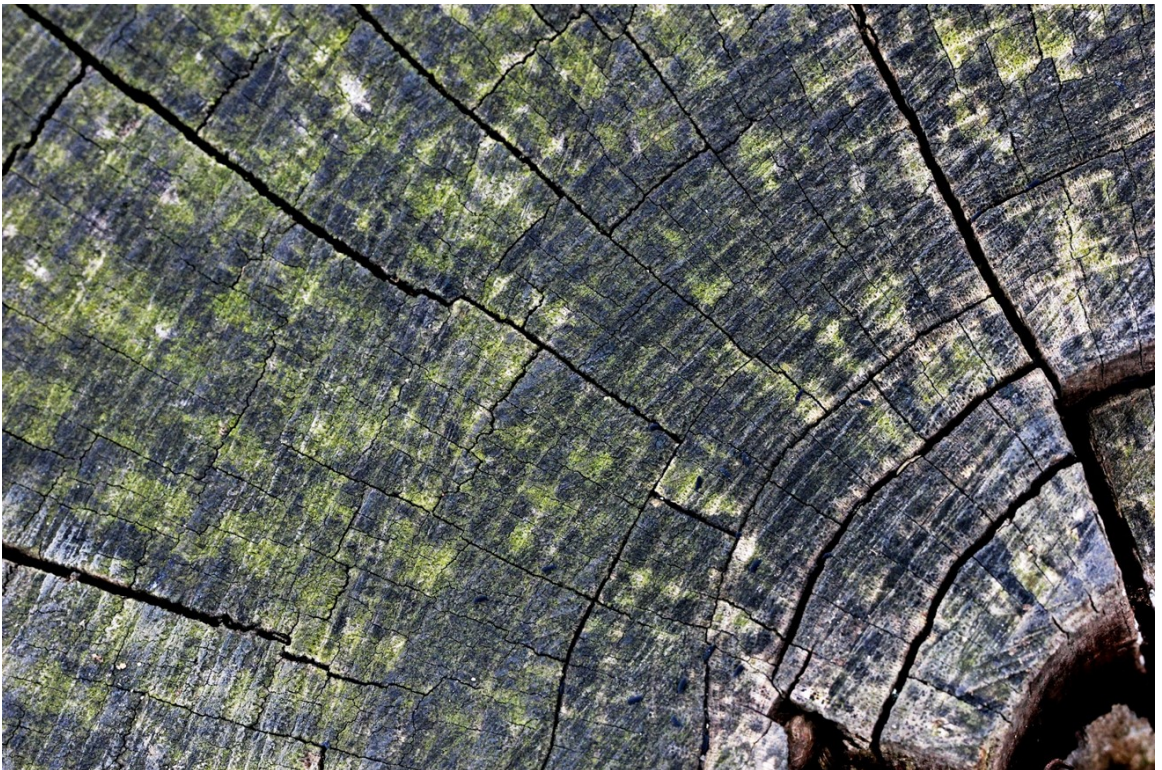


AUSCULT

2018

(E:'SKALT), V. [AD. L. AUSCULTARE TO HEAR
WITH ATTENTION, LISTEN TO...]



Decaying

Alhaji Camara

AUSCULT

2018

(E:'SKALT), V. [AD. L. AUSCULTARE TO HEAR
WITH ATTENTION, LISTEN TO...]

Dedicated To

The Artists and Writers who have shared their gifts of creativity and to the patients, families, friends, and readers who inspire their work.

Acknowledgements

To Chris Antczak, for her support with drafting and preparing this edition of the journal.

To Jennifer Brooks, for her media expertise in providing an online avenue for publication.

To editor emeritus Richard L. Holloway PhD, and to the student editors and physician faculty who have worked on previous editions of AUSCULT, this work has been made possible by their legacy.

AUSCULT

(e:'skAlt), v. [ad. L. auscultare to hear with attention, listen to...]

2018

Student and Faculty Editors

Joseph Hodapp, Class of 2019

Kyle Murray, Class of 2020

Kimberly Tyler, Class of 2020

Bruce H. Campbell, MD

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[MCW Medical Humanities Program](#)

Medical College of Wisconsin

8701 Watertown Plank Road

Milwaukee, WI 53226

The MCW Medical Humanities Program was founded in 2006 and is dedicated to professionalism, communication, empathy and reflection through education in literature, medical history, the visual and performing arts and the social sciences.

EDITORS' NOTE

We believe the humanities are the bedrock of human connection. By engaging in the arts we choose to step, if just for a moment, into another world – a world dreamed by the artist who captured it. Each of the pieces we have chosen for this collection depict parts of our shared human experience. We are all the same, and yet we are all different. It is in this paradox that the arts allow us to stoke our curiosity and spark our dormant imaginations – reinvigorating our powers of empathy and reinforcing our connection to others. We are proud to bring you the 2018 edition of *Auscult*. Enjoy!

Student Editors:

Joseph Hodapp, Class of 2019

Kyle Murray, Class of 2020

Kimberly Tyler, Class of 2020

Call for Submissions:

We invite your feedback and submissions for the 2019 edition of AUSCULT. Please email your submissions to AUSCULT@mcw.edu. You can also find our journal on the MCW website.

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LEAVING FROEDTERT

CYCLARK



FUTURE OF MEDICINE

ALLIA NELSON

Silos, data, searchable fields

Crunching the numbers

Seeking the yields

Finding the knowledge

Looking for light

Medical College

Fighting the fight

Against all cancer

Genetic disease

Treating the symptoms

Lending them ease

Giving our patients

Our time and our talent

Building relations

Possibly gallant

Compassion unbounding. Research resounding. It's all quite astounding and so confounding

To think this is only the beginning

I JUST CONQUERED THIS BRIDGE

ZHAN XU



BEAUTIFUL

WILLIAM REINHARDT

Before I am ready to open our humidor and really begin, it's open. I can't help but look, and see the body draped in white towels. This isn't a horrifying moment, but I recognize that it would be if I wasn't expecting it. Or if I didn't accept that it was happening, whether I'm ready or not. It's strange, being aware of this. Of how my expectations, and the way I reconcile my perceptions, affect how I'm feeling. There's an instability to it. I feel myself tottering, like I'm balancing on something. To fall one way is to submit to the horror and feelings of aberrance. To fall the other is to enjoy this. Currently, neither way feels entirely right.

I look around at my group. They look normal. Their faces, I mean. But I feel like they shouldn't. And I know mine is normal, too. It's taking effort, but not much. We must be like psychopaths to react this way. It feels, for a moment, like there's something sick about medicine. I try to perceive this for what it is: an educational pursuit—an invaluable one—provided by a courageous, selfless woman. But I find that I can't dissect her while thinking about her the same way I would any other person. It's unbearable to witness closely the condition of death and dissection while considering that it is in the realm of physical possibility that it can happen to me or someone I know. But I also can't help but feel her humanity linger. Because I will be like her someday.

To open a body and explore its parts is to rationalize humanity: to literally dissect it, to analyze it, to break it down into describable parts and see how it all fits and functions. I realize I'm losing my sense of separateness. I'm dissecting us both. I think about how fragile and putative the self really is. How it can be shut off like a light, like it's just a consequence of the wiring. About how I'm looking at those wires now. How the fumes from the fluids of her body are in my lungs. How I am alive, and she is dead, and no one really knows what that means. How the closer I get, the more alien this all seems. And the sense of how delicate and mystifying it all is—rightness, life, humanity. And how rapturously beautiful that makes it.

HOPE

MADISON BREILAND

What-

Oh, it's you.

This is God awful timing. I'm not sure
if you're being purposefully malicious
by showing up now

(too late, always too late)

inside this rat's nest of a cell.

Or maybe you've been gone for so long
that you forgot what I looked like.

I wouldn't be surprised.

You're never there anymore,
what with hiking up the rent
causing that sprained ankle last Monday,
losing two grand on roulette I didn't have
...and driving everyone I've ever loved away.

It never used to be like this.

Because sometimes-

sometimes you danced like a skitter-bug
across a pane of clear water
elusive and nearly impossible to catch,
but I *did*.

And in those precious, few moments

I could breathe.

Because you were Saturday mornings with
Mom, baking oatmeal cookies

and seeing the smile light up her face

when the doctor gave her a little more time.

You were that chance meeting at 7-Eleven,
arguing with a stranger

over that last tub of Moose Tracks,

and agreeing to hand it over at the promise
of coffee at the cozy café down the street.

But then you started disappearing
for days on end,

and days turned to weeks

and weeks to months and months to years

until everything I was-

every single scrap of money,

the house, my family and pride

and the sunlight

(especially the sunlight)

was gone.

So I don't need you, not anymore.

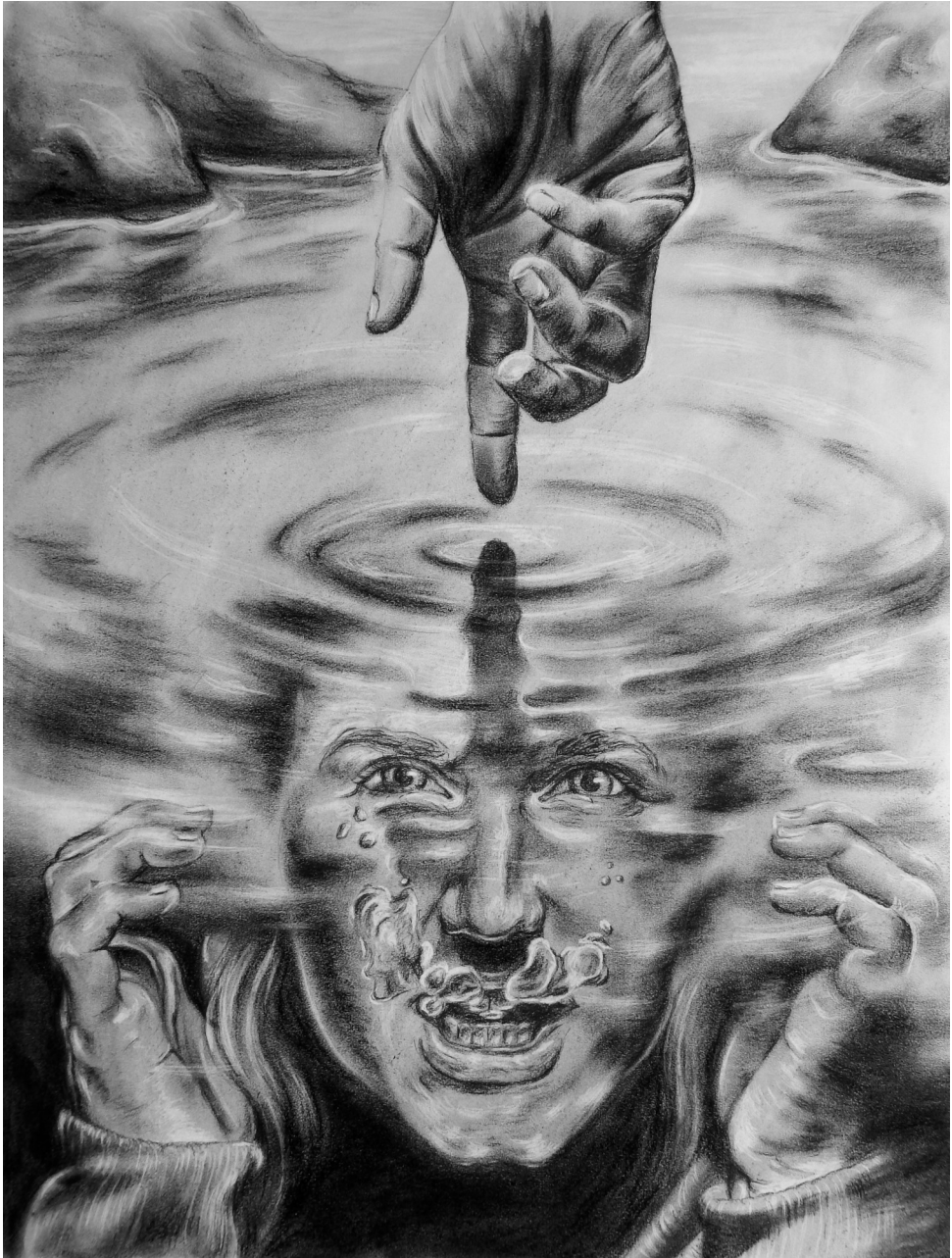
And next time you come,

you'll be lucky

if there's anything left to find.

ANXIETY

MADLINE KLIPPEL



ON COMING HOME FROM THE CONFERENCE

JOANNE NELSON

I came home from the conference buoyed by the breakout sessions, refreshed by time with friends, and packing plenty of convention hall swag. My flight came in early, my luggage arrived safely, and my husband, Bruce, picked me up outside the airport as planned.

The house sparkled and smelled of Pine Sol when I walked in. I was glad to be home in my familiar, predictable place of spouse, kids, and dogs—and grateful for my better half, a guy who actually enjoys cleaning and takes good care of the family.

After I unpacked, I headed into the upstairs bathroom and discovered a new ruby colored curtain adorning the window that overlooks our backyard. I called to Bruce, “It’s okay, but it sure cuts off the view.”

“We can take it down.”

“No, no, it’s fine.”

In the shower, washing the travel away and returning to myself as wife and mom, I noticed a new body wash. Dial for Men. It sported an attractive red and gold label featuring the word “Magnetic” and, in block uppercase letters, the tag, ATTRACTION ENHANCING. Underneath this, also in block uppercase, but penetrated by a strip of manly blue, the phrase: PHEROMONE INFUSED. What, you might ask yourself—as I did, while working my own mild-mannered shampoo into my hair—is a contented husband doing with body wash labeled “pheromone infused?” And, you might wonder—again, as I did by the time I moved onto conditioner—exactly what pheromone infused means. I thought pheromones were naturally occurring chemicals that made the person across the room hot for you as long as you were single and unattached, but then withered away once you became happily married.

I recognized, with the sixth sense borne of my many years as a social worker, that I was avoiding any cognitive or emotional examination of the phrase “attraction enhancing.” It crossed my mind that product placement in such a highly trafficked area—used by daughters, guests, and me—implied a certain innocence or obliviousness. However, it might also suggest an initial, subconscious inkling of dissatisfaction in what had seemed, only moments earlier, a solid marriage. In fact, toweling off, I pictured myself typing these very words on some future tearful morning, alone but for a lukewarm cup of coffee, relating how I missed the first signs of trouble, let my attention waver, and paid the price—the children only visiting, the dogs forlorn, and the house for sale. Bruce now with a woman more appreciative of

his fresh look, one who would recognize the time spent shopping for drapery, who would remark on how nicely the pleats hung or how the color complemented the tile flooring instead of criticizing him.

A woman who would have been home helping instead of off adventuring.

Bruce and Elizabeth, our 17-year-old daughter, were watching television when I came downstairs. Regretting my negative comments about the new bathroom curtain, I casually asked, "So, what's with the body wash—the pheromone infused one?"

Elizabeth looked up from the TV. "I wondered about that too."

Bruce, from his usual spot on the couch, replied "The Dial? It was on Sale. \$2.79."

After describing the cost of the other brands he added, "I don't even know what pheromones are."

I thought this answer came a tad fast. I countered, "Well, you know what 'attraction enhancing' means."

"I don't think it says that."

At this point Elizabeth, clearly enjoying our exchange, happily ran upstairs for the offending cleanser and rushed back downstairs to read aloud the aforementioned descriptions.

Bruce, wearing a long sleeved white t-shirt pallid against his winter skin and black shorts with multi-colored socks, refused to understand the implications and suggested there was no need for enhancement as he had always been a "stud muffin." Then he turned his gaze back to the antics on *Storage Wars*.

I couldn't let it go. For the next several mornings I faced the accusatory block letters throbbing against the blue ribbon. I wondered if this was how it happens, small omens laughed off or dismissed in the busyness of work, raising kids, and the sweet complacency of marriage. I couldn't resist googling "pheromones" and found scant evidence to support liquid soap as a sexual attractant. And the body wash's list of ingredients actually read nearly the same as my shampoo's. Of course this wasn't the important thing. It's not the reality of the ingredient, but the belief system created. Tell yourself you're more enhancing and the odds are you will be.

That's what I would tell one of my psychotherapy clients anyway—right after gently confronting the insecurity lurking around the edges of the story. At the same time I might wonder aloud to him or her, "Why all the concentration on this?"

To switch chairs for a minute and answer my own question—I can feel the blush crawling up my face—aren't I the one with the opportunities? Night after night of post conference schmoozing and, at the very least, all that elbow rubbing?

It's not only opportunity. It's history. My family includes generations of adventurers and gallivanterers. Heck, both my great-grandfather and father became mid-life runaways, and my maternal grandfather was infamous for a septuagenarian fling with his cousin Bernice.

It seems my over-concentration on body wash may have been scented with projection.

But it's the adventuring I'm attracted to, not some need to stray—a desire, stronger with age, to be off exploring more than at home decorating. It's an itchy feeling of not fitting in when everyone gathers around the TV for the night. With this analysis I understand that my fears of becoming like my overanxious mother may have kept me from recognizing the more captivating danger—that of my father's wanderlust. I mull these ideas while I pin back the curtain a week later, the color nice against the woodwork, the window no longer muffled.

"Did you see how I changed the curtain?" I asked Bruce when he hadn't praised my domestic exertion within an hour.

"Yea, I thought I already said that. You can see the backyard a lot better."

He was right—the view was much improved. The hammock swaying between our two apple trees, the new outdoor furniture on the patio, and the baskets of flowers hanging from the fence were all more inviting without the gauzy material in the way. However, too often it was my thoughts that I saw when I looked out the window, my focus coming to rest on whatever confirmed the images tumbling around my head. Or maybe all those sneaky pheromones caterwauling through the air and just looking for trouble continued to blur my vision. Most days though, the cars that journeyed on the highway visible beyond our backyard caught my eye at least as much as the hammock, the planters, and the deck chairs.

BALANCE
ADITYA KARANDIKAR



A PAGE FROM AN IMMIGRANT'S DIARY

KRISHNA DOSHI

Where is home?
Is it a place,
Or a person,
Or anything that is alive

Where is home?
The place where you're born,
Or the one where your roots are,
Or the one you live In

Where is home?
Does it exist,
Or you want it to exist
To hold you
Wrap you
Ground you.

Where is home?
Do you exist to belong there,
Or belong to exist.
Are you content there,
Or settling in the name of it.

Where is home?
Have you found it yet?

A SILENT EXCHANGE

BRITT K. DERUYTER



KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

MEREDITH BUCK

When the docs say, "your loved one is stable, their numbers have normalized"
I understand they want to offer us something concrete.
"They're at their baseline," they might add.

Though I nod in agreement, inside: shock, unrest
because what they unceremoniously say is baseline now
in a heart beat I would trade for
a mediocre day before.
I miss YOU before this nightmare, my loved one.

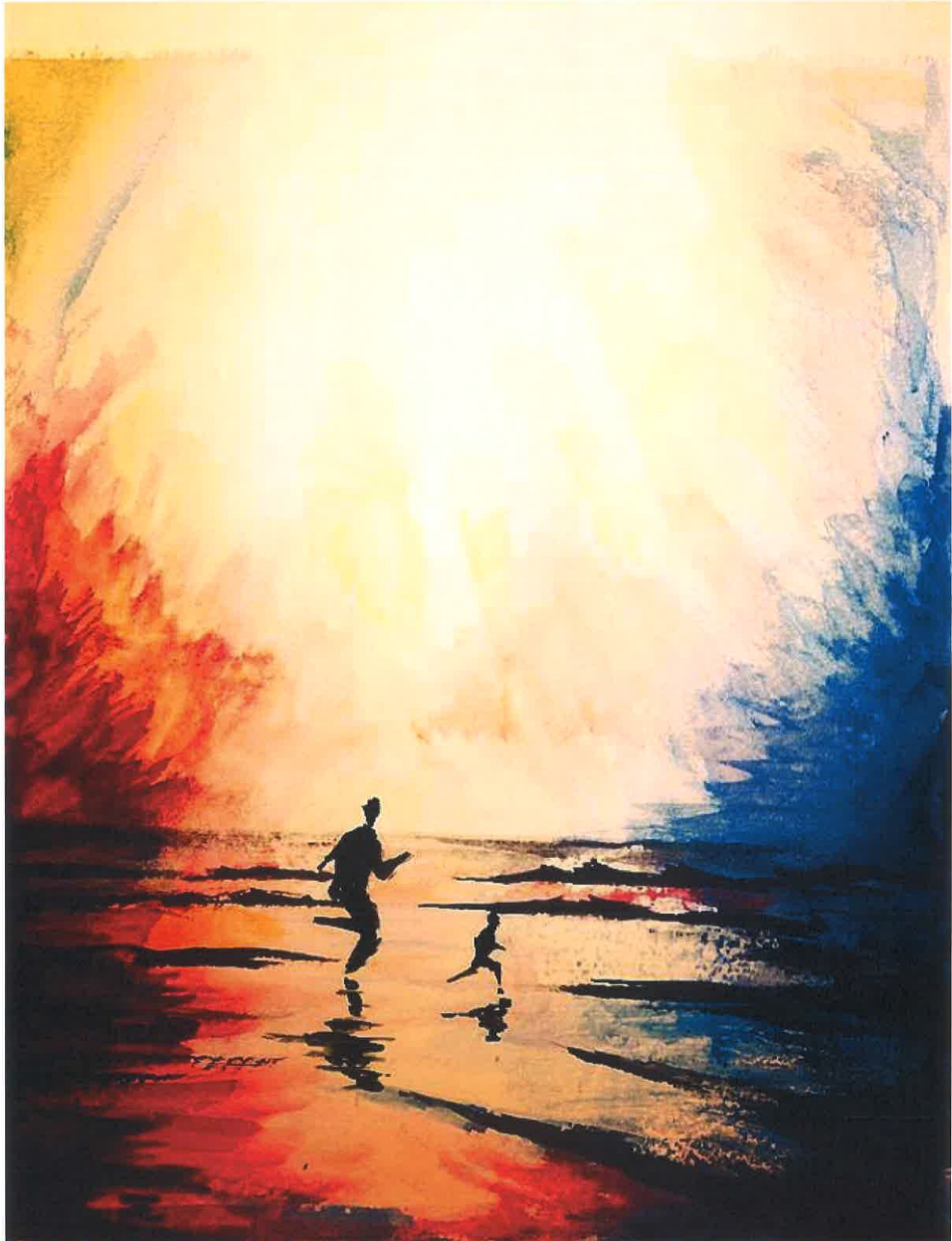
Please understand, some of us are
violently forced to carry around a cloud above us
casting shadow maybe only we can see
constantly reminding ourselves that scattered moments of happiness
pale under stormy skies.

Memories yet wet with tears, not joy,
Frustration. Devastation.

So what can we do?
We can't go back, no matter how much we long,
no matter what sacrifices we are prepared to make.

We must embrace this strange shadowed world
because even here, we can't let misery win.
There is beauty about.
I see it in you.
I feel it in this new wind.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY
ZHAN XU



ILL-ANELLE, OR, THE HYPOCHONDRIAC

ASHLEIGH SANCHEZ

Do I feel warm? Put your hand on my head,
I'm burning up, but my hands are cold.
I think I'm coming down with something bad...

My neck is stiff and my eyes are red,
And look—I never noticed this weird mole.
What do you think? Put your hand on my head.

I could have forgotten to take my meds,
and I ate some chicken that was getting old.
I may have caught something seriously bad!

Maybe pox? Or measles? Something that spreads?
You could have it, too, something out of our control.
Hold still; let me put my hand on your head...

Honestly, you seem fine... But I feel half-dead!
I read about this in *Diseases, Foretold*—
You should always assume it's something bad.

Don't I seem woozy? I should be in bed...
And that incessant humming; it's taking its toll!
I've got to get an ice pack on my head,
I'm in real pain here, and it's worse than bad!

APPENDECTOMY

RUSHI PATEL



13 MED SCHOOL EMAILS WHY

JOHNATHON NEIST & JORDAN BARCLAY

To: deborahd@gmail.com

From: d2l@mcw.edu

Subject: New Credential Setup – Action Required

Deborah,

Welcome to MCW! We hope you are looking forward to your first year of medical school. We need you to set a password for your account. The requirements are as follows:

Uppercase letter, lowercase letter, number, symbol, hieroglyph, verbal clicking sound, name of first born child, forward slash, backslash; cannot include vowels

As a reminder, your username is `firstname.lastname@mcw.edu` – meaning yours is `deborah.downer@mcw.edu`.

Thank you.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: strictprofessor@mcw.edu

Subject: First Day of Class

Good morning all,

Per our conversation at M1 orientation, you are expected to be in our classroom tomorrow at 8 a.m. Eastern/Central/Mountain/Western sharp. The room is M384.

If you have questions about this, consult your syllabus. It will be presented during the lecture tomorrow.

You should have seen the list of textbooks needed for class. If not, consult your syllabus.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Strict

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu
From: healthrequirements@mcw.edu
Subject: Missing Health Requirements

Good morning,

Upon review, it has come to our attention that you're missing multiple health requirements, including the flu shot and Hepatitis B titer. Missing these requirements will prevent you from participating in any upcoming clinical experiences during your time at MCW. Attached is a list of providers that can help you complete these immunizations, boosters, and physical requirements. The hours are as follows:

- Monday from 3-5 am
- Tuesday (Closed)
- Wednesday and Thursday from 9p-12a, Green Bay location only
- Friday (at Bel Air Cantina Happy Hour)
- Saturday and Sunday (Closed)

Your prompt attention to these matters is appreciated.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu
From: financialaid@mcw.edu
Subject: Payment Required

Deborah,

We have not yet received your required tuition payment. Please take appropriate action to meet this requirement, and soon.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: alumniassociation@mcw.edu

Subject: Donation Request

Deborah,

Congratulations on your commencement! Your accomplishments over the past 4 years are remarkable. If you've enjoyed your student experience with us over the last four years at MCW, please consider giving a donation to the Alumni Association. A gift of any size, \$200 or \$200,000, will be appreciated. If this was sent to you in error, please still consider a donation.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: downerfamily@gmail.com

Subject: We Need to Talk

Hi Honey,

I know Dad and I talked about helping you with your tuition, but I have some bad news. We decided to go to supper at Potawatomi after we dropped you off at orientation, and we got a little caught up. The meal was good, but the slot machines were not. You'll probably have to get a part-time job, I'm sure that won't be a problem.

We can revisit this in the Spring semester, OK?

Love, Ma and Pa.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: grandmadowner@hotmail.com

Subject: Just Checking In

Hi Sweetie,

I hope your first week of has been going well. I heard you could use some help with your medical school tuition. I sent a little something in the mail to help - don't tell your parents. Did you get the \$5 check yet? I hope that makes a dent. Also, have you been getting my other emails? They usually start with "FWD FWD FWD," if that helps you find them.

Love,

Grandma

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: examproctor@mcw.edu

Subject: Upcoming Exam

See below for a list of guidelines for the upcoming exam:

- No hoodies, notes, or snacks
- No cell phones, watches, bracelets, or fingernails
- No late arrival
- You must remember your MCW password and enter it twice to download the exam

As a reminder, exam will be held next Sunday from 8am-8pm. No absences will be tolerated.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: bestfriendTracy@gmail.com

Subject: Let's hang!

Hey girl! Hope all is well at med school. I'll be in town next Sunday - can you hang out? Unfortunately, this is the only time I'll be able to get back to Milwaukee for the foreseeable future - but I'm open all day Sunday, 8am-8pm. Let me know what works for you!

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: drdowner@mcwalumni.com

Subject: Been There, Done That

Hey Sis,

How's the first week going? I remember my first week - wanted to drop out. Luckily, I'm super smart and talented and organized and I aced every exam. I'm sure you're doing just as well as me. Right ?

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: husbandmaterial@gmail.com

Subject: Miss You

Hey Baby,

Hope med school is treating you well. I am good but suddenly I've got this rash that I just noticed - maybe you could take a look when we get together? We're still on for next Sunday, right? I'm free all day, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

Love you!

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: studentorgs@mcw.edu

Subject: Student Organization Fair! Sign-Up!

Medical school means lots of free time right? But how to spend it? Our upcoming student organization fair is this Friday and you should come by. Here is a preview of some of the clubs that will be represented:

Wizards and muggles

Pasta Alliance

Grasshopper Guild

Rock-paper-scissors Club

Sasquatch Society

And more! See you in the Main Hall Friday morning!

Debbie looks at her overflowing inbox, despairingly. The thought of responding to each of these emails is simply exhausting to her. She shakes her head, and reaches to shut her laptop.

Suddenly, her inbox dings once more. She raises the lid of her laptop and hesitantly looks at the subject line. It catches her eye. She begins reading.

To: Deborah.downer@mcw.edu

From: student_wellness@mcw.edu

Subject: Student Wellness Resources – and Therapy Dogs!

Hello all,

We know that your time at MCW can be overwhelming, to say the least. Medical school is a lot to handle, right? It's both a unique environment and a heavy workload. Sometimes it can feel like your to-do list is never ending, your fridge is never full, everyone you know is pulling you in a separate direction, and your inbox is often overflowing.

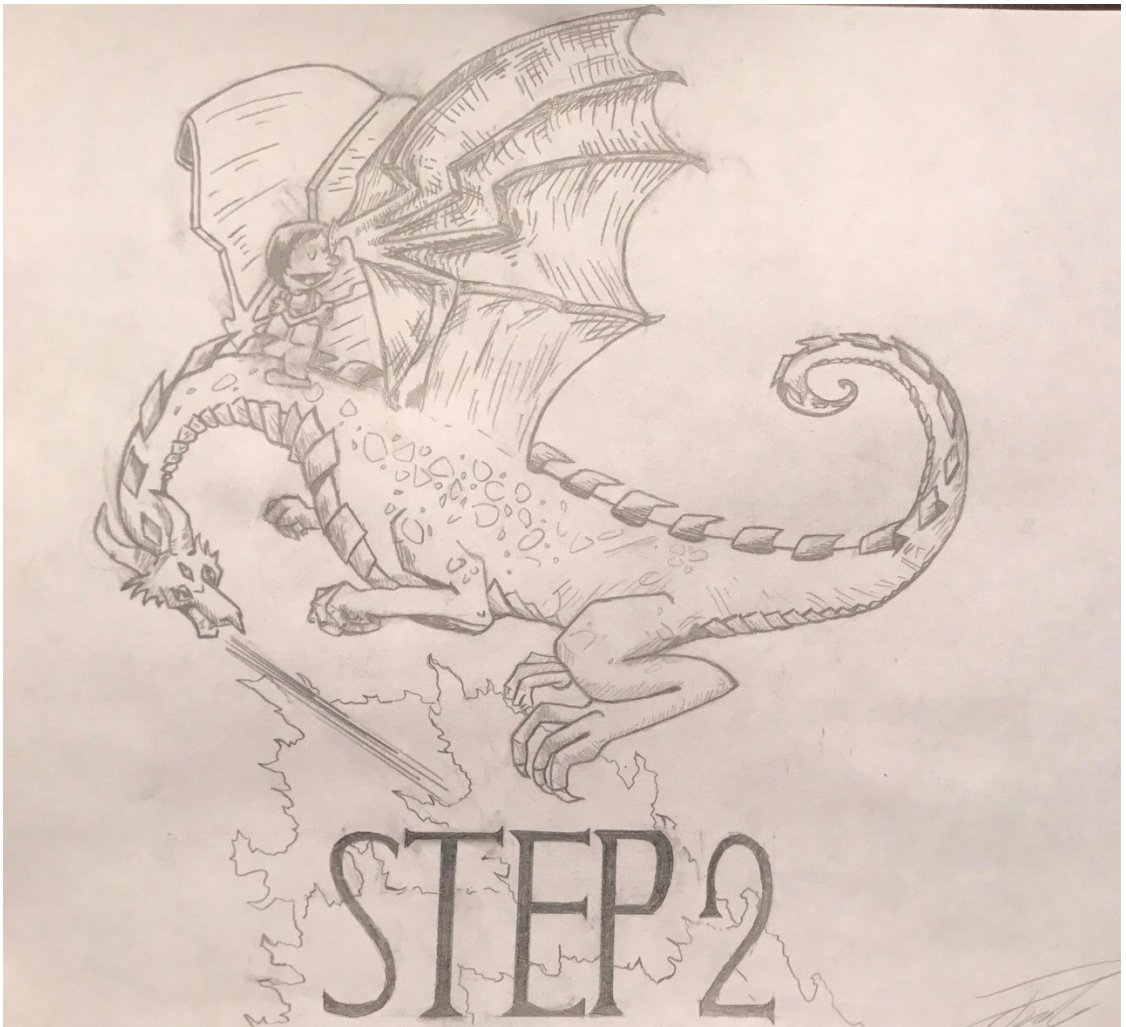
As professionals who care for others, it is imperative to remember to take care of yourself as well. Despite our best efforts to maintain our health, both physically and mentally, sometimes we need a little help. The MCW Office of Student Health & Wellness is here to support you, and is ready to lend a helping hand whenever you need it.

Our website has an abundance of resources regarding stress & anxiety management, mental health, nutrition and fitness, as well as a plethora of other information. We recommend that you read over this information whenever you have a moment to spare.

As a special surprise, and in hopes of lowering your blood pressure, we invite you to come to M1234 to **play with our certified therapy dogs** today! We have 20 dogs on campus this afternoon – all trained to be calm, friendly, gentle, even-tempered, and full of love. Please stop by for as long as you'd like. These dogs are here to support you. We all are.

BE THE DRAGON

SEAN ERSHADI



ANCONEUS

WILLIAM REINHARDT

Exams are here. I know things, but I can't spell them.
Facts are strewn around my mind like bits of frayed and tangled string.
I'm trying to weave them together into something comprehensive,
To knit them into the perfect, all-encompassing conception.
Some kind of tentacled, five-dimensional projection that can weave
Not only into every vessel and synapse,
But into every physiological contingency.

Sometime after 3 a.m., something gives
All the little mental hands, knitting away,
Exhaust themselves at once. The whole endeavor fades from my attention
As I'm tracing nerve projections through the upper limb.
I decide that the anconeus is my favorite.
Just a weird little triangle on your elbow
knowing only what the radial nerve tells it.
It can probably see some of the latissimus dorsi
As it soars over the horizon to god-knows-where, and wonders
What even is that thing?
What am I doing here? What's going on?
How can I help?

REMEMBER GOATS?

WILLIAM REINHARDT

I listened to a song I hadn't heard in a while.

It made my stomach shrink, sent shivers up my spine,

Made me feel again in a way I'd forgotten.

Not because of the melody, or the words, or a memory.

It was the texture.

Bristly, like the 2nd goat you ever pet, after you knew what to expect.

An avatar of the pettable, but less-often-petted parts of the universe,

A relatively familiar part of the world that has become more and more alien to you,

who can no longer afford the distraction of petting zoos,

But one close enough to stray near now and again.

Something you can feel, that tells you, reminds you

That the world of pettable things isn't all dogs and cats.

There's goats too. You remember, right?

BOVIE IN THE MORNING

JAMES M. BILLINGS

The morning dance of wheels and sheets
with patient's drifting off to sleep
while techs & nurses hover round
And M3's struggle to glove and gown

Standing this close I feel I taste
As surgeons work at harried pace
To give this soul another chance
At love, at life, perhaps a glance
at Happiness of younger years
When health prevailed o'er aging's tears.

I retract, I hold, I cut, I sew
As hours pass my backaches grow
I hold some more, my arm goes numb
Do residents really find this fun?

Now weariness invades each day
I shuffle through with M3 haze
A few days off is all I seek...
My God it's been a long eight weeks.

Most incisions open up a view
To organs never seen by human eye
Anatomy all jumbled together, we search for landmarks to discover
Clues as to what must stay if our patient is to live another day.

But inside we find diseases too
Reminding us of what we came to do
We move stones, suck up pus and blood
We cut out tumors, gallbladders and sludge
We lyse adhesions, burn through fat
My attending asks me, "What's this, what's that?"

About this rotation what will I miss?
The hours? The pimping? The morning bliss
of pre-rounding before the dawn?

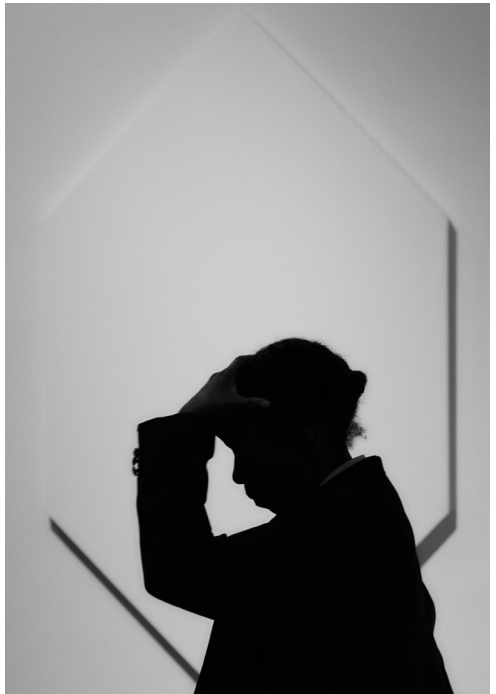
Or surgeries that keep going on and on...
Wet gangrene, oh yes, even better dry
If I smell that again I think I might just die

Better yet what will I take away
From this dance of surgery seen day-after day
More than all else I will remember that inside
We grow, we change, we adapt, we are alive
With stress, with change our cells have a way
of keeping our patient's alive for one more post-op day.

Through surgery I have put my hands into the miracle of life
Thank you, Dr. Zimmerman for saying, "give the med student the knife."

INVISIBLE (1, 2,3)

FRANCIS TONGPALAD



KILLER IN DISGUISE

OLIVIA DAVIES

It's pain and then it's sorrow
It's here and gone tomorrow
It's red leaves on a green tree
A smiling face before you flee

The liquid level rises
To hell with compromises

It's screaming and it's shouting
Taking blame and then rerouting
It's saying this is just a phase
Three hundred and sixty-five days

It's the pain of knowing
The addiction's never slowing
It's broken homes and broken eyes
It's a killer in disguise.

BURS
ALHAJI CAMARA



FULL ROOM

OLIVIA DAVIES

room, room, full room,
eight beds, eight dead,
needle, needle, needle marks
recovery: a Malady

this is not his mother's son
his mother's son is dead and gone.

his mother's son was on his way,
yesterday, was on his way,
on his way
on his
way

needle, needle, needle marks,
recovery – to some degree

this is not his mother's son,
his mother's son is dead and gone.

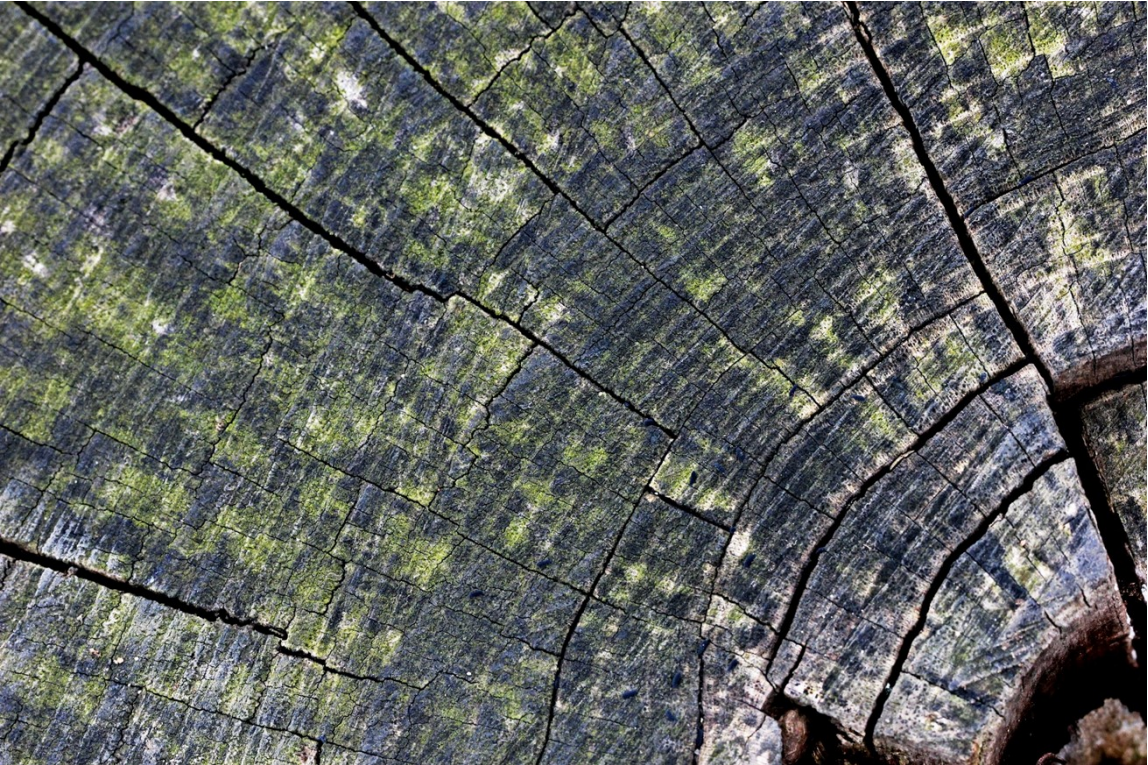
they said that he was on his way,
yesterday, was on his way,
on his way,
on his
way

“where was he going?”
you hear them say
“where has he gone?”
he's on his way

room, room, full room,
eight beds, eight dead.

DECAYING

ALHAJI CAMARA



THEY DON'T BURY YOU WITH YOUR PAGER

WILLIAM L. BERGER

We Doctors were so important, age to age,
But someday, someone else must answer your page
Fret not - you don't cease to matter that day,
You will just matter in a different way.

The Art may be long, but Life is short, actually
And your pager doesn't change the eventuality
That being human, and born terminal, indeed
Means that there's more to living than being of need.

"All beeping eventually stops" at the grave, they say
You'll no longer be your pager's slave that day.
No longer in perpetual committed partnership,
No longer inseparable, attached at the hip.

So, it is what it is - as it's supposed to be:
That you, too, will soon Rest in Peace, you see,
Because there is a God, and no it's not you,
That "There are No Pagers in Heaven," turns out to be true.

CONFESSIONS OF A (FORMER) HEALTH EDUCATOR

ANTOINETTE SPECTOR

Our goal is to change the unhealthy things people do,
Because the resulting diseases are a "burden" to me and you.
"Don't smoke," "exercise more," "eat less" we constantly say,
And this will prevent your heart and lungs from early decay.

But what is the underlying motive to make these broad claims,
That upon refusal opens the door to being called nasty names?
Like lazy, and fat, or a societal drain,
All in the name of "good health" while disregarding their pain.

It starts in grade school with the "say no to drugs" ads,
Then moves to prevention of teen moms and teen dads.
Once the smokers start working, they'll face shame every day,
Huddling outside their places of work- at least 20 feet away.

At face value it seems like an honorable notion,
This important field called health education and promotion.
Underpinned by research and theories to give it credence,
Yet still it comes up against so much resistance.

It may be that changing behavior is far too complex,
That the cost is too great when it comes to cigarettes or sex.
This may be the only way some know how to exist,
The only chance that they have in this world to subsist.
Especially those clinging to dignity, with little left to lose,
Yet we continue to ask the most vulnerable to choose.
If we take away their tools, what is offered in return,
Except a gamble that a longer life is what they will earn?

We should teach less, and spend more time learning,
For large tides of change to really start turning.
Changes in how we think, versus what others do,
Maybe the change really starts with me and with you.
To learn from those without any fancy degrees,
With life experience as the basis for their theories.
We should ask more questions, about what people want and need,
Then give them space to decide which information to heed.
And all without consequence- attached to no strings,
Without any mention of what "burden" their choice brings.

We have one mouth, two ears, and one heart,
Relying more on the latter would be a great start.

NEW SKIN
BRITT K. DERUYTER



SOMEWHERE IN ALL THESE YEARS

KRISHNA DOSHI

Somewhere in all these years
You forgot the days that mattered

You forgot to tell her that she was loved
That she was valued
That her birth was not a curse
That she was more than the son you never had

Somewhere in all those years
You reminded her of the reason she could not trust men
The childhood she never had
The fear she had when she stepped into her "home"

You gave her insecurities
Scars in the form of memories
That time could not heal

Somewhere in all these years
You gave her sleepless nights
And mornings drenched in tears
You took away life from her
And left behind a soul that could not be resuscitated

In all these years,
You gifted her the emptiness in celebrating her birthday
A relationship without value
A life that felt like burden
A life she wished she could give someone else in need

THE OLD BARN

CATHY DREXLER



THE ADULT CARETAKER BLUES

CY CLARK

Cora dropped down to the floor from her kitchen chair
moaning loud enough to be heard from the bathroom
where I was hiding with the morning paper

After her last stroke, she must be reminded to take insulin injections,
A sugar cube will keep her from a semi-comatose state
or the paramedics come, running up the stairs to the upper flat,
breaking plant leaves and shaking picture frames of dead relatives,
some blood related, some not

The paramedic put on plastic gloves before tying the rubber tube around her bony arm,
checking for a pulse, avoiding bruises from previous injections, looking
for a blood vein like he was pulling his tennis shoe string from under his foot.

The injection caused her body to jerk, like when she had a seizure at the Sunday buffet
at the greyhound casino, bystanders unsure about CPR stick a towel in her mouth
so she won't bite her tongue, or try to snatch her purse that fell to the floor

The paramedic wipes sweat from Cora's face, telling her she's going to be fine
and asked for her Medicare card.

I was questioned about what Cora ate that day, she's not supposed to miss a meal,
even when she promised me she had breakfast with her daughter,
a woman on the lower flat who wasn't really her daughter
she never had a daughter, but she didn't remember

So, I never bothered to tell her differently

WHITE
ALHAJI CAMARA



I AM AFRAID

MANAR MOHAMMAD

I am afraid
of the day I will care for you,
put my ear to your chest,
hear what it sounds like when you sigh,
watch the trickling of a tear as it traces your face when you cry.

I am afraid
of the day I think of you as “room #_” or ,
“headache patient.”

I am afraid
of the day I walk into your room and see
blood pressure number
heart rate
central line
abrasion,
laceration to be repaired
before I see your eyes,
your fear,
the smile that illustrates your face after I greet you,
your loved one hovering tenderly next to you in the room.

I am afraid
of the day I tell you you’ve lost someone,
you are ill,
someone you love is ill,
without knowing your story,
how long that wedding band has lined your ring finger.

This fear is part of the process, I understand.
But I want your stories to be intertwined within me,
even if they hurt.

VISION
ADITYA KARANDIKAR



THEY COME FOR ME

MANAR MOHAMMAD

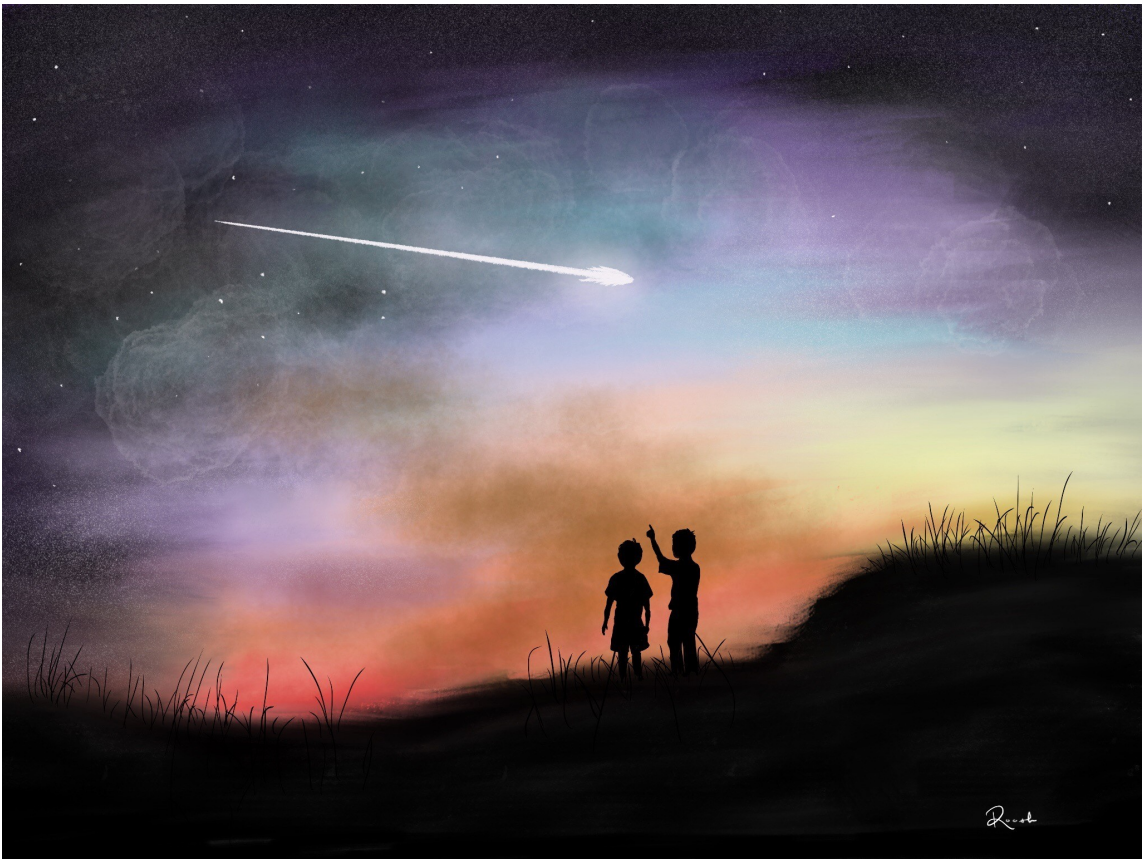
They come for me
when the hands on the clock formed an "L"
and the busyness of the day was beginning to settle,
when the sound of the cars had slowed to a rumble,
and I was walking over the cracks in the sidewalks,
letting the leaves of the trees beside me
softly graze my hands
and remind me of the work I have ahead of me
to make a difference for them.

They come for me
in the middle of a conversation
settling in the space between two white coffee cups
making a home where they do not have one.

They come for me
mid-thought
gushing like the wind on a winter day
calling for me to remember
the broken window
the spray-painted concrete wall.
They come for me
as a reminder
of the life I've left behind with them,
of buzzing hospital rooms
and white tile.
They remind me to carry each of their stories
as a talisman until I am to return to them.

SAND DUNES OF LAKE HURON

RUSHI PATEL



LAKE EFFECT SNOW
CATHY DREXLER



CAMOUFLAGE

AHMED OBEIDAT

Unrelenting fatigue, disturbing my...
Joyful memories
Lively moments
And colorful dreams

Disturbing...
A life of endless hope
The intense desire for a cure
The doubt of tomorrow
And the quotidian fear of the unknown

In the clinic...
Near the white coat
Multiple sclerosis can easily camouflage itself
I often look OK
I walk, talk, and think OK
Though,
Not as instinctive
And not as sharp as I used to be

At home...
I often awaken sore
With joints as stiff as the frame of my favorite bike
The shiny-whitish bicycle
The one I used as my daily ride
Now,
There in the corner, it parks!
Shivering, rusty and remote
Pleading me for one short ride

At home...
I usually stay in my bed
Holding onto the trickles of energy I may have
My head often feels like a stratocumulus cloud
Dense, slow, and infertile
While at times...
Carrying the forecast of a terrifying storm

Yesterday at the clinic...
I finally told my doctor:
"I might look so good to have MS."
"But, as you know."
"MS can disguise!"
"And can often deceive!"

UNSHELTERED

CONSTANCE JOEL

The calm sunrise on a Monday morning. A light fog rolling off the lake, covering the city in a protective blanket. As I walked from my car, the crisp spring air filled my lungs. It was a shock to the system, an unwelcome change from the warmth that I had just been enveloped in.

I quietly waited for the elevator to take me up to the sixth floor. Beep. Beep. Beep. The noise continued as I passed each level. Every floor filled with patients. Patients fighting to survive. Trying to make it one more day. Moms, dads, families, friends, waiting patiently in the halls. Waiting. Waiting to hear the hopeful or harrowing news of the day. Waiting to hear what tests needed to be run. What complication occurred over night. What new struggle they would have to deal with.

I walked into the NICU.

The quiet halls.

The soft hum of ventilators.

The beep from a heart rate monitor.

The alarm.

The alarm was ringing.

The alarm was ringing in a tiny newborn's room. No more than a few hours old. A nurse rushed in, assessed the child, and quickly silenced the alarm. This time everything was ok. But the next one might not prove to be so fortunate. The next one might be worse. The next one might be the last one.

The mother sits stoic in her rocking chair. One hand through the incubator window. Five tiny fingers surrounding her one. Trying to ignore the beeps. The alarms. The nurses rushing around the room. She's watching the chest rise and fall of this tiny human. This tiny miracle. Watching the eyes flutter open, confused by the light. Confused why she's here. So early. Too early. Twenty-four weeks. Twenty-four weeks of growth, but still not enough. The lines are everywhere. Nose, mouth, arms, legs. Monitoring each and every moment of this tiny human's existence. Helping baby survive. But at what cost. What will happen tomorrow. The next day. Next week. Next year. In ten years.

Twenty-four weeks at delivery.

Once sheltered by the warmth of her mother. The protective blanket that enveloped her, shielded her from the harshness of the outside world. Without warning, thrust into this world too soon. Like the crisp air coming off the lake, her body was delivered a shock she was unprepared for.

Why.

Why does this happen.

Why does this happen without any justifiable cause.

Preterm labor at twenty-four weeks. No risk factors. No maternal health conditions. She took her prenats. She saw her doctor for all checkups. Watched what she ate. Read the books. She has a loving husband. A family close by. Friends and neighbors for support. A thriving career.

But still. The tiny miracle came so early.

PLIGHT OF THE JUNIOR MEDICAL STUDENT

DOUGLAS PIERCE

When in a midsummer's day I reposed
(Once the national boards had finally closed),
The gentlest of zephyrs alit on my breast
And, soft as it seemed, still scoffed at my rest
And curled as it danced, 'til wavering wide
It crossed every joint and went straight through my side
Where, diffusing in blood, it presently rose
Through lymphatics and veins in fits and in throes —

Crescendum! Crescendum! With mounting momentum
It crested the anticlimactically capped antebellum
Of a premedical life I could never retrieve —
When I to the Standards of Care was naïve —
So too of symptoms and syndromes and germs
And drugs by the millions and parasite worms
And vascular accidents, rheumatoid flares,
Biostatistics and Staph in my nares,
Gout and arthritis and asthma attacks —
I now understood I could never go back.
I now understood I could never go back.

But lacking complacency rose I from my hammock
In hopeful defiance of thermodynamics
For, knowing that entropy must always increase
I sought from that moment to but be at peace.
For I'm just a student, and a junior at that,
With piles of books and a short coat on my back.
And so far to go that turning 'round now
Will get me no further than the trailer I towed
To move to this city three long years ago.

So I take up my stethoscope, penlight, and badge,
And in my heart I carry this simple adage:
To battle the sterile and soulless machine
Of clipboards and coldness and white-coated sheen;
And when chaos surrounds me to but never mind me
And let empathy, warmth, and humanity find me.
And should the gout flare or the asthma attack,
I'll remind myself how I never want to go back.
I now understand I never want to go back.

OUT / IN
KOENRAAD DE ROO

your silent suffering
ended
when you did

you never talked
about the struggle
the turmoil
the demons
while you were
everyone else's angel

you saw no way out
we had no way in

your warmth
ended
when you did

i saw you
stretched out
cold
alone
gone

my knees buckled
and i wanted to crawl in
in
in your skin
make you breathe again

my hot tears
rolled off
your icy cold skin
repelled
like you repelled life

you saw no way out

we had no way in

our world
ended
when you did

life
would never
be the same
... and it isn't

you're not here
yet
you are
right here

you are
further away
than you've ever been
yet
closer
than ever before

i talk to you
more
more frequent
more profound
perhaps as frequent
as i should have when

you had no way out
and we had no way in

WHOLE

MEREDITH BUCK

Hands on flesh
I tug, I pull when told
inside the person I chatted idly with
only minutes ago.
I promised her she was in good hands.
No, not my own.

In between waves of the bovie smoke
I ponder: where inside does her humanity live?
Does it pulse bright red, each heartbeat?
Does it hide out in small recesses of her pelvis
where even HIPEC can't reach?
Or does sit up high in that curly-haired head?
Nerves pulse, muscles twitch. Fascia splits perfectly.
The suction pulled from my hands after apparently,
I became too slow.

My mind snaps back - don't think too hard
or dizziness sets in.
This body, this disease, this uncertainty.
We say things like
"high grade," "metastatic";
when talking between colleagues
but to patients we seem to need to pretend
there is always hope. There are always options to seek.
The hardest discussions I've witnessed horridly:
not resectable.
No, we can't play God.

But is she lucky?
Strip the peritoneum like dried glue
from the fingers of a child.
Twisted, satisfying.
Disease melts away below talented fingers.
Except I am not that naive.

I know it still lurks there
waiting to go to seed. An evil tree.
This recovery, daunting-
the length of her midline incision tells all,
splaying her small bowel for all to see.
Buying her but a few months
but who am I to judge?
So we pursue, cut, sew, believe.

Finally, with bloodshot eyes peeled to his pager
about another patient, he speaks in what he thinks are simplicities
summoning intensity despite 12 hours in the OR.
"It should just be shut off. He's DNR."
As if we didn't already know.
Flashback, my patient:
squeezing my hand, making a joke.
His family, faithful sidekicks.
His hope for the future
a twinkle in his eyes
touching me with smiles and kindness...

I feel myself breaking down,
hands in flesh.
It is actually holding me.

My thoughts:
so many bodies
so many parts
but each one a special soul.
Whole.
In any way that can.

EL DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

CATHY DREXLER



LEAVE TAKING

Kim Suhr

(an earlier version of this was published in Grey Sparrow Journal, July 1, 2011. Reprinted with permission.)

My foot catches on the threshold of the dim little house. The door is open, so I step in. “Hola?” I practically whisper it. Whoever might be behind the soiled calico curtain separating this room from the next surely did not hear me. My thumb strokes the talisman my father held as he died.

“I’ve been putting what’s left of my strength into it, my little squirrel,” he said as he placed the warm figure into my hand. “I no longer need it.”

I smooth the fabric of my housedress, faded blue and sprinkled with small yellow flowers. I made the dress myself, before I lost the weight, before my sad breasts deflated. I stopped wearing bras years ago but always wear underwear even though my girlfriend, Safia, swears it cuts the Havana heat by five degrees to go without. “Who will know?” Safia said, a sly twinkle in her eye, on her last visit.

Outside a rooster crows. Maybe it is the one that will be used for the ritual. Part of me feels regret for the bird, but the other, larger, portion of my heart is grateful for its sacrifice. My worry about Rolando—what he will do when I am gone—has grown heavy. I must do something. Perhaps the *santería* healer can cure me. The cock cries again. Better the rooster than Rolando, I say.

An ancient clock ticks in the corner of the room. Why would one who intercedes with the spirits need an earthly timepiece? Then I recall Safia telling me that, in his human form, the priest salvages old tires and resells them to buy his rice and put a roof over his head. “He could never live on the few *pesos* from people with one foot in the grave.” The gossipy morsel was out of Safia’s mouth before she could stop it, and we froze for a moment as the words hung between us. “Oh. Not you, *amiga*, your deathbed is far, far away.”

But each morning, it gets closer. My bent body has been unable to stand straight for months now. I used to have posture like a palm tree, despite the years hunched over a sewing machine. “Regal,” *Mamá* used to say, proud that people took notice when I walked into a room. They notice now, but it’s because they’re surprised I can still walk with no meat on my bones. They try to hide their reactions, but I can read what’s in their hearts. That’s a gift—and a curse—I’ve had since I was a girl.

Rolando has known this for three decades; still he tries to hold his feelings in. Long after he left for work this morning, the yoke of his dread pinned me to the bed. His fear is for me, of course, but for himself, too. *How will I live without you?*

I had tried hand him the talisman, but he placed his yellowed hands over mine. *Not yet. I cannot bear it.*

I should have told him the truth. *I do not have many days left. So much I need to say before I go. How I love you. How I wish I could have given you children.* I should have told him what I fear most: that he won't survive losing me. That my death will kill him.

At *Mamá's* wake, *Papá* wept about the fact that he hadn't told her how much he loved her before she left the house that morning. But, as I watched my father's body weaken day by day, I'd felt more sympathy for *Mamá*.

Later, when people spoke of my father's death, it was with a note of romantic admiration, "He simply couldn't live without her." But in my belly, I felt the burden *Mamá* must carry in the afterlife, the guilt of knowing she hadn't made it clear that he must continue to live without her, to love again.

This morning, I should have told Rolando, but, since I didn't, I must try one last thing, the thing I'd laughed at *Safia* for suggesting. "Me? Consult a *voudou* healer? I'll never be so desperate."

I could wait just inside the door, but I am tired from the dusty walk from the bus. The only thing that looks like furniture is a wooden crate in the corner. I sit. Where can the *santero* be?

I hear movement in the next room.

"*Hola?*"

The curtain is pushed back. In the dimness, I can see only two red-rimmed eyes, their dark irises gazing my direction. For a second, my words to *Safia* echo in my ears, All *santería* priests are drug addicts and frauds, I told her.

"I'm here for--"

"I know why you're here." He rubs his face and steps into the room. He wears a pair of cut-off jeans and no shirt. A scar runs from his right shoulder to his navel.

"I'm sorry I didn't make an appointment, it's just--"

"That is okay."

The sound of my stomach startles us both, and we look straight into each other's eyes. I see my death mask there. He takes both my hands in his. His face betrays nothing, but I can feel the conflict inside him. His good heart is ready to kill his only remaining rooster, but I can't let him. I move to stand up.

"You are hungry, Señora." He goes to a shelf on the wall and pulls down a box of something.

"No, I couldn't." I take a deep breath and look for the lily I smell. There are no flowers in the room.

It is time to leave.

"Pardon, Señor. I am sorry to have troubled you. I do not want to add to your burden."

His eyes hold relief and sorrow. "May you find peace."

As my right foot crosses the threshold into the sunlight, he says, "Señora, wait. Let me read the obi for you." He reaches out his hand. "I cannot cure your illness, but I can help you find the answer to the question that weighs on your heart."

My stomach tightens at the thought of knowing. I should leave. I never should have come here in the first place. This man is a fraud with his drug-addict eyes and shabby rooster.

"Please, *Señora*." It is the one thing he can do for me. Now that I am here, I must let him. The crate creaks as I sit.

He disappears into the other room and returns with a hammer, a coconut in a wooden bowl and a jug of water. He squats down on his haunches, lifts the hammer straight above his head and lets it down with a thud. The coconut breaks into four even pieces.

"Think of your question, *Señora*, while I wash the coconut." He mutters prayers as he pours the water over the pieces, holds each one up toward the light of one of the windows, rubs his finger across the surface. When he finishes with the fourth section, his mouth does not smile. His eyes do.

He breaks a small piece off each of the sections and places them before a statue on a shelf in the corner. "An offering to the *orisha*." He lifts his voice in calm cadence, soothing as a lullaby. I close my eyes, try to focus on the disquiet that has brought me here, but my thoughts become swirling shapes, rainbows whirling together, becoming one then separating into beads, cut off from the rest.

"*Señora*?" He touches my shoulder. "We are finished."

He could create any sanguine answer to set my mind at ease, but his heart is true. “Your loved one will miss you desperately, but see this formation here?” He wants to show me he is not a fraud. I already know what he will say, but I give him the pleasure of delivering the words. “He will live a long while after you are gone. Someone else will need him as you have.”

One hot tear rolls along the side of my nose, down the crease next to my mouth.

I have been holding my breath—since I sat down on the crate, I think. Now I let it out, pull in another lungful. The sweetest I have breathed in a long time.

I reach into my pocket for the crumpled *pesos* I tucked in there this morning and place them in the priest’s hand. It is warm. “*Muchas gracias*, may God be with you, *Señor*.”

“And you, sister. You have a beautiful soul.”

END

SERENITY OF THE SUNRISE

MAX C. SCHMIDELER



CONTRIBUTORS

James M. Billings – Bovie in the Morning

James grew up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, went to Columbia University in New York for his undergraduate education and then obtained a M. Div. degree in southern California before medical school. He follows in the steps of his grandfather in writing poetry as a way of remembering important moments of his life. This poem was written in remembrance of his eight weeks on his surgery rotation, the first rotation of his M3 year.

William L. Berger – They Don't Bury You With Your Pager

Dr. Berger has been with MCW for 25 years, mostly at the VA. He is old enough to remember when pagers were a big deal and realistic enough to know that if this poem isn't published soon, no one will be left who understands its context.

Madison Breiland – Hope

My name is Madison Breiland and I'm an M2 at MCW. Mental health is an extremely important and yet often overlooked topic of discussion within medicine, and I'm hoping that this piece may help in contributing to that conversation.

Meredith Buck – Keeping Perspective

My name is Meredith Buck, and I am a fourth year medical student at MCW. My inspiration for this poem is through my personal experience as a patient's family member. As a medical student in the wards, I've noticed throughout my rotations it's possible to become robotic and hyper-focused on the next task at hand. While delivering updates of any kind I urge us to remain sensitive regarding the struggle the patient and his/her family may be going through.

Meredith Buck – Whole

My name is Meredith Buck, and I am a fourth year medical student at MCW. My inspiration for this poem was during my third year surgical rotation in surgical oncology.

Alhaji Camara – Burs / Decaying / White

Photography has been creative outlet and meditative practice for Alhaji for the past 5 years. His macrophotography subject matter features nature in its most unadulterated states, a practice he began when he found himself escaping to forests to collect himself to keep up with challenges he faced in life. Alhaji took photography classes at Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and Marquette University. He is currently a photographer for the Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service and third year medical student at MCW.

Cy Clark – The Adult Caretaker Blues / Leaving Froedtert

I enjoy writing (poetry/short story) and photography (landscape, urban reflections). I have a degree in English-Creative Writing from UW - Milwaukee.

Olivia Davies – Full Room / Killer in Disguise

Olivia Davies is a second year medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Olivia finds solace in poetry and has found that it helps her to cope with events that have occurred in her life. Looking forward, she hopes to pursue a career in dermatology, with an emphasis on global health.

Koenraad De Roo – Out/In

Koenraad De Roo has been with MCW since 2013. He currently serves as the Student Health & Wellness Coordinator. Koenraad has born in Belgium and grew up in a very creative family. Son of two teachers, youngest of four siblings, each with their own artistic tendencies from painting, to sewing, to music. He likes to write freestyle poetry, free from the constraints of predetermined rhyme, rhythm and form.

Britt K. DeRuyter – A Silent Exchange

I started medical school with four boys aged 7 and under. There haven't been many instances where my children have been excited about me being a medical student; however, one day was different. I brought home a human skull specimen from school to study anatomy from and simultaneously opened a box of curiosity and fascination that can only be felt through the eyes of a child. The boys were contemplative and their questions were purposeful. It was an effectual learning experience for all of us, and, for the first time, it was cool to have a medical student for a mom.

Britt K. DeRuyter – New Skin

I follow a dermatologist for my specialty interest clinical experience. We met a busy, young mother who had been suffering with poorly-controlled eczema since her childhood. She described her constant discomfort as feeling like she was living in a shell of sandpaper. She wanted nothing more than to shed her skin and start new. This drawing is how I conceptualize the feeling of healing and new hope.

Krishna Doshi – A Page From an Immigrant’s Diary / Somewhere in All These Years

An Indian born and raised in Oman. Loves everything Indian. Old fashioned soul who still sends out letters and postcards. Loves sweaters but hates winter. An outgoing introvert who reads political nonfiction for fun and wants to retrace Buddha’s steps in her next adventure.

Cathy Drexler – El Día de los Muertos / Lake Effect Snow / The Old Barn

After a career in O.R. nursing and nurse anesthesia, I attended M.C.W. during my 30's, and trained at M.C.W. in anesthesiology. Following private practice career, I now enjoy the rewards and challenges of academic anesthesiology, specializing in obstetric anesthesia. Interests include spending time outdoors, doing trail running and nature photography.

Sean Ershadi – Be the Dragon

I'm a fourth year medical student applying to Interventional and Diagnostic Radiology for residency this Fall. This drawing was meant to motivate me while studying for Step 2 CK by combining my love of Game of Thrones with Calvin and Hobbes.

Constance Joel – Unsheltered

Constance is a senior medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She is a San Diego native and attended Whittier College in Whittier, CA. Here she earned a Bachelor of Arts, completed a double major in Kinesiology and Studio Art, and played four years of DIII Lacrosse. During her time at MCW, she has strengthened her love of medicine and continued to pursue her extracurricular passions in global health, wilderness medicine, and volunteering with the Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured. Outside of school Constance enjoys staying active at the gym, hiking, painting, and spending time with close friends

Aditya Karandikar – Balance

I took this photograph in Chicago after a Coldplay concert and feel like it nicely captures the dichotomy between the hustle bustle of city life and making time for family. As future physicians it's important for us to take time to take care of ourselves and enjoy our own lives. Sometimes that means slowing down, disconnecting, and taking a much needed walk in a park. I don't know the four individuals shown, but the peacefulness and cohesiveness of their moment is universal.

Aditya Karandikar – Vision

Eye contact is so powerful an action that it transcends interspecies barriers. Gazing into someone's eyes is an invitation for them to stare into yours – a direct connection between two central nervous systems, a magically mutual acknowledgment. But our vision flows from one infinitesimally small moment to the next, never allowing us to fully revisit the past pages of our sight. My beautiful classmate and girlfriend was gracious enough to let me capture this sliver of time and preserve it. I hope you find it as lovely as I do.

Madeline Klippel – Anxiety (Drowning Under Pressure)

As a first-year medical student, I am no stranger to the anxiety and stress that comes with a strenuous workload and long days of studying. It can oftentimes be difficult to keep one's head above water and can seem like even the smallest ripples of day-to-day life can create a tsunami of emotions. I created this piece to bring to light that one's mental health is just as important of a priority as physical wellbeing. It's important to take time each day for relaxation and fun, take care of your body, and get the emotional support you need to keep your head above water before falling too far below the surface.

Manar Mohammad – I Am Afraid / They Come For Me

Manar Mohammad is an M1 from Kenosha, WI. Her poetry is heavily influenced by her experiences living abroad and the stories of those she was privileged to serve during her medical mission trips. She is a strong believer that medicine serves as a universal language, capable of bridging gaps between people of various backgrounds. She hopes to practice medicine while simultaneously using language as a way to connect to people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Johnathon Neist and Jordan Barclay – 13 Med School Emails Why

Johnathon Neist is an instructional designer within the Office of Educational Improvement at MCW. In his work he prefers to use library science and open educational resources to help improve the quality of medical education. A lifelong Wisconsin resident, he believes that cheese curds are like snowflakes and all should be appreciated for their inherent beauty.

Jordan Barclay is the Sr. Administrative Assistant in the MCW Medical School Office of Admissions. Her favorite part of her job is interacting with the wonderful medical school applicants when they come to campus for their interviews. Jordan transplanted into Milwaukee from Seattle nearly ten years ago, bringing her love of live music, gloomy days, and coffee with her.

Allia Nelson – Future of Medicine

Allia Nelson is a coordinator for the MCW Tissue Bank. Her passions include research, writing and board games.

Joanne Nelson – On Coming Home from the Conference

Joanne Nelson is the 2017 winner of The Peninsula Pulse's Hal Prize in nonfiction. Her writing appears in *the museum of americana*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *Redivider*, *Brevity*, *Consequence*, and others. She is a contributor to Lake Effect on 89.7 WUWM, the local NPR affiliate. In addition, Nelson gives presentations on topics related to meditation, mindfulness and writing, the personal essay, and creativity. Nelson lives in Hartland, Wisconsin where she develops and leads community writing programs, maintains a psychotherapy practice, and, of course, adjuncts. She holds an MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars. Additional information can be found at wakeupthe-writerwithin.com.

Ahmed Obeidat – Camouflage

Ahmed Obeidat received his MD from the Jordan University of Science and Technology in 2008. Ahmed then obtained a Ph.D. in Neuroscience and Physiology from Wright State University where he received the graduate student excellence award and served as a President's Ambassador. Ahmed finished neurology training at the University of Cincinnati where he is currently completing a fellowship in Neuroimmunology. Ahmed will join the department of neurology at the MCW in 2018 as an Assistant Professor. Ahmed likes to read and write poetry and narrative medicine. Ahmed is an elected member of the Phi-Kappa-Phi and the Alpha-Omega-Alpha honor societies.

Rushi Patel – Appendectomy

I'm Rushi Patel, an M2 medical Student. A comic I was inspired to make while brainstorming ideas for the Student Surgical Society's t-shirt design.

Rushi Patel – Sand Dunes of Lake Huron

This is a piece from last year; my goal was to draw something that represented a strong, positive emotion from my childhood. This scene is on the sand dunes on the coast of Lake Huron, from the first time I saw a shooting star. Now, when I look back at this drawing, that feeling of awe and boyhood wonder comes back to me. It reminds me that even when the stress of school is weighing heavy on me, the world is still a big beautiful place full of wonder, and it provides some much needed perspective.

Douglas Pierce – Plight of the Junior Medical Student

Raised in Colorado, Doug has made his home in Milwaukee with his wife, children, two goldfish, and one hamster. When he's not in the wards he enjoys reading, mountain biking, and building stuff in the backyard. He looks forward to a career in diagnostic radiology.

William Reinhardt – Anconeus / Beautiful / Remember Goats?

My name is William Reinhardt, and I am a student in the Masters in Medical Physiology program here at MCW. I graduated from UW Madison with majors in psychology and neurobiology and hope to attend medical school with the goal of becoming a psychiatrist.

AshLeigh Sanchez – Ill-anelle, or The Hypochondriac

AshLeigh Sanchez, MA, is the Communication & Administration Support Specialist for the Office of Research at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She facilitates regular internal and external communications, provides support to department leaders, and assists with special projects. AshLeigh attended graduate school at Mount Mary University and is also an Adjunct Instructor of Communications for Bryant & Stratton College. She enjoys classic movies, reading novels, and creative writing, particularly formal poetry and short fiction. Her work has appeared in *Gravel Magazine* and *Corner Club Press*.

Max C. Schmideler – Serenity of the Sunrise

Watching the sunrise is my favorite hobby. Be it from the shores of Lake Michigan, the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, or the wide open skies of Texas, I am continuously amazed by the beauty and grandeur of this daily occurrence. A sense of peace consumes me. Every day is a gift to be cherished. I love this photograph and the incredible life it displays! Taking time to appreciate the little things can elevate moods, reduce stress and anxiety, and reinvigorate the soul. As Dr. Phillip Hughes once said, "Light is most definitely a nutrient... essential to life."

Antoinette Spector – Confessions of a (Former) Health Educator

Antoinette is a PhD student in the Public & Community Health Program. She is also a licensed physical therapist, board-certified in orthopedic physical therapy, and has spent over 10 years “educating” people on how to change their behaviors to improve their health. Her research interests are in health disparities, particularly the social determinants of health and the role health professionals play in improving health outcomes for racially- and economically-disadvantaged groups.

Kim Suhr – Leave Taking

Kim Suhr is facilitator of *The Moving Pens*, the MCW writing practice and critique group sponsored by the Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities. Her work has appeared in various literary journals, online and in print. Her short story collection, *Nothing to Lose & Other Stories*, was a finalist for the Eludia Award. Kim serves on the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Writers Association and she is Director of Red Oak Writing.

Francis Tongpalad – Invisible 1-3

My name is Francis Tongpalad and I am currently an M1 on the Milwaukee campus. Photography is a medium I use to express myself when words are not enough. It is a way for me to better understand the world and learn more about myself in the process. These images are an attempt to bring light to health issues which are often invisible but equally important to address. They are snapshots of a country that continues to grapple with how to best aid those who have been pushed to the margins of our society.

Zhan Xu – Happy Father’s Day

This work is a Father’s Day gift. My father is a hardcore, iron-fist military man. Growing up, we spoke very little about anything other than my studies or career. Interestingly, my father is a very talented poet, but he never exposed his sensitive side or his love to me, probably due to his upbringing. My father and I were enemies during my adolescence, leaving my mother trembling and helpless, caught in between. But now that I have been living across the entire Pacific Ocean for years, the meaningless ice shielding our hearts has melted, and I have begun to realize how much I miss and admire my father.

Zhan Xu – I Just Conquered This Bridge

This work was finished during the summer of 2013 when I came to MCW. After running a quarter marathon over the Hoan Bridge, I was excited and not yet satisfied. It was a beautiful day, so I ran back to my ‘04 Pontiac, grabbed my watercolor supplies from the trunk, and then ran back to the port under the bridge I had just conquered. Two hours later, this work was complete. Now I’m about to graduate, raising a family, and driving an SUV with a car seat, but whenever I look at this painting, I recall the passion and energy burst I felt at my best age.

STUDENT EDITORS

Joseph Hodapp

Joe is a third-year medical student from Duluth, MN. His interest in storytelling began as a fourth-grader in Cottenham, England, in a land of castles, knights, dragons, and dungeons. He enjoys writing short stories and fiction, and participates regularly in MCW's writing group – *Moving Pens*. He believes in the importance of the arts as an outlet for human emotion, expression, and connection, and intends to continue writing throughout his career.

Kim Tyler

Kim is a second-year medical student who is originally from Indianapolis, IN. She graduated from Purdue University in 2013 (Boiler Up!) and also has a Master's in Chemistry from UW-Madison. She enjoys reading, writing, running, and drinking a lot of very black coffee. She plans on pursuing a career in palliative care.

Kyle Murray

Kyle Murray is a second-year medical student at MCW who has a background in the humanities and creative writing, having attended Indiana University to study English Language and Literature. Originally from around Louisville, KY, Kyle grew up writing short horror and science fiction stories and continues to foster a passion for writing and literature. In addition to serving as a co-editor of *Auscult*, he is the Managing Editor of *in-House*, an online peer-reviewed publication for residents and fellows. Kyle hopes to pursue a career in Hematology/Oncology, or whatever specialty happens to spark his interest.

FACULTY EDITOR

Bruce H. Campbell, MD

Bruce is an otolaryngologist, a head and neck cancer surgeon, and a faculty member in the Medical Humanities Program. He has a passion for Narrative Medicine and has published essays, fiction, and poetry in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, *Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics*, *The Examined Life Journal*, *Auscult*, and *Creative Wisconsin*. He blogs at *Reflections in a Head Mirror* (www.froedtert.com/reflections).

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