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Brain Candy: Wayne State University School of Medicine Journal of Art and Literature, 2nd Edition

Wayne State University School of Medicine Writing Workshop

Wayne State University School of Medicine Gold Humanism Honor Society

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BRAIN CANDY

Wayne State University School of Medicine
Journal of Art and Literature

2009-2010

EDITOR'S NOTE

One might think it strange that a medical school should publish a literary journal-- as future doctors, we spend most of our days writing medical documents, not poetry, and get no closer to art than the pages of Netter's anatomy. If you look closer, however, you will find that medicine and the arts are not so different after all-- as Dr. Abraham Verghese wrote in a 2001 article in the Annals of Internal medicine, "We should be not just 'doctors for adults' but also ministers of healing, storytellers, storymakers, and players in the greatest drama of all: the story of our patients' lives as well as our own." It is with that same spirit that Brain Candy, the Wayne State University School of Medicine Journal of Art and Literature, was born-- not as a diversion from our busy lives, but as part of our responsibility to be complete and conscientious practitioners of the healing arts.

The first edition of Brain Candy, distributed in August 2009 with a generous grant from the Gold Humanism Honor Society, successfully collected poetry, nonfiction essays, short fiction, photographs, and drawings to shed light on the creative process in medicine, the city of Detroit, and the experiences of health care providers. This, the second edition, brings several improvements. We are proud to announce that this year's journal has been designed by a talented Detroit Designer. In addition, this year's journal features submissions not only from medical students, physicians, and School of Medicine staff, but also from faculty and staff from Wayne State's departments of Art, English, and Pharmacy. We have also included a section of work by some of Detroit's youngest aspiring doctors. As we grow and improve each year, we hope that you enjoy our efforts to enrich the medical community, promote cross-campus collaboration, and give voice to an essential but often-overlooked component of the medical experience.

EDITORS

Jessica Heselschwerdt, WSU SOM Class of 2012

Alok Sachdeva, WSU SOM Class of 2011

Lara Zador, WSU SOM Class of 2011

Deepti Reddy, WSU SOM Class of 2010

Faculty Advisor

Howard Fischer, MD

Journal Design

Jocelyn Fuller

*Produced by the Wayne State University School of Medicine Writing Workshop and
Wayne State University School of Medicine Gold Humanism Honor Society*

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THE ORIGINAL SKETCH | *Maya Holtrop, WSU SOM Class of 2012*

The Williams had been good friends of Peter Abraham for as long as anyone knew, and no one was surprised when Marjorie Williams married him a year after her first husband's death. It was an ordinary thing, as so often love is.

It was ordinary for the two participants as well; her husband had raised the possibility and Marjorie had begun to consider it even before Jacob was dead, as she lay awake during the long nights he was too ill to spend at home. She lay staring at the darkness where the ceiling was, fingering her wedding ring and thinking of the three of them, together as they had often been, laughing, playing cards in her kitchen and teasing each other. Peter Abraham had been the best man at her wedding, had spent too many evenings and days with them to count, had even lived in their house briefly following his one disastrous attempt at marriage. He had been the first of Jacob's friends to become her friend as well. Jacob had teased her once, when she told him how much she liked Peter, not long after they were married. "As long as you don't like him more than you like me," he had said, and she had said no, of course not, and that remained true: she loved her husband and was faithful to him. But she had difficulty remembering which man she was married to sometimes: as the years passed Peter became nearly as familiar to Marjorie as Jacob was, and she would forget which man she was allowed to caress with casual affection. She always caught herself before she made any drastic mistakes, and her husband was not a jealous man. She never fell out of love with him.

She cried for Jacob twice, the first time when she heard he was dying. She felt lost and lonely often during the months that followed, but it was not so terrible as the first shock. One day after Jacob's death she realized suddenly that it had been six months since he died, although the empty space in her life seemed much fresher than that; and three months later she awoke in the night and was not sad but puzzled by the empty side of the bed. When she remembered that the next morning she knew it was time for Peter; and it was only a week after the first time she kissed him that he asked her to marry him.

The second time she cried for Jacob was the evening of the day she married Peter, in the hotel they had come to for their honeymoon—brief and simple, like their wedding. She took off her jewelry and began to cry; "What's wrong?" Peter asked behind her.

"We're incomplete," she said. "Three is our number; we're only leftovers, you and I. We'll never be complete, no matter how happy we are, not without Jacob."

Peter was silent for a moment; then he came to where she was sitting and bent to kiss her head. She caught the arm he put around her and

held on to it as though to deny what she had just said, as though the two of them could be complete after all.

"There's nothing we can do," Peter said, "except hang on to each other. We may never be all the way complete, but we're better off together than separate."

"Yes," said Marjorie, and stopped crying. They held on.

BACKYARD TREE BRANCH | *Shaun Zardouz, WSU SOM Class of 2013*



*MECHANICAL BEING | Deepak Gupta, MD,
Resident Anesthesiologist, Detroit Medical Center*

Flip the coin!
Obverse or Reverse!
50-50 probability always!
What if not!

Because there is
Engrossing craving!
And there is
Dwindling patience!

Because there is
Empowered lust!
And there is
Lost love!

Because there are
Rich divorces!
And there are
Poor marriages!

Because there are
Soaring individuals!
And there are
Rotting families!

Because there are
Never-ready parents!
And there are
Not-wanted children!

Because there is
Living alone!
And there is
Dying alone!

Because there is
Mesmerizing virtuality!
And there is
Orphaned reality!

Who is flipping this coin?
The civilization is!
Trying to prepare for
Its future!
Because Gadgetry will not
Bring the Extinction!
But the Evolution of
Mechanical Being!

QUITO, ECUADOR | Michelle Sakala, WSU SOM Class of 2011



UNLEARNING: A PATIENT PLEA | *Deepak Gupta, MD,*
Resident Anesthesiologist, Detroit Medical Center

Midazolam
Is cheaper!
So don't talk
To me!

I am
Anxious!
But, don't ask
My concerns!

Listening can be
Tedious!
And, you are
Busy!

The busier
You are!
The costlier
You are!

I have so much
Reading material to handle!
I have so much
Awareness that confuses me!

I have so less
Insight to understand!
And I have so less
Insightful people to explain...to me!

I plead to you
Unlearning is difficult!
So please don't
Learn the less-than-good things!

As the system is
Not only for me!
But for
You too!

And midazolam
Is cheaper!
And no-one will
Talk to you!

THE DESIGNER'S HAND | *Nancy Shattuck, Adjunct Professor,*
Wayne State University Department of English

My father spent his last spring
moving toy blocks in and out
of slots meant to teach
tots spatial relations.

Who could tell what inspired
the one move he braved in an hour
or if his Alzheimer eyes held more
than a sky blank with infinity.

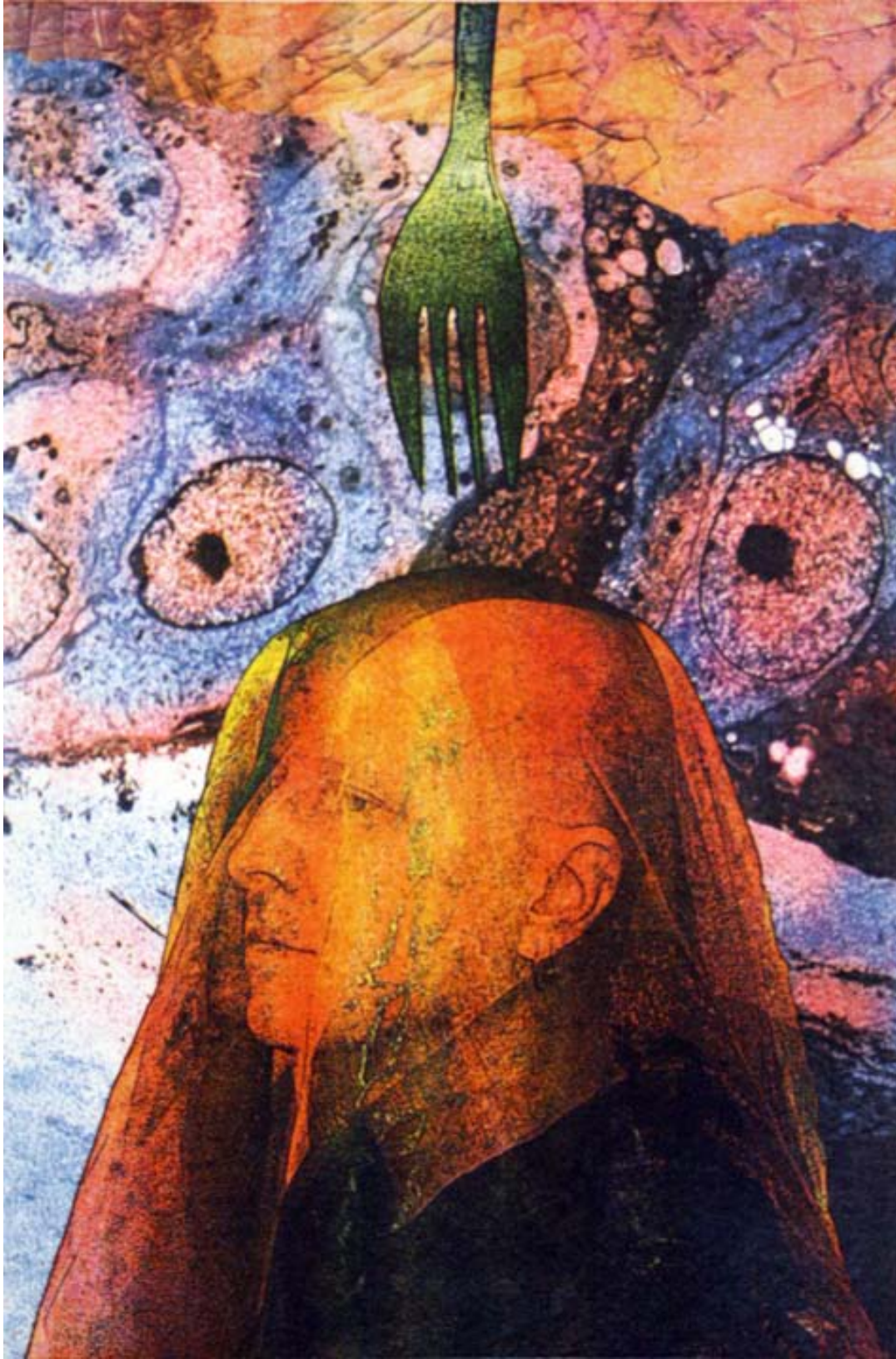
Every morning, he was secured
in his wheelchair for daily rounds:
bathed, dressed, entertained, fed,
toilet to dining room to lounge.

Often I thought as I watched
him stare, pick a round block,
lift one toolmaker-hand,
precisely, to fill a square slot,

he thought there was more
to it, that he studied for nuance,
for underlying designs, as if
he could fix it once for all.

I misunderstood if I imagined
he might be bored, wheeled him
from his meditations to a window,
pointed out the trees newly

in flower, opened it for heady air.
As ever, he was intent on solutions,
stared at the sill, while spring
was no longer of importance.





THE CELLS GO ROUND AND ROUND | *Josephine C. Hazen,*
Wayne State University, MFA, 2011

HE IS THE BEST PHYSICIAN
WHO IS THE MOST INGENUOUS
INSPIRER OF HOPE.
—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE,
1833

BARTLEBY, THE STUDENT: A PRELUDE TO THE SCRIVENER
| *S. Ahmed Ali, WSU SOM Class of 2014*

Decisions. They completely occupied young Bartleby's life and he was fast growing weary of them. While contemplating his latest, turkey sandwich or egg-salad, he could not help but realize just how simpler life would be if he didn't constantly have to choose. Having to choose between playing sports and schoolwork, having to choose a career path given that college was fast approaching, and most stressful of all, being forced to pick sides when his parents vehemently argued, an event fast becoming a daily occurrence. Indeed, life was tough; however little did he know that these seemingly ordinary decisions would ultimately lead to his complete transformation.

Amidst deep thought, Bartleby was startled by the lunch-lady, "Keep the line moving now". Quickly grabbing the lunch tray, he scurried off to the familiar wooden lunch-table; the very one he had dined upon the past four years. After greeting his two close companions, Nat and Jon, the trio quickly delved into conversation concerning the weekend, for they had just given their exams and had the weekend to enjoy. "My grandfolks have an old cabin in Parkland woods, I reckon they'd let us use it..." Nat began. "That is, of course if you are free Bart," he said stealing a quick glance. Stung by his friend's remarks, Bartleby quickly replied, "Yes, yes of course, would love nothing better than."

And although his companions seemed pleased enough with his confirmation, Bartleby could not shake the guilt. This feeling that was bothering him was just, no doubt, for the past few months he had been spending fewer time with Nat and Jon. Truth of the matter was that although decent students, neither of the pair were quite as ambitious or studious as he. This truth explained why he had hardly partaken in any pleasurable activities with his chums ever since his final school year began- while he was on college tours meeting professors, his friends were merry-making and enjoying their final year before everyone went their separate paths. It was a sad thought, but Bartleby vowed to make the weekend excursion one of his fonder memories.

IN NURTURING OUR PATIENTS WE NURTURE OURSELVES AND MAKE OURSELVES BETTER DOCTORS.

— *SHERWIN NULAND MD*

Just how fond a memory the trip would have been, Bartleby never knew. Upon arriving home, he found himself the involuntary spectator of a battle as his parents fought over yet another undoubtedly petty affair. Gathering the gist of the argument, Bartleby realized they were arguing over who was to make the day long excursion to Ridgemont, the nearby town, to pick up groceries and other necessities. Usually it was father who went, however lately his parents had taken to arguing over tasks that, till recently, both had been content carrying out. Reasoning that there was nothing he could make of the argument, Bartleby resigned himself to his room hoping that upon returning, things would be resolved.

He could hardly have been more wrong. To say the argument had worsened would be a gross understatement. The two were arguing as Bartleby had never seen before and disdain for each other was permanently etched on their faces. Triumphantly he realized he could end the ordeal by volunteering himself to Ridgemont, however just as he sought to speak up, he recalled the trip with his friends. Again, bursting inside him was that indescribable feeling of making an impossibly tough decision; either refrain from intervening, or arbitrate and perhaps alienate himself from his closest friends. As the pressure compounded inside him, Bartleby realized where his priorities should lie. He loved his friends dearly but at what cost? Just as his mother burst into tears, he spoke up...

During the journey to and from Ridgemont, Bartleby resolved to settle several issues internally. Simply, he came to the conclusion that that was the last grueling decision he was ever going to make; he absolutely was not going to place himself in that position again. If his parents wanted to argue like schoolchildren, that was their business and he was done meddling. Also, he was through making commitments; they bound him and he was startled to realize that he suddenly disliked feeling bound to anything. Lastly, he miserably accepted the high probability that his closest friends would never speak to him again, not after this betrayal. That thought alone was enough to awaken emotions that he never knew he possessed; self-pity, deep remorse and vice-like conviction. And with these volatile feelings swirling inside of him he arrived home.

He walked into an eerily empty house. Assuming the worst, Bartleby

began bellowing for his parents until father emerged somberly. Motioning to Bartleby to take a seat, he told him of the weekend's tale. He spoke of a horrifying story, of how matters got worse between himself and mother, of how the two argued incessantly and of how both came to the same conclusion – they couldn't raise a family this way. "For this reason, son", Bartleby's weary father told his astonished first-born, "your mother and I have separated. She shall keep custody of this house whereas I move to Connecticut..." As Bartleby attempted to comprehend what he had just heard, he realized that his mother had entered. "I assume father has told you everything Bart", she began with heavy-lidded eyes, "and while we understand just how shocking this must be, you must make a decision immediately." As soon as she mentioned that dreaded word, Bartleby snapped up and his mind cleared. "Your father's moving to Connecticut; since you have been accepted to school there, he is wanting for you to follow him. Or you could stay, attend school nearby and give me much needed help. So what say you?"

As the rage built inside Bartleby's head he realized it was over. Mother and father were separated; he had abandoned his friends to no avail and was now faced with the biggest decision of his life. Years of injustice flooded back as the painful memories of the past returned; he was six and had to choose between a puppy or a kitten – he was twelve and had to choose between boarding or public-schooling – he was sixteen and had to choose between his lady-friend and schoolwork – he was eighteen and had to choose between his friends or family and now, the toughest, he had to choose between mother and father. No matter who he picked, he would receive abrasive hostility from the other. He was in such a state of fury that he could not hear his parents' pleas; all he heard was the cries of his soul as anguish and bitterness tormented it... Finally it happened. A deafening silence enveloped him as everything crystallized. With a look of utter nothingness he gazed up. "Bart, what is it then?" his father inquired. "Will you join me?" Without hesitation, he replied, "I would prefer not to." Jubilantly, mother yelled, "So you shall stay?" to which he again replied, "I would prefer not to" and unceremoniously headed towards the door. His parents exchanged looks of bewilderment. "Where are you going!?" they cried. "I would prefer not to answer that". And with that, he was on his way.



GARDEN OF THE GODS, COLORADO SPRINGS | *Michelle Sakala, WSU SOM Class of 2011*

THE SUPERIOR DOCTOR PREVENTS SICKNESS, THE MEDIOCRE
DOCTOR ATTENDS TO IMPENDING SICKNESS, THE INFERIOR DOCTOR
TREATS ACTUAL SICKNESS.
—CHINESE PROVERB

GIFT | *Alok Sachdeva, WSU SOM Class of 2011*

I give you flesh
Stratified province
Of onions and sweat
Sensitive grasses
Drawn from the dirt
Of the well-concealed
Anonymous earth ...

I give you my breath
Thin fluid flood
Ubiquitous sea
Resolute reflex
That echoes the past
With the rise and fall
Of elementary gasps ...

Your neurodegenerative disease
Has left your muscles wasted,
Your diaphragm paralyzed,
Your words blurred and garbled ...

And so my voice I give to you
Heralded from the mountaintop
Muttered on the streetcorner
Silenced altogether
The madman's splutter
And the wonder of a child
Reconciled

IT'S OUR TIME | *Anonymous, Department of Internal Medicine*

When we were children, we always asked "why?"
"Why is the grass green?", "why are there stars in the sky?"

Oh, to be curious, right from the start.
Oh, to be children, who speak from their heart.

You see, children are born with a blank, clean slate.
It is others who teach them to love or hate.

Their innocence is ours, to do what we will.
The heart and the mind with love we should fill.

The lessons of life, we teach our children today.
The ideas they learn about others will stay.

So, teach your children to love, and that lesson will spread.
Stop bigotry and hate...we must move ahead!

There will be a day, when love conquers all.
Those memories of hate, we will barely recall.

The future is now; it's a choice we must make.
Remember our past and all that's at stake.

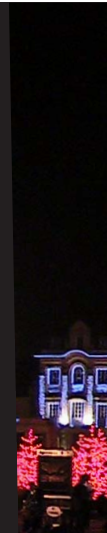
When children tomorrow look back and ask "why?"
Their parents will tell them "someone" was willing to try"!

IT IS THE DUTY OF A DOCTOR TO PROLONG LIFE.
IT IS NOT HIS DUTY TO PROLONG THE ACT OF DYING.
—*LORD THOMAS HORDER 1936*

USED TO BE | *Jessica Heselschwerdt, WSU SOM Class of 2012*

I used to be a poet.
I mean, I wasn't like Ginsberg or Cummings or Angelou
You weren't going to see my work on HBO
Or in a textbook next to the one about two roads in a yellow
wood
In fact, I don't think any of my poems were all that good--
But I used to fill notebooks with them.
Used to almost constantly compose them in my head,
Scribble them on grocery receipts and in the margins of the
magazines I read
I could find inspiration anywhere.
There were poems scattered like lost pennies on broken
sidewalks
Etched into dirty bus seats
Tangled in my hair.
I breathed poetry.
And maybe no one really knew-- I didn't submit my work to
journals
Or perform at open mics
Or do any of those things that poets do
But I was a poet when I looked in the mirror.
There wasn't much I was sure about
But that I was a poet was the one thing that was clear.
I used to be a poet!
And then, somehow, the poetry in me started slipping through
the cracks.
Somewhere between computer screens and library stacks
And calculations and text book pages
The poetry in me just... started fading.
Maybe I was in denial
Or just didn't realize it at first
But I started seeing science where I used to see verse.
I started thinking in equation instead of metaphor,
Idolizing Nernst and Starling and Bohr.
And I started considering things differently--

Breathing became gas exchange,
Curiosity-- neurons firing,
Hearts beating-- ejection fraction
And where I used to see beauty I just saw distraction
And more things to review and chart and memorize
Because when you've got 300 pages to read, you start to
prioritize
And who has time for William Carlos Williams
When you have to get acquainted with Gaucher
And Reed-Sternberg and Sjogren and Kussmal and Graves?
I tried to write, but my meter was lost in mnemonic
And my rhythm wasted on multiple choice tests
I remembered arteries and diseases and enzymes and
Which antibiotic works best
And I just forgot how to be a poet.
I could diagnose your dyspnea, TB, OCD, and flu
But I couldn't write one iamb, one couplet,
One pathetic haiku.
I fell asleep picturing amino acids and had brachial plexus
dreams
There was no longer poetry in my blood--
Just leukocytes and heme
But I used to be a poet!
And part of me still can't believe that life comes down to
neuronal pathways
And esoteric lines on an EKG.
Part of me believes that the poetry is still there, and it never
really went away
It's just waiting for me to pick up my pen and put down my
Gray's
Because poetry isn't what I do
It's what makes everything else I do OK...
I guess I should figure out how to be a poet again someday.



LIVING RECORD

| Kathryn Maysen, Staff Support, Department of Surgery

A poem tried to write
Itself but the pen
Ran dry. Shake, sputter went the brain
Cell's too. Skipping no beat my
Thirsty fountain barrel dipped
Chest deep, arrow sharp
Pierced the Burning Unseen
Cavern of my heart.

There it pumped a bloodletting
Of buried fears, red sweat
Laughter and tears, like some saggy
Jowl hound in relentless pursuit of
Memories with no voice.

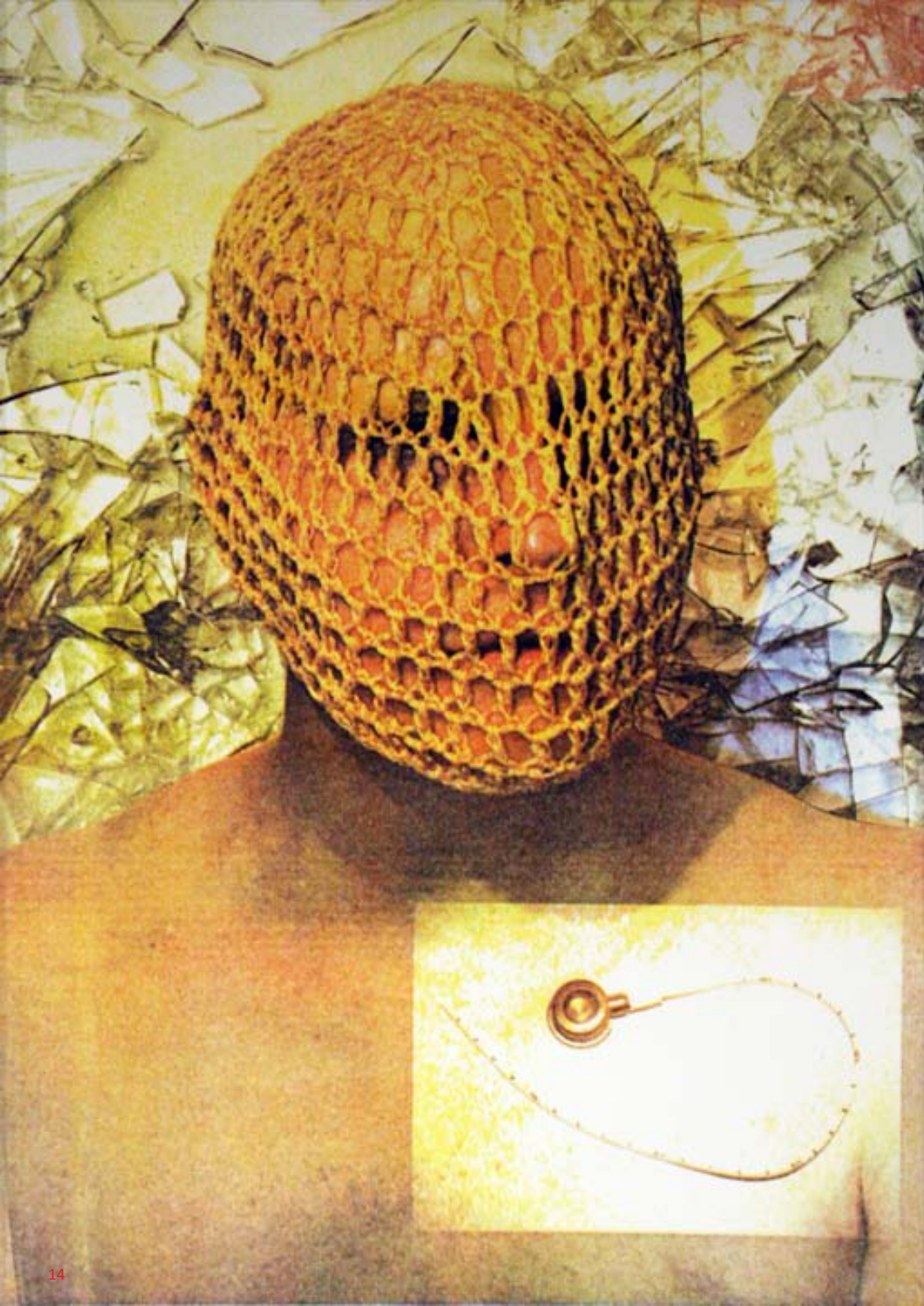
Phantom apparitions
Bled from this aching well
A living record
That seeped through the pores
Of my mouth dripping red
 Stain to page
 Finally initiating
 Words...



UNTITLED | Taufique A. Bhuiyan, PharmD candidate, 2012



*THE BEST PHYSICIAN
IS HE WHO CAN
DISTINGUISH THE POSSIBLE
FROM THE IMPOSSIBLE.
—HEROPHILUS C. 290 BC*



FRAGILE | *Josephine C. Hazen,*
Wayne State University, MFA, 2011

THE GREAT SECRET...IS THAT MOST THINGS GET BETTER
BY THEMSELVES. MOST THINGS, IN FACT, ARE BETTER BY MORNING.

—LEWIS THOMAS, MD

SAND CRABS | *Nancy Shattuck, Adjunct Professor,
Wayne State University Department of English*

The man wears black shorts, polo shirt,
baseball cap jammed on white hair,
fishes from shore, bent, the pole
playing what's left of the Jupiter Beach.
It's no use to tell myself Dad's gone,
it's someone else that fishes now.
That's him that casts the surf, old, bent,
intent, sand crabs for bait.

He taught me how to find them
when the tide sucks down the strand,
to look for bubbles rising and dig down fast.
They're whitish-gray half-dollar
ghosts, six legs, so beautiful,
when I first saw one close
I smuggled it in my palm.

While he fished,
I sketched it,
etched with fine
patterns, shell porcelain, delicate,
frail, so precious I possessed it
to let it go.

Now that he's back,
stands hand on hip,
looks over his shoulder,
reels in, casts, a crab moving sideways down the wave
break,
it's no use to believe in ghosts,
so perfect, I let him go.

TRIBUTE TO THE MERCILESS — AFTER ILYA KAMINSKY | *David Wildt,
WSU SOM Class of 2012*

When I was young,
I stole foreign cars,
holstered my glock
on my ribs and scars:
all scaffoldings
I designed with knives
speeding, crashing,
on my epic drives

until I soared off the road,
above the Grand River,
after my poetic lust –
only to find myself
flung from my car, my guns floating away
while my scars
fell faster-further, than
I trust, did
Icarus.

NO MAN IS A GOOD DOCTOR WHO HAS NOT BEEN SICK HIMSELF. —CHINESE PROVERB

EARLY LESSONS | *Howard Fischer MD, Children's Hospital of Michigan*

Finally, it was my first day in a US hospital after studying medicine in Europe for 5 1/2 years. A medical education at the very old and renowned Belgian university at which I studied lasted 7 years. The school let its foreign students return to their home countries for the last year-and-a-half, which consisted exclusively of clinical rotations. I arrived late at night in Detroit, went to the hospital- owned apartment, and spent a mostly sleepless night anticipating my first day in an American medical setting: My Belgian education had been in French. Would I know the US medical vocabulary? What about the abbreviations? Would what I learned in Europe correspond to what American medical students learned?

I awoke, skipped breakfast and walked the 2 blocks to the hospital. I was given a lab coat and a hospital badge and taken on a tour of the hospital. At about 11 o'clock my tour took me down to the Emergency Room (that's what we called "Emergency Departments" in 1975). After a few minutes an intern, another American who had been ahead of me in school in Belgium, called me over. He led me to a curtained-off space where a man, maybe 50 or 55 years old, lay supine on a gurney. The intern was trying to put a foley catheter down the man's urethra. It would not go in very far and the patient was really uncomfortable. (I had quickly learned that that's how American physicians described a patient in pain.)

"Hey," the intern yelled, "Did you ever put in a foley?"

Surely he knew I had not; in our preclinical education in Belgium we barely laid a hand on a patient, much less did any kind of procedure.

"No." I told him.

"OK, here's your first," he said.

I approached the patient without hesitation. We had learned how to catheterize the male urethra in school – it's just that they never actually let us do one. While the intern and I had this brief

conversation the patient kept repeating the same thing while my colleague tried to advance the foley: "Stop! There's a stone in my penis."

So now it was my turn. "Stone in the penis?" Huh? What could that possibly mean? The first thing I thought I'd do was remove the currently part-way in foley, re-prep the patient and insert a fresh catheter, using sterile technique. I put on exam gloves, held the man's penis in one hand and pulled out the foley with the other hand. As the distal end of the foley left the urethra, a geyser of bright-red blood spurted up into the air from the meatus. I felt myself getting very warm. My field of vision was more and more like a tunnel.

People were standing over me when I awoke, also supine on a gurney. "Are you a diabetic?" "Has this ever happened before?" "Did you have any breakfast today?" I drank the orange juice someone offered and sat up. I was OK and said so, and no, I hadn't had any breakfast. While I had been fainting for the first time in my medical career, my intern colleague decided to find out why the foley would not pass. He placed a thin metal probe down the man's urethra, and sure enough, there was a clinking sound – the sound of metal tapping against stone. The patient had a history of bladder stones which sometimes migrated into his urethra. He did, indeed, have a stone in his penis.

I was sent to the cafeteria for lunch and then ordered back to my hospital apartment for a decent sleep, with instructions to start my first rotation the next morning. What did this episode teach me? It re-taught me that what I had learned in the classroom was true: The brain can't function without glucose. I never skipped a meal while on duty from that time on (even if it was just a candy bar if the admissions were piling up). More important, I understood that the wise physician knows a patient's history well before undertaking any form of intervention, even something as "simple" as inserting a foley. And, of course, that not every classmate or colleague should automatically be considered a role model.

GARDEN OF THE GODS, COLORADO SPRINGS | *Michelle Sakala,
WSU SOM Class of 2011*



APPLE BASKET | *Shaun Zardouz,*
WSU SOM Class of 2013



TWINS | *Pauline Smith, WSU SOM Class of 2013*

I grew up to not like holding your hand;
It seemed like we had done it enough.
With or without my consent, I always had to play the older more
mature role in what should have been our equal relationship. But
now that the years have pasted and our lives have
taken a turn,
I yearn to hold your hand.
But question... do you still want to hold mine?
Because right now, I really need you to hold my hand.



PAUL AND PAULINE SMITH | *Pauline Smith, WSU SOM Class of 2013*

....*THAT ENDLESSLY FASCINATING
COMPOUND OF SCIENCE AND ART WE CALL MEDICINE...*
—*SHERWIN NULAND, MD*

*READ THIS SLOW | Lara Zador,
WSU SOM Class of 2011*

Is the meteor coming or going?
And has our meal arrived?
When I came back,
You were sitting in the same chair,
But had changed. Now, at the table,
my plate it empty,
your hands say nothing,
but remind me to be strong.
Here is a good place for a semi-colon.
After you left this morning,
there was an earthquake and a
cappuccino I am sorry you missed.
Once upon a time, my dear, we were
merely friends. The mole on your neck
winks at me. And now you're my wife.
The silence is bad breath, confusing,
words that are frogs press on my throat.

We discuss toothpaste, gasoline and bonsai.
I like you in my armpit.
The dampness on my pillow that
Remains after you arise after
your shower smells like soil,
turmeric and beer. The wet pillow
means that you and I are still tired.
In other words, in so many words,
In afterwards and forewords and
towards and away: this is my version
of a crayon-drawn portrait: I am
so happy to have found in you
my muse.

*DEATH PANELS AND POLICY | Haroon Yousuf,
Class of 2013 at McMaster University School of Medicine*

Those who have never seen death
Debate death panels as policy.
All that they speak of
Is as far as the mind can see,
Which is neither very far
Nor very good.
But I am standing here
With a myeloma patient and her family;
Her husband is not wearing his ring today—
He's not the type that forgets easily
The promise he made to this woman
When he carved their names into his backyard tree.
Where has it gone?
It looked like it was worth a pretty penny—
Did it have to be pawned?
“Did he always have to be so f-ing silly!”
She cried in his arms,
Both of them a little more frail
When he didn't show up with his ring today.
Today they debate healthcare on Capitol Hill.
Huge bills the weight of a small child are passed.
Is there room for our stories on these bills?
Is there room for humans
On these panels
Where both sides are blinded
By their insight?

WE ARE NOT COMPROMISED BY ALLOWING OURSELVES TO FEEL WHAT A PATIENT FEELS,...WE ARE STRENGTHENED BY IT. —*SHERWIN NULAND, MD*

THINGS YOU NEVER SAY | *Gerald Rice*

You came back to the car with two cups and a new stain on your shirt. It was hot outside, over ninety degrees, but we had an alien craving for something warm. You handed me a cup of coffee, even bad gas station coffee is good coffee, and took a sip of what smelled like hot chocolate.

“What the hell did I just put in my mouth?” you said, your face pulling back with disgust. Manufactured cold chilled the sweat gliding down our bodies into a thin, sticky gel and a sneaking smile crawled across your face as we headed back to the freeway, you pouring the cup’s contents out the driver’s side window.

Saying things that never come up in casual conversation quickly became an unspoken rule as we headed west on 94. Conversation had long since dissipated into meaningless, repetitive talking for the sake of talking and this was a welcomed change. I spotted a dead, broken deer, tossed onto the shoulder.

“I bet he sucked at Frogger,” I said. You joined me in a chuckle, weaving around an elderly woman nose-to-nose with the minimum speed limit in a silver, boat-sized Cadillac, her hands cuffed around the wheel. She was driving by herself and I felt like I was the one looking up over that dashboard, that somehow when I was her age I’d be that lonely. I kept the thought to myself, not wanting to ruin our game with my petty B.S., as you often put it, when I saw you looking at me with that cocky grin.

You lifted your chin, pointing with your eyes, the vehicle you’ve been keeping pace with just outside my window. A white-haired, middle-aged man in a pink, short-sleeved shirt was plucking a thin brown cigarette in and out of his mouth. I didn’t know the make of his car, but it looked foreign, feminine and built for speeding.

“That was when I foise realized I was a wuman trapped in a man’s bawwwdy,” you said in your best gravelly smoker’s voice, applying the tight V made by your index and middle fingers to your lips, making sucking sounds for maximum effect. The old woman slipped from my mind just like you always make me forget the things bothering me about us.

You dialed down the air conditioner when the sun was barely peaking above the horizon. I pinched the shirt off my clammy flesh, seeing a sign reading, ‘Bangor, next exit.’

“Bangor?” I said. “I hardly even know her!” Our easy laughter was brought to a halt as we come up behind a cluster of cars. Flashing red and blue lights are somewhere ahead of us.

You beat on the horn, rolled down your window and poked your head out. “My wife’s pregnant and I’m sittin on lunch here!” you shouted. You don’t seem to notice I’m not laughing this time, my hands covering my empty belly as we slow to a creep behind the other cars, your prideful smirk still in tow.

It took over forty minutes for us to travel the two miles of freeway to where a police officer in a translucent raincoat married the two lanes of traffic into one. Rice-sized pellets of rain pat against the windows, intermittently. We slowly skirted around the accident, a chain of cars illuminating a drive-through funeral. The two cars were a twisted wedding of steel. A spatter of blood like angel wings was across the crumpled hood. I caught a glimpse of the woman before she was loaded into the ambulance and her face was a veil of red. Looking down, I realized I was crossing myself, over and over again.

You were staring over where the emergency vehicles were too. The lights flashed in your eyes and I could see the child drained out of them. Your look had something I wasn’t seeing intermingled with the accident scene, but you said nothing. I looked back as we idled past, seeing the party of police vehicles, fire trucks, twin ambulances and road flares. There was a woman’s shoe overturned I hadn’t noticed before. Glancing back at you, I wanted to turn on the light to see if those were tears welling up in your eyes. Your hand lifted and moved closer to me and at first I thought you were about to put the car in Park. Instead, you fumbled against my arm until you found my hand, lacing your fingers between mine.

“I love you,” you said in the dark cave of the car without taking your eyes off the accident.





UNTITLED | *Taufique A. Bhuiyan, PharmD candidate, 2012*

*WHEN FATE ARRIVES THE PHYSICIAN BECOMES A FOOL.
— ARABIC PROVERB*



YOU CAN'T FIND THE SOUL WITH A SCALPEL. —GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, C. 1880

THE GOLIATH | *Shirly Kmetz, Department of Internal Medicine*

Paul Lieberman didn't go straight home after classes. Instead he drove aimlessly around the city. The evening matched his mood--depressing, cold, somber. The light from the street lamps made the pavement stretch ahead like black patent leather, and the rain smacked gently against his face from the half-open window.

He pulled into a drive-in and ordered a cup of black coffee to soothe his nerves. He listened to the rock-and-roll music drifting from the next car, and glanced at the young couple snuggled close. The noise and carefree laughter of the teen-age crowd momentarily took his mind off the present. Idly rubbing his fingers together, he thought, "God, if only I could start over again."

His coffee came, and as he sipped it he absent-mindedly fingered the cup as though it were an anatomical specimen. Glancing at the books at his side, Histology, Pathology, Anatomy, he felt despondent.. He quickly finished his coffee and left the drive-in.

He drove for about an hour before he finally parked on a side street, turned off the ignition, and rested his head on the steering wheel. The sounds that emerged from his throat were hesitant, spasmodic sobs that come from people not accustomed to crying. He drew a tissue from his pocket, wiped his eyes, then blew his nose, somewhat relieved. After a while, he started his car and headed for home, dreading the inevitable moment when he would have to tell his parents he was flunking out of medical school after being halfway through.

He listened to the sound of the rasping windshield wipers scraping monotonously against the glass, and he thought about his two years in medical school. He thought of the funny, happy times with his fellow students, like the time that clumsy Lester Gitlin dropped a human brain, liver and kidney in the busy corridor as he carted them to the medical photography department. He thought of the more serious, rewarding days, the profound lectures that probed mysteries of life, disease and death. He had felt a shy sense of pride in his white coat, his black bag, the instruments, and the way family and friends came to him with medical questions. With the pride also came a deeper sense of awe at the profound processes of life in its most minute form.

He wondered about his future now, his parents, their reaction to the news he had to tell. His mother would cry--that much was certain, but it was his father's reaction that he feared. He remembered the time in elementary school when he had gotten a D twice in the same subject. His father marched him into the kitchen and, with a long wooden spoon, repeatedly struck the little hands extended outward in punishment.

"You are a Jewish boy," he said, "That means you do not fail at anything you do." Down came the spoon with a resounding smack. "Do you understand? You work hard and you succeed." He recalled looking up into the stony countenance with its eyes like chunks of coal and the heavy stubble of beard. For a moment he wished he had a sling shot to slay the mighty Goliath. He stood there with his palms burning, refusing to give his father any satisfaction of seeing him in tears. After that, he always managed to remain in the upper portion of his classes straight through college.

He was almost home now. He turned onto the modest street of small brick homes and parked his car in the driveway. Through the heavy rain on his windshield, he saw the lights of the living room blur like a gold smudge against the dark silhouette of the house. He scooped up his books and bag and made a quick dash up the front steps. Once inside, he laid his books on the table in the hallway while he wiped the rain from his face.

"Why didn't you tell me you weren't going to be home for dinner?" his mother scolded as she took his raincoat from him and hung it up. "When you study late at school you always call. And tonight I made sauerkraut soup just for you, and lekach for dessert. You want to eat now?"

"No, mama, not now."

"Why not?" her dark eyes widening.

"I'm just not hungry."

"But I made sauerkraut soup," she said as she followed him into the kitchen.

"Mama, please, I can't eat. Where's Pa?"

DOCTORS DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING REALLY. THEY UNDERSTAND MATTER, NOT SPIRIT. AND YOU AND I LIVE IN SPIRIT. —*WM SAROYAN 1943*

THE GOLIATH | *(continued)*

“He’s upstairs. He’ll be down.”

He avoided the comfort of the living room to sit on the hard chair under the bright light of the kitchen. His mother squeezed his ear as she scurried past his chair and murmured to herself, “My son the doctor. How can he take care of other people if he won’t take care of himself and eat?”

“I won’t be taking care of other people, mama.”

“Look at you. You’re getting so skinny lately.” With her flowered apron tied neatly around her pudgy figure, he watched her busy hands roaming in and out of drawers and cupboard, completely oblivious to anything he had said.

He spun around in his chair, the freckles prominent on his pale, thin face.

“Ma...I’ve flunked out of school. Nothing seemed to go right for me this year. I just don’t know...I don’t understand.” He sat looking down at his folded hands, the long graceful fingers that everyone admired, hands that somehow seemed out of place with the thin, awkward body.

The clatter of dishes stopped, and he heard his mother slowly shuffle over to the kitchen table and sit down beside him. She drew her apron up to her face and cried. He looked down at the top of her head, at the smooth, even part down the middle and the little knot at the back, and he couldn’t say a word.

After a while, she dried her eyes, rose to her feet and made her way to the stove.

“I’ll heat the soup and we’ll talk about what must be done. I’ll tell you exactly, not a word of this to Mrs. Berman. With her big mouth the news would spread from here to Tel Aviv in half an hour. You know...” she said, waving her ladle, “her Seymour is not so smart, not what I’ve heard from him. I think he cheats, myself.”

Then Paul heard the heavy foot descend the stairs, and his mouth went dry. He looked up at the massive figure standing in the doorway.

“What’s wrong Sarah?” His father’s face crinkled in concern. She kept crying and shaking her head.

“What’s wrong with your mother? What did you say to her?”

Paul stared at the black and white floor and wished it could split and devour him. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth like a fly to fly paper.

“I’m talking to you. What did you say to her?”

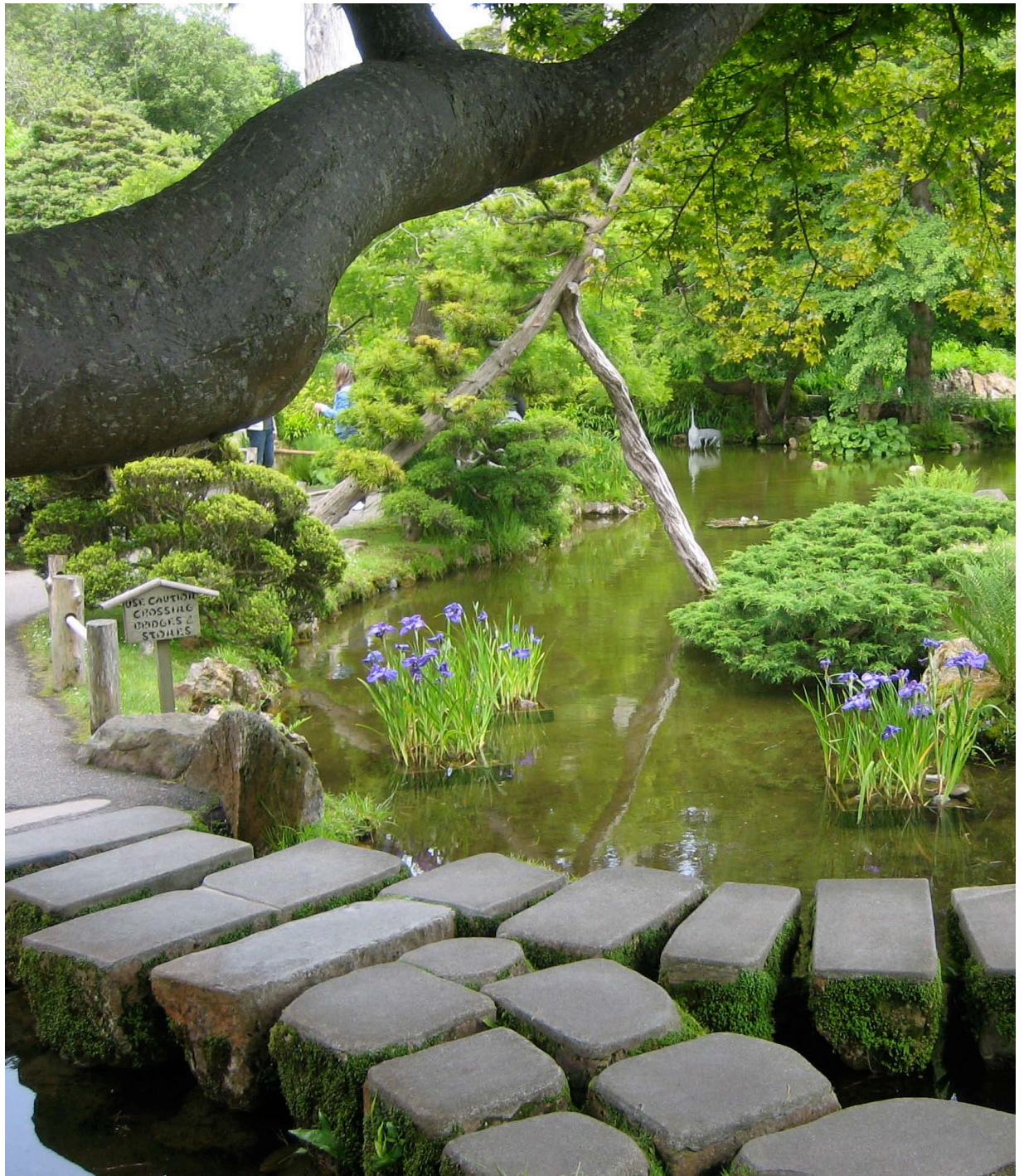
“I...I flunked out of school. I’m through. It’s over.” He spoke so quickly the words flowed together. There was silence. His father rested the palms of his hands on the table and leaned towards Paul, his breathing slow and heavy.

“What did you say?”

Paul repeated the words. The look on his father’s face was the same cold stare. It was almost a full minute that his father stood there, frozen. The only sign of thaw was the brief, flashing hint of anger in the dark eyes and the clenching and unclenching of the wide jaw.

“For years your mother and I saved every penny we could to give you this education. To have you use it was all we wanted. That was to be our reward. Why do you think I took on extra work, for my health? No, we wanted you not to have to worry about money, just your studies. Now you can’t even do that.” His eyes were moist, and their rims reddened as he spoke.

Paul looked at the fallen Goliath, and he wondered if the shot had been worth it after all.



JAPANESE TEA GARDEN, SAN FRANCISCO, CA
| Michelle Sakala, WSU SOM Class of 2011

I just walk in the door from a four-hundred-mile drive from Dad's house when he calls me. Exhausted, I steel myself.

"I see you made it home. Got a problem here."

"Yeah?" I say.

"Someone rang the doorbell, said I needed to go to the doctor with them."

His voice implies that he knows the "someone" is his home nurse, Laura, but he has a difference of opinion about going to the doctor.

"You had an appointment Dad. It's on your calendar."

"I *didn't* have an appointment. I sent whoever it was away."

"You sent Laura away?" I can feel my voice rise. "She's your friend, the one you love! Plays piano! Sings with you!"

Laura's told me that Dad proposed marriage to her twice, telling her that she'll never have to work again and her kids will go to the finest schools. We laugh about it because he refuses to write a check to pay for her services every week.

"Don't know a Laura," he says. "I'm not going anywhere!"

I'm beside myself. In his early-morning-hour confusion after a cancer operation, he cut the drainage tubes from the wound site. He was famous at the hospital ever after, now having to return daily to have a manual extraction of fluids from his arm. Laura usually took him to this appointment.

"Dad, you needed to go. Is your arm swelling?"

"No. A little. When are you coming back?"

"I have to sell my property. A week, like we discussed."

He screams at me. "Are you just going to leave me here all alone?"

When I left Chicago this time, he cried and begged me not to leave. Half the time, he thought I was his wife. I'm not sure where he is coming from now, but I know he wants me to feel guilty.

"I can't be in Chicago and St. Louis at the same time!"

I'm yelling. I hate this, the way he can make me angry. I know my exasperation does no good for either of us, but I can't come to terms with the fact he can no longer reason.

"Just live with it, Dad."

I slam down the phone and walk to the kitchen window, tears rolling down my cheeks. I deplore the fact that I am crying. *Why*, I think for the hundredth time, *do I always cry when I'm angry?*

The still voice that answers comforts me. *You're not angry*, it says. *You're upset because you have to leave your home.*

But I can't get through to him anymore, I argue, *and now he's missed his appointment.*

The voice again soothes me. *You can call Laura and have her take him tomorrow.*

I felt I owed my father the care he needed when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, but I wasn't prepared for this unreasoning and often raging man. I was regretting my decision as I drove back and forth between the two cities, arranging his medical appointments and paying his bills. Exhausted by the long commutes and realizing that he could no longer function on his own, I was determined to sell my home and move in with him. I thought it might be better if I were overseeing his meals and regulating his rampant overdosing on sugar and caffeine until I could get him into a care facility. The wait for a good one could be nine months or more.

I dry my eyes and assess what the months of intermittent absence have done to my spring garden. Four azaleas dead, and the new rosebud tree, too. The rhododendron blossoms are limp from the late spring freeze and just one scraggly tulip left. Weeds have overtaken the patio and vines cover the remaining azaleas and shrubs. *Mrs. Locke's legacy*, I think.

I go downstairs to see if there is anything I can do to clean it up before the real estate agent holds the first open house. The garden used to be a source of peace for me, like a Japanese Temple garden. In fact, the friend who helped me to plant it is Japanese. Toshiro even made a ceremony, placing the large stone shaped like a ship in the center of the azalea "islands" and drew surf lines around it.

"This ship," he said, "is bringing you treasures from the islands."

I christened my retreat "ringing stone garden" and spent hours grooming it, as many as I could spare. Now I stand in the middle of a disaster. I grab at weeds that leave tiny stickers in my fingers tenacious as memories. I used to keep the garden so meticulously, pulled each weed up by the roots, rejected chemical fertilizers and weed killers. I even finished by sweeping the dirt free of clippings and fallen leaves with a broom and dustpan. It's not that I'm a perfectionist, as anyone can see looking at me. The garden is just the only place where I have any control. Anyone who has rehabbed an old house in a city transitional zone knows what I am talking about. Many



of us are fighting the neighbors and city hall at the same time. Mrs. Locke was the neighbor variety.

She never spoke to me when I moved in, but would nod a greeting if she were in her yard. I heard reports of her through the neighbors in our block club. Her daughter Charlotte had moved in with her husband, but Mrs. Locke had kicked them out. She went to the Baptist church down the street. We lived side-by-side peacefully, never speaking.

Then one day, I was spreading mulch in the garden near the clematis I'd trained up the cyclone fence trying to block the view to Mrs. Locke's weed-filled yard next door. I planted the clematis as much for Mrs. Locke as I did for myself. It would eventually replace the rank milkweed vines and cover the chain link fence with large lavender blooms. Mrs. Locke was too old to keep up her backyard, but she was the only native to the neighborhood who kept flowers and shrubs trimmed in her front yard. Mrs. Locke would appreciate flowers, I had reasoned.

I didn't notice the hiss of the screen door in time to steel myself and jumped when Mrs. Locke's terrier, Baby, barreled to the fence, barking fiercely. I was eye-to-eye with all the fury of a Chinese temple guardian. He barked with each snarling lunge at the fence. My heart beat faster, and my stomach felt queasy.

Mrs. Locke, who followed the dog, was dressed for church in the same cotton housedress she wore on weekdays dressed up by removing her

bib apron and adding a hat, from which thin wispy white hair poked.

"That's my fence," Mrs. Locke said. "You've been killing my flowers."

Hands on her hips, she took a step closer, but kept her distance from the fence where the dog still barked. I rose and faced her.

"Flowers! That's milkweed!"

"It's not milkweed. It's my white flowers!" she said.

I was stunned. The fence didn't show on the sales plat. Mrs. Locke was in her right if she owned the fence. I would never have planted clematis there if I thought it was Mrs. Locke's fence.

"But, I thought you'd *like* the flowers I planted."

Mrs. Locke wasn't through. "You keep putting dirt on your yard and it's come up higher than my fence. The bottom's rusting."

Mrs. Locke pointed at the line of bricks I placed at the fence line to dam the build up of composted dirt. That fence was aluminum! No way it could rust. But this wasn't about the fence. She had no right to wreck my only day off. Fair was fair.

"I didn't ask you, to cut down your stinkwood tree that's wrecking my garage wall, did I?"

"That's your problem," the old woman said, "the minute you buy here."

Stunned at her attack and too angry to reply, I had to leave the yard. I reasoned that Locke was crazy. That tree was a monster. Hollow. Next windstorm, it would fall. Even if she cut the roots at the property line, it would fall. And they would all lose their houses. My flowers were preferable to milkweed.

I was right. Mrs. Locke was crazy and she failed the next winter. Letting her property fall into ruin, she didn't pay utilities. The companies shut off her electricity and gas. A neighbor called the city welfare department and social workers removed her from the house, declaring the house, which now had trees growing on the caving roof, blighted. Apparently, Mrs. Locke owed so many years' back taxes that the city auctioned off the house. The neighbors pitched in to cut down the stinkwood tree after one huge branch crushed my garage roof and destroyed her other neighbor's car during a storm.

Just the memory of Mrs. Locke could disturb my peace of mind. She too was a victim of Alzheimer's disease, I now knew.

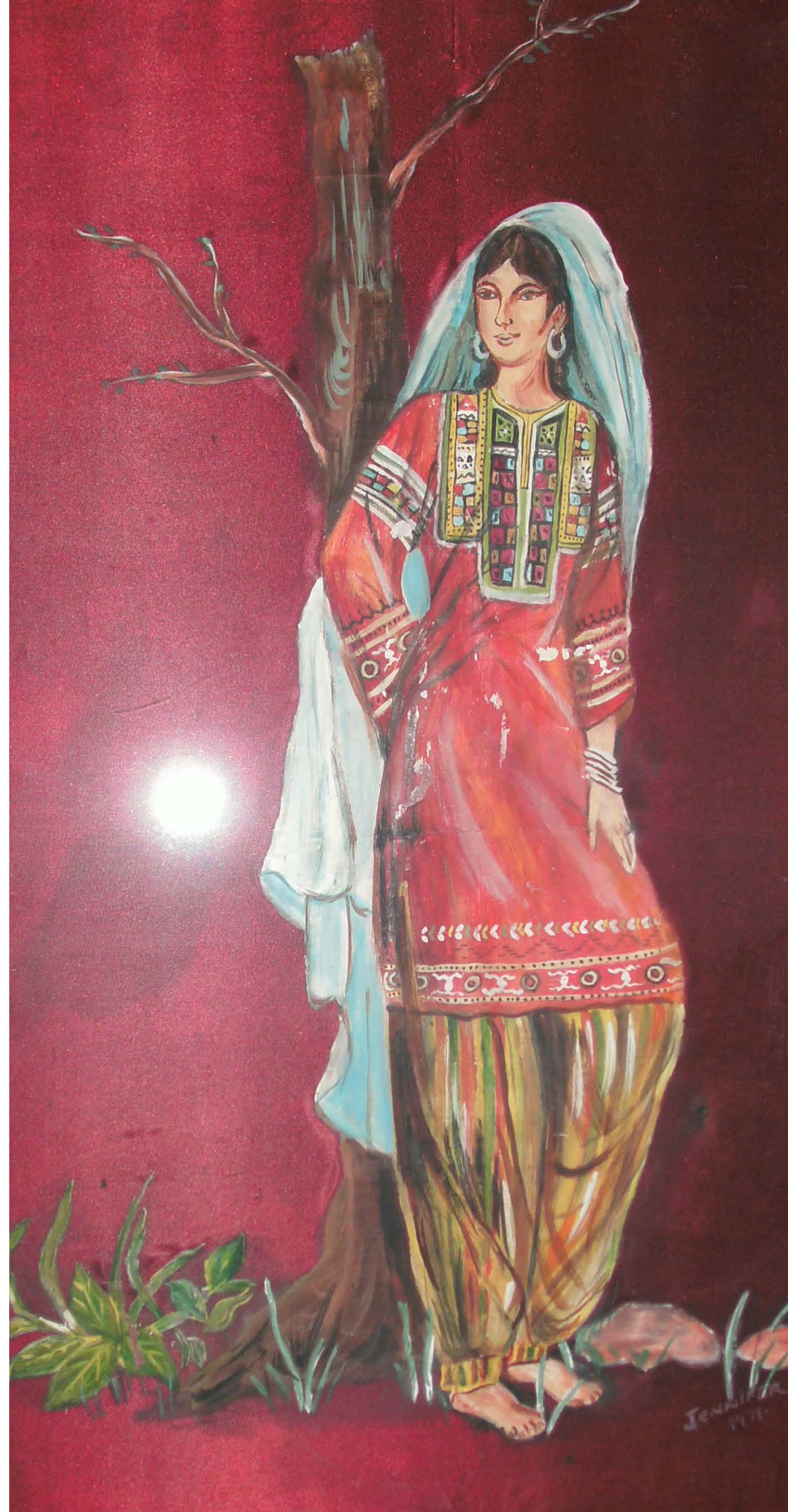
Now! Mrs. Locke's milkweed vines writhe across my azaleas, choking white blooms struggling to breathe in the spring sun. I pick a strategic place to begin to remove one. When I yank at an end, it comes free of the bush easily and I loop the bright green vine in my hand as if handling a garden hose. I fold and stuff it into a trash bag. Then I pull at the next sucker and it too gives up its slight hold on the bush as I reel it in. It weaves fantastically to the next azalea and then back again, in a snaking canopy. Fascinated, I recognize that some of the brown vines are left from the previous fall, when I started commuting to Chicago to care for Dad.

I tug a brown creeper. Her flowers! Too late, I hear the dry brown pods that hang from it rattle. Before I can shove them into the trash bag, they burst open. With horror, I see hundreds of seeds, each with a white parachute, swarm into the air currents, then settle on the rich composted soil, already rank with weeds. More of them waft to settle at the base of the ringing stone.

I throw down the trash bag and sit down on the porch steps already drifted with milkweed seed. *Too many*, I realize. *My garden is gone forever. What am I going to do about it?*

For one crazy moment of my own, I want to laugh or cry but can do neither. What I do is scoop up a handful of those seeds and throw them into the air, and then another and another. I take an inane pleasure with the way they take the light and beam a transformed radiance of wing in their dance. Then I leave, go upstairs and call dad.

"Dad? I'm sorry I yelled at you. You were right all along. You going to go to the doctor tomorrow?"



They say you never forget your first – dissection, that is. I remember a hot afternoon in early August that began in Jaffar Auditorium. Dr. Ireland introduced the course and then lectured on the scapula, the clavicle, the top of the humerus, and the axilla (aka armpit) along with the accompanying muscles and nerves. We were to finish with a video about proper dissection technique and how to care for one's cadaver, but the video didn't work so we saw only the very beginning. Then we went down to the basement, not knowing what to expect. We changed into scrubs and lab coats, pulled back our hair, and entered the lab.

The lab consisted of four large rectangular rooms connected to each other. Double-doors from the hallway had small windows that prevented outsiders from seeing much, probably to save the stomachs of nearby janitors. Inside, I saw six steel tables against one wall and six against the other, for a total of twelve tables on each wall. The two long walls had chalkboards, as did the short wall with the door to the hallway. For the moment those boards were blank; soon, they would be covered with diagrams and muscle names. In the center of the room was a narrow table with several opaque plastic bottles and at the far end were two large sinks. But the tables captivated everyone's attention. Each held something long and bulky, a white plastic-wrapped mummy secured with tan packaging tape. Some tables had clear-ish liquid with a hint of red at the foot. Our table was table forty, in the front corner of the back room. It looked fairly clean. I assembled there along with Nick, Neil, Emily, Megan, and Lisa.

We were an interesting group. Nick was relatively tall with very short dark hair. He seemed the most prepared, confidently rattling off structures. But Neil, a quieter boy whose parents were from India, had the better knowledge base in my opinion. Emily was short and petite, probably under five feet, and the quietest of all of us. She had short curly brown hair and seemed afraid, though she had taken anatomy before (albeit a simpler class for undergraduates.) The three of them became "team that side", working on the cadaver's right half. "Team this side," which Megan named us (thus designating the other team's name as well) consisted of Megan, a cheery, low-key girl who'd lived all over because her dad had been an army doctor, Lisa, a tall, thin girl whose family came from Sicily, and myself.

We donned our gloves, opened our dissection kits, and waited for an announcement from Dr. Ireland. His voice soon sounded over the PA system and several other teams started slicing open the packaging on their cadavers. We waited, timid and unready. I recalled how my mother had told me that her cadaver reminded her of her father and I hoped mine wouldn't be the same. Eventually we took out a scalpel and sliced open the white plastic from neck to waist. We saw the somewhat bloated body of an elderly woman. A scar replaced her right breast. I thought immediately of my grandmother, who had breast cancer in her thirties, and my cousin, who developed breast

cancer at the same time and died of it three years ago. Fortunately my cadaver looked nothing like either one. Her abdomen was infused with fluid so that it looked square and box-like, and her hands were tied together at the wrists and rested on top. We untied the gauze and let her arms sit at her sides. Her skin was tough and leathery and olive-toned, and her fluid-filled stomach resisted our timid poking. Eventually a young professor came to our table. She had a kind face and brown hair cut to her shoulders, and her green lab coat muted the fact that she was somewhere in her third trimester. I later learned her name was Dr. Tracy-Bee, and she became one of our favorite lab instructors. She helped us make the hardest cut, the first cut.

Dr. Bee reviewed where we would be cutting and gently but firmly asked who was willing to wield the scalpel. Nobody volunteered. After a minute Dr. Bee turned to Emily and said, "You look like you're ready." Emily took a deep breath and I think I inhaled with her. Then she took her scalpel and made the first incision along the sternum. It was unimpressive, just a line going a few inches down the cadaver's chest. Nothing spilled out, and one couldn't even see anything. Dr. Bee showed us how to check and make sure we were only cutting to the level of the fat to avoid damaging cutaneous nerves and other important superficial structures. One by one we all took turns cutting. It was surprisingly easy. The skin was tough but not unyielding, and sometimes the scalpel moved quickly of its own accord. Soon we had made the necessary incisions: down the sternum, along but caudal to the clavicle, and along the costal arch. We then began the difficult process of retracting the skin while scraping off the fat – which I was surprised to find is just as yellow as in pictures. I had no idea it would talk nearly two hours pulling away the skin and picking out fat and fascia. We laid paper towel on the cadaver's belly and piled the fat on top, periodically emptying our "fat piles" into the biohazard wastebaskets. It began to smell like formaldehyde and our eyes stung if we bent over the cadaver for too long. Eventually we were able to identify pectoralis major and retract it to see its relative pectoralis minor. The muscles were grayish brown and the nerves were a faint yellow. Veins were dark blue. They were the only structure that looked like we expected. We managed to identify some other key muscles, veins, and nerves before it was time to go. We poured water over the exposed area, closed the skin flaps and covered them with wet paper towel, and zipped up the body bag.

It must have been at the next lab that we unanimously to name our cadaver. Calling her "it" or "her" or "the body" felt cold and impersonal. We knew she was eighty-four, and we wanted an "old lady" name. Different people in my group suggested several different names including that of my grandmother (which of course I immediately vetoed), but we eventually decided on Dolores. It fit immediately. "Hi, Dolores," I almost said. "I'm honored to meet you."

THE EXPERIENCE OF HEALING IS A JOINING BETWEEN DOCTOR AND
PATIENT IN WHICH ONE HUMAN BEING IS PRIVILEGED TO HELP
ANOTHER. IT HAS BROUGHT BLESSEDNESS TO MY LIFE.

—*SHERWIN NULAND, MD*

SECOND DIVISION, ADA DRIVE | *David Wildt,*
WSU SOM Class of 2012

This poetic, is like my father's black audi
Sunday morning
as I race it to buy
an Irish Cream Breve
from a burnout hippie
who cut his pony tail off
because it snapped him in the eye
while picking asparagus
he sells at his coffee shop
the Kent County
Commission of Health
just closed down for sanitation
violations on
Ada Drive.
This poetic, is like remembering
Eric's brother's baby girl
who is still alive – Sarah –
like Aaron's refusal to buy
a cup of Tea from starbucks,
but instead buys one from the hippie
and drinks it
across the street
at that Homogeneous American Monopoly –
decadent and degenerate,
now illegitimate on
Ada Drive.
This poetic, is like the Drop C
tuning on my brother's red wine
Gibson Les Paul at 11 AM
scaling my ear drum

like a werewolf
tangled between the hemlocks and
telephone lines
forming the canopy over
the old music store
where he took lessons
from the
classical guitarist
who didn't like his style,
back in his office, off
Ada Drive.
This poetic, is like the Nuns
who wondered at my 9-year old body
my brother's 7-year old laissez faire
smile when we handed them
the money our mother gave us
to buy their cinnamon rolls
while she waits outside
on the yellow curb,
teaching my baby sister
the proper form of a
Pas de Chat, in front
of the Barber shop
across the street
from the weathered
hardware store (that doesn't sell paint brushes anymore)
on
Ada Drive.
This poetic, is never enough.

Maybe this volunteering thing was a bad idea. What did I know
about dying people? I imagined running out the door, that first time.
Before I could flee, an old woman caught my eye, and I guess that was enough,
this hunched figure in a natty pink robe and mismatched socks. She held a deck of cards,
and beckoned to me. If I tried to think of an excuse, I came up with nothing--
so I sat down. She smiled, and extended her thin, wrinkled hand.

Rummy was her game, and she won nearly every hand.
And maybe I knew little of grief, but I did know
how to shuffle and deal, and that was better than nothing.
We played until it was long past time
to tally the points and put away the cards
and when I came back on Tuesday, she winked-- "I didn't beat you enough?"

It was funny, because she seemed to like me enough
but she made everyone else shake their heads and wring their hands.
She insulted the nurses and scoffed at the woman who brought her flowers and cards,
insisted that this was some sort of short-stay nursing home and if you didn't know,
you were just stupid. She price-shopped apartments, and in the meantime,
ripped off her bandages and insisted her useless doctors did nothing.

When we played rummy, though, it was like that all meant nothing.
Sometimes her armor cracked-- just a little, but enough
for her to hint at life in better times.
Only once, she said "Sometimes, I wish I could still hold my daughter's hand.
I thought I could fix her, you know?"
She sighed. "I guess it just... wasn't in the cards."

So forget about the flowers and the get-well cards
Because this isn't permanent. This is nothing
Jesus and determination can't fix-- don't tell her, she knows,
and don't argue, she's heard it, and she's really heard enough.
She ignored her labored breath and shaking hands
Told me to deal the next round, and said "I'm going home soon, just give it time."

I remember the day I let her win for the first time.
She was quiet, and could barely hold her cards.
I had all four aces in my hand
but I just waited, doing nothing
pretended her two jacks and a four were enough
for a rummy, and let her break the rules she should already know.

I would need more than two hands to count the number of times
I wanted to make sure she knew it wasn't about the cards.
I said nothing. No words were good enough.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO REMAIN
AN EMPEROR IN THE PRESENCE
OF A PHYSICIAN, AND DIFFICULT
EVEN TO KEEP ONE'S ESSENTIAL
QUALITY AS A MAN.
—*MARGUERITE YOURCENAR, 1951*

A circular saw cut off my two fingers. Left ring and left middle. They fell to the garage floor. And before it sunk in, I looked at them. One pointed up, one pointed down. Dirt still under the fingernails, like they still had a job to do.

Then the blood came and the kind of pain that makes you act instead of panic. So, I wrapped my hand in a rag and decided not to make a fuss. I drove with one hand, as usual, even listened to the radio to steady my nerves. It's times like this when you really listen. Every word in every commercial, the lady's voice on the radio waves that sells you minivans and two gallons of milk for the price of one.

In the hospital, they reacted just like I'd hoped they would. Like I was no big deal, "oh, just two fingers? Anything else?" They hooked up both my arms to tubes draining bags full of liquid science. It was a real circus for a little while, people coming and going, and learning lessons from my big mistake. "Thank you, sir," some of them said, and I was happy to oblige, I'd be sitting there anyway. Then I got pain and sick and don't remember much else.

I like to think about where things come from. My fingers are from my mom, I'm sure of it. The skin is hard and thick like a man's, but the shape, with the bulge in the knuckles; those are the same hands that raised me. Maybe I'll bury those fingers next to her, give them back to her and the earth.

The circular saw is made of steel. Steel is mostly iron and somehow in all it's a wonder, the earth makes iron and people figured out how to use it. Some guy mined it out of the earth. Some other guy got it out of its ore, melted it down. And some other guy sold it at the hardware store where I bought it on a clear day in winter.

Iron makes your blood red, so there's a nice connection.

Wouldn't you believe that the surgeons went to school for probably thirty years and none of them could put my fingers back on? Nerves cut wrong, blood vessels too messed up. Their fancy scalpels just couldn't win against the way things are going to be. They gave me some nice jell-o and celery sticks and even a new shirt since mine was pretty badly stained. There was some dried blood on my shoes and on the steering wheel, but I figured that it was all part of getting used to having two less fingers.

A part of me is gone before the rest of me. I drove to the bar and joked with the guys, that I left some things at the bar the last time, had any one seem them? That cold beer tasted so good, more for the cold than the beer, and more for the company than anything else. There was plenty of aching now, like my hand missed its whole self, pointing and fidgeting and such.

I was done telling stories about that damn circular saw so I finished my beer and got back in my car.

Glass comes from sand. Driving down the road, with some beer in my blood and one hand on the wheel, a little sparrow flew right into the clear glass of my windshield. Poor thing. I like to think that sand comes from far away, like the Sahara Desert. Some guy goes out there and scoops up buckets full. He sells his sand to the glass factory, where they heat it into liquid and pour it to cool and harden into glass.

That bird suffered a worse accident than me. He was nothing more to me than a little dark thud and now his wing is bent backward on the road.

I didn't know that she was watching. Had I known, I might not have pulled into her driveway. But I didn't know, so that's what I did. She was in her screened in porch, watching birds in the feeder. She says she gets cardinals all year round, but watches especially for the sparrows. They flutter about and chirp and just by being birds, that makes her happy. She comes from Cleveland.

So, the combination of my lost fingers and the beer and the bird brought mist up to my eyes. I just sat there with the world underwater. She came up to the car like she was a mermaid. I felt so sorry for all those things that cannot be undone. I felt sorry for iron and sand and birds and fingers that have lost the sense of which way to point. She opened the car door and held my intact hand in hers.

When she was a baby, she was ill. The illness clouded up her eardrums, so her world is quiet. She jokes that with the two stumps for fingers, I'm always saying, "I love you" in sign language. Well, it's a good thing she's the only deaf lady I know.

Just like the iron that makes circular saws, gold comes from the earth. It's the softest metal, though, so it makes sense to wear it as a ring. When we put the rings on each other, I put one on her hand and she put it around my neck, on a string, dangling right in front of my heart. I didn't want to wear my ring on the wrong hand, and I was missing the correct finger on the correct hand. Maybe the gold comes Mexico where Aztecs used it to build their civilization. But I like to think that it comes from someplace close to home. Some guy mined the gold, melted it down, sold it to the jeweler, where I bought it on a new day in town.





LAKE COMO, MONTANA | Dawn Yargeau, Office of Admissions

MACHINE ORGANIC | *Matthew Taylor, WSU SOM Class of 2013*

"A modicum of solace comes. I contemplate
How marvelous this human body is, indeed,
Impossible in its bizarre complexity.

Into the mirror I direct my scrutiny.

An epithelium envelops muscled frame.
An inner armor, ossified, lies deep to that,
Protecting vital organs, blood supply, and fat.
There at my center: those four chambers count my days.
I audibly receive the metronomic call
Of systole, diastole, the crux of all.

Yet how the beat originates – a mystery.

My gaze to that infernal pulsing plexus drawn,
My arm abducts so I can gently reach beneath
And test the lines wrapped in that loose connective sheath.
I clamp the axillary, though I'm not concerned;
Anastomosing arteries have found their way
Around the shoulder blade, so everything's okay
For this, my first exploratory surgery.
And so I tweeze at branches coursing distally
To stimulate pain *and* amazement...this I'll see.
Proceeding to unsheathe the nerves, I'm anxious now.
I pinch the nerve most medial and suddenly,
Like some insidious demon is possessing me,
My hand becomes a claw and it is poised to strike.
A frown cuts through my countenance, the damage done,
Yet curious, I move on to another one.
This time a deep one, wincing as I dig for it...
A branch of the posterior-most cord is smacked,
The innervation of the deltoid was attacked,
And momentarily, my arm had lost its strength.
My human reason, though it ponders this device,
Just cannot fathom these great wonders 'fore my eyes.
A forearm flexion brings my hand before these orbs
And ciliary muscles then contract to see
The many palmar creases. *How came they to be?*
And then relaxing those same muscles, peering past
To focus on the silvered glass on which I'm cast.
Can I elucidate some meaning from this husk,

This shell enclosing oh so intricate a yoke?
Yes, all the while this central question does provoke.
Have I – Machine Organic – reason to exist?
Or has Deception forged my senses to deprive
A brain hooked up to some insane computer drive?
Reacting to such solipsistic ponderings,
I wonder now if meaning has been lost or gained
And if this body mine should ever be explained."

Project ECCLES, Vat 3, Specimen 16
Activity Recorded M.Y. 2522.2999
TERMINATION OF SPECIMEN ADVISED

LOSING INNOCENCE | *Wahid Pabani, WSU SOM Class of 2010*



MR. CUMBERLAND'S LAST MAGIC SHOW | *Gerald Rice*

"Malf," Floyd began. "I need you to express to the manager my deep necessity for quiet tonight." He paused a moment, regarding the slight palsy in his hand. "I don't think I can take noise tonight. I need concentration."

"Yes sir, Mr. Cumberland. You're on in ten minutes, Mr. Cumberland." Malf, his assistant/manager, gave a curt bow, turned and left.

Floyd Cumberland sat in his chair, turning his special key in his hand. He watched Malf's back disappear down the hall through the reflection in the mirror.

He took a deep breath and sipped from his nickel-plated flask. He had never canceled a show, despite the times he legitimately could have. He'd performed on the same days as when two of his wives had died. He'd missed births, graduations and marriages of his children all for the sake of his trade, but he'd had to. No one would ever understand that he did what he did not by choice. It was inside him, literally inside him. Explaining this was real magic didn't seem like an argument he could win. But the thought of not putting on shows brought on recurrent nightmares where he would vanish. His mind went on, but he would be nowhere. To be disconnected from everything, even himself...

Floyd ran his handkerchief over his face. Still there.

He stood and did up his bowtie without looking. On his way out he picked up his top hat and wand.

All of Floyd's career had been comprised of one piece of magic. Whether it was sawing a woman in half to pulling an endless string of nickels from his nose, it was all the same thing. He could make anything dis- and reappear with just concentration and memory.

Not that those two things he had ever taken lightly. By no means. Sometime during his childhood Floyd had developed a temporary photographic memory. That was what he called it anyway; he'd never bothered looking it up. But he could memorize every detail of an object and hold it in his mind.

He'd met Malf in Paris over thirty years ago and been crafted into an artiste by the older man. Malf had taken little convincing; he'd believed in the magic before he'd seen Floyd do it and had several ideas to build into a routine by the day's end. Malf never questioned his motives, had always been reliable and honest, had always done what was needed. But Floyd had never trusted him. In fact, he was afraid of him. As many things as Floyd had kept to himself he had always felt Malf had much more to hide. When they met, Floyd would have guessed Malf was easily twenty years older than him. Now, it was he who looked the older of the two. Malf didn't look a day older than when they'd met. In their time together he'd never

married or been involved with a woman, or man for that matter. He had no hobbies, no vices, or habits, good or bad. He was only *Malf*.

But Floyd's instincts had him remain with Malf. Something about him made Floyd think he would be much worse to have as an enemy. The few times in the beginning when he'd tried to leave Malf only to be effortlessly found by the man had been enough. He hadn't even been angry. In fact, he'd seemed pleased to have shown Floyd how impossible it was to get away.

Malf returned as Floyd made his way down the narrow hallway to the stage.

"I spoke to the manager, sir," he said.

"And?"

"It went quite well. He thought this would be good for the set and is all for it."

"Good."

"We're on in five." Malf dashed ahead of him back towards the stage.

Floyd stopped by a water fountain. He focused on the glass that had been on his dresser table and an instant later it was in his hand. He filled the glass halfway and held it up in front of him over his head. The water swayed from side to side in his shaky hand. He stared for about ten seconds, sneered and downed it in one gulp. He'd never been able to do liquids.

Backstage, he waited behind the curtain while Malf went through his introduction to the audience. The manager was there for some reason, smiling at him as if they were in on some secret together. Floyd smiled as best he could at the man, half-trying to recall his name and hoping the man didn't speak.

As Malf's introduction reached its close, Floyd began walking on stage just as the manager shout-whispered, "Good luck!" He stumbled onstage but recovered by reaching out and grabbing Malf's hand. He made an awkward handshake out of it, balancing himself and standing upright. Malf's expression was iron; he was never surprised.

The silence of the audience was jarring. But he remembered he'd asked for this quiet and the knots in his stomach subsided. Impending doom had been at the back of his mind for years, ever since he'd gotten word from Mother that Father had died of Alzheimer's. His mind still remained as sharp as ever, but with age it had become increasingly harder to ignore the possibility it could happen to him.

"Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen." He smoothed his hands

MEDICINE IS NOT MERELY A SCIENCE BUT AN ART.
THE CHARACTER OF THE PHYSICIAN MAY ACT MORE POWERFULLY
UPON THE PATIENT THAN THE DRUGS EMPLOYED.
—*PARACELSUS C. 1520*

down the front of his tuxedo, taking his time to gather in the whole audience with his eyes. He spotted Malf backstage from the corner of his eye, opening the case of tricks they he sometimes relied on. “For my first trick—” he tossed his wand into the air, sending it in an arc up to the ceiling and back down to the audience. Just before it hit some unsuspecting woman in the head he reached out and snatched at the air and it was back in his hand. “I will need your attention.”

Some people oed and awed, but for the most part remained silent. Good. Tonight he was feeling particularly nervous. He hadn’t felt like this since... since his very first show way back in California.

There was a man standing over at the bar with his back to him. It annoyed him, but he couldn’t very well *force* the man to turn around. Well, he could, but that might cause more of a calamity than he could handle.

“You sir! At the bar!” He pointed. The spotlight swiveled around and highlighted the man. He turned around, a bullish-looking black man with no neck. A cigarette dangled from between his lips and he looked around, embarrassed no doubt that everyone was looking at him. Floyd put his forefinger and thumb out and ‘pulled’ the cigarette from between the man’s lips and into his own hand. “May I light this for you?” He pulled a lighter from his pocket, mocked like he was putting the cigarette in his mouth, lit it and ‘pushed’ it back in the man’s open mouth.

The cigarette fell and the man danced away from it, no doubt to keep it from burning his expensive-looking slacks. He bent to pick it up, held it in his hand and looked back at Floyd.

“Got him,” he whispered to himself. Light chuckles came from the audience. “Does anyone have any keys I can borrow?” he asked, putting the lighter back in his pocket. A young man up front stood after the woman next to him prodded him several times. He stretched his arm up and handed his over.

“Thank you.” Floyd took the keys and dropped them into his pocket. The young man looked confused, the smile waning on his face. “Now for my next trick—” he looked at the young man, in a half crouch, half stand, unsure what to do. “You may sit,” Floyd said to him and he slowly folded into his seat.

“Now for my next trick — wait, whose is this?” Floyd held up his arm, dangling his hand down and a lady’s bracelet fell down around his wrist. A woman at one of the middle tables gasped and nudged her husband, putting her bare wrist up to his face. She was gawdily adorned with several thousand dollars worth of expensive jewelry around her neck and fingers and ears and ankle. Floyd motioned for her to come up, that it was okay and she sheepishly made her way up to the stage. It slipped easily over his hand, but he had to unsnap it to fit it around her thick wrist. Each time she turned to go back down he would call her back, saying, “Oh, Ma’am?” and remove some other piece of jewelry until he had gone through all of the items she wore. Her face was thoroughly reddened by the time she sat down.

“Sir!” Floyd pointed to the rear of the room. The people back there began looking around and Floyd said, “No, not you, not you, not you,” until he settled on an older Asian man wearing glasses and a leather jacket. “Yes, you, sir. Would you stand, please?” The man complied. Floyd put his index and middle fingers to his forehead. “In your... right pocket... there is a set of keys. Would you take them out?” The man dug his pudgy fingers into his blue jeans pocket and pulled some out.

“Are those... yours?” Floyd asked.

“Uh, yeah,” the man said.

“I see.” Floyd put his hand to his chin and walked around. He stopped, facing away from the crowd, looking perplexed. “What about... the other keys in your pocket?”

“What other keys?” the man asked.

“Please, sir.” Floyd motioned to the man. “If you will.”

He reached back into his pocket and before he pulled his hand out he looked surprised. He pulled his hand out with his finger hooked through the ring of another set of keys.

“These aren’t mine.”

“No. I know they’re not. I think we all know they’re not. Don’t we?” Floyd looked down at the young man from earlier.

“But I gave them to you,” the young man said.



MR. CUMBERLAND'S LAST MAGIC SHOW | *(continued)*

"Oh? Then why does your friend have them? I suppose you're going to tell me you two don't know each other aren't you?"

The young man turned and looked at the man in the back. "No, I don't know him."

"Oh, I see. That's the game then, is it? If you would, please go back and examine the keys and tell us if the keys are actually yours or not." The young man stood and began walking to the back. "One other thing?" The man stopped. "Hold your hand up high for the audience if you will into a lightly closed fist." He complied.

The younger man took the keys from the elder and nodded. "These are my keys."

"I see. And what about your hand? What's in there?" The young man opened his hand and the audience, his girlfriend included, saw the small diamond ring in his hand.

"Henry!" she screamed, holding her hand up. She was touching her bare ring finger with her other hand. Henry's face turned a deep shade of crimson and he retreated to his seat, keys in hand.

There were quite a few people applauding by the time all three sat down. Surprisingly, Floyd didn't mind. He felt good; as good as ever. The crowd didn't bother him in the least, he found himself *wanting* the applause. The cynic in him was saying that things were going *too* well when things started going downhill.

It began with the man at the bar. A different man, the first one had found a seat at a table on the other side of the room.

"Sugar!" the man shouted at the bartender. The bartender whispered something to him, but the man would not be consoled. "Sugar!" he shouted again, stamping his foot. Floyd tried ignoring him, but he was very distracting. He slammed a gin glass on the bar, each time shouting his demand for more sugar. Finally the bartender pulled out a bowl of sugar and began spooning it into his glass. The man hunched down as if enjoying the sight of the sugar going into his glass.

"Sugar!" he shouted again, even louder and shoved the bartender away from the bowl. He picked it up and poured it into his glass until it flowed over the top. He slammed the bowl down and scooped up his glass. Floyd and the audience watched as he turned the glass up to his lips and poured the sugar into his mouth.

He turned, crunching the sugar between his teeth as he chewed, his throat jerking up and down as he swallowed while staring at Floyd. His eyes irises were too large. Only his mouth and arm moved as he ate; everything else about him was still. He was like an animatronic



BONES | Ginger Keiffer, Southeast Michigan Center for Medical Education, Assistant Director

puppet; thick chunks of sugar combined with his saliva streaked his cheeks and clung to his chin.

Floyd tried to return to his act, but he couldn't concentrate. Things had gone too well tonight and this was a counterbalance. Every time he tried to think of what he was doing next he could feel those unblinking eyes on him. He reached into his pocket and pulled out his special key. He always used this key to help himself focus again. He held it in his palm, upturned so the audience couldn't see what he was doing and the key vanished and reappeared.

Floyd was in control again. He glanced at the man again and he was drooling freely and panting.

"Now for... my next trick... Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm going to need another... volunteer." He looked out over the audience and picked out a short, thin-framed woman from a center table to come on stage. "What is your name, young lady? Introduce yourself to the audience."

"Pat."

"Good afternoon, Pat. What Pat is going to do for me today is simple. She will cover my eyes, no, not yet, Pat. She is going to cover my eyes while each of you writes something down that I cannot see, pass it around, making one long sentence. And the last person will put it into a pocket or a purse, safe from sight." He held Pat's hands up by the wrists and said, "As you can see there are no holes—" and he ran his hands up her bare forearms, "and nothing up her sleeves." Floyd pulled out a sharpie and an index card and set the two on the front of the stage. "Once Pat covers my eyes, someone feel free to pick up the index card, write whatever you'd like— one word apiece, please— and then pass it around. Pat will call 'time' and whoever has the card, please abruptly put it away, try to look as natural as possible, and then Pat will uncover my eyes. All right, everybody ready?"

Pat stepped behind him and slid her arms around him. She had to reach high to make cups of her hands over his eyes, but she did a good job of it; Floyd couldn't see anything.

"As you all can see, I can see absolutely nothing," Floyd said, waving a hand over his face. He had done this trick a few times before and it was simpler than most of the others. He couldn't see the card, but he had already committed it to memory. He could call it up in his mind's eye and see everything being written on it and whose hands it was in.

Despite how much he was enjoying himself, his mind drifted back to the man at the bar. He wondered if anyone was going to remove him. Had he simply had too much to drink? Was his behavior his idea of a joke? Floyd pushed him out of his mind, figuratively, and concentrated on the card.

"Time," Pat said from behind him. A moment later she removed her hands and Floyd made a show of blinking as if to clear his vision. He happened to see the man who had been at the bar, but was now standing several feet closer.

"Sugar." He stared at Floyd like he was the only person in the room. He took a step forward, the sugar/saliva mix glistening off the lower half over his face down to the upper half of his shirt and tie.

"Sir, please find your seat." Floyd instinctively put Pat behind him. It was apparent he was about to do something. Everyone stayed in their seats, probably thinking this was part of the show.

The man charged the stage and Floyd scabbled backwards with Pat firmly behind. He hit the stage chest first and clawed his way on top. Floyd put his hands up as if to defend himself, but the man was much larger. Even hunched over he was looking down on Floyd.

Before he could say anything the man sprang at him. Floyd threw his hands out and closed his eyes.

And the crowd gasped.

When he looked the stage was empty, save for him and Pat. One by one people began to applaud. Then they began to stand. A few of them whistled.

"That was great!" Pat said, grabbing him by the shoulders. "Wonderful!"

Floyd stood there, surprised. It hadn't been part of the act, but they believed it was. Floyd stayed onstage a minute or two longer as they applauded, realizing his real last trick had been totally forgotten. He turned to them and bowed; it was the perfect place to end the show.

"Malf, where were you?" Floyd asked back in his dressing room. Malf was sitting in his chair, his fingers laced over his head. Floyd wasn't bothered by it; in fact, he was riding so high he barely noticed.

"Around."

"What does that mean, 'around'?" Out of routine, Floyd poured himself a drink he realized an instant later he didn't want.

Floyd walked over and stood next to him. There was a key much like his placed on the dresser.

"What's this?"

"Exactly what you think it is."

MR. CUMBERLAND'S LAST MAGIC SHOW | *(continued)*

"But this is the key I use for concentration." Floyd dug in his pocket. "I already have this — why would you copy it?"

Malf smiled. It was disturbing because it was the first time Floyd had seen him do that in all their years together.

"I've waited for you to catch up for so long. Coddled you, protected you, tutored you. When you've been broken on the wheel of this world, you will understand. Now it's your turn." Malf placed another key on the dresser. Floyd didn't see him pull it out of his sleeve.

"What are you talking about? What are you doing with these keys?"

Malf stood. "It's your turn." He said it again, poking Floyd with each word, "It's. Your. Turn." Malf closed and opened his hands and there were keys spilling over out of his palms.

"Malf. What's going on? What are you doing?"

"Demand me nothing: what you know, you know: From this time forth I never will speak word." Malf walked to the door, turned and tossed a key at Floyd that bounced off his forehead. He stuck his thumbs in his ears and waggled his hands while sticking his tongue out then ran out into the hall.

Floyd got out of his chair, rubbing his forehead and went to the door. Strewn about with pile after pile of keys were a grey wig, a pillow with straps attached to it, a prosthetic leg and a latex mask that looked like Malf's face.

"Excuse me," a woman in a white sundress said. "I can't seem to find my husband." She giggled. "He was the one at the bar, y'know, the one with the 'sugar' routine? He always wanted to be part of a magic act. You just *have* to tell me how you did that. Your assistant guy came over, but he only touched Dwight on the shoulder."

"Oh." Floyd put the heel of his hand to his forehead and concentrated. He was able to recall the man perfectly. "The men's room, third stall. He may need a doctor, I saw him sick in there."

He went outside and saw a baldheaded man who looked briefly like a younger version of Malf standing—no, hopping on one foot—across the street. There was something wrong about his eyes; the same as the man from the show. And his mouth was so animated; that smile twitching at the corners of his cheeks non-stop. He lifted his arms over his head, his fingers at awkward angles like a demented

organist in an old horror film and a giant car appeared above an old woman walking on Floyd's side of the street. It hung for a moment and dropped. Instinctively, Floyd vanished the car. The old woman looked up as if she had felt something overhead, held up her hand as if feeling for rain, and continued.

Floyd was about to give chase, but he suddenly felt weighted down. He looked down at himself and saw his jacket pockets bulging. He reached in and pulled out two handfuls of keys, all the same. Floyd looked back up just in time to see 'Malf' hop around the corner, headed West.

Floyd followed, dodging through traffic as he crossed the street. The keys were few and far between but there was plenty to give him a good idea which direction Malf was headed. Six foot tall fire hydrants, compact cars with seven wheels, trees with branches thicker than their trunks; Floyd put all these back the way they were supposed to be and pursued, the setting sun burning in his eyes. It was out, really out, whatever 'it' was. Explaining to people passing by that this was real magic didn't seem like an argument he could win, so he didn't bother. The world was the show now, and the risk of not going on would leave everything to be victim to a waking nightmare. The wires of the world all crossed together, a chaotic mix of everything connected to everything, even people...

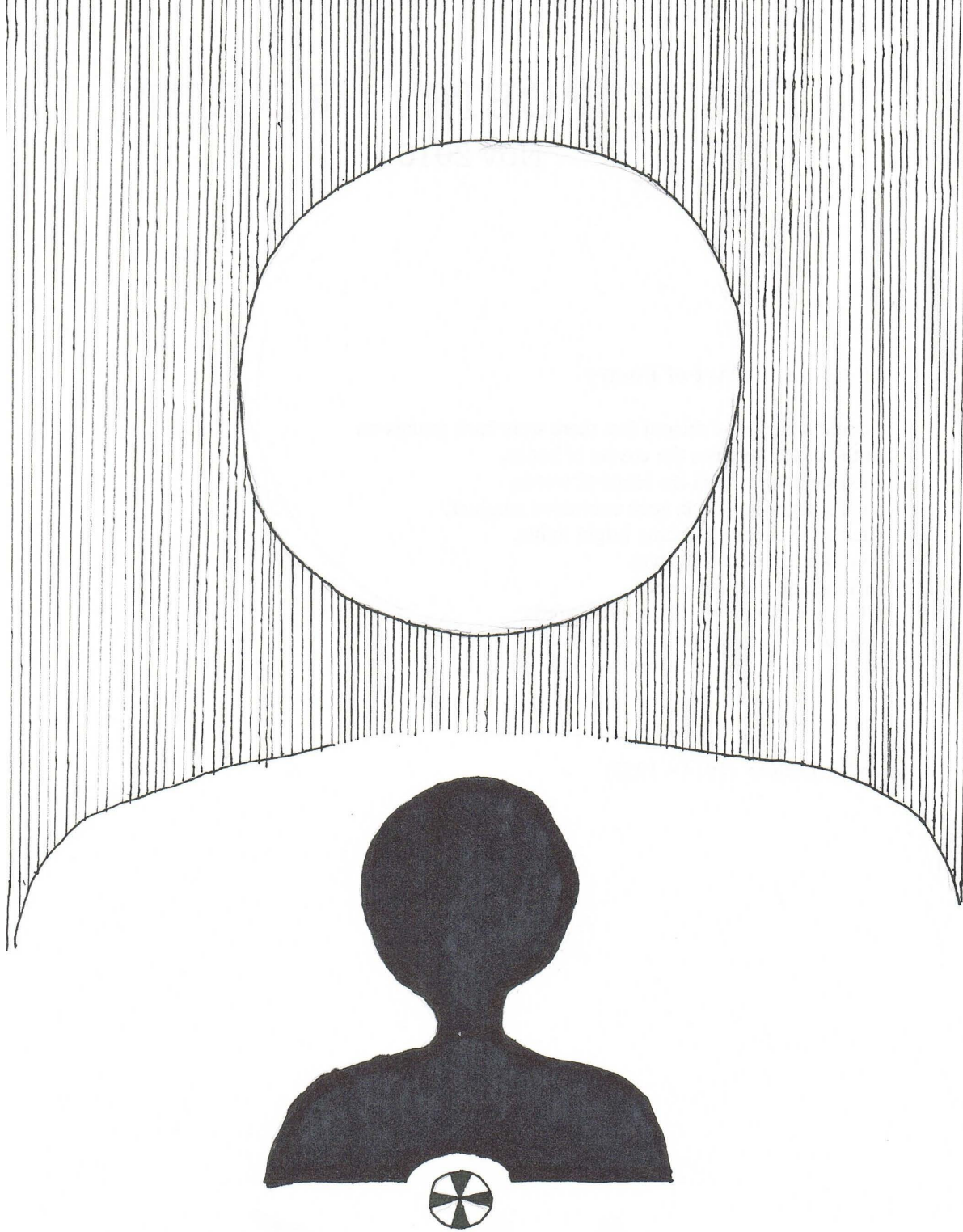
Floyd glanced at his watch as he stopped for a breath. He 'pulled' a stop sign skewering through a confused man's torso standing at the corner. A woman was caught in the current as the street began to run like a river. Floyd 'plucked' her out and stopped the asphalt from flowing, though he would never have guessed he could have. Calling this ability this often was like working a muscle; it was exhaustive. He was due to go on at eight but was nowhere near catching up to Malf. Floyd leaned off the building he had just stopped from jiggling like jello and continued up the street. There would be no second show.



WELL NOW, THERE'S A REMEDY FOR EVERYTHING EXCEPT DEATH.
—MIGUEL DE CERVANTES 1605

LYON, FRANCE | *Pierre Atallah, WSU SOM Class of 2010*





LISTENING TO THE “MOONLIGHT SONATA” WHILE EATING A MINT
| *Alok Sachdeva, WSU SOM Class of 2011*

Music, armament of affection, assaults
me like the sudden lilacs of sultry summer
as it advances to the place I most fear
where the loss of pain is final and fire
blisters sinews of cloud. The failing tide
tells its flat tale in the language of salt
and, as I make my appeal,

night triples its playful lament.

FUTUREDOCS WORKSHOP OF MEDICAL WRITING AND DESIGN

FutureDocs is an annual event for the children of Wayne State University School of Medicine alumni, donors, faculty and staff ages six to twelve. At this event, children have the opportunity to explore more than 10 interactive stations, each aimed at a different aspect of the medical profession. These stations include experiences ranging from ultrasound practice to the study of gross specimens from the pathology lab.

On 17 April 2010, the Wayne State University School of Medicine Writing Workshop joined in the effort to educate tomorrow's healthcare leaders by sponsoring a workshop for medical writing and design. At this workshop, our future doctors devised treatment plans for sick patients, wrote about why they are interested in healthcare, and designed beautiful works of art.

We are very pleased to be able to share their work with you in this section of the journal. As you view the writing and art on the following pages, we encourage you to consider the perspective of our future leaders and think about how the decisions we make today will determine the quality of the healthcare system they inherit. Ten-year-old Medina Shuti of Duncan Elementary in Macomb Township, in writing about why she wants to be a doctor, eloquently summarized this section's primary message:

"It is so amazing what you can learn and be."

Enjoy,

THE WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE JOURNAL OF ART AND LITERATURE EDITORIAL STAFF

Alok Sachdeva

Jessica Heselschwerdt

Deepti Reddy

Lara Zador

Howard Fischer, MD

I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR BECAUSE ...

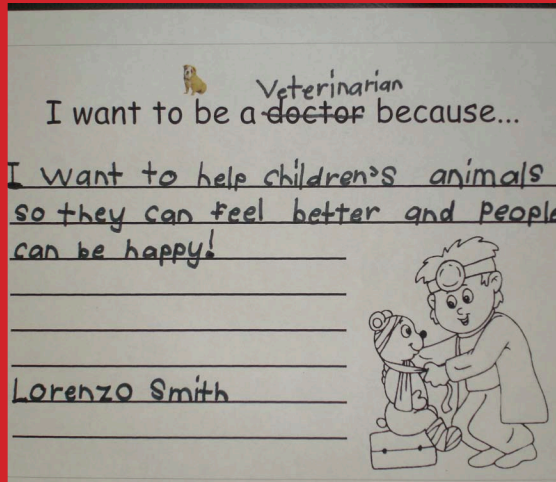
*“Doctors help people & save people,
and doing research can help find cures for diseases.”*

*—Anjali Reddy, 10 years old,
Brookfield Academy, Rochester Hills, MI*

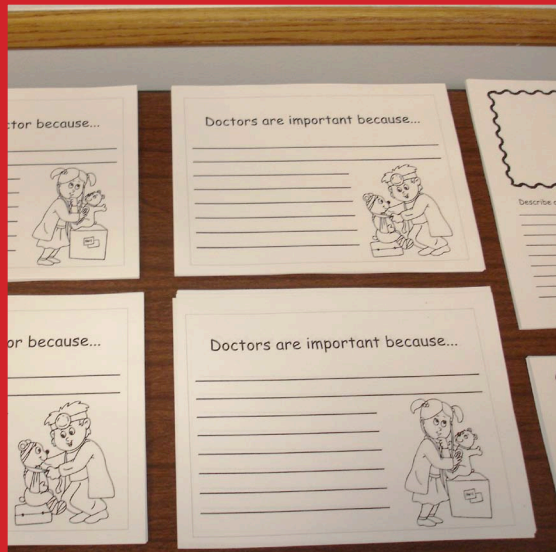
*“I think it’s great knowing you’re
helping someone everyday. It’s great to know you’re making
a difference with what you’re doing. Doctors are very talented
and skilled and that’s what i want to be. I started wanting to
be a doctor when my uncle was accepted to medical school.
When i saw what he was learning i thought it was very
interesting and it was so amazing what you can learn and be.
That in fact is why i want to be a doctor.”*

*—Medina Shutti, 10 years old, Duncan Elementary,
Macomb Township, MI*

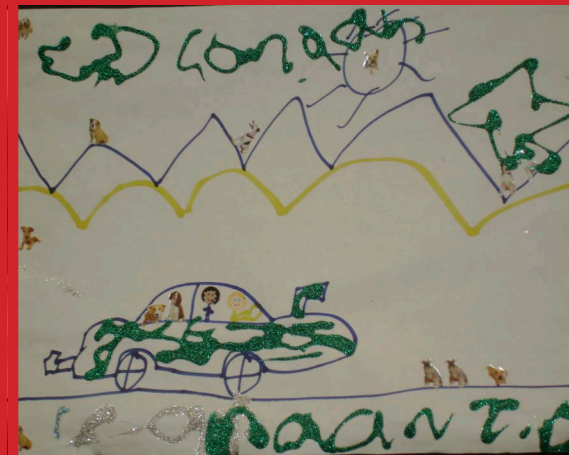
LORENZO SMITH | 10 years old, Home School, Shelby Township, MI



HAROON YOUSUF | First Year WSU SOM medical student, Haroon Yousuf, helps a new artist select her template.

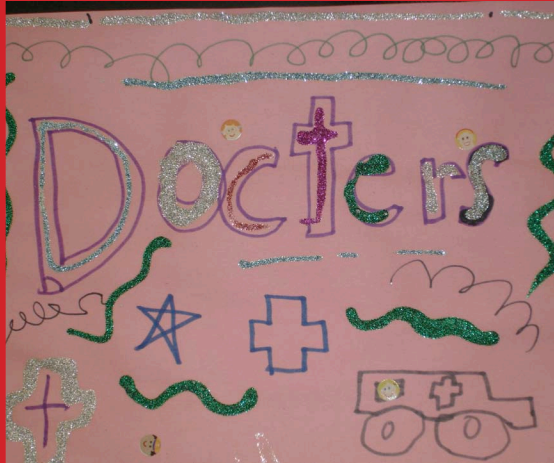


FUTUREDOCS TEMPLATES



CANAAN THOMAS | 8 years old, West Village Academy, Detroit, MI

AKILI COLLINS | 8 years old, Home School, Detroit, MI



ROSE CHAMBERS | Elementary school educator Rose Chambers inspires tomorrow's leaders.



MARY FILDEW | 8 years old, Maire Elementary, Grosse Pointe, MI

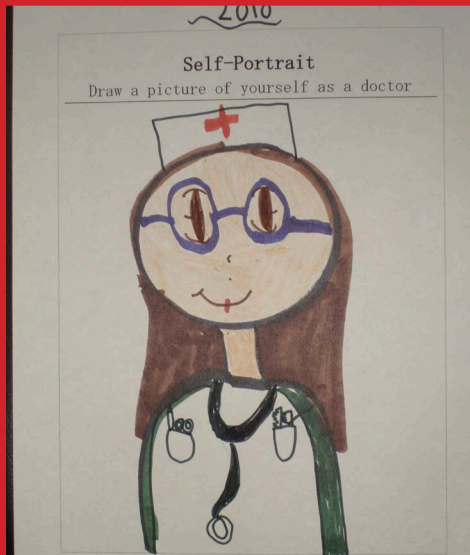
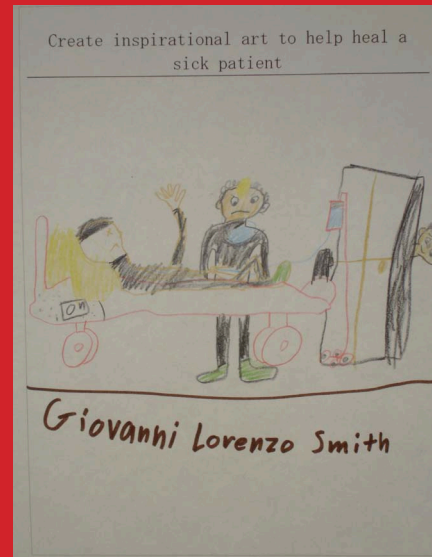


WALKER FAMILY | The Walker family starts the workshop with three beautiful drawings.

JESSICA HESELSCHWERTD | *Second-year medical student*
Jessica Heselschwerdt works with the kids.



GIOVANNI SMITH | *8 years old, Home School, Shelby Township, MI*



HANNAH WALKER | *10 years old, Costello Elementary School, Troy, MI*

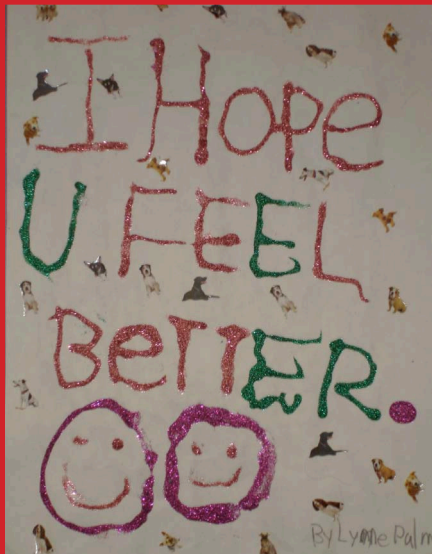
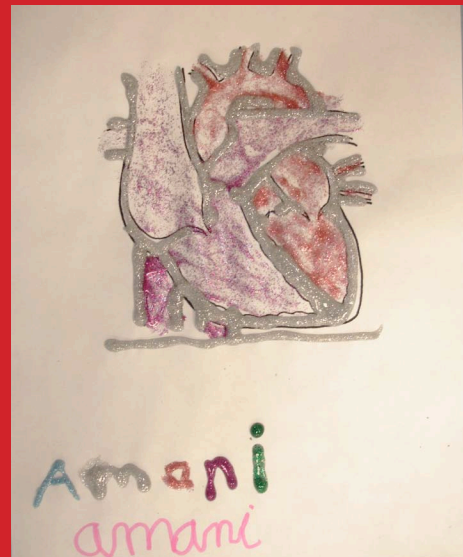


LARISSA MICHEL | *Larissa Michel with her FutureDocs masterpiece.*

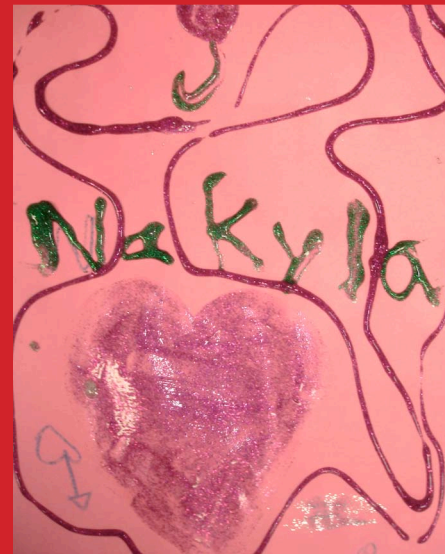
SKYY RILEY | 9 years old, Longacre Elementary,
Farmington, MI



AMANI TARAMAN | 8 years old, Haigh Elementary,
Dearborn, MI

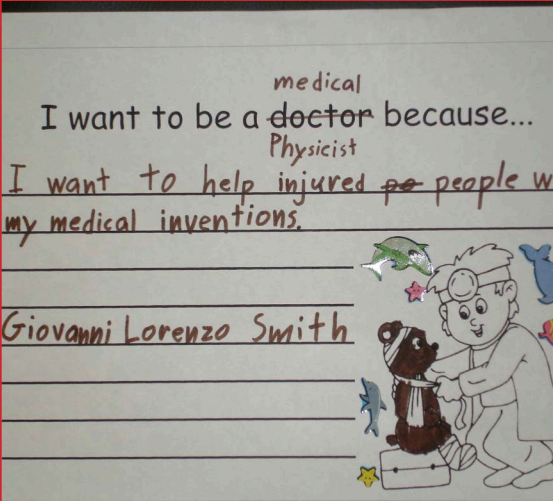


LYNNE PALMER | FutureDocs Participant



NAKYLA MCCORMICK | 8 years old, Fisher Elementary,
Redford, MI

GIOVANNI SMITH | 8 years old, Home School,
Shelby Township, MI



LARISSA MICHEL | 10 years old, Birmingham School
District, Birmingham, MI



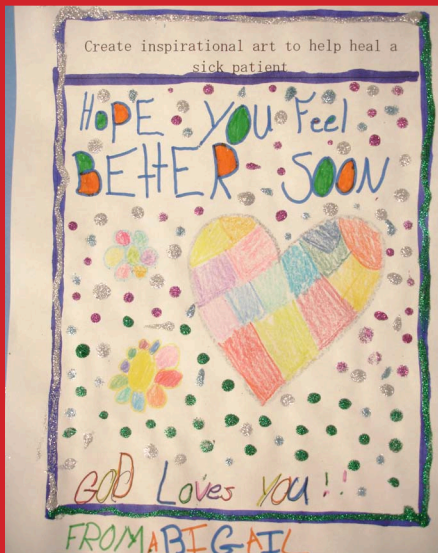
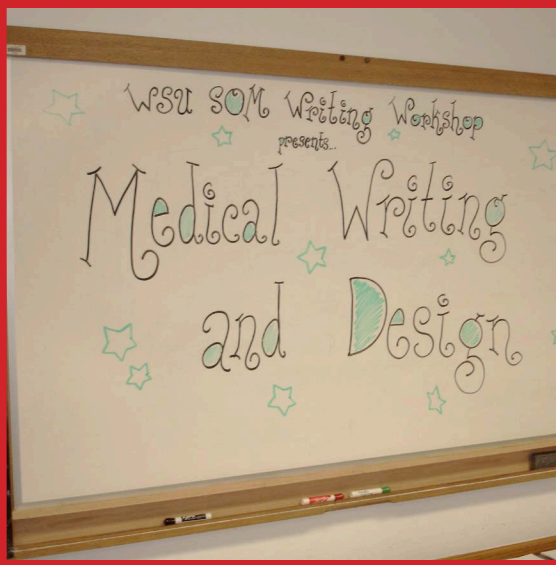
RASIKA KARNIK | A second-year medical student at Wayne
State, discusses Brain Candy with a young artist.



SARA LEVENDOSKI | FutureDocs Participant

FUTUREDOCS WHITEBOARD

SMITH FAMILY | *Giovanni and Lorenzo Smith draw medical scenes with their father.*



ABIGAIL BLUMBERG | *10 years old, St. Frances Cabrini Elementary School, Wyandotte, MI*

SYDNEY MAUGHAM | *FutureDocs Participant*

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