thoughts on Death and Dying

© Linda Amos
Family of Patient

Some things remain the constant ...
The sun rises in the morning,
The birds continue to sing their songs,
The job is the same old grind,
And the moon shines its light at night ...

But, then a person you love dies,
Life proceeds at a different pace.
Mundane things:
 like the morning's sun rising,
 like the night's moon shining,
All take on a new significance ...

Perhaps, it is because,
We all grieve in different ways.
Some cry in private,
Some shed their tears in public,
Others hide their tears ...
For days, or for years.

Some lives are lived
For all-too-brief-a-time.
But, that does not diminish their worth.
Each life, no matter how brief,
Has meaning and purpose.

Winter

© Ananya Das, Staff
Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation

Leaves turn golden brown
and slowly drift away
leaving ungainly limbs behind.
The pristine white snow
covers all the good green intentions.
Vulnerable creatures scuttle inside
the hollows in the ground,
chilled to the bone by the winds.
Endless long, dark nights
follow frigid crisp days.

Are we talking of relationships
or is winter finally here?



Loss

© Micah Spangler
Brother of Mark Spangler, Staff
Department of Medicine

The Things That Stick with Us

© Matthew Conboy, BA, MS1

Daquan and I grew up about twenty miles and two worlds apart. I grew up in a small, suburban, middle-class neighborhood, while Daquan grew up in the inner city of one of the most violent cities in the United States at the time. Our high schools played football against each other. I wonder if our paths crossed back then, maybe he was my opponent, maybe he tackled me, maybe he even helped me up.

This time our paths crossed for a very different reason. I was working as an EMT with the ambulance. I had just finished dropping a routine patient off at the local ER, and was thinking about what I wanted for lunch when we got the dispatch. Dispatch: “Unit 270 respond to the intersection of City Terrace and Third Street for a stabbing.” I reached for the radio mic and calmly replied “Received, show us en route.” I had no idea what was waiting two blocks away. My partner Dave is the senior paramedic, and one of the most talented medics on the street. We arrive to Daquan on his back in the street, staring up at the sky, pleading for help, as his blood begins to form a small trickle down the black asphalt. The police are already on scene and they have Daquan’s shirt balled up against his chest like a crude bandage. They’re frantic, but as professionally and urgently as a seasoned police officer can convey without losing his control, he pleads for us to help. I look down at Daquan to watch the sunlight touch his retinas one last time as he mouths, “Help me.” Those were his first, and only words he ever spoke to me.

Emotions fade out, my training kicks in and I immediately evaluate the situation as the police officer is giving us an incident report. “Male in his early 20s, single stab wound to the chest.” I remove the balled up make-shift bandage from his chest to evaluate the injury just in time to watch a fountain of crimson red pump from the chest. I wipe the chest with my gloved hand to see more clearly. I note a single stab wound, approximately 1 inch thick, just left of the sternum at the approximate level of the 2nd/3rd intercostal space. Without hesitation, I know the knife pierced Daquan’s heart/aorta. He needs immediate intervention, or he will die. I look at Dave who has started to manage the airway and ask, “Should I put my finger in his chest to occlude the wound?” “No,” he says, “put an occlusive dressing on it and let’s go.”

A second ambulance arrives to assist. My friend Bill and my former FTO Rob step into the sunlight. There’s a sense of calm when people you trust arrive mid controlled chaos. Without conversation, we all start performing various interventions and packaging Daquan for transport. We lose pulses and begin CPR. Every time my hands push down on his chest, the blue nitrile gloves turn a crimson red.

From the time we arrived on scene to the time we arrived at the hospital was 8 minutes. That was the slowest 8 minutes of my life.

The ER physician receives the report from Dave. “Male, in his early 20s, single stable wound to the left side of the chest, CPR in progress for the past 5 minutes.”

The physician takes over and begins an open thoracotomy procedure. As he cracks the chest, a wave of blood rushes from Daquan’s thoracic cavity and covers my boots and the physician’s shoes. As the physician harvests the heart from the chest, he confirms my suspicion. The stab wound is through the right atrium and into the aorta. The nursing staff begin multiple blood and fluid transfusions. The doctor begins suturing the wounds.

We continue life-saving interventions for 35 minutes. Eight units of O negative packed red blood cells, 3 liters of normal saline, and countless rounds of epinephrine are given before we all know there is nothing more we can do. The doctor asks the team if anyone has anything further to try. Everyone knows what this means—we all look at each other, silent head shakes are followed by a silent bow. One nurse whispers a prayer as the doctor calls time of death.

Emotions flood in, the whole ER is silent.

I see Daquan’s eyes fade as his mouth forces the words, “Help me.”



Chickadees

© Jessica Matincheck, Age 12
Daughter of Lynn Matincheck, Staff
Office of the Vice Dean for Faculty and Administrative Affairs



Hope

© Zhoulin Wang, PhD
Husband of Zhexi Ma, Staff
Department of Medicine

The Pool Hall

© Joseph Gascho, MD
Departments of Medicine and Humanities

At noon, after washing off the smell
of gross anatomy lab, a bunch of us
(not all, some would stay,
to trace again the nerves
they'd just dug out),
would race across the street,
then hurried back to sit
for four long hours, copy down
the names of metabolic paths
so we could pass the test next week.
Knowing when the grades
were posted on the wall
our marks might be below
the marks of those who'd
never triple banked the black 8
in the side, those who took the prizes
graduation day, those who
in twenty years were deans,
department heads. Doctors,
just like us.

Failure

© Tracy Scott, MS4

Like a sliding drawer,
Lachman found me out.
Maybe I could have worked harder,
held on a little longer.
Maybe if the tension was less,
without so much stress.
Will I be thought of as a failure,
who cracked under pressure?
I hope my strengths are remembered,
from when I held it together.
Fibers left in shreds,
it has gotten to my head.

Second Place Photography

Contemplation

© Susan Landis, CRNA
Retired, Department of Anesthesiology



Judge's Comments

Our eyes are initially drawn to the face of the woman looking out. Only a portion of the face is illuminated, but that is enough. She appears to be contemplating a world we cannot see, we can only imagine. She seems to be asking, who am I? What opportunity lies ahead for me? Will I change, will I be changed? What is my identity? And then our eyes are drawn back into the hallway to a second woman, seemingly less contemplative, seemingly more certain about who she is. The rich colors of the vertical blinds, the other receding lines, make the photograph appear three dimensional and help to make it a great photograph.

Second Place Literature

The Night When it Covers with Darkness

© Homaira Zaman, MS4

As I enter the funeral home, I'm relieved to note that most of the female attendees are wearing colors other than black. I stand in the antechamber and adjust my plum-colored kameez and matching hijab, all the while watching the others huddle around posterboards. They're whispering at baby pictures, smiling at memories from a high school prom, and signing their names in an album of condolences.

I know the names of my patient's parents only from the obituary in the newspaper. I brainstorm ways to explain my presence to complete strangers, but my mind is a jumble of incomplete sentences. The 2016 presidential election is fast approaching, and I've ventured alone into a small town in rural Pennsylvania. I guessed from the patient's tattoo that we come from different backgrounds, but I only now realize how much I stand out among the other guests. I brace myself for the possibility that I will be asked to leave.

I turn the corner into the reception hall, and I see my patient.

Suddenly, I remember standing on the right side of her bed in room seven of the ICU. I've encountered ruptured intestines and postpartum hemorrhages during my time as a third-year medical student, but nothing compares to this soup of blood and feces spilling from the rectal catheter, soaking the sheets to a deep shade of pomegranate. I breathe through my mouth so I don't have to turn away.

I see her in profile. She's young; we could be the same age. No one in the hospital knows her name, date of birth, or whether she has a family that cares about her.

A few minutes later, I'm kneeling beside her, pounding on her chest. With each compression, her head rocks along with the rest of the bed. Her eyes are half-closed, and for a fleeting moment, I think she sees me. Once, perhaps twelve hours ago, these eyes were brown; now, they are yellow marbles.

The last thing she ever saw was the underside of a bench. She was gone long before I touched her. I'm pounding on the heart of a corpse.

We stop the code just before midnight. The hospital lies still; the air around us has stopped conducting sound.

Later, when the coroner has left the room, two nurses are rolling the patient onto her side. I bend over her back and squint at the tattoo, etched in warped cursive just beneath her neck.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

*I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.*

At the funeral, I briefly introduce myself to the patient's mother before it is time to sit for the eulogy. The pastor speaks extensively about drug overdoses and how this young woman had dedicated her life to rehab for the past two years.

Afterward, a middle-aged lady in a royal blue dress introduces herself to me as the patient's aunt. She sits down in the chair next to me and takes my hand in hers.

"She died peacefully?" she whispers.

She's neither asking nor confirming. She's pleading.

"She didn't suffer."

She leans her temple against mine, and I wrap my right arm around her shoulder. Together, we watch as the patient's mother strokes her daughter's hair for the last time.

Outside, I hear that the patient's father is looking for me. In all likelihood, he's planning to ask for medical details; after all, his family was greeted on a Saturday morning with only a packet of autopsy results. I decide to leave before I meet him, but he sees me in the parking lot on the way to my car.

“You were there for her at the very end, when we couldn’t be.”

I blink. His eyes are a light shade of brown, just like his daughter’s.

“I’m sure you did everything you could.” He pauses, and then he asks, “May I give you a hug?”

I throw my arms around him, and we hold each other for a long, silent minute. My breathing slows to a steady rhythm. His hand pats slowly against my back, as my own father would have done.

We say our goodbyes, and I drive away. They never knew my name.

My drive home is plagued with traffic. My eyelids are heavier than my hands. Without warning, I’m

struggling to raise my arm to grip the steering wheel. To keep myself awake, I recite verses of the Quran from memory, and the entire car vibrates from the piercing volume of my voice.

*By the morning brightness,
And the night when it covers with darkness,
Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is he displeased.
And what comes after will be better for thee than what
has gone before.*

Once I’m home, I settle down on the lawn to watch the sunset. In the frigid breeze, I remember her aunt’s forehead on my shoulder and the feel of her father’s hand against my back.

Judge’s Comments

This is the story of a brave act born of compassion and complicated by cultural differences. With both a vivid flashback and haunting turns of phrase, the author conveys the difficulty of this experience—from the hospital (“I’m pounding on the heart of a corpse”) to the funeral home (“Together, we watch as the patient’s mother strokes her daughter’s hair for the last time”). The author describes a rare and powerful experience to reveal that saying goodbye is one of the monumental privileges of the profession, though it is also tied to some of the profession’s most profound responsibilities and challenges.

Second Place Art

VA Stoop

© Carmen Marcucci

Daughter of Gina Marcucci, Staff | Department of Neural and Behavioral Sciences



Judge's Comments

“VA Stoop” is a relief to see. It presents itself as a complete image and I don’t have to fumble around to take it all in. It is a direct unembellished human exchange between the viewer/artist and also between the two depicted figures. The area at center where the elbow of the nearest figure folds around the knee of the other creates a wonderful fulcrum that sends the eye around the page. It’s a very well composed image. And whose sandals are those at the bottom of the page!? The sandals suggest the presence of an invisible figure creating an envelope of space in this pocket of the picture.

White

© Angela Sedun, Family of Yvonne Sedun, RN, Pain Clinic

And What Do You Do, they ask me.

I don't even know what my favorite color is anymore.

Do?

Unsure.

Do you want the long answer or the short one, I reply, knowing most people equate the value of being with activities we are paid to enact.

Eventually, feeling trapped into some cliché response or attempting to make a snappy comeback,

I falter.

Not that the answer proves anything.

Not that I am known better. I chose a ray of light anyhow:

Oh, I'm a visual and performing artist.

I'm a Byzantine cantor. (Please don't assume the pejorative.)

I direct an à cappella choir. I paint. I'm a student.

I'm a wellness consultant, a life coach. I do the laundry.

I'm upper management, a business owner, an interior designer, an executive assistant. (Did I mention I sleep with the boss?)

I'm a domestic engineer, the head housekeeper, an accountant, the cook, a lover. (I'm pretty skilled at that one.)

I'm a sinner, a sufferer; sometimes I'm bitter, joyful, serene, energetic. (Am I coming across as sarcastic to you?)

I'm a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, a friend. There's the cliché.

I'm a lighting expert.

Searching.

Knowing my eternal interior identity as wife and mother isn't appreciated.

Not now. I'm "just" a housewife.

Just.

The rays of light breaking into all my darkness-

The rays of light I send forth into all these little lives-

The rays of light I deliver everywhere everyday-

Do these beams come together as one?

Does the array plunge into the darkness around me?

Do I break into the depths of other souls?

Why don't they ask my favorite color? Maybe they'd see the spectrum is one.



Mom Mimic

© Kelly Chambers, CRNA
Department of Anesthesiology

Where We Are Hiding

© Amber Kulaga, Patient

The moon put itself in its
empty cigarette box.
Don't you know
the moon smokes?

The moon put itself in its
shoe box.
And the moon wears big shoes
so the box is roomy.

The moon put itself in its
refrigerator box.
The moon eats a lot,
staying pleasingly plump.

The sun (also in a mood) put itself in its
big toe.
Big people don't
always like being big.

The sun (still in a mood) put itself in its
sunblock bottle.
You wouldn't want
a sun-burnt sun.

The sun (starting to come around) put itself in its
1979 Ford Thunderbird.
We all need vacations.
It isn't easy being the center of the solar system.

The neighbouring galaxy put itself in its
water glass.
It hadn't been swimming
in years.

The neighbouring galaxy put itself in its
chicken soup.
Do you know how easy it is
to catch a cold in space?

The neighbouring galaxy put itself in its
snowsuit
and pelted us
with snowballs.

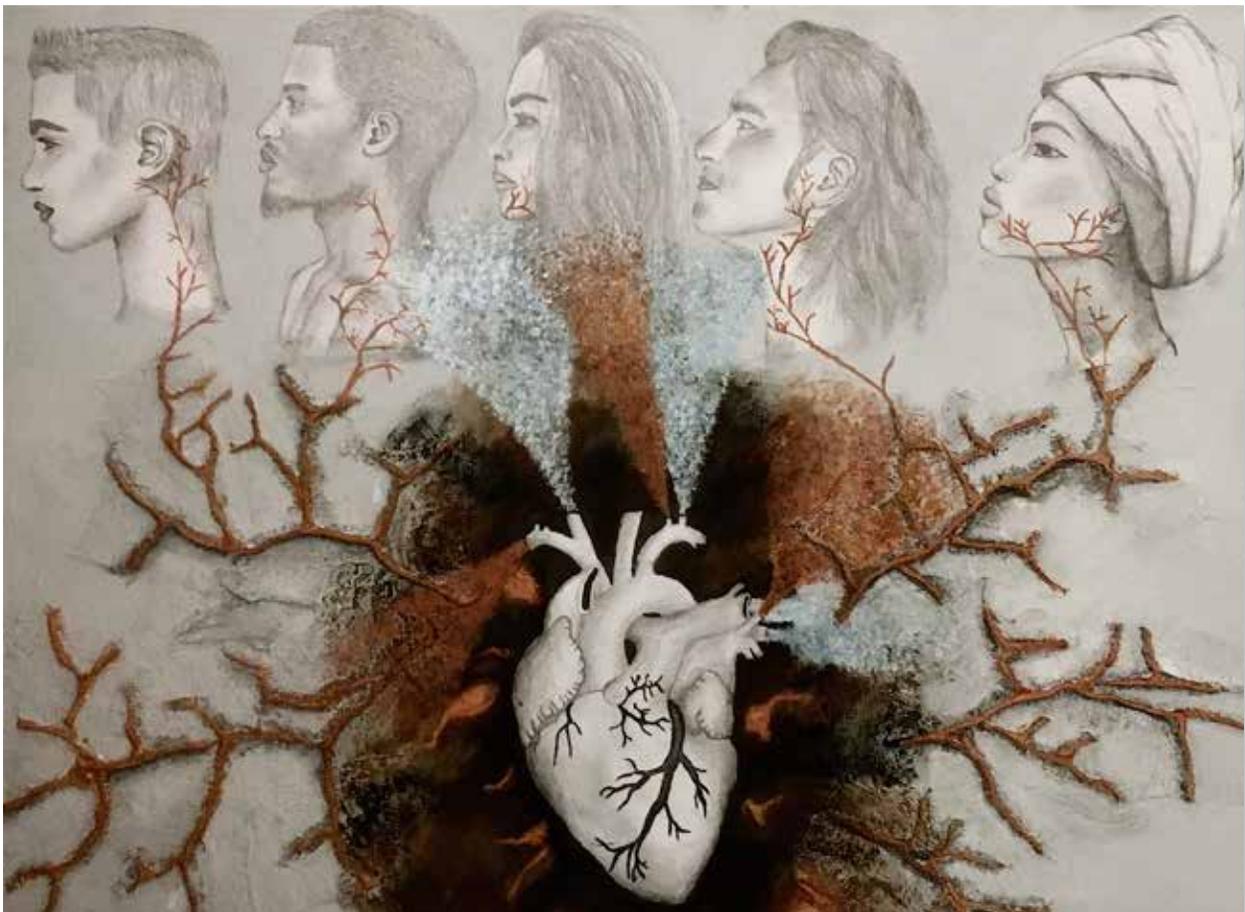
I put myself in my
picture frame
so I can always remember
this exact moment.

I put myself in my
laundry basket.
I get tired
of taking showers.

I put myself in my
empty cigarette box.
Never knew I had
something in common with the moon.

Ahead of the Common Denominator

© Zena Saleh, MS1



Heavy Is My Woe

© Lynelle David, Patient

I put my dentures down
And lost them on the ground
I tripped, they bit my toe -
Oh, heavy is my woe!!

Then I sat down on my glasses
And they bit me in the "ass-es"
Heavy is my woe
Clumsiness my foe.

I dropped my contacts down a drain
Now I can't get them out again
Heavy is my woe
Sewage is my foe.

My parrot ate my hearing aid
Now tells me what the neighbors said
Heavy is my woe
Gossip is my foe.

My implants swelled the other day
I thought that I would float away
Rising is my woe
What a way to go!!

While bobbing on a gust of air
My wig was lifted from my hair
Branches are my foe
Heavy is my woe.

Now, toothless, sightless, deaf & grey
Giant bosom in my way
I cause a stir wher'ere I go
Oh, how heavy is my woe!!

Every Day is a Miracle

© Sigmund David (Siggy), Patient

Every Day is a miracle
There is no other way
To face our day
Otherwise one lives
In ever widening despair
You never know
For sure
When it will be
Your last day
In King Solomon's words
'Life is but a vapor.'
So welcome
Each day
With open hands
And heart
So welcome
Each morning
With expectation
And wonder
This is your day!

Stand Out

© Zhoulin Wang, PhD
Husband of Zhexi Ma,
Department of Medicine



Beyond My Chronic Conditions

© Carissa Haston, Patient

I hear them talking outside my hospital door. I strain to try to catch a little insight into what they are saying before they all come in and look at me as I lie in a vulnerable state in my hospital bed. I've been here for a week and they are still trying to figure out how to manage my combination of challenging problems. Words and phrases such as "complex patient," "five organ transplant recipient," and "gastro paretic" are commonly used to describe me. I feel uncomfortable as my case is discussed among the team of medical professionals caring for me. Is this how I'm identified? I'm already uncomfortable about being in a medical setting again, relying on others for so much, and losing my privacy. But the terminology being used makes me feel like I am a case being studied in a medical lab and not like I am a 40-year-old young lady with a life outside of the hospital.

Although my chronic illnesses have had a profound influence on who I am and the direction in which I have taken my life, other aspects of my natural, developed, and learned identity have had an even bigger influence on the decisions I've made as I've had to change my dreams over the course of 23 years since my diagnosis.

In college when meeting new people, I never mentioned my health problems until it became inevitable. I did not want my new friends or professors to immediately identify me as being ill before they truly knew me. Throughout my Child Life Internship in 1999, I knew that I was working alongside one of the most highly expectant supervisors in the internship program. I wanted the full experience. I opted to not reveal anything about my health challenges in advance. This proved to be of great value. As she was doing midterm evaluations, she noted that I had a unique sense of compassion for parents and children in the hospital setting. At the conclusion of my internship when I finally revealed my medical history, her jaw dropped. She said, "That's where that compassion comes from!" If she had known about my health conditions from the beginning, it would have muddied her ability to accurately see me as someone able to excel in that environment regardless of my personal experience.

My natural determination has pushed me to never give up on my dreams. The installation of good values growing up has helped me make decisions on how to take my challenges and use them in a way to benefit others. My education has provided me with a variety

of skills which have allowed me the flexibility to adjust to new situations when my circumstances change. My creativity, art, and humor have provided me with coping skills crucial to survive extraordinary challenges. My experiences growing up created an identity which has led to the path I've taken throughout my adult life.

While the core nature of my identity will not change, other aspects influencing how I am identified now have, and will continue, to change. Had I not developed any health challenges, how I am identified now would not look exactly same. If people look back on my life and try to define it, some definitions will look quite different depending on who is asked and at what stage in life they knew me, but there will be consistencies with each definition as well.

I am not a case, a body part, a medical record number, or a disease. I am so much more than my chronic illnesses. When medical professionals recognize this, and treat me as a person with a unique and special identity, and not only treat my unique and special case, they will always be successful in curing me, even if they can't cure my conditions.

Shadows of the Past

© Kristina Chroneos, Age 12
Daughter of Zissis Chroneos, PhD and
Zvezdana Chroneos, PhD
Department of Pediatrics



The Diaspora

© Marian Poley, MS3

A long time ago, my family spread across a wide distance
We couldn't stay, said my mom
There were no jobs, no opportunities to grow, said my uncle
It's true!
No jobs, no money, no future, says the news.
My little island, 110 miles by 35 miles, couldn't support us
So I grew up, far away from my heritage and my roots
But not far enough that I couldn't come back
And soak in the love of those who stayed.
To learn how to cook, to sing and to dance like those in my family before me
My identity rests on that heritage that I cling to
A shared moment with those who know what it is like
To long for those who are far away.
A shared pain is a pain that is halved
Every day there can be a new pain from the distance, but none so great
As the pain created by Maria.
She devastated our island, destroyed our cities
All while I was so far away.
Helpless.
Alone.
My identity is not defined by the language I speak, or where I live
It is built on the experiences I've shared,
It is the meaning behind knowing the pain of my island
It is the decisions I make, to make a difference.

Crater Lake, Oregon

© Jason Spicher, MS1



Moredecai's Kingdom - Where the Unusual Can Become Extraordinary

© Gary Buchhalter, Patient

Constant

© Chloe Tubbs, Age 14, Patient

I'm never what I want people to see me as,
Though that is less their fault and more of mine.
For as fixated as I am on being myself,
There is nothing to fixate on.
Chasing after constant motion of being liked
Shifting to fit the scenery
Save me from myself,
Falling from too deep
I have no idea who I am supposed to be.
Everyone likes to run away from the idea of disappearing into nothing.
Everyone likes to ignore their shower thoughts
Surrounded by self-inflicted disaster.
Yet, I have the urge to know.
Will you remember me when I am gone?
What will you say?
If you say, "I miss you" will it be your first or will it be your hundredth time?
If you say, "I'm sorry" will it be out of pity or will you actually mean it?
I'm not going to give up on myself.
I owe myself that much.

Pager

© Danielle Peterson, MD, Resident, Department of Surgery

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Pain

“Where is your pain?”

Tylenol

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Nausea

“Emesis?” No. Belly soft

Zofran

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Swelling

“SCD? Heparin?” IV infiltrated

Compress

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Trauma

A B C D

No breath sounds. Pneumothorax

Needle

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Diet?

Nausea? Vomiting? Passing gas?

Clears

Speaking of diet, crackers and water, my refuge.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Can you come talk to this patient? They just got a diagnosis of cancer and they haven't been updated on the plan. They are very tearful.

“Hi I'm Dr. So and So. I'm not part of your primary team but I cover you overnight. I heard you had some concerns—“

I'm so tired.

“I can tell you are very upset. Anyone would feel similarly in your shoes—“

Where are the tissues in this room?

“Here.”

Patient: “Please Doctor. I'm scared.”

“It will be okay. Take my hand. Everything is going to be okay.”

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Thank you for talking to that patient. They were finally able to fall asleep.

At least one of us was. Maybe I'll just close my eyes for one minute ...

BEEP BEEP BEEP

Luscinia

© Eresbet Spain, LPN
Department of Otolaryngology

My life's work,
The work of a night,
With the strength of steel,
And flex of verdant grass.

Each day a fresh start,
And more of the same.
The golden glow of joy,
Despite scattered showers.

My palms crossed daily,
With anxious hands,
Holding dearly,
Secrets, trust, and faith.

An assistant, a leader,
Warrior and scientist.
Me, exactly me,
The only person I ever wished to be.

Insight

© Ananya Das, Staff
Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation

They say they cannot see her lately,
and she is not surprised
because she cannot see herself either.
The mirror returns an opaque silver stare
when she stands before it
and the lake water is a perfect blue.
The bright light of the sun scares her
as she huddles in dark corners
where no one looks for her.
They don't see her because
she blends in well with her dark thoughts.
Their success, their exuberance scares her
as she wallows in her grief, her failure.

If they want to find her
tell them to look for her
amidst the lingering twilight,
trying to merge into the night,
cradling her petrified thoughts.

As the last rays of the setting sun fade
she revels in the glory of losing herself into the night.

Facet

© Nicole Seacord
Daughter of Steven Seacord, Staff
Enterprise Information Management



DNI

© Sarayna McGuire, MS3

84 year old male,
COPD exacerbation with acute on chronic heart failure.
Our job to assess code status before admission:
Just do some chest compressions and stick me in the corner
We ask more questions to elaborate on his wishes
No intubation, no tubes, no shocks-
All my friends, most of my family, everyone I knew is dead-
Just leave me be if it happens.
Six days later I watch as they give chest compressions-
Two sets, stopping just short of intubation
And as they pronounce time of death I think of his words,
All my friends, most of my family, everyone I knew is dead
And I'm reminded of the meaning death can hold
For us in the end.

Scary Tree

© Joseph Sedun, Age 4
Grandson of Yvonne Sedun, RN
Retired, Pain Clinic

Branches collapse.
Branches move.
Branches break the mood.

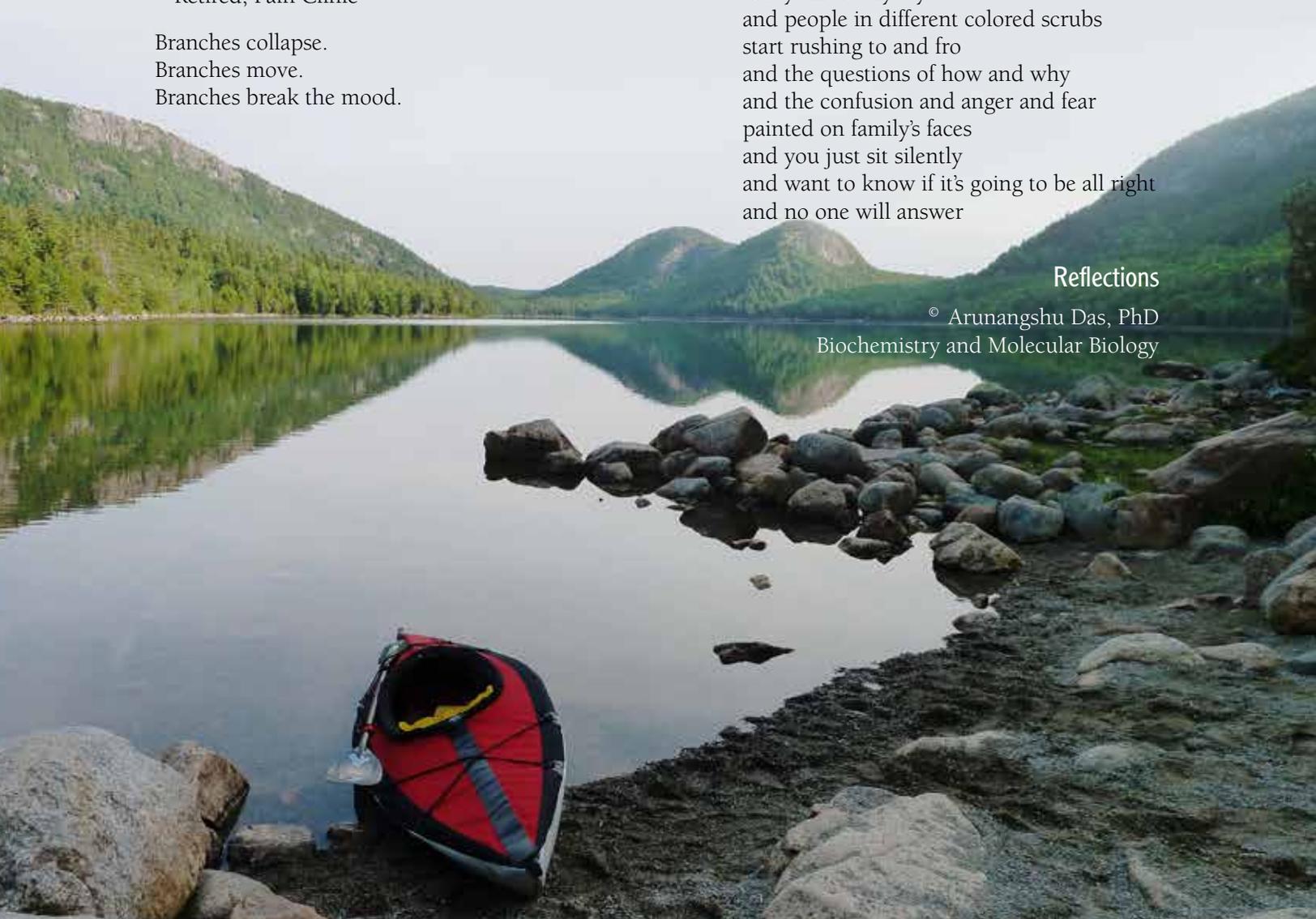
Grandmother

© Nathan Bicher, MS4

A slight trip
while walking up the stairs
and a lacerated elbow
that sends you for stitches
and a little difficulty
holding your right arm up
compared to your left
and a subtle drooping
of your eye and face
that your family hadn't noticed
and a loud machine
taking "a picture of your brain"
and an assurance that it is
just to make sure everything is ok
and a small dark dot that shouldn't be there
and the silence of your family
when doctors detail its meaning
and the tests they want to run
and the pills they want you to take
today and everyday
and people in different colored scrubs
start rushing to and fro
and the questions of how and why
and the confusion and anger and fear
painted on family's faces
and you just sit silently
and want to know if it's going to be all right
and no one will answer

Reflections

© Arunangshu Das, PhD
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology



Third Place Art

Untitled

© Diane Jang, MS1

Judge's Comments

“Untitled” is noteworthy for its long format reminiscent of a Japanese screen painting panel. The image is clear and one’s gaze can slide around the composition with ease. One is drawn into the flash of saturated color depicting the sleeping moon and then lifted to the face of the figure along with the narrative suggestions of the scissors and hands. However, the color use in the watery cloud forms and the black space surrounding the figure make this image a more visually complicated and pleasurable experience.



Third Place Literature

The Man of the House

© Tabitha Eckert, RN
SICU

Judge's Comments

What a touching story! This poem makes clear how a medical procedure may be a fairly straightforward event in the clinic or the ICU, but its impact unfolds in infinite directions and to untold depths once the full scope of a person's life is considered. The exceptional, concrete, slice-of-life detail—from the “yard that never stops needing mowed” to the “harsh mechanical sigh of the ventilator”—made this poem stand out to me. The clincher, though, is the line about “we’ being truer than ‘I,’” a sentiment as applicable to the loving couple in the poem as it is to the patient’s care team and everyone who is touched by the poem.

It was an elective procedure,
not necessary, but probably worth it,
clean and simple, in and out.
Better be, since he’s the man of the house, he said,
and so many things need him.
Of course, he’d go home in a few days, they said,
back to the tile he needs to replace,
the yard that never stops needing mowed,
the wife whose presence he needs to sleep soundly
just as she needs his snoring to sleep herself
because it’s been there ever since he was barely old enough
to shave that beard that always needs a trim,
the cell phone that always needs charged because his daughter calls so often,
his favorite chair by the table marked by that one mug
from which he and only he may sip coffee
while he waits for the sun to rise each morning.

He’ll be in the ICU at least a week longer.
Can’t say for sure, but at least.
He’s a sick patient; he needs so many treatments.
And then – if then – he’ll need rehab, they say.
Home for them both is a far away thing, dancing in delirious visions
of the hard recliner chair in the waiting room
that she can tolerate only because she so badly needs to sleep,
and blown more distant with each harsh mechanical sigh
of the ventilator he needs to breathe
through the new hole in his neck where the trach ties
constantly wick up bloody ooze and need to be changed,
and hanging in the air faint and sweet and stale,
like the scent of the cookies she left on cooling racks weeks ago
that now need to be thrown out, whenever she gets back.

She will stay here till he leaves.
That was part of the promise.
She will love no matter what it costs, she says,
no matter what he needs to pull him through.
Her heart falls to the ground with each scrub-wearing messenger,
but she picks it back up and dusts off the fear
cause he needs it to shine, he needs it to hope,
he needs to be sure that no words and no scalpels
can shatter the promise on which they gambled their lives,
or the new name of “we” being truer than “I,”
or the gradual exchange of standing for leaning,
or the dream that no matter what comes, it’s better together;
he needs to still hope that, and she needs him to.
She doesn’t need him well, or whole or nicely patched
or even able to shave by himself, she says – no,
she just needs him back
among all the familiar needs he needs to be him.
She needs him
so she needs him home.

Third Place Photography

Night Unveiled (1 Hour Time Lapse)

© Rev. David B. Simmons, D.Min, BCC
Pastoral Services



Judge's Comments

One sees the paradox of identity in this photo. Our eyes are drawn to the North Star, fixed in position, in contrast to the arcing lines of the stars circling around it. These circling lines draw our eyes back again to the North Star, as does the fact that that star is on the diagonal line between the dark upper sky and the lighter hues of the clouds. The shape of the outline of the trees mirrors the circling arcs of the paths of the stars. And then our eyes are drawn to the brightness of some “non-heavenly” light in the lower left. One is left with the question: does this compete with true north?



Caledonia

© Jonathan Frazier
Center Stage Musician/Performer



Rings

© Anthony Sedun
Family, Yvonne Sedun, RN, Retired, Pain Clinic

It's been, I'm sure you'd agree,
a fast and full year. In fact, when I look
back on our years before, I notice
what you undoubtedly already know.

Each year has chronicled its own burdens
and blessings, plans and spontaneities.
The accumulation of our shared and separate
experiences can appear thick,
like the outer bark, the trunk of a tree.
But who sees its inner rings but God?

A man, perhaps, too, might come along
and fell that tree and thereby see its rings. Chestnut
colored echoes rippling outward through the phloem and outer bark,
all amidst late-season wheat colored
cambium and sapwood deep inside.

These rings bind us to our pith,
itself rooted in a far-off land.

The heavy rains this morning make me wonder, too:
Where is our Garden?
Where is our Cavalry?

We look out to sea from the fisherman's boat.
Thinking ourselves the fishers, it doesn't
take long to realize we are the ones
caught up in the net.

The rest, the dormant memories recalled from time
to time. Strings stretched wide
along the bridge, waiting for the bow.

The paralytic sat outside the pool, waiting for the angel.
The sound of heavy nets—wet and worn and seasoned
cords—in calloused hands, waiting for the cast.
The caress of a thousand, thousand leaves
through a grove of trees, waiting for the whispered breath
in the amber glow of summer sun and evening breeze.

We plant and we are planted. Here, for now.
The next year's growth lines might mark
excessive rains or drought, steady conditions or injury.
Storms buffet. Animals scratch. Insects burrow.
Still, our rings remain the brands of sanctity,
the caramel cords of God's loving ironies.

In My Dream

© Jessica Matincheck, Age 12
Daughter of Lynn Matincheck, Staff
Office of the Vice Dean for Faculty and Administrative Affairs

Thank You, Betty

© Jason Mascoe, MS1

I've heard stories of others' firsts. Some laughed. Some cried. Some were left breathless and even fainted. I envisioned mine for years, but nothing and no one truly could have prepared me for this.

Embarked on an exploration with no designated destination, I navigated your body.

I remember the rush, how I rushed each motion and gesture synchronized to a tachycardic rhythm I simply could not control.

That day, in that moment, I got to know you in a way you never knew yourself.

Fascia effaced, ribs cracked, extracted and removed.

Your heart was held, but were these hands pure to contain it?

Were my intentions worthy of your frame?

Was my work worth you being my muse?

I felt a cool breeze and was certain you whispered to me, telling me I'm doing it all wrong; to stop. So, I did. I reversibly retrieved, put everything back in its rightful place.

You were right, Betty.

I was wrong.

I messed up.

I did it all wrong.

How selfish of me.

I stepped back and stared; observed; yielded for direction.

I admire your frame, every wrinkle, dimple, crack, freckle and scar embedded in your canvas.

It was the first time I gained insight into your journey on this earth.

Breeze returned and I swore I thought I heard you utter the word, guiding me on how you wanted to be held.

I look up, but then your face was covered.

You were silenced, no way to speak.

I stepped back even further, hauntingly assured it was neither your spirit calling, nor your soul crying.

How do I know?

Your fragile frame, ambiently reminded me of the cold, dry room where we met.

For a second, I thought we made a true connection.

Sadly, you simply rattled with the air's passing through your shell.

I say she was my first, yet, did she really belong to me? This work of art was not my creation to claim credit. She was individually, beautifully, and wonderfully crafted. Stamped with uniqueness I could never fathom. In this awestruck moment I became surprisingly speechless.

Our experience teasingly left me with questioning, wanting more.

Who were you, Betty?

Did you spend your long years on this earth well?

Did you laugh much, forgave more, but loved most?

What brought you joy?

What were you passionate about?

Whom did you serve?

Is there more?

There has to be more. Are we more? You were more than just body.

You were not here, but graciously left me a key to enter inside. To learn, study, admire and appreciate your stunningly well kept interior.

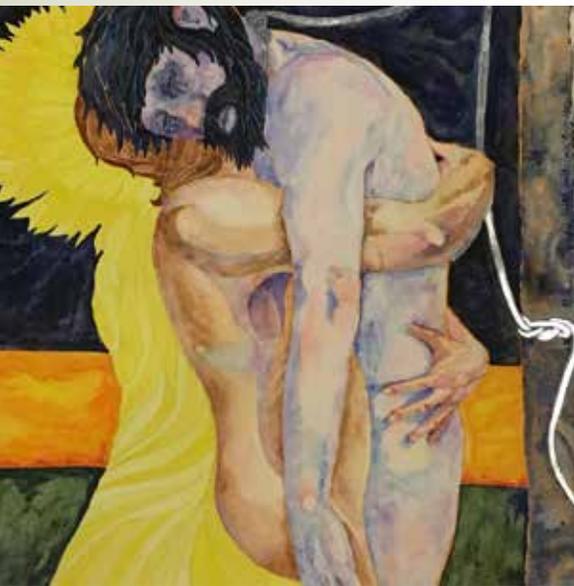
I don't know where the true "Betty" now resides. But, maybe one day we can warmly meet on better terms. I would greet you, ask you these questions, listen, hug you and finally say,

"Thank you, Betty."



The Wait

© Robert Ganse, Faculty, IT



Nothing You Confess Can Make Me Love You Less

© Jim Rudegeair, RRT
Respiratory Therapy

I Wish I Were

© Diane Jang, MS1

My identity?
I'm not really sure.
But here are all the things I wish I were.

When she called in the middle of the night in October,
I wished I was asleep.
Too tired to form full sentences.

When she told me, "It's cancer" from the other side of the line,
I wished I was just part of some messed-up dream,
One that would dissipate when I woke up.
But I woke up at three,
Feeling breathless and shaky,
And thirty minutes later,
And an hour after that.
Nope, not a dream.

When she asked me if the chemo would hurt,
I wished I was already a doctor
Who could tell her I'd make her all better.
But I just googled the drugs,
Read her the side effects: Fatigue,
And maybe nausea or vomiting—15%, they say,
And maybe numbness in her fingers and toes.
Neither of us bring up prognosis.

When I watched her get infused two nights before Thanksgiving,
I wished I was a more gracious person,
Gracious enough to feel thankful for something,
But I was mad and angry and upset,
Because as she slept I watched her fingers become a dull, ashen taupe,
And I realized that "fatigue" didn't even begin to cover the despair,
And nothing could have prepared us for the reality of "treatment."
Nothing.

When I sat behind her at the salon,
I wished I had long, healthy locks,
To cut and drape over her thinning hair.
But she tried on a synthetic wig
That overwhelmed her wan, thin face,
And she laughed at the mirror,
And then she cried.
We didn't buy anything.

Continued on next page

When she hunched over in the grocery parking lot the day
after Christmas,
I wished I knew the right things to say and do,
As she threw up into the plastic baggy I'd carried in my coat pocket.
But for a moment she was someone I couldn't recognize,
Who hated everything and said living longer on chemo wasn't worth it
And then she saw me standing there
And said, "Sorry, just kidding.
I feel better now."

When I entered the airport security line
I wished I could teleport between these countries.
She told me if anything happened, I'd be the first to know,
But there will be no emergencies, she insisted.
My grandma stood with her and waved from the other side of the
glass panel,
And they got smaller and smaller,
And I slept the thirty-five hours back.
Still not a dream.

When I laughed during class, and went to lunch,
I wished I was sad.
It felt wrong to smile, just wrong.
But life does not slow down for us.
She goes back for chemo, cycle 6, tomorrow
And I memorize mutations, labs, clinical presentations
And lists of -nibs, -mibs, -mabs.
Taking one day at a time.

And when I sit at my desk at night,
Waiting to call at the right moment
When she will have woken up half a world away,
I wish more than ever that I was big and strong—
Big enough to reach the sky,
And strong enough to fish out a miracle to give her.

My mom laughs at me when I tell her this,
And tells me that will never happen,
No matter how tall I grow
Or how much I learn
Or how tough I become—
Because she is the mother here,
And I will always just be her baby.



Full Bloom

© Alexandra Adams, MPH, MS4



Attitude

© Susan Landis, CRNA
Retired
Department of Anesthesiology



Mexican Moonrise for the Bride

© Malgorzata Sudol, Staff
Department of Medicine



Painted Lady Butterfly

© Lisa Black, RNC
3rd Floor South Addition

Alyosha's Kiss

© Rev. David Carnish, M. Div., BCC, Pastoral Services

Multiplicities of being
The only plot is too hallow
I've lived a hundred lives though many a book and story
Tragic, comedic, yet too melodramatic, potentially cathartic
Son of Apollos, heir to Dionysus disguised in The Bacchae
I, too, the mystery of the Mass
Soulfully religious
A celebrant and a wise fool, though never sophomoric
I have killed my share of monsters
I have excised many demons
Lived with them too ...
I have set sail and returned
I married Leah and was lost until my beloved Rachel found me
Wait! Who was I to Leah?
I, particles of stardust that hold the universe's dreams
A Peregrine not an eagle
Habitual and addicted
Ritualistic
Rote and spontaneity
A daydreamer and a sloth
An oak tree and a weed
Reborn with fear and trembling
A man with vibrant heart,
Potent and powerless
Father to Ephraim and Manasseh
A lamenting man
Ishmael, son of Hagar and our father
The first child and beloved
Forgotten and outsider
Second best
Ishmael, the narrator
The iconoclast who warns Ahab
Restless!
Oh, the weight of being conscience!
Ah! the freedom, to be among you
My name is Prospero
Prisoner priest of Château d'If
Masks go on and come off
Costumes change with performance
Revealing and hiding person
Trying to see and know you
Roles eclipse knowing
Titles they are cages, the veils we hold between us
Script and improvisation
Still, life is calling
Consummation
Venite adoremus
For who I am without imagination?

Perspective

© Tony Oliveri, Patient

Mostly
they
convince us
of what is real
of what is not.

The ultimate virtual-reality filters.
Insidious, as absolutes tend to be.
Leaving innocence
and
arrogant notions about anything
we are not equipped to perceive.

Holding that thought
in the swirl of time
is hampered
in entropy born of experience
borne by cauterized tomorrows.

Puzzling a way through.
Believing what we see
while only seeing
what we
already
decide
to believe.

Sense of Community

My 9/11 Response Still Lingers

© Dwayne Morris, Staff
Office of Medical Education

My heart longs
For a sense of community
I can hear the huddled masses
Crying out their desperate plea
“Let’s redefine our prosperity,
As the love we take
From here
Into eternity”

Route 1

© Xiaojie Liao, MS3

Through the Fog-Veiled Curtain
Smashing Waves, Turbulent Tides
Standing in the Heavens

Thanksgiving Sunrise

© Homaira Zaman, MS4

Huddled Together

© Linda Amos, Family of Patient

As she stood in front of her childhood home
she remembered fragmented
childhood memories of
these trees

trees now naked
of autumn's leaves
all gnarled and bent
these trees

Familiar South Carolina avenues
were her childhood playgrounds.
Summertime she ran underneath
these trees.

These same trees had murmured
sweet nothing sounds to her, a teenager,
as she shed silent tears beneath
these trees.

Other times, she was sure,
as the sweet Carolina moon shone,
had these old trees murmured complaints,
to one another on harsh autumn nights
as they huddled together for warmth.

In This Era

© Sudhanshu Bhatnagar, MD
Resident, Department of Medicine

I am grateful for the white coat.
For with it,
shamefully,
I am seen.

In my hours outside without said coat,
I fade as I always have.
I am overlooked in the crowds
And my opinions are but wind.

In this land,
To be me can sometimes feel wrong
Like I'm always out of synch
With mankind's choreography.

I feel as though without my coat,
I seem to be worth less
And sometimes,
Worth
Nothing at all.



My Dancing Shadow

© Kelly Chambers, CRNA
Department of Anesthesiology

Ball

© Anthony Sedun
Family of Yvonne Sedun, RN
Retired, Pain Clinic

The boy sat alone in the yard
watching the traffic go by.
Atop the junior soccer ball, he sat
and crouched there, as a warrior from his perch.

The house itself sat up
on a hill. And the boy—all of eight
years old—would play outside. Daily.
But almost always by himself.

The mom got a baby blue-nosed pit bull once.
But to see them play, it wasn't clear
the boy loved Man's Best Friend
that much—between the shouting and the sticks.

Maybe he just wanted his dad
instead.

Out of the Past

© Spencer Katz, G2, MD/PhD Candidate



Father

© Emily Hess, Nurse Extern
Department of Nursing

Memory tastes like this: burnt rye toast
Smearred with apple butter, Sunday afternoon,
And you're drinking beer, beside me on the couch
Watching *This Old House*.

We're barefoot in the prickly grass of early autumn,
Chipmunk-cheeked with "how many?"
vine-fresh Concord grapes,
Sucking the slime-green orbs from
Thick purple skin. You always win.

I remember, supper on the deck you built:
Garden bounty of eggplant, corn, zucchini we grew
Together. Fried tomatoes with salt and butter,
Grilled chicken and my face sticky with marinade.

Winter evenings beside you in the kitchen,
Making apple dumplings like your mother did
Before she died. Our flour-dusted hands knuckle-deep in
Sweet dough dappled with raisins and brown sugar.

Saturdays I pretend I don't have homework,
We fry eggs and scrapple in too much butter,
Singing along to 70s hits, drinking black coffee
And the flavor of lost time.

I'm older now, moved out, always busy.
Rarely taste home food except in memory.
Over meals of Minute Rice and instant oatmeal,
Your calls, your voice is the spice I savor.

I mark my textbooks with the recipes you send,
You stock my freezer with peas and applesauce.
And—this won't surprise you—memory still tastes
Like burnt toast.

Until Tomorrow

© James Nguyen, MS1

My brain is heavy.
My mind is foggy.
All I know is
A child outside chasing a dog
Through a blanket of auburn leaves.
It must be autumn.
My home's dry silence,
Except for a TV commercial,
Aricept, with an endearing couple.
And slight nausea.
My violin in the corner,
Tattered, yet glimmering,
Rosin caked on its strings,
Bow already tightened.
I can feel its warmth under my chin,
Melting away the plaques.

I remember

Swirling in Mendelssohn's melodies.

The conductor turns his head and gives me a reassuring grin, as my sound soars high above the orchestra, and transitions into an intimate, dreamy duet with the clarinet – and then the oboe. I hear the child in the front row, fiddling with his program, and the woman in the balcony unwrapping a lozenge to control her cough. The hot spotlight beams down on me as my sweaty fingers fly up and down the fingerboard. I'm lost in the cadenza, the dazzling barriolages, followed by the haunting orchestral entrance. Little did I know. I take a final bow to a thunderous ovation, and see a wink in the crowd.

"Unbelievable," he whispered, squeezing my hand twice as we sped in a cab towards the restaurant. The New York City bustle was raging, but the comfort of the cab was soothing. I peered over. He had the quirkiest smile steeped with pride – and love. His handsome face

Grew brighter and brighter
From the headlights
That were too quickly approaching ...

Crash.

The melodies stop.

I quickly put the violin back down.

Until tomorrow.

The auburn leaves slowly drift down.

It must be autumn.



Lucky Shot

© Kelly Shaak, Staff
Department of Anesthesiology

Hunger

© Emily Hess, Nurse Extern, Department of Nursing

A hunger that begins in the hollow space
above my navel and works a gnawing path towards my skull
like mice moving in the empty space between the walls
of an old farmhouse, crawling along the tangled nerves,
soft tufts of insulation that cushion like adipose, that wrap
like periosteum encircling a length of bone; a hunger that oozes
like an ache, that burrows its damp, pink, quivering nose
into the soft down of tissue, pushing
a little hollow nest between interstitial spaces,
elbowing tumescent cells padded with cytoplasm
or the freckled surface of a fatty liver, nestling beneath the
plied, piled layers of tissue, membrane, dermis, epidermis—this,
a hunger that roams, that scurries over
ribcage rafters, that curls its small, brown body
into the empty chambers of my heart.

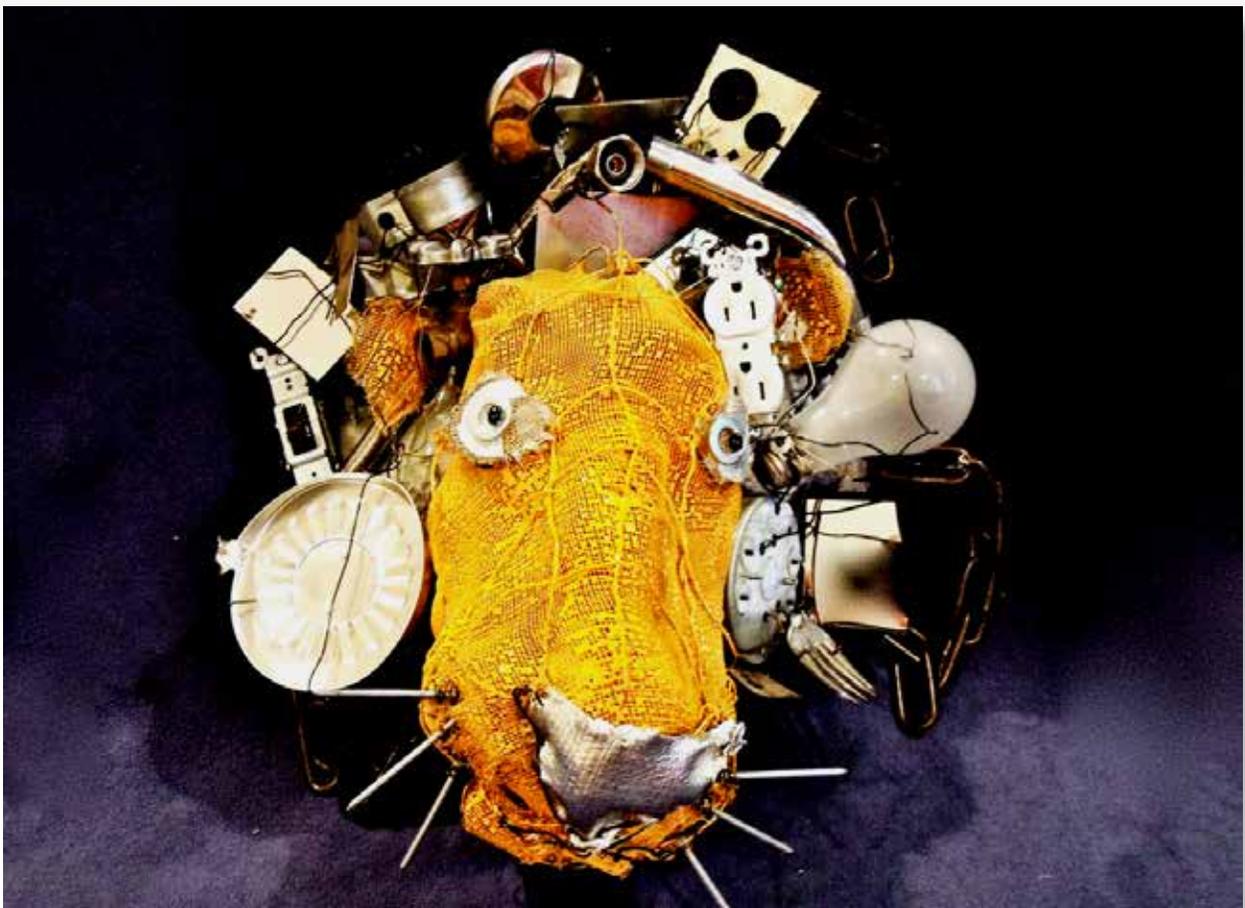
Some Things Happen

© Judy Schaefer, RN
Kienle Center Member

Some things happen
to you
that are so terrible
that you
think you'll not live
another day.
But – you do!

Redefined

© Kate Levenberg, MS1



I Carry Identity

© Judy Schaefer, RN
Kienle Center Member

I carry identity like a pocket watch
Notched not with hours but moments
of salience, of shaping songs,
of luxuries such as having a blanket
to pull up when the night turns cold
Father, skinny boy on a Missouri farm
One of eight, five boys and three girls
Living close to the land
feeling the groan of ancient trees
aching toward winter
on the soles of barefeet
He would say: *I never went to bed hungry
or slept cold*
Mother, with an osteoporotic back
She would say: *It will feel so good
when the pain stops*
The pain would stop, flat on her back
on a bed board, or the floor
Perfectly aligned at night
she would find the sweet anesthesia
of sleep
In small hours when I worry the clock
When I can't sleep, when I feel cold
When I search for optimism
I hear the songs and make a good guess
as from where the melody comes

Oh! No! To the Brace

© Donna Mountfort
Patient

Let's try a brace, says Dr. Reid
It MIGHT help with the pain
Down the hall, to Lawall
There MIGHT be relief to gain
After instructions on how to wear and
Trying to remember which straps go where
Dick and I worked together to place everything right
Making sure that nothing fit too tight
The bulky inner knee pad caused an awkward gait
Redistributing some of my hefty weight
Crooked walking threw my hips out of line
The outer pad hit a painful spot not too fine
Strap one with a hard part over the calf
Securing strap two behind gave us quite a laugh
Strap three went directly over an already painful thigh
Causing more nerve pain but I didn't cry
Strap four agitated the metal sticking out
Strap five was the only one that I have no complaints about
Strap six yet another tightening over the thigh
A torturous contraption, now I do want to cry
Another option, according to Dr. Reid
Straightening the leg is what I need
Decision is made, the surgery is a go
For after the holidays, so Ho! Ho! Ho!

Lines Leading Lines

© Justin Etzel, MS4



Honorable Mention Art

Brain Storm

© Jennifer Dobson, MS1



Judge's Comments

Noteworthy for its materials properties and strong design basis. This painting demonstrates celebration of the fluidity of paint unconstrained by the desire to describe something other than its own plastic fluid nature. Fortunately, this is coupled with a sound color movement from orange to blue on one diagonal from bottom left to top right along with a counter movement in the fluid itself on the opposing diagonal. An overall circular movement holds it all together.

Honorable Mention Literature

Evolution of Care

© Kelly Chambers, CRNA
Department of Anesthesiology

Helping our humanity
Defined by our technology
Seems every advancement
Puts me in further proximity
To an individual

Keys requiring my care
Stealing my stare
Stealing my time
It just isn't fair
To my patient

Buried in numbers
Wrapped in wires
Trying to survive
While my stethoscope alive
Listens to the beat
Of a hard drive

Judge's Comments

Form and meaning are intertwined in this poem that describes medicine's integration of technology—or a better term may be the interruption of technology. The bouncy, limerick-style rhyme scheme turns a corner at the end of each stanza with a prepositional phrase pointing out how these tools produce for the doctor both connection and alienation. It's a poem about doing the best job possible for one's patients, while considering carefully both the opportunities and the obstacles posed by technology.

Honorable Mention Photography

Family Outing

© Homaira Zaman, MS4



Judge's Comments

Take away the horses and one is left with a beautiful image of sky and water and clouds, horizon 2/3 of the way down, emphasizing the beautiful clouds. But add the horses, and the photograph becomes something more. There is now story. Our eye is drawn to clouds and the grouping of three horses, but finally, again and again, to the single smaller horse trailing behind. Left out, spurned by the others? Or a loner, quite content to plod along with its own thoughts? Sure, one would guess, of its own identity.

The Last Visit?

© Michael P. Flanagan, MD
Family and Community Medicine, University Park Campus

Your eyes were keen with intelligence once.
Framed by arching eyebrows
That peaked when you were angry, or insightful.
Now they stare distantly, and without focus.
Waiting without expectation, gazing without anticipation.

Your lips were once smiling,
and often pursed in concentration,
Ready to kiss a child, or whisper, “Good night, I love you.”
Now they are dry and without expression.
But the familiar freckle is still there, to identify you.

Your voice was once lovely,
When filled with a song to welcome the morning,
Or sometimes strident when arguing your point or a cause.
Now it's silent most of the time,
Uttering just a few words, and then only when prompted.

Your hair was once vibrant and full of body,
Auburn curls framing your oval face,
And hinting at the passion and intensity within.
Now it has lost both luster and color.
What was once thick and rich has become thin and depleted.

Your hands were once engaged and nurturing,
Caressing a cheek, tapping out notes on a keyboard,
Or composing a poem and typing a story.
Now they are curled, with fingernails too long.
Involuntary fists, contracted with disuse.

Your feet were once whole,
Cradled by sandals in the summer sun,
Pacing, while coaching from the sidelines of a softball field.
Now they are simply appendages that fill the footrests of your wheelchair,
An absent fifth toe testifying to a past infection.

Your heart was once expanding and welcoming,
Caring and loving unconditionally,
Willing to help others and offer assistance—sometimes too much and too often.
Now it beats softly, blissfully unaware that your body is waning, nearing the end,
Following the path of your memory, that began fading years ago.

Your mind was sharp and often bold,
Your intelligence evident, defining your character.
Education was paramount, always your goal, and you instilled this in your children without compromise.
That is your legacy now, how we will think of you,
Measured not by this fleeting moment, but by a life in perspective; a journey nearly complete.

Fasting with Others

© Daniel Wolpaw, MD
Departments of Internal Medicine
and Humanities

In the late afternoon, sun kneeling
to where I sit, bread rising to dinner,
a long fast finds me trying to live along
lines of wanting to others. How does
that work? Is it so easy, or so hard?
What is the calculation, the division,
what is the semblance of sure? Sure,
as in where I will be when the sun sets,
where you will be when it rises, how
we wait for the next description of
feeling, the next declension of a moment's
sentence, the last movement of yeast.

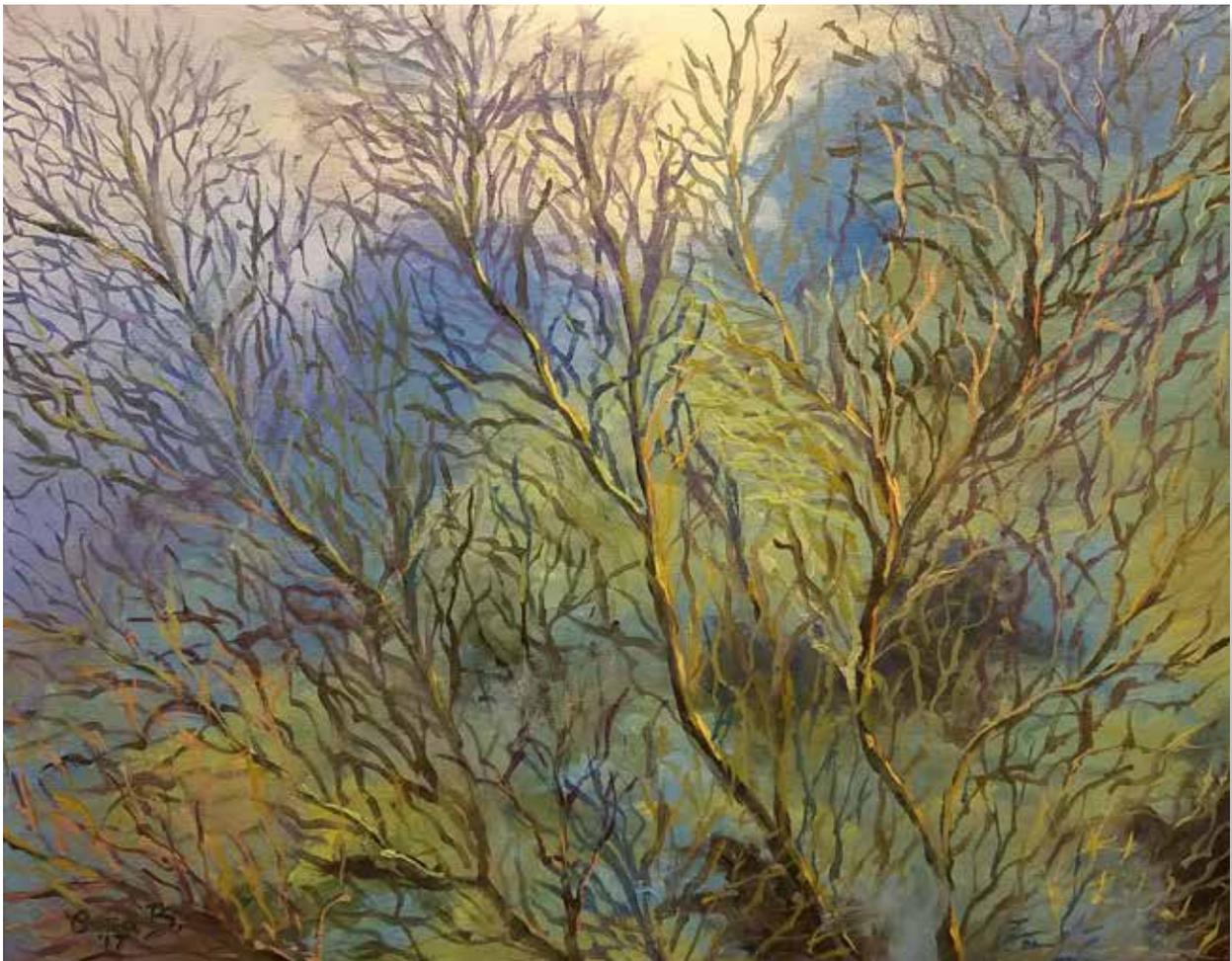
Transitory

© Kate Levenberg, MS1



Peaceful

© Oana Bollt, Staff, Department of Pharmacology



Letting In Some Brightness

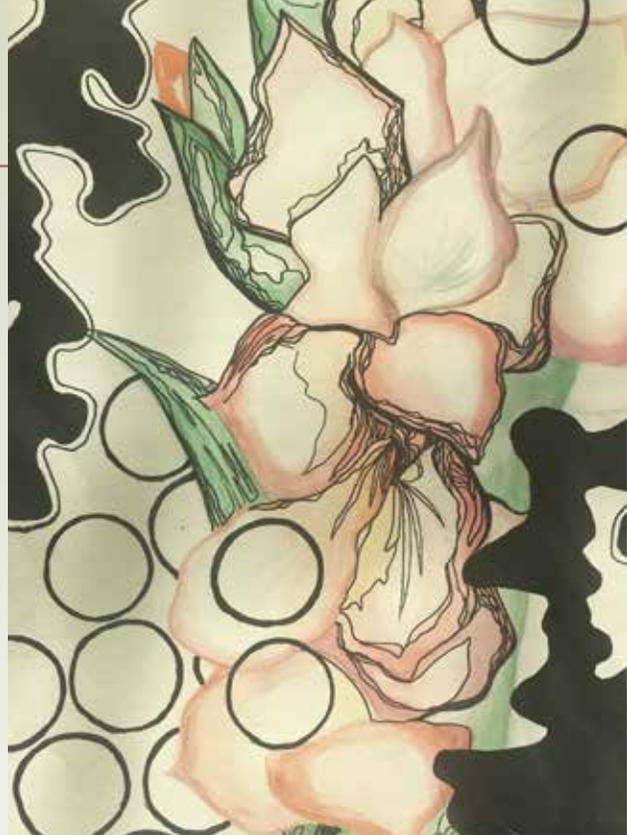
© Natalie Sullivan, Nursing Student

0630. My clinical group and I shuffled our all-too-white sneakers, markers of our student nurse position, up to the third floor onto the med-surg oncology unit. Our thunderous heartbeats pounding in anticipation of our patient assignments were surely the only audible sounds at that hour. Our instructor, fired up and ready to go, spat off our patients and what she expected of our care provision. And off we went to the electronic charts, feverishly jotting down every detail about the patient for our clinical paperwork before report arrived at 0700. A review of my patient's chart coupled with information received during report were both enough to conjure up an image of who I expected to work with that day.

That day, my assignment was referred to as “the Stage IV metastatic patient” in report. Untangling histories, past surgeries, and lists of medications, I deduced that this patient's cancer was consuming his body systems. Crossing the threshold to his room, I took in my initial impressions. His skin glowed a yellow hue. What was left of his fat tissue hung for dear life from the bony prominences of his limbs. With each labored breath, skin retracted into his rib cage as he winced in discomfort. As if his diagnosis did not already speak for itself, his nurses explained that, simply, he was giving up.

“Good morning sir, I'm just the student nurse here to help care for you today.”

Somehow, I could not break free from this deplorable habit of introducing myself as “just the student nurse.” It was always “just the student nurse” coming to take vitals. “Just the student nurse” here to clean you up. Sorry, “just the student nurse” to ask you some questions. My introduction received a semblance of a head nod in return, but no words. Again, I made efforts to get some information about him other than what was provided by other nurses, but still, he barely spoke. Uncomfortable with the silence, I asked if he would like to see outside. He nodded, yes, perhaps just to please me. Letting in some brightness allowed natural light to stretch into every corner of his hospital room shrouded in dismay and misfortune. The expansive view displayed sherbet tinted streaks across the sky of a still rising sun, contrasted against the vivid



Wallflower

© Jehan Momin, MS3

mossy greens of rolling mountains. I noticed a hot air balloon floating across the skyline, which I enthusiastically pointed out to my patient in an attempt to fill silence and hopefully lift his spirits. Staring out the window, he made no comment. Feeling lost and my efforts dejected, I felt the need to do more, to find a solution that might get him to open up about his needs. But I stopped myself, because in that moment I realized that silence was what he needed. Some time to reflect and have his overwhelming emotions be validated, even if it was by me—“just” the student nurse.

I pulled up a chair. Instead of frantically looking for a solution, I watched as the tears welled up and ran down his cheek. Reaching for his hand, he returned the grasp with what little strength I am sure he had left. I asked him to share what was concerning him, and the worries flowed, as if I had suddenly burst the dam. Talk of his wife and her insistence that he continue with treatment despite his fatigue and dissatisfaction, of becoming disgruntled with his recurrent hospital stays, of his favorite nurses, and also, of his dignified acceptance of a nearing death.

I felt compelled to speak up on his behalf about the stressors that were pressuring him—and I could

as his advocate. Coordinating the appropriate consults agreed upon by the patient and his family, my primary nurse and I facilitated important conversations and management of anticipatory grief. No grandiose appreciations for my intervention were verbalized, but I still left the floor knowing I had made a difference in the course of my patient's care and that I felt more like a real nurse than a student.

My willingness to be vulnerable enough to sit down and hold this patient's hand for a while afforded me just one of many opportunities throughout the course of my education to reflect on what it means to be a nurse. As we get caught up in all the action of nursing, many of us forget that sometimes inaction is action. This was someone's family member, entrusted to a team of healthcare providers with the unifying goal of returning him to a higher functionality or maintaining a respectable quality of life. And while he was steadily declining as a

result of his disease, his family members still saw the husband, father, brother, son, etc. they knew all their life, not "the Stage IV metastatic patient."

Taking on the responsibilities of a healthcare provider means reminding ourselves of this throughout everything we do, whether that be technical skills, medication administration, or "just" offering companionship. Already I recognize that all too often, we find ourselves forgetting how integral our role is, because we think we should be doing more. But without our seemingly insignificant contributions, who would be there to provide that care to these patients?

I am ready and eager to enter this profession of lifelong learning and growth, equipped with the power to provide patient-centered care each day. But even more important is the reminder that we are never "just" something. We all have our unique way of letting brightness in.

La Garita Wilderness, Colorado

© Jason Spicher, MS1



Brain Death

© Tabitha Eckert, RN
SICU

We drilled a foundation deep enough to root the antenna.
The neurosurgeon carefully attached the cables and zeroed the Camino.
And we listened to the waves of inner space.
Earth to Carly, earth to Carly.
Are you in there?
Tell me who you are,
where you've gone -
If you are - anymore.
Your universe has swollen tight,
building pressure, imploding
your monuments and memories, sacred places,
laughter.
We tried Propofol, Fentanyl, elevated head of bed;
your temples flooded, starved, burned up instead.
Anoxia took its offerings.
Reflex is all that's left, it seems.
The room around your universe feels empty -
odd, because
it's full of cables, monitors, machines,
gizmos and gadgets all to predict
the likelihood of intelligent response -
they try but they cannot suffice
to prove your intracranial life.
Tell me who she's been,
who she was -
though we're not quite ready
to commit to past-tense verbs.
Light, you say, so light-hearted, so light:
gravity could never hold her.
I think she's floated finally away.
I think, but I don't say.
The subclavian triple lumen is a conduit
to the blood-river at her core -
which is lapping low like never before
in a channel eroded, shifting from recent shock.
And the low tide is keeping the little supply boats
from reaching the power centers
but if the river rises, it will flood more of her brain.

Tell me who she was.
There, we said it.
We said it, and now we can be honest,
look our hope in its cold, far-away face.
She's funny, so funny, and she likes to swim.
And she's honest, so raw -
"you can't trust the future," says her tattoo,
blooming out on her collarbone,
below her unearthly peaceful face.
Is she floating somewhere in there, still
suspended in the CSF that couldn't
absorb enough of the shock?
I don't feel you here, Carly, I don't feel you.
Your family is waiting, so am I,
but you - in the static of your universe,
in the disordered echoes of transmitters and receivers,
in the intracranial mystery -
you are lost, you are lost to me.

The Mask

© Mark Stephens, MD
Family and Community Medicine
University Park Campus



A Work of Art is What I Am

© Shauna Banks, G2
Department of Neurology

Who am I? One may inquire.
The answer to this is often desired.
Knowing this will guide you through,
Whatever the world decides to throw at you.

I am a powerful entity so divine,
With layers so complex and intertwined.
I am deeper than the eyes' perception.
This melanated skin is just the introduction.

I am the invincible resilience that runs through my veins,
When doubt kicks in and my life is in pain.
Simple yet complex, only God can see,
The unique work of art He made me to be.

I am my deep thoughts in the middle of the night,
When no one is watching, and the birds are back from
taking a flight.

Always fighting for peace and a better world.
Just wanting to see love among all boys and girls.

I am one individual with many roles,
Impacting lives and changing souls.
Know who you are and remain true.
Knowing that the divine power lies within is far much
greater than you!

I am a Picasso piece, with simplistic curls but
profound twines.

Mujer ante el es pejo, more than what you see,
But immensely more than what reflects at me.

A work of art is what I am, no one will know-only me!



Gelid Frond

© Bryan Stefek, MD
Resident, Pediatric Cardiology

Forest Wizardry

© Sparrow Marcucci
Son of Gina Marcucci, Staff
Department of Neural and Behavioral Sciences



To My Gram

© Elaine Williams, Staff
Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation

I remember when I was little and ran away to your house,
I hid behind the chair as quiet as a mouse.
I told you my daddy dropped me off on his way back to work,
I later found out the truth sometimes hurts.
You stood by me through all my years,
The good, bad, sad and tears.
You tried to guide me from wrong to right,
I didn't always listen, even though you thought I might.
You never judged me on the decisions that I made.
You watched over me like a shadow and the shade.
I remember all those times and appreciate you dearly,
That is why I wrote this poem, to help you think more clearly.
I can only imagine how hard it must be,
I can't feel your pain, I can only see.
Now it is my turn to stand by you, to make you see,
I want to help you, because you mean so much to me.
You need that boost to help you along,
I am here to help you be strong.
I know you can get better and you just need some strength,
I am here to give you my shoulder and my entire arm's length.
So as you read this, and a tear will fall,
Remember I am you granddaughter, big or small.
You can get through this no matter how grand,
I will always be there to give you a hand.
So hold this poem close to your heart and think of me,
For we will always be together and must never part.

Wish

© Melissa Greene
Center Stage Workshop Facilitator

I wish I could inject myself with words, find a vein and
send the music shooting through the heart of me, the soul
of my being, the core where the best of me lives. I would
glow from the inside out, capillaries illuminated like strings
of red lanterns stirring softly on a summer's night.

Snowdrifts

© Oana Bollt, Staff
Department of Pharmacology



I Sometimes Feel Her All Around Me

© Jim Rudegear, RRT
Respiratory Therapist



Know One

© Emily Hess, Nurse Extern
Department of Nursing

The top of the watchtower, my hands
Smelled like old sweat and the metal rungs
Of the ladder. We sat
Shoulder to shoulder on the
Graffitied concrete floor, drinking
Lukewarm cold-brewed tea you knew
My favorite, drinking in the view between
The bars—lolling ocher fields and knots of
Unshorn winter wheat forgotten by the harvest,
Slender birches penciled against a blue horizon.

The graffiti too we appraised like high-brow critics,
The paint tattooing the concrete:
Nobody loves you Jennie in orange on the low wall.
Bubble letters crying Ange. We wondered
At a fierce rage left unfinished.
Blocky capitals declare a love for
LUGGAGE. Such concise wanderlust.
And fat letters in faded ink,
Trust Know One. Profound.
So much angst
In layers of chipping rainbow paint.

The gold of your hair
Like the gold of the dry, ripe wheat.
Sunbright flush mottling your cheeks.
Your lips warm and sweet as our plastic cups
Of tea, the ice long melted.

Now, this is what I remember: the warm flush
Of sunlight on my sweat-damp neck. The clack
Of the plastic cup against my teeth. The grit
Of the concrete texturing my thighs.
And the ink of intimacy, the words
Of the graffiti
We shared like a secret,
Like the key to a door only we two knew existed—
Trust know one.



Vertigo

© Spencer Katz
G2, MD/PhD Candidate

Index

Adams, Alexandra	40	Mascoe, Jason	38
Aguilar, Morris Alexander	10	Matincheck, Jessica	20, 37
Amos, Linda	18, 43	McGuire, Sarayna	7, 33
Banks, Shauna	56	Momin, Jehan	53
Bhatnagar, Sudhanshu	4, 43	Morris, Dwayne	42
Bicher, Nathan	33	Mountfort, Donna	47
Black, Lisa	41	Nguyen, James	45
Bollt, Oana	52, 57	Oliveri, Tony	42
Buchhalter, Gary	30	Peterson, Danielle	31
Carnish, David	41	Piazza, Brian	6, 7
Chambers, Kelly	25, 43, 49	Poley, Marian	29
Chroneos, Kristina	28	Quinn, John	11
Conboy, Matthew	19	Reid, J. Spence	4, 7
Das, Ananya	18, 32	Romanoski, Natasha	6
Das, Arunangshu	33	Rudegeair, Jim	39, 57
David, Lynelle	27	Saleh, Zena	26
David, Sigmund	27	Schaefer, Judy	46, 47
Dobson, Jennifer	48	Scott, Tracy	14, 20
Eckert, Tabitha	35, 55	Seacord, Nicole	32
Etzel, Justin	17, 47	Sedun, Angela	Inside Back Cover, 25
Flanagan, Michael	51	Sedun, Joseph	33
Frazier, Jonathan	12, 37	Sedun, Anthony	37, 44
Ganse, Robert	39	Shaak, Kelly	45
Gascho, Joseph	20	Shapiro, Dan	Back Cover
Greene, Melissa	6, 57	Simmons, David	36
Harkins, Elias	15	Smith, Patricia	8
Haston, Carissa	28	Spain, Eresbet	32
Hess, Emily	44, 46, 58	Spangler, Micah	18
Heasley, Victoria	Inside Front Cover	Spicher, Jason	29, 54
Jacobs, Aaron	16	Stefak, Bryan	56
Jang, Diane	34, 39	Stephens, Mark	55
Johnson, Jeremiah	11	Sudol, Malgorzata	11, 41
Katz, Spencer	44, 58	Sullivan, Natalie	53
Kauffman, Gordon	16	Tomazin, Deb	8
Kulaga, Amber	26	Travagli, Francesca	16
Landis, Susan	5, 21, 40	Tringali, David	9
Levenberg, Kate	46, 52	Tubbs, Chloe	30
Leyfman, Yan	4	Wang, Zhoulin	20, 27
Lin, Diana	9	Williams, Elaine	57
Liao, Xiaojie	42	Wold, Aaron	4
Malone, Joseph	17	Wolpaw, Daniel	52
Marcucci, Carmen	Front Cover, 24	Zaman, Homaira	22, 42, 50
Marcucci, Sparrow	56	Zhou, Steven	13





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