

Untitled | DRAWING
GABRIELA CRINIGAN, *Multilingual Services*



Auscultation (ôskultā'shən)

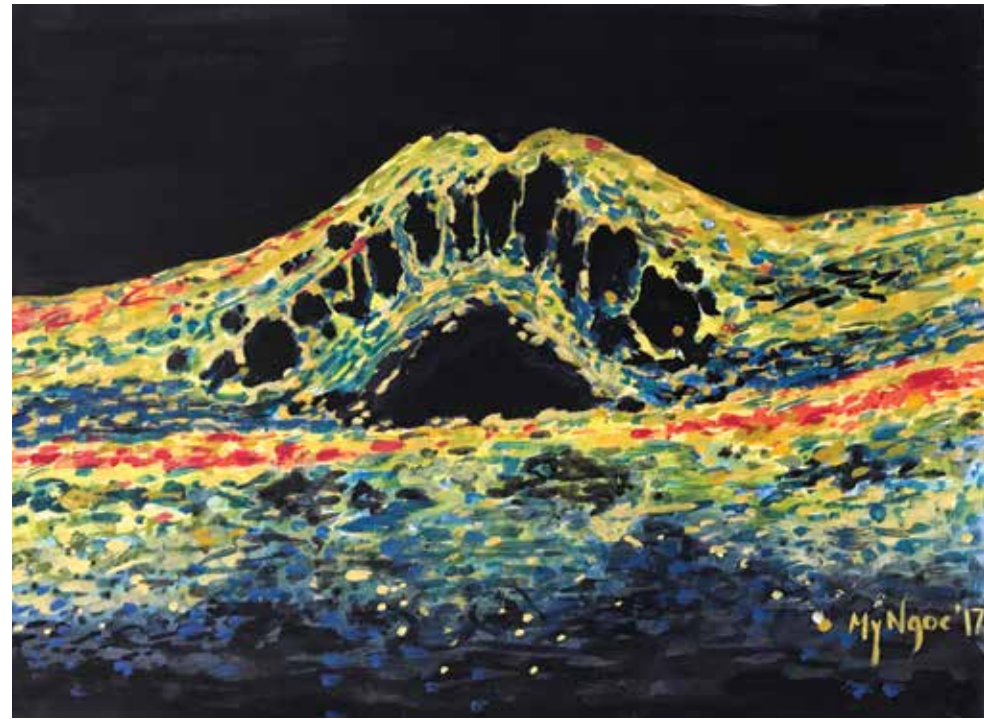
The process of listening to sounds that are produced in the body. Indirect auscultation involves the use of a stethoscope to amplify the sounds from within the body, like a heartbeat.

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FRONT COVER

Ethiopia | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
LU SANTOS, *Somerville Emergency*



Hard Time Seeing | PAINTING
MY NGOC TO, *Psychiatry*



Untitled | PHOTOGRAPHY
WILLIAM ZINN, *Medicine*

UM SUSPIRO VALE MAIS QUE MIL PALAVRAS

SUSSEN GAZAL MILLER | *Multilingual Services* | MAPS

Como você interpreta um suspiro?
Com meu silêncio.

E o rolar de uma lágrima?
Com o baixar dos olhos.

E uma notícia ruim?
Com as mãos entrelaçadas.

E uma notícia boa?
Com largo sorriso.

E quando a dor é tanta que sai num grito?
Com um abraço.

E se o paciente for um amigo?
Com discrição e sigilo.

E se os Santos não se cruzam?
Com um suspiro.

E se a consulta não acaba?
Tomo outro gole de água.

E se ninguém te escuta?
Ouço a chuva.

E ao final do dia?
Vou a pé pra casa

A SIGH IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

How to interpret a sigh?
With my silence.

And the rolling of a tear?
By lowering the eyes.

And bad news?
With hands intertwined.

And good news?
By beaming.

And when the pain is so immense that it comes out as an offense?
With a hug.

What if the patient is a friend?
With still discretion.

What if the planets retrograde?
With a sigh.

And if the appointment doesn't end?
I take another sip of water and blend.

What if no one listens?
I listen to the rain.

And at the end of the day?
I walk home.

A FATHER'S MISTRESS

ANUPRIYA GROVER

Family Medicine

He stands at his desk, pants pulled an inch too high,
bright red vest and crisp white collared shirt
A red stethoscope sits perfectly along the back of his
neck, as if it were created for him alone
Pen in hand, always writing something down, always
signing off on a script

I hear the echoes of his commanding voice, giving orders
with his eyes peering above the rim of his silver lined
frames; that look of seriousness and complete focus on
the task at hand that may rival only my brother's
Murmuring under his breath; decisions that confirm
diagnoses and alter lives

He travels from the yellow room to the blue one, walking
into the most private recesses of his patients' lives,
stripping them of their diseases and afflictions while
keeping their dignity intact

He sutures simple, interrupted stitches, alternating
between gentle strokes of gauze as he wipes trickles of
blood in between knots, as if he was the great Sushruta
himself

Disorganized skin hangs under his eyes; his face has lost
the firmness of its youth, which is now hidden under years
of patients' stories, ridden with anxiety, hurt, pain
His features show years of many things that should never
have been, setbacks and familial situations that have left
blemishes, revealing a sense of loss and disappointment
for a life that should have been easier

What has settled in its place, however, is an abscess that
has been drained too many times and that has scarred
over

From there, has emerged a new person, remaining
resilient, ambitious, and never resisting the chance to
fight to keep the sanctity of his damaged, yet unbroken
soul

I am astounded at the number of patients that flock to
the great healer, bowing before his skill, empathetic ear,
and even gentler touch

As he has sworn by Apollo, the healer, to be true to
medicine and to the purity of its life and art
And so he is

I see his patients look at him with a sense of mystery and
utter admiration for the perfection and precision of his
craft and then glancing at me

Questioning whether I, too, will ever master medicine the
way he has, to be ever so captivated by the demanding
mistress that is medicine

But his discerning eye and wise council has made a
student of me, and his fatherly love and guidance has
made me a better daughter

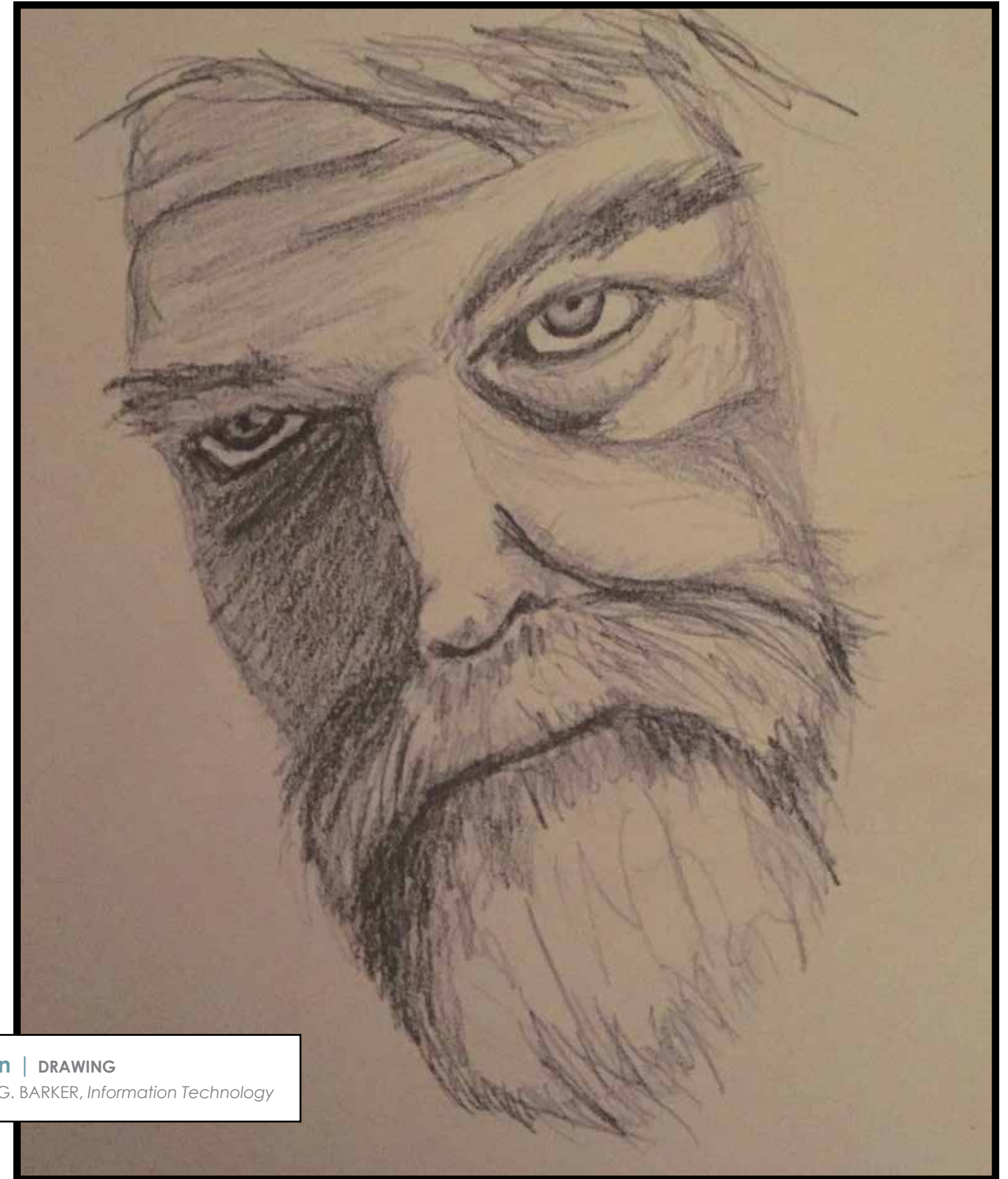
For I have often thought that the passion and
extraordinary skill he brings to his craft are attributes that
draw me back to the art that I once was ready to leave
so quickly

And for him, for my father alone, I promise to consider
dear to me he who taught me this art

To forgive his transgressions and find love in the mistress,
the craft, the art that had pushed me away and
burned a dark scar onto my soul that feels like it may be
irreparable; to forge onwards and begin a collection of
my own patient stories and allow them to help shape my
own

And so, I have since changed my vision of this courtesan
they call medicine,

For I am focused on my new aspirations, prepared
to return, and ready to assuage my father's fear that
perhaps his legacy will be forgotten among the colorful
rooms and wooden panels that make up his livelihood
and nourish his heart.



Old Man | DRAWING

MICHELLE G. BARKER, *Information Technology*



Monet's Garden | PHOTOGRAPHY
JO SOLET, *Medicine*

WHAT TO SAY

BENJAMIN ADLER | *Family Medicine*

She bares her soul
Exposes a deep wound
Sits there gently in the poorly cushioned chair
Eyes lost and afraid, tears rolling slowly onto
the rough doctor's office tissues

My turn:
Pause longer to see what else lies beneath
these first words?
Explain the possibilities slowly without
complicated medical terms?
Genuinely express my sympathies?
Write it out so she remembers when the shock
wears off?
Name her emotions?
Ask that perfect question that helps her figure
out what to do next?

They wanted to have another child
He died suddenly
Pregnancy test is now positive
It's a piece of him that could live on
But she can't see how to do it alone
What do I do?

Her eyes hesitantly swivel to meet mine
I'm still not sure what to say
Better not to ponder perfect phrasing
Just sit next to her with the pain in the air



CITIZEN

GERARD COSTE | *Internal Medicine*

The medical visit was over. So I thought. "Soy Ciudadano" He recalls crossing the border inside a tanker truck. The \$200 cab ride to LA; the phone call to "primo" in Revere; the flight to Boston; 80 hours work week. Waiting 20 years.
"Citizen"
"Si,Ciudadano"
We embrace. Sheepishly we cry.

Untitled | PAINTING

GABRIELA CRINIGAN, *Multilingual Services*

halfeti rose.

HEATHER BRAGER | *Multilingual Services*

nowhere near providence, she has found him again
slumped forward, a deconstructed flower
in his closed fists, invisible treasures
an eternity of skies written on his arm
silent bewilderment in his eyes, almost
like the afternoon they met

the broken mantle clock
futures of observant children
the gift of a self-portrait lying
on a kitchen table, now framed in the dark
how his hands once felt on her skin

she watches her own fingers trace his spine
witnesses a foreign voice recite
a prayer in a whisper
it must have kept her alive when he left
something kept her alive
years compressed into a hand tracing a spine
clarity drowns and resurfaces
love is not an emotion, but meager sustenance
she turns her face to the ocean, pulling steadily on
the horizon, wave upon wave crashing down
an eternity of skies
an eternity of skies

SOY INTÉRPRETE | I AM AN INTERPRETER

ESTER RIU | *Multilingual Services*

Comunicación	Communication
Fronteras	Borders
Dolor	Pain
Felicidad	Happiness
Angustia	Anguish
Espera	Waiting
Urgencia	Urgency
Diagnóstico	Diagnostic
Fortaleza	Strength
Familia	Family
Costumbres	Customs
Soledad	Loneliness
Empatía	Empathy
Conexión	Connection
Humildad	Humbleness
Transparencia	Transparency
Cultura	Culture
Confusión	Confusion
Entereza	Fortitude
Lágrimas	Tears
Agradecimiento	Gratitude
Respeto	Respect
Esperanza	Hope

Rooftops, North Cambridge | PAINTING
BIANCA SHAGRIN, *Pediatrics* (TOP)

Untitled | PAINTING
ANNA GOLDMAN, *Internal Medicine* (CENTER)

Jan-45 | PAINTING
LU SANTOS, *Somerville Emergency* (BOTTOM)



AKO | PAINTING
ALLAN TORRES CAMBA, *Laboratory*



AT THE RETREAT

ELISSA ELY | *Psychopharmacology*

In the Retreat Center, every dormitory room held a single bed, a corner sink, a straight chair with an informational binder on it, and an alarm clock. The informational binder had a Table of Contents but no map of local restaurants or outlet stores. Instead, there was a section on “Keeping Noble Silence” (p 6), one on “Meditation Hall Etiquette” (p. 7), and another on “Mindfulness of the Environment” (p 13). For those who read thoroughly, there was also a fact page on Tornadoes, and one on Lyme Disease.

Provisions were simple; we had been instructed to bring our own towels and sheets from home for the bed. I found an old set in a third floor closet: yellow, with Winnie the Pooh and Piglet up and down the edges. They caused tender feelings--nostalgic linen from a mothering past.

After Sitting Meditation and Walking Meditation, more Sitting Meditation and some more Walking, we ate meals in the dining hall to the sound of no voices talking and 100 spoons not making noise. The occasional cough

was magnified, and acute listeners might have heard birdseed dropping from feeders outside. Bell-ringing, which began at 5:20 am, seemed especially resonant.

No one strode down hallways. Movements were slow and purposeful, as if a lower speed limit somehow increased inner visibility. It felt a little extravagant; here we were, sitting and walking, walking and sitting, while out in the world, there were marches, phone calls, partisan noise. What use is a meditation retreat to humanity?

Heading to breakfast on the last morning, I opened a door and bumped hard into someone opening it at the same time from the other side. It was my fault. Instead of mindfulness, I had been contemplating oatmeal. —So sorry, she said immediately. —Me, too, I said. Four little words, without even a verb to kick them into action. A few minutes later, chewing as noiselessly as I possibly could, it occurred to me that a bit of decency between strangers was worth breaking Noble Silence for.

THE BUSINESS OF SAVING LIVES

(DEDICATED TO THE VICTIMS OF THE LAS VEGAS MASSACRE)

EDDY TOUSSAINT | *Multilingual Services*

Amidst our busy workload challenging the curse of human illnesses we found time to afford a night out, a lovely get together of colleagues enjoying rare moments of leisure, laughter, and laissez-faire flippancy, symbiotic team spirit under the season's generous charm playing along with life's cadence after giving much unconditional love and human empathy for duress during a long week of trial and effort; such a pleasure it is to be alive and well on this beautiful Earth of ours.

Our choices are multidimensional, carved in the perimeter of being, the instant could become either a dead end or an eternal exploration of space or the joyful and painful journeys experienced throughout our living; will you make of it a beauty or an agony?

We are in the business of saving lives and bringing smiles to faces ravaged by pain, more reasons we lament all killings of humans be they perpetrated in our names or our greed or for the twisted

pleasure of an unrestrained ego. We save even the killers' lives when we can, still we place in the same basket of horrors killing for the honor of the Fatherland in the middle of battle on vast lands animated by fear and the fervor of the flag, and the killing by drones from afar while sitting in an air-conditioned crib detached from the nuisance of human emotion; yet we watch others benefit from the darkness, while the barbarians have ever more guns.

How can we let people die of neglect within the plenitude of waste? Why can't we harvest what is best of ourselves minus the jackals of all stripes and remake our world in the image of justice and love?

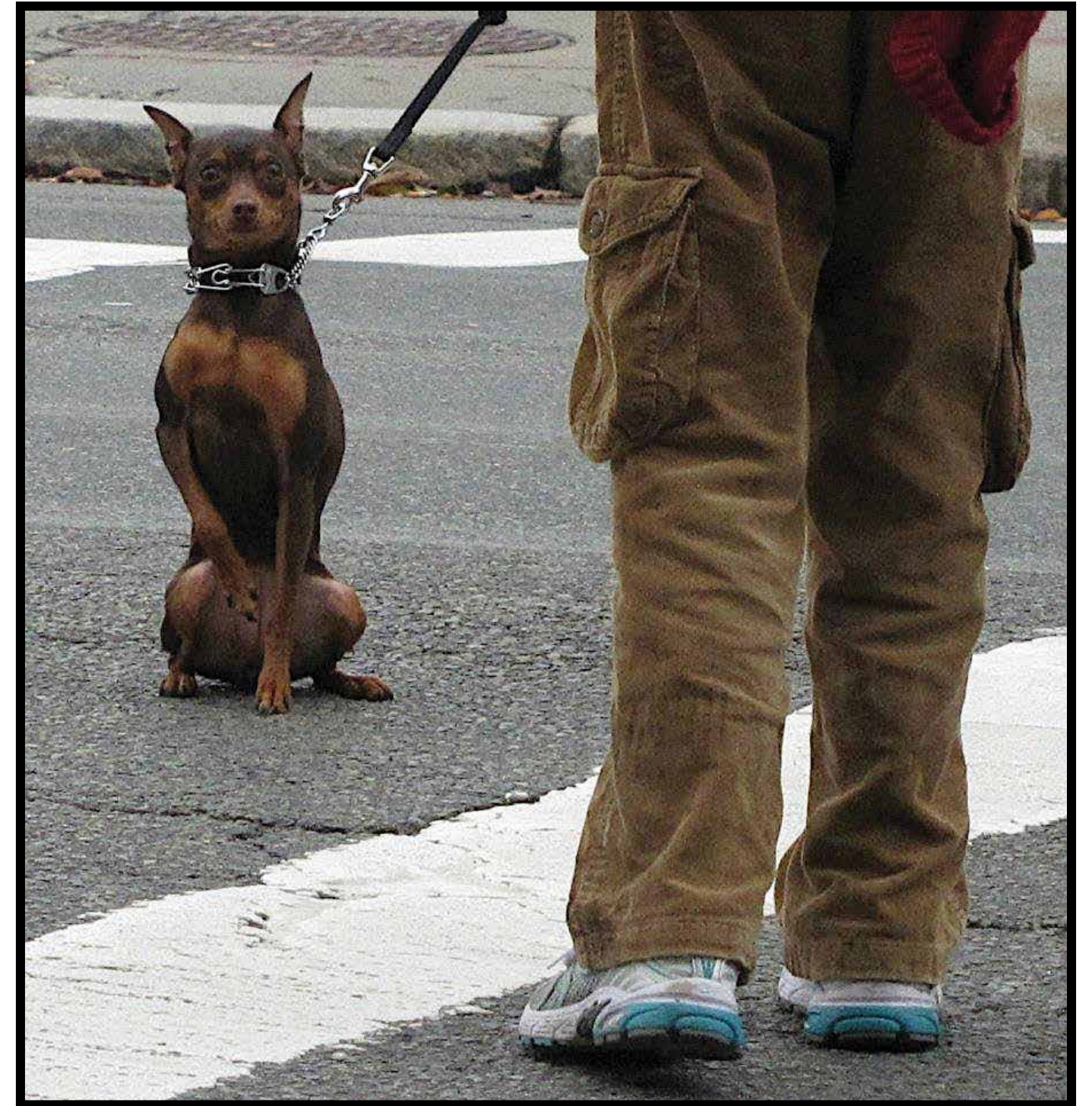
I recollect January 21st, 2017, the immense ocean of people joining hands to reject the poison that was offered as redemption; their foresight proved so right even in the distance of time. In the face of democraticide and menace on all fronts resistance is our most precious

means to uphold our values and ideals.

We are torn between many loves and conflicting choices that can be unified in transcendental solidarity. My friend, we should continue to dance, even in the absence of music and song.

Between the unknown of the next instant and the overlapping of the past and present, the evolutionary process never stops, nor do the occasions to despair; still also exist moments to rejoice and bring about ample new beginnings; the covenant to reach beauty can be achieved in due time.

Let's all choose the long course of wisdom over the narrow-mindedness of the instant. I'm looking forward to the next full moon penetrating the spellbinding calm of a New England Fall night.



Dog with legs | PHOTOGRAPHY
CHRISTINE AQUILINO, *Geriatric Psychiatry*



Philadelphia - the city of brotherly love | PHOTOGRAPHY
 (Photo of public mural art Colorful Legacy by Willis "Nomo"
 Humphrey & Keir Johnston, painted 2015)
 ELZBIETA JACEK, Family Medicine



Alley | PHOTOGRAPHY
 ELENI CARR, Care Integration (OPPOSITE: TOP LEFT)

Sunset Sail | PHOTOGRAPHY
 ELENI CARR, Care Integration (OPPOSITE: TOP RIGHT)

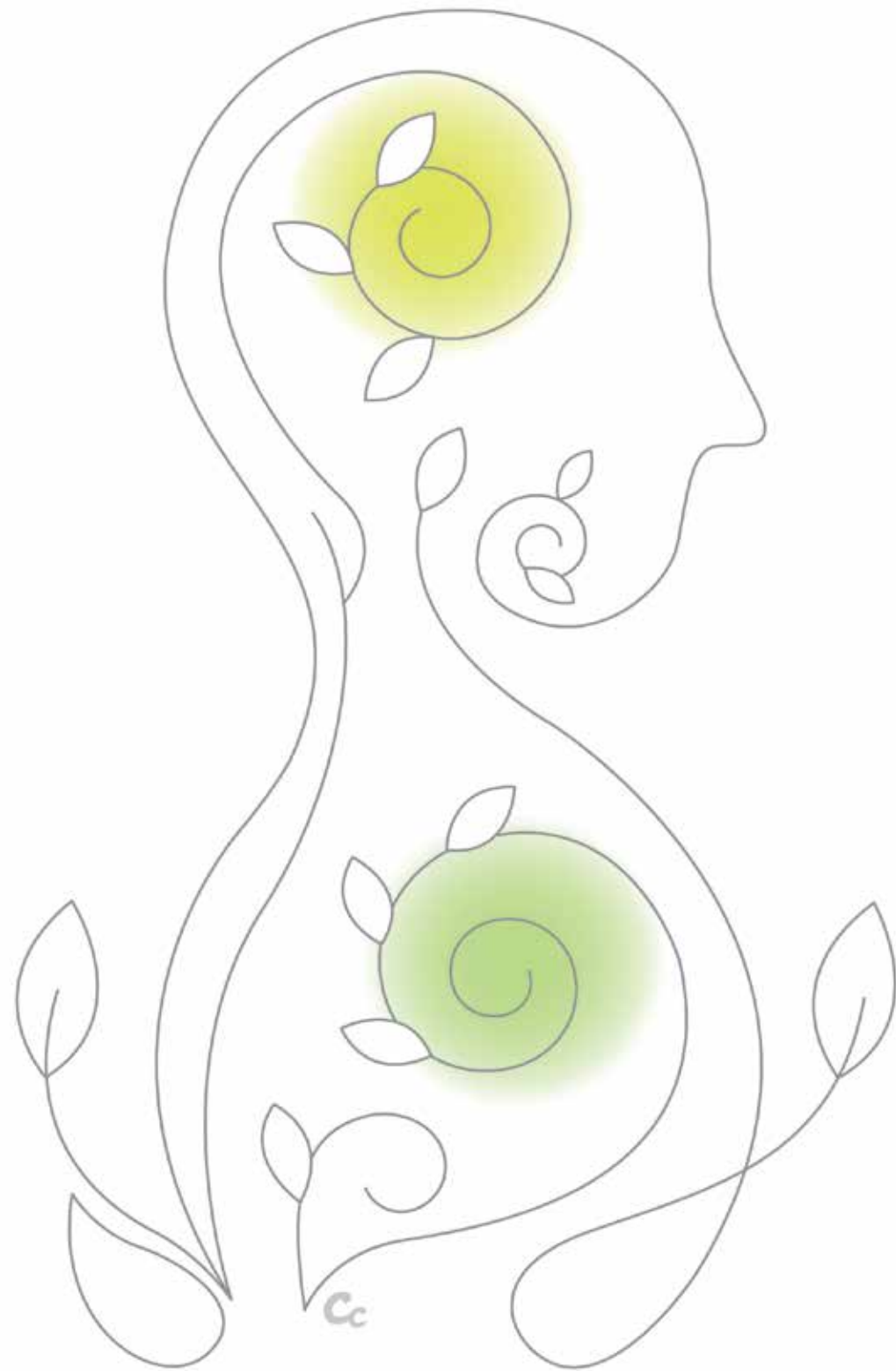
Puerto Rico's People Will Dance Again | PHOTOGRAPHY
 ESTER RIU, Multilingual Services (OPPOSITE: BOTTOM LEFT)

Early Morning Backstreet, Venice | PHOTOGRAPHY
 RALPH UPCHURCH, Emergency Medicine (OPPOSITE: BOTTOM RIGHT)

"On (In)Justice"

JENNIFER BAKALAR |
 Psychiatry

Lamenting to lambs
 the hardship of the lions –
 Cue the violins
 violence.



Growth | DRAWING
CHRIS CENSULLO, *Marketing*

SVT

JESSICA PLATT | *Family Medicine*

Blow out the candle
My finger hovered before her dry cracked lips
Almost felt ironic
To be extinguishing
A fake flame
When her life was nearing its end

Monitors beeped all around her
Heart rate close to
Two hundred
As if trying to fit in as many beats
Before its final pause

I said her name over and over
As my hand lay on her bony shoulder
Watching her chest heave
Against her ribs
As she continued to pant
Her son's shoulders hunched
As he turned his back
And glasses slipped down his nose
Riding his tears
To the ground

Do you sing in the shower?
She asked suddenly
Eyes locking mine, inquisitive
I smiled

And said yes
As she started to croon at the top
Of her lungs
And her heart began to hum
Happy birthday



Whale in the Sun | PHOTOGRAPHY
CAITLIN G. D'AGATA, *Family Medicine*

I AM A GREENHOUSE

SUSSEN GAZAL MILLER | *Multilingual Services*

I am a greenhouse
Spring sprouts inside of me
Love is my organic matter
Matters to recycle what was decomposed
Left to waist and vulture visits.

I am a greenhouse
Everything beating and pulsating
Inside of me requires
Carbon, nitrogen, water, air and
Passion to grow.

I host a family of Earthworms
Who help me, cleaning my debris
For the Daffodils to blossom
Next to the Carnations and
Azaleas.

I am a greenhouse
I can be a cozy nursery
But I also suit to be a room in the
Emergency, where rapid high heat
Is vital to destroy pathogens and seeds.

I am a glass house and doing so
Tonight I am hosting an Open House
Welcoming Northern Spring, Vernal Equinox
Super Moon along with the Eclipse of the Sun
I won't be able to see them, though
But left a myriad of signs by the door.

Welcome to Your Guest house
Where the Deer mouse
Walk on Eggshells to disturb not
Gardenias, Camellias and Ambrosias.

COMFORT FOOD

CHRISTINE AQUILINO | *Geriatric Psychiatry*

• THE AUTHOR HAS ALTERED THIS STORY TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF THE PATIENT •

Every Wednesday afternoon, I visited Lena. She lived in a two-story walk-up, where she had become homebound since a stroke partially paralyzed her. She was nearly deaf, too, and I had to knock so loudly to announce my arrival that my knuckles hurt. She struggled to open the door, breathing heavily, murmuring all the while, "Wait. Wait." Then she turned away without looking at me, took a few steps, pivoted, and collapsed into a chair at her kitchen table a few feet away.

Lena was a stout 86 year-old woman with wispy gray hair she rarely bothered to comb. She wore dentures when she had visitors. They were loose and moved while she talked, giving her voice a nasal, whistling quality. The stroke affected her left side: she wore a leg brace and kept her left arm in a sling. The stroke also affected her emotions. Her moods were in constant flux. She screamed out one moment and cried the next. But mostly Lena was anxious. To calm herself, she picked at her skin. Her arms and legs were a patchwork of scabs at different stages of healing. Some were covered with band-aids, but most of these were peeling off. They flapped when she moved, like flags. Lena was always hot, even when it was cold in her apartment. She wore a simple cotton shift and didn't bother with underwear, except for an adult diaper her home health aide put on her each morning. By the time I arrived, though, she had already removed it, letting it drop wherever she happened to be. Her shift rode high on her legs and I asked her to pull it down.

Visits with Lena were predictable like this. I was her psychiatric social worker, assigned her case because her cries and screams had alarmed her neighbors and because she had become paranoid. She'd fired one homemaker and health aide after another, accusing them of stealing. The elder service agency was hoping if she met with a therapist she'd become more cooperative so they could find a replacement. But on this particularly memorable visit, no one had come for two weeks and

it showed. The entire floor was covered with rotting food, discarded tissues, and adult diapers soaked with urine. The stench was overpowering. The mess formed a path between her, her bed, and the bathroom. The worst of it, though, surrounded her chair at the kitchen table. Lena was upset about this, but was oblivious to her part in her predicament.

I asked Lena's permission to tidy the place up. "Okay," she said. Lena was going blind and I was afraid that if I left her in this mess, she would fall and get hurt. This meant that I spent an extra hour with her, even though I couldn't bill for it. I washed dishes and scrubbed pots cluttering the sink and countertop. I found a broom and swept the floors and filled three garbage bags with trash, which I brought out to the dumpster behind her apartment building. Lena was grateful for my help. "God sent you to me today," she said.

God was Lena's reference point for everything that happened to her. Every day, when Lena had reached a point of despair, she called the prayer line. Nuns who answered her call prayed with her. Lena found this comforting, if only for a few minutes. Then her feelings overwhelmed her again.

When I finished cleaning, I sat down at the table. Lena wanted to talk about her early life. She liked to tell the same stories again and again: that she was beautiful once, that she married young -- "We all married young then" -- and that after giving birth to twin boys and a girl in three years, her husband deserted her for another woman. She was only 22. She divorced him and believed this was a terrible sin, a sin for which she worried God was still punishing her.

Lena's parents took care of the children during the day while she worked as a stitcher in an illegal sweatshop to support them. She told me her boss locked the doors to the factory and would not allow the workers to leave their stations. "Not even to use the toilet," she whispered, rounding her eyes and raising her

eyebrows for emphasis. When Lena's father died, her mother moved in with her and the children. She was proud of how hard she worked to take care of her family. But she insisted she didn't expect this of her own children. "They have their own families," she said. She believed their spouses would resent her if she moved in with them. Still, I wished they would offer. She really didn't seem safe at home.

After she finished talking about her past, Lena turned to her other preoccupation: questions about God. Usually she asked, "Why is God doing this to me?" But on this day she had a different question. She wondered if God could really hear her prayers:

"How could He? There are so many other people praying too."

I am a lapsed Catholic -- if that's what someone is called these days who no longer believes -- but I easily recalled the Catholic catechism lessons of my childhood. I reminded her of what she was taught: that God is everywhere, that He is all-powerful, and that He forgives. Lena smiled at this, relieved.

But then she grew pensive again and asked another question: "There are so many people in the world. So many people have died. How can they all fit into heaven?"

It occurred to me then that Lena might want to die, but was afraid. I reassured her that heaven has lots of room in it. In response, she smiled and said again, "God must have sent you to me today."

A few months after this visit, Lena had a fall. She pressed the Lifeline button on the pendant she wore around her neck. Medics arrived with an ambulance and took her to the hospital. While there, at a meeting with her family, hospital staff convinced Lena that going back to her apartment was out of the question. Upon discharge she was transferred to a nursing home. I visited her there a few times. She sat in a chair in the hallway, amused by the nurses and aides rushing by and gossiped with me about the other residents. She had no complaints. "I had to come here," she said. I was glad she seemed content.

Less than a month later, Lena felt a bit unwell and asked the nurse to put her to bed. As she dozed, a blood clot in her leg dislodged and made its way to her brain. This was how her life came to an end. But this wasn't the end of my relationship with her.

Lena's memory has stayed with me for a long time. What was it about her that made such a deep impression? Perhaps it was because she challenged me to think more broadly about what it means to provide therapy. Long before I became a psychiatric social worker, someone said to me, "All people want is to be accepted and understood." When I wonder about my role and someone's capacity for change, I recall this bit of wisdom. For Lena there was no introspection, no deep reflections on the meaning of life or what other choices she could have made. She just wanted to know that God forgave her and that when she died she would not be punished for doing what she did to protect herself and her children. She was satisfied that she had done her best. Yet, she could not reconcile what she had to do to survive with what she presumed God had wanted of her. If I couldn't completely fix that, at least I could accept her fears, let her ask her questions, and give answers that soothed her.

Lena looked forward to my weekly visits. The things I said and did made her feel better, less afraid and less alone. One day, Lena asked me to make some instant mashed potatoes for the two of us. Why not, I thought. Mashed potatoes is a comfort food, and what does Lena need if not comfort? I followed the directions on the package, adding milk and butter. Then I filled two small bowls with the rich and creamy mixture. Lena seemed happy. I felt happy too. We sat together eating in silence. There was love in the silence between us. And, I thought, if Lena wanted to believe God had sent me to her that was fine with me.

REMOVING BARBS

ANDREA GORDON | Family Medicine

The first rule of removing anything with barbs is that it can't come out the way it went in. Some things bite and can't be removed leaving a smooth track. The only way out is through – keep pushing and make another hole, but at least this one you control.

It will hurt – how can it not? This invading force is carved, curved, created to puncture and hold. The trap is to fight it, tugging, trying to pretend it never pierced your skin.

Injuries happen; words, stones, hooks are flung. Some land and drop, others ricochet. Large spears may bring you down for time, linger even when you regain your feet. Some small punctures barely register, then persist, boring deeper with each step.

You don't have to live with it forever. Acknowledge its power, and drive it through. Accept that other parts must shift or bleed to allow delivery back into open air, where it is again just itself and not a wound.



Ode to Eric | MULTIMEDIA
ANITA DIABATE, MAPS

PREGNANT

LEE CRANBERG | Neurology

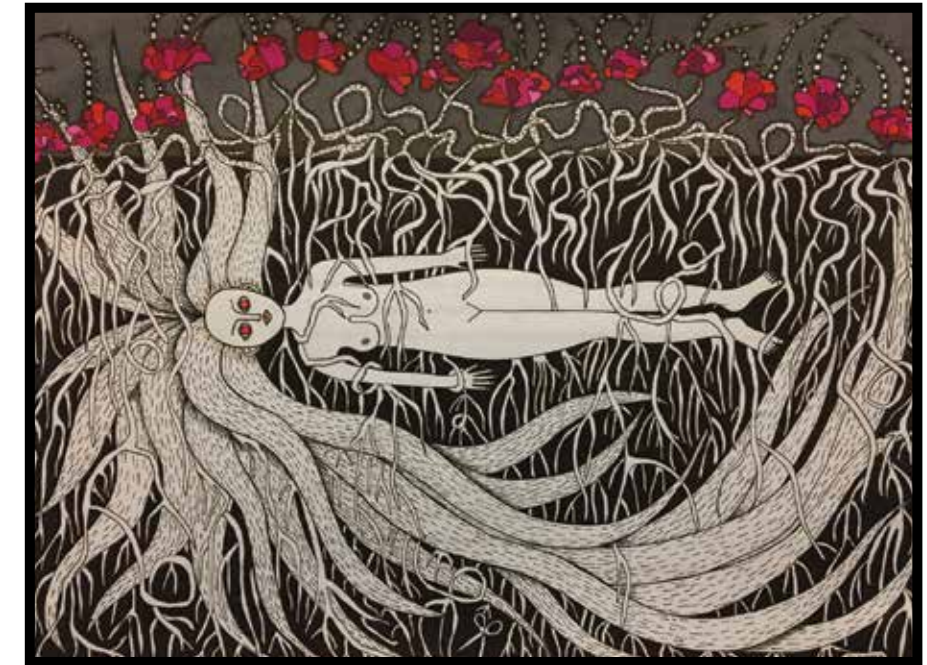
He said it was the size of a baby's head.
"About as big as a grapefruit?" she asked.
"No, bigger . . . the size of a baby's head" he repeated.

What a cruel choice to describe the form that had sprung from her reproductive system. Ovarian cancer is more common in women, like L, who have never been pregnant. Having this baby's head in her pelvis was the closest she would come to bearing a child.



Tea Party Cake Art | CAKE
JESSICA COLLIER, Outpatient Psychiatry

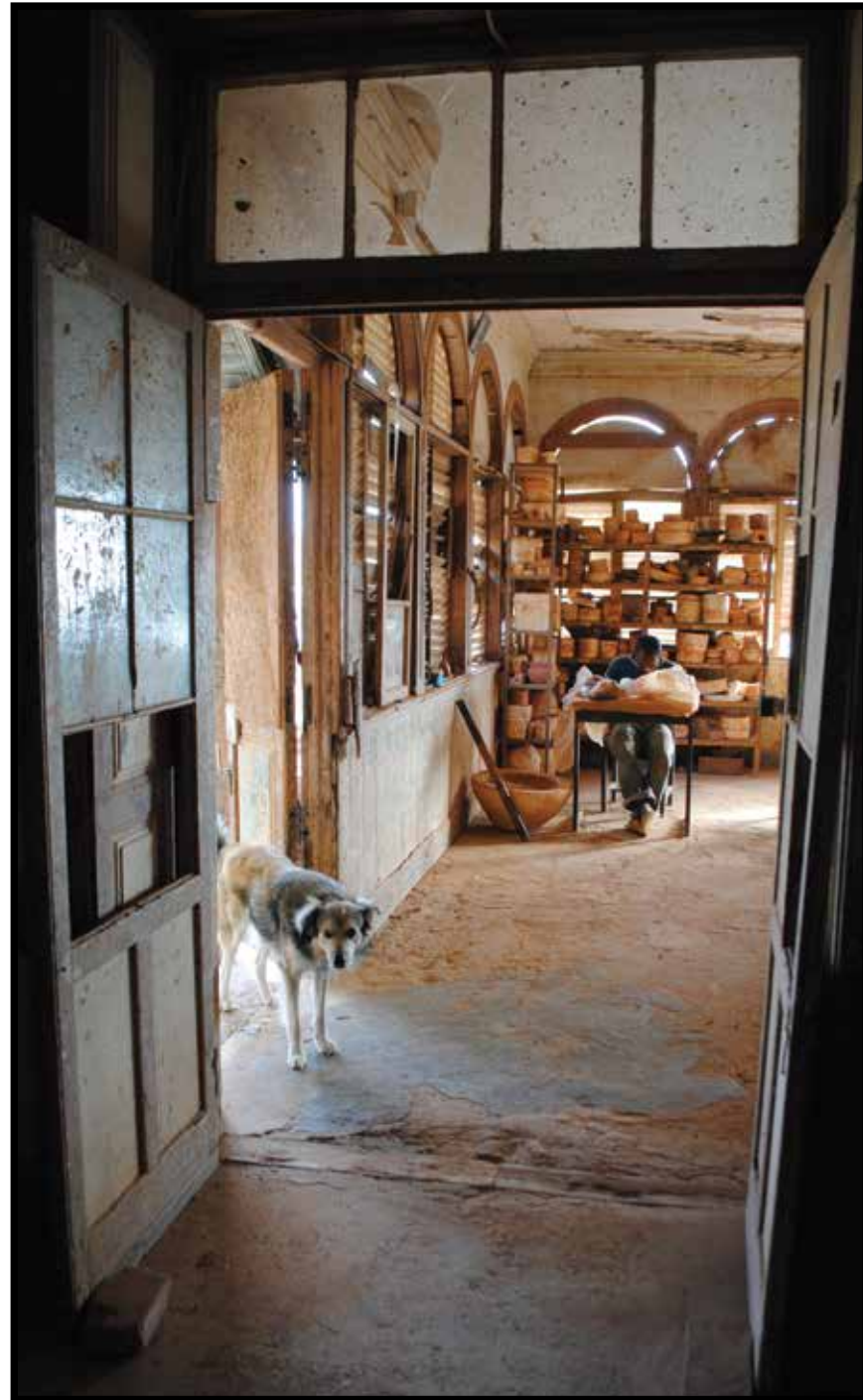
Gabriela Bajo Tierra | PAINTING
GABRIELA CRINIGAN, Multilingual Services



OSWIN AND 11

LEONARDO TOPPIN | Medical Specialties

How committed is the girl to her soufflé
impossibly baked sans ingredients.
My hearts beat for re-purposed DNA.
An empty ramekin teases my sense.
I break into the set exterior.
The warmth in wait renders me near extinct.
My lifeline is that moist interior.
Who saves me every time? Who do you think?
Too many times to count my tongue is burnt
rewriting my old canon with a bomb;
again re-pairing spice with sustenance.
She got the script in earnest from her momma!
A Dalek with a perfect pair of legs
puts to one's mind: What's the state of its eggs?



WHERE MY DADDY AT?

LEONARDO TOPPIN | *Medical Specialties*

His light in the beginning sparked conception.
 A world's resolve could not put up a fight.
 He marked each morning after with reflection.
 His head lay who-knows-where throughout the night.
 He made a home too welcome to distraction.
 Lures ill and nil both flourished in my midst.
 Curiosity spurs souls toward ascension.
 I know it all, but ignorance was bliss.
 I broke the rules. He kicked me out the house.
 Of vice and vixen was my first transgression.
 A family tree, like all trees, drops its produce
 to crush the lushest landscape like a stone.
 I make a plea with digits set to raze
 until my palms compressed divert my gaze.

DISPARITIES

LEE CRANBERG | *Neurology*

"Are you sure you can't see my other hand?" I asked.
 "No, I can't." A seen hand and an unseen hand.
 Immediately another disparity arose. I knew he
 was doomed, but he did not yet know it.

Cabo Verde Aglow | PHOTOGRAPHY

GLORIA ACOSTA, *Outpatient Child Psychiatry*

Residence | PHOTOGRAPHY

KONWEN YUEN, *MAPS*



HAIRCUT, 1999

NORMAN BELANGER | *Zinberg Clinic*

"Cut it all off," I say.
 "Yes," he nods, as he lays the drape over me. He hums and
 tightens the snap collar around my neck.
 "My hair doesn't grow out well," I say, hearing my voice that
 sounds small inside the overly bright place. I keep talking, just
 to talk, words tumble out, as I settle into the chair. "It doesn't
 lay flat or flop, or hang in my forehead, it doesn't sweep, it
 just grows up and out, I have cowlicks all over."
 "Yes," he says. Without further ado, the clipper buzzes
 pleasantly, it vibrates through my skin, into my skull. The
 physicality of body sensation grounds me: I'm sitting in the
 chair, my feet just touch the metal rest, I tap a toe softly
 to test the hardness, the realness of it, my hands grasp the
 armrests. I breathe.

Soon, the scissors are snipping. His gentle hands smell clean
 and pepperminty, they move briskly, efficiently around my
 head. I watch the silver accumulate on the scarred linoleum,
 a snowfall of hair.

"How are you today?" he asks. His English is as good as my
 Arabic, his words are spiced with hard consonants and
 resonant vowels. Over the years of our acquaintance, we've
 developed a comfortable repertoire. Sometimes I catch his
 soft brown eyes, but he is shy and looks away.

"I'm ok," I say, "how are you doing?"

"Ok, I'm ok too."

For the moment, we've exhausted our usual topics of
 conversation, so I look at the rain streaking down the plate
 glass window. It's a wet, windy November day. It feels like the
 day when the last tree has shed its last leaf, when all seems

naked and cold. It is that lonely late afternoon hour, yawning and blank and vast, when time feels heavy, when I need to find these little things to do, errands to check off my list: buy lightbulbs, mail that check, pick up some shirts at the dry cleaners, get a haircut. These islands of activity make the day seem a little less empty. Already, the darkness is creeping in.

"Night comes so quickly these days," I say out loud.

"Yes," he says.

"It's hard to believe in a few months we'll be in a new millennium."

"Yes," he says, "a new time."

His thumb lingers on my cervical vertebra as he deftly, gently strokes a quick razor over my nape. My skin tingles in the cool air of the place. This slight touch surprises me, I cannot remember the last time I was touched, my flesh craves and cowers, but then the moment is gone. Again, briefly, I catch his eye in the mirror. He looks away.

Two other guys await their turn, one riffs through a men's magazine, the other has on his Walkman, he nods to music. NPR drones, crackling on the old sound system, about a breakthrough in AIDs medications. Combinations of antiretrovirals are showing great promise. A cocktail, they call it, as though it were a martini or something fizzy to be drunk with chums. "It's a miracle, the dawn of a new age," says the soothing reporter, as she details the story that breaks-

-too late for us. Too late for so many. Too late for you, too late for me. I am still here, the last widower of a plague. I am the survivor, left to stumble through the days without my guiding star. An icy finger nettles my insides with that tickling fear, a dread quiver of animal panic. If I closed my eyes now, I might be lost. I will myself to stay here, now. The small shop's walls are covered with sports posters: the Sox, the Pats, the Celts. In the periphery, lurking in the shadowy corners, just beneath the smooth hum of life, something stirs. That dread sensation makes me jump in the chair.

He pauses, the blade lifts off my cheek. "OK?" he asks.

"Yes, Ok, sorry," I say from far away. I am not unmoored, not yet, but the knot that once held, gently slips a bit. I feel the unraveling begin, that fraying of the tethering cord.

In the other chair, a handsome Harvard boy is getting a neat trim. His hair does flop and sweep, it hangs in his forehead with that casual smugness of health and vigor and youth.

"OK?" says my barber.

I look at myself, newly shorn and clean, I run my hand over my scalp. It feels soft, velvety, smooth.

I smile, a tiny twitch of my upper lip.

"Good?" he smiles back.

"Good." I nod.

He brushes me down with soft bristles, shoos away pesky hairs off my sweater. He sweeps up the pile of dead hair to make ready for the next customer.

At the register I pay and hand him his tip, he thanks me and holds something out to me.

It's a lollipop, red, the kind they hand out to little boys after their first haircut.

"See you next time?" he says.

"Yes," I say.

Outside I bundle up, zip up. Mass Ave is loud with traffic. Buses rush by, cabs and cars and bikes all jam the street. The rain has stopped. I trudge through wet leaves that clutter the sidewalk. My battered Keds are damp. In a coffee shop the tables are crowded. People warm chilled hands over mugs of hot tea, there are scones and cakes and delicate blue plates full of crumbs. Laughter and jazzy music comes from the place. In the window, I catch my reflection: the lollipop in my mouth, my cropped cut, the face that looks back at me.

I slip again into that empty space, that voided dread place, adrift. The night will be fathoms deep, and cold, a little death that waits for me. Once more I fall into it, into the depths of another lone, starless sky.



Paseo de Marti, Havana, Cuba | PHOTOGRAPHY

GADDY NOY, *Psychiatry*



Finningur, Faroe Islands | PHOTOGRAPHY

LISA RUBENS, *Psychiatry*

VARIATION ON A THEME

LYNN ANDERSON | *Internal Medicine*

While working nights as an intern, I began to expect that we would admit at least one patient every night for alcohol withdrawal. Tonight was no exception, although this time, withdrawal was a secondary issue. After getting sign-out about a homeless man who was picked up at a local coffee shop with a red, swollen foot, I stuffed my papers in my back pocket and headed to the bedside.

On observation, the middle-aged man was curled up in bed, sleeping like a kid who had played hard outside all day long.

"Mr. Smith, my name is Doctor Anderson."

He slept on peacefully.

"Can you wake up for a bit so we can talk?"

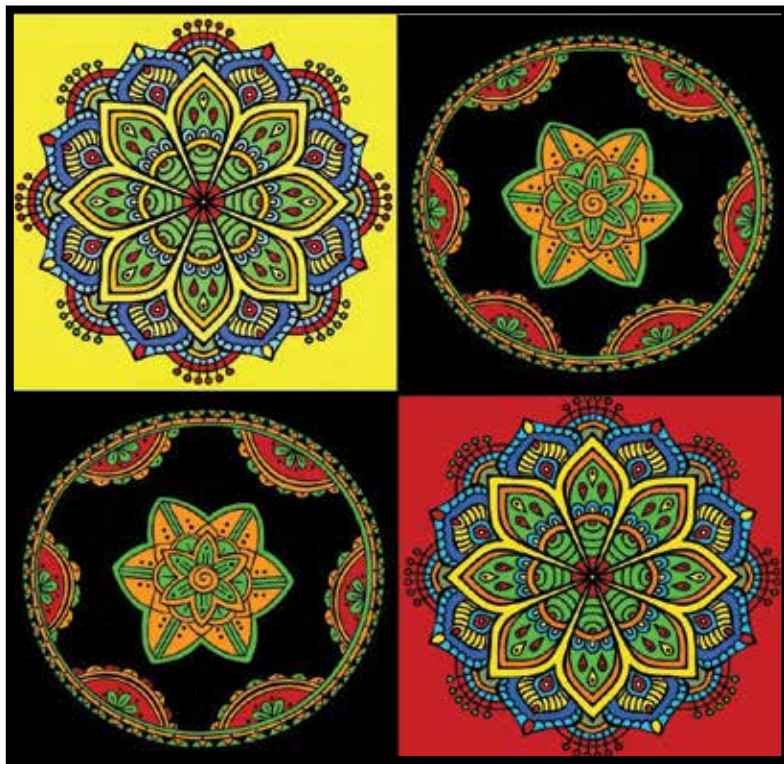
Still nothing.

"Mr. Smith," a little louder, and I shook his shoulder. He was warm. The hovering nurse wished me luck and left me to it. With more shoulder shaking, the man began to stir.

"Ok, ok. Sure, sure. Can I get a blanket?" he asked.

"Yeah, sure. Hmm, this is just a sheet . . ." I said, looking around for something more substantial, but not wanting to lose the window of wakefulness. "Well, that's a blanket to me!"

For a minute I thought he would curl right back up, and I'd have to snake a stethoscope through for an abbreviated exam. On the agenda: auscultate the heart, hear his story. Somewhere down the hall, the incessant, piercing beep of an IV pump percussed the dreams of the sleepless sick.



Express Your Soul - A Mandala | MULTIMEDIA
 JYOTI HINDUJA, *Medicine*

Spiral Rose Window | STAINED GLASS
 TIM BUTTON, *Accountable Care Organization*



VARIATION ON A THEME | {CON'T...}

I was in luck—the nurse came back with scissors and started trying to sort out what I hadn't noticed before. On his wrists, the patient had an impressive array of old hospital ID bands—green ones and white ones, with faded print.

This had him more awake than ever, as he insisted that she not cut them all off.

"How many do you need?" she asked, a little incredulously.

He was quick to explain, "Do you know how hard it is to have anyone believe you are who you say you are when you don't have any state identification?"

The words alone might have seemed defensive, but I heard the pragmatic steadiness of his tone—this was just his life, and what he needed to maintain it. I felt a smile coming on. This was going to be good.

Somewhere mixed in with his story of bench-sleeping and panhandling and hobbling around with a swollen foot and a case of the runs, his one-liners came blow after blow.

"I read the dictionary—it's a good book." And he showed it to me in his green backpack, alongside his catch of the day. "I played the homeless card with the Girl Scouts—that's like playing a priest! I got peanut butter patties. I thought about getting thin mints too, but two boxes would be taking it too far."

I stifled my chuckles, suddenly sensible to the other beds behind curtains. All the while, my respect swelled. His restraint while living on the street . . . it was a review of systems of a different guild. A review of humanity on the streets.

But the tragic comedy had only begun.

"I drink a little," he reported.

"How much is a little?" I asked.

"A pint."

I paused to maintain composure. He must know how funny that sounds. "To me a pint is a lot." I tried to say gently, suppressing a smile.

"Not compared to what I used to drink!"

His present illness, it seemed, was an improvement.

His presentation at once fatalistic and optimistic. He then struck with one of his greatest yet.

"I might do stupid things. But I'm not stupid."

I couldn't agree more. Especially after the treatise he gave me on the duckbill platypus—summarized from a book he bought with his panhandling earnings. "I make about 40 bucks a day, and I spent ten of it on that book."

Now those are some priorities I can relate to.

While he went on about the etymology of platypus, I grew uneasy—I was still without an etiology for his cellulitis. It was the middle of the night, I had more paperwork waiting for me, yet my chief complaint was that I did not have more time for his endearing antics. I should have known he would save some gems for after the credits rolled.

When I was examining his abdomen, he tried to replicate his run-in with diarrhea on the streets that week.

"You should have heard it! GURGLE GURGLE GURGLE."

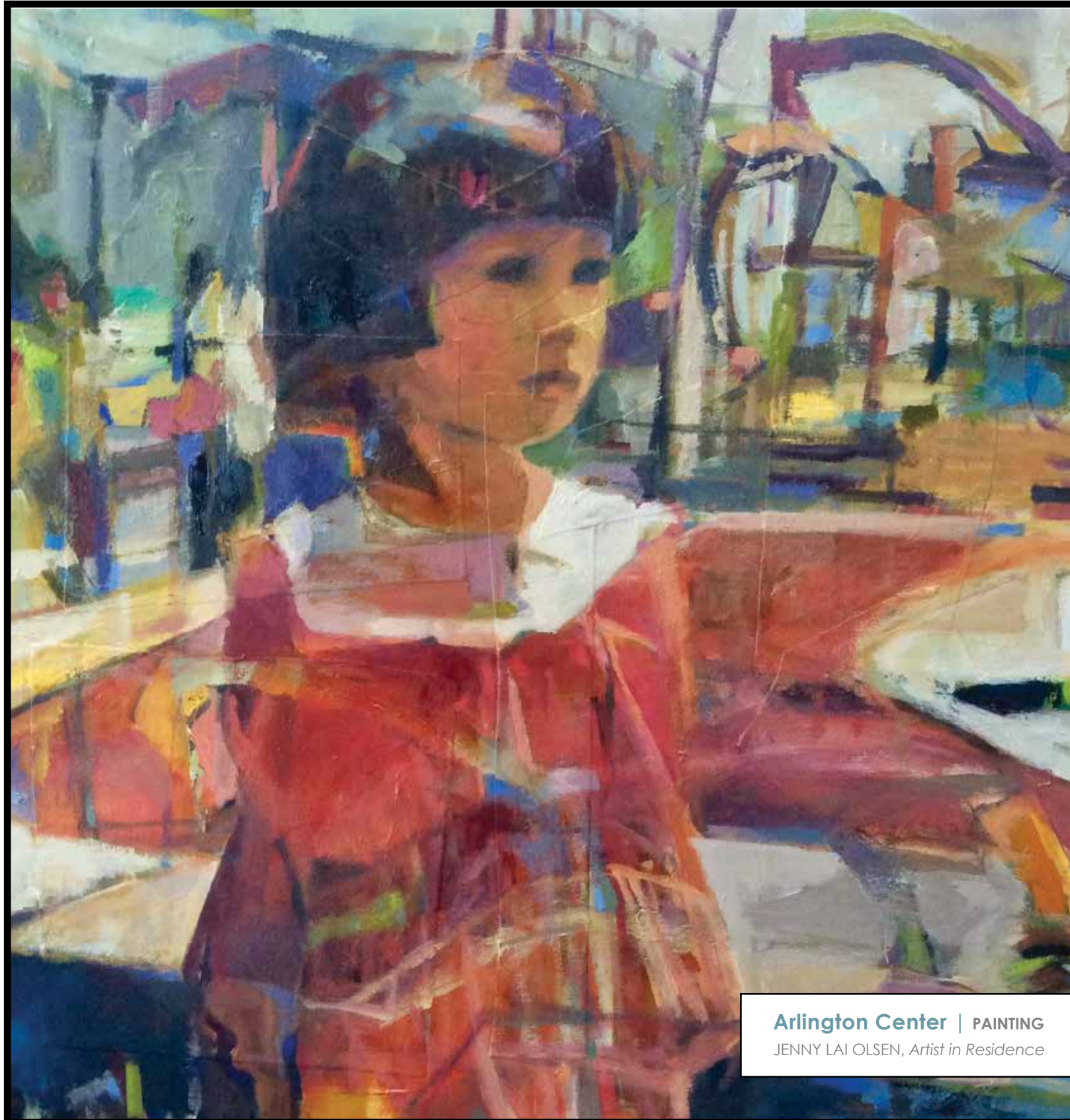
And he wiggled his fingers over his stomach. I burst out laughing, unfortunately for the curtain folks. Most would

consider such a plight distressing, and here he still seemed to be the kid who had a hell of a time playing outside today.

Then—I will never forget—while I was trying to examine his liver, which requires the patient to breathe deeply in and out, he suddenly covered his mouth with his hand and said, "Sorry. I didn't brush my teeth this morning."

You know, I could forgive him for that, because in his rush off the bench that morning, he didn't forget his David Bowie coloring book. In his green backpack, he also was found to have colored pencils.

In my post-night-shift delirium, I can almost see some chalk in there too. And when they discharge him back to the streets, we can meet on the sidewalk and paint a variation on a theme. A doctor who sees patients. Sees them. Who finds a way to blend, not differentiate, their medicine and their humanity. You're welcome to join us. The admissions fee is a box of thin mints.



Arlington Center | PAINTING
JENNY LAI OLSEN, *Artist in Residence*

ON SOUTH TWIN MOUNTAIN

ELISSA ELY | *Psychopharmacology*

Originally published in *Appalachia*

From Galehead Hut to South Twin Mountain, every step is an act of intelligence. The rocks are tall and wet; the lichens are like slides; there's no time for preoccupations.

And yet, climbing to the hut, we were preoccupied. A few days before, someone we knew had almost died, deliberately. She had not succeeded, but only because luck had intervened. Instead of watching our steps, we were wondering what could cause her to want to live.

One forgets, in the midst of despair or even simple discomfort, how circumstances change. Hours earlier, a mile or two into the Gale River Trail, we had passed a couple heading out.

—Nice hike? I asked the patriarch.
—For us, he said. —But WE'RE going down. YOU'RE going up.

The woman only shook her head and flattened herself as she passed. She looked like she had seen a ghost.

There was a tough, tough stretch ahead, the man explained. We were going to need to save our energy. It would take everything.

—Look for the sign, he added, with the dark satisfaction of one whose hard times are behind him. Then he hurried to catch up with his downward, silent, flattened wife.

We are earnest hikers, but not strong ones. After the second water crossing, the route grew rapidly steeper. What had been stone became boulder; breath became wind. The ascent seemed to go on with no sign in sight, and the dread grew, because we knew this was only the beginning.

Finally, we reached the sign. Galehead Hut, 0.6 miles—the impossible stretch. A little more than half a mile but, as per a stranger's warning, the end of us. We ate a quantity of trail mix meant to hearten.

ON SOUTH TWIN MOUNTAIN | {CON'T...}

Yet instead of growing steeper, the slope grew more gradual as the trees shortened. Eventually we found ourselves walking levelly. We had expected undoing, but when the hut finally curved into view, we were upright and mostly full of air.

All this time, fearing worse ahead, we had actually been passing through it. The sign (we had misunderstood) was a marker for steepness ENDING.

We signed into the hut, took our bunk assignments, and dropped our packs beside the last piece of applesauce cake for a dollar. While I was eating it, preparing for further upwardness, I leafed through the Guest Log. "There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground," someone had written on 7/31/15; someone who, clearly, liked life very much.

Now, like many who arrive at a hut without feeling they haven't climbed quite high enough, we were struggling up the Twinway to South Twin for the view—"yeah, that's crazy fun!" said a young man with muscles, coming down—and hoping another sign would signal another misunderstanding soon. But we were also preoccupied with the question of someone who had no use for life. She had no desire to kneel and kiss the ground. She didn't believe steepness would end.

Many boulders later, the Pemigewasset Wilderness fanned out underneath us. It was like an answer that had found us, instead of the other way around. Nature as salvation: how simple, we told each other. What if the hopeless were sent huffing to the tops of mountains? What if she were here, looking at this?

In the huts, dinner begins promptly at 6, and dinner is one of the great satisfactions of staying there. We turned back, and started to hurry a little, which is never an act of intelligence.

That night, on my way to brush teeth, I passed the Log again, and took up reading backwards where I had left off. There were through-hiker trail names ('Chickpea' was popular) and mileages, weather reports and food reviews, and family histories, incomprehensible to anyone but other family members. There was also one entry on 7/1/15, with no signature. I read it a few times, to be sure I got it right; a reminder that the wish to live, and its opposite as well, are never as simple as a single vista.

"Despite these hikes", someone had written, "I am still afraid of dying."



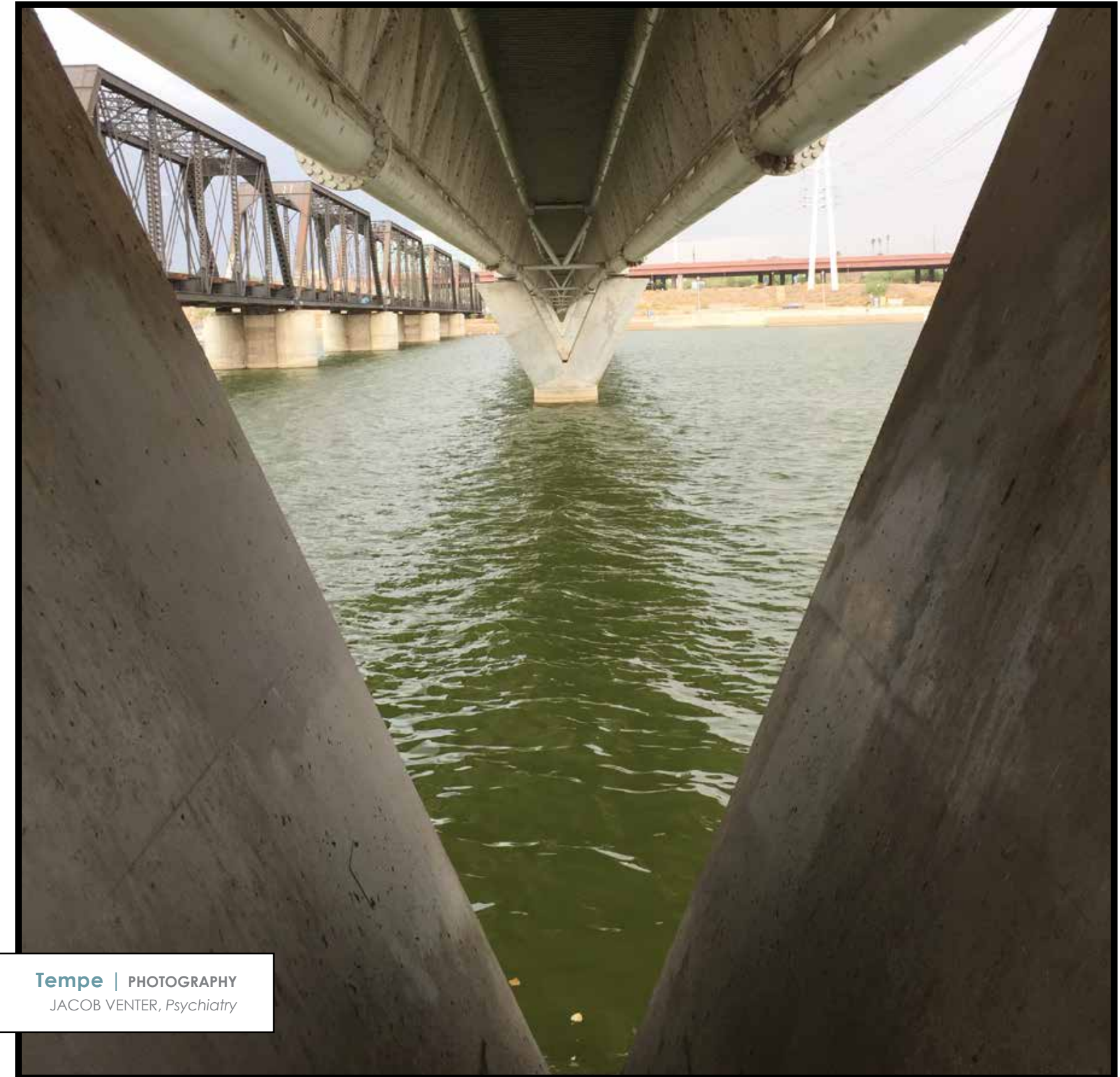
Cheetahs, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania | PHOTOGRAPHY

JEFF CAMPBELL, *Inpatient pharmacy*

FORGIVENESS II

JACOB VENTER | *Psychiatry*

Dad, it is me again
Toepoe, remember, that's what you used to call me
And no one since called me that
Do you remember how I got that name
I do – you told me
one day, while driving in the truck on the farm
Africa's sun everywhere
looking for sheep, water, signs of rain, thunder, smelling earth, watching the plow opening the red soil,
sometimes you laughed, sometimes you smiled, cried a few times, but always there
Just there
Kind, unconventional, even liberal, with your eyes on God, but a smiling one
But you had to leave me, dad
between Christmas and New Years
I am mad
I want to hear your voice, look into your piercing blue eyes, feel your tight squeeze, feel the calmness I get
around you
Did you have to go?
Between Christmas and New Years
Why?
Was it because I left, could I have done something if I was home
I left, you died, I am mad, mad at you, mad at me
you see, dad, I am looking into this dead business too
not because I want to
it is just time...
Will I be strong enough when it comes, will I be alone
Were you alone dad, were you scared, did you think of mom, me, JL
were you looking forward to it
Please say you were thinking of me, that you thought how much you loved me, and you knew the strength you
had, and how lonely it is without you
Maybe you had to leave, a new year was too much
It was what I called my pillow, dad, remember, you told me
the pillow I dragged with me all the time, across floors, dirt, outside when I was too little to comfort myself
I still hug my pillow and think of him, dad
he, who means so much to me
My pillow – I called my Toepoe
Bye dad



Tempe | PHOTOGRAPHY
JACOB VENTER, *Psychiatry*

IN HIROSHIMA, ECHOES OF THE PAST AND FUTURE

JANNA MALAMUD SMITH | *Psychiatry*

Officially, I visited Hiroshima, Japan, this summer in order to give a talk at a conference. But really, as I realized only later, my reasons were much older, and more deeply embedded in my soul.

One night, when I was maybe 8 years old and we were living in a small college town in Oregon, my parents went out to the movies, leaving my older brother and me with a babysitter. Several faculty at the state college had formed a foreign film club, and that night's offering was "Hiroshima Mon Amour," a movie set in the city in the days after the atomic bomb was dropped.

I have never seen the movie. But that night, the babysitter, eager to show her worldliness and knowledge of the atomic bomb drop, carefully described to us a scene from John Hersey's "Hiroshima": A man is helping a woman into a boat. He reaches his arm out to her, she takes it, and their joint effort causes her unintentionally to pull all the burnt skin off his arm and hand, so she is left holding it, and his flesh is bared. The description incised itself into my 8-year-old mind. Not surprisingly, when, on the recent afternoon in Hiroshima, my husband and I walked up to the ghostly Atomic Bomb Dome Memorial – the only building left partly standing (by

the direct pressure upon it) at Ground Zero when, on August 6, 1945, the Americans dropped the bomb – my eyes almost instantly filled with tears.

Nothing really prepares you for the feeling of standing where something terrible happened. The physically evoked reality surrounds you like a tornado. It lifts you, spins you and delivers you back across time so that the past becomes tangible and, in this case, the profound and grievous harm it signifies permeates you like the poisonous, black, radioactive rain that fell from the sky on the day of the explosion. (Rain that parched survivors naively tipped back their heads to swallow.)

I took my husband's hand, and we steadied ourselves and prepared to make our way to the nearby Peace Museum – where we would later watch filmed interviews, read accounts in diaries, look at photos, and examine the small mundane items of everyday life – rice bowls, cups, a tricycle – that the bomb's heat fused and melted into bizarre shapes. But as we were leaving the Dome, a trio of young Japanese, two women and a man, one of whom spoke English, approached us and asked if they could interview us for their radio program. What, they wanted to know, did it feel like to

be an American visiting Hiroshima at this particular moment in history – when Donald Trump is the president of the United States, and North Korea is testing nuclear weapons?

The question crystallized much that had been nascent within out tears: our horror that America dropped the bomb, much less without advanced warning as to its true nature, our grief for the 135,000 casualties – including many children – killed or maimed by the fire and radiation; the insane international political flipping between enmity and alliance that feeds war; and, of course, our own fears living in the suddenly destabilized world we all now seem to inhabit.

It also flashed into my mind that the young people asking the question had grown up surrounded by families and neighbors who'd lived through the original bombing. They and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where the second bomb was dropped, carry a singular knowledge of radioactivity-induced death and medical debility from which most of the rest of us have so far been spared. That recognition, together with their sincerity, our foreignness and our shared awareness – of nuclear proliferation, of the incompetent bravado of world leaders – became too much. As we groped for words with which to answer, our

voice choked. Tears started trickling down our interviewers' cheeks. The conversation was halting. The one bilingual speaker had to translate first the Japanese questions, and then our American answers. But the words mattered much less than the moment of mutual recognition. In each other's eyes we saw the reflection of the Atomic Dome. We contemplated the past suffering and the unspeakable possibility of future bombs. Then we said good-bye. As we shook hands, I was aware of touching both living people and lost ancestors – particularly the two from long ago who stood stunned beside a small boat.

**Originally printed in WBUR's Cognoscenti*

WINTER'S SKIN

T. HAMEL | *Pharmacy*

Here it is
Winter's skin—
the frost sets in
and I,
I expect angels
to be repulsed
in this arctic sin.

Summer's rotund sun
now a freckle of light
waning a vast
mourning sight.

I lay here
hot steam-sweetened tea
and, it is only me.
Under solemn influences—
crumbled biscuits
plummy fruits
outside, outside
are the differences.

So, I will wear
this winter's skin
from inside
but, not within.
Waiting, waiting for—
spring's violin.

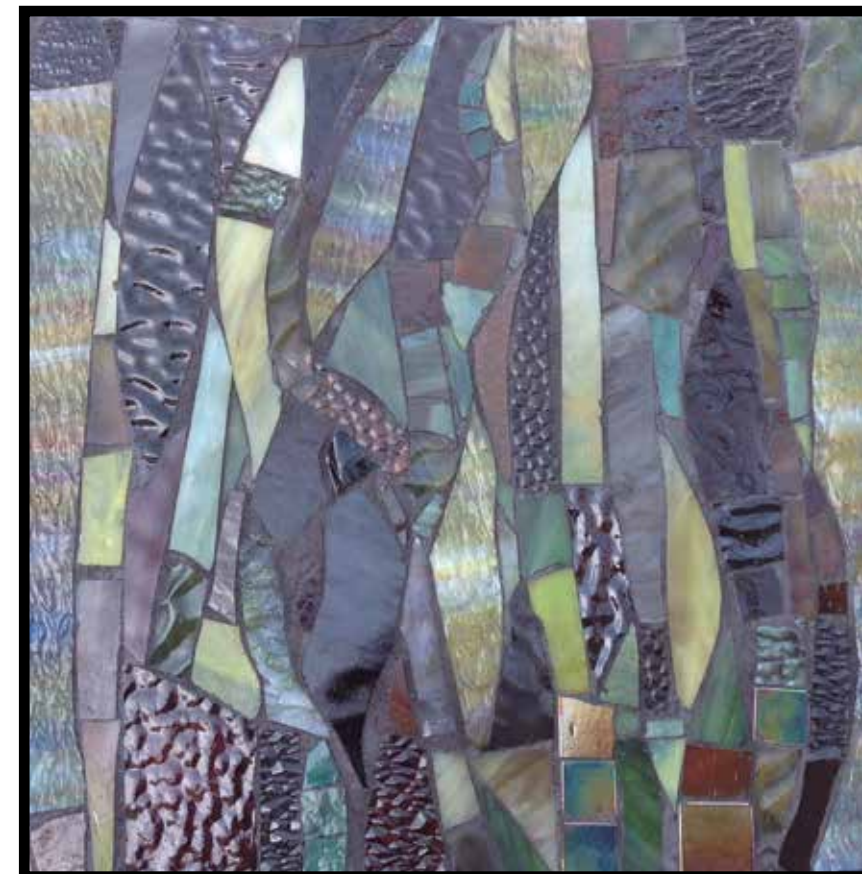


October Morning Light | PHOTOGRAPHY

JENNIFER BAKALAR, *Psychiatry*

Halcyon | PHOTOGRAPHY

LYNN COLEMAN, *Union Square Family Health*



Meanderings | MOSAICS

JOANNE WHITE, *Psychiatry*

Moonrise at sunset | PHOTOGRAPHY

ROSE H. GOLDMAN, *Medicine*



SHOTGUN BLESSED MARY

T. HAMEL | *Pharmacy*

Sweet apple pies
smooth velvet cakes
she's the kind of woman
no man can hate.

Until one day
took her shotgun down
aimed and fired—
at Jay Bob Brown.

People say it took only one
one shot to cut through
leaned the gun back in
up against her Blessed Mary statue.

Oh, she baked her pies
made her special cakes
best baker in town
no man could hate.

Said her prayers—
to a Blessed Mary statue on a perch
she prayed her rosary, too
always, as she went to church.

Some say
Jay Bob Brown loved her so
only problem there was
he didn't play the one-woman-show.

So, she shot him down
baked a pie
made a cake
became a woman—
became a woman
a man could hate.



Self Portrait | PAINTING

LAURA RADLINSKI, *Emergency Department*

STROKE

ELLEN BETH SIEGEL • *Psychiatry*

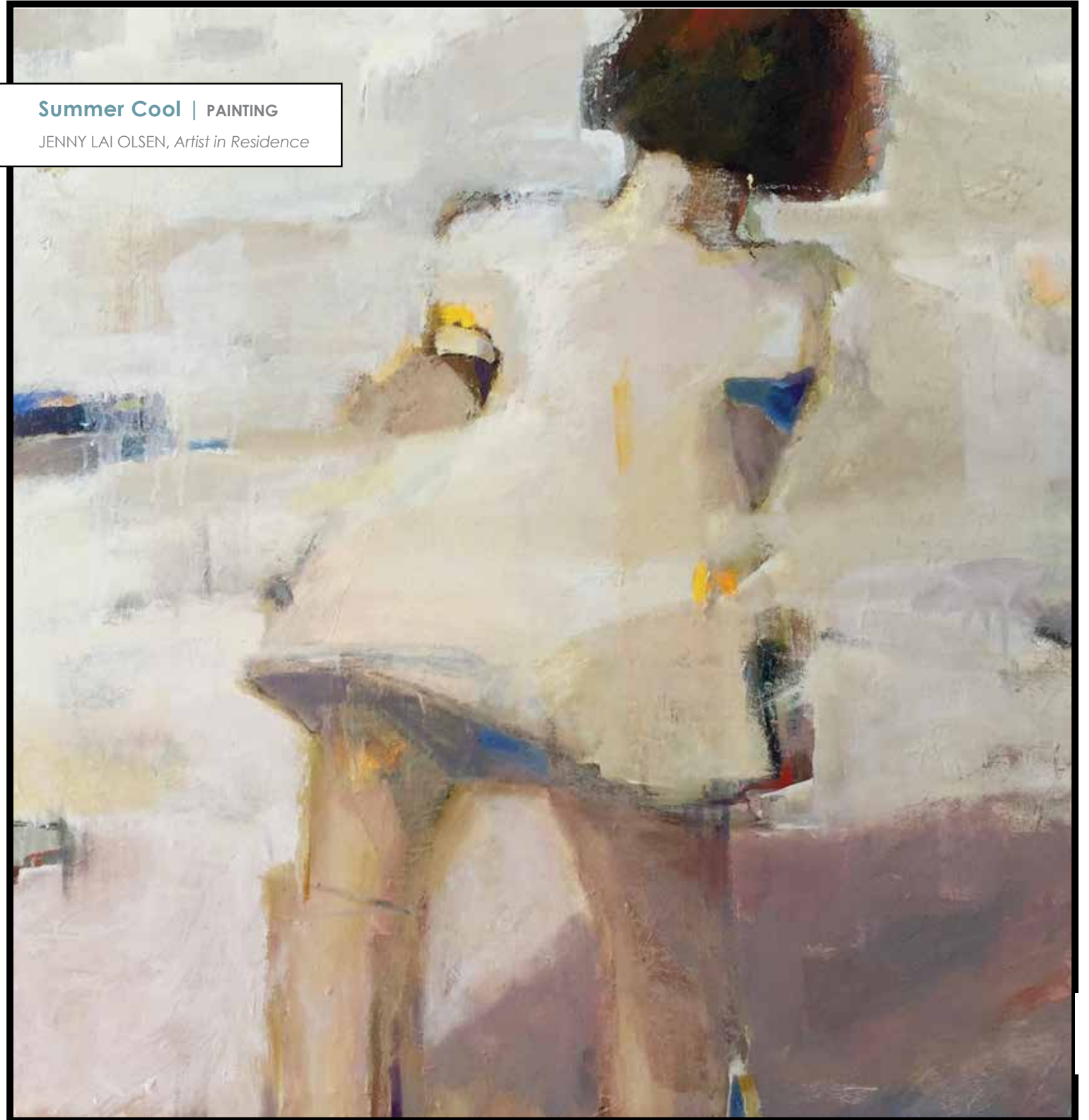
Her pink-polished nails grab
the wheelchair's arm,
her scrabbling feet
clench the iron bars.
She's grown thin, weak, old,
though the days haven't draped
her soft-skinned face with age.

Hot, hot means water. *The girl, the girl*
means anyone at all. Her jaws clamp,
and spit, word-salad.

She is fed by patient hands,
bathed by gentle wrists,
held by firm brown thumbs.
TV flickers past her.
She cannot click a change
and she stares, dully,
or calls *hello, hello*
for someone,
waiting somewhere,
to hear her.

Peanut butter crackers—
their paper wrappings snap.
She hunts her gaping maw, chewing
greedy bites of cellophane. The day-nurse
pulls a cracker out, puts it in her hand,
pats her smooth pink skin . . .
brown-sugar voice lifting:
Come, baby, let's fix your hair nice.
Soft stroke on stroke.
And her smile gleams, but only
on the left side of her face.

(Previously published in Irving I. Silverman and Ellen Beth Siegel, *Aging Wisely . . . Wisdom of Our Elders* (2018), Jones & Bartlett Learning, Burlington MA, www.jblearning.com. Reprinted with permission.)

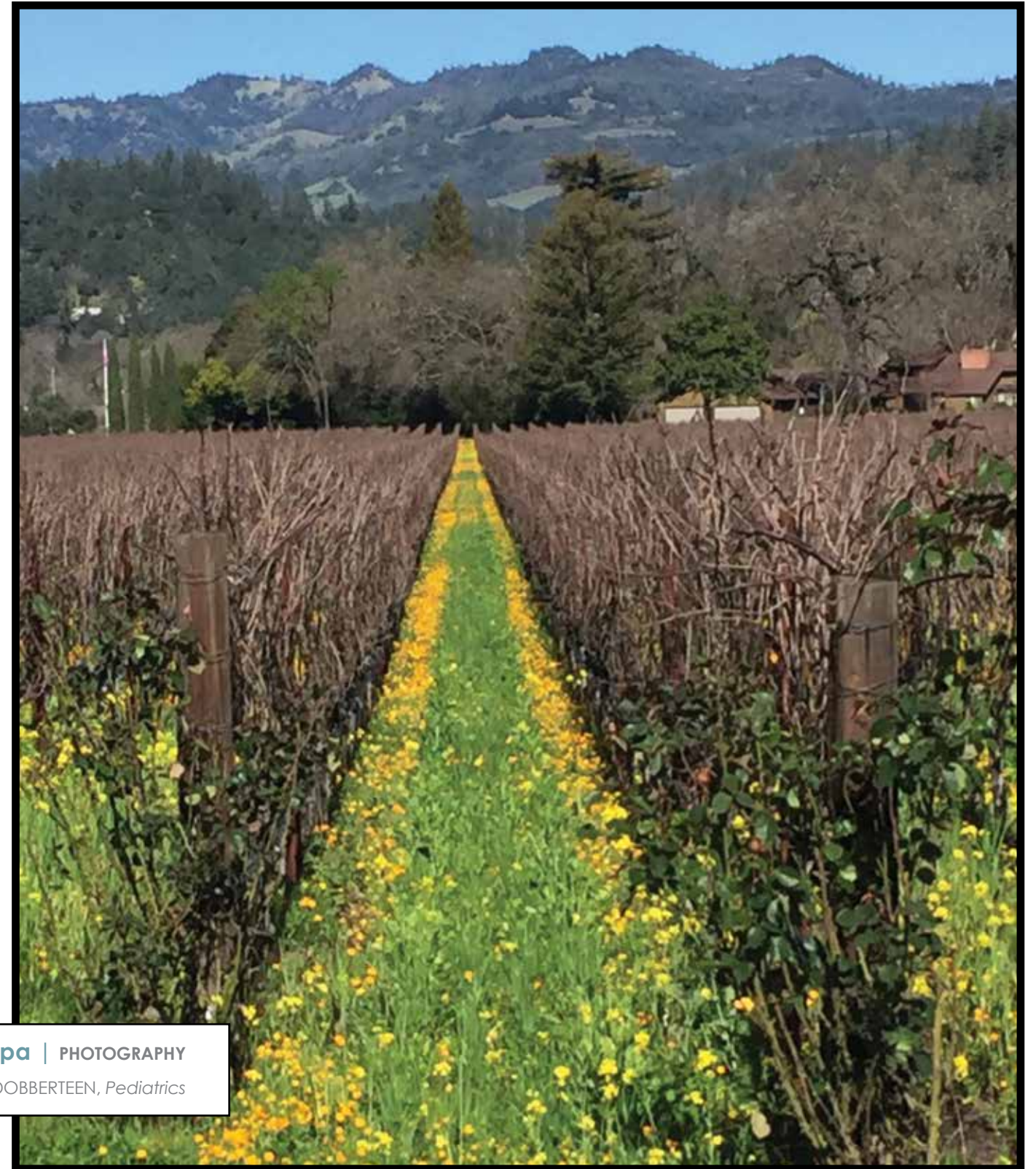


Summer Cool | PAINTING

JENNY LAI OLSEN, *Artist in Residence*



Kids at Play | PHOTOGRAPHY
JOEL ANG, Podiatry



Napa | PHOTOGRAPHY
LISA DOBBERTEN, Pediatrics