**Letter from the Dean**

Having enjoyed the last issue of *Ad Libitum* (the first I've had the opportunity to read), I look forward to forthcoming ones. With all of the academic demands on the students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty that make up the Einstein community, a magazine such as *Ad Libitum* serves to remind us that there is more to medicine than just lab and imaging results, and more to biomedical research than just raw data.

At Einstein, where excellence in medicine and research have always been coupled with humanistic values such as compassion and respect for all, a literary and art magazine can serve as an excellent medium for reinforcing such values.

One need only recall that Chekhov was a physician and Maugham a medical student (albeit one who abandoned medicine for a literary career) to appreciate how literature and medicine can be intertwined. Viewing Rembrandt's "Dr. Tulp's Anatomy Lesson" or Toulouse-Lautrec's "Dr. Pean Operating" (cover of 3/28/07 JAMA) are two of the more obvious examples of the interconnection between art and medicine. The connections made in *Ad Libitum* tend to be more subtle, but still capable of teaching us lessons about the challenging world in which we live.

*Allen M. Spiegel, MD*

*Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean*

*Albert Einstein College of Medicine*

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The *Ad Libitum* team would like to thank all those who have supported and stayed with us from the beginning and made this an exciting endeavor:

- Dr. Albert Kuperman
- Dr. Christopher Cimino
- Mr. Peter Dama
- Our friends at the Gottesman Library
- The Graphic Arts Center
- Staff in the Department of Computer Based Education
From the Editor

It is a true delight to present the 5th issue of Ad Libitum, the Annual Einstein Art & Literary Magazine. With the increasing expectation from our readers and contributors, it was a challenge to keep up with their excellent submissions. As always, our source of success has been the fantastic artwork, literary pieces and breathtaking photographs that made it extremely rewarding for us to give our best.

This issue continues to feature paintings from Dmitriy Kedrin and RoseMarie Russo along with many new artists like Claude Killu, Sharon Rose, Heike Neumeister and others, presenting their lives and thoughts with paint and brush. In our literary section, we have impressions from real life experiences by Dr. Steven A. Sparr, Jonathan Mazurek and Eric Siskind written with the perfect touch of art, revealing the everlasting dilemmas of life. We are honored to feature an interview with Dr. Jayanta RoyChowdhury who has published with us in past years and shares several of his photographic moments and inspirations behind them. His dedication towards both research and photography is a true encouragement to pursue one’s passions in life.

I would second Dean Spiegel’s appreciation of the fact that despite the demands from profession and everyday life, there are so many talented artists and writers in the college. Their creative expressions, both in colors and words, encompass many corners of life and society.

This year has brought the graduation of many students who have been integral to the magazine for the past several years. Without their sincere participation and creativity, the magazine could never have been such a part of the college.

I would mention Souvik Sarkar, our outgoing Executive Editor and Co-Founder who has been closely involved with the magazine since its inception. His innovative ideas and endeavors have helped bring the magazine to its present form. This is an entirely student organized magazine and their involvement, despite academic engagements, is truly appreciable. I am hopeful Ad Libitum will continue to flourish in the able hands of present and future editors for many more years to come.

Our greatest strength lies in the diversity of the artworks and literary pieces. In a way, Ad Libitum reflects the true essence of our college: despite the multitude of thoughts and mediums of expression, all are threaded together to a single platform. As one goes through this issue, one would find comedy, tragedy, reality and many other genres with different style and form. Amidst all the violence in different parts of the world and news of affected family members, one still writes on hope, love and social medicine. Such is the spirit of mankind and we are proud to be a part of it.

Soumit Roy
Editor-in-Chief
Front cover: **Pointalism Woman**, Oil pastel on paper by Sharon Rose, 1st year MD student


Cover designs by Souvik Sarkar

Opposite: **Untitled**, Ink on paper by Mariam Kabir, 4th year MSTP

4 **Chicken Soup**, short story by Steven A. Sparr

5 **In our blood the chaos runs**, poem by Patrice Cohen

5 **Dragonfly**, photograph by Mauricio Alvarez

5 **Grand Prismatic Spring**, photograph by Shaeri Mukherjee

6 **When Frogs Get Frisky**, poem by Karen Gardner

6 **Osprey Watch**, painting by Diana Hartel

7 **My Friend**, poem by Natasha Shapiro

7 **The Butterfly**, photograph by Kausik Chattopadhyay

7 **Untitled**, photograph by Martin Grajower

8 **A Winter Day**, painting by RoseMarie Russo

8 **Abandonment**, poem by Jessica Furst

9 **I’m Going to Rehab**, poem by Peter Manu

9 **Venice in July**, photograph by Stefanie Rader

9 **Untitled**, artwork by Mazen Sidani

10 **Prophylaxis**, short story by Jonathan Mazurek

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11 **She likes her bathrooms**, poem by Peter Manu

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14 **An Interview with Dr. Jayanta RoyChowdhury**, by Souvik Sarkar

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36 Guilin, photograph by M. Donald Blaufox
37 Clear Vision, painting by Dmitriy Kedrin
Anna D. had decided to die. She was 95 years old with bad lungs, had trouble walking and a cancerous breast mass that seemed to be growing larger by the day.

She had had enough and so decided to end it all, to commit suicide – by starvation. For two months she refused all solid food, and took only a few sips of liquids. She had lost 40 pounds, and was now essentially bedridden. She was admitted to the hospital where she refused all blood work and diagnostic tests.

When I went to visit her, she was surrounded by family, her son, her grandson and her 4 year old great granddaughter. She greeted me warmly.

“Dr. S. you’re more than my doctor, you’re my friend!”

Some friend! Five year before I had given her the incorrect diagnosis of an incurable, fatal disease. She had come to me complaining of weakness and, astute clinician that I am, I had seen fasciculations of her leg muscles. I jumped to the diagnosis of ALS and once I had confirmed the presence of “motor neuron disease” by EMG, I had shared the “good news” with her.

She became very depressed. “What’s the use of doing anything, now?” she said, “So that Lou Gehrig can take me?”

As months passed, I made regular visits to her home but to my great surprise, her condition did not deteriorate. It finally dawned on me that I had been wrong. Her fasciculations, I concluded, were more likely due to compression of nerves coming out of her osteoporotic spine and her weakness was due to myopathy caused by long term steroids use for asthma. I retracted my fatal diagnosis, but perhaps the psychological damage was already done.

I felt guilty.

“What’s the matter that you’re not eating?” I prodded her in the hospital room.

“I don’t want to live any more. I am 95 years old. My husband and sister are gone. I’m sick. It’s enough!” I looked at her family and then back at her.

“You know there are quite a few people who will miss you when you’re gone. We’d like to have you with us for a little longer if we can.”

She did not answer.

I thought for a moment and then continued. “How about this deal – if I make you a chicken soup with my own hands, would you eat it?” For Jewish people, chicken soup has almost mystical powers, which have nothing to do with the ingredients. It is a metaphor for love. I knew that, and I knew that she knew that.

“If you do that, Doctor, how can I refuse?” Answering a question with a question is another pillar of Jewish culture. I took her answer to be a “yes”.

That night I went home and prepared chicken soup according to my mother’s recipe which included a kosher chicken, salt, all sorts of vegetables and parsley. I even added her Secret Ingredient (one packet of Lipton’s Cup-A-Soup). I had my younger daughter taste it. “It’s not as good as Grandma’s, Dad”.

The next morning I brought the soup to Anna. She smiled. I offered the soup to her in a Styrofoam cup with a straw. She took a sip.

“Thank you, doctor, but that’s enough,” and she put the cup aside.

I did not press the issue. I now knew that this was the end of the line. I said my goodbye. I asked her that when gets “upstairs” to give my regards to my parents and my brother Freddy and tell them that I’ll be there someday. I kissed her forehead and walked out of the room.

Just for curiosity I lingered awhile outside her door and sneaked a peek back in. I could not believe my eyes! She was drinking the soup! Voraciously!

By the end of the week Anna was gone. I did not stop by again to watch her go through the terminal phases of her suicide by starvation, it would have been too painful for me. She had made her decision to end her life and I had failed to convince her otherwise. And I strongly believed in her right to refuse medical intervention almost as strongly as I believed in a doctor’s right to make a little chicken soup.
IN OUR BLOOD THE CHAOS RUNS

In our blood the chaos runs
Burning like a thousand suns
In our minds... insanity
Grips the heart and turns the key

This chaos is a power
That oft lasts forever
Insanity is our strength
‘Tis with us till our death

Patrice Cohen
2nd year PhD student

DRAGONFLY
Mauricio Alvarez
4th year PhD student

GRAND PRISMATIC SPRING
Yellowstone National Park
Shaeri Mukherjee
PhD Recipient, Class of 2007
When Frogs Get Frisky

Poem by
Karen Gardner
Media Relations Manager

On a walk in the woods one spring afternoon,
signs of the new season were everywhere.
Young buds, still holding tight to their blossoms,
tipped branches a golden-green.
Stalks of skunk cabbage emerged from soft earth,
with maroon blades waiting to unfurl their pungent scent.
Birds flitted from tree branch to bush,
assessing nest-building prospects in bursts of chirps and song.
One proud robin strutted along a decaying log.
He puffed out his chest –
an orange-red vest woven from a sunset –
proclaiming his arrival.
As we climbed in elevation and walked deeper into the woods,
a cacophonous chorus arose from off in the distance.
We paused, trying to make sense of the raucous dialogue.
A pond hosting a convention of geese, perhaps.
The volume of the chatter grew louder as we
crested an overlook that took in a marsh below.
We paused again to listen and, in the stillness,
the uproar became distinctive croaks and excited whistles.
The discordant symphony struck a feverish frenzy,
as if the conductor had fallen from his perch.
Mesmerized by the songs,
we hiked closer, drawn by the animal magnetism.
The water bubbled with activity as frogs leapt, swam and mated.
As we watched and listened, a transformation took place.
Smiles creased our lips, as we stood spellbound
amidst the energetic amphibians.
What at first had seemed cacophonous
had become musical, even magical.
For when frogs get frisky, a walk in the woods is a live concert
celebrating the promise of future generations.
My Friend

Natasha Shapiro
1st year MD student

I want to say I love you
But I can’t
I want to say te amo
No, too strong
My feelings are conflicted
Yes, I know
My words are forming phrases
That are wrong.

But love is on my mind
And in my gut
It’s trying to escape
To break out free
And what if just by chance
The word amor
Flies from my lips when
You’re with me.

But I don’t think I’m there yet
That much is true
I just don’t understand
What I’m feeling for you.
I don’t think it’s love,
Yet if not, then what is?
It’s more than just lust.
And I can’t bare to dismiss
The idea that you
May want me for more
Than what we first said,
What we agreed to before.
We wanted a friendship
Without any strings
We didn’t want drama
A relationship brings.
But now that we’re closer
And I know all your quirks
I wonder if you’re more than
Just a friendship with perks.

The Butterfly

Above: Photograph by
Kausik Chattopadhyay, PhD
Research Associate
Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology

Black-eyed Susan

Bottom: Photograph by
Martin Grajower, MD, FACP, FACE
Assistant Clinical Professor, Medicine
Dept. of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology
A WINTER DAY
RoseMarie Russo
Administrative Secretary
Albert Einstein Cancer Center
Acrylic

ABANDONMENT
Jessica Furst
1st year MD student

You limped into my world, but really I was visiting yours
Your dark blue pants with your blue plaid shirt, slightly disheveled, the pants could use a
bit more elastic, unkempt, the collar of your shirt has not been pressed
White hair, thick glasses, you could be anyone's grandpa, anyone's sweet elderly neighbor
You carry a paper bag with your reading – the reading you say will help you
understand the world. I wish I had such a magical bag.

You could be any old man, but I already know you're not.
The old man posture, hunched over from decades of living
but your life is not like the lives I have ever seen
your pain is not a pain I can respect.
I cannot see you as a patient, I cannot give you my objective attention.
I listen with hatred, I listen with shock, I listen with anything but openness.

As you tell your story, I run through the facts you no longer know in my mind.
You respect all women but you nearly killed one
You respect all people but you killed many innocent ones
I can't respect you, I can't see you as a patient in need, I just can’t do it.
And listening to your words pulls me further into my world – away from yours.
I want you to stop talking, I want you to leave.
I see the gun you deny using in my mind. It's clouding out my vision of you as a person.

I have stopped visiting your world – my mind has left – it has abandoned you.
And right now, I'm not even sorry.
I’M GOING TO REHAB
Peter Manu, MD
Professor, Clinical Medicine

i’m going to rehab he said and
smiled two paper bags with shirts by
his wheelchair i knew the story how he
had been thinking that his wife though
weak after strokes and amputations was
having an affair and hit her a few times but
still a nice and quiet man not well at eighty
two with that pain that stayed with him
after they had taken out as much of his
lung cancer as they could he kept smiling
as i was walking to and fro making a
living trying to keep it efficient and brisk
to finish for the day go home order some
sushi here he was waiting at the end
of the road what rehab and i could not
find in me any words to keep lying

Right

VENICE IN JULY
Stefanie Rader
1st year MSTP

UNTITLED
Mazen Sidani
5th year PhD student
It was supposed to be a prophylactic bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy. Prophylactic, you see, because the patient’s mother and aunt had both suffered from ovarian cancer, with the patient’s mother having had the great misfortune of suffering from breast cancer as well. All of the risk factors pointed to a BRCA gene mutation, an observation that the patient’s gynecologist had been trying to impress upon the patient for over a decade, ever since he took care of her ailing mother during her final days. A “happy surgery,” as I would like to call it, because this patient was finally taking the step to ensure that she would not fall victim to the same fate that killed her dear mother and aunt.

As soon as the laparoscopic ports were in place however, the procedure had metastasized into something that none of us, including the attending gynecologist, with over thirty years’ experience, had anticipated. The large friable mass found on the right tube and ovary was all that was needed to confirm that this patient had indeed waited too long.

“Imagine, going to sleep a healthy fifty-two year-old, and waking up a terminally ill cancer patient,” I thought to myself. When and how should the patient be told of her prognosis? What if she had just gotten the surgery a few years earlier, as her doctor had insisted, could she have saved her life?

The questions were compounded when the gyn-one surgeon came into the OR. The patient had simply consented to the removal of her tubes and ovaries, yet now she would require a total hysterectomy, an omentectomy, and a complete lymph node dissection for the staging of ovarian cancer! It was now the responsibility of her gynecologist, to go to the waiting room and inform the family that indeed the unimaginable had happened, and receive consent from the patient’s husband to continue with the surgical staging.

Not even an experienced surgeon, toughened by years of service in Vietnam, and jaded by years of experience, was able to restrain his emotions. He lowered his mask from above his mouth and nose, letting it hang gently from around his neck, and wept alongside the family, as he conveyed to them their worst nightmare.

Following the surgery, the seasoned gynecologist, engulfed by feelings of guilt and regret, felt it necessary to take me, the medical student, aside, and prove with the patient’s chart in hand, that he had been trying for ten years to convince the patient that she had the power to alter her fate. ♦
In the beginning....  
was the Big Bang

Richard B. Lipton, MD  
Professor and Vice Chair of Neurology  
Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health

Before the beginning,  
You contracted into Yourself,  
Creating the infinite void,  
The primordial shelf.  

On the first day,  
Into that Mother night,  
An explosion of glory,  
The flow of Divine Light.  

And on the sixth day,  
Four billion years from then,  
In your image,  
You fashioned man.  
(Mutation and Natural Selection)

Out of darkness and chaos,  
You made order and light,  
And the laws of physics,  
The laws of human life.  
(Quantum mechanics)  
(Torah)

Your truths are revealed,  
By many holy men,  
Your prophets Abraham and Moses,  
Einstein and Darwin.

You gave us mind, soul  
And divine imagination,  
For glimpsing truths,  
Beyond our grasp,  
Through Science and Religion.

SHE LIKES HER BATHROOMS

Peter Manu, MD  
Professor, Clinical Medicine

she likes her bathrooms shiny and there are small soaps candles things to read hand towels some shells collected on sanibel island it’s warm and quiet could not be better and all I can think of is the ditch they dug with their hands that day of september 1942 just after he (my father) and twelve hundred other jews got out blinking and hungry from the cattle cars at Vapniarka

Below:  
COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT  
Souvik Sarkar  
PhD Recipient, Class of 2007
Our lives form a strange attractor of decisions,
Fuzz of choices
To reach some utopian precision.

Sixties medical breakthrough helps mother,
Future thalidomide generation– who was the decider?

Today’s little girl decides to sleep in her Mickey Mouse nest
But a grown-up Katyusha prefers eternal rest.

If you are able to avoid the mire–
You live in bliss,
But others chose you to be there.
Here you are

Here you are, an impossible blend of static and cotton and pulses of grace pressed into a crucial hush.

You take all the buzz and battle and bend it into waiting until you find your pace, and then you make the pauses lush.

When I shake you up, you spill champagne brief bubbles and immaculate stones to hide the pretty fractures in your will and the grief that has settled in your bones.

You reach in fractions. The tiny arc from there to here is a piercing test and takes a brave age to span.

Stay here with me in the dark and thaw and stumble and rest and be an impossible man.

How sweet the risk

How sweet the risk, delicious the release, in one rash breath to speak aloud your name and force myself, as if it were a piece of old bread for ducks and just the same as other words, not to expose its weight and to adopt a careless pose. We walk circumferences. We cloak and shy. I keep you in the corner of my eye until we meet and make limits spin. All the desires that broil and collide are subdued to such a tiny, quiet sin—illicit privacy and tea. Finally alone beside you, I talk about my car. I've raced through rain for the luxury of the perfectly mundane.

Poems by
Maria Gulinello
Director, Behavioral Core Facility
An Interview with Dr. Jayanta RoyChowdhury
By Souvik Sarkar

Dr. Jayanta RoyChowdhury is a distinguished faculty at Einstein, and still finds time to follow his passions for ornithology and capturing images of exotic places. His photographs have received rave reviews in many circles. We have been honored to publish his work every year for the last three years.

As a physician and scientist what made you interested to pursue a passion in art and photography?
In fact, what interests one in science is very similar to what attracts one to art. It is the wish to see beyond what is obvious; desire to figure out an underlying pattern in a set of events, findings or images. Like good science, a serious piece of literature, music, sculpture, painting or culinary art begins with a thought experiment.

Did your profession help or interfere with your interests?
Any serious career demands a lot of effort, putting constraints on time available for other activities. For a physician-scientist it is particularly challenging to carve out any time for other endeavors. However, this is somewhat compensated by the fact that my work has allowed me to travel extensively, which has given me the opportunity to experience the diversity of nature and wildlife.

What made you interested in ornithology?
A good photograph or a painting always offers more than a static and mute image. Edvard Munch painted “The Scream”, which portrays an auditory experience through a visual image. I became interested in the portrayal of motion in a still picture. Some things seem to be moving or going somewhere even when standing still. While many subjects, even still life, can suggest a sense of motion, birds do this consistently. The constant movement of small birds poses a technical challenge, but their myriad of poses offers the photographer opportunities to freeze motion and capture compositions that express their highly mobile personality.
What are some of the rarest photography moments either in ornithology or your various travel around the world you value the most?

There have been some breathtaking moments. I will list only two here. While on a dolphin watch tour off the Big Island of Hawaii, I noticed that dozens of spinner dolphins were fleeing through the crystal clear sea across the path of our boat. Then I saw the reason for the panic. A false killer whale was chasing the group of dolphins. It had gotten close enough to the dolphins to get them all in the same picture. Another time, I was traveling by Amtrak from New Rochelle to Providence. From the window of the moving train, I saw a bald eagle dive into a lake and pick up a large fish. Then it started flying parallel to the train at about the same speed, so that I could watch the fish wiggling in its talons for over a minute, until it perched on a tree branch near its nest. This should have been one of my best photo series ever. Alas, I did not have a camera with me!

I loved you in a place
where there is no space or time
and even though it is over
it will forever be mine.
My darlin’
I’ll remember
The love we shared together
Oh yes!
I’ll remember our lonely love and sing our song too.

Oh god!
Those bittersweet memories come
and
I have no words.
All words have been spoken
Now we sing different verses.
But baby…
Please remember
The love we made together
Remember our lonely love and sing
Our dead song.

So walk away now!
To the beat of our song
The Drummer has gone home now
But my heart still beats the tune.
Darlin’
Please remember…
The magic we made together,
Remember those words
Our words
And hum our dead song.

Robins
Dr. Jayanta RoyChowdhury

Sing our song!
Sing our song love
The melody… this magic
This is our song
The music—this rhythm
That is our song.
This madness!
Forever will live on and on
because it’s a miracle
because it’s our song.

By Patrice Cohen
2nd year PhD student
The Feet
Natasha Shapiro
1st year MD student

The darkness had long set over Midtown Manhattan, as I rushed out of the NYU Medical Center entrance and into the pouring rain. The lonely, yellow cabs flashed along the flooded 1st avenue, hoping to pick up a lost tourist or a drunk businessman at this hour of the night. But to their disappointment, even the city that never sleeps seemed to be napping. A few slowed down upon spotting me, but seeing my hurried walk and downcast head, they rapidly sped up again, in search of customers a bit richer than a loan stricken, 1st-year hospital resident.

It had been a long Sunday in the ER, filled with broken limbs, runny noses, stomach aches, and crying kids. It had been the kind of Sunday every doctor dreams of, but with one exception – today we had a man come in with a gun shot to his chest. The paramedics guessed it was a “drug-deal-gone-wrong” case. The bullet had gone right through his heart. How he even made it alive to the hospital was beyond me. They rolled him in, calling the “A team” to the trauma room, and in a matter of seconds, all of us surrounded him. I watched the blood gushing out of him, as I firmly pressed the surgery knife against the wound and cut him open. I cut, and I looked for the bullet, and I cut some more, but all I could really see were his feet. They made themselves visible to me, out of the corner of my eye. These two inanimate objects, not blue per se, maybe yellow, I’m not sure, but completely depleted of blood.

I didn’t look straight at them, but I could feel them looking at me, sticking out from under the ghostly white sheet. I palpated the chest, but I felt the feet; I listened to the senior doctor, but I heard the feet; I licked my dry lips but I tasted the feet; I smelled the sterility of the surgical instruments, but I sensed the feet; I saw the bleeding man in front of me; but all this time, I was looking at those still, blue-yellow feet.

He died. At 3:02 AM, we called the time of death as 2:45 AM; we knew he was dead for quite awhile before we gave up trying.

I walked out of the trauma room in a daze, still seeing those feet, and made my way to the conference room, where his family was waiting.

“Oh my Lord, Jesus!” screamed the stout, middle-aged, black woman when I walked in. She was looking at my bloody scrubs. I was looking at her feet – painted red toenails, protruding out of her summer sandals. Those same feet.

“I’m sorry…” I looked at my clipboard.

“…Mrs. Braswell. We tried everything, but the bullet hit the heart. He’s gone.”

“No!!” She screeched. “Not my baby! Anyone but my baby! Not Frankie!” She turned to the man next to her. He was trying to hug her, but she started beating at his chest, screaming, with tears flooding the marble, hospital floor. He wasn’t crying. I looked at his feet; he was wearing boots. Neither one had noticed that their teenage daughter had fainted. She lay sideways on the cold floor, one leg over the other, with a blue and yellow flowered flip-flop dangling off the raised, motionless foot.

I left them there and went to the bathroom to change my scrubs. I took off my surgery shoes and sat down in the corner by the sink. I looked down at my pale, bare feet and began to cry.
To explore the mind of God,
Start anywhere.

Start, if you like, with the Cosmos,
With distances so vast,
That you can see events unfold
From the time of Abraham.

Or start with our galaxy,
With the swirling stars of the Milky Way,
The gyrations of the spheres,
Suspended by unseen forces.

Begin instead with mother Earth,
Spinning, like a centrifuge,
To separate the night from day,
While orbiting to make the seasons,
In her complex Cosmic dance.

Listen to the rhythm of the tide,
Or of the tide imagined in a mollusk shell,
The echo of the canyon,
That speaks of human distances.

If you prefer, look at your hands
As they hold this poem,
A steady, gentle grasp,
Of structural perfection.

Consider your seeing eyes,
Focusing on an atom or a galaxy,
Adjusting to ever-changing illumination,
A globe within a globe within a globe…

Or look at the brain and at the mind,
Those networks of connections,
Each nerve, a microcosm,
Contains a universe.

And the nucleus of the nerve,
Holds a blueprint of the whole,
And an imprint of the Soul,
A double helix, dancing.

To explore the mind of God,
Hear the music of the Cosmic piper,
The rhythm of the stars and of the tide,
A song beyond us, yet ourselves.

The substance of our beings,
And of all being,
At every moment,
You, and all of creation,
Dances to that unheard melody.
I took me a guy to a seller's bazaar,  
And there I saw stuff which was truly bizarre!  
"I swear by Phobos..." my date, Chun, declared—  
"Oh swear not by inconstant moon!" I then shared.

We went there to shop for a bargain or two,  
And for me to see if Chun were "a good man, and true".  
"I like this place", said I, so smartly of wit,  
"and willingly could waste my time long in it!"

One of the traders had plenty of tables,  
And wares stacked on top with their own pricing labels.  
There were numerous slogans on buttons and buckles,  
So clever, in fact, that I read them and chuckled.

"Now is the winter of our discount tents,  
So if you find yourself of the camping bent,  
Just come on down and here do the deed—  
If you do not pick us, well, do we not bleed?"

And "This above all, to thine own self be true—  
Come browse my tables for something brand new!  
Neither a borrower nor lender, be,  
For I don't take credit, just hard currency!"

On display on one table were cloaks of exception,  
With a sign "The best part of VELOUR is discretion"!  
Chun pointed next at the work of great bowyers,  
Labelled (quite fairly): "To kill all the lawyers!"
Oh, sure, there were stacked both fine arrows and slings, Which were certainly stylish and quite deadly things. Written near them was this opportune pun—"More slings and arrows from Outrageous Fortune!"

On a stack of fine gowns I saw this on one hem: "Some achieve 'great dress' which is thrust upon them!" A sign about sales tax was prominent, too: 'I'm sorry, but I must give the 'devil' his due!"

Some clerical collars had slogans like others: "We few, we happy few, we band of Brothers." On a tray of religious-y bells shining bright, "Ring me so you'll hear the chimes at midnight!"

A fiddle, a lyre, and a pretty bodhran, Sat under "Just what piece of work can play man?" Some needlework tablecloths they sat upon, Read: "If music be the food of love, just play on!"

A sign boasting "Pets" showed a bowl with a guppy, And a crate labelled "Havoc", which was holding a puppy. "Train him to battle and he'll serve you, sure! Cry "Havoc" and let slip the canine of war!"

Some plate-mail for women had a note which read such: "Methinks that the lady doth PROTECT too much." Nearby, some soap bars my attention got, Proclaimed on their labels was "Out, Out, Damn Spot!"

Underthings next caught Chun's and my attention, And a label which was nearly too funny to mention! "On nighties, allow me to give you some tips: You're standing, like greyhounds, in one of THESE slips!"

I found myself laughing much more so than buying, As a slogan for love potions had me near dying: "Pour this in a fruit drink if you are that choosy, Since the course of love potion did never run smoothie!"

So after long browsing, I decided that There were too many things one could "Shake" a "Speare" at! But the issue was not whether I'd impressed Chun—"To buy or not to buy?"—that was the question!!!"
**Upper Lema Road**

Yvonne Lui, MD  
Assistant Professor, Radiology

The last light of the day makes the dust incandescent after the passing of a crowded bus now gone to Moshi, to Arusha, to Dar es Salaam. The clouds of the morning have been dispersed by the midday heat and we can’t help but see this mountain unveiled in its evening grandeur, purple against its own legendary snows. There is magic in a view as ancient as the world, carved on the walls of caves, on the insides of hearts and upon the tongues of civilizations, written even in our own tongues: Hemmingway, Dinesin, Markham.

Look upon this world sublime and wonder how the unchangeable changes, the immovable marches. The snows are melting and the waters of the region will one day run dry. Marangu is the gateway village to Kilimanjaro, and its name means blessed by water.

In the wake of a truck, billows of dust red as the roots of trees and of humankind envelope two schoolchildren on their way home and for a moment they glow in it like sons of God.

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**Trees**

Claude Killu, MD  
Assistant Professor  
Critical Care Medicine

_Oil on Canvas, 60x36“_
“Why did my father raise me to be a Mets fan? Could that be the source of all of my problems? The inferiority complex, the bleak outlook on life, the perennial position of the loser waiting till next year, the archetypal underdog with false hope, could this all have been avoided by a simple change of baseball hat? I mean the letters would be the same, the large N overlaid by the Y. Just change from the royal blue and orange of the Mets to the navy blue and white of the Yankees. It’s true that my father grew up rooting for the Giants, and the Mets were an obvious choice when the Giants moved to San Francisco. And it is true that parking is more readily available at Shea Stadium. Still, I was born in the Bronx and I live in the Bronx now. Why couldn’t I have grown up as a Yankees fan? Why couldn’t I have inherited the feeling of entitled victory, of domination over all of Major League Baseball and from that promontory extend that feeling to all of my life’s endeavors? Was I made to feel second best, to always look at the greener grass at the house that Ruth built and ask why?

I know that Yankees fans also have problems. My friend told me that he has trouble teaching his own son not to be such a sore loser in Little League. He tells me ‘Eric, you have to understand, my son is a Yankees fan; he just doesn’t expect to lose. When he does, he just won’t tolerate it.’ Actually is that really a problem? To expect the most out of life. Never to settle for second place. That sounds like a pretty good way to live, with confidence. I don’t know.

But the truth is I like the Mets. They have their own tradition. It’s not one of winning, it’s more about the attitude to the game. It’s an attitude of clutch plays, miracles on the field, “amazing” comebacks and their slogan about overcoming the odds “Ya gotta believe.” It may not be a tradition of professionalism, excellence, and grandeur. The Mets may not have the records of Lou Gehrig’s iron horse dedication, Joe Dimaggio’s hitting consistency, or Babe Ruth’s slugging power. But they have a history of magic, excitement, and the infinite possibilities of the syllogism “It ain’t over till it’s over.” It may not be much of a tradition, but it’s one I can relate to, its one that reflects the human experience. To be a Yankees fan in a way is to be cursed. If you win, you just did what was expected. If you lose, you are a colossal failure. You can’t handle the crests and troughs that are inherent in the game. You are not adept at adapting, persisting and surviving. As a Mets fan I feel I can better handle the adversity, and when the victory does come it is all the more sweet, seeing as how long I’ve waited, how long we’ve all suffered in silence. Maybe my father was trying to teach me a lesson, just like the lesson in Johnny Cash’s song “A boy named Sue”. And after all, the Mets did better than the Yankees this year. Maybe the tides are turning after all. Maybe the losers are now the winners? Does that make sense?”

“How does that make you feel?”
“I just told you all that!”
“Time’s up. That will be $300,” said the psychologist. ✪
Rachel and Aleks
An excerpt from the novel
Sylvia W. Smoller, PhD, FAHA
Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology and Population Health
Head, Division of Epidemiology

ZARKI - 1918

The woods that encircled Zarki were fragrant in the early springtime with the fresh scent of pine, though the ground was still wet from melted patches of snow. Rachel walked along the mossy paths on Saturday afternoon, on her way to meet Helena, the only person who understood her. She considered Helena her best friend, in spite of the twelve-year age difference between them.

They met at the edge of the forest halfway between Rachel's house and Helena's. They embraced, and Helena, taller than Rachel by a head, bent down to kiss Rachel's cheek. There was a faint odor about her of dental paraphernalia. Helena had Saturday morning hours, mostly for the Polish peasants from the surrounding countryside, who always seemed to get a toothache just before Sunday.

"Don't be too late tonight. We have a visitor," Helena spoke in her throaty voice.

"I'll come as soon as I can. I can't leave before Shabbos is over," Rachel said. "Who is your visitor?"

"An old friend of mine," Helena laughed and a slow blush rose from her throat to her high cheekbones. "Jakob. From the other side of Czestochowa."

"Who is he?" Rachel asked.

She thought how amazing it was that when you grow to love someone, you stop seeing them as they really look. Rachel was in the habit of thinking Helena was fairly nice-looking. Only now, when her friend's features were transformed by a certain softness, did Rachel recognize that ordinarily, Helena was really very plain, with her angular face, her too thin body.

"He's interesting. He's a Zionist. You'll see."

Helena entwined her arm with Rachel's and they walked along with bouncy steps on the springy carpet of pine needles. Rachel stopped, threw her head back, looked up at the sky showing patches of blue through the trees, stretched out her arms and took a deep breath. At seventeen she was exploding with silent restlessness. Mostly, she was melancholy, serious, but sometimes she experienced such flights of inner exuberance that she thought surely her spirit, separated from her earthbound body, was soaring high above the tall trees of this forest on the edge of Zarki.

They came to the end of the path and emerged on to the dusty road leading back into town. Beyond the road the vast open countryside stretched all the way to Czestochowa, about fifty miles to the north, a Catholic city, with its Black Madonna shrine high on the mountain top, and beyond that, Warsaw.

The afternoon sun was low in the sky. Rachel looked off into the distance across the road. A peasant woman was tilling the fields and the furrows of freshly turned rich brown earth spread outward in an inverted fan. The woman, heavy and shapeless, dropped her hoe, lifted her skirts and half-squatted, a heavy stream of water coming out of her. Presently, she dropped her skirts and resumed hoeing, her back bent over the earth. Rachel sighed. She alternated between despair at the thought that she would live, marry and die in Zarki, and a firm conviction that she would escape, a certain knowledge that she was on the verge of something.

"I will see you tonight," Rachel said to Helena.

"Not too late. Remember."

The highlight of Rachel's week was the Saturday night salon Helena had established shortly after she settled in Zarki to open her dental practice, but it was always a source of argument at home. On the evening when Jakob was to come to Helena's salon, Rachel had her usual disagreement with Papa.
Sofie, her younger sister, said helpfully, "Rachel, you can have my wool hat."

"No, I want Papa's tall fur hat– I love it."

"Take it," Papa said, as usual unable to resist Rachel. Mama, poised to intercede, relaxed and began to clean up after the evening meal.

Rachel ran out of the house and took a deep breath of the late March air. It was an exceptionally clear night. The stars were just beginning to multiply as it became darker and the bright moon lit up the street Rachel took across town to Helena's. She passed all the closed shops, the fruit and vegetable stalls, tightly shuttered now, the fish market, the kosher meat market. Toward the end of the main street there was a fork in the road and she took the left branch down an unpaved street with small houses on either side. The other, the right branch, led to the edge of town where her father's leather curing factory stood. All four of her brothers worked there after school but she rarely set foot in the factory—the smells were so awful. She wondered how they could stand it. Of course they had no choice. Papa demanded work from all of them, the most from the eldest. Still, she recognized it was a good business and made them the wealthiest family in Zarki.

She approached Helena's house with a little thrill. It was brightly lit and voices from inside were rising and falling on the silent night air. Rachel knocked on the door to announce her arrival, walked into the foyer and scraped the mud off her shoes on the straw mat outside the living room. As she stepped down the small threshold into the living room a man she had not seen before was in midsentence.

"You are all too complacent," he was saying. He looked up at Rachel for a moment and continued. "I used to be like that till I woke up."

Helena, reclining on a chaise at the far end of the room, held up her hand, "Stop, stop for a moment, Jakob. This is Rachel. Come, Rachel, sit here next to me."

Rachel crossed the room and took her seat on a large soft footstool near Helena. There were four other people in the room. Lounging on a chair nearest the door was Vitek, his long legs stretched out in front of him, arms crossed in back of his head. His unruly dark hair and thick eyebrows arched above the piercing black eyes, his muscular arms and the whole insouciant tilt of his body emphasized his seductive appeal. Next to him was Marta, his new girlfriend, a slender blond whose quick and lively wit was a match for Vitek's usual sarcasm. Sitting opposite Helena was Stanislaw, a student in Warsaw in economics, several years older than Rachel and rather unapproachable, with his slight air of superiority. He was here in Zarki to visit his family for the weekend. The other person was Motek, the town pharmacist, a man of unprepossessing looks who was in love with Helena for many years, starting back in Warsaw where they had both been in school, always attentive, helping to prepare the cookies and little pastries for the company, and to clean up afterwards. He was unfailingly kind to Rachel and now he headed off Jakob before he started talking again.

"Rachel, we are happy you came tonight. Jakob is visiting Helena this week. He is trying to get us all to go to Palestine. I am afraid Helena might listen to him."

There was an undertone of sadness in Motek's voice, despite his attempt at light-heartedness. Rachel looked at Helena looking at Jakob, from under lowered eyelids. She said nothing, but took her hat off, curled her legs under her skirt on the footstool and sat quietly as the talking resumed.

Jakob paced around the room with a fierce energy. He was shorter than Helena but taller than Rachel, with a powerful build, and he scowled as he spoke.

"Jews from all over Europe are going to settle in Palestine. It is going to be a remarkable land. And you just sit here and talk!"

"Jakob," Helena said. "We are Poles as well as Jews. With Paderewski there's some stability in the government. Pilsudski is on our side. There is an Independent Poland now. We have to support it."

"Ah, yes," Stanislaw inhaled deeply on a black cigarette. "Poland has a soul. Where else would a pianist head a government?"

"Independent Poland!" Vitek said bitterly. "All it means for us is more pogroms. We fought for Poland in the War and now they boycott Jewish stores and cut off the beards of our old men."

"They don't boycott them here," Motek said. "I have more business from the Polish peasants than ever. They come in from the country - from halfway to Czestochowa on market day every week and practically buy out the store! I'm doing very well."

"You are all so shortsighted it makes me sick! You can only see in front of your nose. Though I must admit, for some people, that is a long distance."

"What a wit you are," Marta taunted him. "I don't see you doing anything but complaining."

"Well, you see all this talk just points out how powerless you are here," Jakob said. "It only underscores what I've been trying to tell you-- we must have our own homeland. What you call Polonization— it's really assimilation— it won't help. They won't let you assimilate even if you wanted to. And why should you want to?"

"I am Polonized," Stanislaw spoke slowly, with a slight accent, which Rachel considered an affectation. "In Warsaw it's quite different. We all speak Polish. We are part of the Polish culture— but that is not assimilation. Yes, there is anti-Semitism in the University. The solution is to take part in the government, to work for change from within."

"Yes, that's what Mischler says," Vitek unexpectedly agreed. "We have to form a strong political action movement."

"Bankrupt idea!" Jakob said vehemently.

Rachel was getting a little bored; she amused herself by looking at Jakob's strong arms, the muscles bulging under his shirt.

"Enough," Vitek said. "Come, Helena, let us eat some of your good cake. You see, our little Rachel isn't concerned about such things. Well, you should be, Rachel, you should be."
I’m disgusted with the system. What once was a beautiful service, has now become a terrible disservice. One may not become He that heals, until all life has been lost & the connection with your brother and sister has been severed by countless hours, screams and mockeries that you’re a worthless human being.

To be deemed worthy of being added the suffix, M.D. one must attain certain qualities: One, Be so overwhelmed that a feat for the common good, becomes a place you’d rather not be. Two, Be pulled in so many directions as to lose the ability to spend time to heal with words, compassion & humanity. Three, Treat those at an earlier level of training as exactly what they are, BELOW YOU ensuring they always feel INFERIOR TO YOU. Four, Believe that, this is not a service job but a business, always choose the most lucrative specialty. Five, Look upon primary care as “Glorified Social Work” & lesser paid fields as “worthless,” frowning upon those that choose to be in the trenches over leisure & material excess. Six, A service to humanity, becomes a disservice to those in need.

Once all six are complete, you may successfully deem yourself, M.D. I’m disgusted with the system. So I guess I’ll never qualify, but will forever remain Noé, an extended hand to those in need.
IRREGULARLY IRREGULAR DINNERS
Rebecca Bradley
2nd year MD student

It occurred to me
after putting my daughter to bed
that my life, if put on an EKG
would be in Atrial Fibrillation.

Generally asymptomatic,
but under the surface
there is clearly a static
buzzing chaos.

Ventricular pumps
keep daily routines steady
but the rhythm has odd jumps
and the P wave may be missing.

Irregularly irregular dinners of fruit and cheese
with cartoons and flashcards
hint to the underlying disease
of family life flutter in medical school.

BOLUMINESCENCE
Geoff Lau
6th year PhD student

ANTILOPINE-CANYON:
IMPRESSIONS
Location: Arizona
Michael Oertel, PhD
Instructor, Medicine
Liver Research Center
Crack Baby

Noé Romo
4th year MD student

What becomes of a crack baby?
Does he rise against all odds
Or does he stand only to fall?
Will he become the next Messiah,
or just another one who will succumb?
Will he be forever marked,
for the mistakes of his mom?

Who is to blame for a crack baby?
Is it the mother
who takes the apple from the tree?
Or is it the system that saturates the land
with trees from which apples she
could easily pick?
Is it the father who trades
crack cocaine in exchange
for unsolicited sex?
Or is the system to blame
that portrays money, drugs & sex,
as the three basic principles on which
democracy is set?
Are the grandparents to blame
who raised a future mother to be,
on minimum wage
with no time to spend,
because mouths need to be fed
& ends need to be met?
Or is the injustice to blame
for the directed inequality
& economic apartheid manifest?

Mothers are publicly stoned
by those that spoon fed them.
Infants are born crack addicts,
& placed in environments
they are predisposed
to become a part of.

Hope is lost.

Angels cry with the delayed breath
of a crack baby,
suffocated by a system that welcomes
him by saying:
“Just another ignorant one born,
who will never learn or dare
to seek the truth
& never question by whom
he’s being ruled.
Let him play in the world
I’ve created for him.
Let him pray with the false hope,
that one day things will change.
Let him believe he’s free
in his land of poverty,
injustice
& early death.”

Who is to blame for a crack baby?

Lone Duck on a Cold Misty Lake

Location: Iceland

Paolo Norio, PhD
Instructor
Dept. of Cell Biology
Roles that Rhyme

Mariam Kabir
4th year MSTP

These are some of the roles we play to make the stories of our lives.

The Pessimist
My hypothesis concerning wars, battles, and unrests.
It’s inevitable.
It takes energy to staunch chaos
It takes Herculean strength to stem greed
It is as if goodness is the only unnatural element, sometimes.
As if death and destruction is human nature

Then why do I feel tears rolling down my eyes?
Why does my breath catch with indignation?
Why do I choke back anger?
Human folly and selfishness,
It’s a part of life.
I have to accept it.
I can’t.

The Optimist
Right now
There’s the possibility.
It’s like a novel
Unraveling.
My heart beats a little faster
My mind churns a little bit too
And I am filled with expectation
That there is something There.
I feel a bit flawed,
A bit out of sorts
But may be
The Something out there
Is going to smooth out the wrinkles.

The Curious
I am
In search of insight
About the existence of the soul
In the circuitry of our Neural network.

The Heartbroken
Questions unanswered
Answers questioned
Such is the curse of love.

The Momentary Nonconformist
It comes in ripples,
This wave of Emotions.
You look past
The shackles of Conformity
And find Happiness.
These moments, Rare and scant,
Are truly Bittersweet,
Like when you Are deep in love And afraid of Loss.

Reflections
Heike Neumeister, PhD
Research Associate
Dept. of Neuroscience
Oil on canvas, 24x24”
My wife’s mother, Mary, died of cancer last year in Dallas. As the Katrina catastrophe unfolded late that summer, we sat and followed the television coverage in a stupor over the sudden news that Mary’s pericardial fluid was thick with malignant cells from a mass in her lung. She went quickly and quietly; five weeks from diagnosis to last breath. My wife Jeanne, Mary’s only child, lives with me in New York City and we commuted to be with her mother for the weekly chemotherapy sessions until their futility became apparent. Then Jeanne remained and I commuted.

Mary had not seemed a doting mother. After Jeanne and I married at their home in Long Island, her parents retired to Texas and never returned. We would fly down to see them twice a year. I was always surprised at how much Jeanne seemed to enjoy the shopping junkets she and her mother would take.

Despite the fact that Jeanne’s mother and father seemed diffident as parents, when they began to decline with age, Jeanne became a fiercely protective daughter. Against everyone’s counsel, she fought for months for her father’s release from an Alzheimer’s unit to return to his home with twenty-four hour nursing care. When I shared these impressions with a friend of mine, he said it seemed like “grace,” an unearned kindness.

Jeanne’s assessment of her father’s needs proved accurate, but the very day we brought him home, Mary had the bronchoscopy that diagnosed lung cancer. The symptoms had been masked by depression and COPD. Squamous cell carcinoma provides oncologists with a fairly definitive prognosis. Although I had been teaching residents how to deliver bad news to their patients for over a decade, this experience gave me a new perspective. Dr. Brooks’ presentation to us was a marvel of compassion and candor, but the reality of death was stark in the neon light of the examining room.

So autumn came and darkness fell. The earth passed, as it does, through a tightening arc in its solar swing; and, with an eerie suddenness, mornings became like midnight. Thursday nights through Sunday became my days in Dallas, and one evening when I arrived late on my weekly commute, I went directly from the airport to the hospital.

When I came to Mary’s room, I paused, unnoticed, at the doorway. I saw Jeanne sitting at the bedside; with great patience and attention, she was caressing her sleeping mother’s hand. She was as focused as someone in love, not the least bit restless or distracted. And as I marveled at this, it came to me that Jeanne was recalling another time, a time I had heard about but forgotten, when she was child and had become gravely ill and it was she who lay in a hospital perforated by tubes and sensors. And it was her mother at her bedside.

Behind me, the hospital floor was teeming with activity. Urgent voices echoed in the hallway. The light from an unseen ambulance slapped at the wall. But despite the open door, Mary’s room was soundless.

And so as I watched, I understood that Jeanne was remembering as she waited; and that hours could pass unnoticed, almost as if time had halted. And as I watched, I realized that I was witness to an event at once extraordinary and yet quite common, that generations were interweaving and roles exchanging. And I heard echoed prayers of children.
Skin
Erin Rose Rundquist
1st year MD student

Today I skinned a human face.
I sat on a stool; she stayed in place.
Chin to lip to nose and eye
She didn't scream, complain or cry.

Around and down, back to the ear
Find the structures we need; they've got to be near.
Clear off the fat, find the parotid.
Her muscles are great— must have smiled a lot.

It reminded me of Sweeney Todd,
The barber shop play with a sinister plot.
Or maybe I felt like Dr. Osbourne the coroner,
Who made an ashtray and shoes out of Big Nose George.

We had cut out the things that made her a woman;
Now we peeled back the skin that made her look human.
I really don't think she had this in mind
When she donated herself, so thoughtful and kind.

Thank you, donor, for this ultimate gift.
We cannot repay you, we did not deserve it.

Sea Turtle
Ronald Simon, MD
Professor, Clinical Surgery
Jacobi Medical Center

Photograph was taken scuba diving in
Turks and Cacos in an underwater
housing.

Cedar Breaks
National Monument
On top of Colorado Plateau, Utah

Aparna Mukhopadhyay
PhD Recipient, Class of 2007
THE WHISPERED WORD WAS LIFE
Yvonne Lui, MD
Assistant Professor of Radiology

student of medicine
in clinical year one
arrives on the wards clean
pressed white coat and papers
to jot things down on
two different colored pens
ballpoint so they
don’t run
a light to shine
in the eyes an honest tongue
blade in the breast
pocket all kinds of instruments
to tap to listen to elicit
the signs and symptoms of a strange
world quickly am
no longer foreign to all night hovering
in the emergency
room where flat
mate fellow student friend
lies between hospital sheets
and delirium
tried to kill him
self and I
had no idea
how long standing still
in surgery the next morning
just one flight down from his ICU bed
scrubbed in not knowing yet

whether the whispered word was life
or no
when the operating
theater temperature edges
up and blood
pressure drops precipitously
cardiac arrhythmia and unstable vital
signs and someone is bleeding
out in front of my
gloved and gowned
self cannot move to turn or touch
anything outside
of this surgical field
belly flayed
aorta clamped
and red filling the whole body cavity
later on hands
and knees I curl
on the tiled floor
of the OR locker room sick
and cradling a liter of hot saline
they use to pour inside gaping incisions
when the body cannot maintain its own heat

UNTITLED
Soumit Roy
4th year PhD student
Plasteline clay, 24” armature
Photograph by Sarah E. Lutz
I
I think of him as an old baseball player. His skin is leathered from the lick of the sun His hands stiffened by the tug of the ball I place his name into stories my father used To tell me from the mothball stained air of his childhood home. He’d take down a shoebox from his old closet and we’d hold the baseball cards inside from their edges like butterfly wings. I think of him as Satchel Paige; they say he could turn off the light switch, climb into bed and be fast asleep before the room went dark.

II
In that way I lay my hand on his shoulder And call out across the widening grass field between lucidity and Mr. Paige as if my father waits in the corner of the room considering my bedside manner with his hero. I weave my stethoscope’s bell between CPAP ventilator tubing and snake my fingers around his NG tube as if it is an exposed electrical wire to listen to the great one’s lungs. I push his belly gently around his colostomy bag and surgical dressing and monitor his lips for a hero’s grimace. It would be such a tragedy to lose him, I tell myself, Marking his urine output. This American icon—laying idle, sedated, and pain-controlled. This collagen sphinx, pale and unresponsive.

III
There are literally dozens like him at any one time. Their families are not allowed to be there before Dawn when we see them. But I hear their voices calling on me to ‘do everything to save’ their father. Their grandfather. Which means more tubes, more machines. They do not understand they will not get their grandfather back. And they are not there to hear the residents snap “Mr. Paige is doing very well in his coma—slowly dying.” As if our only plan for them is to let their bodies exhaust from medical treatment and find a new way to slide past our most life-saving measures.

IV
By the time the family arrives with homemade cards from great grandchildren, the daughters escorting the wives or husbands, my patient is cleaned of the dried tears crusted around his eyes and the ulcerated blood around his mouth. The catheter cutting through his penis and the ulcers chewing away at his ankles are covered by freshly laundered linens and creaseless blue blankets. The sun floods in through the bay window setting aglow the silver picture frames and toasting the saline drips. A perfect day for a foul, I say to myself as I join them and stare up at the blinding sun, waiting for the damn ball to appear.
...i can say many things... about life and how i became..... the person i am... for one we become alive... with mother's birth... then the passage of life with her teaching... carefree... the love... filled with the passion...... the very sight of learning life... i guess i can say she has taught me well... i have become the man i was born to be... she is the becoming of that is all... in which i am and the greatness that awaits me..... now in this time i have found my other half... beauty... hope... love... and my truth... now here after all this time... i am really alive... i can feel that... rage... love.... sweetness... i guess follows... i say after all this... can i say i am blessed... but yet for all my deeds that are not pure... yet the sin is real... yet i am forgiven... at last i am one..................

............... for patricia karr
............... for debra santore

.............. two women... truth... hope... soulmates

Dear Gloria
Jessica Furst
1st year MD student

He sawed into your skull
he cut into your brain
you took it like a stoic
but I was not the same

We dug and prodded, identifying your nerves
string-like connections so small and plain
my heart let go, my captivation took over
and suddenly, your fractured skull became mundane

I remembered it all later
the clangs of metal versus bone
the smell of burnt hair, scorched scalp
but I did not cry, perhaps I had grown?

Cut, pull, slice,
retract all to uncover what lies beneath
after several weeks, I now see your body is on loan
to save my humanity, I must place yours aside
this process of discovery carries a somber, heavy tone

I see the divine perfection that I have scalped away
patients stand before me and your body comes into view
I close my eyes, learning from you haunts me
I'm left afraid, intrigued, guilty, and confused too

So, I thank you for your gift
it is something I no longer rue
I vow to learn as much as my mind allows
because I know I can't ever repay you
Broken Letters...
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She sat by the window that morning writing his will for him. His desk was empty of everything but some drawings. The house seemed so peaceful. Light came shining through the crisp curtains as she realized it was almost noon. She had to finish before he awoke. The package was still under the bed. She wiped a sweat drop off her forehead, flipped the pages and walks around her study. The sound of her heels on the marble floor made her anxious. It was time. It was time, she kept repeating to herself when she heard a moan coming from his room. It was the third year they had slept in different rooms. The first year she told him that he needed his rest and that the smell of the drugs made her nauseous during her pregnancy. As the time went by he stopped asking.

She went through the hall towards his room to help him with his morning bath when she stopped. Her reflection in the mirror stopped her. The large mirror also reflected her apartment behind her. She looked so frail in her unpretentious eggshell house gown. Her face sank leaving no marks of youth or freshness. Her pale skin only contrasted with the darkness under her eyes. He had always told her that she looked common and unappealing. The day he took her away she overheard him saying he was pleased by her young age but not very enchanted by her poise. She almost hesitated as she regressed back to her times of weakness but then she repeated to herself that it was time. It was the right time. She was a woman now and a mother and she had gained the right to control her destiny.

Her thoughts were interrupted again by a squeaking noise coming from his room. The less quiet he was, the more she felt a wave of disgust and pressure raging through her limbs. It was time for him to die. She despised the mother she was and the wife she was. She hated him when he turned weak. She hated the darkness he left her to face, the episodes, the secrets and the shame. She could not bear the loneliness any longer. She could not bear the lack of laughter and the lack of color in her life.

As she stood by the bed side, she could almost hear the smooth rustling sound of the leaves coming from the washroom window. Only then she realized that she hadn’t been breathing. Suddenly she had to make an effort to stand. She leaned on the dresser and she wandered with her eyes around the room. She looked at the crimson crochet on his nightstand. He always ridiculed her little decorative attempts. She weaved threads of color, threads of dreams. After achieving every piece, she would hold it in her palm and bring it closer to her face. She would pass it against her skin and smell it. She always thought that different colors had different smells and she ornamented her little world with aromas of colors. Pastel colors always smelled like the earth, like a freshly cut tree in her mother’s garden. Dark colors had the smell of the winter, the smell of the dancing dust coming through the dark attic spilling silver on the thick brown carpet, the smell of a black leather chair sweating in front of a chimney in her father’s study and the poignant scent of cognac. Red smelled of her sin. Red smelled like voluptuous silky wine, like the rose he gave her, like their passion and indiscretion and impatience. Red was the smell of her secrets. Her secrets carefully folded in the creases of that crochet.

Back in her room the desk was still deserted. Her papers still on the armchair covered with her shawl. The package was still under the bed. What if he’s dead? I will worry about that in a minute. She took the papers that she was writing and tore them to small pieces. Wrapped the shawl really tight around her neck and sat in her chair. She reached for the empty cradle and started pushing it. She pushed hard.

Look at that, she thought... It is fall... It is time...
The package was light. Somehow she knew what it will contain. As she starting unwrapping the knot, she noticed that it was wrinkled. It looked as if it was redone. She saw her letters to him. He had returned her letters. She covered them with both hands as if to make them disappear and she wept. She wept for a long time. As she wiped her tears she could smell the paper on her hands. There was another smell she recognized.

It was his smell. She had no doubt in her mind.

It was the smell of the man who drew her face and drew her destiny once again. The man who painted the veins of her face with the tip of a brush and painted the life in her body with the tip of his fingers. The man who flushed blood in her skin with a look and a smile. This letter. She knew this letter very well. How ruthless he was. How could she go on living after he touched her? The first time he touched her. The first time her urges did not daunt her and her heart not deter her as she succumbed and let her hair down flaring. She summoned the first time he reached for the tip of her dress, how her shoulders shivered and how she let down of her guards. He made her lips tremble as she waited for his breath to pour his soul into hers. She remembered how her lashes curled wet, how her limbs ached as he draped her with his caress. How he wrapped her senseless and ravaged her essence with the flood of his manhood. He was the man who made her pray for life and pray for the day to purge her body. He was her curse, her doom, her fleeting hours, her culled memories and her turmoil. He was once the reason for her rising sun.

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He left his house for his usual morning walk. Every morning the driver asks to chaperone and every morning he gets the same reply. Despite his wealth he refrained from flaunting his large habits in a troubled Spain. In times where the aristocracy was imprisoned by its own detachment from reality, he walked the streets looking for a resemblance to his own life in the faces of the strangers. He was a man of strong convictions but he had a soft heart. He walked down the narrow streets of the old city sampling all the gifts of life that that world so generously endows the carefree man. It was a long walk from his carefully placed avant-garde apartment in the industrial Passeig de Gracia through the promiscuous colors and shapes of the stacked buildings in Catalunya down to the cathedral.

Every day he went back to that cathedral where he first met Elisa. Every day he traced back the memories and evoked the feelings as he traced the road that ushered his destiny into hers.

- Three red tulips please.
- As you like them sir?
- Yes without the stems.

He carried her three buds carefully in his hands and walked the steps to the cathedral. He laid the roses by the holy mother and said a prayer for her. His walk down La Rambla was a blizzard of colors and sounds. Shouts of vendors and songs and people conversing and dancing and arguing. Everything was loud and extroverted about this part of town. Everything was also honest and simple and true. Racks full of life and of the ingenuity of crafts. He always pressed his step passing the market of cheap goods and the market of cheap painters to reach the carts of fabric. He stopped by the small wooden cart where he would greet the old lady who always seemed full of sorrow. She always had a new piece that she had created around her neck every day. She used to try to sell him in the beginning but then she stopped. She knew the deal they had. He gave her someone to talk to, even for moments, and she gave him moments of remembrance.

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**Cherry Pond**

*Photograph by* Carl Schildkraut, PhD

*Professor*

Dept. of Cell Biology
As she flipped the fabric around with her hands that seem to age every day, she flipped his emotions around. For as long as he talked to her she could almost see the hope in his eyes. She saw how he was actually gazing into the colors on the cart. Almost in a daze, never looking around him and every day before he left she repeated to him,

*You give your heart away,*
*How do you know they will stay?*
*How do you live without your heart?*

He secretly smiled as he walked away. They had a deal. He decided to see his beloved that day.

*Maybe I will see her this afternoon*
*Maybe it is time. Yes*
*It is the time...*

His last visit did not daunt him, did not haunt him...

Her sight is so clear in his head like she was still sitting facing him at that terrace where she reached for the basket of thread work and started carelessly working her needle through the red piece of linen. She was almost smug sitting in her chair as if she gathered all of the years’ confidence and fullness to contain him in her presence. He looked for a sign of her affection, for a look of hesitation witnessing her need for him. He hopelessly looked as she passed her needle slowly and carefully. He gazed at her fingers and his words betrayed him as he held his breath gazing at her playful fingers and her delicate wrist. At that moment she leaned with her body towards him. Her language confused him. Her voice came tender almost moaned with exquisite femininity yet her phrases to him were cold and abrupt today. Her unbuttoned velvet robe hugged her hips as her long frail legs crossed so naturally and kept shaking slowly keeping his body attentive alert nervously wired in anticipation of her every move. Every now and then she would uncross her legs and sit straight to affirm what she was about to say, only to sit back again and stare in the hallway. Her face was not the face of the woman who once threw herself in his arms. He looked for the pure face that knelled for him at that altar praying for his soul. He helplessly looked for a reaction. She had lost her confusion and her fragile skin was not conveying tenderness. She looked cold. She was not his *Eurydice* waving her long black hair as he carried her to safety, she was his *Androphonos*, his killer, and hers was an empty body that turned his to stone.

She dropped her work all at once, she dropped her arms as well, as if to end their meeting, and his heart came to a halt. He mumbled her name in a last attempt to summon what they once had. This was his last chance to exorcise her out of her boredom. It was the last time he saw her and it was the day he knew that she will forever remain his torturer.

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One more letter.
One more letter is all she can read.
One more letter before she resigned to a world of uncertainty. Before she leaves her planned days and planned fate to unravel the thick crust of life.

She will read and by the end of the lines she will forget him for good. She will leave her grief behind. This overwhelming feeling of sadness that became her accompanying emotion and her comfort. Today her physical pain leaves no room for sorrow. Today she chooses to be angry. She chooses herself and she chooses to blame the world for her troubles.

This was a letter she wrote for him,

“My beloved, as he becomes weaker before me every day, I cannot help but think about the futility of this path we call life. As the reason of my turmoil turns helpless, I cannot but question myself. I have to question my courage and my commitment to myself and to you. I have to question the reason I remain by his side. I long for you my love and I am in constant pain.
My memory betrays me more so every day and it feels cruel when the memory of your face is all I have left. I ponder upon life around me. I look at the trees and the flowers and the dried leaves dancing in the wind and I wonder. I wish I could transcend my soul into a more simplistic form. Into a leaf hugged by its mother branch, into a fading ray warmed by the curb, into a dancing star hiding in the sky. I wish I could be a murmur, a lover’s whisper, a twinkle in a child’s eye. I wish I could be a rhythm that will once die. I wish I could be happy. I wish I could melt away like a sand grain under a foaming wave, like the memory of my life, like my skin under your touch. I wish I could love you once more. His screams my name in the long feverish nights. Long nights my love. Nights made bearable only by my watering eyes meeting the early morning rays. Long nights of sickness and of stillness in my heart. Tears are a wonderful thing. These rivers of my melting soul spilling away. These rivers of washed hesitations and washed sins and washed regrets. Regrets mean nothing when we do not have a choice. We cry to comfort ourselves and not to show regret. Tears are personal. These involuntary inevitable bursts of moaning hurting muscles oozing in drilling fluids, drilling into my face, drilling the lines on my skin. This kindness of nature. This natural right of our body to revolt and to react to the strength of our deep disappointment and confusion and distortion. Distortion. A distorted life is what we all live. A distortion of reality is what I am. A left shade of what I was prepared to be.”

She pauses and looks into the glass. It is fall and the world has given up. This habitual feeling of loss and of hurting. She collects her face in her fingers and tries to cry in vain. She cannot be sad anymore. She does not have the luxury of giving up in a storm of emotions. She chose anger instead. She was angry at the world. Loss was not of her making. Loss was the cold hand of fate that took her child away. Loss was inevitable and death was a reality. People die but children were not supposed to die. She suddenly remembered Emma. There was another. Her baby. Her baby that would be a piece of him. That would have his face. The empty cradle. A sudden emptiness. A sudden pain in her stomach. The crimson center piece on her desk. The smell of torture. The smell of blood in the wash room. The face of her mother. The darkness that was now her life and outside her window. A dim light coming from the house across the street. That trivial house that enclosed a trivial life and a silly family. That frozen woman who lived by the rules. Those plastic flowers. Those plastic lives. Those lives lived without her. Life will not cease without her. Or without him.

Who knew
Who knew that a moment stolen in life,
Is life?
Who knew that the beginning of one’s happiness
Never happens…
Who knew that the chilling morning breeze
Might remain one’s reason to live
That the days carry happiness only before they achieve
That there is nothing to unravel
That life is the act of unraveling.
Who knew that constant betterment leads to perpetual unsatisfaction

Who knew that to choose not to wrestle with demons is to live blissfully
Who knew life’s anesthetic routine is not to be questioned
Who knew that jolts of joy are gifts to the youngsters
And that love visits only once?
Who knew?

“Some people cannot just be. Some people have to make a mess of it all and some women seem to need the reassurance of a lifetime every day. Life faces me every day. I do not know anymore if I am the reason of his survival or that of his pain as I do not remember if you were my cure or the reason for my ailment. The baby is growing inside me.”
CLEAR VISION

Dmitriy Kedrin
5th year MSTP

Mixed media on canvas 17x24”
Navajo Nation 1930
Traditional Life in Photographs