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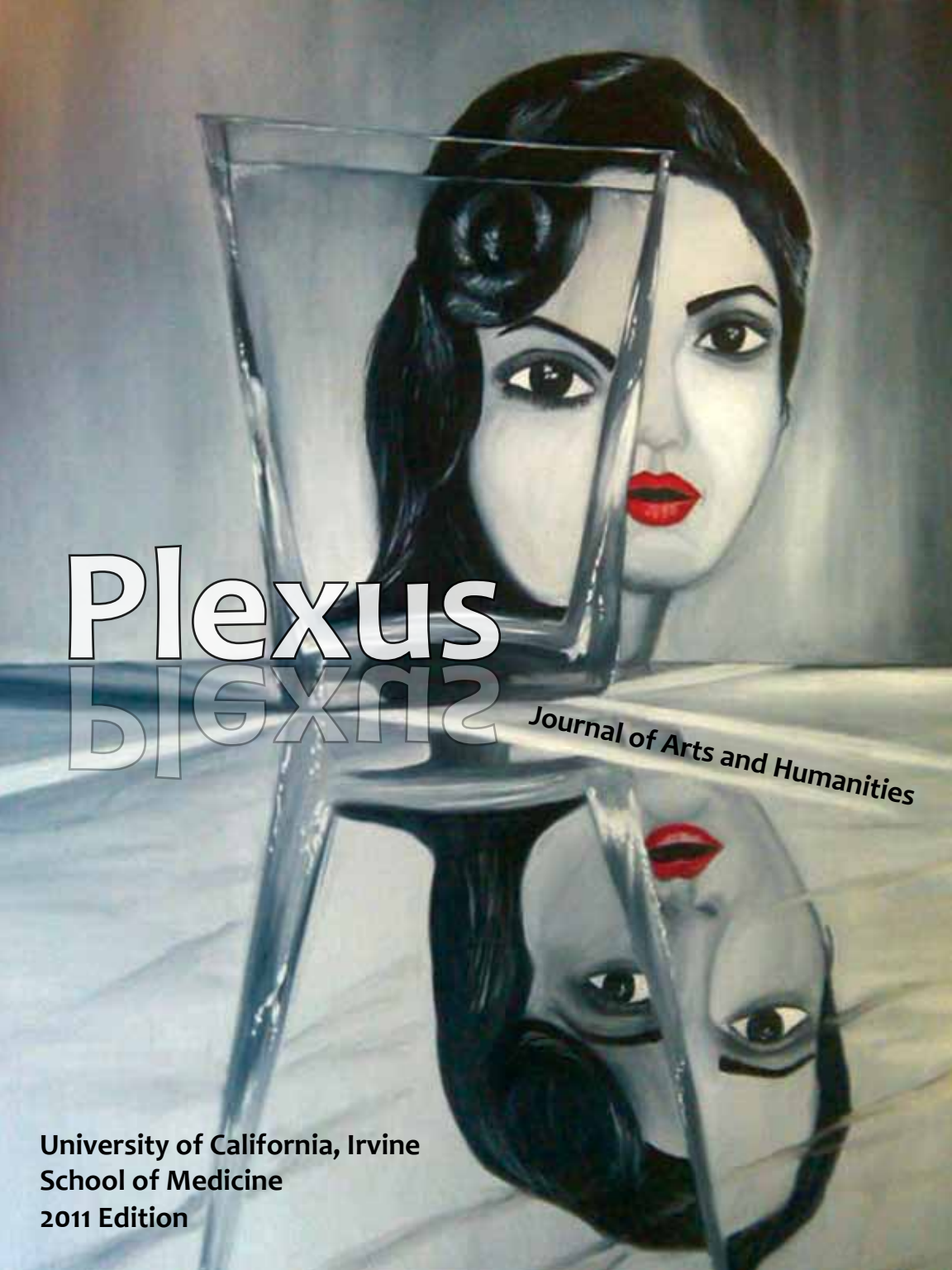
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Plexus BIEXN2

Journal of Arts and Humanities

**University of California, Irvine
School of Medicine
2011 Edition**



Lemons of Capri

Betty Wong
Fellowship Program Coordinator
Painting

Cover

Glassy-Eyed

Charitha Reddy, MS4
Oil on Canvas

Plexus Audio

Keep your ears open for the CD
and music available online!

[http://www.meded.uci.edu/Medhum/
plexus.html](http://www.meded.uci.edu/Medhum/plexus.html)

Plexus

Journal of Arts and Humanities

University of California, Irvine School of Medicine

2011 Edition

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The Rippled Body: A dialogue

Idris Leppla, MS1

We aren't all perfect.
We have scars—battle wounds.
We don't die as pristine as we came
into this world. Our anatomy
reflects our experience.

Student

Cutting you open, I pinned through the breast tissue only to find that the breast tissue wasn't there. I kept looking for it, wondering: will I see the ducts, the highway of your mammary glands? I pushed the scalpel in deeper only to uncover a balloon-like object slip out from under its cover. How peacefully it had been situated there. A piece of you just like the rest.

Teacher

I remember the day they diagnosed me. I was sitting in the waiting room reading a magazine when the nurse called me in. *Breast cancer*, she said, nonchalantly. I remember wanting to call my son—waiting for him to pick me up, I almost did. But when he arrived I said nothing. After all, his youngest had just made the volleyball tryouts. I waited at home for an answer—an antidote to this damper in my Monday morning routine. All I found were more *Women's Worlds*. It seemed that breast cancer was everywhere. The color pink started to annoy me. I went to Walgreen's to fill my monthly meds and they had switched to pink caps. I almost threw up. Doesn't anybody realize what a constant reminder pink ribbons are?



Nature Beauty

Tanni Thai,
Senior Financial Analyst
Photograph



Sunset Over Morro Bay

Cipriano Hurtado, Security
Photograph

Student

I moved onto another body. Yet I kept returning to you. I liked holding it in my hands. Jiggling it around, wondering if it would pop if I dropped it on the ground. I never looked up your cause of death. I got lazy. Did they tackle the breast cancer, kill it, and then put those in? So that you could be beautiful as long as you went on living?

Teacher

I watched a movie last spring. It was about a man who was sick with AIDS and decided to spend his last months looking out the window. He realized he couldn't live so he wanted to watch other people live. A sort of sick vicarious pity party. He wore thick sweaters—the kind that go down to your waist and have big pockets on either side. He was sad – and so his death, I guess, would be one long continuum of his life. Barely awake in the morning, slumber neither here nor there, sweater sets to cast away the changing of the guard, and done. He was done.

I was never the type who waited to die.



Main Beach

Peter McQueen, MS4
Photograph



Pause and Reflect

Adam Spjute, MS1

Silent and still you lie there
What life you had, I do not know.
The lives you touched must have been many
Through love and kindness shown.

Did your mother weep
When born to your family so dear?
Did your father cry when you married
Or did he hide his every tear?

Did your husband surprise you with flowers
When you had that last fight?
Did he embrace you when times were tough
And then you knew all would be right?

Did you clean the scraped knees
Of the children you adored?
Did you put them to bed
When they fell asleep on the floor?

Did you sing Christmas carols with grandchildren
And make houses of gingerbread?
Did you read them stories of St. Nick
Tuck them in and kiss their little head?

Now with hands cold and weathered,
Once so warm and tender;
Hands that teach me how to heal
And that our bodies are gifts beyond splendor.

As I hold the scalpel in hand
I pause and reflect.
And think of all you've given
To mankind, showed you no neglect.

Did you know the lives you would save
By teaching people like me?
For this I thank you with a full heart
For teaching all of us anatomy.



Untitled

Luz Ornelas, Ms3
Photograph

Remember Me

Kimberly Truong, MS1

Please do not remember
My strangled veins, the piercing nerves;
That my weak, weak heart could not
dance on its own; these feet
took me to work every day,
One hundred years later, they've begun to mold;
That maybe I had the most impressive
Internal thoracic artery in the room.
Do not remember
My last uttered sigh, it was just gas exchange anyway

But remember,
I once had dreams
higher than the skies could ever part



Self-Portrait

Sandra Ruiz, Cancer Survivor
Watercolor



Decisions

David Tran, MS1

Photograph



Building the Paddies

Robert Detrano, MD

Photograph

Visit to the Radiologist

Johanna Shapiro, PhD

It's like getting ready for a first date
only different
Then I chose high heels
hoping for a sexy sway
Now I put on sensible shoes
to appear a person of substance
who deserves to live
Then I researched football
and other sports I knew boys liked
so I'd seem smart
but not as smart as they were
Now I research metastasis
to show my doctor I know something
but not as much as he does
Then I applied liner and mascara
drawing bedroom eyes
Now I put on lipstick
to prove I care about myself,
so the doctor should care about me too
Then I wanted to be liked
Now I want to be saved
Then I pleaded
Choose me, choose me!
Now it is the same
Choose me to be your girlfriend
Choose me to be the patient you care about
the one you think about for a moment
before plunging the biopsy needle
into the bone

Maybe it's not so different after all
It's all about yearning for something
just beyond reach
It's all about desire



Kerala Mural

Naga Anuradha Chintalapudi,
Junior Specialist
Painting



Untitled

Abbie Baker, Site Office Activities
Painting



The Walk

Cipriano Hurtado,
Security
Photograph



Emptiness

Tanni Thai, Senior Financial Analyst
Photograph



Sweet Nothings

Jackie Ho, MS4
Photograph

Butterfly Catheter

Tony Le, Undergraduate
Photograph





Kimono

Betty Wong,
Fellowship Program
Coordinator
Painting



Turenne 2010

Olivier Civelli, PhD
Acrylic Painting

Venetian Bridge

April Stubbert, Nurse
Oil and Acrylic Painting



Return

Steven Cramer, MD

One last sweater, does it fit in the trunk?
I will look away just as you look up.
We chatter, it fractures,
 I parrot the jokes that make you giggle.

I can't remember where I set down my coat (I am still wearing it),
In that bed, behind your closed eyes, a blank stare.
I hear myself speak parts of some thoughts aloud.
I act as though for these moments you can hear me.

Chest moving like a December coal bin door let go slam shut
Eyes stray like a finger through cake frosting
Lips lissome, leaning

Years ago we had all the hours we wanted
to talk
And we had silence, as now, but
A thousand times more valuable, then,
Because we chose it

We had air rushing through my window and out yours
We might go an hour on the drive back
Without sharing a glance
Your cheek on and off my shoulder

In January, when you would return
With stale muffins and fresh stories,
Your scarf knotted firmly,
Sometimes
I would pretend I wasn't sure if you'd be at the station.

Oh, the humanity

Goutham Ganesan, MD/PhD Candidate

Legends speak of a doctor, compassionate and wise,
Who spurned his profession's greed and lies,
Who decried fervently allopathy's coldness,
And framed his diploma with equal boldness.

Patients arrived at his doors desperate for hope,
Convinced they had reached the end of the rope,
But this doctor was always full of assurance,
With a special regard for those with insurance.

One heard from his patients the selfsame refrain,
"I beseech thee for a cure, and an end to the pain,"
Our hero would reply with aplomb supreme,
"Consider your ailments to be naught but a dream."

He'd dispel the supplicant's previous trust,
In the science that had seemed once so robust,
"The source of your suffering is not your condition,
But rather a lack of proper mentation."

"By my word, thou needst not these injections and pills,
I shall prescribe thee the cure for thine ills.
I've discovered through diverse secret studies
the hidden reason for thy horrid disease."

And then he would offer his patient a text,
Leaving the poor man no less perplexed.
"Allow me to submit, good sir, that your malady
follows from your life's distinct want of poetry."

Indeed, this doctor held in copious files
The panacea for nigh all medical trials.
Whether excess of bile, blood, phlegm or spleen,
He faced them all with bearing serene.

"The arthritic, it is said, to reduce his pain
must needs pore over romances of Spain."
"If ye should complain of surfeit of iron,
refer to the poetical works of Lord Byron."



Sagrada Familia

Samantha Costantini, MS1
Photograph



Archer Woman

Samantha Costantini, MS1
Photograph

“For bowels disturb’d I have but one remedy,
And that is catharsis through Athenian tragedy.”
“And to conquer disease of the heart that all fear,
One must devote his time to Shakespeare.”

Indeed, he convinced many a patient resigned
To put their faith in the power of mind,
To treat his disease by learning to draw,
To shrink his tumor without scalpel or saw.

Of course, too often his poor patients died,
But take that as merely a minor aside.
The time they had left to live was not wasted,
Constantly reading, their thirst for life sated.

Fiery Fusion

Alicia Sheen, MS4

Painting



Whimsical Resolve

Bethany Conly, MS2

Photograph

Independence

Pouneh Nasser, MS4

These tired feet no longer will accompany me forward
My dehydrated lips no longer have any stories to tell

No longer will my chemotoxic body feel its passionate heat
No longer will my gaze be wild, running free

I want to scream about the fate you brought upon me
I am tired of carrying you as a shadow every step of the way

Cancer, it's enough with your stay
Enough with your torture, cut the chains- I am tired of being a prisoner

Let me be alone, as I waste away to my mortality
Let me have this one last independent journey



Safe

Charitha Reddy, MS4

Oil on canvas, based on photograph by Gregory Colbert



What Did You Say

Douglas Skarecky, MD

Watercolor

A Heart to Heart

Sarah Farukhi, MS1

I saw the way you faced the world,
With courage every day
So close to you, a part of you
And yet, so faraway

When life threw challenges in your way,
You conquered one by one
As though no force could bring you down
And life had just begun

When thunder storms would weather by,
You kept me safe inside,
You nourished me and cared for me,
In you did I confide

I tried my best to serve you well,
When fear and panic fell,
I kept you warm and quickened the pace,
To nourish every cell

Then time wore on and I was worn,
From standing by your side,
But still I would not let you go,
'Til death pushed me aside,

What is this place? Where am I now?
So cold, nowhere to go
I blame myself for your demise,
With grief I overflow.

Suddenly, a piercing light
I see your world at last,
They lift me up, examine me,
To see the life I've passed

These students who dissect me now,
With eyes so full of mystery,
They see that every part of me,
Reads your life history

The knowledge I had learned from you,
To them did I impart,
I gave them everything I had,
And taught them heart to heart

I've carried on our legacy,
At last my job is done,
I've shown them how we faced the world,
And conquered one by one,

Through this I now connect with you,
We are no more apart,
I know that you'd be proud of me,
Your one and only heart



The Mirror
Douglas Skarecky, MD
Watercolor

Yosemite Beauty

Tanni Thai, Senior Financial Analyst
Photograph



Wolf

Bev Kilpatrick, Cancer Survivor
Pastel

Brooklyn Bridge

Andrew Eads, MS4, MPH
Photograph



Pittsburgh Panorama

Minh-Ha Tran, DO
Photograph

A Perfect Imperfect

Sue Wang, MS2

At age two, perfect meant
drawing a circle with no dents.
Soon perfect came to be
the note G, a fifth above C.

Growing up, I tried to find
the picture of a perfect life.
The grades, the job, a family,
Perhaps, a medical degree?

Then I began to see
perfection does not stem from me.
Seeking completeness from within
was a mere chasing of the wind.

As the meaning of perfect changed,
a new view of the world I gained
for the more I looked, the more I saw
remarkable beauty within the flaws.



Turquoise City, Betty Wong, Fellowship Program Coordinator, Painting



Time Out

Tiffany Tu, MS2

For a moment time stops
Hovers
Above a small parking lot
Near the Newport coast.

We step into our cars
And are rushed forwards
But I am lurched backwards
Remembering the times
When the road home brought us together
Instead of apart

And in that moment,
The numbers, facts, scores
Pale in comparison
And I remember I am
A student second.

The Lonely Walk

Peter McQueen, MS4
Photograph



Judgement Day

Linda Rodriguez,
Security
Photograph



Untitled

Luz Ornelas, MS3
Photograph



National Cathedral

Minh-Ha Tran, DO
Photograph



i am a vapor phase

Sharine Wittkopp, MD/PhD Candidate

i am a vapor phase

i fill anything you use to try to contain me
and spill out any cracks

i have sired a son

the gender of drinking from a cup with my elbow out to the side
is not dissonant with sitting with knees wide.

women, well-trained, wear skirts and
cross legs at the ankles when seated
fold into themselves as neatly as they fold
their husbands' work shirts

i spread out

i take what is given

Home of the Brave

Andrew Eads, MS4, MPH
Photograph



The City Rises

Jackie Ho, MS4
Photograph



The Surgeon

Alex Keleman, Assistant Specialist
Photograph

Cylinders of Light

Amy Tan, Clinical Research Coordinator
Photograph

Mad Scientist

Donghui Wei, MD/PhD Candidate

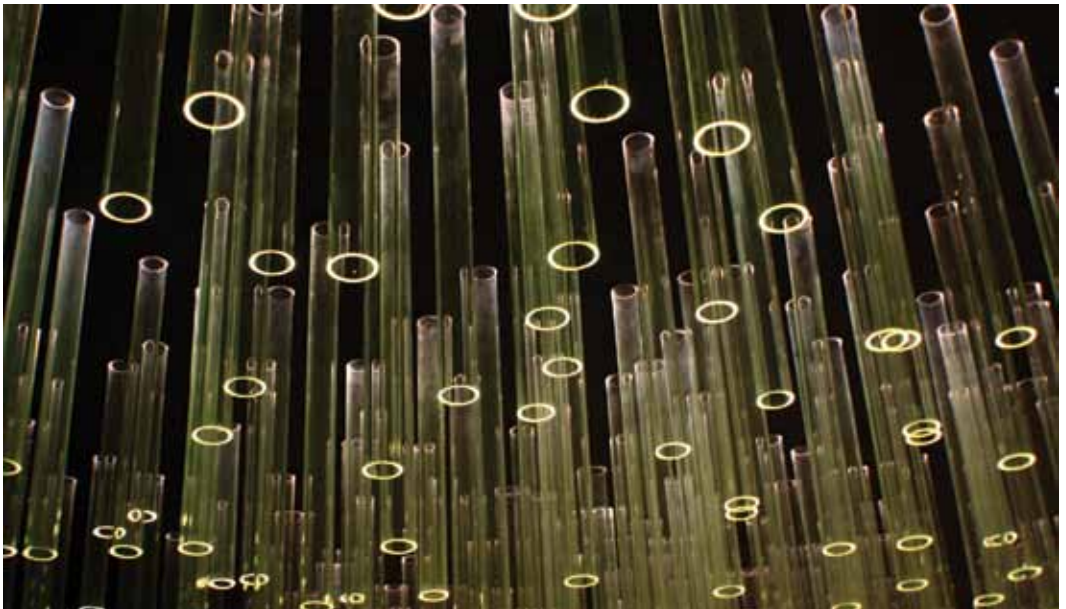
Is it so terrible, this destructive binge
those fingers giddy at unweaving
small and careful constructions, believing

He is angry
to realize and relieve
a burden tied to sickness
that does believe

Is it so wrong, this quiet mutilation
those scissorhands pleased in untying
a slow and measured art, undying

He feels rage
unfaithful to nature
to give the terminal sickness
a future

To make more unkempt
filled with contempt
he is the mad scientist in the room
the only one who is mad





Stage Fright, Peggy's Shostakovich Solo

Virginia Liu, MD/PhD Candidate

Acrylic Painting



A Music Note

Stephanie Le, MS2

It carries canes,
thrusts pennants on the page,
adores wearing flats,
and doesn't mind
gaining a pound.

The flattened dot
solos—
an F-15 in flight.
When it lands,
it may link arms,
showgirls in a chorus line.

It sports in symphony halls,
slicking down metallic
slides, surfing horse-hair,
and emerges
shivering teeth-
shattering
tremolos.

It seduces in cafes, melting
chocolate over
microphones
and serving sex
on strings.

It swarms stadiums like
clouds of starlings
at sundown
pulsing

Freedom to Fly

Tanni Thai, Senior Financial Analyst
Photograph



Untitled

Stefano Sensi, MD/PhD
Photograph



Blue Angels Air Show

Trung Thai, MD

Photography



The Best Medicine

Goutham Ganesan, MD/PhD Candidate

A drug addict was starting to get desperate for funds, so he put up an ad on Craigslist offering his kidneys for sale. Though after years of drug abuse, the accumulated nephrotoxicity made them a tough sell. So, after a few weeks, he lowered the price dramatically. You might say he had a “Renal Clearance.”

A neutrophil, a T-cell, and a mast cell walk into a bar, sit down, and order drinks. After serving them, the bartender turns on the television, and there is a news story about a school bus driving off a cliff. The mast cell and the neutrophil both break down in tears, but the T-cell just sits there and drinks. Two days later, the three friends come back to the same bar, and order the same drinks again. All of a sudden, the T-cell lets out a wail and falls to the floor in agony. The bartender asks the other two why and the mast cell says, “He’s always been hypersensitive; it’s just delayed sometimes.”



View from the Amber Fort

Anna Morgan, MS4

Photograph

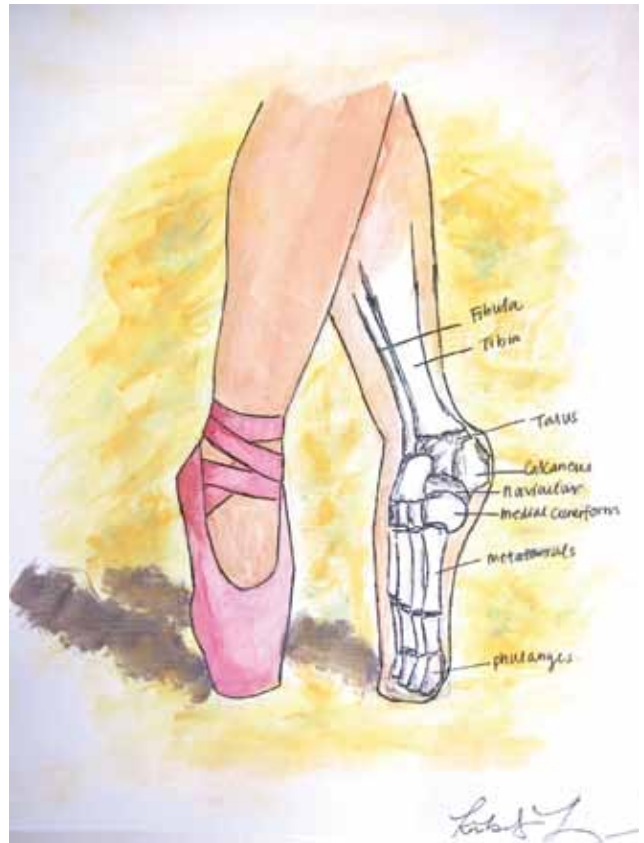


Rwanda

Janet Ho, MS4
Photograph

More Than Just Pretty Pink Shoes

Kimberly Truong, MS1
Acrylics



Lighthouse
Jason Kang, MS3
Photograph



Yellow Cow

Ricardo Perez,
Cancer Survivor
Watercolor

Cool Kids

Janet Ho, MS4
Photograph



The Past and Pending

David Tran, MS1

No experience is simultaneously as real and surreal as being confronted with death for the first time. A moment of shock, fear, and possibly even horror; our faces become flushed when slapped with our own mortality. Despite all our philosophical and religious beliefs in the “the great beyond,” we know very little about what happens to a person when they die. As children, we are told to look away. The mere mention of death scares us. So much that Western society hides its dead. The dead are relegated to laboratories and funeral homes; cremated, embalmed, or made to look not dead, as if they would be ashamed to be seen in such condition.

Only a select few are privileged to see the dead in their natural state: morticians, coroners, and physicians. While morticians prepare the dead to be laid to rest, and coroners clean up after death, physicians are the only ones who tend to the dying. As medical students, we learn about the many causes of death, the process of dying through illness and disease, and most importantly, how to prolong a patient’s life. Though centuries of biomedical research have taught us volumes about the human body, we have yet to discover what distinguishes a living, breathing person from a cadaver, an inanimate object. We know very little about death.

For many medical students, the first time we experience death is in the basement of a medical laboratory. The laboratory looks nothing like a funeral. Instead of mourners shrouded in black, we wear white coats spotted with formaldehyde. Instead of flowers and frankincense floating in the air, we smell of embalming fluid and coffee. Our tears are not of mourning, but a combination of sleep-deprivation and aerosolized chemicals in our eyes. Yet the cadaver lab is still, in a way, a holy place. We take a vow, a sacred oath that allows us to explore the human body from cradle to grave. We don our white coats before passing through a gateway, the locked doors of the laboratory. During our orientation to the lab, the room is momentarily silent as the first cadaver is unveiled.

Silhouettes

Peter McQueen,

MS4

Photograph



A medical student's first sight of a cadaver is a special moment. With great anticipation and anxiety, we crowd together, peering over each other's shoulders to take in the sight of an actual dead person. Cadavers are special. They are a physical symbol of all the things that can go wrong with the body and the fallibility of science. They hide nothing; nude except for a strip of cheesecloth, an identification tag, and a body bag. They expose all insecurities: their age, health problems, wounds, scars, smoking habits, and tattoos. Over the next few months, we will deconstruct the human body, learning about its unpredictable variations and peculiarities. Cadavers are special because they teach us concrete lessons using a lifetime of acquired experience, illness, and finally, death. They allow medical students, as future doctors, to experience death without failure. They educate us without putting the living at risk or punishing our conscience when we make mistakes. The greatest irony is that our first patient, the one who teaches us the most, is already dead.

It is with respectful, trembling hands that we pick up our scalpels and begin to dissect. At first, we make shallow incisions, uncertain and half-expecting a yelp of pain from our quiescent patient. As the hours pass, we spend more time with the cadavers, learning to dissect bluntly with our fingers as our fears give way to curiosity. After several weeks, we've spent more time with the cadavers than our own families, building an unspoken bond developed through scientific discovery. We explore quietly at first, blindly searching for nerves, arteries, and veins until treasure is found. The drama unfolds as we excitedly uncover the branches of the thoracoacromial artery, or better yet, the remnants of a thymus hidden by the heart. For many, this is our first experience with death, a beautiful lesson in human anatomy.



Public Transit Regular

Charitha Reddy, MS4

Oil on canvas



Fleurs Cache
Gail Raphael, MD
Painting

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