

HARMONY

Humanism explored through Art and Writing

A HUMANITIES MAGAZINE
from the
PROGRAM IN MEDICAL HUMANITIES



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of Medicine

Tucson

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This issue of Harmony
is dedicated to:

Professor Ellen Melamed

1953 - 2021

*"The things you do for yourself are gone
when you are gone, but the things you do
for others remain as your legacy."*

-Kalu Ndukwe Kalu



A child of Holocaust survivors, Ellen Melamed went on to escape from the Twin Towers on 9/11 and successfully fought and beat cancer. She utilized her family's intergenerational trauma, her own experiences with illness, and her training in medical humanities and bioethics to teach medical and pre-medical students to honor the patient experience. When she was approached by students who wished to start a new medical humanities elective at the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Tucson, she immediately got on board. She brought her natural gifts for forming human connections to bring interested students and promoted diversity in all aspects of the curriculum, from encouraging discourse on mental health and LGBTQ experiences to inviting ethnically diverse guest speakers.

When the Program in Medical Humanities requested her support, Ellen zealously took on the role of Director and even joined Harmony Magazine as Chief Editor, which saved the journal from publishing its final issue. She recognized the value of incorporating art, literature, poetry, and music into a medical school curriculum and was skilled in synthesizing those components into a successful longitudinal course. She also held important roles at the UA Poetry Center and was fundamental in helping to establish the first medical humanities book collection at the UA Health Sciences Library. Ellen was a role model, a counselor, and a friend to her students. She will be remembered as a light-hearted, kind, and humanistic individual who was a cornerstone of the arts and humanities at the University of Arizona. Her legacy will live on, not only in her family and loved ones, but also through the course she helped to establish and her work for Harmony. In the words of a friend, Ellen will be missed greatly by all who were lucky to have met her and experienced her energy and passion for life.

HARMONY

VOLUME XVIII

Harmony is a publication of the Medical Humanities program in the Curricular Affairs department at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, University of Arizona Health Sciences, and the Kenneth Hill Foundation as a gift for the community.

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FRONT COVER:

"Rebirth of the Moon"- by Riley Patrick McDougall

BACK COVER:

"Orange Tree"- by Bianca Kao

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



Rebirth. Rebirth is our theme for the 2021 Harmony Magazine.

Rebirth. Awakening. Possibility. Transformation. Hope.

As I write these words, 2020, a year that history will note with a degree of incredulity, and a year like no other in our memory, is coming to an end. All of us have been impacted by a raging health pandemic, a long overdue awareness of racial disparity, and an unorthodox election that we have not experienced during our lifetime.

This pandemic, which continues to devastate the country and the world, is also a time for hope, for rebirth.

It is the health care community - our community - that has been at the forefront, fighting the novel Covid-19 virus. It is the members of our community, whose words you will read and whose artwork you will see in this issue of Harmony, that continue to experience the daily challenges and joys of practicing medicine. It is our community that, despite the painful divisions in our country, serves everyone who needs medical care, and who daily puts their family and friends at risk each time they finish a shift and return home.

We in the Medical Humanities Program honor our health care workers for their empathic and sustained service. Compassionate care begins with effective and respectful communication; our students are instructed early in their training to listen generously, and to recognize and value a patient's history, culture, and daily life.

It is this compassion for others that will guide not only our health care workers, but all of us, through these challenging times. This time for reflection and for kindness towards others, and towards oneself, will surely encourage hope and transformation as we navigate the new year.

Despite the challenges of our current, unusual academic year, the student and staff editors of Harmony have worked diligently and enthusiastically to bring you this current issue. I am grateful to all of them for their creativity, intelligence, and generosity.

May we all find peace, safety, and good health in 2021.

Rebirth.

Rebirth. Awakening. Possibility. Transformation. Hope.

Ellen Melamed, MA

Director, Medical Humanities Program

University of Arizona College of Medicine

FROM THE EDITORS

Natalie P. deQuillfeldt



Three and a half years ago as I packed my belongings into a suitcase and boarded a flight from New York City to Tucson, I knew I was headed for one of the most difficult journeys I would ever make. As I now navigate the interview trail for residency, it's easy to look back and say wow that went by so fast or that wasn't so bad. Maybe that's because things tend to look more pleasant in retrospect, or maybe it's because the trials of medical school were dwarfed by the year 2020.

When the Covid-19 Pandemic hit the Northeast, I listened as friends and family told me of the deaths of many people I knew back home. Among those was Aaron (Bill) W. Godfrey. He was the longest standing professor at Stony Brook University in Long Island, a military veteran, Civil Rights activist, philanthropist, and a very dear friend and mentor to me. He had left Princeton to attend a smaller state college because prestige was not important to him. Then he left Wallstreet to become a teacher in inner city schools. When he was offered tenure at Stony Brook, he turned it down to the chagrin of his family, simply to keep himself humble. He believed in education for all, diversity in every field, and most of all in helping those in need. He had enormous faith in young people and was very optimistic about the future because he believed in the fundamental goodness of human beings.

With a pandemic, wildfires and other natural disasters, and ongoing military conflicts occurring in many parts of the world, I believe we could draw some inspiration from his optimism. Across the United States, politicians and lawmakers are recognizing the need for medical providers in underserved areas. Local governments are offering incentives to bring diverse physicians, nurses, and ancillary staff members to areas hit hardest by disease and poverty. More and more medical schools and residency programs are developing tracks for those interested in rural health, primary care/preventative medicine and creating diversity task forces.

While people everywhere are dealing with loss and hardship, we are also learning resiliency, holding our loved ones a little closer, and practicing gratitude. In this year's issue of Harmony, the authors and artists will share with you their sorrow and pain. However, you'll also be nurtured by their strength such as in Risen, I've Got Life and Shining Stars, their kindness and love of humanity as in Sweet Healing and Hospice, and the joy they have felt immersing themselves in new cultures and experiences in All Soul's Procession and Yogeshwari.

I'm so honored to have been part of this magazine for the past 3 years. I'd like to thank my wonderful team of editors (Ellen, Jerie, Julie, Amrutha, Andres, Bianca, Holly, Jenna, Oumou, and Riyasha) for all their hard work. With the creativity and innovativeness each medical student has brought to our group, I am confident that Harmony will continue to expand to wider audiences in the future. Lastly, thank you for picking up this magazine or reading online. I believe that in these pages you will find empathy for our shared human suffering and hope for a more unified, diverse tomorrow.

*But pray for our recovery
And hope that we can rest
Forever in the sunlight
In the islands of the blest
-Bill Godfrey
1.10.1929 - 4.7.2020*

FROM THE EDITORS

Julie Huynh

Like many Americans, I will admit that I had no idea of how destructive COVID-19 would be to the world when news regarding it first appeared. It was the combination of the NBA suspending their season with the email the University of Arizona saying that in-person classes were going to be cancelled in March that made me realize COVID-19 required full alert and action. As a non-essential graduate student right in the middle of an 8-year MD/PhD program, I decided to end my experiments in the laboratory and retreat to my home. With that, I watered my succulents, transferred all the data and information I needed from my work desktop onto a hard drive, packed it in my bag and drove to my house, with no idea of how the pandemic would unfold.

One of the major themes the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to us are the thoughts of uncertainty. This uncertainty from COVID-19 creates so many questions. There are many about society—how will we recover from this? How can we protect and help each other? It also generates so many about our own lives: When will it be over? When can we return to doing the things we love? When will things get better? Will I be okay? How do I make sure my neighbor is okay?

Reflections on answers to these questions are present in all of our minds. More than ever, 2020 has been a year where we have had to think about our values and our choices every day-- From choosing to wear a mask, especially when they were not universally ordered, to deciding whether or not we should see loved ones to protect them and the community. We have had to forge a new normal, one that is depicted in many powerful pieces in this issue of Harmony. A new normal that mandates mask wearing as an essential part of our daily uniform, depicted in Elizabeth Vargas' Rebirth: La Tierra en los Tiempos de Hoy where the rebirth of a baby is portrayed with the baby donned in a mask and Radu Moga's School supplies where a child is illustrated in front of required school supplies, which now includes the mask covering half his face.

Artwork like these and all the pieces and written works found in this issue of Harmony are ways we as humans can reflect during these uncertain times, bond together and become stronger. This uncertainty in varying degrees is not foreign to many patients we work with in the medical field. A new cancer diagnosis can bring up these questions but as Steve Cushman writes in The Chemo Infusion Suite, "...She likes the sound of suite. The implication this is only temporary, a layover, before her normal life begins again. The resiliency that humans have allows us not only always have hope but to have the strength to actually do what we need to do to overcome uncertain, difficult times.

Thank you to the authors and artists of this issue of Harmony for sharing how they think about the world. We may be fighting this pandemic by changing our normal, typical lives (though as I write this, multiple vaccines are in the process of being approved—an end in sight!) but that does not take away from who we are as humans at our core. These works explore that and I hope you find words and strokes that resonate with you as I and the amazing editorial team at Harmony (Ellen, Jerie, Natalie, Amrutha, Andres, Bianca, Holly, Jenna, Oumou, and Riyasha—this issue would not have been possible without them!) did.

All my best,



FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF

RIYASHA DAULAT

Riyasha is an Arizona native and fourth-year medical student at UACOM-T. She is pursuing a career in internal medicine.

Riyasha Daulat



OUMOU BAH

Oumou Bah is the proud daughter of Guinean immigrants, and a medical student at tUACOM-T. She is passionate about women's health, and she aims to use her career in medicine as a means for social justice.

Oumou Bah

JENNA KAY

Jenna Kay is a third-year medical medical student at UACOM-T. She is passionate about rural family medicine, enjoys creating art, and loves spending time with her husband Jarred and dog Blu.

Jenna Kay



ANDRES DIAZ

Andres is a native from Colombia who loves good food, good people, and good times. He is a first-year medical student at UACOM-T with a passion for global health. He plans to pursue a career in pediatric oncology.

Andres Diaz

FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF

AMRUTHA DONIPARTHI

Amrutha Doniparthi is a second-year medical student at the UACOM-T campus. In her freetime, she enjoys photography, traveling and spending time with her family in Yuma, AZ.

Amrutha Doniparthi



HOLLY LAWRY

Holly Lawry is a Third-year medical student at the UACOM-T. She is pursuing a career in Emergency Medicine and enjoys hiking and spending time with her children, Tryston and Harper, and her husband Jonathan.

Holly

BIANCA KAO

Bianca Kao is a third year medical student at UACOM-T. While exploring a career in pediatrics, she also has a passion for painting, yoga, and baking.

Bianca Kao



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HARMONY

AWARD WINNERS 2021

MATHIASSEN PROSE AWARD

best submission in either poetry or prose

Kuhokee Kumari Das : *Twenty Minutes in the ICU*

Kuhokee Kumari Das is an adjunct lecturer at Queens College and a professional Indian classical dancer. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Kuhokee discovered her love for science, art, and dance, through diverse avenues of experiences throughout New York City. She combined these interests during her undergraduate career at Queens College, where she majored in Biology and minored in Art History, graduating with High Honors. Kuhokee then decided to advance her dancer career during her time away from academics, performing in esteemed venues such as the United Nations General Assembly and Lincoln Center. Kuhokee was further motivated to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Biology. She now teaches Anatomy and Physiology as an adjunct at Queens College, while continuing her studies.

RYAN VISUAL ARTS AWARD

best visual arts submission

Riley Patrick McDougall : *Rebirth of the Moon*

Riley McDougall is a current fourth year medical student at The University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson. He was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, spending most of his childhood enjoying the outdoors as an active Boy Scout. After graduating from high school, Riley attended Arizona State University and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with the aspirations of becoming a physician. He is currently interested in Radiation Oncology and enjoys cooking, hiking, and photography in his spare time.

PARADA MEDICAL STUDENT AWARD

best overall submission from a University of Arizona medical student

Lynn Pham : *I've Got Life*

Lynn Pham was born in South El Monte, California and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. She studied Public Health at UC Berkeley and is now a fourth year medical student at The University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson where she is pursuing a career in anesthesiology. She has always enjoyed painting but devoted more time as a quarantine hobby creating gifts for her loved ones. She painted this piece for her sister's 30th birthday to honor her resiliency in overcoming past struggles and building a harmonious life with Bipolar Disorder I. Lynn will continue to paint as a therapeutic way to express herself and reflect on the power of human connection in medicine.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Teddy G. Goetz : *Risen*

Bianca Kao : *Orange Tree*

Adelina Lane : *The Rebirth of Medicine*

TWENTY MINUTES IN THE ICU

Kuhokee Kumari Das

On an autumn evening, I sat on my father's lap. Being half of his height, I likened him to a softer, warmer chair. I lay my tiny head on his chest, pressing an ear on it until I could hear his lungs expand and relax with each inhale and exhale. My eyes focused on his chest hair. They were curled and few, a noble trait, I thought. We stayed that way as we listened to his recently-acquired Celine Dion album. "My Heart Will Go On" played, swooning me to sleep. "You are my heart", he said as I closed my eyes, breathing in the incense my mother lit in the prayer room. He bore the weight of recent immigration, a new family to feed in the States, and an old family to support in his native city of Chittagong, Bangladesh. Yet, he lovingly welcomed this added weight of his six-year-old daughter peacefully sleeping on his rising and falling trunk.

Memories like this swarmed in my mind as I sat in an ICU room in April. A curtain separated my 25-year-old self from my father's breathless body. He had been suffering with Covid-19, its complications, and aggressive ventilation. The warmth of that memory was now replaced with my cold, cruel reality. I sat in a chair, completely covered in protective equipment, shaking, my eyes stinging. When the memories finished their dance, I was met with intolerable stillness. I forcibly remembered the ancient teaching, "the body is temporary, the soul is eternal".

I looked at a large mass that was sitting close to my feet. Blinking away my torrent of tears, I focused in on the object. It was a plastic bag, full of Baba's things: his glasses, a collection of poems written by Rabindranath Tagore, a pen, pajamas, and a note my brother had written to him. A flash of blinding pain hit me in my chest, ice coursed through my veins. "The body is temporary, the soul is eternal". The name plate that read, "Das", came to my awareness next. This was it. This was the last time I would ever see him. My loving, radiant father.

Somewhere in the room, my cousin cried loudly, his voice ringing with despair, disbelief, guilt, and insurmountable pain. I heard him touch my father's body. I heard his voice muffled as he dug his face into his jacket, trying to get Baba to wake up. A nurse touched my shoulder, she too, shielded from the virus and the dense cloud of my sadness. "The body is temporary, the soul is eternal", I repeated inwardly.

"You can look at him, dear. He looks like he's sleeping, like he's in peace", she said, affection brimming in her eyes as she looked into the emptiness of mine. "I haven't seen him in a month. Does he have a beard? Is his hair gray? Has he lost weight? What does his skin look like? Is it darker? Are there more wrinkles? Are his eyes closed? Did the vent hurt him? Were you able to disconnect him from all of those machines?" My lips busied themselves with these questions, my mind continued to drown. The nurse answered each question, her hand now gently stroking my gowned shoulder.

Yes, he had a short beard. No, his hair wasn't gray; it was dark and full. Yes, he'd lost weight. Yes, his eyes are closed. No, the vent didn't hurt him. Yes, he's free from the machines. She ended with, "He was a funny man. Before he was placed on the vent, he called us over to talk to us. He joked with us and showed us pictures of you and your brother. He said he needed to survive for the both of you. He loved you very much."

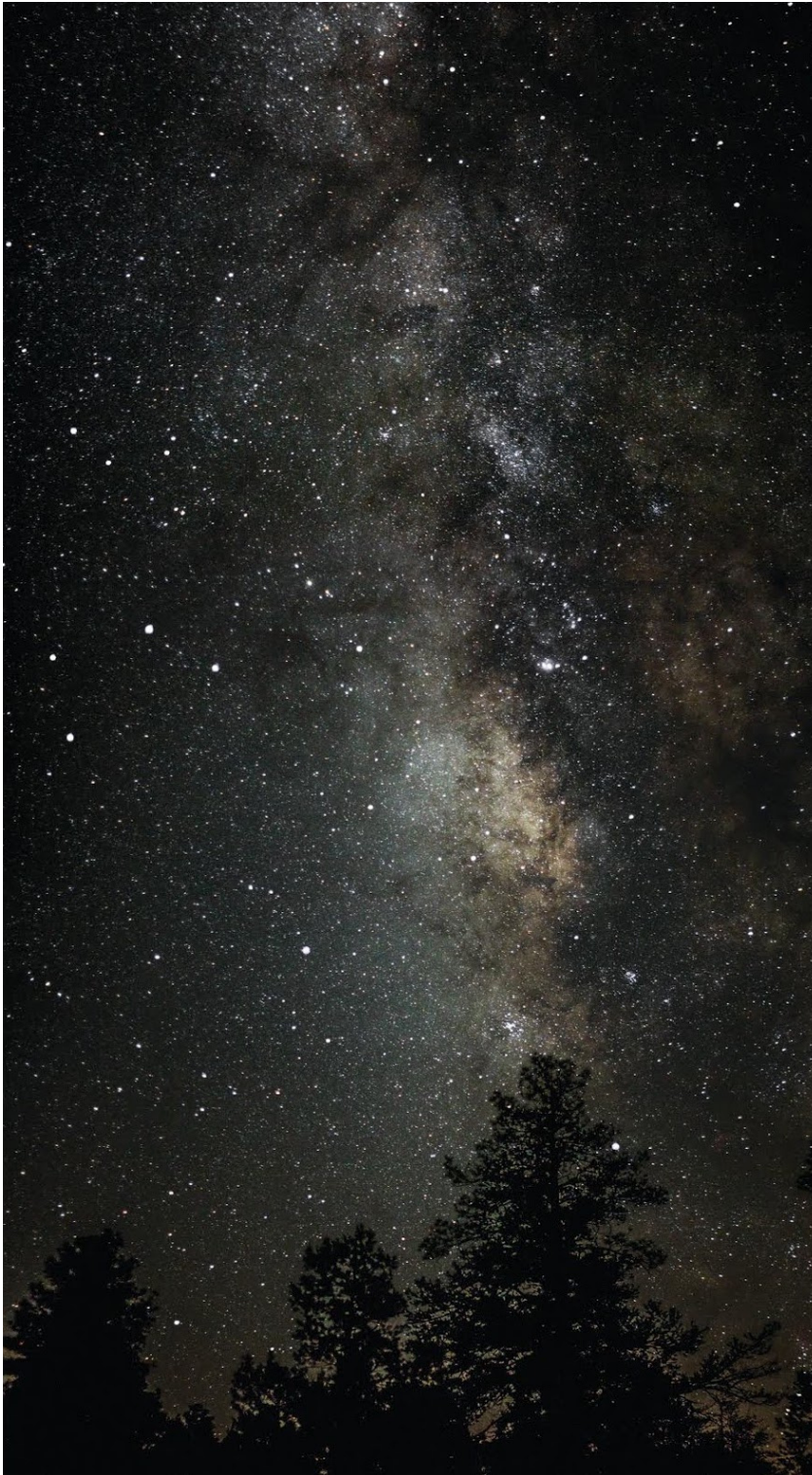
And finally, I shattered. Everything inside and outside of me broke. Everything became dust. Everything became fire and I burned. Everything became gray ash and from those ashes, I was born again, without a father. "The body is temporary, the soul is eternal."

My cousin emerged from behind the curtain, his face swollen and soaked with tears, his face shield clouded. My gloved hand grasped his tightly, as if my life depended on this moment of human contact. "Dada, that's not Baba anymore. His soul left this body behind. I can't look at it. I can't remember Baba like this. I only want those memories of him from when he was my dad." My cousin collapsed on me upon hearing this. Supporting the weight of his body and the weight of my anguish, I managed to stop my tears.

I walked out of the room of that body that once was home to my father's Soul. I walked around the ICU, looking at the patients, all hooked up to machines, all seeming "peaceful" with their eyes closed, all with families that couldn't see them. I walked out of that hospital with a plastic bag of Baba's things. I walked out without looking at his body.

I walked into my house to look at the shells of beings that were now my mother and brother, sitting on the floor. I sat awake the whole night, watching the only two parts of my Soul that still existed with me, as they watched their nightmares behind their closed eyes. I watched my mother clenching her marriage bracelets, I saw my brother scream my father's name over and over. I saw how neither of them were aware of what they were doing.

Six months later, I wonder if I made the right decision. I wonder if I should have looked at the body that lay on a bed in an ICU room given to "Das". I wonder if I should have pressed my face on that lifeless, still chest, imagining that we were back in Brooklyn listening to Celine Dion. I wonder if I should have counted his chest hairs one last time. I wonder if I'll ever forgive myself for not being able to save his life with the strength of my love. In this new life, this life without him, I wonder if I'll ever be able to pick up the pieces that shattered on that chair in that ICU room, which now harbors a different name.



REBIRTH OF THE MOON

Riley Patrick McDougall

*Pinetop, Arizona
Canon T3i with a Canon EF
50mm f/1.8 lens*

Astrophotography lets me reflect on my experiences. The Rebirth of The Moon emulates the continuous cycle of life and death; with the darkest nights flashing millions of possible new beginnings.



REPAIR

Julia Marie Liatti

Pencil

I used woodless, solid colored pencils and laid down very small, straight lines (<1cm long) at various angles and proximity to create texture and layer the colors. Shaping a large piece out of so many small components is a long exercise in patience and planning. So, making the drawing is analogous to the foresight and endurance of a complicated repair process - the final image of the tree is a nod to the fires in the mountains this summer, but is really just a by-product.

DO YOU HAVE THE ANTIBODIES?

Ammura Hernandez

Do you have The Antibodies?

Tested.

Did you brave the new-aged dragon?

Covid-light. *Maybe?*

Who can be tested? *Me, surely?*

Do you hold secret sword and shield,
Well within your blood,
Forward marching with each heartbeat?
Status: passed, braved, positive
Antibodies.

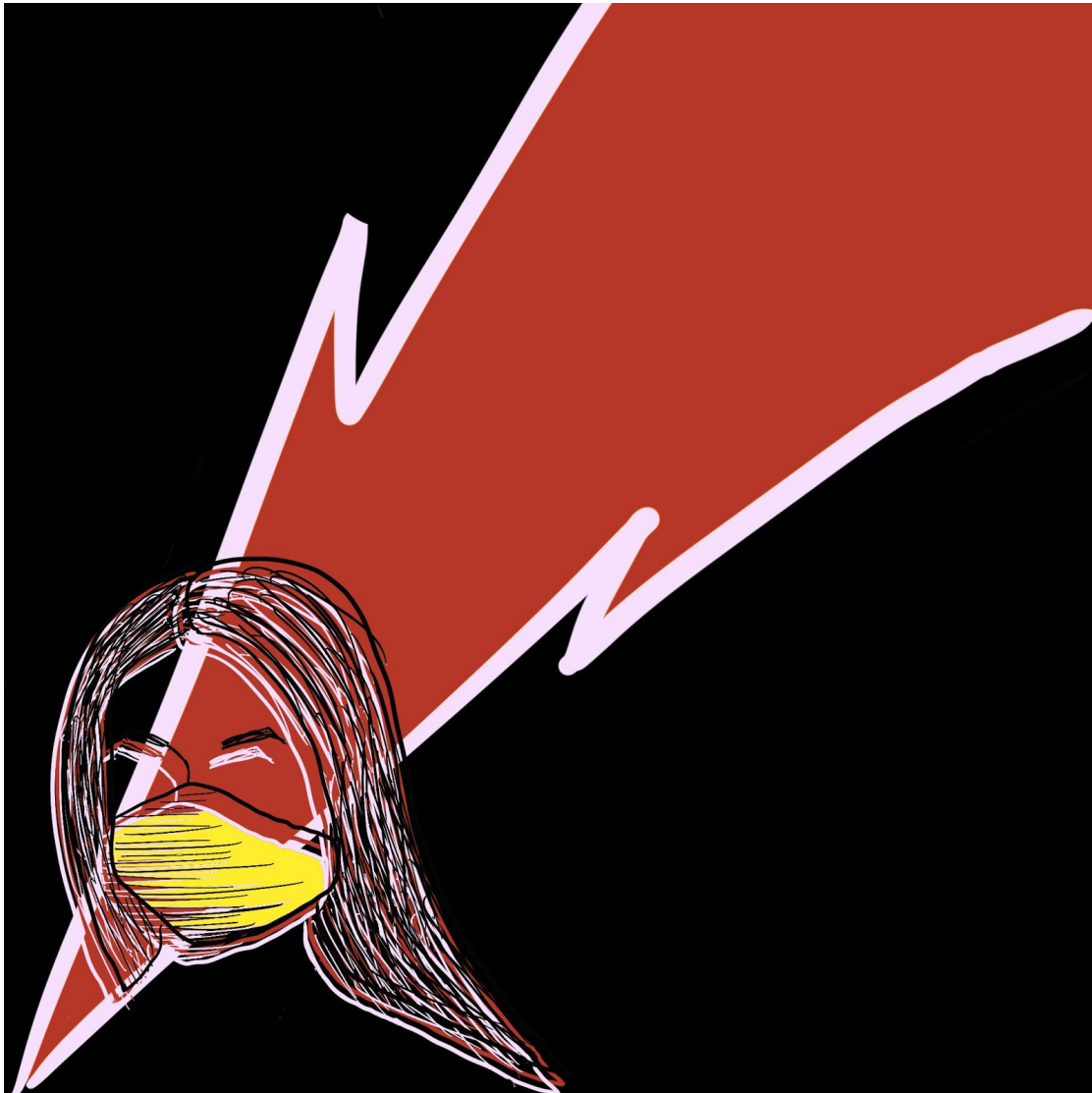
Do you wear the new
Signet ring, a cure for only you?
Your pass for freedom.
Do we pin a scarlet letter upon your breast?
Marked, superior, free, survivor, able.

Does your Antibody cry,
Tears of silent anguish screaming for those fallen?
A mounting toll: bodies, lives
Upon which you stand, your Antibody.
Elevated above the rest.
Separated from the Dead, the Dying, the Sick, the Stuck, the
Quarantined.

Does your Antibody protest,
Marching for false freedoms?
Without safety in sight,
With righteous anger and pride,
Marching into the unknown, brazen
Against Science, against Law, against Neighbor, against kindness.

Are you our savior?
The Antibody, the cure in blood:
Replicated, transmitted, shared.
Why does *my* Antibody,
Robust, strong, survived, breathed,
Mock *his* Antibody, unmounted, left for loss of breath, Antibody but
clots in his lungs?

Is your pass to freedom,
A pass to serve?
To stand up front, your shield for all. Your Antibody for all.
All humanity's hope
Found by a bloody, sick-stained, death-tolled Antibody.
But who will be tested? *Me, surely?*



A NEW MEANING TO SELF

Ellen Michelle Sivertson

Digital Media

I have felt like the past year has been so challenging that it's forced a change within myself. I am grateful for the challenges and successes it has brought me!

ALL SOUL'S PROCESSION

Elizabeth Butler

Tonight I flow along with others
along the Santa Cruz
a river without water

I want to be a part of it
Procession of souls
the many mouths, one stomach

The faded pink around mountains' bumpy peaks
everyone gathered under dim streetlights
a magical feel on this ordinary street

Red fire, flaming feathers
golden tassels sway
one hundred thousand faces begin to flow

Calaveras with deep black eyes
offset with turquoise, orange, and blue
marigold crowns

Offrendas carried by others
slow walk
tall and billowing La Catrinas

I'm caught up in these feelings
my heart bursts forth
love for all

And at the same time
a sinking, falling
deep hollowness of loss

The Odaiko begin to beat
thrum, thrum, thrum
flutes sound, lanterns glow

East, west begin to move
our ritualistic dance
I simply walk

An Anglo in this mysticism
worshiping clouds
and those I've lost

Do you feel responsible?
slipping down into the abyss
or rising with the flames of night

My fingers stroke the rough paper
holding on before letting go
encouraging smile

I let fall into that giant orb
the names I know and
clouded memories of faces I could not save

And burn that glinting scalpel blade
of fortitude
tonight let soft blue tears to drip

Four hundred pounds of wishes and dreams
inflamed, alive
made of words and paper

Then hoisted, flying overhead
Radiance! In the obsidian sky
the acrobats!

I yell! I scream!
Oh what delight!
I laugh with such a celebration

Music blares
we are consumed
hugging, twirling, perhaps a kiss!

I'm drunk with all humanity
sharing grief
and so much life



ARTWORKS BACKYARD

Karen Dannheim

My art piece has lots of flowers and leaves. I decided to create this because I like seeing them when I go on walks with my mom. I picked fresh flowers and leaves to serve as inspirations and references. I also used them for printmaking this piece.

YOGESHWARI

Todd Farnworth

Yogeshwari. It is the Sanskrit name for a Hindu goddess. She is fierce. She liberates the oppressed. She battles the forces that threaten peace. She is a warrior.

My email to Pete, the warehouse manager was brief:

If I send you my mesher like last year, do you have room (and weight) to include it? I think it weighs 15 lb.

His reply was prompt:

If you can send it to me by Friday, I can get it in the boxes.

I had never heard the name Yogeshwari before I went to India. In fact, I didn't hear it much while I was there. It was just the name on the makeshift medical chart that had been created moments before as she, along with a hundred others passed through the orderly process of screening. A photo of her face was attached. A black Sharpie identification number was printed on her arm.

She did not know my name. I was one of the American doctors. She feared me.

She had, what to her must have been insultingly short boy-hair, and a feminine face. Her flowing hair had been shorn off to keep it from sticking to the burns and dressings.

Her eyes pleaded to alter what she knew was coming. A silent crying distorted her face as we gently started to remove the white gauze wrapped around her torso and right arm. She had suffered through painful dressing changes every two days for the last three months.

Pallavi and Hanumantha, were surgical residents-in-training in the local hospital. They were a credit to their program. Their English was good. Their translation skills were used in the triage clinic and repeatedly over the next eleven days.

Pallavi was the junior resident. She was short, with long dark hair and as kind as they come. She knew how to talk to anxious or frustrated parents like an older sister.

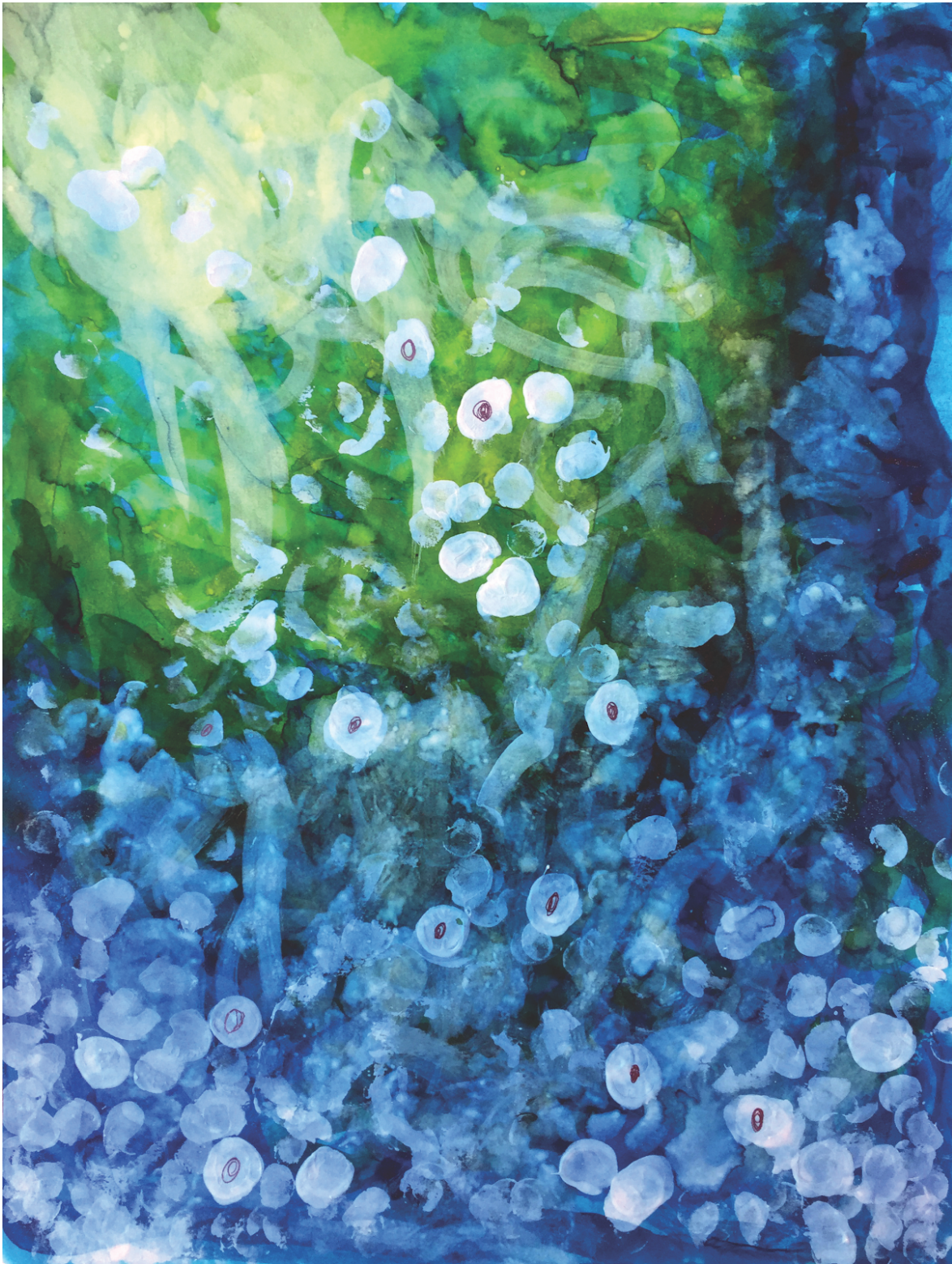
Hanuman (we learned from Pallavi, who smiled as she told us) is a Hindu god and divine monkey companion of the god Rama. As we got to know them better, Hanumantha was teased about being the "monkey god." He was a tireless worker - always so polite, calling me "Sir" every few seconds. He had a handsome brown face, but blushed if you asked him about any girlfriends.

Pallavi interviewed the mom and related the story: Three months before, Yogeshwari was a happy, beautiful girl. Mom had photos of her. Stunning. Mom and dad both worked, leaving Yogeshwari and her older sister home with their blind grandfather. "Grandfather is hungry," her 12-year-old sister had said. "We can boil him some noodles."

I imagined the scene. Yogeshwari had gotten on a stool next to the open-flame stove. Her colorful dress ignited like a torch. Screaming, she fell off of the stool. Her older sister did not know what to do.

Her parents spent all their money to get her medical care. They sold jewelry and everything of value that they had to help pay for an operation.

A local surgeon treated her with skin grafts taken from her thighs. The grafting was partially successful. But then they were out of money.



CIRCLE MOONS ON WATER

Chris Ortiz

This art piece shows the colors I like: blues, yellows, greens and whites. They remind me of swimming in a lake. It was a long project for me because I had to create many layers of color and it required that I remain extremely focused and quiet as I worked.

I have seen many kids terrified of pain. When they are young, kids are incapable of cooperation. I have often had to wrap kids in a “papoose,” a fiberglass board with cloth flaps that fold over to secure a writhing torso and kicking legs. It is the only way to reduce the movement enough to make it possible - not easy - to repair a laceration, short of using general anesthesia. Their anxious parents are tasked with helping to prevent a Houdini-like escape from the papoose until the last stitch is placed.

I have decided that age seven is when you can start to reason with some kids. Some can cooperate. But some cannot.

Yogeshwari was seven. She was tense but she did not flee or fight. She stood skinny, naked and shaking beneath a disposable surgical gown, while we examined the burns. Raw bleeding spaces dominated the chest and abdomen where skin should be. She also had a burn on her right upper arm. She would clearly have difficulty developing normal breasts, a problem that I knew would haunt her in the future. I saw one bright spot, a healed skin graft on the right side of the abdomen. Her thighs showed the marks of having been used for skin graft donor sites already. The groin was contracted with scars.

At age seven, she had lost control of her body. She had lost control of her health.

Even before setting foot in India, I knew what to expect. The same thing I find in every country we visit. Unfair circumstances. I guess, like survivor’s guilt, I have privileged-person’s guilt. As I say this, I realize that there are unfair circumstance where I live as well. There is poverty. There is neglect, abuse. However, a child with the same burns in the US, even without health insurance, would have been treated immediately and would have healed quickly, avoiding many weeks of painful dressing changes and worse scars. As if adding insult to injury, the parts of the world where you wouldn’t want to get a burn are the very parts of the world where burns happen with shocking frequency.

I once treated a 21-year-old Bangladesh girl with neck burn scars that were so bad her chin was plastered down to her chest. She couldn’t close her mouth. She had been burned while cooking too. She mistook kerosene for cooking oil. It was seven years, mouth stretched unnaturally open, before she got help from a surgical mission. We released the scar and placed large skin grafts on her chin and neck. Now she can close her mouth and even smile.

When I went to Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world, a realization crystalized. Even poor countries have rich people. I saw their houses. I saw their factories. I saw their expensive cars and clothes. And to their credit, it was those types of people who had invited us to do free surgery on their poor countrymen.

On the day of her surgery, she was carried from the pre-op bed in the hallway, wrapped in a blanket. She was tense but did not cry. The anesthesiologist spoke soothing words in Kannada, the local dialect. The tense body went limp as the anesthetic took over.



RISEN

Teddy G.
Goetz

Photo

This piece represents the profound rebirth that my recent gender-affirming chest surgery offered my trans body.

The donor site had already been pre-selected by studying her clinic photos. The calves, though skinny, were smooth: perfect sites to harvest thin sheets of skin with an electric dermatome. Planning and efficiency limited blood loss. At age 7, and weighing the same as an average four-year-old, and slightly anemic, she couldn't afford much.

Split-thickness skin grafting is a very basic operation for any plastic surgeon. We learn it early on in our surgical training. It's usually a case for the intern, the first-year trainee just out of medical school. Once harvested, the sheets of graft were sent through the mesher, a block of metal with a hand crank that places tiny holes, making it look like a piece of fishnet stocking. The meshing allows blood to seep through the graft rather than collect under the graft which could cause it to separate from its new bed. The meshed skin expands a bit to cover more area.

I have had to mesh a graft by hand with a pointy #11 scalpel poking hundreds of holes when the mesher was not included in the equipment. It is a tedious process that does not work as well. The mesher is a luxury.

The grafts from the calves were just enough to cover the wounds on her arm, chest and abdomen, thanks to the mesher. They were secured with staples. Then, all was wrapped up securely: chest, right arm and legs. Mission accomplished. She was a good patient on the ward. She did what the nurses told her to do. Someone got a picture of her with mini plastic dinosaurs all over her arms and chest and face. She looked like a mountain that dinosaurs loved to climb. Under the dinosaurs there is a hint of a smile.

After five days, she returned to the operating room, this time for a dressing change under anesthesia to check the grafts. Carefully lifting the gauze, I was relieved that the grafts were adherent to the wound beds! Another week and they would be even more secure. The grafts were carefully re-wrapped. A local plastic surgeon had agreed to change the dressing again after we left.

I don't like speaking at closing ceremonies. As the medical director, I was expected to speak on the program. They filled the auditorium with nurses, medical students, residents and even some of the patients. On the stage I sat two chairs away from the honored guest: Sri Sri Sri Dr. Nirmalanandanatha Mahaswamiji. A Hindu religious leader, he was barefoot and wrapped in an orange robe. He had a shaved head, and a look of peace on his face. In one hand he turned a lime over-and-over. With the other he occasionally checked text messages on an iPhone 11. Local doctors and Rotarians put a flower garland over his head and leaned down to kiss his feet and obtain his blessing.

Usually, at closing ceremonies, we say things like, "We are honored to come to your country. Your hospital is doing a great service to those who can't help themselves. We will always remember the friendships we have made here."

Our dedicated mission director, a police chief from Pennsylvania, had already said those things in his five-minute speech. So, when my turn came, I told a simple story. I told of the pain I saw on the face of a girl with burns. It was hard to get the words out. I declared that the pain would soon be gone because of a simple operation.



FROM THE PAIN, SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Rebecca Loggia

Pencil, charcoal and ink combined via Photoshop

As someone with a chronic illness, I know how easy it is to feel defeated by the confusion and pain of it all. Expressing these darker moments through art made me realize the process of healing greatly depends on how willing we are to let go in order to see the beauty and purpose therein.

Sri Sri Sri spoke last. "If we cannot empathize with the pain of others," he asked, "how can we help them? People keep asking me, why are the Americans always smiling? I believe it is because the essence of God is inside of us when we are helping others."

I didn't know it at the time, but the nurses had brought Yogeshwari to the auditorium. At the end, she walked gingerly and shook hands. Her coy smile graced many team member photos. She waved as the nurses took her back to the ward in a wheelchair.

From my computer at home I composed an email to the warehouse manager,

Pete, can you mail me back the mesher when you get a chance?

I'll do it ASAP and let you know.

How was the trip?

It was great. A lot of people needed us. The mesher came in handy for sure. Thanks.

Months later I was thinking about her. On WhatsApp I inquired:

Pallavi and Hanumantha, Did you guys ever see the little girl again, Yogeshwari? The one with the burns on her chest? I'm curious to know how she is doing?

Hanumantha: *Hello sir . . . that child is doing good sir . . . all injury healed sir.*

That brought a smile to my face.

THE BLOOMING HEART

Mehnoor Haseeb

Embroidery

Embroidery is a fun and productive way for me to process my emotions. This piece represents the rebirth of my spirit after enduring the difficulties of 2020. With everything our society experienced this past year, it was often difficult to have a positive outlook on the future. I felt disheartened, tired, and helpless. But at the end of it all, like many of you, I experienced immense personal growth and walked away with so many encouraging truths. I found strength in my support systems, fostered my passion for social justice, and grew into my responsibilities as a future physician. There is so much to work to be done in our society, but I'm grateful to have found my role in it all. I'm ready for challenges of 2021.



THE SOUL

Gurkaran Singh

No beginning

No end

Yet time is fleeting

For the soul is the only entity forever

While the physical body is a temporary endeavor

That allows us to experience the ups and downs of a journey

One that changes in the next awakening with a new yearning

Different from the form we took in our last passage

Yet the ultimate enlightenment is the understanding

Living each moment as if it's our last

But letting each moment last as if it's forever

For you know not what the next moment or life shall bring

Or what physical form you will be carrying

But you know that death plants a new seed

One that will sprout a passage that is new and unique



RISEN I

Christianna Kreiss, M.D.

Photo

Playa Grande Sugar Plantation ruins in Vieques, Puerto Rico

BREATHING TREATMENT

Steve Cushman

Nice and easy the respiratory therapist says
but nothing has been nice and easy

for Mrs. Byrd in about a hundred years.
I wait my turn to take her chest x-ray

watch the white air leak from her Nebulizer
and when we're alone Mrs. Byrd says,

tell me the truth, boy, am I dying and I say
I don't know and she coughs, laughs,

looks me up and down, says,
no, you probably don't.

RISEN II

Christianna Kreiss, M.D.

Photo

Playa Grande Sugar Plantation ruins in
Vieques, Puerto Rico



IN THE CHEMO INFUSION SUITE

Steve Cushman

As the needle pierces her skin,
then the catheter,
Jill eases back in the chair.
It's big, this chair, and tan
like the other nine in the infusion
suite. She likes the sound of suite.
The implication this is only temporary,
a layover,
before her normal life begins again.



RISEN III

Christianna Kreiss, M.D.

Photo

Playa Grande Sugar
Plantation ruins in Vieques,
Puerto Rico

ASCLEPIUS AND THE CRAB

Andres Felipe Diaz

In lab, with a neuroglial scar formation
Resilient and impenetrable, clear complications
Biological wall, no hope for regeneration
Enter stem dorsal root neuron!
Is this a cause for celebration?

Cocktail of morphogens, wisdom for differentiation
Sound reasoning, some luck and certainly good intentions
For paralyzed limbs and facial expression
Hoping for physical and mental liberation
Enough literature review or scientific consideration?

Day one, two, three...no regeneration
Week one, stagnant indications
Week two, no progress. Clear regression
Week three...wait...
Growth?

Yes, growth...
Perhaps insignificant, requires further observation
More growth...
Slow yet consistent, needs an explanation
Could all of this be a statistical aberration?

No! significant growth with functional integration!
Recovery and healing, with encouraging foundations
Comprehension, not just luck and good intentions
Improved movement and lifestyle, an SCI revelation
So what journal is available for publication?

More growth...

No worries, just slight malformations

More growth...

Progressive distortion, evolution and transformation

Perhaps a mistake or insufficient inspection?

More growth...

Invasion, destruction, and genome mutations

More growth

Unexpected result, need literature exploration

Why such a sudden presentation?

More Growth

Darwin at work, hostile manifestations

MORE GROWTH

Complete disregard for homeostatic regulation

MORE GROWTH!

Continued survival after lack of supplementation

MORE GROWTH!!

Immortality, conquest, self-automation

MORE GROWTH!!!

Stop

MORE GROWTH!!!!

Please stop...

MORE!!!!!!

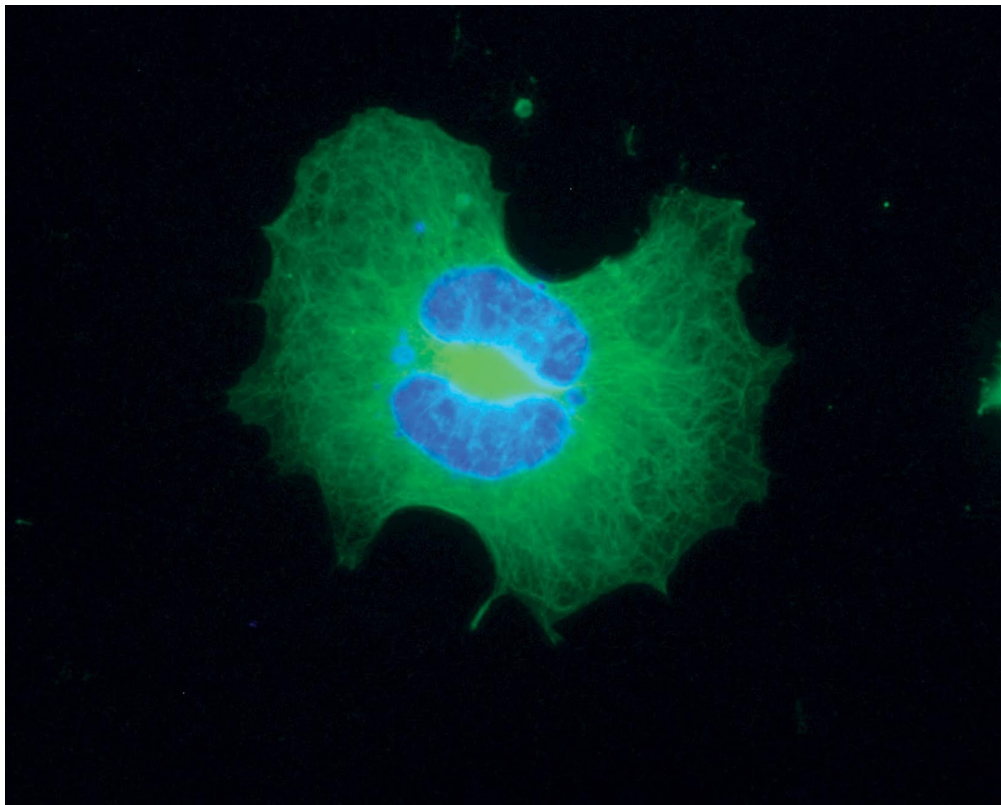
STOP!

MORE!!!!!!

PLEASE STOP!!

Time for a microscopic evaluation
Cellular Underworld, Hades' Magnum Opus, Post-Revelations
Time for a chemical assault, absolute eradication
To leave no trace of the abomination
So, we meet again ancient malignant aggression?

Back to lab, deep breaths and introspection
My apologies Asclepius, Farber and Vesalius
Grampa, please keep watching with affection
With courage for spinal rejuvenation
Round two, neuroglial scar formation?



THE CRAB

Andres Felipe Diaz

Immunofluorescence microscopy

The Crab is an image of malignant cells that arose from my unsuccessful experiments at UCF aimed at stimulating spinal regeneration. While beautiful, these images also remind me of how violent and resilient malignant cells are; they have an intractable will to invade, transform, and survive.

A QUEST FOR THE LOWLY GOD

Matthew Leonard Repp

Before going into medicine, I aspired to be a theologian. Throughout my life of floating on a rock through space, the big questions of life, death, theism, atheism, and the meaning of life have kept me in limbo between existential despair and passion fueled charisma to change the world. I developed severe anxiety in graduate school as I studied philosophy, hoping that the next philosopher that I came across penned words to paper that would summarize the meaning of life for me so that I could at least get some decent sleep. My studies were fruitful in the fact that I learned vast amounts of knowledge, but futile in that life's answers were never handed to me. I desired to pinpoint the exact pathology of life and to treat it. Unfortunately, neither medicine nor the deep questions of life are this easily dealt with.

It was during graduate school as I was striving toward my master's in theology that I was diagnosed with a common disorder that many philosophers have; I call it the "High Thinking Disorder." This diagnosis by Myers Briggs Personality Test told me what I already knew of myself, which is that I live in my head, constantly thinking and tossing and turning over questions and answers. I've learned how to cope with the way that my mind works by journaling in order to organize my thoughts. I suppose that writing has helped me realize that you can find answers to life in strange places.

A Journal Entry: 9.6.2020

"Wait! Show me how to do that one more time." My fingers fumbled across the colors and edges as my nephew - a good teacher I might add - attempted to walk me through solving a Rubik's cube. He repeatedly tried to show me patterns, like a mentor striving to show his mentee the way. I got confused. I got flustered. As my vexation peaked, I said, "I'll try to do this next time, I need to study." I successfully escaped the situation that made me anxious and uncomfortable.

Without anything remotely close to a display of disappointment, he replied, "Don't worry, Neaner, you'll get it next time and then we can do it together," (Neaner is my nephew-appointed name).

My nephew shares my birthday. October 13th signifies a day of life for me, yet I always worried that for him, this day would mark death. He was born addicted to heroin, with four other drugs in his system as icing on the cake. Unlike the safe places of my mind where deep thoughts form, the womb in which he formed was far from safe. I remember watching his body tremble as he craved the very substances that would kill him. I wished the worst imaginable on the people who did this to him, regardless of the fact that they were my own blood. The pediatricians and psychiatrists told us that the long-lasting effects would be only for the future to tell.



LEAVING CHILDHOOD

Mark Abrams, PhD

Photo

Bar Mitzvah ~
transformational rebirth

Flash forward to now, the future did tell. It told us that he is a smart boy, curious about the world with an ambition second to none. A six-year-old ready to solve all of life's complexities. With swiftness, he attempts to simplify his words in order for me to understand his instructions. My ego arises as I rehearse the encounter: "I went to the best colleges in the world for education. You're a six-year-old. I'm supposed to be the teacher here." But in reality, I'm the medical student who knows nothing and he's more like the attending physician patiently trying to teach me a concept.

In my high thinking mind, I sometimes draw conclusions and try to place meaning on everything in life using a philosophical lens. Sometimes I make deep connections, and sometimes I feel crazy labeling my bed making in the morning as the first step to organizing the chaos in the world. Maybe there is a meaningful connection here, and maybe this is empty speculation, but here it goes:

I spent so many years searching for God in philosophical texts and ivory towers but could never seem to find him. The truth was that he was never there. I believe that Carl Jung was right: "Modern man can't see God because he doesn't look low enough." God is found incarnate amongst us, teaching us lessons through the least of these, the six-year-olds and the recovering addicts.

Maybe life is like a Rubik's cube - sometimes it's just handed to us all jumbled up and we are supposed to slowly put it together. In my nephew's case, he was given a difficult start, a hyper-jumbled Rubik's cube, and he was forced to use what he was given for good and for progress. In my case, I was given a similar cube, but I wished I could just take off the stickers and rearrange them until the Rubik's cube was complete. Unfortunately, life doesn't allow us that luxury. Regardless of our starting point, we must make decisions - some calculated, and some not so much. We get lost, we press forward, and we get lost again. We take ground and restart when a breaking point is reached. We don't get to choose what we get, but we get to choose how we move forward. Some get a cube nearly solved and others get a cube that is mixed to the core. We strive to put together the pieces and to see the patterns as we reach for enlightenment.



SWEET HEALING

Michael A. Zaccaria

Photo

In the Palestinian city of Al-Khalil (Hebron), Zakariyyā brings candy to hospital patients fulfilling the Islamic moral commandment to visit the sick.

If life is like a Rubik's cube, this means that I get to choose my next move, my next slide, constantly remolding myself into a more full and consistent architecture. It means that I get to die and be born again with every mistake and victory made. It means that I am dynamic and changing. It means that I can shed the ideas that I have of myself in order to become who I actually am. I don't have to falsely pretend like I know it all in order to feel secure around others, I can just be a learner who is curious about how to make colors line up on a 3D box and be able to admit when I don't know how. I get to shed my ego that resists being taught by a six-year-old and can be reborn into a learner from any and all sources. My nephew knows this lesson even though he cannot articulate it. He uses his teratogenic mind to solve challenges. Like a photographer, he used negative photography to give light to an originally dark image.

Maybe the meaning of our lives is not somewhere out in the ether, but it is found in overcoming the hardships that have been dealt to us, for in doing so we overcome the evil in our lives with good. Like Judo, we are to take the momentum and force of what was meant to crush us and use it to flip the situation on its head for the good of ourselves and others.

Maybe we are more than our diagnoses and our pasts. Like God, we can be creators and remodelers of our situations. Maybe life isn't supposed to be easy, yet we find true lessons and meaning in the complexities and toil for which we have the choice to rise from. Maybe God is lowly and amongst us and teaching us the meaning of life through the unlikeliest of sources. We can speculate without knowing for sure, but I would say that I do know one thing true from my nephew: sometimes the thing that is meant to kill us becomes the one thing that we get the most strength from.

"That which does not kill us, makes us stronger." – Friedrich Nietzsche

CONTEMPLATING A BROKEN HEART

Marjorie Stamm Rosenfeld

is the name of Helen's painting.

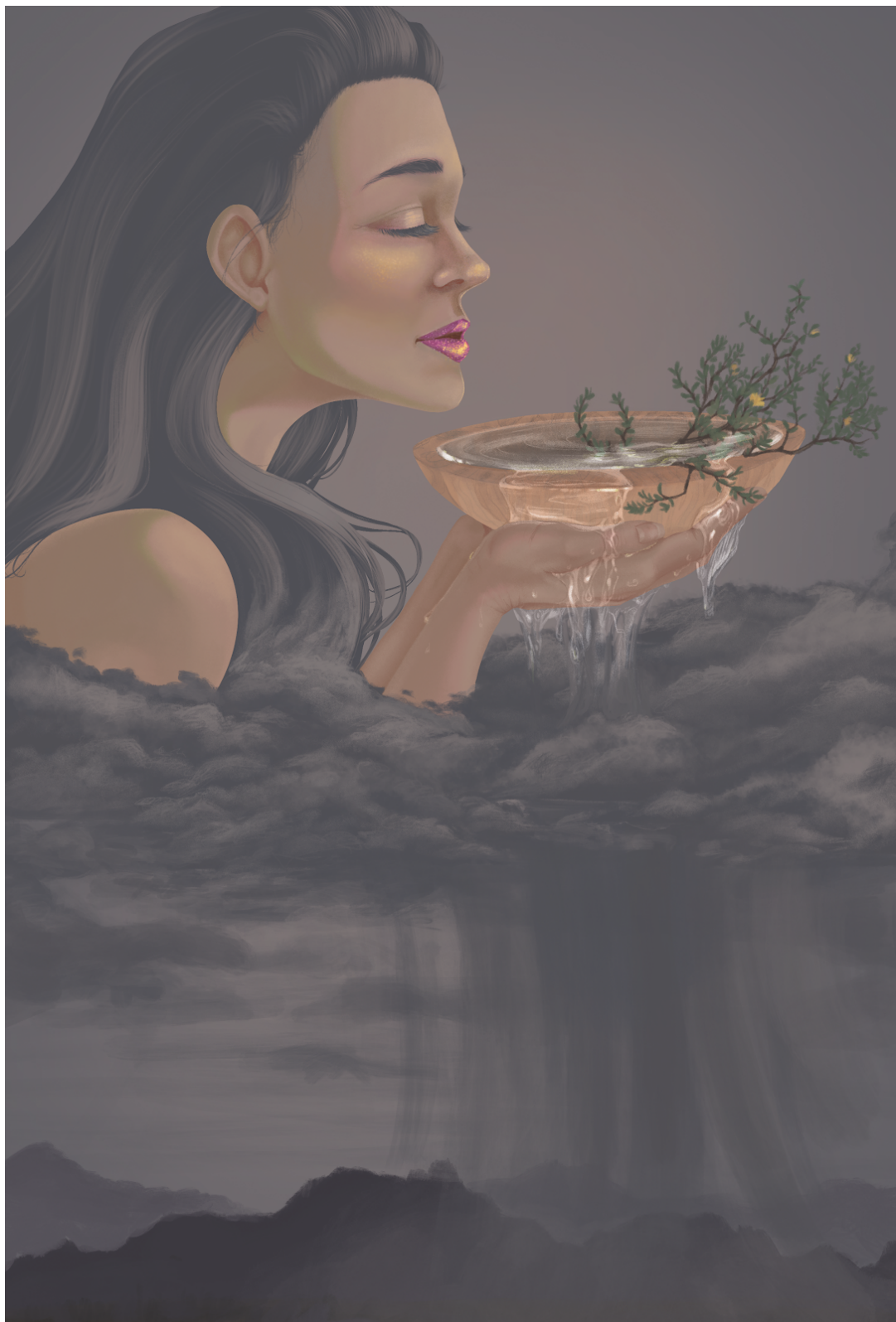
On cream construction paper,
purple bruise-like strokes
compose a heart-shaped face.
Sunlight snakes its way
into the warm breakfast room.
Helen, once a mover of men,
shuffles in slippers she will wear
all day long. The vestiges of beauty
sit upon her still. She speaks
in a slur of unformed sound.

Click of an empty cup on a clean table.

Expressionless, Helen
holds her picture up and points.
A purple stroke that travels lengthwise
splits her heart in two. Left, a single
green eye gleams forlornly.

Hunched, Helen will haunt these halls,
her fingers clutched in front of her
as if she held some unseen precious egg
or orb, framed by strokes like bruises
that compose her bifurcated face.

The name of Helen's painting is
"Contemplating a Broken Heart."
The watercolors weep.



MICROBURST

Kendra Marr

Procreate via iPad Pro

The darkened sky, the smell of creosote - Don't you just love monsoon season?

OVER ONE MILLION CASES RECORDED IN THE U.S.

Ammura Hernandez

Over one million cases recorded in the US.
Over three million cases recorded worldwide.
MILLIONS like the moments
that pass in silence between us,
like the cells in my eyeball:
just 137 million cells defining my reality.
Like millions of cosmic realities but
we are found in just this one.
Millions, like the memories that
flash before the I Love You and
the million more from now until Death Do Us Part.
Like the million watts of tension
itching for freedom as I watch life through the window.
Like the flaps of a butterfly in her short life,
just one million?
One million, like the weight of anxiety
to walk outside,
to breath someone else's air,
to be sick, to be infected,
to be defined as One Million.
One million lives written into history.
One million times over
an invisible threat caught hold.
One million in a nation who
thought their strength was in millions.
One million unprepared,
let down,
failed.
The weight of millions,
like the fleeting hope caught in millionth breadth.



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Radu Moga

Digital media

Sketching has always been my outlet for reflection. Lately, my reflection is about the current challenges we face in a world where, for many of us, face masks have become an essential part of our school supplies.

INTRUSION

Tesneem Jalal Tamimi

Hepatic encephalopathy. Hepatorenal syndrome. Anasarca. So many words used to explain one single truth: his liver was shutting down and there was nothing more we could do but try to pick up the pieces of his crumbling body. He was a large man, made larger by the swelling that strained against his nasal cannula and hospital bracelet. His legs were longer than the hospital bed allowed but he seemed small to me beneath his sheets. Lost. Alone. Deprived of his family to shield him.

As my resident gave him the update on his condition, he stared straight ahead, silent, as tears streamed down his face. He was trying desperately to conceal his pain but it screamed from within his jaundiced eyes, clearly visible to anyone who caught his gaze. And that I did. I met his eyes as I stood by his bed, a stranger intruding on a private moment. A weight formed in my chest and it took all my strength to breathe against it.

Hold it together. I placed a hand on his arm, but he didn't react. The tears continued and the pain twisted tighter within his eyes until it looked like they were going to burst from their sockets. As my resident stepped outside to speak to his nurse, I asked him if he would like me to call his family for him. His movements had been clumsy the past few days and it was difficult for him to concentrate long enough to dial numbers with his swollen fingers.

"Yes, please." His speech was slurred and his voice broke around the words.

I dialed the number and handed it over. I stayed long enough to make sure the line connected and excused myself from the room. My resident stood at the computer outside his door and was looking over our patient's morning labs. He noted the persistently low blood sugar levels overnight and glanced over at me.

"This is a bad sign," he said. "The liver's ability to regulate glucose is usually the last thing to go."

The weight in my chest sank farther and farther down until it reached my stomach. I thought back to our patient, sitting alone in his darkened room, clutching at his phone while his tears continued its flow down his face. I swallowed against the bile that was rising.

"Oh?" was the only thing that I could get out.



COMPASSION

Michael A. Zaccaria

Photo

Giving Tzedakah (righteousness or charity) at the entrance to the Mount of Olives Cemetery in Jerusalem. In Judaism, Tzedakah is an ethical obligation.

My resident nodded as his eyes scanned the computer screen.

"Excuse me," I said softly and almost ran down the hall. My eyes began to sting and I focused my gaze on the ground as my legs strained to move faster and faster.

"Good morning," I heard a voice call out to me and I looked up long enough to give a polite nod. I didn't know what expression was hidden behind my mask but I was grateful for its protection. I finally found the staff bathroom and once I was safely hidden from sight, I allowed my tears to fall. I held my head in my trembling hands and felt the sorrow and guilt and pity pour out of me. What more could I have offered him to help ease that pain? What could a student even offer in the first place in the face of a failing liver? I spent hours reading about hepatorenal syndrome and there I stood, a bystander, with only a touch on his shoulder to provide any semblance of comfort.

I willed the tears to stop and I looked up to stare at my reflection in the mirror. My eyes were red but not swollen. I fanned them quickly, attempting to conceal evidence of my momentary weakness.

I feel numb.

Should I want to feel numb?

How should I be handling this?

I paused in my efforts and continued to stare at my eyes. If I couldn't handle this, then how was I ever going to survive this life in medicine? And if I did survive, would I be able to recognize myself in the mirror?

It was a worry that remained in the back of my mind. I continued through the rest of the rotation as if I was on automatic. One day after the other, wading through pain, pouring over books, trying to convince myself that I still wanted this life. I can handle this. I can survive.

Now I stand in front of a laboring woman, my face once again concealed by a mask. But the expression isn't one that I would usually try to hide. I feel a grin stretching the edges of my lips and I wonder if my eyes can light up the darkened room if I allow them.

Hold it together. My hands are circling the baby's crowning head and I attempt to run through the proper steps in my head once more. Although, don't drop him, don't drop him, is the only thought that seems to make it through.

"Here's another contraction," the nurse at my side is saying. *"Come on, big push, big push."*

Our patient's husband stands by her side and whispers words of encouragement into her ear. Her face is red and sweaty and exhausted but she complies with our orders. She pinches her eyes shut as she uses the last bit of her energy to deliver her baby.



THE REBIRTH OF MEDICINE

Adelina Lane

Digital Art

This artwork is my own representation of how the medical field is rapidly evolving. I used a digital medium to emphasize the medical integration with technology and the 'caduceus' symbol, which was not originally created as a medical emblem, to emphasize how the understanding and application of medicine has and will continue to change.

It all happens in an instant and I watch myself as I guide her baby's head out until his whole slippery body is in my arms. I hold onto him with all my strength and his little lungs let out the most dignified of cries. My patient opens her eyes as tears stream down her face. Her arms reach out to him and it's my turn to comply with her unspoken order. There is a flurry of activity around me as more nurses care for the baby and I force my attention away to continue with the delivery.

In the time that it takes to cut the cord and deliver the placenta, the nurses have taken the baby away and returned him back into his mother's arms. I take off my bloody gown and stand by my patient's bedside. Her eyes are transfixed on her baby's little face and she doesn't look up as I offer my congratulations. She smiles as her husband wraps his arms around the two of them. Again, I feel like I'm an intruder in this private moment. I place a hand on her arm and she finally meets my stare."

Oh, I'm sorry," she says. "I couldn't hear anything looking at his face."

I bat away her apologies and give my congratulations once more. She thanks me and I take my leave. I walk down the empty hallway.

Once I'm safely hidden from sight, I allow my grin to return and my limbs jerk in a little dance of their own. I was the first person to meet that baby and it was an honor that required celebration on my part. My heart pounds, sending a certain thrill to course my body. I think, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. And I continue down the hall, dancing as I go.

I'm allowed these little glimpses into people's lives. Whether it be happiness or sorrow, I'm a bystander all the same. But rather than seeing myself as an intruder, I should see myself as a guest. I've been given permission to enter this world of tears and joy. I should honor this with the same level of honesty. I hope I can handle this. I hope I can survive. Perhaps I can do so without the impulse to hide and shut myself away. I hope I can come to the point where I feel like I can share these moments in their lives, rather than seclude myself to the outskirts. Sharing their tears, sharing their joy. Maybe that's the doctor I should be.



TRANSPLANTED

Jenna Kay

Watercolor

This work is intended to signify that without pain, and without sacrifice, we cannot create change.

PHOENIX

Alexander Hoogland

The old me is dead
I killed him again,
Shoved him beneath the weight
Of accumulated humiliations,
Blasted prospects recondensed
Into something more brittle,
Breakdowns coming easier with practice.
What lessons will this one bring?
Hard knowledge, painful education,
Process of survival through brutalist change,
Another reduction of life, slightly burnt.



I'VE GOT LIFE

Lynn Pham

After the highs and lows of bipolar disorder nearly took her, my sister rebuilt her life. My painting of Nina Simone, an iconic singer and civil rights activist who also lived with bipolar, is dedicated to my sister who during dark times, found strength in herself and in others who shared similar battles. She moves forward in a new light and serves as a beacon for others. We fall and we are reborn.

THE PARASITE

Ammura Hernandez

Black and Latinx Americans are dying at disproportionately higher rates as compared to white Americans from COVID-19.

Brown bodies,
My bodies,
Forgotten again. Forgotten,
Of course.

It's the hypertension. The underlying diabetes.
They said.
As though an explanation
Could excuse the reality of numbers,
Of injustice.

Of bodies left, uncared for, unnoticed.
Black bodies, brown bodies,
Mi familia:
The Within and The Without.

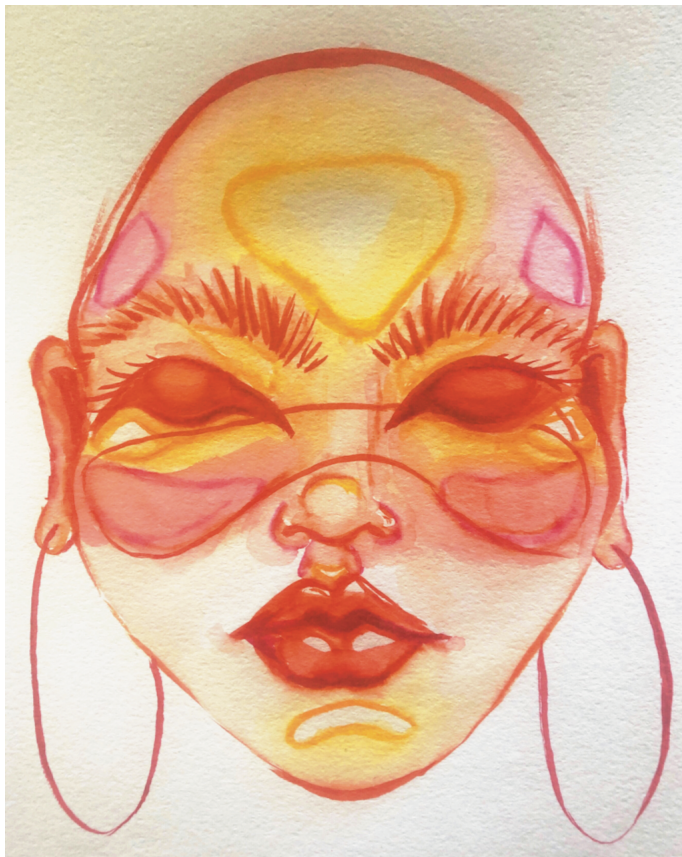
Left to the mercy
Of our New Aged Parasite.
The new aged gunshot.
The new aged noose.

They said it would be The Great Equalizer.
No! No America, there is no Equalizer here!
There never has been.
This New Aged Parasite is but a mirror.

Then they ask, *who's*
The Parasite looking back at me?
Where has he been hiding
All this time?

Perhaps, hidden within
The hypertension, the diabetes
We labeled noncompliance.
Labeled miseducation, cultural difference.

Blamed these brown bodies.
No, America. There is no Equalizer here.
There never has been.
Look in the mirror, see
The Parasite who stares
Blankley back, ravenous, Rona.



FAITH

Marisa Delgado

Watercolor

This piece is named for a beautiful friend whose spirit reminds me to be strong and unapologetically true to myself.

A PASSION REBORN INTO THE SHAPE OF HER SMILE

Kendra Marr

Colored pencil on paper

My journey towards a "new normal" in the midst of a pandemic helped me rediscover my love of drawing; a once daily practice long lost to the trials of pre-med (then medical school) and the banalities of adulthood. I could think of no better subject to bring much-needed beauty to this world than the friend who's always brought beauty to mine.



HOSPICE

Tom Wade

In late January 1989, I met Mr. McClain. He owned a small frame house in an older neighborhood on the city's west side. At eighty-one, he was dying from cancer. The information I had, described him as "widowed, no children, pain in his hip, walks [with] a walker, poor appetite, strong faith, acknowledges terminal illness yet prays for healing." Almost every Saturday for the next year and a half, I'd visit with Mr. McClain in his living room. It was small and crowded with a few pictures on the walls, a couple of chairs with cushions, and a couch draped in an old quilt. He was a little less than average height, thin, with a dark complexion and a pleasant countenance. He was my first hospice patient.

I became a hospice volunteer because I wanted to engage in efforts addressing the raging AIDS epidemic. The public health director, for whom I worked, considered it an ethical test, and we were failing. Among the people I respected, the fight against AIDS was a holy war. I wanted to be a participant in that war; I wanted to test my resolve when encountering anguish and loss. What I had read and heard inspired me. If I attended to those who are dying, I sensed I could go beyond myself, experiencing a feeling I had known in fleeting moments but couldn't describe. I expected to serve young men succumbing to painful deaths, but physicians at the large nonprofit hospital managing the hospice referred few patients who were HIV positive. I saw two persons with AIDS over fifteen years, spending most of my time with older patients who had cancer.

Looking back, I best recall two patients: Roosevelt McClain, who died from cancer at age eighty-three, and Danny Marshall, who died from AIDS at twenty. Unlike in age, disposition, and outlook, they allowed me into their lives as they grappled with their mortality.

During my weekly visits with Mr. McClain, he narrated, in a slow cadence, accounts of his life and gave me a glimpse into his routine. He started working at Atlanta Steel Company as an assistant crane operator and, four decades later, departed as an assistant crane operator. He never claimed to be a victim. He never called the white-owned company, which employed him, unfair for not promoting him. His wife fell ill when he was in his early sixties. She needed constant care, so even though he was about a year short of becoming eligible for the company's pension, he retired to stay home with her. They lived off his meager Social Security benefits. She died a few years later.



THE PUREST GOLD

Kirstin Hope Peters

Photo taken with iPhone 8

Growing up outside of the desert I often yearn for leaves changing colors and a cool autumn breeze so I make it a point to visit Flagstaff to watch the aspen change colors every year.

One of his joys was listening to religious music, and though black, it wasn't spirituals that moved him as much as sacred harp music—the a cappella singing of notes fa, sol, la, mi. “I listen to harp music in the evening, ain't none better,” he said as he played tapes on his well-worn recorder. I didn't understand the appeal of these strange chants, yet sitting with him, as he listened with a faint smile, was affecting.

In his final weeks, Mr. McClain lived at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a facility run by nuns who cared for indigent patients with terminal illnesses. Less than a mile from where I worked, I went there to see him every day. I sometimes brought him in his wheelchair to a room for smokers so he could enjoy his pipe, as I watched the steady decline in his health. From time to time, he forgot who I was. He became delusional and was under sedation during his last couple of days. On occasion, he would utter a coherent statement like, “I'm going to teach you how to hunt and fish,” followed by incoherent mumbling. I grew despondent. I wasn't familiar with grieving; I'd lost grandparents, aunts, and uncles, but I seldom saw them and wasn't close to any of them. I'd been visiting Mr. McClain every week for a year and a half. As he faded, I realized we had spoken our last words to each other. With his imminent demise, the vague sorrow I had been feeling intensified.

After work one late-spring day, I walked into the facility and started down the hallway to his room. I hadn't gone ten feet when I heard a voice behind me, “Tom, Mr. McClain has gone to heaven.” I felt my breath go as if a spike had punctured my lung, and my stomach churned. Until that moment, I didn't understand how much he meant to me. The voice came from the nun who was in charge of the facility. Confused, I didn't know what to do. She gave me what information she knew and assured me someone would inform me of the funeral arrangements. Benumbed, I walked back to my car.

Though infrequent, I have awakened to a semi-conscious state in which my illusions, vanquished by sleep, hadn't fully recovered. This condition forces me to face my fears. My apprehensiveness surfaces in many guises: stuck in a crowded airplane stalled on the runway; drowning in a muddy pond; trapped in a closed space, like a coffin, unable to move. These aren't dreams, but obsessions I can't escape, and as they begin to form, I have to fight off panic attacks. It's a fight I don't always win. I've been able to bring these attacks under control by walking around, even going outside to get away from walls and ceilings that could pin me down. Once I'm moving and safe from the threat of entrapment, I'm OK. Though the circumstances vary, the common element in these throes is impending death. Except for these nocturnal moments, I've repressed this dread. It has never surfaced when I'm with people who are dying.

Danny Marshall lived with his mother in the McDaniel-Glenn housing project a couple of miles southwest of downtown Atlanta. The building was solid looking with red brick exterior walls and painted cement block interior walls, reminding me of schoolrooms. The floors were durable linoleum squares and dark. I sometimes visited Danny in the living room, appointed in thrift store furniture, as he sat on the beat-up, dark green couch, and I sat on one of the stuffed chairs covered in worn brown fabric. After a few weeks, my visits took place in his small bedroom on the second floor, where he propped himself up on a single bed, and I made do on a straight-back chair. He was thin but not gaunt, about five foot ten, polite, and well-spoken. I was anxious about meeting him the first time not because of his illness but because of his youth. I didn't know what to expect from a twenty-year-old dealing with his mortality.



MY FAVORITE PLACE

Jenessa Sanchez

Watercolor & acrylic on paper

For this art piece, I decided to dedicate it to my favorite place in my backyard where I love to sit and enjoy the scenery. My picture depicts a brick wall and beautiful plants and flowers against the wall.

When patients started hospice care, a nurse and social worker would interview them and summarize their medical and social conditions for the volunteer. Danny's nurse wrote, he "has fatigue, weakness, dizziness, blurred vision at times... productive cough, shortness of breath, poor appetite...has had AIDS 2 yrs....partner died of AIDS one year ago." The social worker wrote, he "is depressed (at times), 'has hatred in his heart,' very likable fellow, ashamed, struggling to deal wd all of this." She added, "Mother is very needy, both are open people, family for most part is supportive." My responsibility as a volunteer, "Get to know family—be a good listener, allow Danny to vent frustrations, mother at times needs to run errands—be supportive, may need meds taken [to them] at times, someone to sit [with Danny] at times."

One winter afternoon, on the second or third visit, no one was home when I arrived. Danny's mother told me they should be back by five o'clock; they weren't, so I waited outside in my car. Across the street, a young guy was sitting on a metal kitchen chair in front of a building. I ignored him. After about ten minutes, his anxiety overtook him, and he yelled out, "What are you doing here?" I told him I was waiting to meet someone. He didn't speak for a half minute and then asked me to move down the street. "You make me nervous," he said. He made me nervous, so I moved my car a few hundred feet, keeping a wary eye on him. I thought to myself, "He must think I'm a cop."

MOUNTAIN WITH FLOWER

Abby Love

Acrylic on paper

My art piece depicts flowers, and Arizona Mountains at the Arizona National Park. The flowers in the front are red cosmos and pink marigolds. I like being outdoors, and sometimes I go on outdoor trips with my family where I see pretty flowers like the ones in this landscape.



Danny's mother looked about forty, a pleasant woman, talkative and edgy, smiling but not happy. Danny was walking around when I first met him, and he could carry on a conversation about current events, his health ("you should drink eight glasses of water a day"), and other topics. On occasion, his mother would join us. She once gave her opinion about an inconsequential matter, and he responded in a cutting manner that I could see frightened her. This interaction—his sudden anger and her alarm—startled me. I sensed similar episodes had happened before, perhaps resulting in grievous consequences. Was that moment revealing what Danny called the "hatred in [my] heart"?

Six weeks after I began seeing him, Danny's condition worsened. He seldom spoke, was bedridden and delirious at times. His mom became more downcast though her words remained upbeat. While we talked about her son, we didn't discuss his imminent death. I couldn't determine if she was refusing to acknowledge he was dying (which I doubt; she'd had a rough life in a community where losing a son wasn't uncommon) or if she thought it impolite to burden me with her problems. Either way, I didn't offer her an opportunity to discuss her feelings. I uttered banalities because I didn't know how to be supportive.

From talking to the hospice staff, I learned Danny had an exit plan before his diagnosis: He was going to join the Army on graduating from high school, learn a skill, and escape the projects. He finished high school two years earlier; the hospice notes given to me said, he "has had AIDS 2 yrs." With AIDS, joining the Army couldn't happen. He had lived with the disease twice as long as most other patients in those days, but he was weaker each time I saw him. During the times he was conversant, he remained composed, though his visage manifested bitterness and fear. His mother's moods went from nervous to somber and then quiet. As with his mother, I didn't know what to say to Danny. Looking back, knowing my words provided little solace, I hope my being there offered some comfort to both of them.

His funeral was on a cold, sunny, winter day. As a few of his friends and relatives gathered outside the funeral home, before the noon service, I spotted a young woman in a green Army dress uniform. She was about twenty, Danny's age, and she was his cousin. She had the same exit plan he did, but she was able to take the first step.



CROWNING

Marisa Delgado

Photo

This piece is a tribute to the miracle of birth across all lifeforms. The title "Crowning" alludes to the expression used when an infant's head begins to emerge from their mother; playfully reimagined here as the "crown" on the head of this pineapple fruit as it blooms from the mother plant.



FRUITS OF LABOR

Marisa Delgado

Photo

From pain and strife blooms something beautiful, bringing with it a promise for new life.

I was a hospice volunteer for fifteen patients, seeing about one patient a year. I was wary of first visits because I didn't know the patient's condition or how he or she would respond to me. Thus, the initial meeting was an audition; I was turned down twice by patients who didn't need me. I don't recall any patient living in a dirty place, though they all lived in small abodes with used and sometimes broken furniture; one was in a nursing home. None had air conditioning (except for the nursing home resident), making summer visits uncomfortable. In their last days, they were on drugs, some were incontinent, and none were able to care for themselves. Weekly visits often felt like a chore. I'd sit close to them, listen, make small-talk. There were times we covered the facile topics, such as the weather, how our families were doing, and the past week's events, in twenty minutes or less. Then I would grasp for something to discuss, and if I failed, the room would become quiet. The quiet made me nervous. I would often check my watch, waiting for an hour to pass so I could leave.

Although they had diverse personalities, none of my patients were afraid of silence. They seemed to be content without the chatter of polite conversation. But sitting without talking left me uneasy, adrift with my thoughts. I sometimes wondered what they were thinking. Was dying on their mind? Since they were all Christians and several of them were devout, did they believe they will live in an everlasting, tranquil afterlife? Notwithstanding the unsettling stillness, I didn't know how to ask.

I approached hospice with a yearning to do noble deeds. Early in my tenure, I heard another volunteer describe the ordeal of being with a patient in the last few hours of an agonizing death. The volunteer told of attempting, along with a few others, to console the patient, but despite medication, the sufferer lingered in pain for hours. His last breath brought relief to all those with him. For reasons I can't explain, this was the sort of experience I was seeking. Yet, I had a different type of experience: My role was to watch and hear about the commonplace, not knowing what the person with whom I was sitting was going through as they confronted or denied their illness. Being with Mr. McClain and Danny and the others as they grappled with their quietus, brought me an added sensibility.

They were opposites in many respects: one old and the other young; one grew up in the country and the other in city projects; one embraced religion, and the other was secular; one straight and the other gay; one succumbed to cancer and the other AIDS. But they were alike in two fundamental aspects. They were both black and had experienced injustice because of their race, and they were both dying and knew it. Though one's face was wrinkled and shaped by age while the other's was smooth and lean, they both had the same look in their eyes. It was neither the joy or excitement of imminent salvation nor the fear or resignation of a final ending. It was the blank stare of uncertainty. It didn't evoke transcendent agony, but I did feel a fog of sadness, painful and slow to lift.



BLOOM

Stacey J. Jaw

Photo

Just as plants need pruning in order to make room for new growth, so must humans engage in rebirth in order to bloom into their better selves.

CODE BLUE

Kenneth G. Davis, MD

0220 hours:

"Code Blue 175"

"Code Blue 175"

The overhead PA blared

Filling the call room like a noxious vapor

Propelling me into my shoes

(Asleep in my scrubs I was already dressed for the occasion)

Scrambling like a fighter pilot

Flew down the hall

Hung a left at the nurses station

Tailgated the troops into 175

Where the battle had already begun,

The troops deployed the crash cart

Releasing its arsenal of medicinal weaponry

As I, the Commander in Chief,

Began barking the orders.

Launching the brigade

Into a full-scale frontal assault.

The nurse with Popeye's spinach-fueled biceps

Led the charge

Leaning into the moribund mass

Who moments ago was solving the Wheel of Fortune

Now her chest heaved with the crushing rapid fire compressions

100 per minute as prescribed by the CPR manual

Ribs and sternum grinding, crackling, crunching,

Rising and falling only with the faux respirations

Generated by the conscript at the head of the bed

Bellowing air into her lungs
Through the hose we shoved down her windpipe.
No pulse. Her heart as still as a marble column,
I tethered her to the monitor,
The thin green line pretended to undulate
Then flattened like a sharp note gone bad.
We pierced,
We probed and punctured
Stabbed and perforated
Injected the explosive fluids into her languishing veins
Hoping to frighten her heart back into cadence.
Nada.
I commanded the "All Clear"
And the team backed away from the bed.
I detonated the incendiary voltage from the defibrillator
Her heart feigned a shudder
Then resumed its stillness
The thin green line on the monitor glowing eerily
Unswerving
Undeviating
Straight as a plumb line
No blip
No animation
We laid down our arms.
Spread the white sheet of surrender and retreated,

WHAT I REMEMBER FROM THOSE TEN DAYS

Steve Cushman

in the hospital, almost twenty-three years ago now,
was my mother beside my bed each morning
when I woke, the doctor who asked if he could
have one of the Pepsi's from the 12-pack on the
windowsill, and a visit from Todd, one of my co-workers,
who said, *damn man, if you die can I have your guitar?*
which one? I asked
the telecaster, he said, keeping his distance and
never sitting down. I remember all of that,
though I'd like to forget the catheters,
strangers wiping me front and back,
black spots in my eyes,
skin so yellow it was almost orange.
I also remember walking around the block
after returning home, how this distance I'd
traveled a thousand times before seemed impossible,
remember using the leaf blower for the first time
and the simmering beauty of leaves floating,
falling, through the cool Fall air.



REBIRTH: LA TIERRA EN LOS TIEMPOS DE HOY

Elizabeth Vargas

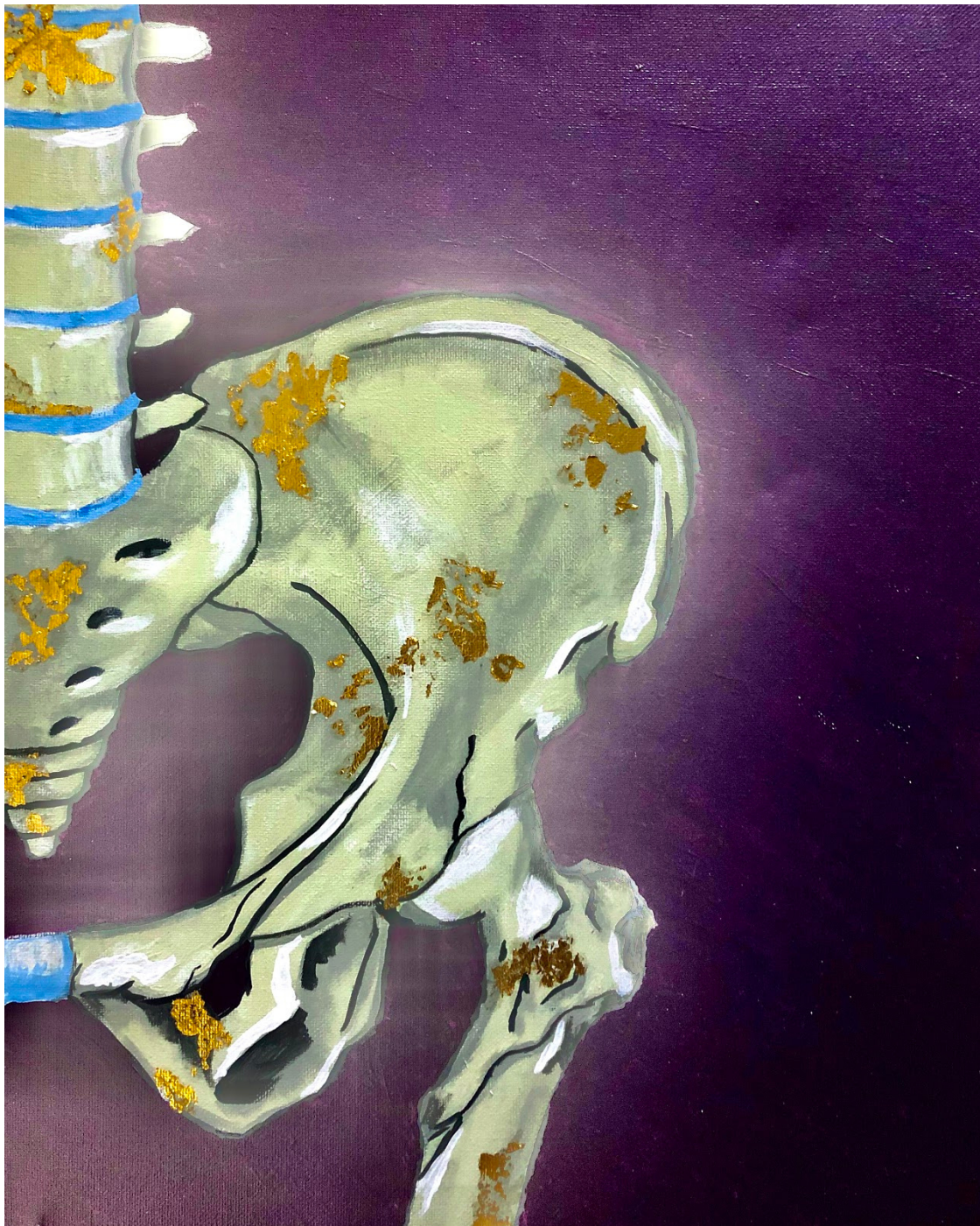
Part of my art work's title is "La Tierra en los Tiempos de Hoy" which translates to "the Earth in our current time"; and that is what my art work is about. 2020 was a hard year for everyone, for humans and nature likewise. My art piece shows the natural disasters, the pandemic and the somber fog that has characterized this year but there is light in the dark, a hopeful rebirth. I had my first child this year and like the child in my art piece, she is a reminder that there is good and we can do better. We can advocate more for nature and we can be more considerate of others. Although what is immediately in front of us and surrounds us is dark, the skies ahead are hopeful.

HOW TO BE MYSTERIOUSLY ILL

Dr. Gila Silverman, PhD

When the pain returns, you will be completely surprised and entirely expecting it. It will feel both foreign and familiar at the time. First the subtle discomfort, the beginnings of a cramp, then the sharp stabbing (in a location you will be able to pinpoint to the millimeter, but that no doctor can seem to find), off and on for a day or two, and then it will spread slowly, stabbing and burning as it moves from place to place. You will find yourself wondering: what has it come to disrupt and destroy this time? What lessons has it come to teach? But you did not invite it in, and you did not ask it to come visit now. You may want to scream, to cry, to resist it with all your might (or you may not). It will feel like a small creature has entered your pelvis, grabbing the organs there and squeezing as hard as it can, repeatedly, off and on, for days. You will be afraid. You will be calm. You will lie on the couch for hours, and then you will rally your energy and take care of your son and do your work and go about the normal routines of family life. People who see you out and about will comment on your weight loss. You will explain that it's a side effect of a health issue. After a long awkward pause, they will tell you: "Well, keep it up! You look GREAT!" You will not speak of the pain publicly again.

A friend will suggest you should call the doctor. But you will wonder, why? To be, yet again, poked and prodded, invaded and opened up, all so that they can once again tell you that they can't find anything, that there is nothing wrong, that whatever small thing they find couldn't possibly explain the type of pain you are describing. You might try to explain to this friend that you have been sick now, off and on, for over 20 years, with a wide range of symptoms that you can describe in detail, but that no doctor can explain. You might add that you have been tentatively diagnosed with nearly a dozen different conditions, and then been un-diagnosed with most of them, that you have spent months, or occasionally years, learning about and making peace with and making plans for, a particular diagnosis, only to learn – when a doctor finally agreed to more invasive diagnostic practices, or when new tests became available – that you did not actually have these conditions. You will try, but be unable, to count how many specialists you have seen during these years; how many blood tests, scans, and procedures you have had; how many different kinds of complementary therapies, new diets, herbs and supplements, forms of bodywork, and emotional and spiritual remedies have been recommended. (Even without counting, you will cringe at how much money you have spent on these beacons of hope, and how much income has been lost during these flare-ups).



OS COXA

Kirstin Hope Peters

Acrylic on canvas with gold leaf

Point of Connection. To carry the weight of life, Then crumble with age.

If you get this far in telling the story, you might mention that, by default, you have been diagnosed with one of those mysterious, misunderstood, and maligned syndromes that have become catch-all's for women complaining of certain persistent and unmeasurable symptoms (or, you might not mention this, remembering the multiple doctors who told you: "Don't tell people you have that. It's stigmatized, and they'll think you're crazy or you're just trying to get pain meds." If you do share this, you will laugh, minimizing the shock and anger and confusion you felt each time you were told this, as you wondered how you were supposed to get proper care if you couldn't tell anyone what was wrong with you). You might remember the doctors who told you that you look too good, or are too high-achieving, to have these conditions.

You will recall also the other doctors, who gently, caringly, told you: "I know what you have, I have other patients who have the same thing. But I don't know what it is, and I don't know how to treat it." You will think about the doctors who told you that you might not be able to have children, and others who said that this condition would have no impact on your fertility, and those who, later – as your body gestated a child – advised that it could not affect your experience of pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding despite the fact that you were in their clinics seeking help for those effects (you will wonder, often, over the years, how they could each have been so certain of these things, when none of them knew what was wrong).

You will remember how the first doctor to give you this diagnosis was clear that it was a diagnosis of last resort, that he didn't actually know what it meant, but that it was what they told women like you, with your symptoms, when everything else was ruled out. You will be ashamed to say out loud that for so many years, you internalized this stigma and this lack of clarity, and kept this diagnosis secret. Because you understood that it simply meant you were another, more modern, woman with hysteria.

At different times, over those 20 years, you will be told that certain foods are causing all of your symptoms, while others will know with complete certainty that diet is not a factor. You will be told to exercise more, and you will be told that exercise will make you worse. You will suffer from mood swings and be diagnosed occasionally with depressive tendencies (thus confirming that you are in fact a hysterical woman). You will also learn that these mood swings often coincide with pain flare-ups, but no one, including you, will be able to say whether one or the other comes first, whether they are linked physiologically, or whether simply being mysteriously sick makes one depressed.

You will be told that your symptoms are repressed trauma, that you need to think more positively, or be more true to yourself, and that if you only do these things, you will get better (and while it's true that your body is holding stress and emotions and intergenerational trauma deep within its tissues, and that acknowledging and expressing these will be healing to your soul, doing so will not magically reset your dysfunctional neurological system). There are days when you will think that this is all your fault, and that you have the power to change it, and days when you will know that you are powerless and helpless. You will feel defeated and you will feel empowered. You will rage at and resist both the medical system and the experiences of your body; you will have times of acceptance and peace and gratitude, for the ways that this illness will shift the directions of your life and break you open emotionally and spiritually and even professionally.



RENEWED

Jenna Clare Kay

Watercolor

This piece is a reflection on how our environment is woven into our identity. What we surround ourselves with will shape who we become and will influence our state of mind constantly.

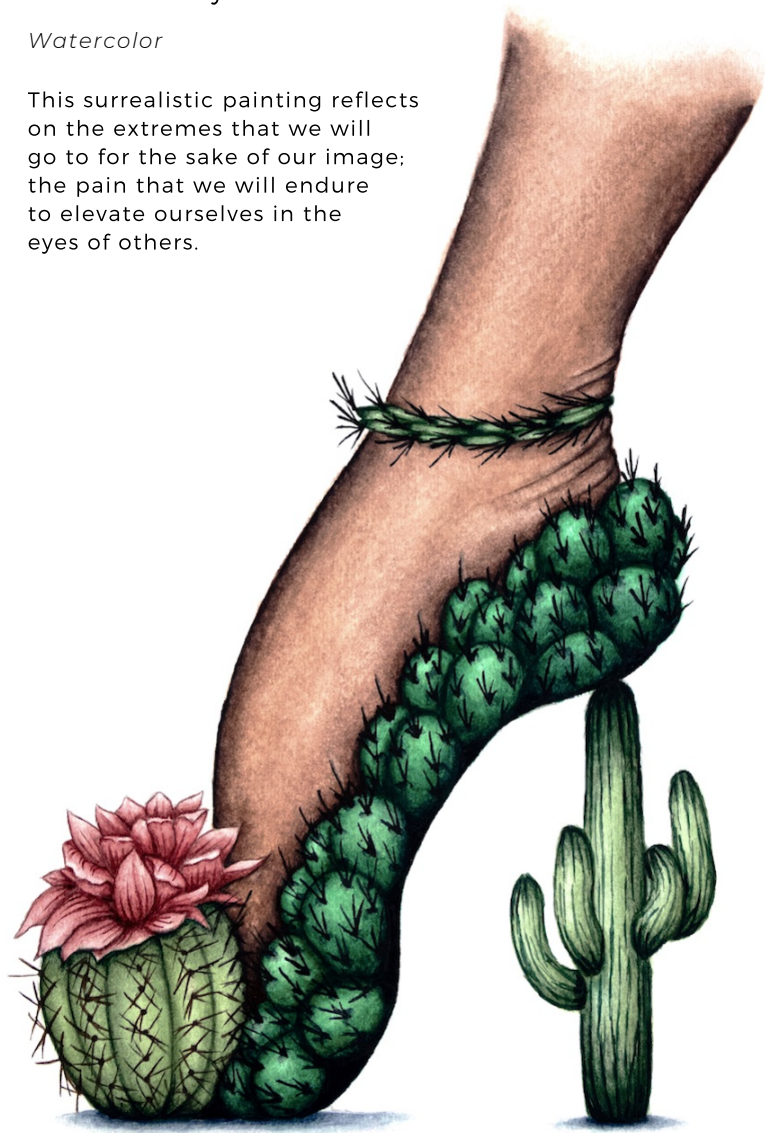
You will follow your friend's advice, and go to the doctor. They will poke and prod and rule out the scarier possibilities, but will yet again find no explanation for the pain; they will not be able to identify the creature that is squeezing you from within. This will be consistent with the only thing that has remained true all these years: the illness keeps coming back, and the medical system doesn't understand it. At some point, a still, small voice will quietly and slowly emerge from the cacophony of fear and pain inside you, and you will listen to that voice and remember that the doctors do not know how to heal you, but you do. Gently, the voice will remind you that only you know best what will help and what will hurt. You are the only one who will be able to connect the dots in your body's strange and mysterious collection of reactions.

ELEVATED

Jenna Clare Kay

Watercolor

This surrealistic painting reflects on the extremes that we will go to for the sake of our image; the pain that we will endure to elevate ourselves in the eyes of others.



You will stop taking the medication and supplements that are supposed to help (and stop listening to the doctors who say they can't possibly be causing this trouble), and gradually, the acute pain will subside. You will start listening to your yoga teacher, who prescribes "radical self-care," and to your body-worker, who tells you to feel into the pain, as she stretches and opens and calms the inflamed fascia constricting your entire body. As your panic eases, you will shift your diet, and meditate, and do yoga, and try to sleep and rest, and wait (patiently and not) as your body finds its equilibrium again. And it will. You will slowly start over, as you return to the quieter, chronic, aches and pains and fatigue that you know so well. You will almost forget the intensity of the pain and the fear and the confusion and the rage. Almost, but not quite. Because now, these too have become part of the tissues and cells of your body.



GROWTH

Koustubh Kondapalli

Photo, taken with iPhone XS, 12 mps f/1.8 lens

This picture was taken in a small town named Shirati in Tanzania. It is the remnants of an old school that was left to ruins after a local land dispute. While it was once a large space that allowed the growth of young Tanzanian children, it is now reclaimed by nature and its own growth.

THE AFTER

Erin E. McConnell, MD

We've been here before
though different in form.
For instance, the house calls --
only my black valise
is now your sleek device.

Instead of inclement weather,
we battle slow servers
scant broadband,
and poorly pixelated images.

The masks are more streamlined,
No bills filled with basil.
Herbs exchanged for germ theory.
Though no less controversial.

I have stared at crowded dining room tables
Been accosted by fur babies,
Nearly made motion sick from a tremor
Read lips due to operator error.

What hasn't changed?
The need for reassurance.
the warm smile,
the genuine laugh
that bridges the gap
of six feet or sixty miles.



A SEA OF CLOUDS

Monica Gomez

Watercolor on paper

My work has an outdoors theme so I thought about the Grand Canyon because it makes me happy. My landscape shows blue skies, clouds, and the orange and red rocky mountains of the Grand Canyon. I love all the amazing colors of the rocks and the huge open sky.

AT SURF'S DOOR

Trisha Stanley

A gentle breeze is upon us softly and ever so slyly
Caressing the corners of our mind
Waves pounding the sand beneath our feet
Shaking us to the core of knowing she's no more

Quiet and serene accepting her fate
Indulgence and passion for the game at hand
Enjoying life's gift and cherishing us all
Did we not know bravery till now?

Her essence lingering on the softest of beds
Intoxicating, unwavering in its strength
Delicate impressions melted upon our hearts
Buffering those who needed her most

As the early morning light begins its break
The song of sisterly love is carried through the day
It's beautiful sound reverberating... but cannot say
goodbye to such a great comfort; to such a great love

HAIKU'S FROM FOURTH YEAR

Natalie deQuillfeldt

I blunder and fuss
She forgives my poor grammar
With empathic eyes

Somehow or other
We understand each other
And beam at this feat.

She can't find the words
Mumbles, cries, angry
outbursts
I offer her mine



DANCE OF THE ANHINGA

Brent R. Carr

*Photograph:
Raw ISO 1/600s
f/4.5@ 200mm*

A monogamous pair of protected migratory anhinga mate, indifferent to Covid. The species' numbers are a fitting metaphor for renewal and rebirth as their reproductive species, once diminished, has now rebounded after a ban on the pesticide DDT.

A German woman
Fell in love with a soldier,
Moved across the world,

And watched over him
As he died from CLL,
Neglecting herself.

Days waiting for labs,
Then a liver biopsy.
The future looked bleak.

But lo and behold,
A med was causing DILI,
He gets to go home

The skin, a window
Behind hair, scars, patches,
plaques
A secret to find

Inspired daily
Seeing patients face illness
With endless courage



ORANGE TREE

Bianca Kao

Acrylic on canvas

This painting is a depiction of growth, change, and renewal yielding--both literally and metaphorically--the bearing of fruit that comes with this transformation.

AUTHOR BIOS

ALEXANDER HOOGLAND

PHOENIX

Alexander Hoogland is a fourth year medical student at Stony Brook University School of Medicine, hoping to specialize in psychiatry. This year he misses restaurants and rock climbing.

ANDRES FELIPE DIAZ

ASCLEPIUS AND THE CRAB

Andres Felipe Diaz is a first-year medical student native to Medellin, Colombia with a passion for oncology and writing.

ERIN E. MCCONNELL, MD

THE AFTER

Dr. Erin E. McConnell is an internal medicine/pediatrics physician practicing in Columbus, Ohio with a special interest in narrative medicine and how it can enrich the lives of both patients and providers. In her own words, "Since the start of my medical training, poetry has allowed me to delve into the nature of language, as well as the complex ethical issues health care professionals face in their careers. As a patient, poetry has also illuminated the blurry line between those who provide care and those who receive care, as we all have been or will be recipients at some point."

AMMURA HERNANDEZ

OVER ONE MILLION CASES RECORDED
THE PARASITE
DO YOU HAVE THE ANTIBODIES?

Ammura Hernandez is a resident physician; a graduate of Scripps College and the George Washington Medical School, she is interested in the intersections of health, culture, and race.

ELIZABETH BUTLER, MD

ALL SOULS PROCESSION

Dr. Elizabeth Butler describes herself as, "Mother, poet, cardiothoracic surgeon."

GILA SILVERMAN, PHD

HOW TO BE MYSTERIOUSLY ILL

Dr. Gila Silverman is an anthropologist and writer, working at the intersections of religion, spirituality, and health. She holds a Master's in Public Health, and a PhD in Medical Anthropology, both from the University of Arizona. In her own words, her essay "describes my personal experiences living with a chronic illness that doctors could not diagnose. Two years after it was written, I was diagnosed with a genetic connective tissue disorder that explained nearly all of my symptoms, but had been missed for over 20 years."

A U T H O R B I O S

GURKARAN SINGH

THE SOUL

Gurkaran Singh is a second-year medical student.

KENNETH G. DAVIS, MD

CODE BLUE

Dr. Kenneth Davis is a family physician and addictionologist currently serving as part-time faculty in a family medicine residency program.

KUHOKEE KUMARI DAS

TWENTY MINUTES IN THE ICU

Kuhokee Kumari Das is an Adjunct Lecturer at CUNY Queens College, where she teaches Anatomy and Physiology. In addition, Kuhokee is a professional Indian classical dancer, visual artist, and writer.

MARJORIE STAMM ROSENFELD

CONTEMPLATING A BROKEN HEART

Marjorie Stamm Rosenfeld is a former Southern Methodist University Press editor, SMU English instructor, and U.S. Navy analyst who has done poetry therapy with forensic patients and made three websites to commemorate perished Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

MATTHEW LEONARD REPP

A QUEST FOR THE LOWLY GOD

Matthew Repp is a born and raised Tucsonan who is a first-year medical student at the University of Arizona - Tucson. He has a passion for exploring the junction between philosophy and medicine and also enjoys a good Jiu-Jitsu scuffle.

NATALIE DEQUILLFELDT

HAIKU'S FROM FOURTH YEAR

Natalie deQuillfeldt is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson with a graduate degree in medical humanities and bioethics. She lives in Tucson with her husband Paul and dog Wiley and is pursuing a career in internal medicine.

AUTHOR BIOS

STEVE CUSHMAN

*BREATHING TREATMENT
IN THE CHEMO INFUSION SUITE
WHAT I REMEMBER*

Steve Cushman worked as an X-ray Technologist for 25+ years and has published three novels and the poetry collection, How Birds Fly.

TODD FARNWORTH, MD

YOGESHWARI

Dr. Todd Farnworth is a board certified plastic surgeon, currently employed by the Phoenix VA Hospital who has participated in 17 charitable surgical missions and was recently accepted as an assistant professor of surgery by the University of Arizona School of Medicine.

TRISHA STANLEY

AT SURF'S DOOR

Trisha Stanley is a retired UA Graduate Program Coordinator who loves to write, travel, paint and design. She is fascinated with history, and has a great love for her family.

TESNEEM JALAL TAMIMI

INTRUSION

Tesneem Tamimi is a third-year medical student at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson and considers Tucson to be her home. In her own words, "I've been writing in little, worn-out notebooks since I was 13 years old. I welcome you into my world."

TOM WADE

HOSPICE

Tom Wade is a retired state government employee. He has been a volunteer ombudsman (advocate) for residents of long-term-care facilities for seven years. His essays have been published in Foliate Oak Literary Magazine, Communion, Jenny, and Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, and Wilderness House Literary Review, Squawk Back, Canyon Voices, and Dr. T. J. Eckleberg Review.

ARTIST BIOS

ABBY LOVE

MOUNTAIN WITH FLOWER

Abby is an artist at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

BIANCA KAO

ORANGE TREE

Bianca Kao is a third year medical student at the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson with an interest in pediatric emergency medicine.

BRENT R. CARR

DANCE OF THE ANHINGA

Brent Carr is a psychiatrist and philosopher within the College of Medicine at the University of Florida where he encourages medical student involvement in art and the humanities to foster deeper empathy and rapport with their patients, such that their practice of medicine becomes richer through exploration and a willful consideration of the human condition. His artwork has appeared in the AMA Journal of Ethics and a Journal of Narrative Medicine, Intima.

ADELINA LANE

THE REBIRTH OF MEDICINE

Adelina Lane is a first-year medical student at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson. She graduated from the University of Arizona with both a Bachelors and Masters degree and is currently pursuing her dream of becoming a physician.

ANDRES FELIPE DIAZ

ASCLEPIUS AND THE CRAB

Andres Felipe Diaz is a first-year medical student native to Medellin, Colombia with a passion for oncology and writing.

CHRISTIANNA KREISS, MD

RISEN I, II, III

Dr. Kreiss is a gastroenterologist at the VA in Pittsburgh, PA. She is also a master's student in Bioethics at Loyola University, Chicago.

CHRIS ORTIZ

CIRCLE MOONS ON WATER

Chris is an artist at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

ARTIST BIOS

ELIZABETH VARGAS

LA TIERRA EN LOS TIEMPO DE HOY

Elizabeth is a working local community multi-media artist and employee at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine. To see more of her work or to contact Elizabeth visit/follow her artist Instagram page @elizabethvargasart.

JENESSA SANCHEZ

MY FAVORITE PLACE

Jenessa is an artist at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

JENNA CLARE KAY

TRANSPLANTED
RENEWED
ELEVATED

Jenna Kay is a third year student at the UA College of Medicine-Tucson, and has been painting with watercolor and acrylic for over 10 years. She is pursuing a career in rural family medicine.

ELLEN MICHELLE SIVERTSON

A NEW MEANING TO SELF

Ellen Michelle Sivertson is a first year medical student at UACOM-T. I use painting and knitting as my creative outlet during my downtime.

JULIA MARIE LIATTI

REPAIR

Julia Marie Liatti is a sporadic sketcher, a former questionably-effective Peace Corps English teacher, a life-long proponent of "just eyeballing it" when she measures things (except when cutting brownies – always use a ruler so it's fair), and she hiccups when she eats spicy food. If she wrote a memoir about being a medical student, it would probably be titled "I Promise I had the Best Intentions: An Apology Letter to My Future Patients" because it sounds sufficiently snazzy but leaves enough space to be serious as well.

KAREN DANNHEIM

ARTWORKS BACKYARD

Karen is an artist at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

ARTIST BIOS

KENDRA MARR

A PASSION REBORN
MICROBURST

"Artist" was Kendra Marr's singular childhood career goal before she discovered "physician", and subsequently stumbled upon "scientist". Why pick just one?

LYNN PHAM

I'VE GOT LIFE

Lynn Pham is currently a medical student at the University of Arizona, College of Medicine Tucson, Class of 2021.

MARK ABRAMS, PHD

LEAVING CHILDHOOD

Mark Abrams is a long-term photographer and psychotherapist, drawing great spiritual sustenance from the desert and from Lake Champlain, Vermont.

MICHAEL A. ZACCARIA

SWEET HEALING
COMPASSION

Michael A. Zaccaria is a historian who studies human behavior over time and a photographer who captures human individuality in the spontaneity of the moment.

KIRSTIN PETERS

OS COXA
THE PUREST GOLD

Kirstin Hope Peters is a third-year medical student at the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

MARISA DELGADO

FAITH
CROWNING
FRUITS OF LABOR

Marisa Delgado is a third year medical student who likes exploring tidepools, hiking in the desert, and making art out of trash. She moved to Arizona from Georgia to learn how to envelope aspects of Integrative Medicine, Border Health, and Native Health into her future practice.

MEHNOOR HASEEB, MPH

THE BLOOMING HEART

Mehnoor Haseeb is a fourth year medical student who loves DIY projects/ crafting, hiking outdoors, and eating delicious food! She moved to Arizona for the friendly people, great mentors, and awesome patients. She looks forward to being a women's health and social justice advocate in her future OB/GYN practice.

ARTIST BIOS

MONICA GOMEZ

A SEA OF CLOUDS

Monica is an artist at ArtWorks, an outreach program housed in Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Arizona, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

RADU MOGA

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Radu Moga is a 3rd year medical student, currently in clinical rotations and working towards a career in family medicine. Part of my outlet for expression and relaxation is making sketches for my friends and loved ones and writing.

RILEY PATRICK MCDOUGALL

REBIRTH OF THE MOON

Born and raised in Arizona, Riley Patrick McDougall is a current medical student in his 4th year at U of A College of Medicine – Tucson and hopes to become a Radiation Oncologist.

REBECCA LOGGIA

FROM THE PAIN

Rebecca Loggia's poetry has previously been published in Allegory Ridge, The Midnight Oil, and placed third in the Phoenix Sister Cities 2017 Writers with Disabilities Competition. She lives in Arizona with her dog, Natasha, where she continues to explore life with chronic illness through art and writing.

STACEY J. JAW

BLOOM

Stacey J. Jaw is currently a fourth year medical student.

TEDDY G. GOETZ

RISEN

Teddy G. Goetz (he/him or they/them) is a fourth-year medical student at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons, with prior training including an MS in transgender hormone therapy and BS in biochemistry and gender studies, focusing on interdisciplinary scientific research informed by individual embodied experiences. His goal (as both an artist and a doctor-in-training) is to help people feel seen. More of his recent poetry and photography publications can be found at teddygoetz.com.

