

WILD ONIONS

2021 VISION

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Wild Onions, 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, fields, and roadsides. It blossoms into an unusual purple flower. The underground bulb, if tasted, yields a pungent, spicy flavor. The wild onion symbolizes the commonplace, yet surprising, beauty living and growing around us all the time. An uncultivated spice, it unexpectedly thrives and—if we take time to notice—enhances life.

Front cover: © *Wondering*, Allison Chang, MSIII

Back cover: © *Hide-n-Seek*, Mary Mager, *Family of Patient*

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From the top, left to right:
Sweta Joshi, Bridget Rafferty, Kevin Chiang, Marisa Riley,
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Allison Ching, Benjamin Watt, Gianna Dafflisio, Hänel W.
Eberly, Kyle Mausteller, Pallavi Kulkarni, Justin Ceasar,
Zachary High, Caroline Eisele, Kushagra Kumar, Andrea Lin,
Not pictured: Krista Hartmann, Jonathan Pham, Lindsey Peck

Wild Onions

The 2021 editorial team presents *Wild Onions* “Vision” with the distinct honor of providing a platform for our community to express the shared challenges and triumphs emblematic of an extraordinary year. Our contributors truly represent how our collective vision has changed as our world has changed. This issue marks the artistic interpretation of a year of reckoning. Together we experienced the global pandemic in our world-class healthcare system and our everyday lives. Contributions highlight a collection of work that mirrors our necessity to confront inequality, civil unrest, discrimination, disease, and sorrow. Likewise, creative expression in our pages strikes a balance of growing toward acceptance, recognizing beauty, and cultivating hope for our future.

The photography, art, and creative writing published in this issue enable us to expand and deepen our appreciation of vision lost and vision gained.

The beauty of *Wild Onions* is its capacity to create a vibrant, creative, and expressive community year after year. The Department of Humanities at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine publishes *Wild Onions* annually. This edition features work by individuals affiliated with Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, including patients, students, faculty, physicians, residents, nurses, staff, volunteers, and family and community members. *Wild Onions* encourages creative writing and artistic work that seeks to describe and understand the experiences of health, illness, and treatment, especially caregiving and receiving care.

Selection Process:

Each year, we are fortunate to receive hundreds of high-quality submissions of original creative writing, photography, and artwork. All entries are reviewed by medical student editors, and a subset is selected for inclusion in the publication. Particularly stellar pieces are identified and sent on to the corresponding art, creative writing, photography, and theme judges for review and selection.

This year we are offering awards—one each in creative writing, photography, and art—for the following categories:

- Students and Residents
- Healthcare Providers and Faculty
- Patients
- Community, Family Members, and Staff

Additionally, we are awarding three prizes, one for each genre, recognizing work that best exemplifies the theme, “Vision.”

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All submissions, inquiries, and requests, including current or past issues of *Wild Onions*, can be directed to the Managing Editor, Department of Humanities, H134, Penn State University College of Medicine 500 University Drive, Hershey, PA, 17033.

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wildonions@pennstatehealth.psu.edu.

Visit our website to download a copy of *Wild Onions* at <http://sites.psu.edu/wildonions>

Our 2021 Judges



ART: Devon Stuart, MA, CMI

Devon is an award-winning Certified Medical Illustrator with fourteen years of experience creating visual communications content for science and medicine. Through her company, Devon Medical Art, LLC, she creates illustrations and 3D animations that help medical professionals to share their research and patients to understand their care. She earned a Master of Arts in Medical and Biological Illustration from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Devon lives in Hershey, Pa., with her husband, two children, and their dog.



CREATIVE WRITING: Heather Hamilton, PhD

Heather Hamilton is the author of *Here is a Clearing* (Poetry Society of America, 2019). The recipient of an Academy of American Poets prize, she teaches English and creative writing at Penn State Harrisburg.



PHOTOGRAPHY: Danilo Hess, AAS and Stacey Cunningham, BFA

From an early age, Filipino-American Danilo Hess was perfecting his eye in photography through different fine art mediums such as photorealism and painting. While in college he discovered his passion for the darkroom and moved to New York City to pursue a degree in photography at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Pittsburgh native Stacey Cunningham studied photography and fine art at the Carnegie Mellon pre-college academy and earned a BFA from Parsons School of Design in New York City, where she continues to pursue her dream working as a stylist. Stacey met Danilo while working with a shared client—her keen sense of color and texture was the perfect complement to his beautifully composed, cinematic quality photos. They are based in New York City with their rescue chihuahua, Chai, and are often found traveling the globe, collaborating on photo shoots, editorials, and other creative projects.



THEME: Ophelia Chambliss, MA

Ophelia M. Chambliss, a fine artist from York, Pa., participates in solo and group exhibitions as well as distinguished juried shows throughout the country. Her large-scale and permanent art installations can be experienced throughout Pennsylvania.

Realistic cubism pervades her signature painting style where she favors a color palette of rich jewel tones. Each piece fits a theme or the subject matter. She paints with both oil and acrylic.

Ophelia holds a Bachelor's degree in communication from Penn State University and combines her visual communication with verbal and written communication to tell the story behind her work. She earned a Masters of Arts degree in communication from Penn State University with an emphasis on critical media discourse analysis.

What does “Vision” mean to you?



David Quillen, MD
2021 Guest Editor

Welcome to the 2021 edition of *Wild Onions*! Each issue of *Wild Onions* has a theme. I have the honor of introducing this year's theme: “Vision.”

Vision has different meanings depending on context. As individuals, we have a measurable vision corresponding to the clarity or sharpness of what we see compared to a standard. For example, a person with 20/20 vision can see what an average individual can see on the eye chart when standing 20 feet away. As employees of Penn State Health and Penn State College of Medicine, we share an aspirational vision: to be a world leader in the transformation of health care and in the enhancement of health for people everywhere. Vision also can refer to an idea or picture in your imagination. When I think about *Wild Onions*, my vision is of a collective work that enriches lives through creativity in writing, art, and photography.

What does “Vision” mean to you? We posed this question to the Penn State Health and Penn State College of Medicine communities and were overwhelmed by the response. As you will see in this year's edition of *Wild Onions*, we work among highly talented individuals with a remarkable ability to create and inspire.

I want to thank all of the contributors for their willingness to share their gifts with us. Creative works—both written and visual—are deeply personal and it takes courage to open oneself up to others. An incredible team of faculty, students, and staff are responsible for creating the 2021 edition of *Wild Onions*. Thank you to Kevin Chiang and Bridget Rafferty, co-senior editors; Editor-in-Chief Dr. Bernice Hausman; and Deborah Tomazin and Kerry Royer, managing editors. It is clear that *Wild Onions* is a labor of love for those responsible for its publication.

We hope you enjoy this very special edition of *Wild Onions*!

Warm Regards,

David Quillen, MD

George and Barbara Blankenship Professor
Chair, Department of Ophthalmology
2021 Guest Editor, *Wild Onions*

Welcome to “Vision,” the 2021 Edition of *Wild Onions*!

What a year it has been for all of us. When we selected this year’s theme and embarked on the journey for this year’s publication in the summer of 2020, we had a limited view of what lay ahead. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, we see that this was an incredible year of creativity and ingenuity on the part of our contributors. We initially worried about receiving enough submissions given the unpredictability and all of the change we faced over the past year, and yet you all responded with vigor, helping to produce what we feel is one of the most unique and powerful editions of *Wild Onions* to date! The selection process this year was especially difficult because we had so many incredible pieces from which to choose. We thank every one of our artists, photographers, and writers for their time, creativity, and willingness to share their vulnerability with the *Wild Onions* community. Their vision has provided us all with a glimpse into life from a multitude of angles, transforming this year’s edition into a collectively beautiful publication rich in emotion and experience. We hope you are as touched by this year’s pieces as our staff was. Now, as we approach summer 2021, we again wonder what the upcoming year will hold. We are grateful to have been able to work with such a diverse and enthusiastic student team, the largest that *Wild Onions* has ever seen! As editors, we rest assured that the publication is in great hands, both with a committed staff of underclass students waiting to take the reins and with a community eager to share their work.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve as senior student editors in this year like no other.

Sincerely,

Kevin and Bridget

Our 2021 Senior Student Co-Editors



Kevin Chiang, MSIV

Kevin grew up in the suburbs of North Potomac, Md. He earned undergraduate degrees in both Mathematics and Physiology & Neurobiology at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he was part of the Gemstone Honors Program. After spending a year working as a medical scribe in multiple emergency departments, he began medical school at Penn State in Hershey, where he is enrolled in the M./MED program. In his free time, he enjoys CrossFit, outdoor activities, music, exploring restaurants, and spending time with friends. Kevin is excited to begin a Pediatrics residency at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and hopes to combine his love of pediatrics and medical education into a career as a program director of a residency program in the future.



Bridget Rafferty, MFA, MSIV

Bridget hails from the beautiful hills of Grampian, Pa., where she grew up on the land that was her great-grandfather’s farm. She earned undergraduate degrees in Biology and Graphic Design from Gannon University and Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa., then completed a Master of Fine Arts in Medical and Biological Illustration at the University of Michigan. She worked as a freelance designer/illustrator and fine arts teacher in the Seattle area for 12 years before returning to Pennsylvania for medical school. Bridget will complete her intern year in Pediatrics at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa., and then head to Milwaukee, Wis., in 2022 for Diagnostic Radiology training at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Countdown

© Estelle Green, MSI

It’s now been **10** months since our world was taken over.
Then on Thanksgiving, **9** households got together.
He **8** and laughed without thinking of others.
Made the long drive home after **7** hours.
6 PM I get the call I wish not to remember –
It only took **5** days for gran to be taken over.
I wanted to yell and point fingers, but what **4**?
It’s now reached **3** family members – no more, I implore.
I’m trying hard for I know it’s wrong of me **2** resent,
The people who went to this **1** superspreader event.

The Voyage

© Rachel Wemhoff, MD

Resident, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

The sky knows nothing of a virus that slipped stealthily into the seams of humanity
Shearing through the fabric of normalcy
Striking down socialization
While the threads of communication were stretched thin and made artificial
Through cables, screens, pings to telephone towers
Until the distance between us was palpable

The sun will not remember the days no one dared to go outside
Masks obscured the smiles of strangers
Until no one bothered to smile at all
Averted eyes as if one look could be contagious
Spring and summer will flow unhindered
Streaming through the riverbed of time
The vessel of humanity drifting perilously on its current

But we will never forget
How the world held its breath
Some in isolation
Others in virtual classrooms, hospital beds, negative pressure rooms
Donning surgical-grade respirators
Or cotton handkerchiefs
We all danced in the masquerade together

There are moments that cannot be contaminated by a virus
Carrying a new life into being
Or holding one as it fades
Keeping a weary soul from drowning
Or letting one set sail in dignity
Despite the ignorance of sun and sky
We have seen it all transpire and persisted

Time will never stop flowing in its singular direction
But we bear witness from the bow
The river littered with confusion, heartbreak, challenges, fear
But also glistening with courage, leadership, selflessness, resolve
And beneath it all the undertow that has always carried us along
Hope



Hawk Eyes

© Sara Walser, MSIII

Disconnected

© Gary Gasowski, MD

Penn State College of Medicine Alumnus, 1972



Seeing Faces

© Lauren Dennis, MSI

It was neurology clinic where I was confronted with a patient who had a face which didn't match what I had imagined for her to have. The blueprint for the face I expected evolved from the pages of electronic records which revealed actions that suggested narcotic addiction. "Left AMA when refused opioid treatment." "Pain level reported 10/10 while patient was eating lunch." "Third ER visit this month." Having never encountered a patient with their face set on a specific medication, I was afraid. Afraid to be swirled into pity for what I anticipated to be an exaggerated history. Afraid to be confronted with hostility or demands to which I had no acceptable response. Afraid to waste my compassion on lies.

I walked into the room with determination to not get played. I had the memory of her records ingrained in my mind and my eyes fixed on finding an inaccuracy in her story. After a series of questions, I stepped out to present to my preceptor to which he responded, "Did you ask her to describe her pain?"

No. No, I hadn't. It was a question so simple and so common that its absence demonstrated more than its presence would have. It disclosed that the trajectory of my questioning was towards proof of fault rather than understanding. When we went back to conduct a physical exam together my preceptor pointed out her asymmetrical facial droop. She still had bilateral motor function, so this observation confused me. "Bell's palsy?" I questioned. He responded, "No, sometimes when someone has severe trigeminal neuralgia, they can have a facial droop purely out of painful exhaustion within the nerves." In a moment my vision cleared, and I saw the objective proof of pain in the face that only moments ago had sat before me. In my effort to not be blind to her schemes, I became blind to her. Yes, she may have real drug-seeking behavior, but she also had real pain.

I know my inexperience. It stands high in my view, overshadowing my daily steps. When I faced this patient, I ran from compassion in the fear of exposing my naiveté. Yet, isn't that so often the crack our frustrations find space from which to grow? We, as medical professionals, are afraid our ability, expertise, or plan will be usurped by the familiar foe of insufficiency. Insufficient evidence. Insufficient understanding. Insufficient narratives of the variables at play.

I will always have blind spots and weakness. Omniscience is not a prize that is on the table to be won. Compassion requires love and love requires trust. Fundamentally, to trust means you must accept some level of vulnerability. C.S. Lewis wrote that if we reject vulnerability in our efforts to keep our love safe, "It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable ..." Some people believe that to trust you must keep your eyes half shut. I am beginning to believe the opposite. Maybe trust is most fully experienced when moving forward with eyes fully open, acknowledging the broken as well as the believing for the beauty. I missed seeing the whole view of my patient because I had constructed a narrative that I would not allow her to break. It was pride and fear that blinded me, but it was vulnerability and compassion that helped me see.

"Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18, Holy Bible)

Untitled Abstract I

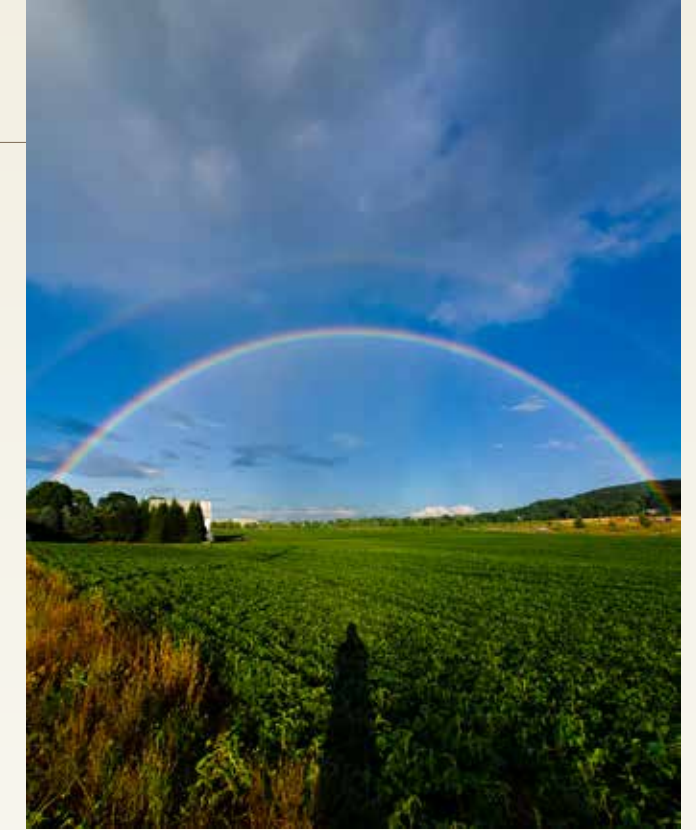
© Noel H. Ballentine, MD
Department of Medicine



D to D

© Marian Wolbers, Patient

Two months to the day
Diagnosis to Death
(That's what her husband said).
In the beginning
(According to her older sister)
I heard:
There are two tumors;
one small,
but one the size of a peach.
I imagined a peach
At the base of Carrie's skull
Hiding beneath waves of
Soft brown hair:
In the back
Somewhere
Pink and fleshy
Extending tentacles
Blasting beyond
The flesh of fruit
Wrapping, trapping;
Digging, destroying
Nerves that told Carrie
How to
Speak
Remember names
Drive to the airport
Without getting lost.
More a sea creature
Than a peach.
She would have turned 63
Yesterday.
Going back ...
That first day when I heard the bad news
Giant gentle rainbows appeared
All week, it seemed,
On roads I drove on
From studio to home and elsewhere.
I stopped to take
Pictures with my phone,
Through the car's windshield
Sometimes pulling over by the sides of roads,
Recording those damn rainbows.
They were everywhere
At home across the lawn
Even a double rainbow
(One of those days)
Stretching clear across the cornfields.
I stopped to take pictures



Hope

© Kaleigh Krill, MD
Department of Medicine

As if to prove that a
Measure of goodness
Was happening right before me
Saying something
Filling the car
Enrapturing my eyes
Shimmering
Red, orange, and yellow
Green green green
cerulean blue
indigo
violet
stripes
In defiance of sorrow and fear
And deep foreboding
Like Carrie herself in real life
Ever the one to say
With no trace of worry:
Trust in God with all your heart.
Things will be O.
K.
I'm left with
All these crazy photos
And no appetite
At all, evermore
For peaches.

Cover

© Pallavi Kulkarni, MSI

We sprinted for shelter
at the first sign of trouble
Doors slammed shut
without others cracking open

Even our faces
identities
became masked

Then there lay silence
followed by ruckus

A conversation with
Friends
Foes
Strangers
Shadows

About how isolation
grieving alone
no shoulder to rest a heavy head
a hug to calm the shaking
breaks us

Oh the irony
loathing loneliness
when 7 billion others
feel just as removed

Never has everyone on this Earth
shared the same sentiment
at the same moment in time

Our bodies must continue
to remain distant

So the human mind
will never have to endure
such pain
again in this lifetime

So the human race
will be bound
by a sensation
other than this one

The Goodbye

© Sage Gee, MSII

She said, goodbye.
Curves turn into straight lines;
Perfection walks the edges of the shapes;
Inspirations find their way out through an endless maze.
She said, goodbye.

Out of the all the boys you fell in love with,
you only remember the most handsome one,
and the dog you kept together, Charlie.

She said, goodbye.

You searched for orderliness in the mass of chaos,
The sole concrete visuals you can hold on to,
Colorful stripes are like bandages,
wrapping that slit where memories slip away.

She said, goodbye.

I don't know which hand to use, you said.

E, you are left-handed and so am I.

The world taught you to use your right hand,
because it's right. Because you were different.

I put the brush in your left hand, just the way you are.

She said, goodbye.

She never said goodbye.

You are just leaving little pieces of yourself in every corner
of the world.

Your warm smiles when I tell you how beautifully you draw,

Your paintings hanging on the wall,

The ski trails in Denver's winter,

The name tags you proudly wrote yourself.

You left a piece in my heart, too.

Sometimes when I lift my head from the book piles,

I think of you.

*This poem is inspired by a dear friend of mine with Alzheimer's Disease.
She was a wonderful painter and we shared so much good time during
my time in the Opening Minds with Art program."*

Maasai Journey

© Nathan Cannon, MSI



Judge's Choice for Best Photograph in the Staff, Family, and Community Category

2021

Hope/Looking Up

© Regan Graham, CAP, Department of Anesthesiology & Perioperative Medicine



Judge's Comments:

A dynamic piece. The photographer's perspective draws the viewer's eye into the piece and really captures the feeling of lying in crisp autumn leaves, looking up.

An Open Letter to My Wife

© Anthony Sedun

Son of Yvonne Sedun, RN, Pain Clinic, Retired

The deer climb the steep hill in the forest and emerge daily toward late afternoon and dusk, crossing almost casually the field downhill from our house.

Zach and I assembled the kids' playset months ago in the cool dusk, as the stars burned brightly above and the deer gathered in the field to forage and watch. Powder-coated steel, hex bolts, foot caps, button head screws, and swing bars. No more manuals; just memory and drive to finish midst the dark.

You know these things, though—at least, you did. But the days are like our kids, ever a-whir, with enough kinetic commotion, crests and troughs, epiphanies and crises to command the fullest attention of patron saints and mothers all the same.

At a time when many question nearly everything, I question not; I question less. At least, not like they do. It takes an oak of will to keep scrutiny from souring into cynicism, to stay the harvest of the black cherry tree.

More than questions these days, I hold hope close. Rooted in faith for what has been and what yet will be, my hope is like my father years ago, sitting in front of the coal stove in the dark basement, tending the fire there with the deft, gloved hand of a physician. Watching. Watching. Acting.

Acting.
In small movements,
to sustain the life therein.

It is said that the earliest human burials occurred 100,000 years ago. Red ochre-stained bones, a wild boar mandible held fast to the arms of the dead, and seashells a-strewn in the caves of Qafzeh.

In the next millennium or more, what will be left of this? The black cherry, alone among the oaks and Eastern hemlocks in the backyard, will have fallen down the slope toward the run in a fraction of the future years. How many generations of deer will walk the same paths from the forest's edge across the field by then?

Yet, our lives—Quixotic, at times, delightful, in turns—along with the life of everything that lives and that breathes, will have mattered, even in the quiet turns of history's hands—hands that serve the Mover of rocks, the Maker of men, the Mystery of life held at times so close that the newborn cannot see its mother's face.

May you know now what you have always known: the gift is all around us, emerging almost casually from the forest's edge, ambling toward a field as the fiery coals of each day's last light fall through the grates with gravity and grace.

Judge's Choice for Best Creative Writing in the Staff, Family, and Community Category 2021



Judge's Comments:

This tender, clear-eyed message takes us from a family backyard to the caves at Qafzeh and back again. In the process, it reminds us of the indispensable nature of remembrance and wonder.

Judge's Choice for Best Artwork in the Staff, Family, and Community Category 2021

The Albatross

© Cameron Barber (Age 15)

Family of Heather Barber, Department of Radiology, Health Physics



Judge's Comments:

Oh the contrast between the careful, controlled treatment of the boat and the wild elation of the surf! It's the split second before we take on a big challenge – with joy. Step aside, Winslow Homer.

Racism in Athletics

© Debarati Bhanja, MSI

When I was 13 years old, one of my club team coaches told me that he didn't think I would be a good athlete because I was Indian. In front of my teammates, he would consistently call me racist nicknames, including "Durka Durka" and "Camel Jockey." While his comments evoked laughter among my teammates, for me, more detrimentally, they sowed seeds of self-doubt in my athletic capabilities.

I was a young girl, the daughter of immigrants, trying to navigate my Indian heritage and American upbringing as well as these inaccurate, hurtful racial stereotypes. Passively, I laughed along with the mockery, but internally, I was determined to prove my coach, and my own doubts, wrong. I kept my head down, worked diligently, and reminded myself to focus on my passion for the sport. Over time, my love for athletics conquered any self-doubt or discrimination I faced. With each year, I found new coaches who ignored any Asian stereotypes, who saw my drive, dedication and spirit, and who saw me as a great athlete.

Upon reflection, I truly believe this experience built the resilience that has followed me throughout athletics. I try to take on every hard workout and tough track race with the confidence I spent years building. However, this experience has also clouded my perspectives. I am disheartened that a part of my drive to succeed is to prove myself athletically to anyone who judges me based on my race and ethnicity.

I try to reconcile this with the hope that my athletic journey will pave paths for other Indian and minority athletes in my community to succeed. I hope their journeys won't be defined by the desire to prove others wrong, but for pure love of a sport. I regret not outwardly defending myself back then, but I am proud to have overcome this challenge because both my Indian identity and involvement in athletics play such integral roles in how I define myself. Above all, I am proud to belong to a diverse and successful group of Asian, South-Asian, and Indian athletes.



A Closer Look

© Susan Landis, CRNA
Department of Anesthesiology, Retired

Scene

© Ted Weaver, Patient



The Misty-Eyed Mother

© Gianna Dafflisio, MSI

Misty-eyed mother
Empty sling across her chest
Final questions answered
All concerns have been addressed
A nod of benediction
From her face of fear undressed
And with that nod we turn
And put our backs to her distress

I step inside the OR
Her emotions in my chest
I see her heart splayed out
Yet gently placed in a headrest
As soon as they scrub in
My mind forgets what she expressed
My first glimpse at a scalpel
As it bites into real flesh

I revel in each moment
That my greedy eyes possess
The skull removed and then repaired
The surgeons at their best
The color red anoints their hands
Each future suture blessed
Time yields to this anointment
And relinquishes its test
And then the tools go silent
And emotion breaks arrest
A nod of benediction
From her face of glee undressed
Final questions answered
All her gratitude expressed
Misty-eyed mother
Child resting on her breast



Searching for Eternal Sunshine

© Raz Abdulquadir, MSI



Hope

© Zhuolin Wang, PhD
Family, Zhexi Ma, Department of Medicine

12-Year-Old Interpreter

© Zachary Jensen, MSI

*I can do this.
Papá looks to me for an explanation.
I interpret for mis padres all the time.
The doctor asks if I understand.
This time is different, though.
Mamá sleeps in the sterile bed.
How can I possibly repeat what the doctor just told me?
I tell Papá.
I should have said less.
Papá weeps.
What have I done?
The doctor needs no interpreter for his next words.
I can't do this.*

The Nurse's Life

© Barbara Antolino-Smith, RN, BSN
Retired, Department of Pediatrics

*We push emotions back so far, they sometimes disappear.
We hide in places no one knows.
The caves where our hearts are hidden,
are impossible to see.*

*The private world of nurse's haunts
so very few understand.
It is littered with the shattered scars
of lives and dreams destroyed.*

*We cry alone, we dream alone,
We chase a hope unreal.
Our hearts reveal an aching pain,
Wishes we can never fulfill.*

*Nurses hold the worst of life
in the palms of aching hands.
We push on through,
we do our best, we sometimes have a plan.*

*Faith and hope are tools we use
to turn the tide we face.
Love and respect forge our path
and compassion leads us to grace.*



Afraid of the Headlines

© Kate Levenberg, MSIII

“What I Saw”

© Elias Harkins, MSIII

The attending hands me a piece of paper, a printout from the EKG machine. They ask, “What do you see here?” I stumble through. “Heart rate is, um, 50. It looks regular. Axis and everything look normal. I think that’s a pathologic Q wave, but I’m not sure. The STs look a bit lowered, too.” We are both quiet for a moment; our patient has had a heart attack.

The attending then directs me to the patient’s laboratory values, asking “Okay, what do you see on his labs?”

I pause again, taking glances to see if I am including too much detail, or not enough. “The troponin’s high, but it has been trending down. I’m also seeing a high BNP, so maybe that’s something we should look into. Maybe an echocardiogram could help?” I had just questioned my way into a viable plan.

The attending responds, “That is a good idea, and if you look at his newest note, you’ll see that he just had one today.” They are kind enough to walk me through. The patient has wall motion changes and low ejection fraction; his heart has been beating for 50+ years but this last insult was too much.

The attending asks, “How about you go see the patient, you can let me know what you two talk about during rounds.”

I walk downstairs. I know more about the patient’s heart than about the actual patient, but I prepare to talk.

I see him, lying down in a cool-colored room kept even colder. We begin the routine of introductions and gathering information. I have grown more comfortable in this role, more confident in my ability to remember the steps. We eventually move into the physical exam, even more like a dance in the rhythmic breaths and deep pauses to listen.

I improvise for a few moments during transitions and ask, “So, what do you do for work?”

He responds, brighter, “Oh, I actually work at the place right down the road, but during the summer, I live like a farmer again!”

I ask, also brighter, “That is really interesting, what types of animals do you have on your farm?”

He says, “Oh, just some chickens, I can’t really handle cows like I used to. But mostly I just like spending time out there with my grandkids.”

“Oh, how many grandkids do you have?”

“Four, we used to meet up all the time, before COVID and all.”

I pause. COVID-19 comes up with every patient, and the story is always the same: a lush, vibrant “before” with an unspoken “after.”

I then say back, “Well, I’m very glad you are staying safe! That can be really hard to do!”

We finish the routine, and I head back to my attending to give my report, preparing and editing my presentation along the way.

“Today, I saw Mr. X, a man with heart failure.”

“Today, I saw Mr. X, an older man with a history of a heart attack leading to heart failure.”

I finally settle, confident.

“Today I saw Mr. X, a farmer who loves when he can visit with his grandkids in the summer.”

Fragments

© Pallavi Kulkarni, MSI

We are all fragmented
Just like a mosaic we fit
To create an image that reflects colors
On days blessed with a beaming sun
Just like stained glass
The fragile nature remains the same
It breaks upon impact
Reparations make us whole again
Without stress, we cannot shatter
And will never become
The beauty that lies before the world
In this era of uniformity



So Many Things

© Barbara Sedun (Age 10)
*Granddaughter of Yvonne Sedun, RN
Pain Clinic, Retired*

So many things
we take for
granted. So many
things we just don't
know. So many
things in this new home
that we do not know.
So many things
to explore ... to and
fro.

The Pollinator
© Shara Chopra, MSI

In Shards

© Jessica Matincheck, (Age 15)
*Daughter of Lynn Matincheck
Office of the Vice Dean for Faculty and
Administrative Affairs*



House/Her

© Lynelle Whitney, *Family of Patient*

Twisted vines
Creep, dying
Up the lonely house
Black-eyed windows
Curtainless
Flatly face the world
Defying all
To look inside
Her emptiness.

Sagging porch slants,
Slides & splinters
Dried wood cracks a warning, says
"STAY BACK"
"No Welcome here."

Heavy door
Ancient bolts
Layered thick with brown disuse
And rust
Guard the inner sanctuary
Old-barred prison
Dark-walled asylum
Life's storm shelter.

Inside,
The carpet trodden old & dark
With fear
Lights extinguished
Candles gutted
Burned to stumps
And not replaced.

And down the hollow hallway
Lined with doorways framed
In tattered dreams

Lie rooms now home of
Grey-winged moths
Spider webs
The smell of mice
And dust.

... And in the corner
Remote, removed
Far, far corner
Distant corner
Hiding corner
Lost in shadows
A darker shadow crouches.



Hummelstown Sunset

© Nikolay Dokholyan, PhD
Department of Pharmacology

Grandpa's Shed

© Marcia Riegler
Patient



Visions

© Elaine Williams *Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation*

I chose your name even before you were a thought,
Teenage girls together, envisioning what they would be when they grew up.
I wanted the big house, beautiful wedding, and children, especially a little girl.
I wanted to have that bond with my daughter that I never experienced as a child.
I wanted her to grow up envisioning what she would be when she grew up.
When I held you for the first time I knew my visions and dreams would come true.
I could not put you down, I told you stories, and sang to you all the time.
I was there for all your milestones, I taught you all you needed to know.
We started to create that bond and I was so happy that we were becoming so close.
When you started school you were so confident and made friends easily.
Your studies came so easily to you and you excelled in school.
When your brother came along you couldn't be more proud of him.
You were always there to help me and entertain him.
I knew we were heading in the right direction toward our dreams.
When you started your teenage years and your friends would come over,
I welcomed them with open arms.
They also became close to me, because you were close to them.
I was so excited for semi-formals and proms and boyfriends, I couldn't wait.
We talked about your future, being a teacher and having children, and maybe moving away.
College was so hard for the both of us, being away from each other since we were so close.
College also was an eye-opener for the both of us, since we were so close.
We shared many phone calls and I helped you with your studies.
When you came home to visit we shared stories and movie nights.
Again I knew as hard as it was we were heading in the right direction.
After graduation you moved back home, you were more confident, sometimes too confident.
You helped me through a lot in my life, you were my savior.
I realize now that I depended on you too much, but you were always there for me.
I knew I instilled in you the right traits to be a beautiful woman.
I envisioned you getting married and having children and a wonderful family.

You started a new job, as I did, and another chapter in our lives.
We were living together, still growing and close, although it was not always easy.
We still had girls' nights with you and your other girlfriends, whom I love.
They were now having children and I adored their visits.

Then one day you came to me after much thought about your vision for your future.
We talked, I was troubled, my visions were being swayed, this is not how it was supposed to be.
It took some time, wisdom and awareness for me to understand that this was your vision.
I had to let you create your own visions, although not what I saw, what made you happy.

Then I met her, you introduced us and she was so nice and sweet and caring.
As time went on and we spent time together and grew, I knew this was right.
I knew we were heading in the right direction, not only with my visions but yours too.
You will always be my little girl and you will always be here for me and I love you.
You will always be my savior and you will always be beautiful to me and I love you.
I chose your name even before you were a thought and now I know why, you were a vision.

I LOVE YOU!

Night Vision

© Lynelle Whitney
Family of Patient

'Cross the black rocks,
Smooth & old outcroppings
From the curve of solid, sloping land ...
Juts a pier—
Ramrod straight & strong
With narrow weathered planks
Precision spaced, like cross ties,
Guided, guarded, flanked by rails of iron
Marching out to sea.
And out beyond
the Water, grey & navy
Topped with fledgling waves
That ride the deeper, darker swells below—
Carried on,
Beyond,
To where the harbor, sea & sky,
Soft, diffuse,
Indistinguishable,

Merge ...
Miraged, they grow and surge
Beyond all sight.

Like emissaries,
Visionaries,
Seeking, reaching other lands,
Other times
Other lives
Across the vast unknown.

While left behind
beneath a night sky
Stands a soul, unmoving,
Held entranced & still

By sight beyond his vision,
Light beyond his dark
Life beyond his death.

Chesapeake Morning

© J. Spence Reid, MD

Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation

Limecello Delivery, April 2020

© Nancy Adams, EdD, MLIS
Harrell Health Sciences Library and
Department of Medical Education

The bottle: the focus
The grass: the field
What a weird ritual this is, you said
Glove, wipe, place, retreat;
Advance, retrieve, retreat again
Maintaining our distance
Disconnected connection
Eyes open, unseeing
Constant presence of absence
The bottle: the focus
The grass: the field

This poem was written shortly after April 3, 2020, when a friend delivered homemade limecello to me. The entire masked and socially distanced exchange was completely focused on the physical entity of the bottle itself and the dance of transferring the object from one to another, and when he left, it was as if he had never been there at all.

Thinking

© Barbara Sedun, (Age 10)
Granddaughter of Yvonne Sedun, RN
Pain Clinic, Retired

Thinking in a new
world, thinking ...
Mask? Online? Still
Thinking ... A whole
new way to think
of things, a whole
new way to see
things through,
Thinking ... To see
what could happen this year.



Play

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

Dancing in the Moonlight

© Gary Gasowski, MD
Penn State College of Medicine Alumnus, 1972



Motherhood

© Eliana Hempel, MD
Department of Medicine

My breasts are heavy, engorged, throbbing.
My heart races frantically.
My incision aches.
It is as though my body, like my mind, is desperate to save the life it created.
Unwilling to accept reality.

The devastated resignation on my husband's face,
The weight of the world evident in the sag of his shoulders.
The way he squeezes my hand so tightly it hurts.
We ask if she will die tonight.
There is tension between disbelief and acceptance.

Emotions roil, wrestling for power over me.
Pain. A bone-crushing, spirit-breaking pain.
Grief. For all that has been and all that was to be.
Anger. Flaring white hot and dying down just as quickly.
Guilt. For all I'd done and all I should have done.
Shame. Unable to do what millennia of women have done.
Emptiness. A hollowness that presses upon me making me question how I will go on.

Fear of the despair I know is to come.

What does it mean to be a mother?

Is it the changing of diapers?
Is it the cutting of grapes into half-moons?
Is it the finishing of dioramas in the dark of night?
Is it the bandaging of scraped knees while brushing away giant tears?
Is it the cheering at the sidelines of a game?
Is it the dancing at her wedding?
Is it the teaching, guiding, molding?
Is it the worrying—more intense than imaginable?

Can it be something else?

Can it be a promise to prevent suffering?
Can it be a willingness to let go even as letting go kills a part of you?
Can it be a vow to honour her memory with good?
Can it be a promise to stand up for others like her?
Can it be a commitment to give voice to others like me?
Can it be comforting a small, sweet, perfect gift as it slips away?
Can it be the unfillable hole that is left behind?
Can it be just as much pain as it is joy?

I say yes.
This, too, is motherhood.
I, too, am a mother.

Reunion

© Haorui Sun, BS, MSI

2002

My grandmother's voice scratches through the phone line, all the way from Dalian
running past the sleeping roosters and between the dust-cloaked streets of rural China
to cradle me the same way I cradle the landline, dreaming of a way back home.

She tells me that I'll learn English and make friends soon, that yes, she misses me, too, that the tree in our courtyard is finally thick with plump, crimson blooms - she wishes I could see it but she knows I'll make her proud in the beautiful, new country.

2014

My grandmother's voice cracks over the receiver and I realize that sometime between asking how tall I'd grown and wishing me a happy 18th birthday, the woman who split my hair into pigtails every day for six years had started crying.

My tears match hers and guilt coats my mouth,
relentless, cloying,
as I lie that she'll see me again, soon.

I know the closest she'll get to seeing me are glossy photographs
folded carefully into cream envelopes and released with a stamp and a prayer.

That night, I dream of glowing winter festivals with wind sharp enough to sculpt satisfaction, spirals of speared, sugared haw berries on street carts,
and the new moon gap between grandma's two front teeth as she smiles back at me.

2020

My grandmother and I videochat for the first time.

We beam at each other, ignoring her shaking hands, her fading eyesight, the halting video quality, enveloped in the pleasure of seeing each other.

No words are needed, no flat, still pictures
Only smiles that stretch 6,800 miles with ease
a wealth of pride
an exhale of *finally*.



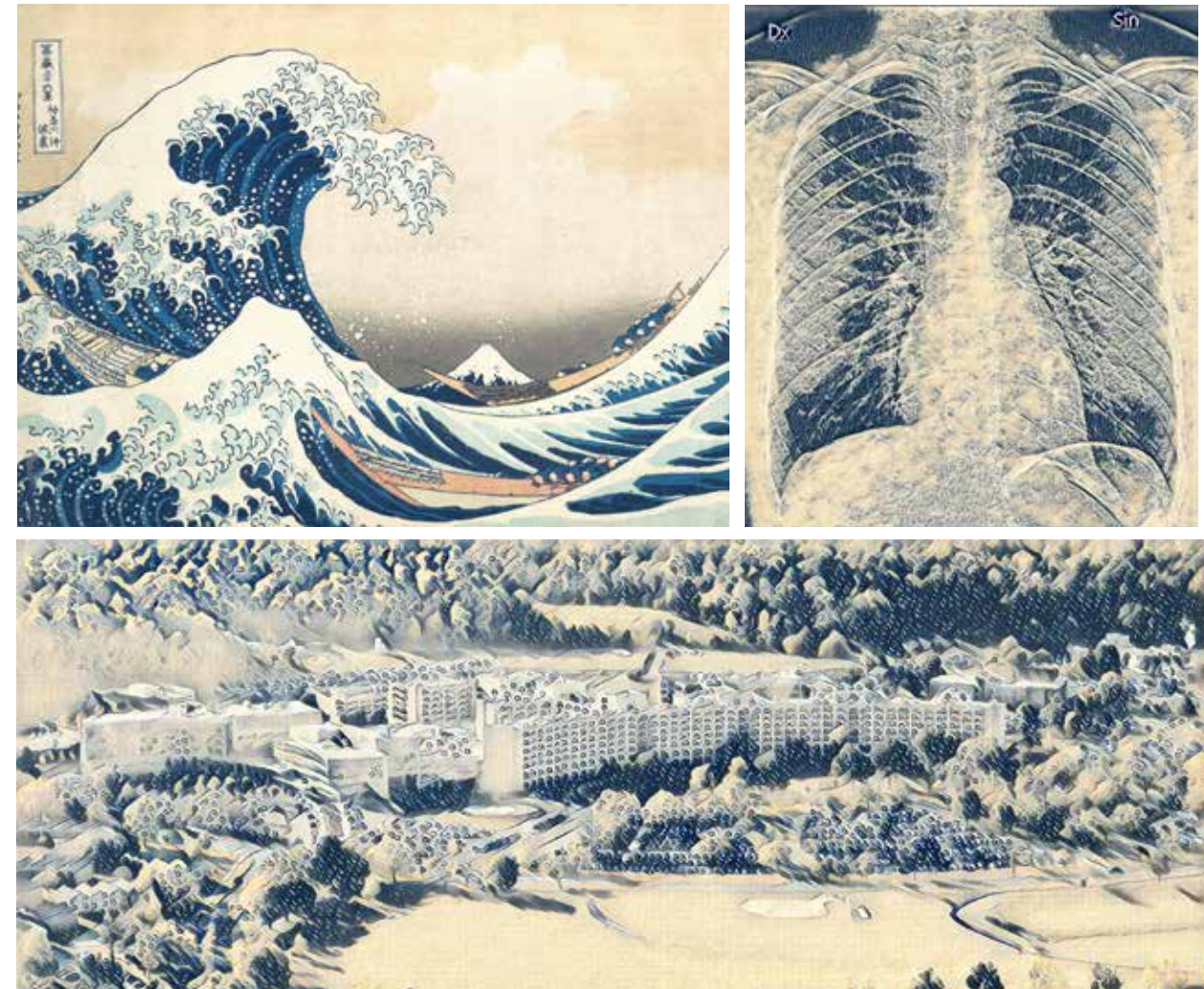
Farm Life

© Safiye Carkaci

Mother of Nurgul Carkai Salli, PhD
Department of Pharmacology

Visions of Hokusai: A Chest Radiograph and Hershey Medical Center

© Christian Park, DO, Department of Radiology



Judge's Comments:

I love this piece because it demonstrates the connections and patterns that exist across art and medicine, nature and human perception. If we choose to see them, these connections give us insight and enrich our lives.

Judge's Choice for Best Creative Writing in the Student/Resident Category

2021

A History of Longing

© Sheharyar Sarwar, DO
PGY-3, Department of Psychiatry

I am stuck between two languages
With a hand full of syllables
And twisted tongue.
I was eloquent when nine,
Before flying over the Atlantic,
Before seeing colors of skin
Lighter and darker than my own
In degrees I did not know existed.

I keep my writing
To the left of the page,
Afraid of spilling into parts I do not yet know,
Afraid of spaces the way my father is afraid
Of gaps in his memory; he tells us stories to fill
The years he feels he has not lived.

My past is a haze of rushed
Moments, of bricks being thrown at worshippers
On my side of the wall as they prostrated, of boys
Dodging cars to catch loose kites, of guns
Claiming victory upon the rooftops of wealthy men
As women in makeshift tents huddle over their young:
What goes up comes down in raging fury.

In dreams, I am running from lions in
The streets of Pittsburgh, then holding
A dead, homeless man outside my apartment
In West Haven, as a child, a younger me, sobs, "grandpa."
Other times, my table lamp is the sun bending
Towards a lawn of dead things in Lahore
Where an old woman spills ram's blood
On the earth surrounding a wilted mango tree,
Pleading: live.

In love, I am awkward
The way I was on the first day of school
In America, equipped with one phrase,
"Is this pig meat?"
What's your name? "Is this pig meat?"
In loving, I am honest, between two lines
Of a page, where I can write a spring time
Of my beloved walking through orchards of my
childhood,
Playing a game of hide-and-seek among trees
That told a history of my family better
Than my elders: "Your great-grandfather planted
these Jamun berry trees and ate them with sea salt
when they were in season until all his shirts
were red with stains."

They say Jamun berries stain the way blood stains
And to tell the difference, one must wait
until one's clothes are dry; mothers
tell their children that far away, at the border,
the war is only a great big feast (of Jamun berries)
and their fathers
were brought home, asleep.

In America, my father sought Jamun berries
But settled for a mint and tomato garden
My brother mowed over several springs ago.
Often, sitting together, we forget how long
It has been since that night my mother counted
All her china and wrapped it newspapers, saying:
"We cannot go to another country without plates."



Judge's Comments:

This poem does such an arresting job of bringing this speaker's two worlds to life and exposing the sharp contrasts between the two. The longing is as palpable as it is enduring.

Judge's Choice for Best Photograph in the Student/Resident Category

2021

Through Our Vision, We Create the Future

© Eiman Khesroh, MBBS, MPH, DrPH Candidate, Public Health Sciences



Judge's Comments:

The dynamism created by the perspective of the architectural elements draws your eye to the subject, but what stands out is the cinematic quality of this photo—how the subject is caught in the middle of movement.

Vision 20:20

© Aria Ghahramani, MSIII

Pupils ready for the day's lessons. Eyes wide open. Watching. Waiting.
Equal parts excited and nervous. Safe here with these books, but
Round the corner there's: riots, revolvers ... 'rona. And uptown
Reactive politicians treat my kids like they did the virus: ignored until it's a problem to them. But the
Light shining through their eyes reminds me ... these young warriors
Accommodate to much more. Eyes wide open. Watching. Waiting.

Perspective of Time

© Duncan McDermond, MSIV



Forest Edge

© Judy Schaefer, RN

Member, The Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine

We lived on the edge of the forest in those days
A place for imagination and hammocks of bent tree limbs
swinging between Egyptian mummies and Huckleberry Finn

We could practice words such as trellis and ennui
Surgery and medicine, the difference between Saturday and Sunday,
and come to rest on words such as skyscraper and suspension bridge

And more cutting and real than sunshine,
we found arrowheads just below the crumbling farm crust of earth;
touched their fading sharpness and examined their strokes of artistry

We stood up and looked around, as if
the cutter was still there; the sculptor still present as we held artifacts
that could define a future in the forest



Organs Learning Organs

© Kate Levenberg, MSIII

January 20, 2021

© Haorui Sun, BS, MSI

My mother used to call me her little dreamer,
partly because I slept 12 hours a night,
pillow mapping sweet souvenirs on my cheek for oh-so-mortal mornings;
mostly because I said I was going to be a writer-doctor-astronaut-ballerina-lawyer-artist
who spent half the year navigating Italy and the other half frolicking the moon.

But today, when you asked me where I'll wake up in 10 years,
I stumbled over my words like they were my first pair of soled shoes greeting the ground.

Today, I would choose the road to a home with enough windows to keep my orchids alive and our children
abloom,
a kitchen wide enough to slow dance in without clipping the garlic-stained cutting board,
and a bed soft enough to always dip us closer,
even when we're mad at each other.
I would choose the road to you.

The Many Lives of Thumbs

© Drew Mullins, MSII

Touching thumbs, slowly circling, give rise to focused thought.
Rapid circles bear witness to idle apprehension, providing no release in tension.

Thumb tips tapping wearily, awaiting news impatiently, pausing periodically.
Tracing edge of nail and knuckle, brought about by awkward silence, extended by a sigh.

A playful war of dancing thumbs, battling boredom, the victor, is the only one, having any fun.
A brave inch moved to rest upon, another thumb, eagerly waiting for a response.



Locked On

© Zhuolin Wang, PhD, Family, Zhexi Ma, Department of Medicine

Illusion

© Mary Lou Osevala, RN
Quality Systems Improvement

Not happening here, at least we thought
We embrace diversity, number one ... on top!
It's true, our rich team has many colors in check
Is it hypocritical then, of the leaders on deck?

Ignored in the hallway, though on the same team
Dismissive glances to ideas, but then ... it's their theme.
Raised eyebrows, short retorts, snubbed all the same
Black lives are not alone with humiliation and pain

It's real, the hierarchy and at times, fed from the top
... You're not as valuable to me ... you're really not.

Your massive education taught you little of respect
Just remember your place, that's what you expect
Is it fear of being usurped, self-esteem so brittle?
You can't reach down to lift up; better to belittle.

The culture is changing for the better at last
Nothing good comes easily and certainly not fast
Image isn't everything. Kindness doesn't cost.
But as nurses we know that because we're trusted
the most.



A Colorful Stranger

© Rucha Borkhetaria, MSI

Cardinal in a Tree

© Sophie Cochran (Age 9)
Patient



Everything's Worse at Night

© Dwayne Morris, Office of Medical Education

There's news on twenty channels
And even if I wait
HBO has a love story on
From 1948
Long before my time
When love seemed good and kind
I'd like to say I see it today
But true love is so hard to find
And everything's worse at night
The heart aches just that little bit more
No one knows this like a man
Once loved and adored
Dream after dream of her
Awake and she's not there
Two little children sleeping like
They don't own a care
Little do they know
They now come from a broken home
And though I teach them we have each other
They can sense this man is so all alone

Deep Healing

© Sejal J. Shah, MD, PGY-1, Department of Surgery

These wounds are deep.
They do not heal with just one sleep.
As painful as the memory of the infliction
more painful is the knowledge of the conviction
that drove the blade dividing layers of skin
to only find that we are all the same within.

The hopes and dreams that inspired us
will only continue to drive us
to mend the tarnished tapestry
that symbolizes the values of our country.
These scars run oh so deep.
We must not forget them as we sleep.

Photon-Frequency

© Kushagra Kumar, MSI

Don't Shoot for the moon
Armstrong's footsteps, why bother?
Find your own space rock

Distorted Vision

© Corinne Laity, Patient

I admit that I am guilty
And maybe so are you
Distorted Vision
I too often wear these “glasses”
And they sure distort my view
Often it’s the captured moments
That I look so far into
And I wonder to myself
Why can’t I be more like you?
I wonder why I can’t keep up
I sure try hard as hell, it’s true
No matter what I do, it seems
I could never compare to you
My “glasses” tell a different story
As I’m sure yours do the same for you
If we all had the same strengths, challenges, and weaknesses
Life would be so boring to walk through
We all have different life plans
And different roadmaps too
They lead us from one place to another
Complete with personal obstacles to work through
I look at where I am today
And then I look at you
Am I not successful enough
It depends in the eyes of who
So with whom am I in competition
Remember this is true
The competition is that of the one

Who stares right back at you?
So perhaps focusing on “their” success
Is something a lot of us do
I need to remind myself
To focus on me and not on you
It’s ok to be where you are
And worry simply about you
Don’t let “anyone” dim your light
Just remove the glasses and simply focus on you
Don’t expect them to understand
Your life is simply different
As different as the prints on the hand
Progress is personal
It’s not a race
Just remember, it’s ok
To simply go at your own pace
Are you ahead of where you were yesterday
If not that’s ok too
Just try again tomorrow
Believe me, I know this much is true
Just put one foot in front of the other
And worry simply about you
Don’t let “anyone” dim your light
Just remove the glasses and simply focus on you

Rift Valley Homestead

© Nathan Cannon, MSIV



Seeing with SOAP

© Caroline Eisele, MSI

As medical students, we learn to document patient encounters with the formula of the SOAP note. In this community-authored poem by anonymous members of the student body, we take the formula to the next level, applying it to our daily lives with both sincerity and humor.

Subjective: Medical student feeling stressed out and overworked. Parallel feelings of fear and hope. Confusion.

Objective: Physically fine. Well developed, well nourished. Mascne noted on lower face. BP elevated.

Assessment: Stressed medical student training in the middle of a pandemic without enough training to help.

Plan: Deep breath. Pass M2 year. Don’t get COVID-19. Get the vaccine and fight to not let 2020 happen again.

Subjective: Med school

Objective: Med school

Assessment: Exams

Plan: Meet Expectations

Subjective: Patient presents with CC of blurry vision.

Objective: Patient’s vision normal on exam.

Assessment: Patient presents with blurry vision, which miraculously improved upon rubbing glasses with cloth.

Plan: Encourage patient to clean glasses.

Subjective: “Patient feels like spaghetti.”

Objective: Skin white, slightly moist. Has no other body parts.

Assessment: Patient is indeed spaghetti.

Plan: Patient counseled on decision between vodka sauce and marinara.

Subjective: Medical Professionalism

Objective: Racism and Health Disparities in Medicine

Assessment: Stigma, Discrimination, and Health Disparities Research

Plan: Advocacy and Awareness-Raising

Subjective: I feel lonely.

Objective: The room is cold and quiet; the screen is cold and glaring.

Assessment: A person desiring company.

Plan: Say hi to the janitor.

Subjective: Reggie is an 11-month-old male canine who presents this morning in his bed groggily staring at me.

Objective: Generally tired appearing, yet with urgency in his eyes, heart rate normal, bladder full.

Assessment: All signs point to Reggie needing his morning walk.

Plan: Drag myself out of bed, put Reggie in his harness, attach his leash, go outside.

Vicarious Vacation

© Jason Mascoe, MSIV



Evergreen

© Jeffrey Feehrer, *Patient*

On an unforgettable afternoon our son got off the elementary school bus carefully balancing a polystyrene coffee cup. In it was a sprig three inches tall and as thick as a piece of wire coat hanger.

“A pine tree.”

“Uh huh.” Its four puny needles identified that. “What kind?” I asked. “There are different species, um, different types like spruce, hemlock, fir ... spelled with an i.”

Sufficient.

“Can you plant it?”

I tablespooned a relative hole but was silently doubtful. Our soil is rock and clay; crabgrass and dandelions flourish, a pretty green when mowed but mockingly recidivistic.

We watered it and I made small perforations in the hostile earth at its frail base adding nutrients.

It survived, progeny and pine growing rapidly.

Not long till we could stand and hang extra Christmas balls and twine blinking lights to be topped with a star. Augmenting, conifers retain their colorful plumage through winter. They don't shed or die. Perennials like youth and love should be.

Seemingly next Yule dad needed a stepladder, later a precarious extension ladder, then so quickly when Santa became a myth it had grown out of reach and decorations.

One summer the pine began diverging, forking into two equal but individual trees conjoined only at their trunk. With prophetic symbolism, each division taking a new direction. The point of the branching away was at our son's eye-level, that summery day right after school ended. Everything's blossoms and fragrances and sweet, new life.

The same June his parents split up.

Possibly the pine tree sensed this fissure as it knew his age and elementary school grade when the sprig came home and their climbing years. After all, we nurtured and raised this floral life. A botanical study I'd read stated that plants responded to music and voices. His evergreen appeared endowed with emotropism? Empathsynthesis? A definite symbiosis.

I stopped adorning our tree after that. No young eyes and hands to help. It loomed too big, beyond reach, different in meaning and distance. The weather was cold and we only shared an hour or two of noncustody Christmas visitations before he and his presents returned to mom's home. I was left with shredded wrapping paper in a silent, empty living room.

It's 60 feet tall now.

With every visit our son walks up to it, leaning back in amazement and memory to scale it, see its peak.

The parted trunk has grown up with him, matching his stature, a kind of palmistry.

I can still put my arms around both of them, however.

But aged 36 years we noticed recently that the lowest needles have paled and are falling. A sad shedding, their bared branches snapping off dryly and easily to twigs crunched underfoot like bones. It's spreading. We can see through it, shade diminishing, the years passed and confusing as time does to that dream day we planted it.

The son has gone to his wife, daughter, and jobs—the warm and complete homelife.

Now his tree is assimilating mine.

Judge's Choice for Best Themed Art 2021

She Sits and Waits ...

© LoriAnn Lockard, CPC-A, *Patient Financial Service*

Artist's Statement: My granddaughter was born without an immune system. She has been sheltering at home since the day she came home from the NICU, (after a 5-month stay). She was 2-years-old in November 2020, and she has never played outside her home or with anyone else, except her mother and father. She often sits and stares out the front window, and waits ... and waits ... and waits ... and waits ... wondering when it will be her turn to play outside along with the other neighborhood children.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions most of us can now understand a little of what my granddaughter has endured on a daily basis. Being locked inside, without human contact, or the ability to venture to far away places. COVID-19 has made us all sit, and wait, sit, and wait



Judge's Comments: What I “enjoyed” about this piece was the many aspects of the piece. The inside, outside, foreground, background, open wall, closed wall, that represent varying perspectives of how we wait and pass time in a pandemic world. The vision represented in this piece is the world's perspective for many of the different characters and how it is different for each one impacted by the unseen virus. The piece is playful in its execution and color and I envision the parents, the playing children, and the lonely child having different aspirations.

Judge's Choice for Best Themed
Creative Writing 2021

Pentimenti in an Empty House

© Judy Schaefer, RN

Member, The Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine

House is clean, packed up, carried out.
All wrapped, taped, secured, fresh paint.
The truck, containing evidence of who we are,
accelerates with gusts of fume from our curb,
pointing north with two drivers for the night.

The sky turns ashen as we back out
on the heavily sealed driveway.
Our car lights strafe the windows
casting shadows on walls in vacant rooms,
releasing flames onto storm door glass.

Ahead of us, now four states out,
bridges to cross, unknown rivers.
Amazing tunnels. Mountains and rolling hills.
Quick stops. Checking maps. Fries. Burgers.
Knowing now, we could have turned back.



Judge's Comments:

Pentimenti in an Empty House



I relished reading this piece because the words invoked images with each line. These images brought up thoughts of change from that which once was. The word pentimenti as used in art is the representation of an underlying image in a painting, especially one that has become visible. Just like the rooms of this empty house, which will reveal new colors on the once sunbathed walls, and floors where furniture once sat, and paintings once hung. These protected spots will reveal a transparency of their original existence.



Judge's Comments:
Bye Bye COVID-19 >>>>

I appreciated the playfulness of the piece as well as the component of scale. The large balloon glove hand appears to be waving goodbye to that which cannot be seen but has plagued us for more than a year. While the scale of the glove is powerful, equally strong is the tiny figure that is holding it all together by a string. I can also imagine the bad air of the COVID-19 virus contained in the balloon that, once released, could float away and a return to some level of normal. I also imagine the child at the end of the string jumping for joy as it floats away and gets smaller and smaller, reversing the scale of what we see.



2021 Judge's Choice for
Best Themed
Photograph

Bye Bye COVID-19

© Devin DePamphilis

Son of Sharon DePamphilis, MBA

Management Reporting and Decision Support



Mind's Eye

© Ananya Das

Department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation

Sitting out in the backyard with Grandpa
Or on the porch sometimes, when I was young
We would play I spy with my little eye.
I would say after the rains, "I see the rainbow!"
And he would nod his head,
dark glasses and all firmly in place
He would look up and say, "It's beautiful, isn't it?"
And we would watch together in wonder,
the vibrant rainbow bridging the sky,
or the glorious sunset in orange and gold,
sometimes the purple pink azaleas with the bees.
We would talk about how pretty they were.
Later as the evening melted into the night,
Grandpa would collect his white cane
and walk me home down the road.
I never knew Grandpa couldn't see, not then.
Later as I knew I asked
How did you know how they looked?
How did you describe them for me?
Why didn't you say you couldn't see?
He smiled as he took his dark glasses off,
laughter crinkling his sightless eyes,
"You don't need vision to see beauty,
the mind's eye is all you need for that!"

Winter

© Drew Mullins, MSII

Silvery mist saps your soul
Surrounds you in eternal snow
The wondrous wind throws you forth
Guiding your unsteady course
Vision lacking blurred and bright
Only instincts give you sight
Just before you give up hope
A distant light, the smell of smoke
Familiar voices welcome you in
Fantasizing winter's end
Stew is served from pewter pots
And then is chewed and slurped and sopped
Belly full and all tucked in
Warm sheets slide against your skin
Your tired mind fades away
To visions of a warm spring day

Midflight

© Mary Mager, *Family of Patient*



The Psychopomp

© Pratiti Roy, MSIII

On the day they gave out the paraphernalia,
you were late
(as you often are).
The good stuff had already been taken.
Gone the winged sandals,
the boats,
the scale and its feather,
the dark wings,
only a stethoscope and a starched white coat left.
The stethoscope is a perfunctory thing that hangs
around your neck.
The white coat hangs on a hook in your office
because it makes the patients skittish,
the whites of their eyes flashing,
like fallen horses who see their riders pull out the rifle.
Never mind that their demise is not in your hands.
To a dying patient who knows no better
the words "palliative care" and "hospice" are final as a gunshot
or the wide arc of a scythe.
"They're giving up on me."
Always a statement, never a question, but you answer it anyway:
"No, we're not."

Restless

© Janette Guzowski

*St. Joseph Family and Community Medicine
Residency Program*

Friend where have you gone today?
Smoke from your chimney yesterday
Made me think that you would stay.
Where light once shone I searched for you.
Somber windows spoke no clue.
No embers glowed from darkened hearth.
No footsteps sprung from dampened earth.
Southern breezes called your name
Restless soul no heart can tame.
Damaged pride replays the frame.
If your path leads back again
I'll search for you in summer's rain
Call out your name to wood and plain
Rekindle fire with crackling grain.



Bad News

© Alek Tomazin

Development and Alumni Relations

Gazing Away

© Michele Morrissey

Departments of Dermatology and Ophthalmology



Giving Thanks

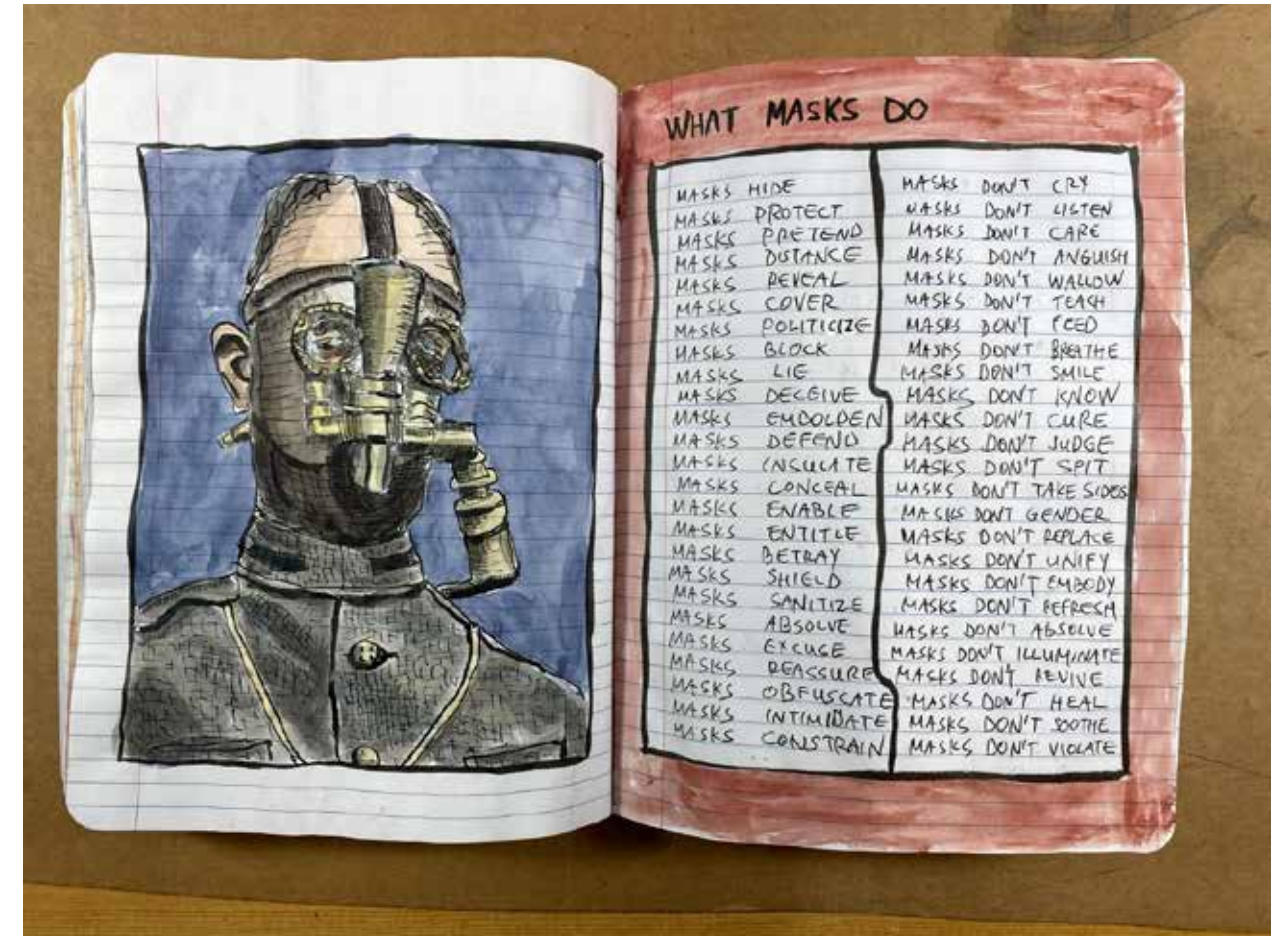
© Dan Wolpaw, MD, Departments of General Internal Medicine and Humanities

"Gentlemen,
Not having had many diseases, after growing old and finding many that are applicable to humans or the human body, I find, growing up I should say, that weather it be vulnerability to poison ivy, an organism in barbers shears or close contact with a carrier; after a chek up when I was told there was much going around, I found out of the parts irritated, a large percentage of my body is cleared up. There is only a little left. Thank you."
Letter from Emergency Department patient, circa 1985

Record gone, there are only questions. Primarily who typed this prose poem onto a blue, pre-made folding letter, dropped in the mail to no person in particular, to gentlemen in a city emergency department? A place offering the possibility of relief in bright lights and strangers, rescuing more from life than to life. Not comparable, for example, to a place of worship, though weekend mornings can work for both, and both promise healing. Worship, of course, also tries for uplifting, shedding the body to inhabit the spirit, free from what is going around. Emergency departments are all about what is going around. What can be cleared up, not acquired. Subtracted, not added. But in the end, if the person is still there, and the means of communication still at hand, there is an opportunity to give thanks. Including some gentlemen to this author who likely never considered himself a writer of poems.

Golden Beauty from Above

© Malgorzata Sudol
Department of Medicine



What Masks Do

© Michael J. Green MD, Departments of General Internal Medicine and Humanities

The Blind

© Benjamin Watt, MSIII

When the sun sets,
The window becomes a mirror,
So I lower the blind,
And switch on the lamp,
That I may see yet not be seen.
When Mercury fades,
And I climb to center-view,
Argus stirs and blinks.
A hundred other invisible people
Light lamps under baskets.
When the day ends,
And the world doubles in reflection,
Then I close my lids,
Trading illusion for blindness,
Perceiving but no longer seeing.

Behind the Mask

© Muhammed Rahim, MSII

Behind the mask there is a person
A person who yearns to hug his grandparents
A person who misses handshakes and smiles
A person who only sees two eyes instead of a whole face
A person who wonders what is behind the masks of others
A person who reminisces about the days before this all started
A person who dreams about returning to his old life
A person who envisions a world safe and unmasked
A person who hopes this will all be over soon
A person who understands that for now, he must stay behind
the mask
Behind the mask there is a person

The Bench

© Rev. Kelsey O'Brien, M.Div.,
Pastoral Service

An elderly man is dying in the Special Pathogens ICU.

Breathe, I say to myself as I hang up the phone. Try to just breathe.

Dr. X greets me at the front entrance. I think he is trying to smile, but with our masks I'm not sure. He tells me that the man's wife and daughter were called an hour ago. They live an hour and a half away, but are currently sitting outside waiting to talk to us.

I follow Dr. X through the glass doors into the spring evening, the sound of voices and vehicles filling our ears. There they are. A tiny white-haired woman perched on the bench. A younger woman stands crying, her homemade mask already soaked through.

Dr. X leads the conversation: *he is dying right now. There is nothing more we can do except keep him comfortable. I'm so sorry, but per policy only one person is allowed.* They will have to decide.

Both women are crying now, their eyes bloodshot wells of sorrow. They look at each other for a long time. They drove 30 miles over the speed limit to the front doors of the hospital to stand outside and make an impossible choice.

Breathe, I say. Try to just breathe.

I squat down, my hand brushing the cool side walk, trying in some way to ground us all. *This is impossible. But you are going to be able to do this because love grounds you even now.*

I offer to bring my laptop out to the bench for the one who does not get to go in. It is not enough. It is not fair. It is such a poor substitute for the comfort of being in the same room, holding that familiar hand. Wife says that she will stay here. She reasons that she's had fifty plus years with him. Daughter has only had forty-seven.

We arrange for Wife to sit on the bench until I come back with my laptop. She tells Daughter to hold his hand and tell him how much she loves him.

Soon, Daughter sits with him in a blue plastic gown, gloved, masked, and covered by a face shield that I helped her don outside the room. She holds his

hand, a strange calm settling over her. She is here. She is present.

Breathe, I say to her quietly. Try to just breathe.

Six feet back from the glass door, behind red tape on the floor, the nurse whispers he has almost nonexistent blood pressure. It will be soon. We stand together outside the room, watching the monitor, trying to give this intimate moment privacy, but afraid to leave Daughter alone.

Breathe, I say to myself. Try to just breathe.

Outside on the bench huddled next to Wife, with my laptop and a box of tissues cradled in my lap, I pull up the video. Wife squints at the image, loudly telling him she loves him, tears fogging up her glasses above her mask. She does not want him to suffer. She says a few more things, noting that he looks tired and comfortable. That he has lived a long life. She and Daughter will be okay. She speaks her blessing into the evening air. Then she asks me to turn the camera off. She has a lifetime of memories to reference outside that sterile room.

And then, through her tears, she begins to tell me their story: married fifty-six years. They met as children and grew up together. He served in the military. They had one daughter. They couldn't have more. He had a good heart. His parents were very religious. He was not. He had been sick for a while but had a way of making her laugh. He loved the outdoors. He hadn't been out of the house for weeks before they rushed him to the ED. He loved watching Daughter dance. All his family had died off over the past couple of years. His memory had faded. He was getting hard to understand. He hadn't been eating. But he still knew who she was. He always knew who she was. I don't know why I'm telling you this. *We went to Hawaii on our 50th anniversary. Chaplain, how much does a funeral cost?* She talks until she has exhausted herself.

Breathe, I say. Try to just breathe.

When Daughter walks out of the hospital alone, she joins Mother on the bench. They both sit still united in their grief, looking out into a strange new world. His gaping absence.

Breathe, I say to no one in particular as I walk back inside. Try to just breathe.



Ithaca Spring

© Thomas Kellner, MSIII

Twin Falls

© Alek Tomazin
Development and Alumni Relations



Just Breathe

© Talia Potochny, Patient

Breathe. Just breathe.

I closed my eyes and scrunched my forehead, concentrating on inhaling and exhaling big gulps of air. I hugged my plaid pajama-covered legs into my heavy chest as the walls of my bedroom caved in.

Breathe.

My heart rate spiked, tears stung my dry cheeks, and my chest burned with a sharp pain. I felt alone, drowning.

Just breathe.

I opened my eyes. This isn't my room. Sparkling, turquoise waves surrounded me.

Breathe.

I plunged deeper into the warm water, slowly sinking, as the ocean embraced me in a wet, salty hug. The waves beat against my ears with a calm, muted sound. I darted my eyes around the vibrant ecosystem swarming with colorful fish and swaying bright corals.

Just breathe.

A large sea turtle calmly floated past my vision. I moved my head to the right following him more closely. I didn't feel alone.

Breathe.

He blew bubbles out of his nose, and the bubbles chased each other to the surface. My anxious thoughts followed those air bubbles, floating out of my brain and popping, my worries disseminating into thin air.

Just breathe.

I slipped off the VR headset and was transported back to my room. I still sat in my bed, wearing the same plaid pajama bottoms. But now, it felt different. I felt different.

Now, I could breathe.

Just breathe.



A Love Poem

© James Thomas, Patient

I wake with my arms around you
And I know
That heaven exists
Your warm embrace, your lovely lips,
And I know
That angels live.
Then the dawn breaks and I am alone
And I know
That you are just a dream.

Flexibility

© Regan Graham, CAP
Department of Anesthesiology
& Perioperative Medicine



Triplopia (photo left and poem below)

© Chandat Phan, MSII

Thought I was seeing double,
Then my vision was cleared.
Realized it was really triple,
With two like a mirror.
A full figure in the center,
That I thought was better,
Cause you could see the whole body,
But then again—it was foggy.
Two portraits crisp but small,
And a hazy one that was tall.
But you put them as one fixture,
And you get a complete picture.
Take one, Take two, Take three ...
How many lenses do we need?
Till we may say we really see?

August 3rd, 2019

© Makayla Lagerman, MS1

I had no reason to own black
Until 22.
No reason for knowing the smell of
formaldehyde,
Leftover casseroles reheated,
the Catholic Church on the corner of Coal Street.
No reason to worry with each surprise ring from a
parent—
“Just checking in,”
Or not—
Who insists I call when I’m free
Because I’m the busy one,
The one busy living.
But at 22,
I snip the tags off a black dress collecting dust in the
back corner of a closet.
At 22, I learn death
When it taps on our shoulders and I am gullible
enough to turn around.
I look back and find he’s gone.
In that moment, I learn death—
Death, but not dying.
Widow maker, but not the making of a widow.
That part comes next.
It is slower, more surprising.
Maybe harder.
At 23, I give Meme a call.
She does not cry this time.
We learn dying and we unlearn it
Minute by minute.
So I meet this sunlight today, shake its hand.
We take them together. Golden.



Survivor

© Jillian Mendez
Patient

An Empty Street

© Rucha Borkhetaria, MS2



The Ghost Map

© **Barbara Antolino-Smith, RN, BSN**
Retired, Department of Pediatrics

Gettysburg, Reedsville, New Bloomfield, Waynesboro.
Harrisburg, Quarryville, Lebanon, State College and Huntingdon.
Many, many others. Too numerous to mention.
Villages, towns, hamlets, cities.
Scattered visions of faces lost.
Scattered memories of events held close.
Found amid the ghosts of the past.

Others visit villages, towns, hamlets, and cities
with joyful countenances of anticipated fun, family visits and
merry reunions.
My reunion is as a sober visitor
to the remembrance of patients lost in a fog of death.

I love these country roads and towns.
I love these Pennsylvania harbors.

I anticipate my visits with a mixture of joy and sorrow.
A little guy who walked the streets of New Bloomfield.
A fun-loving teen kicking those soccer balls in Waynesboro.
The thick braids of a smiling girl loved and cherished
in the hills of Lancaster.

The frightened face of a teen surrounded by the largesse of his family in Harrisburg.
Cashtown apple orchards comforting the pain of a mother's son
as she chases a vision of his kindness and strength.

How does the heart let go?
When will the memory fade?
When will these villages, towns, hamlets and cities become
only places on the map again?
Speeding past on the highway, when will I lose the pain?
Slowly rounding the country curves, when will their memory fade?

This odd association of mine cannot be resolved.
The villages, towns, hamlets and cities are linked to
a very real joy in knowing they existed for a time on this earth.
That together we shared what few might understand.
The best of ourselves. The most loving parts of ourselves.
Spots on the map real and true and impossible to erase.
Kids and teens real and true and impossible to erase.
Letting go and holding on, a lifelong reality.

My Hero-My Dad, the Essential Worker

© **Vanessa Vides, MSIV**

It's 4:45 a.m., the alarm snooze button seems a monumental
distance away
Everyone else has been ordered to stay at home
Partaking in quarantine is not an option here
For if I do, who will take my passengers into the city?

What passengers you ask?
The other essential workers—nurses, doctors, etc.
They have lives to save in NYC
I need to do my part by helping them to do their part

I have an honesty though, I do also need the money
I need to pay the rent, feed my wife and
I need to send my daughter her monthly \$100
I'm not all that altruistic—I cannot afford to stay home

It's 4:45AM, the alarm snooze button cannot be pressed today
I am so cold and hot all at once
Why does everything hurt?
What is happening?

It's March, I never get sick in the Spring
Oh no—it can't be, can it?
I am going to call my daughter, she will know what to do
COVID-19? A test? Stay home?

My bus is a big bus, I don't understand
There were only nurses and doctors on the bus last week, no one else
They all sat so far away
I have COVID-19?

I can die from this?
But I have to work, I need the money
I have to quarantine for two weeks?
What am I going to do?

A Separate Pain

© **Justine Shultz, MA, Public Health Sciences**

the brass in my ears
weighs heavy

i've been pushing
their limits
for four days
now

it's something else
to focus on

a separate pain



Quarantine

© **Marcia Riegle, Patient**

Invisible Wings

© **Arunangshu Das, PhD**
Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology





Past Reflection

© Allison Chang, MSIII

Loss Arrives

© Anthony Oliveri, Patient

So many ways
to lose a Lover—
from carelessness,
through betrayal,
or growing pains,
or Death's final touch.
So many ways
to lose a Lover.

Some say to move on,
to get over it all,
that it's no big thing,
it was meant to be,
just buck up and ...
look on the bright side,
endings are beginnings
after all is said and done.

Deep emotions
don't play that game,
they are ingrained,
like DNA messages
fluttering along nerves
with tricky barbs
and breezy smiles
lying in wait.

It ain't over 'til
it's over—the song says,
but honestly,
it goes on and on and on
long after it's over
no matter who or
what's the cause
of the painful endings.

He went out for smokes.
She wanted a girls night out.
If only I had picked up the phone.
I could have/should have been there.
So many weird changes ...
and then she was gone.
Did something better catch her eye?
... alone again, naturally.

If we are living,
we are also changing.
What we thought was
forever, well, it wasn't.
Where do we go from here?
Why do we go from here?
There is a Life to be Lived!
We choose how we'll do it.

Manifest for the Year's Crossing

© Angela Sedun, MFA, Patient

I meant to call—
Really. I did.

A whole year has passed amidst chaos, strife,
immense joys, much strain.

Are things so different, or do you feel like life was put on
pause?

I've worked harder than I can ever remember.
The kids keep growing, and now I see how fast.

How suddenly they gain their own paths—not necessarily the paths I would choose.

Mind the rudder.

Uncle Richard told me that “little kids step on your toes; big kids step on your heart.”

The first sword.

Why do they make the choices they do? What are they thinking?

Only in the moment, tossed about by the currents—

Steady your ship again.

Set your sail to the deep calm seas and learn to steady.

All around, confused seas—

Don't go seeking them. Look for the calm.

The manifest of my year: Pax, set in a circle of thorns.

Elusive

© Shengchen Lin, PhD

Department of Cellular and Molecular Physiology



Life Is Full of Drizzly Days

© Sigmund David, *Patient*

"I do not mind getting my pants wet," my son said,
As he slid down the slide.

It was damp—the first day of Autumn.

"Higher and higher," he urged on the tire swing.
I did as he commanded.

Little boys (as well as little girls) are not to be dismayed
By not perfect conditions: Life is full of them.

I can get too comfortable in my house
With an overcast sky, crisp outside.

the couch is too inviting. it has not stopped raining.

Someone though, has forgotten to tell my son.
He has reminded me again: Life is full of drizzly days.

And the unexpected:

The bald eagle I had never seen before
Heading for Hawk Rock.

The magnificent sunset that caught me by surprise
In a place I did not expect to be,
For my mind and body are tired.

The ruby-throated hummingbird
That invaded my backyard in the rain.

Yes, life is full of drizzly days.

And four-year-old boys who teach their fathers
What they have lost in the quest for wisdom.



Brown Iris

© Oana Bollt
Department of Surgery



Hollowness

© Shengchen Lin, PhD
Department of Cellular and Molecular Physiology

Turbulence

© Susannah Gal, PhD, *Patient*

34 years
10 too long, you say
I didn't see that
Coming

Fasten your seat belts
as we will be experiencing some
turbulence

Hindsight shows some signs
Silence
Ignorance was not my friend

We'll have a smooth ride
once we're out of these
clouds

I look for the eventual sunshine
above the clouds
Lucky to have friends
whose ears I can bend

We'll be landing soon

Eventually,
in a new place
Until then

We'll be facing some
more turbulence
before then

Am I Still Here?

© Milton Ehrlich
Family of Medical Student Applicant

I feel the shape of my face
that is more familiar than
the one I see in the mirror.
I feel the scar on my lip that
prevented me from sustaining
high C on my Selmer trumpet.
My useless ears can't hear much,
and my eyes keep closing shut
to avoid seeing the terrible news—
my vanishing voice now depends
on pointing with homemade sign.
I'm a crusty old cocoon, a silhouette
of my former self who always planned
to one day climb up Mount Kilimanjaro.
Now I can't even clamber over the rocks
on Bash Bish Falls.

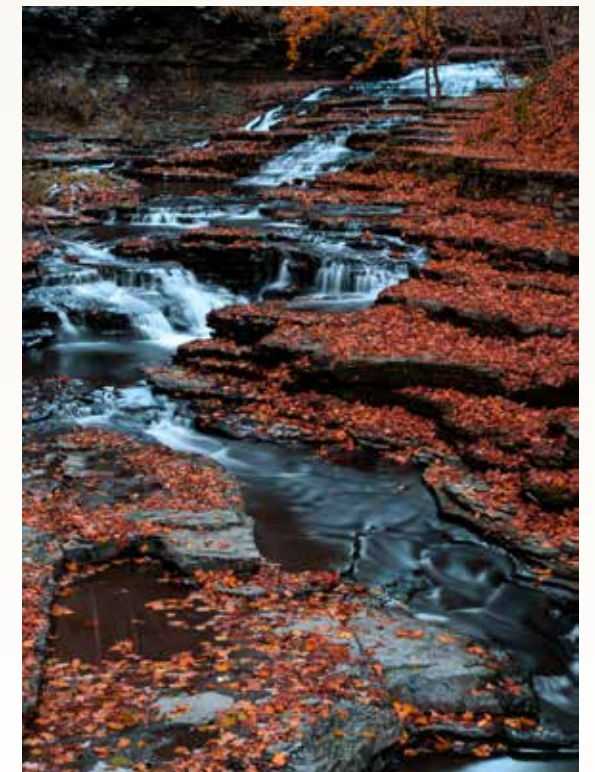


Plane Wing

© Linnea H. Weinstock
(Age 17), *Patient*

Transcendence

© Ben Crookshank, *MSIV*





Amabie Yokai, "Wishing the Pandemic is Over"

© Eresbet Spain, LPN
Penn State Health Cocoa Outpatient Center



Baka's House (Potres)

© Sofija Chroneos BFA, MA
Family of Dr. Zissis C. Chroneos and
Dr. Zvezdana Chroneos
Departments of Pediatrics and Medicine

From Eye to Eye

© Jeremy Kudrna, MS, MD
Clinical Resident/Fellow
Department of Ophthalmology

lancet and laser
lenses and light
no wonder eye surgery
induces such fright

precise, still labor
finesse, our might
that's ophthalmology
the focus your sight

relax dear neighbor,
thy cheeks a resting height,
from eye to eye
a new waking site

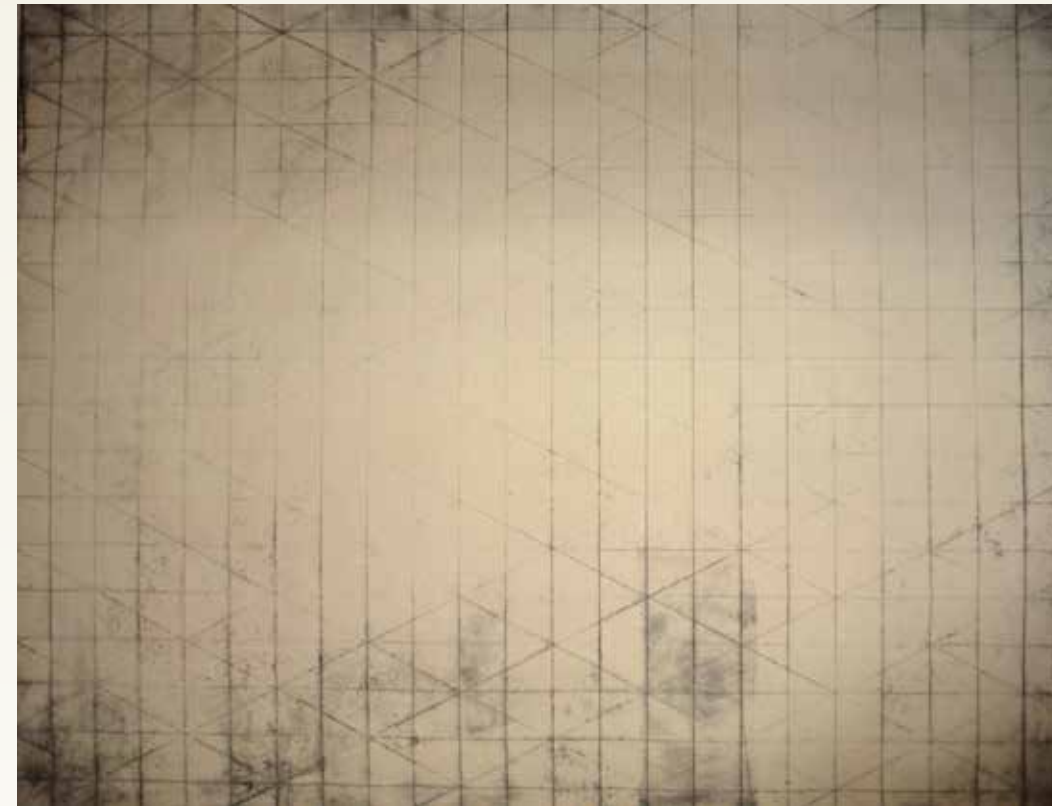
lie back like a stargazer
under a sparkled night,
wonder-filled fully
for this dazzling rite

music with color
will be marvels to cite
relish all merrily,
sweet slumber's delight

relax and savor,
as we take peaceful flight,
today, an anniversary,
for a job done right

Grid Plane: "What do you see? Just lines, forming a grid?"

© Angela Sedun, MFA



Artist's Statement:

Inspired by Mutually Orthogonal Latin Squares (think: Sudoku), this print (1 of 1) was the foundation for other experimentations to represent these squares in three dimensions instead of two.

Why? Because when I look beyond the surface of things, I begin to see dimensions.

Vision encompasses much more than sight: so much so, it is called *insight*. Seeing into things, perceiving, receiving, transmitting, projecting. Something as simple as lines and planes and basic geometry can be a gateway as complex as the heavens. And as such are our lives.

2020 seemed so flat on the surface. A year of Nos: No Socializing, No Showing Your Face, No School, No Work (in-person), No Community Worship, No Dates, No Family Visits, No Spontaneous Joy.

But that wasn't really true after all.

Walking the line of 2020 day-to-

day, there was a lot more experienced: greater appreciation for relationships (even ones that didn't stand out before), unexpectedly missing what had been previously tedious or onerous work, gratitude for being incessantly with immediate family, relief to be outdoors more frequently, indebtedness to healthcare workers who valiantly carried on, awareness of generations of pain and suffering because of the color of one's skin, appreciation for the creativity and ingenuity of educators who did their best to engage students and provide some semblance of balance, surprise and delight at being recognized by an old friend in the grocery store while masked, consolation in mutual sentiments shared with friends, knowledge that we're all headed in one direction—and thereby humility. Maybe a little patience, too.

Everyone has a story, an experience, a need or a want. Am I willing to gaze and see the extent, the expanse of the person before me? It is possible to recognize even four dimensions when I thought there were only two.

So, the cliché, "don't judge a book by its cover," still holds true; in the case of *Grid Plane*, don't judge the plane by its bisected points, the simplicity of its color, the basic construction of its design, the mundane materials of paper and ink, but by the space around it.

The real details are between the lines.



Judge's Comments:

This piece made me think to look for joy and hope in ordinary life, beyond the mundane, beyond the surface.

Judge's Choice for Best Creative Writing
Written by a Patient 2021

A Skeleton's Ghazal

© Ellie Cameron

Alone in the winter and cold to the bone.
A deceptive promise of gold to the bone.
The strain on the heart will take its toll someday.
Body frail, prematurely old to the bone.
Stones dropped to the floor of a porcelain lake.
Sickness, it grows and breeds like mold to the bone.
Left by disciples, Olympus has fallen.
A home, now a despot abode to the bone.
Falsely conveyed by cigarette aesthetics.
A story in a woeful ode to the bone.
Control was a phantasm that faded so fast.
Now I've run down the bloodstained road to the bone.



Judge's Comments:

A Skeleton's Ghazal goes right to the avatar of our mortality and stares directly at it without flinching. In the process, it shows us the beauty and fragility of what powers us.

Judge's Choice for Best Photograph
in the Patient Category 2021

Baltimore Oriole Among Red Blossoms

© Ted Weaver



Judge's Comments:

A beautiful composition of a caught moment in nature. The texture and the depth of field balance the contrasting purples and orange of the bird's breast.

Courage in the Storm

© Marissa Riley, MSIII

The streets rest quiet,
but a storm rages inside.
Clouds cover conscious thought,
and emotions whirl in a torrent
that drenches you in doubt.
As uncertainties collide,
you choke from the force
of questions you can't answer,
and the wreckage it leaves
in your body and soul.

I cannot hold you in my arms,
so I hold you in my heart
and hope there you can rest
as you find the courage
to weather this storm.
For the sun will rise again,
and so will you.

I cannot hold you,
comfort you as I'd wish,
so instead I cling
to the immutable truth,
that the sun will rise again
and so will we.



My New Year's Resolution

© Dixie Miller, MSI

For all my life,
The new year meant a new start.
But more often than not
These brand new plans fell apart.
Becoming someone "better"
Often takes more than a list on paper.
It requires drive and action
And as time wears on my motivations taper.

I aim for a rebirth,
From caterpillar to butterfly.
But I've begun to wonder,
If maybe it's the reverse I should try.

After so many attempts,
I have matured and bloomed.
But with each change,
My own identity seems doomed.

My mind is sharp
My achievements admirable and plenty.
And yet I find
My reflection's smile now seems empty.

This year,
I resolve not to become all shiny and new
I simply want to be
The me that my younger self once knew.

A young girl,
Big heart, kind words, thoughtful eyes.
Even as a caterpillar
Her only limit was the sky.

Peony and Water Lillies

© Seamus Carmichael, BA, H.Dip.Ed.
Harrell Health Sciences Library



Between Cataracts

© Nicole Seacord, Patient

NeuroVision: What Our Patients See

© Joseph Malone, MD
Clinical Resident & Fellow
Department of Neurology

One of the advantages and pleasures of being a neurologist is that our specialty organ, the brain, can be accessed simply by talking to our patients. Another important organ in neurology, the eye, has the special designation of being the only organ wherein we can see parts of the central nervous system. Vision changes are common chief complaints in the neurology office, and some of these changes can be striking, able to evoke wonder and fear.

Visual hallucinations have been known for centuries, and it was a pioneering publication in 1760 by the Swiss philosopher, Charles Bonnet, who described the vivid hallucinations of his grandfather after he suffered blindness from cataracts. The disorder that bears his name, Charles Bonnet syndrome, is seen in patients with severe visual impairment, wherein the vision centers in our brain tend to compensate with often elaborate

visual hallucinations. Some patients report seeing flamboyantly costumed people dancing or little people like the Lilliputians from *Gulliver's Travels*. There is additionally an Alice in Wonderland syndrome, where patients will see items in their view become larger, smaller, or distorted, as if living inside Lewis Carroll's timeless classic.

Finally, certain epilepsy disorders can produce potent visual changes. For example, there are seizures where certain memories flash before the patient's eyes. These so-called "experiential seizures" can be bittersweet, with some memories bringing a sense of nostalgia while others remind them of past heartaches. With these examples I encourage you to remember, the next time you read a fairytale by the Brothers Grimm or peer inside the wacky mind of Dr. Seuss, that there are people out there who are actually living in their own works of fiction.

Cycles of Terror, Death, Innovation, and Hope

© Olga Prokunina, MSII



Handmade cloak and mask by Olga Prokunina

3000BC, 430BC, 165, 250, 541, 1346, 1519, 1532, 1545, 1665, 1720, 1770, 1793, 1889, 1916, 1918, 1957, 1981, 2009, 2014, 2015, 2019

Cycles of influenza, plague, yellow fever, polio, HIV, Ebola, Zika, coronaviruses

Cycles of terror, death, innovation, and hope

“Trial by fire, this too shall pass,” she whispers to herself.

In My Mind’s Eye

© Richard Cary Joel, PT, MHA
Family, Maria T. Joel
Department of Microbiology

I can see
in my mind’s eye,
a time
when faces went uncovered,
where smiles and expression
were commonplace,
and people could still see each other.

In my mind’s eye,
the world remains unmasked,
one inhales the air around them,
without fear nor apprehension,
and distance
is of no concern.

In my mind’s eye,
we only wash our hands to stay clean,
gloves and disinfectants
are reserved for the surgical suite.
and life does not look like a hospital.

In my mind’s eye,
children can still hug their grandparents
and lovers embrace,
family and friends congregate in close quarters,
and teachers
teach in a classroom.

In my mind’s eye
I can see a future
when COVID-19
will be nothing more
than a memory
and all of us will be free,
to be ourselves,
once again.

At the Shore

© Debarati Bhanja, MSI

I will greet you at the shore, ebb and flow,
but through my murky waters, you’ll never see,
never know,
the mysteries at the depths that lie below,
but I will greet you at the shore, ebb and flow.

I will greet you at the shore, day and night,
at high noon, myself, I will hide from your sight,
but as the light disappears, you will see me right,
and I will greet you at the shore, day and night.

I will greet you at the shore, toes in the sand,
together we will sway, hand in hand,
at the depths you have seen, swim if you can,
but I will greet you at the shore as who I am.

Twilight

© Amber Kulaga, BA, Patient

Out on the street
I meet serendipitous
twilight.
So rare of late
it feels stolen,
not mine.

I’ve gotten used
to driving home
with the darkness.
Calm and calming.

The fading blue
glow catches
images not seen in months.

I might be going
anywhere,
in this light—
or any time



Ocean Eyes

© Tauhid Zaman, MD
PGY-1, Department of Psychiatry

Red Sand Beach

© Ryan Higgins, MSII





Lichtenstein

© Andrea Lin, MSII

The Thought

© Kelly Chambers, CRNA
*Department of Anesthesiology and
Perioperative Medicine*

The assault on my epidermis
Sparked action in my neurons
Igniting a bundle of thought

The thought seeped through capillaries
Traveled through veins
Finding a path to my heart

Pumping to my extremities
Finding truth in fingers and toes
Validation and back to my heart

The thought, sought
To find its way out
Trekking the route to my lungs

Floating on carbon dioxide
Traversing vocal cords
Traveling expanding routes

Past tongue, chattering teeth and lips
Dear surgeon
It is too cold in this operating room

Masked

© Michelle Le, MSII

I can see you
but I can't see you
there's something missing
but I know it's there
I can see you
but I can't see you
a smile is hiding
behind what you wear
I can see you
and you look to me
your eyes try to share
the feelings inside
I can't see you
but I can hear you
your voice speaks louder
than your eyes
I can't see you
but I can feel you
no smile is hiding
I judged too soon
I can't see you
I can't see you
a masked face before me
in the same room

Light for the Soul

© Oana Bollt, Department of Surgery



Freshly Painted Purple

© Makayla Lagerman, MS1

Who was the last one to hold these hands—
With nails freshly painted purple—
that knew her name?
Her favorite kind of birthday cake?
The funny way her feet turned out as she walked?
Who helped her pick out this magenta,
Never thinking of it as a color that complements
The simple manila toe tag.

Now, I will be the last to hold her hand,
the purple polish still unchipped.
I do not know her name,
The song that played for her first dance,
Whether she ordered a burger medium rare or without pickles,
The first address she could memorize,
Or the dreams she once held dear.

It is not lost on me that this heart I know so intimately, I do not know nearly at all.
I do not know who last held these hands, nails freshly painted purple.
I wonder if a memory of her danced into their mind today.
I do not know what tragedies or commercials or sweet promises made her pull her
hands to her chest, or how her laugh rang out and for which kind of jokes.
I do not know if she had regrets.
Do most of us?

And yet I know with full certainty that in life, she chose death to be a gift,
And so perhaps,
beyond just the sight of it,
I know her heart after all.

Bloomsday, June 16, 2020

© Seamus Carmichael, BA, H.Dip.Ed.
Harrel Health Sciences Library



Chimera

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

Fields of flowers
Geese flying by
Honking song
Going South
Green turns to orange
Orange browns
The trees let loose
And there's a Fall
a fall
A hearing
A sighting
That's death
A heirophany,
I stood over the abyss
I offered my body
Tired, warm, worn
More wrinkled
This is the cold lot
This is my life
How did I get so loved?



Change

© Lynne McGovern, RN, Patient

Disentangling

© Susannah Gal, PhD, Patient

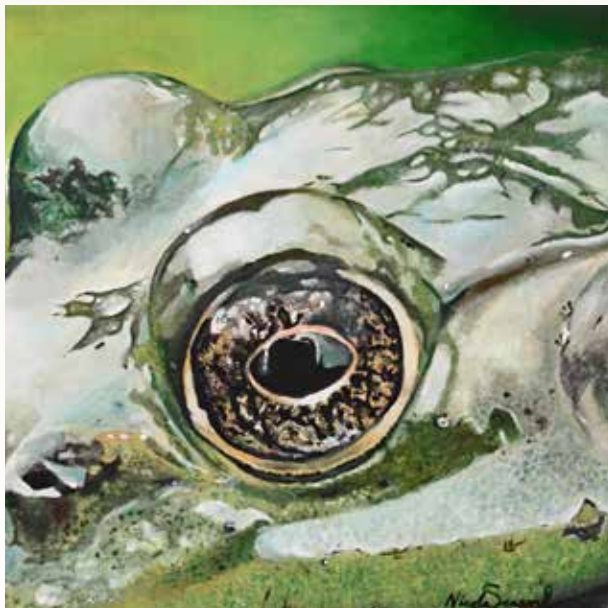
Unraveling lives
like a tangled ball of yarn
Disengaging two strands
undoing the knots that have formed between
them.

It took time and patience.
I was able to do it
and now the two yarns are separated.

Like two people—no longer tethered by their vows.
Us

Beholder's Eye

© Nicole Seacord, Patient



Judge's Choice for Art 2021 in the Faculty and Healthcare Providers Category

Untitled Abstract IV

© Noel H. Ballentine, MD
Department of Medicine



Judge's Comment:

I was drawn to this abstract piece of art for its beautiful design and color. I lingered to think about the interplay between the main face and the secondary face.

Judge's Choice for Creative Writing 2021
in the Faculty and Healthcare Providers Category

Consider the Paper Bag

© Kenna Chuplis, BSN, RN, CGRN, Endoscopy

My mother cut open the paper bag and presented it flat on the kitchen counter. Her tongue tipped from her lips in concentration as she measured and marked two inches from the top and bottom of the bag. Gold glittered nails creased two folds with surgical precision. She raised my physical science textbook and nestled it in the brown cocoon. All 6th grade textbooks must be covered by Friday. Deft thumbs, cracked at the corner near the nail, coaxed the covers into the new sleeves. She wrote the word "science" in neat bold letters across the cover. My mother took a deep breath, ran her hands, creased like crepe paper, across the coarse paper cover then tucked the gem into my book bag.

The clerk told me, "I'm sorry we are out of plastic bags with the virus, we only have paper." He could only see my eyes with my mask, but he could tell I wasn't happy. I was tired and sure the bottom of this glorified lunch bag was going to give out. "Okay," I told him. I paid and a pit rose in my stomach as I watched him bag. I envisioned walking to my car and the gallon busting through the bottom of the bag, smashing to the ground, and milk gurgling from the cracked plastic, lost to the blacktop. My oranges, zesty, bright as the sun rolled from reach, now bruised and smashed. Myself, a stone in my gut, deserted, everyone else 6 feet away. I heard a voice, "Miss, your change." I made my way to the car holding my breath. The bags held. I tucked them in the trunk.

When dressing, pearls are the last thing that you put on and the first thing that you take off. They are delicate and special, easily damaged and should be kept in their own jewelry pouch. I do not have a pearl pouch. I have a brown paper sandwich bag.

The bag is for our masks, it lets them breathe. In the morning I pluck my mask from said bag. The bag, once crisp with clean lines and right angles now resembles an iron-only dress shirt dredged from the bottom of a laundry bag. Soon, all you see are my eyes.

I ate an orange for lunch; the flesh was shriveled, resigned. I carry the stone in my gut constantly now; days have turned to weeks, to months. It's like breathing underwater. We bump elbows, no hugs or handshakes. My last patient's name is Alice. I meet her. Her hands are folded on her lap; her skin is crepe paper, like a party streamer for a celebration I haven't been to in months. Before I can introduce myself she grabs my hands in hers. I hold my breath. Cups them like a prayer and says, "Some days are twos and some days are tens, honey this won't last forever." I can feel my face grow hot. My eyes well but my tears hold. The stone in my gut shifts. I exhale.

Stones are for sinking. Pearls are born of irritation and strife. This alchemy of pain is more than a stone. I breathe. I carefully print my name across the top of a fresh paper bag and nest my mask inside. I fold the top about two inches with surgical precision. I held. Today I tuck hope inside myself.



Judge's Comment:

Using a humble, tactile object as a constant to link disparate experiences, this piece shows the surprising strength both of this material and the people who handle it. It captures perfectly the mundane and extraordinary aspects of life during this pandemic.

Judge's Choice for Best Photograph 2021
in the Faculty and Healthcare Providers Category

Camouflage

© Kelly Chambers, CRNA
Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine



Judge's Comment:

Nature's camouflage with dappled sunlight ... at first my eye was drawn to the beauty of the sunlight on the clear water, and then I was delighted when my eye moved across the composition to discover a turtle enjoying this dappled light just as much!

Diagnosis Clouds My Vision

© Justin Ceasar, MSI

I walked outside, the harsh wind whistling past my ears.

How will things ever be the same?

Days, months, years, spent battling. And for what? It seems as if it was all for naught.

I suppose it just wasn't meant to be; yet, the same thought still rings through my head.

How will things ever be the same?

What could I do and what could I give to return to how things used to be?

To escape the ever-present change in life that never seems to stop.

Some things never change, they say. Well why can't this be one of those things?

How will things ever be the same?

Just a little while ago, everything seemed to be so calm, so clear.

But now it feels cloudy, as if my vision has been ripped away from me.

I try to take a walk to clear my mind and to escape this everlasting haze before me.

To get away from the cold bleakness that fills my horizon.

But I can't focus on anything else apart from what I've just heard.

Just one thought continues to plague my mind.

How will things ever be the same?

As my feet pound against the hard surface below, this thought just can't escape the depths of the sea within my head.

Just days ago, the air was flowing with anticipation.

Excitement hung in the breeze, swirling in every direction, engulfing those around it.

And like a wave at high tide, you rose,

swallowing everything away with you as you sank back into the ocean.

My toes stood in the sand, desperately gripping the endless grains beneath them.

Until they could no longer.

I looked down and there was nothing.

Just as there was everything a few moments ago, now there is nothing.

Save for one thought flowing through my brain.

How will things ever be the same?

How will I ever be the same?



Untitled

© Emma Lamoreaux
Daughter of Rosanne Lamoreaux, RN
Hemophilia Treatment Center

Courage Revisioned—A True Story

© Catherine Piermattei, Patient

It was the Spring of 2014 at Penn State Hershey Medical Center ...

A physician's sharp eye found the disease ...

Offering hope in the journey I was about to enter ...

Visions of despair and an uncertain future were in sight ...

A trip to an amusement park may offer a dark tunnel some light ...

Not expecting the ride to blow off my hat, with no hair and a skeleton face,

a vision of many pitiful stares controlled my mind's space...

I jumped off the ride and snagged my cover ...

I wanted to avoid embarrassment for my son and his cousin ...

When I walked into the crowd an older park man asked my whereabouts with spite ...

Hearing my niece say "her hat blew off and she jumped off the ride"...

The park man berated me for my perceived stunt ...

Pronouncing that he could expel me from the park's future fun ...

I lifted my hat to reveal the need for cover, especially from the sun ...

The park man appeared to be unconcerned, his web of power already spun ...

The kids wanted to ride again, after all this may be the last time with me ...

We waited in line, silently, until we reached the park man and his nasty gleam ...

He accepted the kid's tickets and then made the announcement for all in line to hear ...

That I was not allowed on the ride and again arrived my vision of public fear ...

As the crowd stared at me in anticipation of conflict, surely these curious souls would understand if I were to plead to the park man for compassion to share ...

I pulled off my hat and loudly proclaimed "I have already revealed to you that I have cancer.

I admit I was wrong for jumping off the ride but under the circumstances, would you reconsider or care?"...

The park man and I both slowly turn our heads towards his intended audience ...

His continued nasty gleam at me was now many towards him ...

Without looking me in the eye, the park man took my ticket ...

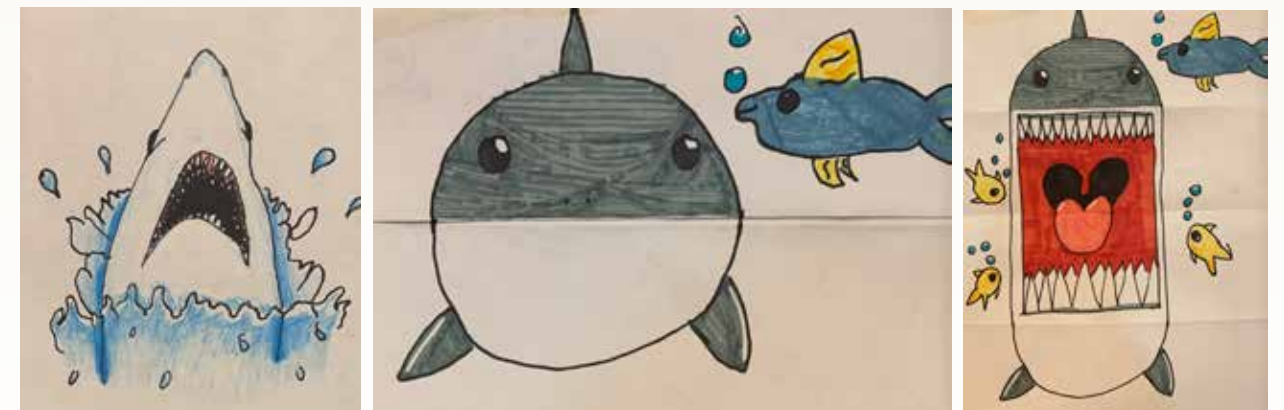
My earlier fear of pitiful stares was now courage revisioned ...

This short ride seemed like a mile as I rode with my greatest smile!

The Great Shark

© Jadon Rucker (Age 8)

Family of Kelly Thrush, CRNP, Post-Acute Trans Care



A Desert of Sorrow

© Zvezdana Sever Chroneos, PhD, CCRP
Department of Medicine
Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

When you left,
Not ever to return,
Stillness chained me down,
Not a word was said,
Nor a grunt of pain heard.

When you left,
My heart suspended in midair,
Swaying like a late fruit
To be battered in storms,
And torn apart by beasts.

When you left,
Abandoning your dreams,
For us, to catch them like
Butterflies in the clouds,
Injured, when touched.

When you left,
The sun blinded my eyes,
No picture that I could see,
Only iron-colored pain,
To paint my fading memories.

When you left,
Swallowed by jaws of your absence,
I took in my first breath.
Until then, I only knew to cry,
Or to hope, endlessly.

When you left,
You were alone and crushed,
Curtailed in the white sheets,
Your suffering body,
Hiding from evil spirits.

When you left,
My own presence
Reduced to remembrances;
My faith, as a forgotten bird,
Soared to the desert of sorrows.

Peace of Mind

© Ben Crookshank, MSIV



Start Your Journey Down a Dirt Path

© Tonya Krushinsky
Penn State Cancer Institute



Today and Tomorrow

© Sigmund David, Patient

I only have today
Maybe, I will have
Tomorrow
But I only
See today

Tomorrow
Can be a long
Time away
Even forever

I only have today
Exactly
What is
In front of me

I may
Not wake up
Tomorrow

I am not
worried
About it

I only have today
Tonight I
Am surrounded
In bed

By my three dogs
And one cat

I only have
Today

I can't see
Any further than that

I only have
Today

Secure

© Madison Kist, BS, MS1

Every night, I crawl into those dark, dangerous, dirty corners of my soul.
And I worship them.



R.E.M.

© Diane Jang, MSIV

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2021 UP Class	Inside Back Cover

Darkness Into Light

© 2021 University Park Class Painting
with Michael Flanagan, MD



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