Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we bring to you the third volume of Ad Libitum. The journal has come quite a distance from its embryonic days as a Microsoft Word document as you will find a more sophisticated version from that of Spring 2003. Peruse these pages and you will discover brilliant artists of yore such as Dmitriy Kedrin and Danny Fein, cutting pages with brush and pen. And you will find newer contributors, exquisite in their craft, such as painter RoseMarie Russo and poet Andrena Mason, fleshing stories with their easy strokes. All of these artists create from experience, subliminal and real, from their multiple lives as scientists, doctors, students, daughters, sons, spouses, spirits. And so we bid you to devour, Ad Libitum, as much as you desire, when you desire. For this is a gift of expression created from and for our community.

Tara Vijayan
We would like to thank those members who have continued to support this journal through all of its incarnations:

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A Memory
Talking Cat
1st year PhD student

As all of the relatives and family members dispersed their own ways into the ever familiar and beautiful, unkept depths of the dacha garden, with its heaps of bright and scented flowers, some of which reached incredible heights and were joyously sparkling in the overpowering midday sun, and as others lazily dozed off in the shades of the old wooden country house whose nostalgically creaking floor boards and exquisite porch and roof designs harked of days when my great grandfather had constructed it, my restless nature, annoyed at my cousins that refused to play with me as they grazed on our best blackcurrant bushes, held onto the tipping fence, trying to peek into the neighbors’ place, hoping to detect some movement there. There were no human noises, and everything was strikingly filled with the sound of summer insects, supplemented by the oh so typical background buzzing of the electricity transmission towers on the other side of the little river, and I decided to take advantage of the neighbors’ raspberry plant branch whose red and ripe fruits were luring my hand to reach out and take some. Spotting the movements of the kindhearted and ever so loved grandma Valentina hushing at the chickens that were walking too freely around their yard, annoying the old and limping Muhtar, a stray dog that lived with them for at least a decade, I observed Maximilian, sitting as usual in the open balcony up on the second floor, engrossed in his daily activity of drawing for hours, not paying attention to anyone, largely immune to our pleas to engage with us in a board or card game.

Finally the oldest of the neighbor’s kids appeared, and I ceased the few seconds before he would disappear again to call loudly for him knowing that he would ignore me otherwise to inquire him if he would join me for a bicycle ride towards the lake, an incredible dark-water oasis between midday and five o’clock, when the heat is particularly merciless during a blazing Russian summer. As he predictably declined my offer, not listening to threats that my grandmother considers it extremely dangerous and irresponsible to ride by yourself in our area, I sneaked towards the garage in disappointment, but still careful to remain unnoticed by any adults, in order to take out
my bicycle. After notifying my cousins about upcoming bicycle ride and obtaining their pledge for secrecy unless absolutely forced by the adults, I pedaled off towards the more lit-up area of our street, which would go over the river and into the fields after the dacha houses spanned no further, and inhaled the aroma of the brown earth, tightly packed over the decades, bare and dry.

A member of the bovine species blinked at me, chewing the emerald herds, and I rode over the rope that was attaching it to the pole in the middle of the field, as I was staring into the distance, thinking about everything and yet nothing at once, such as the trip back to Moscow the week after, and the fact that Volodia always wins card games; and as these thoughts, or perhaps a lack them, proceeded, came the realization that I was already making the turn into the path that wound its way past the young pine woods, signifying that in about ten minutes, I would feel the chilling magic of water after being in a state of extreme thirst, heat and exhaustion from the ride and the sensation of skin suffocated by a layer of sandy road dust... Thoughts started clearing as I saw the oasis flickering not so far away, with seemingly happy (or relieved from their daily miseries) families and individuals laying and sitting on the lake’s banks, with the children’s splashing and chasing echoing distinctly – not too noisily, since this was not the peak time for swimming since it was so hot and a few slowly moving cars, emitting a smell of cheap fuel that vaporized lazily through the thick and still air. As I neared my favorite spot by the lake or pond, as some would argue- I finally realized that someone was calling my name, and I pressed on my tenderly and apologetically squeaking breaks, tearing some grass out of the ground as a result, and looked at the green material smudged slightly over the place where the grass was cut into two before I turned around. Not very surprisingly indeed, it was Andrey, with his nearly annoyed and half amused, grinning expression, that caught up with me on his old bike, and I gave him “that” look, signifying that I knew exactly why he was there; that poor Valentina Ivanovna had to raise her voice at him and send him to look after me when she found out that I set out alone. As he set down with our bicycles on the grass under several slim, graceful birch trees that exuded that very simple Russian folkloric beauty and romance, so mythical and inspiring, so deep-rooted in the culture and yet young and fresh in their entirety, I dove into the cold heaven, hitting a fish or some other underwater creature with my foot, and felt a sadness that these carefree summer days would, in a few years, or perhaps even less, be left behind like the shore, the distance to which was slowly growing, with Andrey squinting his eyes in the sun, observing the girls of his age group and lighting a cigarette.

**Indestructible**

*Dan Cousin*

*4th year MD candidate*

Lying in my bed
Reflecting and directing
All of the traffic in my head
Where is my life going?
Think that I’ll stay right here instead,

Trying too hard to be lazy
Cause I don't know when
I will love again
Cause I don't know when
I will love again

I'm thinking I'm being tested
I'm trying my best
But can’t help feeling
That I'll still come out bested
I'm living life
But it still feels like
My heart has been arrested
But maybe it's all in my mind
Cause I don't know when
I will love again
Oh I don't know when
But I wish that it were then
I don't want to face reality
I'm staying out of touch with the world
So then it can't touch me
I'm playing both the devil's advocate
and its adversary
As I search my soul for me

Cause I don't know when
I will love again
Oh, I don't know how
But I wish that then were now
Maybe I'm just crazy and everything's just fine
and from what appears to be, there's more
That meets the eye
If I just let time pass, will life pass me by
If I'm just in denial, then this too I deny

Just realized my own worst enemy is I
I know there's no way to back up time and
Somehow undo what has been done to me
The yesterday I leave behind
Is not a defense for my insanity
and tomorrow I will survive
If I learn to stop failing before trying
The man I was is no longer I
Cause I just became indestructible to me

Butterfly
Javani

The inscription reads:
I'm a butterfly.
Madly burning in love.
A hobo in any garden.
Intoxicated by the scent of
My love, the flower.

Digital painting printed on canvas, and
enhanced by the artist adding oil stokes on the
top of it.
The Proposition
Andrena Mason

Each day she went to Burger King
Or McDonald’s
I don’t remember.
He talked to her
And she to him
He listened to her
And she to him
Over fries, and Ketchup and Burgers.

One day he said “Marry me.”
His hands were lined with years of memories
And his eyes were sincere and true.
At the time
She was 29 and he was 70?
And she said, “I can’t. You are very sweet,
but I can’t.”
And he said, “But I’ll take care of you.”

He deepened his proposition, and open his palm.
There was a thick wad of green.
“I have money and when I die,
you can have it all.
This is just some.”
He didn’t have to say what he was feeling
It was written on the shell his glossy, wet eyes.
Desperately Lonely.
Now, years, a husband and four children later
She says “I wish I knew then, what I know now.”
“What would be different?” I ask.
She smiles
And I know that she would have wrapped her heart,
No
Her life, around that beautiful,
vulnerable 70-year-old man.
From Burger King
Or MacDonalds.

Bryce Amphitheater
(from Bryce point, Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah)

Aparna Mukhopadhyay.
3rd year Ph.D. student
(Minolta Dimage S414, four consecutive shots stitched together in the Adobe Photoshop ver7.0)
FROM ICE TO ART: A journey into the world of Jack Frost Designs

photography by Charles E. Rogler, Ph.D
Professor.
Dept. of Medicine
Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology

Seeds grow into a serious passion.
We all know that professors and their students are often avid hobbyists, in addition to being dedicated scientists. It seems like the creative impulses don't just end for most academicians when they walk out of the laboratory. Two common leisure pastimes of "academic" types are music and photography. Like many other professors, Dr. Rogler has been an avid amateur photographer for most of his adult life.

Dr. Rogler first developed a serious "photography bug" as a result of his backpacking experiences in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California in the 1970's. Dr. Rogler must have caught the same bug that Ansel Adams had. According to Dr. Rogler, "The scenery and wildflowers were so spectacular that I was driven to take pictures of them to prolong their memory". So, back in the 1970's he obtained a classic Cannon AE-1 camera, (the original), with a great macro lens and a 70-210 zoom lens and began shooting. One of Dr. Rogler's goals was to shoot all the wildflowers in the Sierra Nevada range. While he fell somewhat short of that goal (due mainly to moving back East), the seeds of interest in close up photography, picture composition and lighting and contrast were planted and continued to grow.

Dr. Rogler got to test out the quality of his initial nature photographs while a member of the Color Camera Club of Westchester. At their monthly meetings a "judge" would offer "no holds barred" critique of the images. The competition was tough and intense and awards were made for only the best qualifying photographs. It was there, in the 80's, that
Dr. Rogler learned a great deal about composition, color and specialized techniques and developed a critical eye for photographic art. Over time, Dr. Rogler won ___ first awards, and _____ honorable mentions at the club.

**Jack Frost Designs are discovered**

New discoveries are usually due to a combination of creative imagination, experimentation and good ole fashioned luck. As most amateur photographers, Dr. Rogler’s eye was trained to see what he calls "photo ops". Photo ops occur when you least expect them and that was certainly the case with *Jack Frost Designs*. It all started when Dr. Rogler, in efforts to reduce the costs of heating his greenhouse, started reducing the temperature of the greenhouse in winter. He had to find a reduced temperature at which his geraniums and Christmas cactus would survive the winter. When he did this, Dr. Rogler began to notice ice crystal formation known as *Jack Frost* on the windows of the greenhouse. Having a photographer’s eye, and a keen appreciation for what special lighting can do for normally routine ice formations, the quest to capture the beauty of the ice crystals began.

It turned out that some of the best lighting conditions occurred in the early morning right after sunrise. Of course, the angle of the sun was important and was continually changing, requiring a photographer who was fast with the shutter. Dr. Rogler also experimented with temperatures and humidity conditions in the greenhouse and managed to establish conditions in which the ice crystals would grow into formations of unprecedented size and complexity. When the sun, or the artificial lights he has recently used, hit the ice crystals at just the right angle and the camera lens is just at the right position, the mostly planar formations "shine out in 3D"!

At this point, good ole fashioned "luck" plays a part in the final crystal formation. Just as the photographer Wilson A. Bentley observed in the 1880's that, "no two snowflakes are the same", Dr. Rogler also says that "no two *Jack Frost Designs* are the same". Every cold day is a new discovery, created by the specific temperature and humidity conditions.
Jack Frost Designs receives National Recognition.

Encouraged by Karen Gardner of the public relations department at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Rogler entered a set of five of his Jack Frost Designs photos in a 2004 National Photo Awards competition that is judged by a panel of "Master" level judges. To his great surprise and delight, the set of photos won First Place in the Artistic/Creative category. As a result Dr. Rogler won the Photographer of the Year award for the Artistic/Creative category.

The Jack Frost Designs images have been universally well received received in all the venues in which it has been shown. Dr. Rogler's earliest prints of Jack Frost Designs have been on display in the lobby area of the Forscheimer building at Albert Einstein College of Medicine since October 2004. Workers in the medical school have been fascinated by the images, especially when they read that the images are of "ice on glass with special backlighting and angular photography, as Dr. Rogler puts it, when he explains the techniques. Ron Terner of the Focal Point Gallery on City Island in the Bronx, has appreciated the art form and featured it in his gallery in March 2005 and Metaphor Gallery brought Jack Frost Designs to the National Art Expo at the Javitts Center in New York City. Finally, the New York Times featured Dr. Rogler, his Art, the greenhouse and the beautiful environment of his house in the January 30, 2005, Sunday Times. The article can be viewed at: nytimes.com/realestate/habitats for Jan 30, 2005.

Jack Frost Images have several repeated themes.
"If you look at them long enough you begin to see repeated themes", according to Dr. Rogler. For most of the images, he has used a 35-135 mm Schneider Kreuznach telephoto zoom lens with 35 mm SLR Samsung camera. A variety of films have been used including Kodak TMax 100 B/W which is the current favorite. However, interestingly, Kodak 200 Gold color print film also yields some great images, according to Dr. Rogler. A large format Mamyia Z65 camera with an 80mm lens has also been used with several different Illiford and Kodak color and B/W 120 films to capture some of the larger
Different themes tend to be repeated under different environmental conditions. This article has three images that represent some of the common themes that are found in the "ice on glass". The images have an ethereal quality to them and Dr. Rogler has hesitated to give them titles because, as he says, "Everybody sees something different in them and I don't want to stifle the imagination of the viewer." Furthermore, in that the images are "abstract" they can be viewed from different directions and you see different things. Dr. Rogler says "Just like the "Kandinsky" print I have on my wall, some of the Jack Frost Designs can be rotated every few months for a new discovery.

The first image shown, R5-20, represents one of the main types of crystal formations that occur on the glass. Clearly these formations have an "organic" character to them. This image generally reminds people of feathers or ferns or possibly the branches of an evergreen tree when viewed horizontally. One of the interesting features of Jack Frost Designs is that they make inorganic water and glass look like organic appearing botanical scene.

Image R12-15 has a completely different feel and look. This image has a distinctly "Geometric" quality to it. Many New Yorkers have looked at this image and immediately said "Oh there is the top of the Chrysler Building". Others have said from a horizontal view it looks like a cascading waterfall and all of these interpretations are welcomed by Dr. Rogler.

Image R4-14 combines both the floral and the geometric qualities into one image. This image was one of those that won First Place in the National Photo Award contest. Dr. Rogler has called this one "Liberty" because he sees the headpiece of the Statue of Liberty in this image. This image is particularly striking because it contains both the geometric and the floral patterns.

Specialized Custom Printing and the Digital Age.

All the images included in this article were first custom printed by Chuck Keogh of Bedford Photographic in consultation with Dr. Rogler. According to Dr. Rogler, "there is a special chemistry between myself and Chuck Keogh when we are printing." Chuck has years of experience and expertise and is known as one of the leading printers of silver gelatin black and white prints in the New York area. He can see a negative and guess what exposure the print needs almost spot on every time. According to Dr. Rogler, the two of them discuss what areas of the print need to be "brought out" and which "held back" by dodging and burning.

In the digital age, the wet bench printing approach may be seen quaint and antique. However, there are subtle features of tone and contrast that enhance the three dimensional quality of the Jack Frost Designs that are brought out using the tried and true wet bench photographic processes that are often lost in the digital conversion.

Dr. Rogler says "Certainly, there will be a place for digital images in Jack Frost Designs art." Dr. Rogler will soon have a website--- jackfrostdesigns.com--- and high density scans of the custom prints were used to create the mages for this article. However, according to Dr. Rogler, "Yes, we are moving into the digital age, however, the production of customized silver gelatin prints as fine art, will remain an important feature of Jack Frost Designs for a long time to come."
Four Short Pieces for Piano
Ron Rice
3rd year MSTP
Seven
Dmitriy Kedrin
3rd year MSTP
9.5”x11” Mixed media on paper
**Pieces of Fabric**  
*Andrena Mason*

It is interesting to watch you close your fists  
and your hands  
into tiny balls  
Balls that take no prisoners of war

It is captivating to see you hold on to something  
And to be so strong in it  
That there is no room in the crevice of your pink  
For one Alien Chocolate Morsel

Riveting  
To see how that tiny hand Clutched, Closed, Opens wounds in me. These pieces of fabric That have not been bared  
Are pieces that you hold away from the Sharing  
Are you afraid? Afraid that I'll steal your fabric? Are you afraid that I'll take my scissors and slice it to.... Mr. Unrecognizable?

Maybe they are safe in the crevice of your pink Fist  
I just hate how it makes me wring my fabric to bleeding  
I just hate how my senses contract when we cannot share the story the pieces of friendship the Quilt

---

**Mother and Daughter**  
*Dipayan Rudra*  
*6th year PhD student*  
Pentax zxm, f/8, 1/60, 100mm telephoto lens.

What shall we do with this?  
You sitting there.  
Me sitting here.  
Fabric straining our bones.  
I won’t take it clenched.  
Open it up  
With its beautiful colors
A World of Inquisition
Sahana D’Silva
2nd year MSTP

A thousand words cannot express
The tangled web that chokes my soul.
The mass of threads my breath suppress,
I gasp, I struggle to regain control.
Darkness’s veil swiftly enshrouds me,
She blinds my eyes, seeps through my skin.
How can I truly be free
Until I quieten this silent din?

The empty void, it frightens me,
I strain to push the veil aside.
The web enmeshes my arms, my thoughts,
Now helpless am I as a newborn child.

Hush, I beg silence of the chaos in my mind,
Serpent fights serpent, they rebut in kind:
How will you dress, what be your gait?
Why don’t you marry, for whom do you wait?
What tongue do you speak, what words do you read?
How dare you feel, there is no need.

What tune do you hum? What age do you live?
How far do you reach, where take, where give?
What sign do you wear - cross, moon or dot?
How do you dance - dandia or foxtrot?
How far do you love before the knot’s tied?
Play you with fire or trust wisdom gold?
How much can you cry ‘fore the wells up and dry?
How deep must you pierce ‘fore you shatter the mould?

How fast do you run, which way do you go?
How much will you shed by the time you slow?
How great be the price for the choices you make?
How much be the gain, how much at stake?
What drink do you sip, what fare do you eat?

Woman with Veil at Morningside Heights
Grace Yu
Craypas on Bristol

How do you grip, how call you your street?
What wind blows your thoughts, what rain soothes their thirst?
Which fences erected, how bless they, how curse?
Their weather-beaten boards how often do you change;
How oft do you check their tolerance range?

Slowly I realise as time flits by:
The fiercer I resist, the more obstinately I shie
Away from the blackness, ignore its existence;
If the pretense of broad daylight be my defense,
The more will I wander, precious time will I squander;
The fog inches closer through the dark I ignore.
But dare I welcome the quiet, cradled in Her bosom,
Permit the ripples of questions to wash over my spirit,  
Gently my soul commands thoughts to blossom,  
That weed through the mass of confusion and grit.

Like a bolt of lightening, the truth hits me:  
I can never be rid of this muted cacophony.  
But like the rhythm-bound currents that twist through the ocean,  
Forcing it to writhe and breathe and live,  
So must I welcome this persistent motion  
That brings my soul freedom through the pores of its sieve.

**Space**  
*Dan Cousin*  
*4th year MD candidate*

Searching through space  
Finding no one  
Drifting past stars  
Finding no sun  
When I felt your gravity surround me and pull me over to you  
Then you were the universe to me  
I orbited around you

**Untitled**  
*Anya Sedletcaia*  
*2nd year PhD student*

Unaware of what is right side up,  
Am I upside down?  
Scared my life is outside in,  
Am I inside out?  
Compared with nothing else  
I can’t tell what is itself  
Impaired am I see your light  
Blind to the darkness I left behind?

**Dusk**  
*Souvik Sarkar*

Our perceptions  
Of perfection  
Are internal contradictions  
I know what I thought when  
I thought I knew  
What turned out to be untrue  
Now I realize that  
Absolute is relative  
So none compares to you
Men are from Mars, women are from Venus

Jayanta RoyChowdhury
Professor.
Dept. of Medicine
Dept. of Molecular Genetics

As with most species of animals on earth, the male (top picture) and female (bottom picture) Oriental White eye (the name comes from the white ring around the eyes), are strikingly different. These birds are inhabitants of Western Himalayas in India.

Location: Corbett National Park, Kumaon, India.
(Photos at 500mm focal length using a Sigma 170-500mm APO zoom lens, ISO 400)
Untitled
Mariya Tarassishina
Batik on satin using fabric dyes and hot wax.
Letters home from a Dutch student in New York City: A foreign commute
Ninon Higham

First impressions are lasting impressions. I wonder though, how long it will take for my neurons to remodel, and turn an observational delight into an everyday experience, no longer triggering the fascination it does now, one month after my arrival as a Dutch medical research student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The description that follows is meant to convey to you the amazement that a foreigner feels stepping into the New York City subway for the very first time. New Yorkers are peculiar people. In order to fit in, you should at least master a few techniques. The first skill is an absolute must: hanging on to a bar with one arm, essential for preventing unwanted compression by torsos, elbows, knees or other remaining body parts when the train starts, stops, or jostles... while reading a newspaper, magazine or any other object containing written language, absorbed by everyday concerns while your organs of balance make you believe you are in a different dimension of space and time. ‘Commuting’ is what the natives call it. It is important never to interrupt this pursuit. Whenever you have to wait one minute to transfer to a different train, you loyally continue this ritual on solid ground. For the regular tourist, a worth seeing sight as it is. The one-armed subway technique, for obscure historical reasons, allows one to enjoy other pleasures besides those of reading, thinking or sleeping, if one so desires. For example, in exchange for spare dollars contributed by your fellow passengers, the floor of a subway train turns out to be the perfect place to commission a show of break-dancing skills. A word of advice should you feel inclined to begin showing off your own moves: be sure not to offer the ‘hanging-on-to-one-arm’ audience the sole of your shoe: unfavourable for profits. Any regular weekday provides you a wide spectrum of artists, one performance more novel than the previous. Of course... what would you expect of people living in a polyglot, multicultural city pulsating with energy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? “24/7”... is what those same natives would say.

Until recently, the word ‘commute’ was not part of the English vocabulary I possessed... Now, ‘commuting’ in the New York City sense of the word, has rooted itself so deeply in my consciousness, I can no longer imagine it was never there.

Bath In Central Park
Grace Marie Jones
2nd year PhD student
Olfaction Reaction
Jennifer Wolkin
3rd year Ferkauf grad in clinical psychology

The Jergens lotion,
The mint eucalyptus seeps into
The scaly cells of my utilitarian hands,
All the while suggesting mother’s caress,
That rubs away anticipation,
And massages fearlessness,
And strength into my soul.
Shedding the scents of my youth,
I douse myself with a more fitting fragrance,
The Burberry’s I sophisticatedly wear reminds
me of that time I traveled to London and came home,

Independent, on the cusp of authentic adult
hood,
Subtly seeking to be more sensual, more at
ease with the idea
of attracting a king bee to my perfumed petals.

“Purple Paradise” fragrance permeates my
psyche,
Almost as powerful as the illumination of the
flame
From which it emanates.
This aromatherapy
In its quintessential state flagrantly makes me
think
I am on that wooden porch again,
Mellow as the yellow sun, breathing
in the rich, intoxicating lilacs.

The acuteness of “hazelnut blend”
aroma,
Intense in its capability to attack,
Jolting a rush of caffeine
intravenously into my bloodstream.
At the same time
It carries me to the moments
Of anticipation spent endlessly
sipping
This brewed substance in the hopes
of staying awake to pass my GRE’s.

Each aroma locks like a key with its
own neuron,
Eliciting a unique and irreplaceable
reminiscence.

Perfect Vision
Dr. Lucy Firth
Post-doctoral fellow
Molecular Genetics

Cell cycles and differentiation in the developing
Drosophila eye. Eye is labelled with antibodies
against CyclinB, phospho Histone 3 (mitotic cells)
and the neural antigen ElaV to recognise photo-
receptors.
The Answer
Dan Cousin
4th year MD candidate

I was not the me I wanted to be
I felt like a fish lost in the sea

I was not living the life I wanted to lead
I believed in a world that did not believe in me

I searched for the stars in the night sky
When I found all along they were in your eyes
Then I stopped asking questions that weren’t right
When you answered my life
The answer was you, the answer was you
you answered all my questions from the life I knew
When you made my world come true

The answer was you

In the moment
Robert Karr

To me the form of art comes in many ways...for me holding time...in true form can only be that by the camera’s eye. For me it began with my father a lover of film....video...and taken photography with him my guide... I took my journey of art...in its finest form.....love.....beauty....shapes....heartbreak and just that I say..I took his wisdom and ran all around this city to see all....I say ....I have found my love for all time.

- Robert Karr

Ode to Witt
Will Obrien

O, enterobius vermicularis
Hail ancylostoma with thine hungry grin
Dreaded palor of the great ascaris
And trichomonas dressed in fish-ious sin

My pica-penchance hath pricked my taste
To walk barefoot ‘mongst the egg-laden dew,
And my fashionable lympho-elephantized waist is effected not by inhaling kitten poo

To learn thy secrets, I dress in RBC’s
And pretend to septate in my bed
Or imagine ticks where were only fleas
And ponder on ring-hancements in this head

Though, now it ends for you and me
Our less-than-seemly symbiotic tryst
Please, understand that I take Pz
Not for you, but your dreaded cyst

I ask that you postpone the day
To revisit this splendid pasture fair
When body whithered and follicle gray
My lungs to pierce, your happy liar

Be patient, sick and lame I'll become
Then, once in earth and without need
And to your teeth my flesh be numb
Thou worms, upon this husk, may feed
Still life
RoseMarie Russo
Administrative Secretary, Cancer Center
Acrylic paint.
I want to expand myself
Sunny Gupta
5th year PhD student

I want to expand myself
I want to smile
I want to grow beyond horizons
I want to expand myself

She smiles a beautiful smile
I want to be her smile
She is a small one across the street
So natural is her life

I want to be her life
I want to expand myself
I walk along a thin lane
With walls so high
I feel so suffocated
I want to rise
I want to expand myself

So selfish am I
Always thinking about myself
Student of Gandhi descendent of Buddha
I want to work for my countrymen
I want to expand myself

Thin so thick is membrane between Good and Bad
I live on one side and want to crossover to other
I want to expand myself

My ego so strong
It breaks at the slightest of blow
My life centers around fulfilling its wishes
I am tired
I need energy of love to feed my soul
I want to dance to the tune of life
I want to expand myself

Haleakala Crater
Tarun Dam

Hawaiian island
Canon EOS Elan 7E
Free Parking
Daniel Fein
3rd year MD candidate

Bob Hampton could tell from the moment he woke up that this was going to be the worst day of his life. He felt it in the air from the minute the shrill blare of his alarm clock woke him at six fifteen, before he stubbed his toe on the corner of his night table, sliced a two inch gash on his left cheek while shaving and spilled a cup of coffee down the front of his pale blue shirt, scolding himself and ruining his favorite tie.

The date, December sixteenth, 2062, was prominently displayed on his portable videophone, the dashboard of his 2056 Ford Voltage, on the paper calendar on his cluttered desk at the Ford factory, and most importantly, in small block letters on the wristwatch that his wife Cathy had given him. The watch was powered by Bob’s own body heat, guaranteed to last until he died and his circulation stopped. Guaranteed to remind him of the worst, and last, day of his life.

“Time to wake up Andrea,” said Bob as he kissed his daughter gently on the cheek. She quickly looked up at him and smiled. “We’re going to see Santa?” Christmas was rapidly approaching and she was eagerly anticipating her trip to the mall. “Of course, sweetheart,” he promised, “as soon as I’m home from work.” He turned around and walked towards the door, which suddenly swung open. It caught him in the face and knocked him backwards, sending a fresh spout of blood from his nose. Cathy apologized profusely and helped him tend to his wound.

His bad luck had not ended there. He couldn’t find his car keys, and the contents of his briefcase spilled to the floor when he grabbed it off the table. His watch told him that he was going to be late for work. He shoved his papers inside the briefcase, grabbed the extra set of keys from Cathy’s hand, kissed her goodbye and stepped outside. His jaw dropped when he saw the empty driveway.

“You’ve got to be kid….” His voice trailed off as he remembered where his car was. He reached into his pocket and removed the silver two-inch rectangular box. He pressed the single button in the center of the box, stared at his driveway and waited for the magic to happen.

Several seconds later, the first shimmer were visible. It seemed as if he was staring down a long road on a hot summer day – the air appeared fluid and swelled before his eyes. The ripples spread outwards and began to darken. The trees and fence on the side of his house were obstructed from his view as he was able to make out the first features of the car. The headlights and windshield first, side mirrors and doors soon after. Forty seconds later, his car appeared, intact, in his driveway.

“Amazing,” said Cathy, watching from the open doorway. Bob turned around and nodded in agreement. He had been one of twenty employees at Ford picked to test out the latest innovation – CTM, or Car Transport Mechanism as the technology was more formally known. It had been hooked up to his Voltage only two days back.

What the CTM did was quite simple – it transported the attached vehicle to a pre-determined alternate dimension, where it could be easily accessed by a simple click of the button. After inter-dimensional travel had been discovered twenty years back, many companies had patented ideas; however, Ford was the first to actually have a working product. CTM had been demonstrated for the press four weeks earlier and had quickly been heralded as the solution to the world’s shortage of free space.

All of the test group’s cars were fitted with CTM – a small box in the underside of the car, and several other electronic gadgets that would constantly report vital statistics about
the car and its surroundings. Each participant was given an instruction course on usage and rules of CTM – first and foremost which was that they were never, under any circumstances, to be, or to have anyone else in their car when using CTM. Although a seemingly uninhabited dimension had been chosen for the project, it had been explained to Bob that ‘uninhabited’ meant that scientists had been unable to detect any living being, not that the dimension was empty. After all, thought Bob, who knows what lurks in the nooks and crannies of parallel universes? When CTM would be put into mass use, inter-dimensional parking lots would be heavily guarded; however, this was not the case for the test group. Bob was fine with this – after all, Ford had promised to replace his car if anything should happen to it. He also had no urge to travel to another dimension. Rumors of people coming back autistic or demented or not coming back at all had already bankrupted several companies. After two days of meetings with the director of the program and signing various waivers, Bob was finally free to use the CTM.

Bob threw his briefcase on the passenger seat, waved goodbye to Cathy and pulled out of the driveway. When he arrived at work, he simply pulled up in front of the factory and pressed the button on the CTM controller. He watched the translucent ball swallow the car before it vanished.

Once at work his day continued to go downhill. Bob was informed that his entire division was going to have to take a pay cut due to the amount of money squandered in development of a vehicle powered by cold fusion. Unions had gone the way of the Dodo thirteen years back and the alternative to the pay cut was to find a new job. Bob shook his head gritted his teeth. At least I wasn’t fired, he thought as he tried to conceptualize what was seemingly becoming a dire financial situation, and with Christmas right around the corner nonetheless. He tried to push the thoughts from his mind and got to work, eager to spend time with his daughter that afternoon. Eight hours later, Bob found himself sitting in his car in front of his house. He had spent a good deal of the day debating whether or not he should tell Cathy about his pay cut and consequently had not gotten any work done. It was going to be a late night.
He stepped out of the car as the side door to his house opened and Andrea, wrapped in a bright pink winter jacket, ran towards the car. Bob caught her in his arms and spun her around. She placed her arms around his neck and kissed him on the cheek.

“What happened daddy?” she asked as she traced the scar on his face with her fingers. Bob took her hand and kissed it.

“Nothing honey. Are you ready to see Santa?”

“Yay!” shouted Andrea as she began to squirm in Bob’s arms. He put her on the ground and helped her into the car. Bob looked across the front lawn at Cathy, who was standing by the open door. He blew her a kiss and then got into the driver’s seat. “Are you sure you want to see Santa?” he asked sarcastically.

“Of course, daddy!” shouted Andrea as they pulled away from their house.

The line for Santa had been ridiculously long so Bob decided to take care of some shopping first. He silently cursed his decision since the line was easily twice as long when they returned. Two hours later, Andrea finally made her way past the elves and crawled up onto Santa’s lap. After her three minutes were over, Bob slung the packages over his left shoulder, took Andrea by the hand and led her outside to the far end of the parking lot. He removed the two orange traffic cones holding his parking spot and pressed the button on the CTM controller. Several people stopped to watch as the first ripples appeared in the evening sky. Andrea stared wide-eyed and strangers applauded the visible bulges in the air as the car arrived. Bob smiled as he helped Andrea into the car, placed the cones in the trunk and the packages on the seat next to him.

The ride home was a long one. Worries about their financial situation flooded Bob’s mind and traffic was horrendous. Andrea sat silently in the back seat. She could tell from her father’s silence that something was wrong. She could hear him muttering under his breath, and decided not to bother him. Daddy doesn’t like being bothered when he’s sad, she thought as she removed her ponytail and put the thick pink rubber band on the seat next to her. She looked out the window as the car moved slowly down the street. Her eyes brightened as they reached a stoplight several blocks from their house. A chocolate labrador was walking down the street. It looked up at the car and caught sight of Andrea waving. Its tongue lolled and it barked as the car began to pull away. Andrea pressed her nose against
the glass and smiled as the dog followed the car.
Bob continued his slow drive home as he let the problems eat away at him. How was he going to tell Cathy? Would they be able to keep all the Christmas presents? Where could they take out a loan? Andrea tried turning around to look out the rear window of the car, but was held in place by the seat belt. She placed both hands on the window and frowned – her new friend was nowhere in sight.

*Why did this have to happen now?*
Thought Bob as he turned onto his block. *I can’t tell her now. I’ll wait till after Christmas.* He nodded his head, feeling better that he had at least come to a conclusion about something. And then another thought hit him. *Will I get a Christmas bonus this year?* He suddenly felt nauseous. The dam in his mind broke causing questions and problems to spew forth. He fought to hold back tears as he pulled into his driveway. *Where did the doggy go?* Thought Andrea as the car pulled to a stop. She opened the car door and stepped outside. She saw the dog down the block and clapped. Andrea giggled with delight as the dog ran up to her and wasted no time in licking her face. She giggled louder and chased the dog as it began making circles on their front lawn.

Meanwhile, Bob sat with his forehead resting on the steering wheel. “Get a hold of yourself Bob,” he said as he took several deep breaths. He wiped his eyes on the back of his sleeve and said, “Come on, Andrea, let’s go inside for dinner,” without turning around. He leaned to his side and bundled the presents together as Andrea ran in front of the car, chasing the dog into their backyard.

Bob slammed the car door shut, looked at his house and sighed, wondering if they’d have to move. Bob took the CTM controller out of his pocket and pressed the button without turning around. Although the CTM still intrigued him, he had no urge to watch it now. It would just be another reminder about his job and upcoming pay cut. He slipped the controller back into his pocket and fumbled for his keys. “C’mon Andrea, let’s tell mommy about Santa!” he said in as cheery a voice as he could muster. Bob waited for Andrea’s chipper reply, but there was none. “Andrea?” he said again, his voice trailing off as he turned around. The car had almost completely disappeared leaving a viscous film in its place. He looked around and didn’t see Andrea anywhere. “Oh shit,” he muttered as the packages slipped from his hand onto the

**Revelation**
3rd year PhD student
Aparna Mukhopadhyay
"Devil's Orchard" in Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho.
small patio. He bounded down the steps, stood in the driveway and called Andrea’s name. There was no response. The only sound was that of a barking dog. He ran to the end of the driveway and looked down the street. There was no sign of her. “Andrea!” he shouted once again as he stepped back onto his driveway. The air in the middle of the driveway had returned to its normal appearance.

You are never, under any circumstances, to be, or to have anyone else in the car when using CTM.

“No!!!” shouted Bob as he reached into his pocket for the CTM controller. He took it with trembling hands and pressed the silver button, praying that he would find Andrea asleep in the car.

As the driveway air began to bulge and darken, Andrea stood behind the pine trees in the backyard and watched in amazement. She had seen it only twice before and was simply awe-struck by the phenomenon. The labrador standing by her side barked again and licked the side of her face, trying to turn her attention away from the scene on the driveway, but it was no use as Andrea stood speechless, watching the car materialize from thin air.

Bob didn’t wait for the wavy lines around the car to disappear before he placed his hands on the rear window. It was warm, and he felt his stomach churn when he glanced inside. Andrea was missing, but the rubber band from her hair was lying on the seat. No! thought Bob as he felt his heart skip a beat. How could I let this happen? How could I not pay attention? He knew the answer to his questions, but also knew that it was not an excuse. Now what do I do? I can’t possibly explain this… His thoughts trailed off as he realized what he must do. Bob yanked the controller from his pocket and stared at it.

He ran around the car, jumped inside the driver’s seat and slammed the door shut. Andrea took a step forward and pushed away a branch of the pine tree. “What is Daddy doing?” she asked the dog, who whimpered in response. Andrea took another hesitant step forward. She didn’t know what was going on, but she could tell that something was wrong. She waved and tried to get her father’s attention but he wasn’t looking at her, he was focused on something in his lap. Andrea walked out from behind the pine tree onto the driveway and began yelling an waving her arms above her head.

Just let her be all right, though Bob as he closed his eyes and pressed the button. The CTM emitted a barely audible sound as it powered up. The car shook gently as the translucent ball slowly enveloped it. Bob opened his eyes and released his breath, as he was able to see the ground underneath his feet. He looked out the windshield through the translucent ball and liquid air and gasped. Standing in front of the car, waving her arms was a figure in a pink jacket. Bob couldn’t make out the details, but he suddenly knew that he had made a horrible mistake. He grabbed the door handle on the invisible door and pushed. The door opened an inch before meeting an immense amount of resistance. It was if the translucent ball was squeezing the car from the outside. Bob grasped it with both hands, leaned his shoulder into the door and pushed with all of his might. It was to no avail. The door handle disappeared in his hand and the door didn’t budge.

“Andrea,” he yelled, wondering if she could hear him. Bob pressed his hands against the now invisible windshield and began to cry. He could hear Andrea yelling “daddy” as the world disappeared in front of his face. There was a moment of darkness before his new surroundings became visible. He watched through tears as the translucent ball melted towards the ground and the wavy lines disappeared. He grabbed the controller in his hands and closed his eyes. Please work. Please work. Please work. He pressed the ice-cold button and opened his eyes.
Nothing happened. There was no translucent ball, no wavy lines and no liquid air. Just the pitch-black night of a universe close to home, yet far away. “No!” shouted Bob as he pressed the button on the CTM controller several more times. Each time he was simply greeted with a hollow, empty click. After a minute he dropped the controller and leaned back in the seat, his body shaking in rhythm with his sobs. He looked through the car window and the desolate wasteland that was now his home. There was no vegetation and no other signs of life. He slowly opened the car door and stepped outside, the soles of his shoes kicking up dust. He closed the car door and the sound echoed throughout the empty world. He collapsed to the ground and leaned against the car. Suddenly, a high pitched squeal caught his attention. He looked quickly to his left only to see a cloud of smoke.

Bob was back in the car with the door locked before he heard the sound again. “Oh God,” he mumbled as he looked around frantically. Although he wasn’t able to see the source of the noise, he had no doubt that it wasn’t friendly. Bob looked at his watch and began to cry once more as the sound became increasingly loud. “Coming,” said Cathy as she worked her way through her house to the side door. “Welcome ba...” she stopped talking as she saw Andrea on the porch, her eyes red from crying, standing next to a several shopping bags. “What happened?” asked Cathy as she kneeled down. “Where’s daddy?” She glanced outside at the empty driveway. That could only... She stopped thinking as she looked at her daughter and realized what it meant. Cathy collapsed to the floor and began to sob. Andrea fell into her arms, placed her head on her mother’s neck and began to cry once again.