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## **Brain Candy: Wayne State University School of Medicine Journal of Arts and Culture, 8th Edition**

Wayne State University School of Medicine Gold Humanism Honor Society

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# Brain Candy

8<sup>th</sup> Edition

2021



Gold Humanism Honor Society  
Wayne State University  
School of Medicine

Thank you for picking up this year's 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *Brain Candy*. We are very proud to present this year's edition. We have incorporated paintings, written pieces, and poetry from all the medical classes at Wayne State University School of Medicine

The first edition of *Brain Candy* was published online and in print in 2009, produced by a generous grant by the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS). The edition featured poetry, nonfiction, short fiction, and different types of artwork. With generous funding support from alumnus Dr. Tom Janisse, Class of 1975, the journal continues to be in print since 2009.

We hope you enjoy this edition! If you are interested in the production of this journal or would like to contribute to future editions, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

[bcsohl@med.wayne.edu](mailto:bcsohl@med.wayne.edu)

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## Table of Contents

### **Humanity: Breath and Air**

Belle Isle Reflections, *Michaela Kearney*

beat, *Michael Moentmann*

Portrait of a Young Woman #1, *Ethan Stahl*

Portrait of a Young Woman #4, *Ethan Stahl*

She Never Left, *JT Knight*

mon coeur, *Ashley Kramer*

Illumination, *Claire Novelly*

How Many Questions Have We Raised,  
*Anthony Talaugon*

The Telling of a Story, *Ethan Stahl*

El Correfoc, *Michaela Kearney*

Observations, *Olivia Rizzo*

First Light, *Michaela Kearney*

Competitive vs. Collaborative Framing,  
*Kinan Sawar*

Mobius Meditates, *Peter Dimitrion*

Small Detroiter at Work, *Deliabell Hernandez*

Game Night on the Malecon, *Michaela Kearney*

One Thousand Feet of American Integrity, *Deliabell Hernandez*

### **Grief: Loss, Death, and Dying**

Safe at Home, *Suha Syed*

April, *Luke Geierman*

The Grand Old Party, *Ashley Kramer*

rigor mortis, *Dorothy Yim*

Despair, *Claire Novelly*

French quarter, *Tiffany Khaw*

3 Birds, *Zoya Gurm*

Quarantine Sonnet, *Zoya Gurm*

Another Price to Pay, *Suha Syed*

Ghosts That We Knew, *Michaela Kearney*

To those who have lost, *Lydia Ross*

Rhiannon Newly Winged (2014), *Lydia Ross*

Untitled, *Muhammad Osto*

Specimen Days, *Zoya Gurm*

COWVID-19, *Ashley Kramer*

**Vicarious: We Wish To Be**

Wondering, *Mugdha Joshi*

2020, *Ashley Kramer*

Oily Beach, Pakistan, *Muhammad Osto*

Mardi Gras, *Tiffany Khaw*

Ur's Lore, *Flower Cotton*

The Puppet Show, *Ashley Kramer*

Hakone Train Station, *Ethan Stahl*

Detroit by the Sea, *Deliabell Hernandez*

The Ambassador, *Deliabell Hernandez*

Eudaimonia, *Ryan Kelly*

On Waiting For the Future, *Aishwarya  
Panneerselvam*





**Belle Isle Reflections**—*Michaela Kearney, Class of 2024*

**beat**

It's an inkling  
Or maybe a thought  
Too slippery for words  
Something like a cadence

It makes you want to change  
But then it's gone and you forget  
Sometimes discouraged  
Ignored

It's a story that belongs to you  
But you're not the one to tell  
You don't know how

We deserve to hear it  
We're better for it  
Not quite story  
Rhythm

A song  
One that makes you rock  
Bask  
It feels true

It feels whole  
Connected  
But the words come out twisted  
Frustrated

You see it here and there, this flow  
Try to pin it down  
It squirms away  
Disrupted

Do others see it?  
Do they know it's good?  
To be human?  
To look?

*Michael Moentmann, Class of 2022*



**Portrait of a Young Woman #1**—*Ethan Stahl, Class of 2022*



**Portrait of a Young Woman #4**—*Ethan Stahl, Class of 2022*

## **She Never Left**

Where did she go?

Was it back to the city that made her?

Tilted buildings find their way to the  
water

Reflections of her are to the sandy  
bottom

Shaped by not a cloud in the sky.

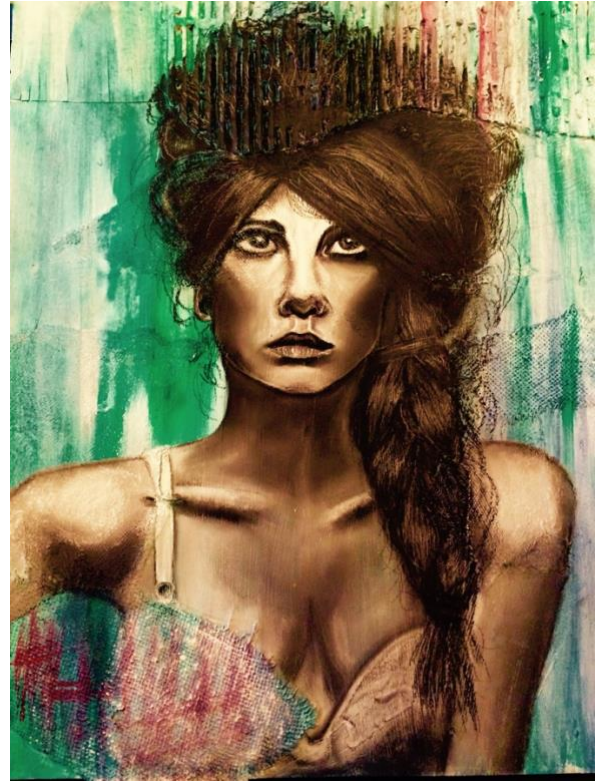
The tip of a winged unicorn masking the  
belief

that there is more than just a concrete  
playground.

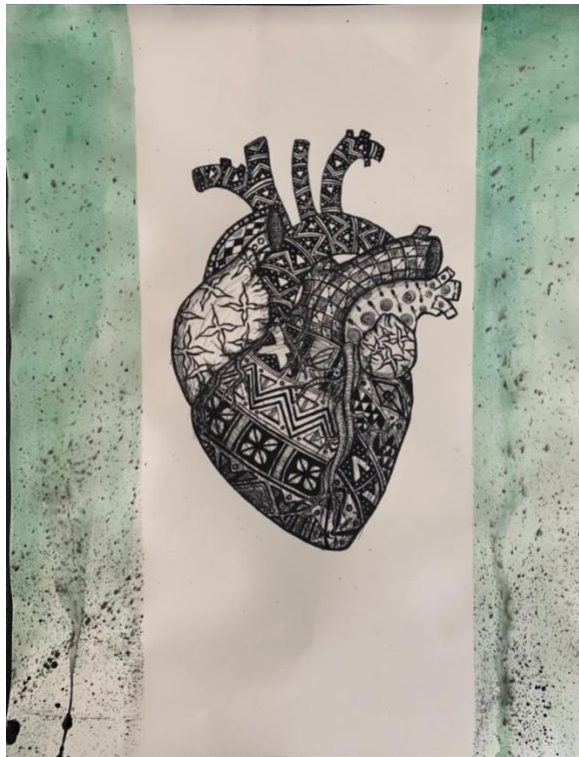
What if she took the time to make a  
sail?

The air is not the only thing she breaths.

*JT Knight, Class of 2021*



**Illumination**—*Claire Novelly, Class of 2023*



**mon coeur**—*Ashley Kramer, MD/PhD Student*



**how many questions have we raised**

how many questions have we raised  
that were born as answers with that  
gradual growth meant for cousins.  
like a caring parent we'll love it  
no matter the season, only to  
push it  
around our plate  
with an eye on our  
guests  
(oh no reason)  
or sweep it under the  
rug of another answer  
that we logically laid down  
(to match the corner of a door that we  
shut to memory) so it can  
melt into the boards of the house we  
desperately decorate until its finally built  
*Anthony Talaugon, Class of 2024*



***The Telling of a Story—Ethan Stahl, Class of 2022***

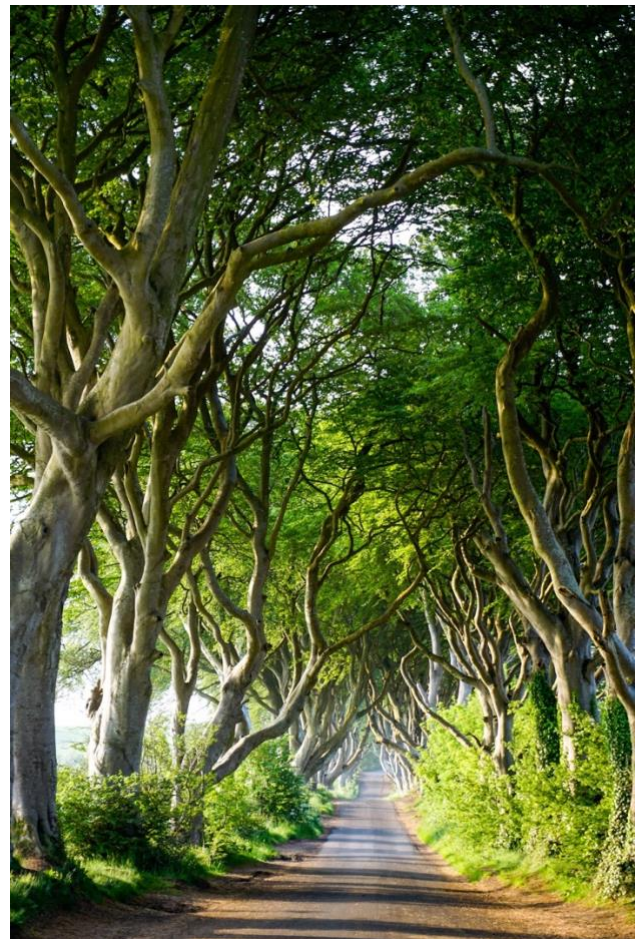


**El Correfoc**—*Michaela Kearney, Class of 2024*

## **Observations**

Symphony of beeps, rain pours,  
Patients rest serenely with eyes closed,  
my eyes never leave them.  
June in the MICU

*Olivia Rizzo, Class of 2021*



**First Light**—*Michaela Kearney, Class of 2024*

## Competitive vs. Collaborative Framing

Why is that some environments seem unfriendly, cutthroat, and miserable? Why is it that others are friendly, supportive, and exciting? It's all framing the environment. Are you and the others around you framing the environment as one that is competitive or one that is collaborative? Competitive vs. collaborative framing: it's the most important principle you need to understand. There are countless benefits to making others feel relaxed around you. The most important of the benefits is that people will begin to be honest with you. You may have noticed that your thoughts about others end up manifesting themselves in reality.

So there I am, a pre-medical college student, sitting in organic chemistry I. It's the first day of the semester. Everyone's been told horrifying stories about the difficulty of this particular class. The professor walks in as we students are anxiously awaiting the start of the dreadful experience. Of course we should be feeling like this; it couldn't be any other way. Everyone before you has told you that the class is a living nightmare. After the professor walks in, the first thing he says is, "Listen, not everyone is going to get an A. Only those of you who *really* put in the time and effort deserve to succeed." How do these words affect the minds of us students? Immediately, we begin to see each other as threats that must be eliminated, like a search and destroy combat mission. Let's not also mention how pre-medical students are already put into an ultra-competitive mindset from day one in college knowing that the success of another fellow student could mean that his or her spot in a medical school is lost. The professor's words just exacerbated an already egregious

issue. Throughout the semester, students didn't talk to each other. We barely looked at one another. What a disaster. Rather than helping one another out to learn the material, we blew up all possibility of collaboration with a military-grade bazooka. It didn't have to be this way.



**Mobius Meditates**—*Peter Dimitrion, MD/PhD Student*

What if the professor had alternatively said: "Alright everyone. I know you're all scared of this class. However, don't fear. All of you can succeed. Everyone can get an A with dedicated effort. Help one another. Teaching is the ultimate way to learn. Both parties benefit. I want to see a lot of collaboration amongst one another throughout this semester. We're all in this together."

Words like those would have created a beautiful environment. Everyone would be at ease. Everyone would share resources to enhance learning. Life would be great.



In every social interaction, YOU are the professor. Your thoughts about how you view others manifest into subtle actions that dictate your reality. If you subconsciously view others as allies, they'll end up behaving in such a way that they end up *actually* helping you. If you subconsciously view others as enemies, they'll end up behaving in such a way that they end up *actually* sabotaging you, or at the very least, not helping you. Every day you're thrust into new social environments, and you'll be given the role of "professor." Be the professor who promotes collaboration because everyone will sense that energy from you and want to share it.

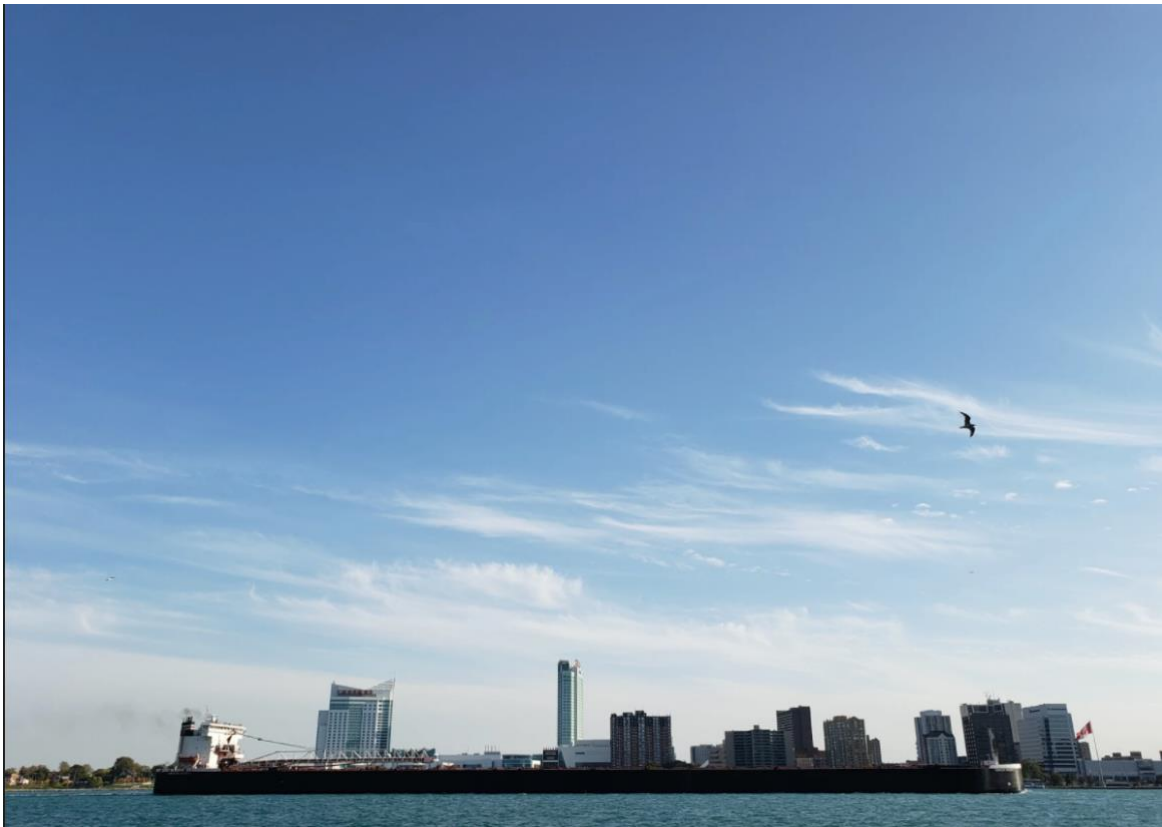
*Kinan Sawar, Class of 2024*



**Small Detroiter at Work**—*Deliabell Hernandez, Class of 2021*



**Game Night on the Malecon**—*Michaela Kearney, Class of 2024*



**One Thousand Feet of American Integrity**—*Deliabell Hernandez, Class of 2021*

### **Safe at Home**

“Stay home,” they all say  
Where it’s safe in the day.  
“Keep a distance,” they preach  
To the fools on the beach.

But what they fail to consider  
Is a threat even bigger.  
When distractions grow thin  
The demons begin.  
All my self-doubt and projections,  
My ragged thoughts and rejections,  
They start to resurface  
Eager with ill purpose.  
And as the landscape turns gray,  
They build themselves a home to stay.

Left too long with this mind

I lose track and go blind.  
New senses, they emerge  
All rationality, submerged.  
I scream for guidance through the  
darkness  
But my voice croaks and grows frail.  
No escape from these feelings  
No hope to prevail.

But through each bout of resurgence  
Each mental disturbance  
A new warrior is created  
A weapon forged, serrated.  
These times don’t last forever  
This attachment gets severed.  
And when the gloom is dispelled,  
I recover, unparallelled.

*Suha Syed, Class of 2021*





**The Grand Old Party**—Ashley Kramer,  
MD/PhD Student

## April

“Admin says family won’t be allowed in  
anyway—  
you and Tim start post-mortem care”  
*wait, do they even know?*

Repositioning her body –  
taking great care to preserve her  
dignity  
it is still a new experience comforting a  
corpse  
*but, she didn’t even seem that bad*

“I’m so sorry you died like this”  
alone  
afraid  
*they’re all dying like this*

She was my patient yesterday but not  
today –  
and not tomorrow  
*Dammit! I could have been better to her*

A phone rings –  
“Tim, is that yours?”  
It’s hers

The ringing stops, then starts up anew –  
incessantly; unabating  
it finally feels frantic, now  
*they must be figuring it out*

Driving home –  
and I can’t stop crying

*Luke Geierman, Class of 2024*

**rigor mortis**

i don't know how to hold  
a gone thing tenderly  
nor the days bruised

in my fist like a warm plum.  
i loosen the tongue  
to find my mother

singing, elegies spilling  
from entry wounds, whose voice  
still harpoons the night into dawn.

i lift a hand to my throat, the curve  
of skin once ripened by a man's salt-  
slick tongue. his peonies piercing

a summer field. here's another  
shoulder. another eye whispered open  
and my father beside me, the time

he knelt in the sand by a beached  
dolphin, its flesh mottled by the beating  
tide. their mammalian faces regard

each other and i think how it's funny  
that you pummel a thing into softness,  
tender the sinew by hammering it. i wrap

my palm around these necessary  
violences, if only to say  
the body holds on to something

even in death. i beat against the year's  
persuasion and find my mother  
once more, pressing crushed

jasmine into wounds, holding me the way a scar  
carries its burning. and how often  
we have chosen to sing, our limbs

dancing against their impossible weight -  
when she gathered that bead of milk  
from her lips and touched it  
to mine.

*Dorothy Yim, Class of 2022*



**Despair**—*Claire Novelly, Class of 2023*



**French Quarter** – Tiffany Khaw, Class of 2023

### **3 birds**

there are birds in my teeth  
I wander for them  
apnea dreams of crow foot  
claws curled through gingiva  
there was barely anything left  
but still it bled  
this is for my riper tongue  
until I can afford parking  
scraping ice off the windshield  
legs burnt into passenger seat  
nothing has felt the same  
since I lost feathers  
the intimate part of decay  
nesting with the sweetness of my  
cavities  
flowers and berries and sodium  
retracted at the lip  
migration is a birth wisdom  
*Zoya Gurm, Class of 2024*

### **Quarantine Sonnet**

Recently my prayers have come out  
gagging.  
Spiders in the bathroom mirror dance  
with  
my spit, the words caught in a holy  
place  
between shower tile and kitchen ceiling.

We talk about burials over dinner now.  
Eating with  
our hands, we prophesy the fates of our  
ashes.  
My left eyelid twitches in the sunlight.  
Something beats, heart in petri dish.

A friend struggles with sobriety in her  
childhood  
bedroom. The distance actualizes until I  
can feel  
asphalt in my unfilled teeth, rhyming *I  
am here for you's*  
until she's sweating with unheld hands.

It's been months of sewing fluorite into  
the carpet,  
my fingers bruise, desperate for  
catharsis.

*Zoya Gurm, Class of 2024*

## Another Price to Pay

Quarantine brings back memories  
Of the ill-planned summers of middle  
school  
When my only form of transportation  
Was my green bike, the tires always  
In need of air.  
Boredom was abundant back then,  
Each day blurring into the next,  
Fall feeling infinitely far away.

But as I grow older  
And my innocence fades,  
The more I unearth the injustices of  
living.  
People are struggling.  
People are cruel.  
People are dying.  
This time at home feels less  
Like the luxury of summer freedom  
And more like the shackles of  
uncertainty.

I've seen how bad this world can be

To those who already have it hard.  
I've seen the stress of stretching  
paychecks  
And the prayers for a different life.  
I've seen the desperation to escape  
The abuse and torture at "home."  
The same home they are now trapped  
in,  
A prison, a punishment,  
For a crime they did not commit.

For some, this may be an  
inconvenience.  
A mere nuisance, you could say.  
But remember those  
Who by following the rules  
Have lost their stability  
Their peace  
Their progress.  
Remember those who already can't  
make ends meet  
And now have another price to pay.

*Suha Syed, Class of 2021*



**Ghosts That We Knew**—*Michaela Kearney, Class of 2024*

## ***To those who have lost***

I never thought I'd have anything profound enough or true enough to add to a conversation about grief because I had never truly met death before. As a friend put it, I now find myself in a club that I don't want to be in after the death of my oldest sister this past October. She was a Navy pilot, and she died in a crash during a routine training flight. When you have a loved one in the military you know events like this are possible, but you never believe it could happen to them. She was an exceptionally talented pilot, incredibly smart and free, and had such an enthusiasm for life. She carried herself as though she was invincible, and being her baby sister, I of course believed she was.

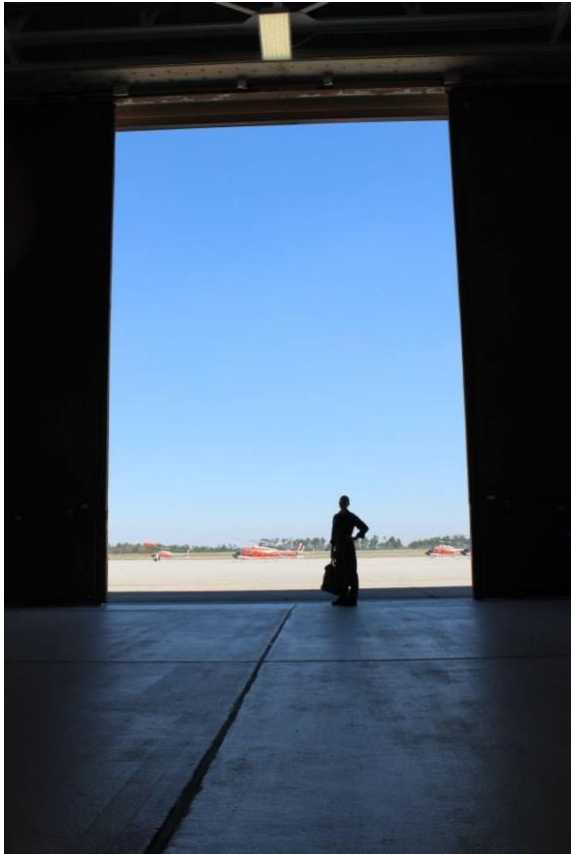
When I came back to school, my family asked me how I'd manage seeing death in the hospital. Not even three weeks before Rhiannon's death I had said to someone that in a hospital it's so evident how death is just a part of life's cycle. It's easy to accept this when you see people who are struggling with their sickness pass away; minutes later you hear the lullaby play on the loudspeaker to mark the arrival of a newborn. But now it's almost impossible for me to see it so objectively. When someone you love dies, there's so many questions about why and what ifs. At times seeing their death as "just a part of life" can feel too small, or too diminishing of the life they left behind. Rhiannon had so much life left to give and she lived it well, so how could it have been her time to go? How could her story be over?

Yesterday I went to see a patient that had ripped out his chest tube earlier in the day and was now quickly

decompensating. The nurse told me he asked for pain medications, but later when he woke up from a nap, he was pulling at his IV and no longer able to communicate. Stat chest X-ray showed he had developed a tension pneumothorax. He was DNR and set to go to home hospice the next day, so there was some question about what we could or should do for him. He lay in bed with his eyes rolled back and eyelids open, breathing quickly and heavily. I tried to get his attention, asking him questions but there was no response. I said his name and he suddenly opened his eyes, looked at me, then fell back to his previous state. I looked next to me, I saw his cellphone on the table and a gym bag that he had brought from home on the chair. In that moment I saw him for who he was before he was actively dying in a hospital bed. I imagined him walking into the hospital with that bag, perhaps a little worried about this admission. I thought about my sister's gym bag that was still in the backseat of her truck when she died. I thought about her driving to work, excited for her flights that day but not knowing it would be her last.

Earlier this week I watched another patient die from outside her room. There were too many people in the room for the code, so myself and another student watched it unfold in the reflection on the window of the door. I could see her feet move with every chest compression, and her abdomen distended further as it filled with blood. Tears rushed to my eyes, and I felt a familiar feeling of grief well up in my throat. I swallowed it and told myself this is not the time. I wanted to hold it together as many of us do so that we don't become yet another problem to be managed in the chaos.





**Rhiannon Newly Winged (2014)**—*Lydia Ross, Class of 2022*

Her family member decided it was best to terminate CPR and let her pass. The resident walked past me indicating there was nothing more for us to do and we should get out of the way. I walked toward the family member and she looked so lost – another piece of grief I'm now familiar with. I gave her a hug, told her I was so sorry for her loss, and then left the floor.

When my family asked me how I'd handle these situations I think I just said "I don't know. We'll see." Obviously, I knew it was going to be more difficult to witness than before, but I wasn't sure what to expect. I came back to rotations 2 weeks after Rhiannon's death, and everywhere I went I saw reminders of my grief. It consumed my thoughts, and most days I felt completely incompetent, unable to answer simple questions.

Sometimes I would catch myself staring at a dark computer screen, wondering how much time had passed and if anyone else had noticed how unhelpful I was being. When I see patients die or approach death, I think about Rhiannon and how I'll never know what her experience was like. I wonder if I'll ever witness a death without thinking about Rhiannon's. But just a few months ago I wondered if I'd ever be able to be happy at work again, and now most days I am. I have hope that, with time, not every death will remind me of hers and I'll again be able to appreciate the cycle of life instead of questioning it's injustice.

Regarding my sister's life story, other people have helped me to realize that even though Rhiannon is gone her legacy will continue. She was someone that touched many people and her friendship was cherished deeply. She lives through each of us as she is in our thoughts and therefore influences our actions. When a patient's death affects you deeply, you can honor their life by treating their family well and applying what you learned from the experience to other patients. In that sense, the death of one patient improves the lives of others, and so their presence is not lost. It has given me a lot of peace to know that as I share my experience, I share a piece of what it was to know Rhiannon and feel loved by her. The people who have helped me by sharing their own grief have continued the story of their loved ones, and their lives/deaths will always have meaning to me.

*Rhiannon. Morgan. Ben. Cassie. David. Beth. Nate. Agatha. Carolyn. Mary. Kyle. Kara. Baby Lau. Kathy.*

*Lydia Ross, Class of 2022*



**Untitled**—*Muhammad Osto, Class of 2022*

### **specimen days**

dissecting scope  
to prod  
hum  
in the brain  
to  
cycle  
circadian.

my body  
has lost  
itself  
wingless  
marked  
by habitat.

the lobes  
are torn  
from the  
white  
tubing  
of the

brains  
so they  
don't  
float in  
antibody.

a mirror  
cut off  
at neck  
headless  
I swing.

heart as  
brain.

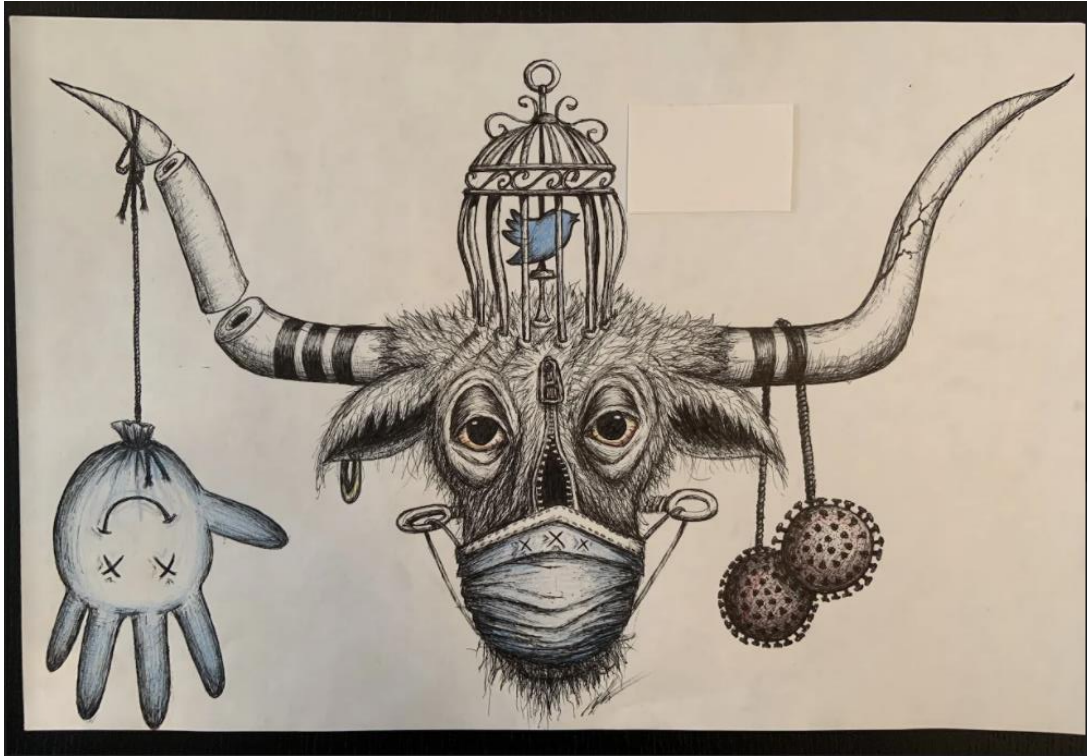
each protein  
deleted  
until the  
fly  
can't  
sleep in dark  
or stay  
at rest.

some die  
if food  
dries  
on their  
wings  
concreting  
their bodies  
down  
stuck.

when I  
die  
will it  
be me  
or my  
body,

because  
I  
physically  
myself  
am  
disbelief.

*Zoya Gurm, Class of 2024*



**COWVID-19**—Ashley Kramer, MD/PhD Student

### Wondering

I don't have evidence, neither hard nor anecdotal, that this man's care was affected by racism. But one can't help but wonder.

This man came to us with sickle cell crisis; if there was one thing I was taught, it was not to underestimate the pain that patients with vaso-occlusive sickle crisis are feeling, and not to skimp on pain medications for them. And so that's exactly what we did: long-acting opioids along with short-acting opioids as needed.

This was a Black man who was obese and had an extensive family history of sickle cell. He also had a history of incarceration and drug use. He is still heavily sedated from his pain meds, and so I can't ask the questions that are burning in the back of my mind. What

drove him to drugs and to incarceration? He followed up with hematology in the outpatient setting, but had been unable to get his pain medications due to his drug use. And he couldn't get into substance use disorder treatment centers because of the pandemic. There are a lot of factors and a lot of bad luck at play, but how do I know that systemic issues in racism wasn't the inciting cause?

That was why he came to us. He couldn't get his pain medications. He had been in and out of the ED for several crises for at least the past year, and several times during his incarceration. I can't help but wonder: would this have happened to him had he been a white man from Farmington Hills, rather than a Black man from Detroit? Would he still have been driven to drug use and subsequently been kept away

from pain medications during times of immense pain?

Which brings me to another thought. Historically, it has been thought (and maybe even taught) that Black people have a higher pain tolerance, which leads to them receiving less pain medication than their white counterparts. We were definitely not skimping on the pain medications for our patient, but what if he had been in a different city, a different hospital, or with different physicians?

While my patient thankfully did not have an adverse outcome, all these questions

keep racing through my head, and it frightens me. It frightens me to think about how many patients receive suboptimal care because of internal biases, because of systemic racism, or perhaps even because of blatant racism. It frightens me to think about physicians who have taken the oath to help everyone, and yet either knowingly or unknowingly treat their patients unfairly.

One can't help but wonder.

*Mugdha Joshi, Class of 2022*



**2020**—Ashley Kramer, MD/PhD Student



## Ur's lore

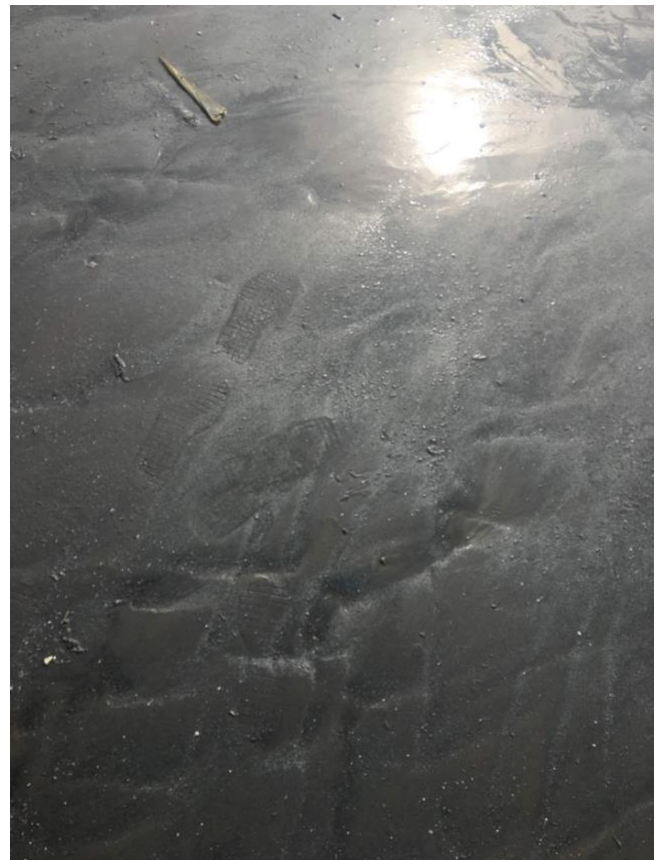
I grew up in the reputable flock of Ur with 50 to 55 birdfolk on a mountaintop overseeing the coast. I was not the strongest fledgling, perhaps the smallest my flock has ever seen to survive past their second spring. Most of the fledgling in my flock kept to their nest or used me to pass time. I was clucked at, plucked, chucked and everything in between. As someone who descended from Ur the merciless, I was a disgrace... I should not be allowed to live on and carry his name.

A heavy name it was, too large for my frail shoulders... they said. My mother carrying his blood was gently requested - as gentle as birdfolk can be - to build another nest, away from her demanding sickly son. Everyone was waiting for the Shaman to make a ceremonial garb out of my feathers, it was my single redeeming trait... they said. I survived for the sole purpose of growing out my coveted deep blue feathered face that transforms to green and gold on the tip of my head then African grey envelopes my body.

My third spring was nearing, I was about to be a fully-fledged birdfolk, the largest I will ever be. I have resigned to being a ceremonial garb, at least then I will be embraced and handled with care. It has been too long since my mother visited the fishfolk dealer next door. I wonder if she will regain some of her status after I am gone, birdfolk have not been kind to her either. I wonder if her new nest will bear a strong merciless birdfolk who adds to our flock insatiable want for pride and status. I wonder when she held me down and snatched my feathers, did part of her long to embrace me? Did she know my cries were not for the pain in my body but for how much I

missed her, how I yearned for her touch and ache for her imminent departure?

I opened my eyes on my last morning to a painfully cold and desolate nest. Sun-rays were gently caressing my scrawny face calling me to join the gods. "I am waiting for my mother... for our last farewell!" I cried out and turned towards the dark corners of the nest. I started smelling smoke, I gather that is how they want to send me off? Am I too worthless and revolting for the shaman to accept me as a ceremonial garb? I am to die alone with every trace of my being erased? Have I not been a good birdtoy? Have I not graciously conceded to repent my transgression in living? If only I died a nestling and was spared comprehending this pain and loneliness.



**Oily Beach, Pakistan**—Muhammad  
Osto, Class of 2022



My nest was crumbling down, it is too bright for dark souls to withstand. A figure appeared in front of the morning sun. "Aerdrie Faenya, lady of the wind herself is calling upon me!?" A gentle graceful ghost she was, calling my name, pulling me out of my misery and we glided aside the mountain. The wind was kneading my body, it was heavenly, I was in bliss, am I allowed to feel this elated? All the sadness, despair and darkness have been wiped away, I can clearly see now; the coast, the village, the blue skies!

She abruptly drops me over a tree and lands near the beach tumbling and trembling. It was a harsh landing. She turns around and sprints towards me crying, begging for forgiveness. "Mother?" ... "Mothe..?" My eyes are welling up, my voice is shaking, she was holding me down... more feathers? ... No! She is embracing me? Did she always have a ghostly white appearance; have the flock been that cruel to her? "I have to go back son, my dearest" Son? ... Dearest? She showers me with kisses; my cheeks, my hands, and my temple. "Listen to Kaparl," and up she goes.

My body was frozen, yet my mind was overburdened with questions, overwhelmed with emotions, overtaxed. I muster a faint "Come back," she can't hear me. Wretched body MOVE! I start running towards her, she's too high and far. I beat my wings, as hard as I can I beat and I beat; there is no liftoff! How do I fly?! Please fly wretched body. Someone hinders my 'run,' it wasn't hard ... curse this body. "Your mother has to hurry back, Ur! She will appease the flock with the feathers she collected over the years. You have died in the fire as far as they know. You can never go back! Not until you're strong enough to protect her!" ... Ur? "Yes, and I am

Kaparl we need to hurry they're going to come get me soon."

A Locathian, a very old dark colored fishfolk with purple hues guides me towards a blowhole by the beach. He asked me to get in a small crevice inside till someone gets me or else my mother dies. I do as I am told, and he jumps in the water and joins his school. Moments later, I hear Ikki our flock leader with his shaman Ichtaca and his son Quierk my main tormentor. They are here to 'gently' interrogate Kaparl, how could his shop be set on fire? Kaparl denied any involvement, "fire is my enemy, unnatural, it revolts me to my core." Somewhat convincing coming from a fishfolk. They still savaged his home by the beach and everyone in his school. They noticed the blowhole and before they can peek inside, a giant gush of water comes raining down. They start complaining about their feathers getting wet, grabbed Kaparl with their cold sharp talons and headed towards the mountain top.



**Mardi Gras**—*Tiffany Khaw, Class of 2023*

Hours later when the coast was clear, a locathah maiden gets me out of the blow hole. She wraps herself gently with my barren wings, holds me by my waist. "Your mother is safe Ur; she flew back to your brother Ureek to continue their daily morning walk. Your brother thinks they're more inland than they really are, her alibi will check out!" ... "I am Morjana, uncle will arrive any minute now bringing good news surely!" ... "This is our home, we're a small school of three fishfolk families. Everyone here except for uncle is very sweet and delectable, please try not to eat us." ... "Tsk Tsk, Morjana have you never tasted the sweet pungent flavor of ocean aged Ale? I am but sweeter" ... "Uncle, Drinking Ale all the time does not make you any sweeter!" "Fibs fibs, your Mother is safe son, she hopes you'd accept our humble home as your own."

I look at Morjana, I am baffled. I just made the ocean waters saltier. My narrow-cramped shelter has just become comfier. My heavy heart just turned the crevice into a fissure. It's so hard to breathe, yet now I feel lighter than air. Yet now my heavy heart is oscillating more erratically than a hare. A raging fire storms within me that not even the howling ocean's wind can extinguish. You maiden under the sleeping sun with a head full of glittering flames, what have you ignited within me? What have you stolen from me? Where has the life I lived go? How can I grief over a tomorrow I desperately want with you? What sorcery have you done to transform a garb like myself into a soul? Yet you claim them all; my heart, my sorrow, my tomorrow and my soul, you have them all. Will you safeguard them all? ... The ocean gods send a cold stabbing wind, yet I have never felt so warm.

Seven springs have passed, many tomorrows have become yesterdays. I wake up by the beach with Morjana laying on my arm all snuggled in my now majestic wing. I can't feel my arm (I can't say that). The tide is rising; perhaps it will wake her up or perhaps I can blame it for taking back my arm. The water touches her slender feet and they turn into breathtaking seaweed-colored fins (I can't say that as well; they are green). Morjana is different in this way from the school, Kapral rescued her from slavery as a child. They're the only family she knows... we both know. She has been talking about Exocoetidae or flying fishfolk, unrelated to us in anyway ... she says. It is not egg fever ... she says. Two or four eggs sound like... two or four children I will have to protect. I will have to build a sturdy nest. I can see them when I close my eyes, it is more accurate to say I can see little precious children with Morjana's face,

heartwarming smile, kind heart and perhaps my - "... YOUR WINGS!" I look at her in shock, "oh no you can now hear my thoughts!?"

"SPREAD YOUR WINGS!!!" A familiar face is charging towards us. Quierk! His repulsive talons take a hold of Morjana and pries her off my chest. I am different now, I am strong, this weasel can no longer scare me! When I beat my wings, this time I will FLY! I pursue him immediately. I smell smoke. I look behind me and it's Ichtaca on the ground behind a screen of smoke coming from my wings. I disregard it and beat harder and harder to follow them and suddenly a fire is set ablaze. I fall down away my hopes and dreams and deeper into despair. I get out of the waters and Quierk comes closer. He moves his repulsive talons again, cradles Morjana's neck then he snaps... her... neck. More of my previous tormentors swarm about, dart towards Morjana and rip her body to shreds. I grab my crumbling chest. My heart's beating feels more forced, more rigid, I can no longer breathe, absolutely excruciating, I implored it to stop. Out of my wails suddenly came a thunder bolt that obliterates those worthless cruel weasels. I stand in absolute horror; I stand a dead birdman stumbling in front of the last shreds of his being.

*Flower Cotton, Class of 2022*



**The Puppet Show**—Ashley Kramer,  
MD/PhD Student



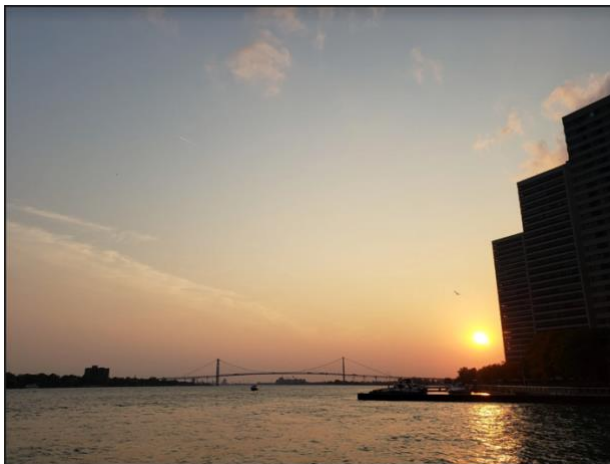
**Hakone Train Station**—*Ethan Stahl, Class of 2022*

### **Detroit by the Sea**

There is a grand city by the sea,  
where my past and my present come as  
one.

Detroit, from my present, serenely sits  
and in the sea from my memory takes a  
bath.

Sundays are quiet. They unshackle my  
memory.



**Ambassador**—*Deliabell Hernandez,  
Class of 2021*

I hear waves rolling on the sand  
as a soft rumble in the distance,  
alternating with sirens,

but I'm not tricked - I hear the highway  
sounds.

Coconuts hang from a maple tree on  
Woodward,  
snow on its branches, roots in the sand.

Island breeze like winter winds  
infusing my lungs with life.

And so, I tie together my past and my  
present.

Sitting by the window that faces the  
beach

I close my eyes while I have a Coney,  
and imagine I'm living in Detroit by the  
Sea.

*Deliabell Hernandez, Class of 2021*





**Eudaimonia**—*Ryan Kelly, Class of 2022*

### **On Waiting for the Future**

Your inherent value does not depend on what has not happened yet. It relies on what you already bring to the table.

In the process of growing and pushing yourself to rise, it might be wise to own who you are in this moment. At some point in life, who you are now was who you wanted to become. So, this article here is my gentle nudge for you to give in to the beauty of what is now, for you may miss the cursory glory of the prize you once eyed.

I have felt this yearning for time to transition: from high school to college, college to work, work to better work...it is a never-ending list of goals to achieve. This is because people tend to seek the path that makes them grow as

an individual. Growth is the side effect of pushing boundaries and learning to navigate through challenges. More often, such accomplishments are made possible by your discipline to do what is needed for the sought outcome. So, yes, we naturally take pride in pursuing this state of being goal-driven since it shows society that we are a focused and successful person. Now, in the format of how our world rewards performance, I won't deny that being goal-oriented is necessary to do well. But just take this moment to think about what got you here? What brought you to be this person that you are? The healing nature of self-reflection is inexplicable, and can only be felt on a personal level. I urge you to let that healing happen. If you need a motivator for that, I have something that always works for me. Step outside and just look up at the vast



night sky, sprinkled with stars. Let it consume you in its colossal lack of restriction. When you feel like cosmic dust, small enough to think about the moment you have in your hands, the self-reflection will flow.

If you are working on yourself right now, incrementally molding yourself into an improved version of you, I want you to take a few seconds out of every day to be present and in that moment. You've probably heard of the adage where the journey is more important than the destination. Just tweak it a little and say there are multiple destinations in your journey. It would be better for you to dignify each of the places you've reached before moving on to the next stop. Each stop has a lesson to offer about yourself. Each stop was the result of a hard and long journey. Each stop is yours to own.

Of course, it is a good idea to plan and prepare for what is yet to be. After all, that is why you have achieved the goal you set sight on. But, in this extended decision-making process called life, I have come to understand that the next big thing will never be the one I would be done and satisfied with. Instead, I see that it is beneficial to pick apart what I am in this moment and trace a roadmap to what made me better and correct what made me fall a few times. In that sense, the next journey would include less of the negatives that I may have once nurtured. Likewise, each stop carves out a better me. Hopefully, by the time my life journey ends, my effort to be pensive would have helped me experience the best version of myself.

I hope you don't mistake this as a call to slow down your pace and zest for growth. Continue to have the hunger and passion to aim high. But as I entered 2019, aware of the upcoming changes about to unfold in my life, it dawned on me that I have to draw upon the experiences of who and where I am now. My life will not get better by waiting for the future, eagerly holding a telescope to peek into what is not in my grasp. So, what do I do now with this thought bubble on waiting for the future? To begin with, I have taken to just deliberately notice my daily actions and thoughts; note the intricacies of my interactions with others; spot what leads to good or bad outcomes. I have taken to explore the idea of "who am I" from a very practical standpoint, with a basis of who I used to be a couple of years back. What can I learn from me now or change about me in this moment before I face the future me?

Rushing through life to maturity, career development, love, marriage, and the many other things that we set to check off on our to-do list may satiate our cravings for consensus and acceptance. However, this fails to exemplify our powerful desire for life; for unlocking our immense potential to contribute to this world. Think about being in tune with you. Strive to be a better you with each stopover, but breathe in the moment and cherish the present.

At some point in life, who you are now was who you wanted to become.

*Aishwarya Panneerselvam, Class of 2023*