Ad Libitum
Albert Einstein College of Medicine’s Literary and Art Magazine

Spring 2010, Volume 8
Letter from the Editors

Ad Libitum, a student club of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is a dynamic interface between the arts, science, and medicine shared by the Einstein community. Each year, the Ad Libitum team brings you a printed magazine that contains submissions we receive from students, faculty, and staff members at Einstein. Unfortunately, we can not include all submissions as we always receive far more pieces than we can accommodate in a single issue. We are lucky to work with a very talented team of editors, and we are always looking for new members to join our editorial board.

We would like to thank the special people who made this project possible: Dean Kuperman, Dean Spiegel, Dean Baum, Dean Katz, the Office of Educational Affairs, Peter Dama and the Graphic Arts Center; Karen Gardner and the Communications and Public Affairs Office; Vera Rico and the Graduate Office, and the Student Counsel for financial assistance, publicity, website design, magazine production, and continuing support and enthusiasm. And last but not least, we want to thank the artists for sharing their never-ending inspiration with us. We hope you enjoy this issue.

Alexandra Ogorodnikova & Masha Kon
Editors-in-Chief, on behalf of the Ad Libitum team

Letter from the Associate Deans

We at Einstein, are blessed with colleagues—students, faculty and supporting services personnel—who have talents that extend far beyond those that they bring to their daily roles.

Since it’s inception almost a decade ago, under the guidance of Dr. Albert Kuperman and through the editorial leadership of a host of devoted and energetic students, Ad Libitum has become the annual showcase for that collective talent. Both the content and the production quality equal that of any commercially produced journal. The photographs are exquisite in their composition and execution; the literary work, thoughtful and provocative.

Those of us who merely enjoy the product of all this talent and work are grateful for the publication of Ad Libitum, and hopeful that this wonderful tradition of a quality art and literary magazine will continue far into the future as a material recognition of the unique community we call home.

Stephen G. Baum, MD, Associate Dean for Students (pictured above), and Nadine T. Katz, MD, Associate Dean for Student.

Front Cover Art:

Look

Leonid Tarassishin
Research Associate, Department of Pathology
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The ladies: Chrissie Besanceney, Chelsea Higgins, Masha Kon, Alexandra Ogorodnikova, Sarah Lutz, Stephanie Buss
The gentlemen: Bret Negro, Aryeh Rosenbaum, Brett Wolfson-Stofko, Ashrei Bayewitz, Jon Stone, Tristan Feierabend, Nathaniel Swinburne
Not pictured: Sabriya Stukes, Chris Hawk, Michael Frey

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Cover</td>
<td>Leonid Tarassishin</td>
<td>Look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oren Mayer</td>
<td>Where were you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Brett Wolfson-Stofko</td>
<td>ALL The Power To ALL The People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nick Fernandez</td>
<td>Ice on Hunter Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jakob Albrethsen</td>
<td>The Surgeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anna Pace</td>
<td>Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Uloaku Ireaja</td>
<td>Ms. Bronx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Anthony Mohabir</td>
<td>What Moves You?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Arthee Jahangir</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Peter Schmidt</td>
<td>Reclining Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>David A. Wallach</td>
<td>Purple Pods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nathaniel Swinburne</td>
<td>1991: The Franchise and the Ghosts of Miller Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Alberto Moldon</td>
<td>Sunny Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Stephanie Garbern</td>
<td>Ava Gardner in Pointilism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lysander Jim</td>
<td>The Cat Treatise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shuli Kulak</td>
<td>Ancient Dye Pits—Fez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>David Kulak</td>
<td>Sahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Peter Dama</td>
<td>Old Man and The Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Simon Desjardins</td>
<td>In My Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grant H. Brenner</td>
<td>Icelandic Horse, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Meagan Campol</td>
<td>Alpaca Amigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chris Hawk</td>
<td>Anesthesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Brett Wolfson-Stofko</td>
<td>Ode To Take Back The Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sarah E. Lutz</td>
<td>Untitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Alexandra Ogorodnikova</td>
<td>i’m with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pamela Stanley</td>
<td>Feet—Present and Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Karen Gardner</td>
<td>Snow Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Yonatan Greenstein</td>
<td>The Lake in Central Park Panoramic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sabriya Stukes</td>
<td>Exit to Mermaid Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ruth Bryan</td>
<td>Autumn on Old Croton Aqueduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jonathan Frankel</td>
<td>Relinquishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Yaw Shin Ooi</td>
<td>Highest good is Like Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Martin M. Grajower</td>
<td>Interlaken Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sharon Silbiger</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Michel V. Gauthier</td>
<td>The Commuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Alfred J. Spiro</td>
<td>Blue Crested Kua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Harold Cheng</td>
<td>Lily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yardanna Platt Koppel</td>
<td>Hidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Jonathan Stone</td>
<td>Mate Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Tristan Feierabend</td>
<td>Caged with Sustenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Steven Akinola Ola</td>
<td>A Portrait of Virginia Woolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Stephen Sparr</td>
<td>I saw you in the ER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Nicholas E. Baker</td>
<td>Art Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Diana M. Hartel</td>
<td>Stepping Over Streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Regina Janicki</td>
<td>NY Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gayatri Mukherjee</td>
<td>The known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>June Rousso</td>
<td>Seashells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Rohini Sandesara</td>
<td>Chilean Blueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Stephanie Buss</td>
<td>Meadow Blooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bret W.A. Negro</td>
<td>an equation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bret W.A. Negro</td>
<td>springtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Aryeh Rosenbaum</td>
<td>Spring Thaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Susan J. Frank</td>
<td>Perpetual Motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Karen Gardner</td>
<td>Montauk Ride (62.25 miles on a windy Monday)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25 Maria Kollaros Breakfast
26 Edward J. Nejat Getting the right photo supersedes safety
26 Simon P. Onderi Winter’s Harvest
27 Gabrielle Burger My Body Is A Cage
27 Damien Jackson Orange Moon
27 Sarah Lee Schroeder A Plea
28 Geoffrey Kabat Searching for Baltermans
29 Janie Milstein Ascending by Degrees
30 Natalie Handelman Betty’s Garden
31 Emese El Bissatine Pasztor Ramadan
31 Julie B. Zhao Gothic arches in a sea of color
32 Josephine Costa Snapdragon
32 Ranjit Sahu The Stars
33 David S. Thaler Melaniö’s Golden Apples: Pliny’s Remora or the Goose’s Golden Eggs?

34 Jayanta Roy-Chowdhury Lesser Whistling Teals Against the Sun
35 Sarah Berkson Askia Mosque
36 Raphael Hulkower Chilling Beauty
36 Masha Kon To All the Girls Who Lost their Fathers
36 Tadakimi Tomita Summer in the Afternoon
37 Cristina C. Clement Old Dixie
37 Jessica Rachel Furst A Man I Never Knew
37 Jennifer M. Purcell Little Red
38 Nathaniel Robbins Health and Ethics in Himachal Pradesh
39 Stephanie Buss Relic
40 Vanessa Scott Saas Fee, Switzerland
41 Clare Donegan Canadian Rockies
41 Shervin Mortazavi Sunset
42 Robert Berkenblit Dachau 2009
42 Jonathan Chung Thousand Hands
42 Uwe Werling Coffee in Central Park at Sunset
43 Chris Hawk Labor and Delivery
43 Michael Prystowsky Bread and Basket
43 Carl Schildkraut With Apologies to Andrew Wyeth
43 Alan D. Legatt Perspectives—Haystacks
44 Tatyana Starikova Harris Jazzy
44 Ujunwa Cynthia Okoye With these hands
44 Ingrid V. Williams We Run
45 Yvonne Lui The Blue House
45 Sabriya Stukes Keys Open Doors
46 Sean Herman An Apple a Day
46 Lin Hsu My First Time
47 Yu (Carol) Cao Untitled
47 Adriana Nieto Amor del Sur
48 Robert Karr Last Man Standing
48 Aryeh Rosenbaum Washing Up
48 Jonathan N. Tobin Ambivalence
49 Bill Burton Hard Times
49 Mariam Kabir about daring
50 Kevin Lau Three Bridges
50 Natasha Shapiro Grandpa Never Showed
51 Linda Jelicks Julia and Llamas
51 Allen M. Spiegel Jacqueline Onassis Reservoir, Central Park
51 Keisha Thomas Vacation at a Beach House
52 Masha Kon Einstein’s Third Annual Ad Libitum Literary & Art Night
53 Alena Janda Banana Plant Drop
53 Mark McBride Behemoth
Where Were You?
Oren Mayer
Graduate Student, 1st year

This is a letter home I wrote while on assignment for the CDC in Kabul, Afghanistan in January, 2009. It’s not often we get the chance to experience something routine through the eyes of a people who have never known it.

Hello All,

How will you remember January 20th, 2009? Will you remember it as a day a fresh new mind with novel ideas took center stage to lead the United States into the dawning of a new age? Or will you remember it as a culmination of your fears; the day an inexperienced, young, naïve man took the reins of a runaway carriage he had very little chance of reeling in? Will it be the day you stood freezing among millions for the chance to view the miraculous? Or will it be the day you pulled the covers up over your head, hiding from the ominous gloom you see on the horizon? Will you remember it as a day in the office you sat at your computer constantly refreshing your news eagerly waiting for the big moment power was passed? Or was it just another day at the office, too busy to stop and watch mere formalities of passing the torch; instead waiting for concrete results before taking the time to enjoy? Were you at a party celebrating with friends or at a bar drinking away your sorrows? Was it a day you have been waiting months for or just another day you didn’t even realize was coming?

For me, January 20th, 2009 was very different; a very special day. Not because of who was elected into the White House; for the purpose of this, it’s inconsequential. To me, it was amazing for reasons I don’t think most Americans ever even consider. This is only the third election in which I’ve been old enough to vote, but came November I had so many ways of casting my vote (by mail, early balloting, in person on Election Day) that it was almost overwhelming. Months of arguing and moaning, cheering and reveling came to a head. Rain and snow couldn’t stop it. Soldiers and police didn’t even try. Bush didn’t make excuses why it couldn’t happen. Instead, while he was still in office, men and women of all sorts of opinions clamored in the public eye for a moment to speak their collective and individual minds (no matter how nonsensical it could be sometimes).

Every four years, we know it’s coming. Every four years, we know we get the chance to vote in some kind of change. Whether or not we take advantage of it is entirely up to us. Our leaders don’t dictate it for us. We freely choose our own fate and with that, time and again, strip the power of the most powerful man in the world and peacefully hand it off to another.

This year, this year was special. I can’t say I was looking forward to it or really even remembered it was coming. To me it was just another Tuesday, two more days till I was heading home from Afghanistan. But being hunkered down in a war-torn country surrounded by those of every political persuasion, well, it didn’t remain a normal Tuesday very long—that, and the ridiculous quantity of guards with even bigger guns than usual I had to pass as I walked from my hooch to get my breakfast. Oh yeah, tonight was going to be different.

I dusted the dried, yellow mud off the only pair of nice pants I brought with me. I tried to smooth the wrinkles from my shirt. I tied a cock-eyed, slightly too long mermaid tie into an overly tight neck ornament, slid my arms through the only sport coat I own, and strode past heavily armed soldiers, stationary Blackwater Commandoes, and though I didn’t see them, I’m sure under the watchful eye of contract snipers into the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan to take part in the US Presidential Inauguration Gala.

“That someday they hope to have what we have, they hope to feel secure like we feel, and most importantly, to have a say like we have.”
It struck me that this was much like any other party that would be thrown in the US for such an event. In one corner, tray after tray of hot food was served on little hors d’oeuvres plates. People crowded around the small bar quickly assembled for they knew not all the soldiers in Afghanistan could have held back the riot if one was not provided. And set up on two tables 30 feet apart sitting perpendicular to each other were two 40-something inch TV’s each tuned to CNN and its coverage of the over-the-top festivities happening in Washington. People mingled and drank toasts, shook hands with those they hadn’t seen in a while, or were just excited to be introduced to for the first time. But really there is where all the similarities ended.

Between the suits walked marines dressed to the hilt in their dress blues, their medals gleaming gold off their chests. Army and navy officers with more stars and bands on their shoulders chatted with the Ambassador and head of the Afghan army. Then there were the unique uniforms. Purple lapels and the medals hanging from them; representatives of all the countries here doing their part. Men with combat boots and khakis, black fleeces and those secret service ear pieces walked calmly throughout, our more subtle, concealed, and armed protection for the night.

When it all really began on TV, when the politicians had assembled themselves on their stages, speakers had taken their places, and the ceremony was ready to begin, semicircles of politicians and commoners, generals and privates gathered around each television as the lights were dimmed and the volume turned up. The opening speech was given, the prayer said, and then the oaths taken. The room had a tactile buzz to it; most of the people were true Obama supporters and hearing him finish the oath and be called President for the first time elicited nothing less than sincere, riveting applause. And then his speech began.

Many that had been standing around continued to sip their drinks and listen to his message. Others went off to murmur quietly with friends about the days that have come and the days that will be. I thought it odd that I was the only one who seemed to notice the only people transfixed on the screen, mesmerized by what they were seeing and hearing were the Afghan kitchen staff. In their green shirts and white aprons, clear gloves holding soiled plates with half eaten food...
and cups left with traces of wine, they stood and watched and listened. They were the only Afghans there not involved in politics, not having a stature in society that gave them undue rewards; to them, all that they were seeing wasn’t a formality. For as harsh a critic as we are of ourselves, what they were seeing, they were seeing something most of the world doesn’t even get the chance to pretend to experience, an election that worked, and a transfer of power from one person and one party to the next without death, without violence, without retribution for supporters or haters of either candidate.

Since Tuesday, I have gotten a new appreciation for what Afghans experience. The government here now is considered one of the most corrupt in the world. Hamid Karzai, the President, is finding every excuse to postpone the elections. He blames the weather, he blames the violence. He changes the constitution at will and ends his oppositions’ attempts at his position by any means he deems fit. To the Afghans, it was a wonder that Bush couldn’t stay in power even if he wanted to. It was a wonder the army didn’t need to be out in force. It was a wonder to them that a constitution could be so strong, so believed in, that it didn’t matter how powerful a leader was; it wasn’t up to him to change.

To us, an election is all too often a time to get sick and tired of television; a time when the media has more power to control voting than common sense. Election Day is time to rabble-rouse about a bit of election problems and voting discrepancies. It’s a time we can’t wait to be over, all too eager to get back to what’s going on in the rest of the world. But what’s amazing is most of the “rest of the world” is just sitting in awe, watching, listening to what we’re doing. For all our complaints, for all our frustrations, we have a system so much of the world looks up to.

I experienced an inauguration surrounded not by those who couldn’t wait for it to be over, but by those who could scarcely believe it was possible to have in the first place. My January 20th wasn’t special because of who became president; it wasn’t special because I was at some party. It was special because I had people, natives of a country that is all too often portrayed as hating us, shake my hand and tell me that we are an inspiration. That someday they hope to have what we have, they hope to feel secure like we feel, and most importantly, to have a say like we have.

So it’s a new four years. You may not have voted for the guy, but he’s our leader. So share in the optimism, there’s no reason not to, and trust me, its shared by the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places for reasons we all too often overlook.

Work continues to go well; we are really making some strides in helping to advance the agenda on finally improving the quality of the blood supply and HIV testing in this country. For those of you who’ve wished me well, thank you, I’m trying to get back to you all. And for those of you that just think it, thank you to you too.

Be home soon (maybe… if security holds…)

Oren
Passion
Anna Pace
Medical Student, 1st year

It’s in the way I put on my gloves, always right first, and then left, snapping the latex against my wrist so I hear a sound.

It’s in the way I pull back my hair, going through the motions, wrapping the band around three times. It’s a ponytail that means business.

It’s in the feel of the scrubs against my skin when I walk, my “battle fatigues”, those that make me part of an elite group. The healers, they call them. The epitome of strength, intellect, and compassion.

It’s in the way the scalpel sits so comfortably in my hand, like it knows all of the grooves and ridges of my palm, anticipating the feel of my fingertips lightly pressed against its handle.

It’s in the rush I feel when I watch what parts underneath the relentless blade, cowering from its edge. The separation seems almost effortless.

It’s in the calm precision of each cut, the gentle concern and care of the hand that holds on, while the other glides slowly across the surface.

It’s euphoria, it’s the high, the feeling you get when you hold a heart for the very first time. For that brief moment, you have the source of life sitting in your tiny little hands. And you are enraptured by it.

It’s what gets us out of bed in the morning. What keeps us going into the late hours of the night. It’s in what we read. What we learn. Who we know.

It’s in our daily conversations, our phone calls, our greetings to each other across the hallway. It’s in our “hey mom, guess what I did today?!”, or those “oh did you guys just see that?!“ moments. Or put more simply… “wow.”

It’s all we talk about. It’s all we can think about. It’s the only thing we want to know.

It’s something new. Something different. Something that is changing our lives.

Passion.

The Surgeon
Jakob Albrethsen
Postdoctoral Fellow
Ink on Paper
Her skin color is a light peach because she is multiracial
Posture strong and her eyes fierce; on the prowl
Her hair short and fiery red
Thick and swollen from her misinterpreted Opulence
Despite the profusion of diseases shelled within her body

Ms. Bronx
Eccentric and Ghetto
Wild and Unkempt as a stray dog
Mindful and Aware like a house cat
A jewel that hides behind her famous sibling, Manhattan
Boisterous, garrulous and yet hushed

Ms. Bronx
Accepting and Prejudice
Content and Dissatisfied
Glowing and jaded
Vibrant and lethargic
Poetic and Unorganized

Ms. Bronx
She is artistic in manner and multicultural in taste and background
She is pious and ignorant
She fights her own battles and handles her struggles
Whether it be with whim or with wisdom

Ms. Bronx
She is rude and loving
A stark contrast of what outsiders see her as
Yet a sharp detail of what outsiders believe her to be Ms. Bronx, The Bronx, is contradicting in Nature

What Moves You?
Anthony Mohabir
Medical Student, 2nd year
Untitled
Arthee Jahangir
Graduate Student, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year

Reclining Woman
Peter Schmidt
Web Coordinator
\textit{Pencil on Paper}

Purple Pods
\textit{(NY Botanical Garden)}
David A. Wallach
Manager of the Committee on Clinical Investigations
wo-two heater, up and in. The Cedar Hill kid – center fielder, Mark was pretty sure – stumbled back and fell down like he’d been shot. He jumped up and waved his bat in the air, cursing at Tim on the pitcher’s mound. Tim yelled back that the kid was crowding the plate. Their first baseman, Andy, stepped forward to show he had Tim’s back, but before anything could happen the coaches ran out to calm things down.

The Cedar Hill fans were going crazy in the stands at the third base side; Mark and his teammates were really outnumbered. Among them Mark recognized two of the boys that had thrown rocks at him that morning as he rode his piece of crap Huffy bike to Miller Park, straight into the lion’s den. The county final was supposed to be played on neutral ground but apparently one of the Cedar Hill parents had pulled strings. Luckily, as everyone knew, most Cedar Hill kids had garbage for arms, although one good-sized stone had made square contact with Mark’s right temple, leaving behind a welt that was now being painfully squeezed under his cap.

Mark couldn’t see Coach Cannavaro’s face from where he stood in leftfield but he bet Coach was pissed right off about this. Here they were in the biggest game any of them had played before, a one run lead in the bottom of the ninth, two outs, man on second, and Tim was throwing purpose pitches. But that was the thing about Tim, and Coach knew there was nothing anyone could do about it. Tim wasn’t satisfied with winning the game; he had to break the other team in two. Mark was just glad Tim was on his side.

So now it was a full count, and the umpire walked out to warn both coaches: any more inside throws and the pitcher would be tossed. Mark’s heart had been pounding the whole ninth inning but he only realized it now. He took his cap off and wiped the sweat from his forehead, trying to clear his mind. There were gnats all over the place, a whole big cloud of them hovering above the outfield. To his left he could see his teammates’ parents cheering them on, wearing the Overlook All-Stars red and white.

And then, for just a second, he was certain he saw his dad in the stands right there with the rest of them, smiling his direction. It was the strangest thing, and Mark’s heart froze for a moment—maybe, he thought, he had the bad heart too. He took a long, deep breath and glanced up at the power plant that towered behind right field, spewing black smoke into the blue sky. The goddamn gnats were everywhere and he could hardly see in case a fly ball came his way. He wiped the tears from his cheeks, quickly, so nobody could see. Focus, Mark.

Tim shook Bobby off, his blond hair swinging side to side under his cap. He glanced back at the runner on second and, Mark swore, Tim had a big grin on his face – the psycho! The lefty wound up and dealt. The batter read fastball the whole way but at the last second the ball dropped a bat’s width beneath his swing. He never had a chance. See, most twelve year-olds can’t hit sliders because most twelve year-old pitchers can’t throw them. But Tim Sarna was no ordinary twelve year-old.

Strike three. Game over.

"CHAMPIONS!" Tim shouted, and threw his head back towards the sky.

Mark hurled his mitt into the air and sprinted towards the pile of his teammates forming on the pitcher’s mound.

“Here they were in the biggest game any of them had played before...”

After Councilman O’Leary presented them with the Nassau County Little League Champions trophy they all stood around to watch the coaches present the MVP award. There wasn’t much suspense.

"We among the coaching staff have taken to calling him 'The Franchise,'” Coach Cannavaro said with a
grin. All the parents laughed, Mr. and Mrs. Sarna especially. Mark had never heard that word before but figured it was something to do with having an unfair natural talent at baseball.

"It has been an absolute pleasure coaching this young man this season and I only hope to be witness to his bright future. All of us here today will someday be able to say, 'I saw Tim Sarna pitch in little league.'"

The crowd applauded.
"Come to think of it, let's print that up on some t-shirts," Coach added with a laugh, “and give me a cut!"

He turned towards Tim. "Congratulations, my boy. You've got a great journey in front of you."

They packed up their equipment for the last time that summer and the Overlook All-Stars, new county champions, filed out of Miller Park into the late afternoon. Mark noticed the Cedar Hill kids, four of them, waiting outside of the park near where the bike path led out to the street.

"Hey Mark, the team's going to Glenn Ice Cream to celebrate. Come on!" Bobby called as he walked by with his mom.

"I'm riding so I'll meet you guys there," Mark answered.

Bobby's sister, Anna, came by carrying a mitt. Her face was tan, her raven hair tied back in a ponytail. She had on her brother's All-Stars jacket.

"Oh, hey Anna," Mark said, trying his best to act unaffected.

"Think fast!" she said, firing the mitt at him hard. "You left that in the dugout."

He tried to think of something cool to say. "Uh, thanks."

"Nice catch." She smiled, her big eyes cutting through the dusty air. Mark looked away, the way you do when a girl seems to like you and you can't figure it out, just don't want to do anything to mess it up.

Across the park, the four boys kept looking over at him and he knew what that meant.

Tim came over with his mom and dad. He grabbed Mark's arm urgently.

"We're going for sundaes. Right now. We're gonna get the biggest scoops ever. And all the toppings they have!"

"Mark, are you okay to get home by yourself?"

Tim's pop asked.

"I'll be fine," he lied. "I ride down here all the time."

Mrs. Sarna looked at him like she knew what was really going on. She was one of those moms that always knew when you were up to something. "Come with us, Mark, we can fit your bike in the truck."

He knew how this worked; pity the boy, buy him an ice cream.

"It's okay, really," he shrugged. "Thanks."

As they walked off, Mark started in the opposite direction, towards the trouble that awaited him. He suddenly wished he hadn't told his mom not to come to the game that day. He was pretty sure it hadn't hurt her feelings, and she would've had to get the Saturday off from work, which was a hassle, but at least he wouldn't have had to deal with this. And, he admitted, it might've been nice to celebrate the victory with her.

He picked up his aluminum bat and slung it over the bike's handlebars. *Four against one...*

"On second thought, I think I would like a lift!" he called to the Sarnas, pushing his bike quickly to catch up in case they might take back their offer.

"Let's go get ice cream!" Tim yelled, MVP medal glinting in the sunlight, and threw his big left arm around Mark's neck.
I do what I want when I want; I do what you want when you don't want it. I jumped on the kitchen counter to annoy you. I tipped over the trash can for the same reason. (Eating the eggshell inside was just a bonus.) You see, these little actions are part of a long-term plan Dos and I have concocted to increase your blood pressure millimeter by millimeter because we want you to have a heart attack or stroke. I got hair on your white coat to make you look unprofessional and further ensure that no one will ever love you. (Imprisoned within the confines of your tasteless apartment, I am assuming that no people or animals can take a positive interest in you.) I tore the string smile off your beloved pig finger puppet to break your heart. I wait until it's your turn to change the litter box to use it, often at great discomfort to myself. Just for the record, if you speak to me in a condescending voice or call me Bixby Bear or Twixby or Fatty one more time--just one more time--I will personally tip over your favorite vase. Meow.
**In My Head**

Simon Desjardins  
Medical student, 3rd year

I have conversations  
in my head  
with my father.

He’s in there, camped out.

I’ll be doing dishes,  
telling my father off  
in my head.

He listens  
in my head.

I have time to express myself  
in my head,  
and it almost sinks in.

He never quite gets it,  
but at least he’s listening.

I hope he can leave one day,  
pack up his things,  
say goodbye,  
and leave my head.

I would miss him at first,  
but I think  
it would feel nice  
to not have  
him in there.

---

**Old Man and The Sea**

Peter Dama  
Creative Director, Graphic Arts Center

“Every thing about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated”

“A man is never lost at sea”

“It is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers”
Anesthesia
Chris Hawk
Medical Student, 3rd year

The dream begins in a Chinese restaurant, dessert, trying to decide between chocolate wound and prostrate of the 3 milk. the waitress says something like, “it surrounds tuttifrutti” but in a dream transition the white coats are leading me down a hallway. it’s unclear if they are all clones of each other or just shop at the same haberdashery, but dreams don’t suffer criticism and so as the bus warmly lurches forward, ticket checked, belly full, i surrender responsibility to my seat. the window yields to the red blinking light, which could be a light-house situated at lands’ end, and i wonder how many ship-wrecks piled up beneath the cliffs before this coast was civilized. and how many since... the white coats are slinging cocktails and the captain is showing no restraint, but i’m hoping for yet another safe landing when a dream transition surrounds me with the white coats, sans cocktails, staring down in my general direction, asking about flatulence. the sound of my voice is at once nauseating and soothing, “shunk” i say, “groat” and everyone but me understands and they concur and tuttifrutti drips onto my tongue and my stomach turns purple and the lights go out, flicker, another transition, and the waitress is asking if i would prefer a slow-marinated death or something spicy. and here’s where it gets interesting, finally, because who orders death or even thinks about it and i laugh, inappropriately in my own dream, and the white coats frown in unison and the waitress at last stops talking and Hank Williams says, “you’ll never get out of this world alive,” and i push the snooze button and everyone is gone.

Icelandic Horse, 2009
Grant H. Brenner
Assistant Clinical Professor,
Department of Psychiatry

Alpaca Amigo
Meagan Campol
Medical Student, 3rd year
Get back in your house!
You’re a human being DAMN IT!
Don’t let any ticker or a punk in a suit tell you that you don’t have the right to shelter
You’ve been here for years
Never missed a payment

Where’s he gonna drag you if you don’t leave, huh?
Another house?
But a less accommodating one?
A dwelling with cold walls
Higher rent
And a dress code

Get back in your house!
They aren’t going to let anyone else inhabit
Just the rats and roaches...who by the way already have homes
And now they’re going to annex yours

But this isn’t going to happen
No one is leaving their home
Because housing is a human right!

Ode to Take Back the Land
Brett Wolfson-Stofko
Graduate Student, 1st year

Untitled
Sarah E. Lutz
PhD Recipient, 2010

i’m with you
Alexandra Ogorodnikova
Graduate Student, 3rd year

Feet—Present and Past
Pamela Stanley
Professor, Department of Cell Biology
Snow Job
Karen Gardner
Manager of Internal and Web Communications

Fairy-dust flakes seek haven, transforming the world outside into confectionery delights. The magical makeover lifts my spirits, shaking gloom free. A vast white blankets the slumbering earth, nurturing the season to follow. I gaze at the scene, captivated by the shifting perspectives of flat terrain morphing into ripples, waves and dunes. The wind loses its cloak of invisibility whenever snow takes flight. My long-weary heart stirs, too, fluttering as if errant flakes caught in the wisps of wind. In the aftermath of the storm, tree limbs encased in frosty armor, bow, even break, beneath their burdensome weight -- just as my heart did in the wake of your deception. Yet, somehow, this blizzard has restored my faith, and nothing is as it once was.

Exit to Mermaid Ave
Sabriya Stukes
Graduate Student, 2nd year

The Lake in Central Park Panoramic
Yonatan Greenstein
Medical Student, 4th year
Relinquishing

Jonathan Frankel
Medical Student, 2nd year

Love is confusion,
Even it knows not what it is;
Feelings charged and powerful,
Forgotten as if never been.
How is one to know,
When true love truly is;
Since history returns to us,
Many more loves lost than won.
Love abides in the heart,
The heart lives without the mind;
Lacking any reason,
Why trust that which it finds.
Wisdom preaches prudence,
Love will only scoff;
Fools rush in heart aflame,
The wise know, doubt such stuff.
But love cannot be reasoned,
For love lacks logic from the start;
When one is hurt by whom he loves,
He grasps not his head but his heart.
So justified love is not,
A product of reason it never;
For love that grows from planning,
Is not feelings but clever.
Reality tolls a painful truth,
One we cringe to face;
Love is a silent killer,
Who stalks without a trace.
The end is clear the hope is stark,
If there be any hope in love;
The love struck fool can only dream,
A pair the hunter seeks there of.

Highest Good is Like Water

Yaw Shin Ooi
Graduate Student, 2nd year

Rice paper and Chinese ink
Fear
Sharon Silbiger
Professor, Department of Clinical Medicine

Fear. We’re all familiar with it. That wave of throat clenching. That desire to flee. As a child, we were afraid of riding fast roller coasters and of hurting ourselves. As we got older, we were afraid of failing med school tests or of losing a boyfriend. As adults, we’re afraid of falling short in our careers and afraid of allowing our own children to ride those same fast roller coasters.

We know that our patients fear their diseases.

I always thought of myself as an empathetic physician. I figured I understood how my patients felt when confronted with a horrible disease and a questionable future. I figured I helped them through their dark times. And maybe I did.

But I didn’t realize until a few months ago that I didn’t understand the depth of their fears at all.

Here’s what happened. After experiencing some pain in my hip area on ambulation, I decided to be a responsible person and see a doctor. Although unclear what the discomfort was from, it was decided that I should get an MRI. ( Honestly, this was probably ordered because I’m a senior physician at our institution and the MD I saw was a much younger one). Completely unexpectedly, the MRI was grossly abnormal, showing a mass in the acetabulum.

Here’s where a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing. And here’s where my personal fear set in and my panicked roller coaster ride began. Is this primary or metastatic? Am I going to live to see my son reach his 13th birthday? How will my son fare without a mother? Will I need chemotherapy? I’m only 53 years old! What I never said, was “why me?” As a physician, that’s not something one thinks or says. We see horrible disease all around us and I don’t think any of us thinks we are immune.

Naturally, I referred myself to the major cancer center in my area. They know what they’re doing, I told myself. Everyone around me told me they know what they’re doing. OK, it was the right thing to do.

But the week of waiting for the appointment with the expert, proved to be a major psychological challenge. I barely slept, I barely ate and I experienced those waves of throat clenching and that desire to flee.

I was shocked. Was this really me responding like this? I have always fancied myself an incredibly stoic and macho person. I could be tough as nails when needed. But, this time, I was consumed with fear, even though I didn’t have any concrete information to hold on to. Maybe that was why I was so panicked.

My mind reached the lowest depths of scenarios. “It was clearly metastatic”, I told myself. I was convinced that my chronic cough of 2 months and solitary neck node meant I was a goner. After all, we go for one unifying diagnosis. I believed this even though I had a
normal chest x-ray, the pulmonologist thought I had post-nasal drip and the lymph node was getting substantially smaller in size. I almost believed that if I thought the outcome would be ok, it certainly wouldn’t be. Magical thinking was the order of the day.

Interestingly, once my husband and I set foot in the cancer center waiting room, I felt a little better. “Look at all these people here,” I thought. “They look pretty healthy. Seems like they are managing their diseases. OK. I think I can make it.”

The appointment itself was less reassuring than I had anticipated. The expert wasn’t sure what the mass actually was. There were a zillion things in the differential and all them were probably mentioned because I am a doctor. Diseases I hadn’t even thought about, like metastatic renal cell cancer or myeloma, were added to the differential. “No doubt I am a goner,” I thought.

Given the efficiency of the cancer center, I underwent a “total body” CT the evening of the appointment. That night, I could not sleep. The next day followed with a bone scan. My future rode on the results of these tests. I was convinced that they would be abnormal.

But I was wrong. Everything pointed to a localized lesion in the acetabulum. Just as I had written my own obituary, I was now so ecstatic it was as if I had just won the lottery. “Congratulations, you have cancer! But it’s only in one spot!” was what I imagined hearing. Wow, talk about emotional liability.

Nevertheless, the good news was that the free floating panic left me. I felt sort of like I dodged a bullet. Whatever the actual diagnosis, I began to think it was manageable.

But, I still remember the fear—the sheer fear of facing my own mortality; I remember the roller coaster of my emotions—how everything can change in a second. And I am still amazingly surprised by my response to this all.

I now have a deeper understanding of my patients’ struggles. Even if they seem to understand the distressing news I’m giving them, I now realize that they may be in a sheer panic inside; they may have sleepless nights ahead of them and they may be worrying about their children’s future without them.
Hidden
Yardanna Platt Koppel
Medical Student, 3rd year

Mate Break
Jonathan Stone
Medical Student, 1st year

Lily
Harold Cheng
Student Spouse
I saw you in the ER
Stephen Sparr
Director, Clerkship in Neurology

I saw you in the E.R.
but you didn’t see me.
you sat with your back toward me,
your long hair draped over your white coat.
you were looking at some numbers
on a computer screen.
3.5, 64, 13.8, 1.1
these were my numbers
but they meant nothing to me
as I lay there
screaming,
silently.
and I knew that you didn’t hear.
16.5, 8.9, 256
I could tell that these numbers
were important to you,
I could tell by how you stared at them,
intently.
and I felt a chill in my un-held hand,
a hand that longed for yours.
and when you were done,
you went for a break,
for a cup of coffee,
before the new numbers arrived.
and suddenly I understood
that you were just doing your job,
the job that you were trained to do,
trained for many years to do.
and then I understood,
and forgave,
and the screaming stopped,
as we both died a little bit
on that day
in the E.R.
1. South

Below the fishing lodge.
in the deepest part of the river,
lies a greyhound bus
with a singular destination.

In the trees above, boys swing
wide into the water,
laughing the bluest
part of the day into night.

Cypress groves and longleaf pines
recall the centuries,
speaking in crescendos
received by rocks.

2. Pacific

Can you hear the Chinook’s
upstream surge
through old growth
forest and thundering
waters?

Now finning slowly,
scarred and spent,
in river-cut green canyons
she rests.

Can you hear her
in the current,
on eagle’s wings,
or voices of fishermen?

Her song
will never
be stilled.

3. Atlantic

Chromatic river notes greet
slaves who died at sea.
They swim to the mouth
of the Hudson to listen.

Birdland jazz
heard round the world
joins the multitudes
in syncopated song.

Borne on the backs of sturgeon,
birder women in sneakers,
Storm King Hudson saviors,
come to our windows at night.

Swimming past mountains of
Glittering glass and steel
Atlantic bass
are back.
The long winding path, the scent of fresh flowers,  
The bright blue sky, the occasional showers,  
They seem to welcome me in this foreign land.  
But I try to look for what once was a part of me:  
The hot sun, the narrow lanes,  
The crowded roads, the honking of the cars,  
Stray dogs fighting for food…  
Then one day, as I stand beneath the great unknown,  
I get the answer to it all.  
Without knowing when and how  
Everywhere, everything has become my own.

The Known
Gayatri Mukherjee
Department of Microbiology and Immunology

NY Attitude
Regina Janicki
Electronic Research Administrator

Chilean Blueness
Rohini Sandesara
Research Technician

Seashells
June Rousso
Staff Psychologist
springtime

Bret W.A. Negro
Medical Student, 3rd year

russian winters are long
and brutal
and when the river
starts to run again
and the sap arouses buds from the birch
and the drunken bear kicks up
a cloud of dust
at the threshold of his cave
what else to do
but throw your head back
and laugh into the sky?

Spring Thaw

Aryeh Rosenbaum
Medical Student, 1st year

an equation

Bret W.A. Negro
Medical Student, 3rd year

another average
between the two
of us
a difference
yet again
put some integers together
and all they’ll do
is divide and subtract
i’m tired of all this
frightening arithmetic
show me the way
to multiplication,
i’m ready for
some summing

Meadow Blooms

Stephanie Buss
Medical Student, 2nd year
Montauk Ride \textit{(62.25 miles on a windy Monday)}

Karen Gardner  
Manager of Internal and Web Communications

From the seat of my saddle  
I pedal past farmland and beaches, absorbing this day’s beauty.

Along the shore, the salt air filters through me, boosting my spirit and energy.

Sunlight sparkles.  
Its reflection dances across a sea of vibrant, dark blue.

Rolling waves greet shoreline with foamy reception, then make their tidal retreat.

Against a clear, blue canvas clouds cruise the heavens, leaving wind in their wake.

Cresting a hill, the wind -- its unseen hands on my shoulders -- pushes me to pedal harder.

I am in the moment as the miles pass beneath my wheels. And the moments pass all too quickly.

\textbf{BreakFast}  
Maria Kollaros  
Research Technician

\textbf{Perpetual Motion}  
Susan J. Frank  
Assistant Professor of Radiology  
\textit{Oil on linen}
Winter’s cold chill
Relentless as a mad dog
A crushing, chilling blow
A scene so haunting
Yet a sight so beautiful
From the dimly lit backroom window
And a cup with hot chocolate
In the street below
One after another phantom figures appear
And disappear to destinations unknown
Where is the stray cat’s refuge
Or the winter birds’ nests
A soft wail thru a crack in the window
In a storm so violent
Where does one take solace
Who does one turn to
A search of strangers’ faces
Betraying nothing but indifference
Alas, they are one with the snow
If only but a tad colder

One says I have to get home
Another’d rather go to Mama Malua’s
She’s got the best cup cakes I hear
Another with the anticipation of a lover’s embrace
Another with the apprehension of tomorrow
Another with the hope of the future
A cast on a frigid, white stage
A theater of absurdity
A spectacle to behold
Invisible hands outstretched
A touch yearned for
A flickering lamp extinguished
A retraction to the inner recesses,
A pair of observant eyes,
Hostages to reluctant wisdom,
From above the view tormenting.

Getting the Right Photo
Supersedes Safety
Edward J. Nejat
Postdoctoral Fellow
A Plea
Sarah Lee Schroeder
Medical Student, 3rd Year

Put me to bed.
I’m counting heartbeats again—
fifty-one,
fifty-two
and
a digit changes on the clock.

Put me to bed.
Give me some space
to feel safe.
Shore up my ribs,
lullaby my knees and elbows,
smooth my brow.

Put me to bed!
(I’ve drawn lines on my wrists)
I’m leaking music,
blind even with my glasses,
and this body cannot take too much
more of me
before strings start snapping.

No, tomorrow won’t come
unless you
Put me to bed.

My Body Is A Cage
Gabrielle Burger
Web Designer, Communications & Public Affairs
Intaglio-Collagraph Print

Orange Moon
Damien Jackson
Director, Office of Student Finance
Searching for Baltermans

Geoffrey Kabat
Senior Epidemiologist, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health

Reliterate cultures that rely on an oral tradition devote remarkable energies and ingenuity to recording genealogies and the succession of generations. By contrast, modern societies appear to be much more cavalier about preserving such information.

In my own case, all I know about my family’s past, beyond the names of my four grandparents, are the few isolated facts my father wrote down. His father, Harris Kabachnik, came to this country at the age of nine with his parents, arriving in New York harbor in September, 1881. They came from the small town of Baltermans, in Lithuania, which was a province in Czarist Russia. The date of their arrival was confirmed by Harris’ memory that the flags were at half-staff in honor of President Garfield, who had recently been assassinated.

The town Harry came from and the date of his arrival in New York are as far back as our family history goes. A mere three generations. I know nothing about my grandfather’s or my grandmother’s parents, their names, what they did, the reasons they left Eastern Europe, or what they did when they arrived here. There is a complete blank – not one document, photograph, fact, or memory from the Old World was passed down, aside from Harry’s town of origin. It is as if there is what cosmologists call an event horizon, beyond which no information can be retrieved. The drive to flee oppression and to find a better life was so consuming and the everyday demands of making that new life so overwhelming that people were not inclined to inquire about their parents’ childhood and history. Their only goal was to escape the Old Country and, once here, to forget it. Since childhood, this resulting blank, which extends to within two generations of the present has disposed me to fantasize about who our forebears were and what they did in the Old World. Any scrap of detail provoked vivid imaginings about their life. Influenced by Isaac Singer and Sholem Aleichem stories, I fantasized that my great-grandfather was a peddler or a merchant. When I read Günter Grass’ The Tin Drum, as a twenty-year-old, I half believed that in reading about the Kashubian peasants I was reading about my ancestors.

There is one exception to the lack of documents of my family’s life in Europe -- a sepia-tinted photograph of a couple dressed in their best clothes which appears to be from the mid-nineteenth century. The man and his wife stand, facing the camera, in what is clearly a studio, with a backdrop of forest. Though I have studied every detail of this portrait with a magnifying glass, I can find no markings either on the front or the back giving any hint of who these people were, or of the date, the town, or the studio. Are these Harris’ parents, my great-grandparents, who arrived here with their children in 1881? Why would this one photograph – the only one predating my father’s childhood – be there if it were not of these crucial forebears?

It was only in the year following my father’s death in 2000 that it occurred to me to search for information about the town of Baltermans/Butrimonis on the Web. Typing the name into a search engine, I was excited to learn that there was a shtetl named Butrimonis located in the Lida District of the Vilna-Grodno Province. It was part of the town of Mackiszki and was close to the border between Lithuania and Belarus. I gathered that at times it had been part of one province and at other times had belonged to the other. The town had also been known by the following names: Butrymance, Butrimantsy, Butrimonys, Novyye Raklishki, Raklishkes Naujos, and Rakliskes Naujosios. The wealth of different names and spellings reflected the mixture of languages spoken in this area: Polish, Yiddish, Lithuanian, and Belarusian. With a little more searching, I found a listing

“\textit{The drive to flee oppression and to find a better life was so consuming...}”
of voters from 1906 which included nine males in the Lida district named KABACHNIK. Were these relatives of Harry’s parents? The name appears to be uncommon, unlike the many KAPLANS and KOPELMANS, suggesting they might be. I was struck by the fact that six of the nine had ABRAMOV listed as their family name, since my father’s middle name was ABRAHAM. In the column for nationality, all were classified as Jews. This shtetl was 30.7 miles south southwest of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

But then, looking at more links, I noticed there was another shtetl called Butrimonis/Butrimonys that was 44.5 miles west southwest of Vilnius. Further searching turned up a third town called Butrimonis, or Butromoniai, or Butrimantz located 72.4 miles northwest of Vilnius. These three shtetls were too far apart to be the result of confusion. All were too small to appear on any maps posted by a helpful web site called JewishGen.org. I had no way to determine which one my grandfather had come from.

In the course of further searching, I came across an 1874 listing of residents of the Borisov district of Belarus, which included twenty-five KABACHNIKS in the town of Dokshitsky. Their recorded dates of birth ranged from 1797 to 1872. Dokshitsky was about one hundred and twenty miles east northeast of Vilnius. I also came across recent correspondence from others who were looking for information about their grandparents who came from Baltermantz or Butrimonises. People had been here before me and had devoted enormous energies to retrieving, organizing, and making available documentation of the life of Jews in the Pale of Settlement. My deeply personal and solitary search for traces of my grandfather’s family turned out to be part of a crowded and well-organized effort by Jews in America and elsewhere to retrieve information about their forebears from Eastern Europe. The discovery of this mass movement of seekers after their roots made me uncomfortable, much as I have always tried to keep apart from tourists when I visited foreign countries. In spite of these feelings, I couldn’t help being grateful for and moved by this collective effort.

All of this information testifying to the existence of people with the same last name as my grandfather made me feel I had uncovered something important. But these were only possible distant forebears. I had no immediate way of selecting between the three different shtetls with similar names. Some of the contributors to the web sites had taken photographs of cemeteries in Lithuania, including one in one of the Butrimonises. But the photographs were too small and in-
distinct to make out the writing on the headstones. Furthermore, the inscriptions were of course in Yiddish and many of the Jewish cemeteries had been vandalized.

So after a day of searching, I had a number of leads which were intriguing, yet frustrating. Did I want to devote more time -- and it promised to be substantial -- to pursuing these leads, to corresponding with others who were searching for their ancestors’ towns of origin, and to consulting books and documents on the subject? What would be the goal, the payoff? Part of me feared that I could spend a lot of time looking for this information and come up short.

But I also sensed that if I found what I was looking for, I would still inevitably feel cheated. The search for rudimentary facts about my ancestors seemed somehow a narrow, arid exercise, somehow beside the point. There was a rich history of Jews in this region stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Jews had first settled there in the thirteenth century, and by the sixteenth century Poland and Lithuania had become the heart of Jewish life in Europe. Cities like Vilna, Kaunas, Lodz, and Odessa were vibrant centers of Jewish learning and culture. Vilna was known as “the Jerusalem of the North.” This world had flourished and then, between 1880 and 1945, had been eradicated. Part of me yearned to learn more about it, to immerse myself in it, to read its literature and history.

It was only after these efforts to retrieve information about the past that I became aware of a question that had never been articulated in my family. A question so obvious and so related to our very existence, that I couldn’t understand how it had never been raised before. This was simply whether it was possible that some members of Harry’s family had stayed behind. If there were relatives who did not have the motivation or the means to pick up and leave everything they were familiar with and if they were still alive in June, 1941, then, it occurred to me that ancestors of ours were almost certainly among those who were taken outside of their towns by the Einsatzgruppen, lined up along a ravine, and shot at point blank range. This thought had never entered my mind until now. If it ever crossed my father’s mind, he never articulated it. With all of the heated family discussions about politics, books we read, and principles we stood up for, we never stopped to take cognizance of the fact that if Harry’s parents, whose names my brothers and I never heard pronounced, had not scraped together the means to come to the United States, they might never have left. And in that case, it is overwhelmingly probable that all of them would have been among the thousands of “Jews, Jewesses, and Jewish children” whose murder was methodically documented by the head of the Einsatzgruppen in Lithuania. If this thought had ever surfaced for discussion, it would have led to at least a momentary recognition that we had our own undiscovered connection to the Holocaust -- we owed our existence to people whose names were never passed down to us.

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**Betty’s Garden**

Natalie Handelman

*Acrylic*

This painting, now displayed in the 7th floor reception area in the Ullman Research Center for Health Sciences, has been generously donated to the Albert Einstein College of Medicine by the artist.
Gothic arches in a sea of color

La Bascilica; Quito, Ecuador, 2009

Julie B. Zhao
Research Assistant, Department of Neuroscience

Ramadan

Emese El Bissatine Pasztor
Faculty Spouse
Oil on Canvas
The Stars

Ranjit Sahu
Research Fellow, Department of Pathology

Yesterday, The History Channel telecast
The past, human sufferings and glories.
In a matter of an hour
Rushing back and forth
Covering centuries
Yes, they forgot the STARS

Today the news channel telecast
Local, national and international news
In a matter of minutes
Showing clip after clip
Of governments clinging to power
And the common folk
Struggling for basic needs
Yes they looked at, but largely ignored
Yes, they forgot the STARS

The Weather Channel has forecast
A cloudy sky and thunderstorms and what not
That will soak the city
Throwing life out of gear
But beyond the grey and darkness
Will shine stars
Stars that have appeared on the firmament
Ignored and sometimes recognized
But largely unknown to everyone

They will struggle in the skies of human existence
To flicker for a while
To twinkle with hope
And for a short time shine
Yes these stars, None other than the common man
Will appear again tonight,
To struggle and shine
In the growing darkness of the world.
Melanion’s Golden Apples: Pliny’s Remora or the Goose’s Golden Eggs?

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This essay is a meditation on creation and one particular danger in creative communities. When recognized, this obstacle can be transformed and, surprisingly, can energize what it previously threatened. Concepts in this essay are adapted from a name used (perhaps invented) by the Greek historian Pliny, as interpreted by Jorge Luis Borges in his Book of Imaginary Beings, and the story of Atalanta and Melanion as translated and interpreted by Robert Graves, and independently by Edith Hamilton.

Atalanta devised an imaginative obstacle to marriage: Any man who wanted to marry her had to beat her in a footrace. If he won, she would marry him, but if he lost, he would be killed. Atalanta was both beautiful and swift. Challengers were highly motivated by both carrots and sticks. The rules were clear, the outcome may have seemed inevitable and cruel, but it was fair. The system worked until Atalanta was defeated by a new strategy. Melanion was apparently a fast sprinter, but he lacked stamina. His innovation was to momentarily obtain the lead and drop golden apples behind him. Atalanta paused to grab the gold. Either the stopping itself broke her stride, or the accumulating weight slowed her. Atalanta gained three golden apples, but lost the race and her life as a human.

Life can be considered an evolutionary game whose outcomes are fragile. Sometimes a break by chance yields an unlikely winner, but another way, Melanion’s way, is to win the game by outsmarting the rules and “thinking outside the box”.

Pliny gave the name “Remora” to a sucking fish that attached to ships thereby creating drag and slowing progress. Pliny’s Remoras are ugly, but have fetching counterparts in the Golden Apples of Melanion and the Sirens of Ulysses. Ideas are weightless, and yet, ideas can slow a runner as surely as dense metal. After all, it was the idea of gold that slowed Atalanta, since apples made of base metal would not have attracted her.

I will give three examples from science in which I have seen ideas used as golden apples. Because the rules were not explicit, the games were less fair. On the other hand, they were not life or death games; I lost, yet lived.

The setting of the first example was a bicycle tour with an out-of-shape and somewhat over-weight scientist. He asked me a thoughtful and difficult question requiring some analysis and opinion as we started out. He pushed on ahead as I peddled slowly with my awareness, lost more in thought than in the lovely countryside. Eventually, I held my reply and peddled catch-up to deliver it. He barely took in my response before posing another profound question and I fell behind again. He gave me interesting things to think about and I did not appreciate his motive. My experience at the time was to be honored that this eminent fellow had invited me to think with him. Decades later, I understand what this trickster was up to and bless him for the lesson.

Another eminent scientist more recently revealed to me his use of this strategy. His laboratory is on an upper floor, and he often finds himself ascending four staircases in the company of younger colleagues. When he feels himself straining, but before shortness of breath shows, he casually asks his colleague a difficult question and, as the colleague unconsciously slows to consider, white top trots ahead. He titrates his questions according to the strength and obliviousness of his youngsters, so that they don’t catch on. For some, he uses three or four

(Continued on pg 34)
good questions on a single trip up the stairs.

The use of ideas as golden apples is not limited to physical slowing down. They have similar effect on intellectual exertion. Working with Melanion is delicate, but it is a key skill for survival and even thriving in what can be important mentorship, consultation, and learning situations. Interaction with Melanion is often essential and not to be avoided. Below is a case based on a public statement that can be interpreted as the use of pre-emptive overpowering to avoid becoming victimized.

A scientist introduces another scientist for a public lecture. The man introducing the speaker recently won the highest prize. The introduction: “Today’s speaker is good, not only in his own work but in thinking about the work of others. It is amazing how well he thinks about things that are not his area. He is so good and it is so important to learn what he thinks about your problem that when he is talking with me I find myself talking very fast so as not to allow him to ask any questions.”

The introducer is articulating a strategy consistent with his desire for insight, but only from one angle. Talking fast and not allowing questions is a way to define the perspective and to pose precisely the questions to be addressed. To state the scene in terms of detective noir: it is an interrogation. Thus we have discovered one of the effective strategies for avoiding the distraction by the golden apples: consider a potential Melanion to be a consultant on your problem, rather than a wide-ranging teacher and provide him with the facts and context within which his inquiry will be restricted. In this strategy, wisdom is sacrificed for focus. Another danger in this defense comes from its rudeness and the consequences of rudeness. Melanions are not stupid. Be prepared for a rebuke (such as I once received from Barbara McClintock: "I was about to say something really important concerning your problem but it slipped my mind when you interrupted me. Perhaps it will come back later.")

Golden apples are akin to sexual energies in the sense that honest intellectual seduction with deep questions, or, vile harassment are not always easy to distinguish. More attention tends to be given to thinking and worrying about the dynamics and abuses of sex and power than variations in intellectual intercourse and potential dangers in Socratic-like methods.

Did Atalanta have Attention Deficit Disorder? A related problem is to over-emphasize conception at the expense of gestation, birth, and the final release of a creation into a life of its own. To have a new idea, make a new connection, begin a new project, is akin to new love. I have been told that to begin a project one should be playful like a child, but to finish it one has to be an old man. This is not a comment on how long it takes to complete many worthwhile projects. Rather it concerns the attitudes typically appropriate for different stages of the process. The play in beginning is seductive and exciting. Conceiving a baby ought to be fun. Gestation, on the other hand, may involve morning sickness, or, can be just plain boring. The experience of birth runs the gamut, but whether pleasure or pain, tends toward intense. An intellectual who has a difficult time with the potential tedium of gestation, and who fears the pain of birth, is an easy mark for golden apples in
the form of clever new ideas, connections, perspectives, and openings.

Atalanta, Melanion, golden apples, and Remora, have so far been described in the context of relationship and community. The Melanion and Atalanta can both be found within a single mind. Self-Melanionization is a new Knot for R.D. Laing’s topology of madness. Learning to recognize and work with Melanion in one’s own mind complements practice with external Melanions.

Give golden apples a break. Melanion’s leavings are, in and of themselves, the same as those of the goose who lays golden eggs. Context counts. The goose is indifferent to her eggs, their finders, and the consequences. Melanion finds a new way to win within the rules of a race he did not invent. We don’t blame an octopus for defending itself with obscuring ink, why object when the obscuring agent is beautiful?

Golden apples do not intend to be cruel. New ideas can even be aids to concentration. Golden apples tend to be original, unexpected, and curious, with twists and variations; they represent one direction of the creative spirit. Sometimes a mind threatened with extinction by concentration gives up golden apples as a kind of corrupting temptation for allowing it to continue. The mind that wanders and returns may be more flexible and fun than the mind that never strays from the straight and narrow. A dog that obeys perfectly often lacks spirit.

What of love? Atalanta picked up Melanion’s golden apples even though she might have ignored ordinary golden apples. Atalanta was not tricked; she made choices. The context-dependence of value is evident in the Zen adage, “Gold dust is precious but in the eyes it causes cataracts.”

This essay interprets the saga of Atalanta, Melanion and the golden apples as an allegory of the rhythms of creation. Alternating expansion and contraction occur in conception, gestation and birth. A ship launches into the sea at high tide, but with the receding wave. Once I helped build a house on a rural hilltop. The site allowed unobstructed views of a sweeping valley, distant hills, and open sky. We marked corners with foundation stakes and pulled string to connect them. The staked square on the hilltop felt suffocatingly small. An oppressing sensation increased as we made the foundation concrete. The next phase brought together individual pieces of long wood, mostly horizontal two-by-fours nailed to vertical four by fours. It was a frame house. The relationship between external and internal space seemed to open as the wall and roof were framed up. Sky and earth through the frame were, again, vast. Looking outward, the frame was a guiding series of openings that introduced individually valley, hills, and sky. We closed in the walls, rapidly, with plywood and sheetrock. The house was now a tiny box trap. Lastly, and much more slowly, the box relaxed. Cutting into the walls and mounting windows, putting in shelves and other irregularities, molding, a sink, and on the walls and ceiling, hooks for pictures and lamps. The space became intricate, interesting, and inviting; it became a home. Remoran golden apples transmute into nourishing golden eggs and back again.

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**Askia Mosque**

Sarah Berkson
Medical Student, 2nd year
Chilling Beauty
Raphael Hulkower
Medical Student, 2nd year

To All the Girls Who Lost their Fathers
Masha Kon
MSTP, 5th year

I am going to rip my heart out
I am going to rip it out and lay it out
On our table
Still vibrating.
I am going to show you.
I am going to show you that it’s strong
And there will be enough for both of us!
And I will squeeze it with my hands
Until the last moment
Until we can
You can…
Until I can’t
Make you live in front of them.
In front of THEM
Because for ME
You’ll live forever.

Summer in the Afternoon
Tadakimi Tomita
Graduate Student, 2nd year
A Man I Never Knew

Jessica Rachel Furst
Medical Student, 4th year

An icy cold embrace as I clench that fist
No smiles, no frowns, not even some tears
The irregular irregularity seems so unreal
And the cold contact between us ensues
Interspersed with a punctate voice
A voice you no longer have,
But one that reminds me how to think
How to feel about you – the man I could never know

The ice cracks without warning as this voice punctures the room
You can’t notice, you can’t react so I react for you
My smiles, my frowns and my tears are shed in vain
You do not know but something is irregular here
And I think of what lies beneath your clenched eyes
What should I feel towards this man I do not know?

“Daddy” the voice firmly states
And just maybe for a split second, you open those eyes
As I attempt to glimpse a view of your world
The ice starts to crash, into a glacier and into an oblivion
An oblivion marked by such irregular irregularity that I am dazed
Dazed that after all my efforts you remain the man I never knew.

Old Dixie: New Orleans and Steamboat on the Mississippi River

Cristina C. Clement
Visiting Professor, Department of Pathology
It was mid-morning. The sun crept above the steep valley walls, finally warming the Himalayan altitude. Our mobile "clinic" was set-up beside a tributary of the Beas, the mighty river that turned back Alexander the Great millennia ago. I was examining a small girl with a pruritic rash in our tent-cum-examination room when I heard raised voices outside. I stuck my head through the flaps to search for the cause of the commotion.

A group of weathered men carried a tiny old woman on a wooden makeshift litter. The men in this region were like ancient trees, brown and gnarled by a lifetime under the tropical sun, yet sinewy and majestic in spite of their wrinkles. The retinue crossed the wooden bridge and placed the passenger in front of the group already gathered on the trail, stethoscopes around their necks. Through the translators, gesticulating wildly, the men began.

This woman was an elder of a nearby village. Since her son's death, she had been gradually deteriorating, becoming more and more short of breath. It was unclear exactly when her son died. Time was measured differently in those mountains. Whether six moons or three moons had passed was unknown, but things definitely worsened after the last snowfall and before the harvest. Now she could no longer walk without stopping for breath. She slept sitting up. Her legs were grossly swollen. These men, her neighbors, had carried her on their shoulders since sunrise -- 6 kilometers on a wooden chair strapped to long straight branches -- because they heard that Western doctors were in town.

The woman was struggling for air. After a quick history and examination, it was determined that she was suffering from a congestive heart failure exacerbation. She needed hospitalization, diuretics, and long-term medical management. The translators explained to the men that though we wanted desperately to help, only so much could be done in the field. This woman needed IV medication, X-rays, and close supervision. Hearing all they needed, two men hoisted the wooden poles onto their shoulders and continue trekking 4 kilometers uphill to the nearest "hospital," a two-room building with one recently graduated full-time doctor and a single assistant/nurse/lab technician. I watched the group jog uphill on the wooded trail for a moment before ducking back into my own tent.

Under the auspices of the Milton T. Rosenbluth Foundation and the Einstein Global Health Program, I spent October 1st to November 20th in northern India, working with the Himalayan Health Exchange (HHE) and their associates. From the website, "Himalayan Health Exchange is a humanitarian service program bringing together healthcare professionals who give their time, talent and resources to provide care to underserved populations in select, remote areas of Indo-Tibetan Borderlands."

Our team consisted of twenty-four individuals from around the English-speaking world -- attending physicians, residents, fourth-year students, a nurse, an EMT, and three non-medically trained people. A local Indian doctor and a dentist joined our team.

As a team, we saw thousands of patients during our trek, many of who had never had any other encounters with medical professionals. On mules or in cars when road conditions permitted, we brought along donated medications as well as the equipment for minor surgical procedures and basic laboratory tests. We traversed mountainous terrain, ascending to over thirteen thousand feet across the Chansal Pass.

Clinics were held at donated buildings in whatever passed for a town -- a school, a temple, or a large private house. Patients hiked for miles from all around the surrounding countryside in order to be there when the clinic opened.

Some days, the schools would close their doors so that the children could see the doctor. Dozens of children with matching navy blue uniforms would arrive simultaneously and swarm around our tents, curiously peeking in and giggling when we chased them away.
Their teachers told them to complain of headache, stomachache, or some other triviality — if you are sick, you get a panacea from the Americans. We would see dozens of children with identical phantom chief complaints. Invariably, the children did not know when their heads hurt or where they hurt. They would fight through “the pain,” chasing each other around the clinic site and shouting. We sent them off with toothbrushes, albendazole, multivitamins, and a whole lot of laughter.

Dramatic landscape characterized this rural section of Himalayan foothills. Farming plots dotted steep verdant mountains. Crops ranged from apples and potatoes to unrecognizable bright red grains. The houses were crafted of beautiful clean wood and topped with slate slab roofs. Goats and sheep herds constantly interrupted our clinic, storming through our campsites, leaving piles of dung in their wake.

As a group we faced many challenges. Rockslides blocked our trails, infectious diarrhea struck our group, and limited resources handcuffed us at every turn. We grappled with our inability, and we explained to patients that nothing could be done, that the only help was two days away, that we could only provide two weeks worth of omeprazole for chronic dyspepsia. I'm sorry, but you will have to find the money to buy the rest and go to the hospital for an ultrasound if the pain does not resolve.

Despite the obstacles, we managed to treat entire villages for parasitic GI infestations, and we supplied multivitamins for all the children and pregnant women, iron when needed, and antibiotics and anti-inflammatory to literally hundreds of people who otherwise had no recourse.

Because our patients had so few resources, we formulated treatment plans that were feasible as well as efficacious. One memorable patient demonstrates the challenges to treatment that arose.

A young woman, around 20 years old, entered my tent in early afternoon. Her face was ruddy and blank. She was stiff and talked little. Her parents accompanied her. Her father began telling the translator the story.

This woman had given birth two months before at a large hospital two day’s travel away. She went all the way there on account of a high fever that started just before labor. During the puerperium, she began "acting crazy," and was taken to a psychiatric hospital and prescribed risperidone. They did not have any papers from the obstetric encounter or from the psychiatric hospital. The family was unsure about timetables and other detail, and couldn’t provide any more information on the “craziness.” Now, the father related that the patient “was not acting herself.” She was not caring for the baby and had just recently developed a resting tremor. On examination, the patient exhibited masked facies, cogwheel rigidity, resting tremor, and a stiff gait with reduced arm motion. I diagnosed her with drug-induced Parkinsonism.

Though the diagnosis was made, the treatment plan was not as simple. Since we did not know what psychiatric diagnosis she originally carried, we were reluctant to stop risperidone. What if she had been sui-
What if she had been suffering command hallucinations to kill her baby? We wanted to send her back to the psychiatrist for reevaluation, but it became apparent that she would never agree to return. The cost and inconvenience was prohibitive. The family had spent their entire savings on the difficult birth. Now, transportation alone was too expensive, not to mention the doctor’s payment and the time away from home, ever so valuable as the long Himalayan winter approached. They would not go. As an organization, we could pay for it all, but HHE’s money is reserved to pay for necessary surgeries; paying for this woman’s transportation and treatment might mean that a case of congenital heart disease goes uncorrected.

Ideals aside, we had to be practical. Ultimately, we concluded that the most likely explanation for her hallucinations was fever-induced delirium. We decided to stop the risperidone and monitor her response, so long as her parents and husband could stay with her and assure her safety.

At follow-up visit five days later, her movement disorder had resolved and her mood was vastly improved. She had no recurrent depression or hallucinations, though of course five days was all too soon to tell for certain. The next day we hiked out of that valley and left that woman and her follow-up care to fate.

While I believe our group did a lot of “good,” I was disappointed with the lack of emphasis on sustainable development. We did not train anyone to do our job when HHE stops operating in that area, which inevitably it will, when the current generation of leadership retires or moves on. The vast majority of our patients had chronic complaints - COPD, arthritis, headache. Prescribing twenty ibuprofen is not a solution. They needed preventative care and chronic symptom management. Medicines need to be titrated. Side effects need to be monitored. As an annual expedition, these services cannot be rendered.

Most people on the trip wanted to do “good,” but how much did we accomplish and how much was aimed at making ourselves feel good? Would the people we hoped to serve be better off if we took all of the money we spent on the trip and donated it? Can a Western doctor come into an area and provide effective medical care, or are the cultural barriers too great? Will we know the right questions to ask? Will the patients trust us? Or should we instead focus on educating the villagers to produce their own doctors?

On the other hand, de-worming a child allows her to stay healthy and engaged in school. Perhaps those restored sick days will allow that child to become that village doctor. In that respect, we helped just by handing out multivitamins, albendazole and toothbrushes, not to mention the antibiotics and anti-dyspeptics. So what is the answer? How can we in America who believe that health is a human right help those people in rural India, or post-earthquake Haiti, or sub-Saharan Africa? There is no single infallible model of sustainable healthcare delivery. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight a few key tenets.

First, education and health are inextricably codependent. Education leads to opportunity, income, and self-worth, and an accumulated body of evidence dem-
onstrates that these qualities inevitably beget better health outcomes. Better health enables studiousness; a child cannot focus his efforts or achieve his potential while sick or malnourished. Anyone who wishes to work in healthcare internationally must also work towards development; establishing better schools, providing cleaner water, and ensuring a physically safe environment are basic prerequisites to sustainable global health projects.

Second, responsible, knowledgeable, and talented local partners are indispensable. Our translators were Himachali. Our drivers were Himachali. The pharmacist was Himachali. When dispensing medication, he explained everything as only a local could do. In-and-out medical brigades mean well, but they are doomed to failure without incorporating the local people into the therapeutic goals.

Finally, global health work starts at home. The medical and philanthropic communities must continue to prioritize international health. Swamped with debt and bleary-eyed from studying, it is easy for medical students to forget rural India. We must deny that apathy. We must encourage each other to do more work and better work in resource-poor settings. Einstein students and faculty operate all over the world. We are our own resource. We must continue to exchange ideas and recruit each other to help in worthwhile causes. The challenges are enormous, but success will come incrementally as a result of a cooperative and concerted effort by the international health community. For Einstein students, that effort starts here.
Coffee in Central Park at Sunset

Uwe Werling
Postdoctoral Fellow

Dachau 2009

Robert Berkenblit
Associate Professor,
Department of Radiology

Thousand Hands

Jonathan Chung
Graduate Student, 1st year
Labor and Delivery
Chris Hawk
Medical Student, 3rd year

You are breathlessness
Anticipation
the quickening
and finally
finally
blue and bewildered
you deliver
to your parents and to theirs and so on
the promise -
and teach me
something about strength
in a little cluster of organs
suspended like a true christ
within the body of woman

With Apologies to Andrew Wyeth
Carl Schildkraut
Professor, Department of Cell Biology
Digital Photograph

Perspectives—Haystacks
Alan D. Legatt
Professor, Department of Neurology

Bread and Basket
Michael Prystowsky
Chairman, Department of Pathology
Egg Tempera and Oil Glazes on Linen Covered Board
**We Run**

Ingrid V. Williams  
Einstein Enrichment Program

We run to chase our dreams  
To make these dreams a reality  
We must not let them put us down  
Because it will take many to raise us back up  
We must run so that we have a purpose  
Because sedentary lives will take us no where  
We must run to make it known that there is hope for us and it’s not just a figment of our imagination  
We run to keep momentum for our children  
We run to keep our dreams alive and to ignite the fire in our bellies  
We run to keep the pages in our book filled will hope and gladness  
To keep away our distress and sadness  
We run for us, we run for you, I run for me

**Jazzy**

Tatyana Starikova Harris  
Designer and Illustrator, Graphic Arts Center  
*Watercolor*

**With These Hands**

Ujunwa Cynthia Okoye  
MSTP Student, 2nd Year
The Blue House

Yvonne Lui
Assistant Professor, Department of Radiology

This building
we struggle against -
in places crumbling
mortar, dented tin ceiling,
flooded basement.

We struggle against your
creaking your settling your seeping
water like a lifeblood that travels
down to every dry crevice
bringing news of the rain god’s answer
to our prayers.
The copper pipe burst,
the drain clog,
the heater drip,
the boiler cold cold on a January night.

We fight
with you outright, we reject
the broken lock, the tarnished silver
the blackened bulb,
the musty and the dusty
and the wrecked.

We waterproof and we paint
we wax we shine
we repair, resurface, renovate
and then

at night underneath the cover of a moonless
sky, we look out from our bed and
we remember to call you
a new name and pronounce you clearly with
lips and with tongue:

home.

Keys Open Doors

Sabriya Stukes
Graduate Student, 2nd Year
As we walked into the darkened room, I felt as if I was going to pass out. I had no business being here. What was I thinking? Yet Mr. So-and-So was very pleased that he could help with my education. I introduced myself with the preceptor in the room, knowing he was watching me fumble over my own name. I hesitantly shook Mr. So-and-So’s hand—was I supposed to touch him without washing my hands first? Do I need to wear gloves because he has some flesh eating disease? I have no idea why he is in the hospital, so exposing myself with a handshake seemed like a huge decision to make.

As I started taking his history, I scanned over his feeble body trying to assess his situation. Looking for cuts, bruises, any sort of sign. Instead, I just noted that he had dry skin and made the mental connection to the word “Cetaphil.” He was a very nice man, elderly and kind. He tried the best he could to be a model patient—he hadn’t the slightest idea that he was my first. Nothing he did would have mattered because I was too busy being overly aware of myself and how ridiculous I must seem in my three-sizes-too-big white coat and my uncomfortable shoes. I quickly gave up on my history-taking since I found myself repeating questions and receiving different answers. I gave as many PEARLS as I could, which went unnoticed to the preceptor’s eye. I gave comforting smiles and tried to convey my own empathy and caring with my eyes. I thought I had established a connection, but according to the preceptor, this rapport was meant to be built through statements that would be feeble attempts to illustrate my understanding for his situation. How could canned sentences from a pamphlet really show him that I cared? Would patronizing him with ideas, saying that I could understand what it was like to be him, really make him feel understood? I felt my silence to be a tribute to the pains he had endured.

It never occurred to me that when I was finally in that situation, where I could have a hands-on interaction with an actual patient, I would be preoccupied about such trivialities. I found myself overcome by the logistics of the scene. The too-inexperienced student standing over the patient in his chair. The patient in the neighboring bed, listening to our interview. I wondered how confidential “confidentiality” really entails in the two-bed hospital room. How difficult it was for us to take his blood pressure because his body was not close enough to the wall for the sphygmomanometer to reach. How impossible it was for us to take a pulse without the necessary tools, like a watch. How ridiculous it was that we were both protected in latex gloves when the patient had none to protect himself from us. How little you can learn from a physical examination when you have only been taught the motions and never fully understood the meanings.

What I learned from my first time is probably no different from what other students learned. I learned that I am still just a kid playing dress-up in a white coat—even though the patient can’t tell the difference. I learned that I will most likely feel uncomfortable in my white coat until I have used my knowledge to actually heal, rather than to learn. I also learned that our white coats and gloves may keep us safe from infections, but the conditions of our patients can bring down even the thickest of armor.
pick up a dandelion puff, and kiss its parachute people farewell…
tiny, sweet breath of release, and courage, and loss
…and Love

where will you alight?
come back soon…i’ll miss you so…dreaming of all the places you will go
to some other galaxy, time-folds distant
where stars dance Infinity
…and sky is open sea

oh! i see you—falling from the clouds
eyes shut tight in echoes of thunder
do not fear. embrace the storm.
Vision cleared,
see this heart bleeding to protect you
…and as you ride the raindrops

lightning fades, the world new and clean
ah, is that you—in the garden over there,
all grown-up and sparkling with gold?
It’s no garden
but the entire earth
…and singing in green

remember her, who set you free?
she’s still here. right here.
silver silence, and peace, and joy
surfacing memory
but Now is better than before better than after
moment so full that liquid sunshine
bursts within being
outflowing tears of light

suspended in motion, before me—
it’s you. truly you
…and homecominG
Washing Up
Aryeh Rosenbaum
Medical Student, 1st Year

Ambivalence
Jonathan N. Tobin
Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health

Last Man Standing
Robert Karr
Einstein Staff
Tell me this.
Do I dare stare down boundaries?

When I see rules
That school me
To think brinks,
And shrink my world
To bits of skittle-shaped thoughts
Of how actions
Need to know bounds,
Do I dare stare down those rules,
Those schools,
For a school of my own
Thoughts?

Tell me this.
Rules laid are laid for reasons.
If those reasons
Are treasons to my core of being
Do I dare to stare them down?
Do I dare blink away
Those close to me
Who believe in those rules,
Those schools
Of boundaries,
Of age-old sayings
That have histories
Of oppression, brinks, and borders?

Only time will chime
And tell if the bells of the rebels
In me
Will toll for new rules
In a school of my own boundaries.

**about daring**

Mariam Kabir
MSTP Student, 7th Year

**Hard Times**

Bill Burton
Associate Director,
Office of Educational Resources
Grandpa Never Showed

Natasha Shapiro
Medical Student, 4th year

Bye Mikey! Bye Sammy!” Tommy watched his friends get into their parents’ cars and drive off, one by one. Soon, he was the only kid left in the schoolyard, wondering why his grandfather wasn’t there to pick him up.

He looked around. The school teacher had stepped back inside to get her purse. He was all alone.

I don’t need grandpa, thought Tommy angrily. It’s only three blocks. I’m old enough to walk home alone! After all, he had turned seven last month.

Tommy picked up his backpack and his Superman lunchbox and headed home. He was very careful when crossing the street, always making sure to look both ways first. But the whole time, angry thoughts about his grandfather circulated around his head.

I can’t believe he forgot about me! Tommy had noticed that his grandfather had started to become more forgetful. He remembered his grandmother being upset that his grandfather often forgot to take his blood pressure pills. He’s probably sitting on the couch, watching TV and smoking his pipe! thought Tommy, shivering in the cold.

Finally reaching his front door, Tommy rang the bell. There was no answer. He knocked, loudly. Still no answer. Tommy kicked the door. Silence. He tried the handle. The door budged. Of course Grandpa forgot to lock the door.

“Grandpa!” yelled Tommy, walking in.

“Ta!” He heard in return from the kitchen. Tommy had never heard his grandfather use that nickname before, but he didn’t care enough to wonder about it. He ran to the kitchen.

“Grandpa!” screamed Tommy in horror, seeing his grandfather on the kitchen floor.

“Ta!” repeated his grandfather, extending his left arm. Tommy grabbed on to it, tears rolling down his scared face, and tried to pull his grandfather up. But he didn’t stand a chance against his grandfather’s two hundred and seventy pounds. Giving up, Tommy slumped down next to him, wrapping his little arms around his grandfather’s neck, and burying his face in his grandfather’s chin. As he cried, he felt something wet hit his forehead, and thought his grandfather must also be crying. But when he looked up, he realized that the mois-
turer on his skin was the saliva leaking from the right side of his grandfather’s mouth, where the lips seemed to hang down as compared to the left.

“Grandpa, why are you staring at the window?” asked Tommy, noticing that his grandfather’s eyes were continuously looking to the left.

“Ta,” answered his grandfather.

“Stop saying that!” yelled Tommy, shaking him. His grandfather held him still with his left arm, but the right one lay motionless on the floor. Tommy kept crying. His grandfather turned the boy’s face with his left hand to face him.

“Ta…” he said again, his face turning red, as he struggled to say more. “Ta…Call…naan…un…un.”

“Grandpa, grandpa, I don’t understand!” Tommy kept yelling. He curled up on the floor next to his grandfather, hugged his listless left arm, and continued to cry, knowing that it will be at least another four hours until his grandmother would come home from work.
Einstein's Third Annual Ad Libitum Literary & Art Night

Masha Kon, MSTP, 5th year

The third annual Ad Libitum Literary & Art Night was held on December 9, 2009 in Einstein’s Lubin Dining Hall. It featured live music, prose and poetry readings, and displays of original artwork by members of the Einstein community, not to mention good wine. The event was attended by close to 200 people and featured 60 artists.

The spacious room filled up quickly with the members of our community, all enjoying the artwork on display and the beautiful music played by the Einstein String Quartet. The atmosphere was warm and inspiring – as it is to see and hear artistic expression from people belonging to entirely different fields: doctors, scientists, students, and administrative workers. For an evening, the titles were erased and it was just a group of people enjoying art for art’s sake, exchanging positive energy. And that is what Dean Kuperman, who was a keynote speaker for the evening and has been our avid supporter all these years, treasures in the Ad Libitum.

The revealing of talents continued with an engaging prose and poetry reading session lead by the MC Brett Wolfson-Stofko. Several presenters confessed that it was their first time ever reading their pieces in public – a highly emotional moment for a budding artist. The energetic Jazz Ensemble finished up the evening, which closed with an award ceremony for the top 7 art pieces on display, as decided by audience vote. The prizes were generously donated by neighborhood venues: Coals, Flowers by Nelly, Starbucks, and Good-to-Go.

The Ad Libitum team is very thankful to everyone who made the evening possible, especially Dr. Kuperman, Karen Gardner, Dr. Lazar and the Graduate Office, Peter Dama and the Graphic Arts Center, Jim Cohen from Lubin Cafeteria, and the Student Council. Your support made the evening a great social event that we hope will become the Einstein tradition.
Banana Plant Drop
Alena Janda
MSTP, 3rd year

Back Cover Art:
Behemoth
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Markers, color pencils, and pen.