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## Plexus

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# PLEXUS



UCI COLLEGE OF MEDICINE JOURNAL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES  
2003 EDITION



**SHE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER  
RYAN PATTERSON, CLASS OF 2005**

**FRONT COVER PHOTO  
JOSE OSPINA, M.D./PH.D. STUDENT**

**BACK COVER PHOTO  
STEFANO SENSI, M.D./PH.D. DEPARTMENT OF NEUROLOGY**

**OPPOSITE  
MICHAEL LEE, CLASS OF 2005**

**PLEXUS**  
UCI COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
JOURNAL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES  
2003 EDITION



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- \* OUR EXCELLENT PRINTERS, GRAPHIC DEPOT



Salina Lee, Class of 2006

### T3 N1 M1

Daddy, please eat some soup,  
It's good for you, I promise.  
I know it's hard to do,  
But you need to eat some, Daddy,  
I made it just for you.

Daddy, please take these medications,  
They'll help decrease your pain.  
I know the time approaches,  
I know you have to rest.  
I promise to you daddy,  
No medications then.

Your pain won't be an issue,  
But mine will still be there.  
Who then can I turn to  
To take my pain away?

Oh God!  
Why did you promise  
To take my Dad away.

Ramon Ray Ter-Oganesyan  
Class of 2004

Today the river froze.

I know that it's a side of nature but still I was surprised.

I might have walked across

to the other side

but with little pause chose not to.

It was a dark, dank day

slow clouds low, chimney level fog, the weather  
uncertain.

The still air numbed my bare ears.

I do not know how thick the ice is; there are holes

but I've not seen anyone fall through.

I've not seen anyone else at all.

There are no assurances.

Heaven might not exist.

A pious path pursued

guarantees no safety

in the hours not yet passed.

Look upon the frigid world.

Dangers abound

neither black nor white,

but vague borders

around infinite gradations of gray.

I saw the pity in your eye

when you looked upon me

and my condition,

but you do not realize that

I am not afraid.

Steve Cramer, M.D.

Assistant Professor

Department of Neurology



Salina Lee, Class of 2006



**Under the Volcano— The Mt. Etna Eruption of October 2002**  
Anonymous

### **Son/Father/Brother**

She had a big heart everyone always said; fifty-five was too young for his mother's life to end; How ironic, an enlarged heart they said; was the cause of her death too sudden to mend. The love he gave takes some a lifetime to give. His eldest son taken, no surgery could save him, so off to heaven at the age of eleven. Now Zach is still here so innocent and pure; at the ripe age of four, there is just no cure. His youngest son, given a short span of life, he hopes to have Zach at least thirty years of life. It is CF you see no mercy to be; 'cause it is a killer of life not enough people get it, to wage a war against it. So as Zach fights to live, to die sooner than others; I will pray for a chance for more life, for the son of my brother.

Cynthia Mann  
WHI/Cancer Center

During the afternoon of one of my call days, a gentleman on the Floor coded. Along with other members of my team, I rushed to his room. What greeted us was an obese male in obvious respiratory distress. He uttered the words, "I can't breathe," and then passed out. The response was dramatic. Within a couple minutes, the room was literally filled with about 30 persons, all jostling about either to lend a hand or just to get a better view. Medical students, residents, interns, nurses, technicians were as cosmic flotsam drawn to this one man, who, ironically, in his unconsciousness perhaps never commanded more attention in his life. Eventually, CPR was instituted and I was part of the 3-man team who rotated responsibility for pounding on this man's chest hoping that any spark of physiological energy within his impressive physical frame could be re-ignited into being. As I drove my arms into his body like pistons, I couldn't help myself although I knew better. Like the proverbial moth drawn to the flame that would bring it despair, I gazed into the man's face and into his eyes. It was the face of death. Lips a muted cyan, eyes glazed and unseeing. It was a stark contrast to the tornado of activity occurring all around him. Although there were moments of possibility—could that be a blush to his lips? formed beat on the EKG?—the most final of results ultimately could not be denied. After 25 minutes of resuscitative efforts, the gentleman was pronounced dead. As the crowd dispersed and I moved back to the room that served as home for my team while in the hospital, I felt deflated. This was not a patient I had been carrying nor was he even one that my team rounded on. Yet in that small moment of seeing him alive, of hearing his voice, a connection, human enough, was made. I felt as if I had to leave the building lest it implode, to scream and at the same time to shrink away. But what in actuality transpired: Business. As. Usual. A lecture on Advanced Life Support. The difference between V-tach and Pulseless Electrical Activity. If I could see myself from the outside, I imagine that my eyes at that moment could have been as glazed as the man's whose unmoving body—corpse—now lay in his hospital bed, attended to by a couple of nurses preparing him for transfer to the morgue. Was his death not the only causality that day? That is the question I leave unanswered for ignorance, perhaps for fear. Is it too naive to believe that experiences such as this will enable me to be a better doctor, to more effectively serve my patients? Is the sacrifice a necessary disconnect from the humanity of others, and that within myself? My hope is to someday re-read this passage and be able to recall who the author is.

Michael Doo, Class of 2004



## Transition\*

After two years of an arduous classroom education, he eagerly anticipated the early July, to start the third year of his medical school training of clinical rotations.

Rising at an early light of the day, he stood in front of the mirror, admiring himself in a short white coat, a doctor in becoming.

He showed up to his clinical rotation in Pediatrics. Two hours of orientation passed slowly before he received his first assignment to see a ten-year-old girl admitted overnight.

He picked up the chart and entered the room with an air of self-confidence, almost arrogant. The young patient was intensely focused on the television, oblivious to her surroundings. Her young body was rejecting unmercifully her second transplanted kidney. She will be on dialysis again, waiting for a matched donor and a third chance in life. A life spent more in the hospital than with the loved ones at home. Her innocence lost since age three when her kidneys failed.

She shrugged her shoulder in defiance and responded wryly to him to get lost, stating that she was busy watching her favorite cartoon.

Surprised and shaken, he walked slowly backward out of the room. Intimidated he murmured to himself, is this what I was longing for?

Discouraged from his first encounter of the real life, he paused and reached deep within, thinking to hide in a nearby closet.

After a while, he reluctantly walked back to his patient's room finding her now painting a Disney character. He paused a little, admiring her dexterity with the brush. Timidly he said hello followed by a word of praise for her talent.

Noticing a radiant smile in her face, he sat at the edge of her bed, exchanging stories of mutual interest in painting.

Not long after, a daily game of scrabbles became a routine before he left the hospital.

Walking out from her room, the last day of his Pediatric rotation, he felt sad but content with the thought that he was, on his way, to become

a doctor.

Houchang D. Modanlou, M.D.  
Professor, Department of Pediatrics

*\* Dedicated to our UCI Medical Students*

## Night Rain

Tonight I looked at the stars.  
Insight.  
For the first time I felt  
Connected.  
A universe so large  
Indefinite.  
Yet I feel trapped.  
Society.  
What is freedom?  
Imagination?  
What is reality?  
Boundaries.  
Tonight I smelled the air.  
Infusion.  
For the first time I found  
Paradise.  
A distinct weather pattern  
Imminent.  
Unpredictable at best.

Family.  
What is next?  
Insanity?  
What is present?  
Change.  
Tonight I heard the wind.  
Intuition.  
For the first time I knew  
Why.  
The sun rises and sets.  
Imperious.  
They come and go  
Fact.  
What is existence?  
Interpretation?  
What is death?  
Truth.

Cristin Gail Ryan, Class of 2006



Lighthouse

Cristin Gail Ryan, Class of 2006

## Gandalf, M.D.

(an ode to health-care professionals,  
adapted from JRR Tolkien's work)

When twilight in the E.R. was grey  
His footsteps on linoleum were heard;  
Before the dawn he went away  
On surgery long, without a word.  
From city hospitals to clinics on the shore,  
Trauma centers, and hospices upon a hill,  
Through intensive care units, and restricted  
doors  
And quarantined sections he walked at will.  
With doctors and nurses, ambulance women  
and men,  
With medical and non-medical folk,  
With patients and loved ones in the waiting  
den,

In their own cultural tongues he spoke.  
A deadly scalpel, a healing hand,  
A heart made heavy with its load;  
A cup of coffee, the strongest brand,  
A weary surgeon on the road.  
A Doctor of Medicine, on committees he sat  
In heated debate, though quick to laugh;  
Scrubbed and sterile, in surgery gown and  
hat,  
Supported by all the hospital staff.  
He stood and faced HMO's alone,  
Insurance policies and staff-cuts he both  
defied;  
He opened a practice on his own  
And saved many a patient that might have  
otherwise died.

Naglaa El-Abbadi  
Beckman Laser Institute

Awe Inspiring Alps  
Betty Wong  
Division of Neonatology  
Department of Pediatrics



Roses are Red  
Violets are Blue  
Why does it seem every physician has a different view?

To many patients, we garner respect because of the white coat  
As we try to find the perfect antidote.

Are we really striving for preventative perfection  
Or are we merely treating a symptomatic deception?

In medical school, we admit the best of the best  
So that they can survive, test after test.

After two years of cerebral regurgitation, stenosis begins, the pressure  
builds, the third year begins we are finally allowed to critique and think  
Even after retracting without a blink, smelling a stink, or sleeping a wink.

Fourth year: it's time to decide what kind of patients do you want to see?  
Kids that are stung by a bee or older patients who are unable to pee.

You've graduated, two more letters, a longer coat, and some pocket change to pay rent on your  
humble abode.  
To the patient, nothing has changed; except maybe their ICD9 code.

All this training, but do patients care?  
Oh quite contrary, they want to be heard, be treated fair.  
Not learn some esoteric fact about the half life of Voltaren.

Are physician's occupied too much with the A and P rather than the H and P?  
Can't our reward be a person's smile of glee?  
Rather than a paycheck full of G's

Compassion and empathy will take us physicians far.  
Yet when death comes unexpected, we drown our sorrows at the nearest bar.

It's all about efficiency and speed. Where is the time?  
Do we turn away disshelved, dysenteric patients with all this grime that can't afford to pay a  
dime  
And then admit a drug seeking addict for no reason or rhyme.

Medicine is full of patterns and paradox. Patients inherently ask, "Can we make sense of it?"  
The answer is no, but we do our best learning patient by patient, bit by bit trying to make the  
pieces fit.

In the end, medicine is not an exact science, it's an art.  
It's not only what's in your brain, it's what's in your heart.

*Sabin Motwani, Class of 2004*

## Anatomy Extra Credit

Eleven years old,  
Bitten by the family pet,  
A peridot green parrot  
Pierced my right wrist clean through to the bone  
Bloodlessly.  
Sitting on the porch steps  
Cradling my arm in anticipation of pain  
I peered through this artificial keyhole  
Into the iridescent pink and ivory below  
Hesitantly,

Twisting, sliding my shallow skin over the  
wound  
To better glimpse what lay beneath  
What lay within.  
Before the bright flood boiled over,  
And pain sealed this porthole  
To my new world,  
Myself.

Eighteen years old,



Mary Wang, Class of 2006  
*Untitled* (acrylic)

My first year in college,  
Insecure and mortally terrified of  
The so-called "Freshman Fifteen."  
I lost 30 pounds that semester alone.  
Lurching out of the shower  
I wiped clear a streak of mirror  
And saw the upper border of my breastbone  
The canals between my ribs now so deep  
Condensing fog had pooled between them,  
Indifferently.  
Pressing my thumb into my side I half expected  
To see my fingerprint on the other side  
And waited for my skin to shrink-wrap over  
Whatever dense flesh remained within  
Eternally  
Which weight I could not starve away  
Or run away,  
Myself.

Twenty-two years old,  
Coming of age in the emergency room  
In a seafoam green smock,  
I prove my will to practice medicine  
Doing rounds  
(Between the linen cart  
And whatever bed had been soiled  
Most recently.)  
He didn't stay in the waiting room too long  
With his left thumb in a cooler.  
I packed a dam of over-laundered washcloths  
beneath his limb.  
And snuck a peek at the isolated digit  
Which now lay curled on the floor of its chamber  
In a sort of fetal position, almost  
Defensively,  
Having crossed to freedom  
Over a reddened, murky river.  
This man and his errant body regard one  
another,  
Separated, incomplete, but fully recognizable  
That he is still a man,  
And he is  
Still very much  
Himself.

Twenty-three years old  
Newly married and beginning medical school  
I confront a lifelong phobia

Gathered in an underground bunker  
Shielding science and tradition beneath layers  
of sterility  
And a sheet of shining canvas  
Which gravity has tucked within  
A dead man's armpit.  
Delicately.  
Stiffening to the challenge,  
My scalpel runs deep of its target and through  
Layers of grainy brown tissue, grease and  
fluid,  
Recklessly,  
Brute force in my mind the manifestation,  
Of the faith I want to have, dear God, more  
than anything  
That this morbid scavenger hunt could not  
reveal  
What death has no doubt removed  
I hope has removed  
Himself.

Two hours older,  
Hopping one legged out of my scrubs into  
jeans  
I break free of the ladies room, the building,  
and the parking lot,  
And face-off the speed-bumps with  
Unanticipatory speed,  
Blaming inertia as I roll, eyes fixed, towards a  
yellowed light,  
Defiantly.  
When for no real reason I recall  
A report of somewhat apocryphal origin  
How the first cosmonaut hatched through this  
atmosphere,  
And in the wonder of space, stars and earth  
beneath,  
Radioed back a newfound atheism,  
Because he had seen it all, and  
Had not seen God  
Evidently.  
Shifting my foot deeper into the pedal,  
I change lanes and cut-off a classmate.  
We turn, knowing what was seen, into the red  
And through the intersection  
Intent upon finally  
In this life overtaking  
Ourselves.

Meghann Kaiser, Class of 2006

Vertigo in Vegas, Parts I & II  
A Tribute to Mr. Yoko Ono\*  
(July 1932 - September 2002)

*\*(name changed)*

Mr. Yoko Ono was a patient of mine for 3 of my 4 weeks at the Long Beach VA. Under my care, he was newly diagnosed with a small cell lung carcinoma with mets to the brain. All Mr. Yoko Ono knew in the 4 months prior to coming to the hospital was that he had separate, seemingly disconnected diagnoses of vertigo, vomiting due to gastritis, headaches due to tension, acute bronchitis, weight loss due to gastritis, and atrial fibrillation. Mr. Yoko Ono was a respectful gentleman who never wanted to bother anyone, even if it was the nurses to help him walk steadily to the bathroom. He always said "thank you" or "thank you very much" or "I greatly appreciate it". He never asked for anything out of the ordinary, except that we try to get him well enough to fulfill his dying wish a first time trip, just for a day or two, to Las Vegas. Despite a trial of radiation and chemo-therapy, Mr. Yoko Ono passed away under hospice care at the Long Beach VA. All the doctors tried their best. All the nurses tried their best. You could see the effort and selflessness that he brought out in everyone around him. It was a beautiful thing to see.

Michelle Dominguez, Class of 2004





"every offense"

little computer I know you mean well  
but when expression demands i not I not I  
please don't feel the need to correct  
that,  
or my fragmented sentences  
because  
some nights i am hurt  
too easily

Michael Doo, Class of 2004

Cabbala

Struggling between the air  
Of peaceful travel  
And expectations of  
A new century of work.

Reading Isaiah and wondering:  
Do miracles really happen?  
Are we all made for cabbalistic revelations  
Or just those touched by  
Magic smoke?

Andrei Novac, M.D.  
Department of Psychiatry



## STREAM OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS

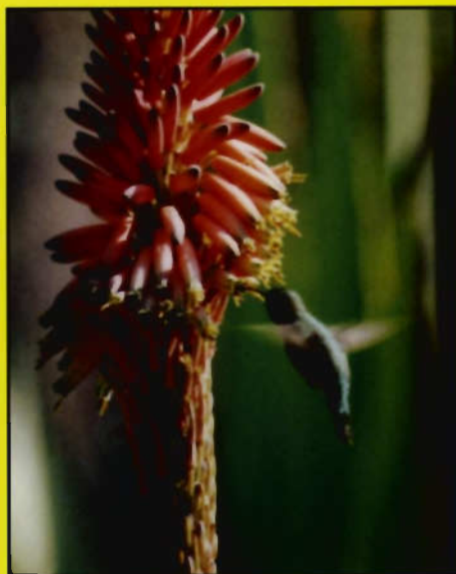
It felt like 10 miles  
It was probably 50 feet  
The nurse didn't look up  
The form goes here  
Your signature goes here  
Your clothes go off  
No jewelry  
No pacemaker, right?  
No comments please  
The cold crawled across my bare skin  
Why did it have to be in my middle?  
If it was just my arm  
Then all I'd have to take off  
Is just my shirt  
All I get is this little gown  
Don't they realize its freezing in here?  
One of the ties is broken  
I bet they don't even care  
Which way to the front  
Which way to the back  
I'm not ready yet  
Hop up here, she says  
You're not pregnant, right?  
No, no way  
But wait, what if I am?  
I don't know  
But if I tell her I don't know  
I have to go back  
But if I am, what would that mean?  
Med school would be harder  
My parents would be worried  
And the baby will have two heads  
All because I got this Xray  
No, not pregnant  
No, no jewelry  
Yes, a lot of fear  
But wait, you didn't ask that  
This table is freezing  
My stomach is aching  
What is the doctor even looking for?  
I haven't taken Path yet  
So many things that it could be  
It must be cancer  
He just couldn't tell me  
He knows how med students react  
There are so many organs in there  
It could be any one  
I hope its not my colon  
I don't want one of those bags on the side  
Its probably something rare  
That would be just my luck  
But then I couldn't study for Biochem

One good thing about being sick  
The lights are dim  
The air is cool  
The nurse told me to lie down honey  
She slapped on the lead pads  
Protect your ovaries and thyroid  
What's the thyroid?  
If this pad doesn't protect it  
What will that do?  
And oh great  
Now I really won't be able to have kids  
Without two heads  
The door closed behind her  
My eyes closed tight  
I know this won't hurt  
But what if it does?  
It makes a whirring noise  
Does anyone even know that I am here?  
No one does  
My parents are far away  
My boyfriend too  
My sisters are at school  
My friends are busy  
My classmates are in class  
No one knows that I am here  
No one knows that there's something wrong



Something wrong enough to need an Xray  
Something wrong enough that the doctor didn't know  
No one knows that I am here  
I think there are some people that would care  
But since no one knows  
Right now, no one cares  
The tears well up  
One spills over  
And drips onto the lead  
This pain in my middle  
This pressure in my back  
No one knows I am here  
No one cares  
Its freezing cold and dark  
I have to study for our test  
The nurse is back  
She looks at my face  
I know she sees the tears  
She grabs her lead pads  
And runs away  
They always say  
You learn best by doing  
Please let me remember  
These thoughts  
These pains  
These fears  
Every patient has  
Even me

Jennifer Jolley, Class of 2004



Christine Beeton, Ph.D.  
Researcher  
Physiology & Bio physics

ALONE:

He stares out the window  
Unaware of his surroundings  
The leaves fall  
One by one  
Leaving their home naked and cold  
Mesmerized  
He does not flinch  
He does not breath  
The clock ticks behind him as each  
Second falls away  
Like the leaves  
Only unlike the leaves the seconds  
Do not blow away  
They form a mountain  
Of which the man stands upon  
It grows  
Higher and higher  
And  
Further away the man drifts from his

Childhood dreams  
He shivers for as his mountain gets  
Taller  
The wind blows harder  
He turns from the window  
To escape the desolate, dreary day  
Only to find it is  
Dark  
Behind him.  
He reaches out to stop  
The leaves from falling  
The seconds from escaping  
And  
The wind from blowing  
But his hand remains lifeless in the air  
For he refused love  
And  
Now he must climb the mountain alone.

Anonymous

## Only in Orange County, Southern California

One late afternoon after I finished my last case, I picked up the anesthesia pre-op questionnaires for the next day. I reviewed the information and called my patients. The first two patients that I phoned were not home so I proceeded to call the third. I noticed "NEEDS TO SPEAK WITH ANESTHESIOLOGIST" highlighted on her questionnaire. She was a 54-year-old obese female, ASA " (low surgical risk), otherwise healthy, with no surgical history going for a Total Abdominal Hysterectomy, and should have been routine. Perhaps she was simply nervous and wanted to make sure she met her anesthesiologist before she came to the hospital. I dialed the phone number written on the questionnaire.

"Hello, is this Ms. E?" I asked.

"Yes, and you are?" she followed.

"This is Dr. Zolfagari, the resident Anesthesiologist for tomorrow's surgery. I wanted to call you and see if you have any questions."

"Oh yes, I do." Ms. E replied in a calm but rather assertive voice, "I just wanted to let you know that I won't be needing you guys tomorrow."

"What do you mean, "you won't be needing us tomorrow"? You mean the Anesthesiologists?" I stammered.

"Yes, exactly!" she exclaimed, "You see, Dr. Z-whatever your name was- I have been seeing a hypnotist for the past couple of weeks and with his help I will have my surgery without general anesthesia."

I almost lost control at that point. I was very close to letting her know how ridiculous that idea appeared. This was a big abdominal case that can take many hours! While I was trying to hold in my laughter, I asked her to explain what she meant.

"Well, you see," she calmly stated, "My hypnotist has been working with me. As soon as we arrive to the operating room and we are ready, I will put myself to sleep. I will be in a very deep sleep much like general anesthesia and will not feel any pain. That is why I don't need you guys."

Having been in residency for only a couple of months, I wondered if it were really possible for one to use hypnosis in such a setting. I decided it was time to end my conversation with her and call my attending. "Ms. E, there will be plenty of time tomorrow for us to discuss things as I will also need to inform my attending physician," I said hoping that she didn't have any other wishes for the case. She answered, in a semi-content voice, "Okay doc, but remember, no need for you tomorrow but I guess it'll be ok if you help out."

I spoke with my attending and surprisingly enough, he decided to roll into the O.R. and see if she could, in fact, put herself to sleep. He did,

however, have her sign the consent for general anesthesia in case the self-hypnotism method was not successful. We did not give her sedation in the preoperative area. As we arrived towards the



Vinh Nguyen  
Class of 2004

room, my curiosity was increasing astronomically. We pushed the gurney into the cold room and began putting the standard monitors on. Ms. E said, "Yes, this is the room. I know this room. I am almost ready."

As we gave her oxygen, she started to hypnotize herself. She mumbled about being on the China Wall. She spoke of flowers on the hills and other things that did not make sense. Despite her attempts, she did not look sleepy enough for an incision! That's when we decided not to let this poor lady experience surgical stimulus on a MAC of zero (no anesthesia whatsoever).

We encouraged her to do her thing while I pushed fentanyl and a stick of propofol intravenously. That worked and she fell asleep for a general anesthetic. We intubated her and breathed the anesthesia machine. The patient was still trying to use self-anesthesia that she made it through the surgery

that some people out there, like the percentage of naive patients like this. We have a medical record to prove we provided her "do-it-yourself" anesthesia

Ramin Zolfagari, M.D.  
Carla St Laurent, M.D.  
Department of Anesthesiology



Peeking Banana Flower  
Stephanie Dittmer, Class of 2005



Ko Khio Tupu, Thailand  
Rumina A. Zaman, Class of 2005

**Dust**

**Why must the best moments  
be remembered and not lived?  
why can only the clock's sweeping hands  
reveal the hidden gems of by gone days.  
In the moment the day brings no joy,  
the sunlight no warmth because I am late,  
a smile no happiness for my heart aches,  
a meal is tasteless as it buries my worries.  
And yet tomorrow I will look back on today,  
as the memories skip across my mind  
I will force a bittersweet smile and see,  
how blind before I could be.  
Why was it I cried and complained  
when I should have been in pure bliss?  
It was my own life and everything I missed.**

**Nguyen Pham, Class of 2006**

## The Masai

The Masai standing tall and erect  
Statuesque and elegant  
His spear nearly as tall as he  
Poised at his side  
Shield held high  
The warrior stood still

In harmony with his surroundings  
In touch with his world  
The Masai eyed his adversary  
The Cape Buffalo did the same  
Sizing up one another  
One with knowing respect, the other  
with a powerful gaze

I drove past the two watching them  
Standing at their distance  
Each mindful of the limits  
Aware of subtle nuances  
Seemingly at an impasse, time standing  
still  
The warrior knew the first move did not  
belong to him

As the sun was setting, I passed their  
way again  
Masai and Cape Buffalo continued their  
gaze  
The nobility of both clearly evident  
Engaged in their timeless struggle  
The gulf remained between them  
Patience and knowledge kept them from  
mortal conflict

Masai and Buffalo  
Living out their destinies in this fragile  
environment  
Mired in centuries old traditions  
Away from the quickened pace of my  
world  
Where respect and patience are lacking  
Learning much about myself in the  
process

Pat Lenahan,  
LCSW, Assoc. Clinical Professor  
Dept. of Family Medicine



Jason Hwang, MD  
Chief Resident, Internal Medicine

## The Patient

I am sitting here half-naked waiting for what?  
Somebody, hopefully, who can tell me what I got.  
Waiting and waiting, I think I will play with this pen,  
Maybe push this button, look in this drawer, and open this.  
COME IN!

Thank you Doctor, I am glad we can start.  
Yes Doctor, right around this part.  
Just the other day it started to hurt.  
Ever since then, I have felt like dirt.

No, no, yes, just a little at night.  
Sometimes I wake up and it gives me a fright.  
No, no, no thank G-d its all clear.  
It is just this new problem that I am beginning to fear.

Sure, no problem, I don't mind at all.  
No, not as far as my memory can recall.  
Oh man, I really hate this part.  
Maybe in YOUR eyes it seems like an art.

Well that's good news; I will give it a shot.  
I will be back again to see if it works or not!  
I am glad that is over with, but it was worth the wait.  
However, next time, I will be the one who is late!!

Shaun Miller, Class of 2005

## Motivation at 1 a.m.

Another hour I promise myself, eyes sore  
The clock ticks away painfully slowly  
While I push through a chapter, just one more.

But I've forgotten what I've read, completely.  
Flooding my head with absolute frustration  
Wasted time, mental and emotional energy.

But what if I prescribe the wrong medication  
Miss the subtle signs of a rare but deadly disease  
Or fail to recall the fatal contraindication.

Lives will depend on my future expertise.  
I have time to learn but it goes by fast,  
The pressure great, more than probs to appease.

It's for my future patients, first through last  
That I draw my attention alertly to the text  
Turning back the pages I thought I'd passed.

Myra Wong, Class of 2005



### Oh To Be Young Again

Improper Protein

Why aren't you with your brothers?

Find a Job

In the ER, in the continuum, mitochondria,

Hell, stay at home in the warm cytoplasm or at your

Grandma's Nucleus

Sometimes Life feels like you are being packaged by the

Golgi

Sending out to the Outside World.

Left to fend for Your Own

Only looking for a cell to call Home

To have a Job on the assembly line

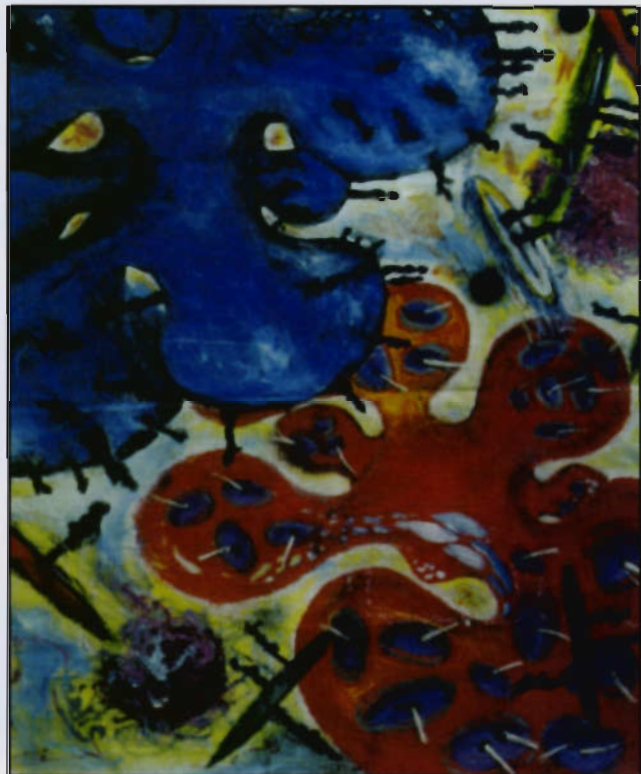
But the lysosomes are out to Chew You Up

The macrophages might Destroy the World

All you can do is Enjoy the Float

And try not to Rock the Boat

Jantje Groot, Class of 2006



Tandis Kazeminy  
Class of 2003

## Empathy

Fever, cough, and a rash  
As I enter legs do thrash.  
"Please hold still. Please be quiet."  
Crying, screaming, jaws defiant.  
Swollen glands, painful ears.  
Stuffy nose, tears and tears.  
"Child fussy, uncooperative.  
But no distress and non-toxic.  
It's nothing serious. Just a bug!  
Have some soup and use this drug!"



Ali Razmara  
M.D./Ph.D. Student

First my throat—it's just a scratch.  
Nothing a night's rest won't patch.  
Tonsils form a soft white coat.  
Burning down my tender throat.  
Fevers come, and then return.  
Legs do ache and eyes do burn.  
It's nothing serious. Just a bug.  
I'll have some soup and use this drug.

Fevers follow, one another.  
Chills and heat attack the other.  
A raging battle starts inside  
My body along just for the ride.  
How much I want a hospital stay!  
Get me closer to D-day!!

OH, WHEN WILL MY FEVERS BREAK?!!  
WHEN WILL MY LEGS NOT ACHE?!!!  
WHEN WILL MY THROAT NOT BURN?!!!!  
WHEN WILL MY LIFE RETURN?!!!!!!!!!!

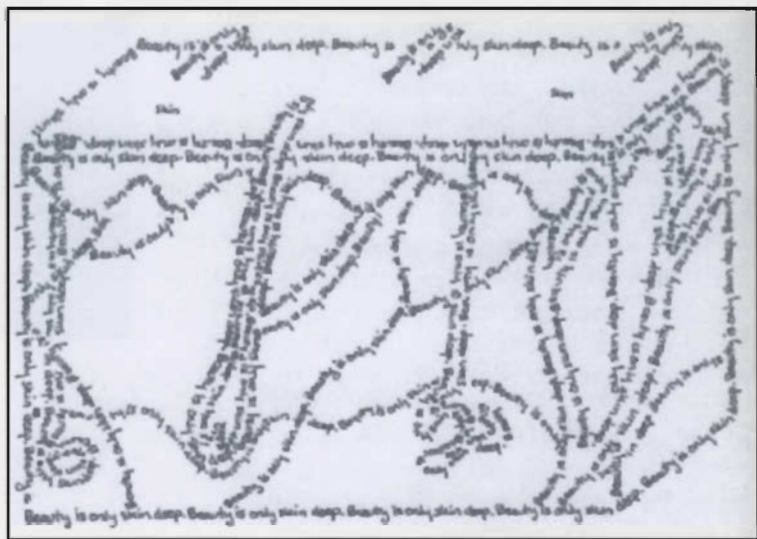
NOTHING SERIOUS?! JUST A BUG?!!  
YOU HAVE SOME SOUP AND USE THAT DRUG!!

Jenny Murase, Class of 2003



Pat Lenahan, LCSW  
Assoc. Clinical Professor  
Dept. of Family Medicine

"Beauty is Only Skin"  
Rebecca Shpall  
Class of 2003



### Biker Wedding

I am laying on the hot sidewalk  
Because I just feel like it  
Watching my sister's best friend  
Sunny Day  
Walking up the steps in her yellow bridesmaid dress  
Swinging her golden egg custard hair.

My skirt can spread out on the concrete  
To make a summer snow angel.  
Someday I am getting a yellow dress  
And maybe yellow hair!  
But I am not getting a job at the Pussycat Lounge.

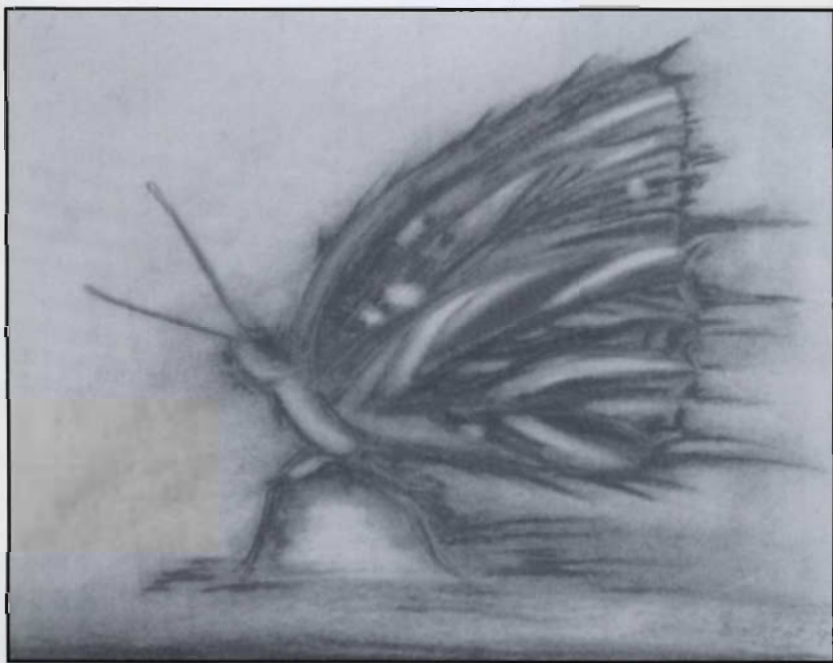
My sister comes out and lights a cigarette  
Says she can't believe she's getting married again.  
Louie rides up with Butcher and Spike on their choppers  
Shiny wedding shirts under their leather jackets and chains.  
When I put my head upside down  
All the colors and sounds drip down into the sky.

I squeeze my eyes shut to see pictures of the future  
Like me in my someday biker wedding  
Or maybe I am the other girl riding away on her own motorcycle.

## Thoughts on George Harrison's Death

I was killing time at the lunch conference,  
listening to an ENT surgeon.  
He pointed to a slide, snapped during a big case in the O.R.  
It was half-head, half-recognizable.  
I'd say disfigured but that implies some figured starting place.  
Half serious he said, "Most people who get head and neck cancer sort of get what they deserve."  
Ready to take on the next terminal case, he swaggered, the privilege of the clean-living.  
I imagine he'd once crossed paths with this example,  
both up in the pre-dawn hour.  
The surgeon with clean trimmed nails en route to work,  
the head staggering home from bars,  
or smoky trysts.  
Not interested in gaining the world  
but up all night nevertheless,  
learning the sitar.

Jena Berg, Class of 2003



Mary Wang  
Class of 2006

You stand there  
Among the strangers of all strangers  
Not understand the language  
Not understand the custom  
Smile!



Your love and joy radiate  
Remembering the day that I approached  
"Ma! Ma co muon con lam bac si?"  
(Mom! Do you want me to become a  
doctor?)  
"Nghe duoc. Cuc lam do con,  
Nhung con se co co hoi giup nguoi"  
(Sounds good! You have to work very hard,  
but you will have opportunities to help  
people.)

In the mist of that crowd  
Attending the White Coat Ceremony  
This mother is a dentist,  
Another a professor, an R.N.  
An executive, an ophthalmologist.  
You are the most special  
A seven grader, a farmer, a retailer,  
A babysitter, a mother of ten,  
A sacrifice  
You were born to unconditionally love and  
give  
And to be a quiet inspiration  
I love you Mom and am always proud to be  
your daughter  
And laugh with you when hearing you say  
"Cam on, y quen, thank you."\*

*\*One evening when we went shopping  
together, we were helped by a gentleman.*

*My Mom spontaneously appreciated him in  
Vietnamese. The whole quote means  
"Thank you, oh I forgot, thank you."*

—Anonymous



"A Perfect Moment in Life"  
Trung Minh Thai, M.D.  
Dept. of Psychiatry

One afternoon of his life  
Was spent on a mermaid  
Tattooed onto his left deltoid  
So I could study her in more detail  
Than the deltoid she is tattooed on.

Once, perhaps more, he was worried,  
Rushed, exalted, thrilled, inspired...  
Wishing it to go on forever,  
To skip the thrust  
That will collapse his tomorrow into  
dust.

Now he rests motionless on a steel  
table,  
While a group of studious medical  
students,  
Myself included,  
Are picking apart his every part

Detail by scrupulous detail,  
Like perhaps once a jealous girlfriend  
Picked his character apart,  
Part by scrutinized part.

That is one way to prolong your stay  
here,  
Impressing yourself onto the memories  
of those  
Whose time did not yet come.  
Mermaid by mermaid

Diana Katsman, Class of 2006

## I'M ONLY TAKING A NIGHT WALK

You call me a schizophrenic,  
but I tell you I'm only taking a night walk.

The night's purple;  
whispers invade into my feel.

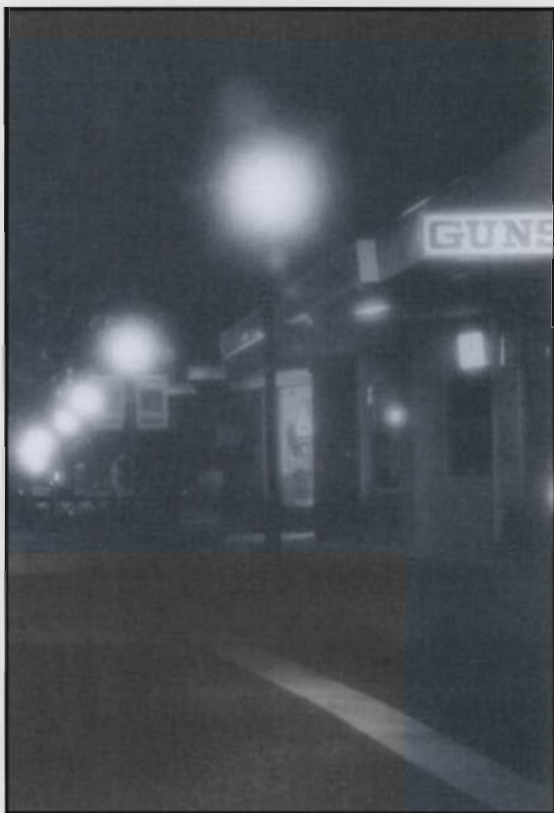
Among starry darkness far above,  
crickets' cries surround me.

Sudden rustles from the wood resemble  
incoherent cerebral activities of mine.

One step forward opens the face of fear;  
one back step I meet a cold stone-wall.

Quintessential vision of mine you judge false,  
instead I accept it as my perfect reality.

You can't hear even though  
I'm hearing well.



You can't see what I see, because  
the color's too bright and remote for your sense.

My breathing I count under my head,  
and silence a silencer toward eternity.

You decide I'm sick for funny talk;  
I'm not because I'm under my own spell.

After a day's work I prefer a night walk,  
for there's fever and perhaps chills too.

Call me an insane or a hypochondriac whatever,  
yet I'm occupied within my own world.

Joe C. Chang, M.D.  
Division of Hematology/Oncology  
Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center



Steven Daines, Class of 2006

## Cracked Paint

Lead me through rooms warmed by escaped breath falling.  
Sit against old stale walls while distant voices are calling.  
Cross burden laden floors to wood splintered standing doors  
Into forgotten rooms with cracked paint and foot worn floors.  
Moving endless puzzle box, few pieces and worn parts  
Turn the knob to another room waiting, again it all starts.  
Cracked paint on old walls falls and poisons days yet born,  
Told tomorrow in praise and let today fall into forgotten scorn.

Sitting in halls, head against up turned palms, awaiting sense,  
Asking none, wondering without stop, where to go hence.  
Are the walls not marked where old pictures once hung?  
Has passing of time unmarked as venom your mind stung?  
Stand and walk, or not, which rooms will you never see?  
Though cracked paint never ends, what else awaits to see?  
Stand from motionless stupor in long forgotten halls cold.  
Walk with unsteady foot. The rooms aren't too many to behold.

Rooms without cracked paint lead to peaceful bliss minds astray.  
Rooms with too many cracks poison often in immunity's delay.  
Who could build false rooms of perfect balance and line?  
Only who would say with resolve today will never be fine.  
Breathe in deep against restrain over the smell of lead paint.  
Listen to sounds of steps long gone against the floor faint.  
Their breath fell as it escaped to warn the rooms of old build.  
The paint cracked from some many these rooms have filled.

Amir Bernaba,  
Class of 2005



Gary Gutkin  
Class of 2005



For the last few weeks I've been visiting a person I never knew  
And for the last few weeks I've realized that I've learned something new

I used to take life for granted and thought that everyone around me was never gonna pass  
But now I understand that, life, in essence is short and I never know how long it will last

Ever since I've been visiting a person named Benjamin,  
It's been one of the first times where a stranger has gladly said, "come in"

That first week I saw him, I almost felt he was unlucky,  
But, when asked what he'd like and Ben answered, "I would love to have wild sex" I knew he was feelin' spunky

In his situation, Ben as I called him, was in good spirits and uplifting,  
However, during the weeks, he became quieter, and I almost felt like he was drifting

I remember the second time I saw him in his chair, looking a little quieter, and paler only after a week.  
I felt like I was helpless and to me things looked bleak

But, realizing that no matter how quiet Ben was over the weeks, he was always there listening to my voice  
I knew that it was only a few days ago when he opened his door and welcomed me in, by his own choice

At this point, there was absolutely nothing I could do  
Except for trying to comfort him, and maybe whispering in his ear "thank you"

Because I thought, this may be the last time I'll see Ben,  
I thought this was it, and I would never be able to say bye again,

But, at the point where Ben was so somber that he said nothing for the entire hour,  
I thought that this was the point where I had lost all power

So realizing that life may soon be coming to an end  
I knew that I could be close to losing a person I'd finally considered a friend

So I bid him a farewell and told him I would be back to visit him in the coming days  
Although I knew he was too weak and frail to even breathe out a phrase

So, on the next visit, I pulled up to the terrace and walked to the front door,  
Where I buzzed in my code and the caregiver asked me, "who are you here for"

As she opened the door for me, I told her Mr. George, and she went back to her desk and looked through some piles,  
Where she found a folder with what looked like someone's files,

"Mr. George passed away on Thursday evening," she said  
"Was not doing so well over the last few days," as she finished what she read

Sometimes it almost takes someone you know or befriend  
To make you realize that life, as you know it, can come to an end

So when we see others we care about, including our family and friends,  
We have to remember to look at them in a whole different lens

In a viewpoint that helps us appreciate others in a whole new way,  
Because it is the memories we have of them that will never go astray

*Who are you? Brave one, that you still give life  
After the harmonics of breath have expired.  
You invite me unknown scholar to explore with the knife,  
All that your body and mind have conspired.  
In the quiet of the cavity there is still a voice,  
Beckoning reserved spirits to explore  
"Don't worry," you say, "This was my choice"  
I have used this body, it can serve me no more."  
"I further I believe that there is a dearth  
of knowledge that will transcend the grave.  
So rather than reside beneath the earth,  
I meet you here, so far to lessons save."  
"But all the while you are timid, I see  
With gentle touch upon the clavicle,  
Respect is respected, but ultimately  
This is poor use of my eternal sabbatical."  
"Be thorough, be steadfast, dare I say even aggressive,  
For I have secrets the timorous will not find;  
Dive through that tissue; I promise not to think less of  
You for showing fervor to expand your mind."  
"Section the pleura, remove the lung  
That fat cell? No. That is not it.  
You wish to find the ligamentum arteriosum?  
Retract the aorta, it the arch it does sit."  
And on it goes, the whispering guidance,  
Leading me around each new curve,  
Skillfully teaching the art of reliance,  
Instruction beyond what I may deserve.  
So I leave you now, there on the table,  
Where some may call it death.  
But I will return again to bear your fable,  
To see the life beyond the breath.*

*Nathaniel DiNicola  
Class of 2006*



Vinh Nguyen  
Class of 2004

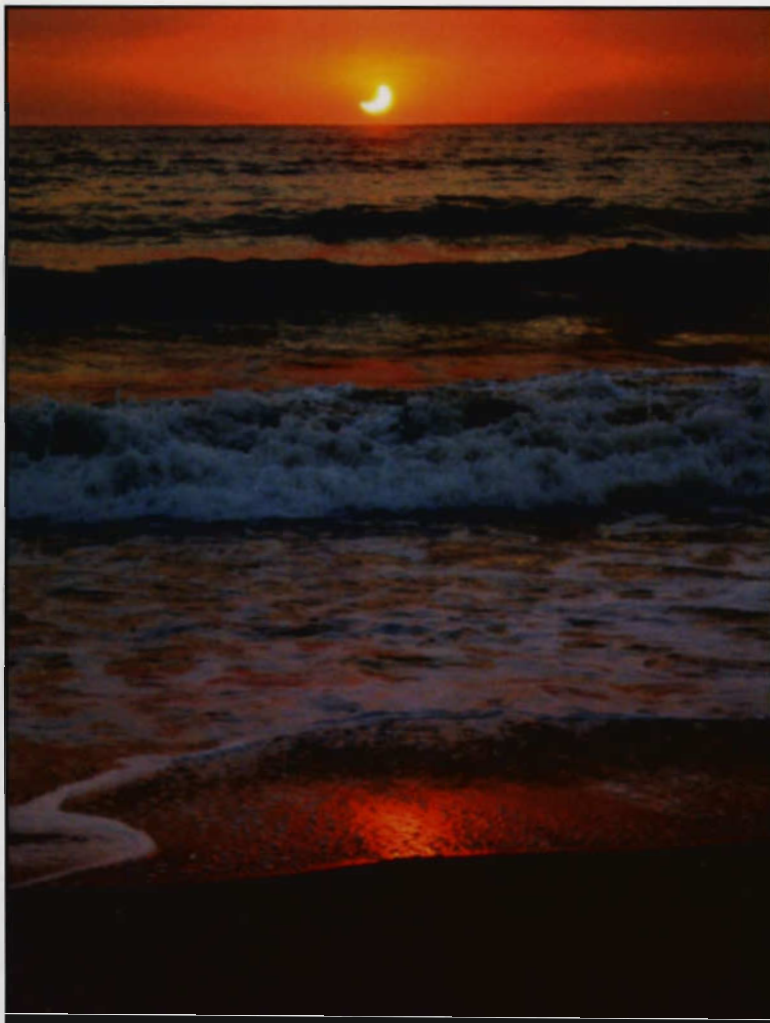
## "Memory"

Minuscule vertical threads of tiny white screamed through the darkness. They hung one octave above disappearing. All was dead quite and then turned white. The brilliance was overpowering. The brilliance had weight. It compressed the surrounding sheets. The slightest movement caused waves of amplified sounds. A spiraling swirl of viscous back interrupted the white. It moved in silence counter clockwise. All went inverse. The collapsing white linen sheets screamed in slow motion. Do not move. The sound was too loud. The sound came from any movement. Horizontal threads of black emitted faint high-pitched chirps-squeaks one fraction above disappearing. They expanded into canyons empty of colorless purpose. The sheets moved again with a deafening roar. The moment then went silent. Don't move. Time convulsed and momentarily disconnected. Please, please, just don't move.

Sentelle Eubanks  
Psychiatry & Human Behavior  
Research Assistant



Louvre  
Darren Raphael, Class of 2006



Trung Minh Thai, M.D.  
Dept. of Psychiatry

### STRENGTH

I have Sold my Soul many times and bought it back again,  
When I've Told my Whole situation, will you Love me then?  
Will you Hold my Bowl, be the one on whom I can Depend?  
Or stay Cold, my Lull will finish, and I'll be on the mend.

I spend Time with Dreams I have built with my own two hands  
Broken Rhymes with Screams of hate to bring on the end  
Only Crime it Seems pays off quick, to Evil you will bend  
In your Prime you Team a haters' life against your good friend

For I find Strength to go on,  
And my Love, it will stay Strong,  
Will you be here later on?  
Or will I turn to find you gone?

But I find Strength to go on  
And my Mind is not far gone  
Will I stay Sane, Will I stay Strong?  
Will this be my Victory song?

Matthew Sanford  
Senior Clerk  
Physician's Billing Group

## The Risks of Empathy

If I climb into the same boat as you  
Will it sink?

If I walk a mile in your shoes  
Will I get blisters?

If my heart bleeds for you,  
Will I need a transplant?

If I see the world through your eyes  
Will I go blind?

If I feel your pain,  
How much analgesic will I need?

If I understand your point of view  
Will I end up skewered on that same  
sharp point?

If I hear what you're saying  
Will I develop ear ache?

If my heart goes out to you,  
Will I ever get it back?

If I could be you  
Could the same bad things happen to me?

If I am you  
Then who am I?

Johanna Shapiro  
Professor  
Dept. of Family Medicine

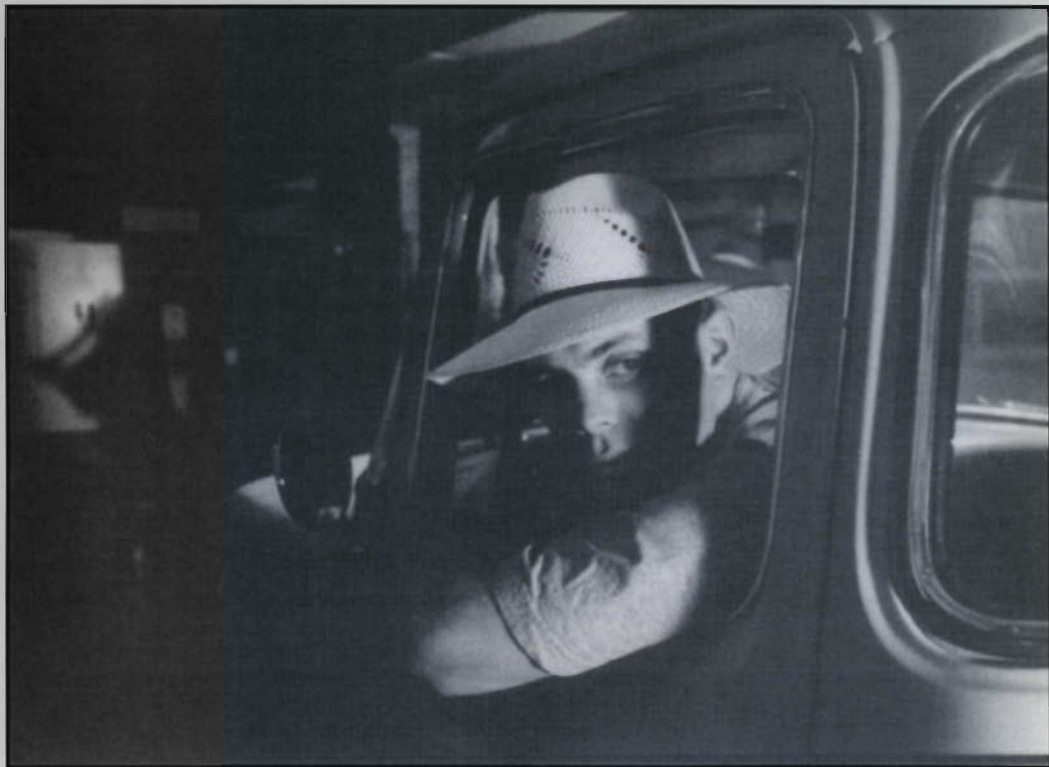


Buddhist nun with prayer wheels  
Lhasa, Tibet  
Judith Hopkins, MS, RN  
Department of Gynecology/Oncology

I came across this analogy at the end of a hard day of trying to "get out of the way". You see, we medical students do a lot of that. It came to me that working with medical students in the hospital, is a lot like doing dishes with my son David. David is two, and wants to be just like his mom and dad -talk like we talk and do everything we do. Consequently, each night after dinner he insists on helping with the dishes. So we involve him. We want to help him to learn how to wash the dishes so that he can one day be given the coveted responsibility. We begin by making some allowances. We take the time to get out a stool for him to stand on and find ways to work around him so he can feel that he is "a part of it all." Often times we have to completely rewash the dishes he's washed, and every now and again we must 'jump in' and stop him from breaking a glass or doing some other real damage. But mostly we just let him give it a go, knowing that is the best way for him to learn. In the specialty of dish-washing we are the attendings, working with our little medical student. David, bless his heart, is in reality "in our way," just as I am in my attendings' way at the hospital. It takes twice as long for my wife and I to wash the dishes with him as it would if he were not there in the middle of things. But as I thought about it, I realized that this is what teaching is. We are praising his successes and correcting his mistakes. And he is learning from both. We try not to worry about the extra time it takes and yes we actually get a kick out of his improvement. We care about him too. We care about his improvement. We look forward to the day when with satisfaction we will sit on the couch and visit while he is doing the dishes. The lesson for the attending is simple: let them wash the dishes. The other lesson is for the dish-washers. David learns from mistakes mostly, and after each one he jumps right back in trying. I have learned that it is nearly impossible to damage a two-year-old's ego, or lessen their enthusiastic drive to achieve competence. This same attitude of learning can drive medical students to excellence in the practice of medicine. So get in the way and start scrubbin!"

Daniel W. Wells, Class of 2005





Eric Hegedus, Class of 2005

It is  
A summer night.  
Not in August  
But in May;  
A night of oddities  
uncertainties  
of black that turns to gray.

Midnight finds a sleeper  
Trembling in the bed  
Praying once again  
For a single night's peace.

Hand on the doorknob this Saturday night  
Out into the wilderness of a brick  
unknown.

Just escape her alarm clock's  
Insistent ticking monotone.

Already he dreads the lawnmower

### "Regret"

outside tomorrow morning  
The way the hum whittles time  
like brave grass trying  
to live for a little while.

With this ring I thee—  
Why do lies get told  
dreams sold  
and children born and forgotten?

The secret is safe again tonight.  
Sure as the arrival of morning light.  
Make a pancake, tell a joke,  
"Keep Tim's fingers out of the yolk."

And all the while there festers pain.  
This he sees in his tomorrow again.  
Back down the hall  
And into the cell  
where the eyes, they fail to close;  
the ticking, it does not cease.

Anonymous

## HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

Lines on my face,  
A signature of endurance.  
Lines on your face,  
A map of time.  
Lines on his face,  
A swing of circumstances.  
Lines on her face,  
Cries for the loss of the chosen.

Facial lines!  
A loved one in motionless confinement,  
A child lost at sea,  
Imposed asylum,  
Travels to foreign lands,  
Hours of relentless humiliations.

Andrei Novac, M.D.  
Dept. of Psychiatry



Lighthouse and Bridge  
Jose Ospina, M.D./Ph.D. Student





PLEXUS 2003