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Plexus

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When ATP gives you lemons, make guacamole! Rhonda H. Reeves Graduate Coordinator, Dept of Physiology & Biophysics Painting



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# UC IRVINE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE JOURNAL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

2014

# PLEXUS

#### JOURNAL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES UC IRVINE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

2014

Plexus is a student-organized publication that showcases artwork by UCI School of Medicine students, physicians, faculty, staff and patients. True to its name, PLEXUS aspires to connect those who seek to heal and to be healed through the unifying language of art.

This year, the Plexus team is excited to introduce some 'firsts' - a theme, the traveling Plexus exhibit, a separate Art for the Soul section and inclusion of performance arts. You were invited to embody the theme of 'Equilibrium & Transformation' in your art and what a response! Thank you for sharing your wealth of emotion and perspective. Due to an overwhelming number of requests to display Plexus at events last year, we have produced our own moveable feast of 5-10 of our most prominent pieces from Plexus 2013 and displayed it during Solidarity Day 2014 and at Irvine Hall, and plan to display an updated version at UCI Medical Center during various departmental events this year. We have also highlighted work created by cancer survivors through the Art for the Soul program in a separate section and have added a 'Performance' section on the Plexus website to respond to the community's passion for dance and drama.

Congratulations to this year's winners of the medical student writing competition! 1st: Anjali Hari, MS2 'Maya' 2nd: Jiwon Shin, MS1 'The Remnants' and 3rd: Lorianne Burns, MS3 'Conversation Unspoken'.

Thank you to our wonderful Editors who helped bring all the changes to fruition, and for bringing thoughtful criticism and inspiration to our creative vision. We would like to thank Dean Clayman for sponsoring the traveling Plexus exhibit. We would like to give special thanks to our faculty advisor, Dr. Johanna Shapiro and Dr. Ellen Peterson, Associate Dean of Admissions and Outreach. This book would not have been possible without your support.

We hope you enjoy PLEXUS 2014. Bon voyage!

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To contribute to Plexus or to requext the Plexus exhibit at your event, please send email plexusjournal@ gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

PLEXUS 2014

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\*\*\*1st Place Winner of PLEXUS Student Writing Competition made possible by UCISOM Humanities Dept; \*\* 2nd Place Winner; \* 3rd Place Winner

# My Body is an Archangel of Love

Today my body is an archangel of love Whose wings fly open in astonishment At the hawk that thrusts past my window, At the tiny monarch caterpillars in my garden, everywhere, Whose mother kissed the leaves of the milkweed On her way to the coastal sanctuary in the eucalyptus grove, Leaving her children behind on the breast of Baba Yaga.

Oh, such shining joy as this I want to give to everyone. My heart is a universe overflowing With every terror, every bubble of laughter, every housecat giving birth secretly In a nest of red maple leaves beneath the bougainvillea, With every sighing blade of the palm tree languishing in the sunlight after rain. My heart lifts and lifts and lifts with such longing for all those I love. I stretch my wings and out burst butterflies, dragonflies, hummingbirds, Who tread so swiftly on the air, who live in a shimmer of light, Who drink nectar, capture smaller flyers, and skim over the surface of ground water Like explorers gazing into the mirror of a new world.

Why am I happy after such dark fears I don't know. I am breathing in excitement within the still heart of grace. I can hear far-off music coming closer, singing songs of promise and of praise. I gasp with delight as the morning unfolds. My body is an archangel of love.

Some people survive cancer like a three-legged dog Who struggles to perform tricks that were easy when she was whole. I have re-grown my leg, shape-shifted into a wolf running under the moon. The earth is my bones, the waterfall my blood, The flowers my words, the trees my hair, The eagle's cry my song, the flash of sunlight on water my eyes. I lift up onto my hind legs and feathers sprout from all my limbs, My face, human again, yet suffused with a nameless light, My body, an archangel of love.



Smile Restored - A Self Portrait Chantal Eyong UCI Extension Digital Print  Digital Cortex Andy Trang Conditional Medical Student Pen & Ink



# We Are the Same

I open the door. My nostrils are blasted with the stale odor of moist socks, though I effortfully maintain the smiling greeting on my face. JC, my patient, sits on the table. Though he doesn't know it, we are the same age.

He has suffered from seizures since early adolescence, and is currently cared for by his grandmother. His aunt, who has brought him here, pauses mid-sentence in her cell-phone conversation to tell us that she has no records from his previous provider, and assumed that we'd be able to get them. She can't tell us anything regarding his medical history. She resumes her phone conversation with his grandmother, who herself doesn't seem to know the answers to our questions.

Has he had any surgeries? I know he had that one brain surgery. Are you telling me that he has a drain sitting inside his head right now? Seriously? That's ridiculous.

Stymied, we turn to the patient himself, still seated on our table, overlooked; he can answer the "where" and "what" regarding his life, but not the "why."

He sits in a constant epilepsy-induced cloud—occasionally cleared by the winds of conversation swirling around him, though the canopy over his head is nearly confluent. He dresses in loose gym shorts and slip-on sandals with (the malodorous) socks, gaze downcast, hands in his lap as the discussion swirls along. He turns and looks up at me. "You 6'5"? I'm not used to looking up at people." He's exactly right about my height.

Discouraged, we attempt to guide his aunt through medical conversation, making best guesses as to the medication regimen that will control his recurrent debilitating seizures. He is physically fit, built like an athlete—though, after many years, the damage of recurrent uncontrolled electrical bursts has severely incapacitated his mind.

We are the same age, yet I am struck that I must almost relate to him as to a child. He is free of distrusts, preconceived notions and judgments, so we interact as two individuals sharing a mutual experience centered only on the present; it is somewhat liberating. I join him in this feeling, and am surprised at myself for doing so.



#### Fishing Time

Cipriano Hurtado UCIMC Security Dept Photography

 Where Liberty Is Ben Nguyen MS1 Photography

#### Fractalized Owl

Lillian Dalgleish Dept of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Photography

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Pavones
 Carter English
 MS3
 Photography

Veins of the Earth Richelle LuHomo UCI Chemistry Student Photography

✓ Purple Cloud Marcida Dodson UCI Health Publications Manager Photography

### Jacaranda

Marcida Dodson UCI Health Publications Manager

Beneath the purple clouds we parked, Leaving the floral sky To scurry indoors and learn about The miracle growing within me.

Relax. Breathe. Imagine the new life Preparing to emerge.

Hours later, when we returned, The street was paved with hundreds of flowers,

Violet stars fallen from the sky. It took our breath away. That was many seasons ago.

A child was born And is now a man. Yet every year, when I see the Brilliant blossoms return, They transport me back to when I was one with the jacarandas.

Glorious, In full bloom, Bursting with life, With blessings raining down from above.

# Dinner by Candlelight Jemmy Chen, Staff Research Associate & Department of Neurobiology and Behavior

You've gone to prepare me a place, still I long for your embrace. But, you know how to satisfy; dinner by candlelight, the flame in your eyes, like doves burning bright. You prepare yourself as a meal, a lamb freshly slain, your own flesh in bread so plain. You pour out your blood, I drink a quenching flood. You give me your presence real, until the day you take your bride, when I kiss your face and forever in your house abide. By your love pledged on the table, to love and endure I am able.



# Patience, patients

Diana Zhu, MS1

One cell two cells red Cells blue cells. Will patients know? How we learned to heal?

We don our white coats, Over our sins, to smile and Delve into patients.

Gaping gashes smile, white teeth on mouse fur, for now. Like your 'Hi, Doctor'.

y 141 191

Who am I to say I can heal your suffering When I can't fix me.

#### Green Pond with Active Fringe

Bert Winther-Tamaki Professor, Art History Dept Acrylic, Colored Pencil, Marker

KY WY YW

TANG CARE

### Anjali Hari, MS2 Winner of the PLEXUS Student Writing Competition

vory bristles scrape my scalp. Ma croons in my ear.

📕 "Beautiful Maya."

I close my eyes as she rubs coconut oil in my thick black hair with her rough hands. "Someday a prince will come", she promises. I can hear the smile on her lips.

But I was sold and robbed of such fairytales. *Calcutta*, 1920:

The city looks as if it wants to eat itself. I stand by the brothel door peeking out into the hot narrow streets. Here he comes, down the alley carrying his little pouch of coins in his



pudgy fingers. What a pig; no worse, he looks like a warthog. Pappu, our clients call him. Kamina kuta, bitch, is what I'd like to call him. He jokes with a beggar on the steps of our brothel- like always, a joke about women. The beggar has the gall to laugh- how dare.

Pappu, a little drunk, stumbles up the steps. I wish he could see himself; that fool. He sees me though. I know what comes next. He strolls lazily towards me, knowing that I cannot escape now. His hands wrap around my waist and he pulls me close to his watermelon of a belly. I should slap him.

"Why do you tease me?" he asks in that most annoying raspy, high-pitched voice. I cringe. His breath smells foul, a combination of paan, hashish, and rum. He laughs at the face I make but I know better. He's covering his anger, upset at the slightest hint of rejection. Perhaps I will have to pay for this later. I want to pull away, run away, but my body is always so unwilling to move. Ma would brag to our village neighbors that I was the most obedient child one could ask for. Damn my nature.

"The tea shop is open. We need tea".

He drops coins in my palm and walks away spitting out the paan on the floor. I hate those red stains. Well, at least I get to escape this hole above ground, even for a few moments.

Any new comer would soon become a sinner in this lusty city. Everything teases the senses. The mazes of Sonagachi twist; women, hidden in shadows, lurk at every corner. Plates of food stand unwashed and stacked in the corners of all the doorways. Rats and hungry young men wanting to escape from the trials of work and home wander looking for a woman's warm flesh. The rats are men. No, the men are rats. It's confusing. I can feel their eyes on me as I pass. I wonder what they see. A painted clown? I never feel guilty anymore for my nightly engagements - I can't recognize myself under that mask. Only my hair- same as always- tied in a tight braid. It's as if the braids my ma had tied so long ago were never undone. The only thing I let remind me of her. I trip on a chicken.

Really, it's not as bad once out of the maze. This is Calcutta, the most beautiful city in India. Rickshaws and trams zoom pass filled with uniformed school children. I pass a Kali templeReally, it's not as bad once out of the maze. This is Calcutta, the most beautiful city in India. Rickshaws and trams zoom pass filled with uniformed school children. I pass a Kali temple on the banks of the Hooghly River. The passersby stop to pray. Today, I'm too ashamed to pray but another day. The bazaars, the coffee houses, the street brawls, the small business on the sides of roads, I love it all. Then I see it. The rasgulla stand. Red and green with little steel bowls filled with my most favorite sweet. The old vendor smiles at me. I walk by slowly remembering the taste of the syrup in my mouth. I drag myself away. Later, I promise myself.

I carry the tea back taking time to enjoy being away from the maze. At the entrance of the district I find a red feather. I pick it up to add to my collection. They are magical I've heard- red birds are rare. I close my eyes and make a wish. A rasgulla, I pray. But wishes do not come true. And I have never believed in magic. No fairytales. Not real. Not really.

I have a client tonight. Mr. Malik. He is at the least 60 years older than me. Don't men ever get tired? He has had me before. His dirty nails always scratch me. Filled with dirt, filled with it! I always bathe after those nightly engagements but for some reason I never feel like I've gotten all his dirt off- especially the dirt hidden under my flesh, stuck there forever. Black scars.

Pappu stands outside the door smoking a joint.

"Clean up", he chuckles. He knows damn well we don't get water on Tuesdays. The only way to be clean is to get out of here. Besides, what is the point of cleaning up when that old man is going to scratch me? I wait at the back of the brothel waiting for my time to come. The sun rolls away with the promise of returning tomorrow. I don't trust it. I can only imagine the gondolas in the river tinged with the pink of dusk. I hum a tune; I don't remember the words. I wait for the forgotten hours of the day. Those are my hours.

Normally, our clients visit us. Pay Pappu, go to the room, we do our jobs, and they leave. Almost painless. Almost. Not really. But that Mr. Malik, old rich man, gets preferential treatment. So what if he has a few more coins in his pouch, why should I walk to his house, out of the maze, two streets away? I braid my hair as I walk.

The lights are lit in Mr. Malik's home. It is PLEXUS 2014 too quiet. Even that dog of his is not around. No one is. No watchman, no beggars, no servants. I decide to look through a window. At first I don't see him. There are dias, lights, burning on the windowsills. Then I see him. There he is. Lying on a mattress. Wearing all white. Eyes closed. Cold. Dead. His family has crowded around him. The women cry silently. I am a little surprised. He called just this afternoon. Then I wonder...who will miss that old man? He was bound to die. I stand on my tiptoes to see if his nails are dirty. Filthy, black. I step back from the window. Dead huh? I walk away. No client? Not since before I came here. A free night? My feet carry me back to the maze. It starts to rain. I look up into the streetlight at the raindrops; it looks like the stars are falling. I want to catch them. I walk away from the maze. What is one night away?

Monsoon season is beautiful. I love the rain; so pure and wet. I walk carefully making sure not to disturb any of the puddles. I walk faster and my clothes get soaked with water. The red of my skirts runs down my legs and stains my toes. Red, like Pappu's paan. Disgusting. My braid begins to get undone because of the heaviness of the water. I shake my braid open and begin to dance in the rain. I remember dancing with my ma in the village; she would hold my hands and twirl me around and around and around telling me stories of the pretty British princesses who would dance with the handsome young British soldiers. I twirl pretending to be a princess and begin to splash the puddles. I dance down the main street past all the little sleeping booths that sell bangles, saris, jewels, and rasgullas during the day. I come to the corner of the street and stop next to a sleeping beggar. Street dogs lay under his rags hiding from the rain.

"Slut." I turn around and see British soldiers watching me. They begin to laugh. Men, I think to myself, no matter what color, are the same. I turn around and walk back down the main street, this time stepping in every puddle. My reflection reminds me I am not a princess. My feet make ripples; ripples disturb my memories. I remember the day I was sold. My mother died, my father became ill soon after, and no one was going to look after me. It was raining



that day, muddying everything. Pappu had come to my village looking for young girls to take back with him to Calcutta.He had heard of my family, village gossip.

He visited my father and offered him a deal to keep his daughter alive. Well, here I am, alive.

I find red feathers on the ground. First one, then three, six, ten. Where could they be coming from? I pick them up and follow their trail all the way to the banks of the Hooghly River. I stop to admire the scene in front of me. The banks are thick with mud and the crescent moon peeks from behind the red flowers of the Gulmohar trees lining the bank.

"Good evening", a strangely mystic voice disturbs my reverie. I turn around and find myself facing a young man in a plain dhoti and checkered collared shirt. He smiles and hundreds of red birds fly into the sky from behind him. I can't help but gasp.

"H-how did?"

"It's maya, magic."

I sit down in awe. My mother had told me stories of street magicians before. She had promised to take me to meet one. That was how she had met my father, a magician. He would pull coins out of my ear when I was crying to make me laugh. Red birds are magical, he had told me. The street magician watches me with crooked smile.

"Wandering the streets in the rain?" he asks as he sits down beside me.

"A free night. In the rain will have to do." I smile and pick up two red feathers next to our feet. He sits quietly watching. He knows me. He is not a client. He does not have that hunger in his eyes. He knows me.

"Where did you learn maya?" I ask with wonder.

"I have traveled to the far corners of the world; picked up tricks from the best magicians in China, the Czar's court in Russia, Arab pirates, the queen's butler in Britain..."

"You've been to Britain?"

I have always wanted to visit Britain. More beautiful than Monsoon season, the Hooghly River, Kali Pooja, tea estates of Darjeeling, and the snow on the Himalayan mountain range is the queen's palace the soldiers say. I cannot imagine so I don't believe it.

"No. I lied. I picked it up here. Watching others. Learning fast. To live in this city, one has to learn fast." He pulls a coin out of my ear. I remember my dad and smile. He laughs as he continues to watch me.

"You like red feathers?"

"They are lucky."

"A magician must have told you that". He

then produces a red bird from his sleeve.

"Make it disappear", I whisper. He pretends to swallow it. It disappears. Magic. Just like magic. Maya. I don't believe in magic. But something takes flight in me. A great red giant. Feathers brush each pore of my body. A warm chill flutters with my heartbeats and its dark chambers come alive from the glow of the birds' eyes. My mind, always so obsessed with reason, is now empty of all thought. I am flying. I know I will never again be able to return to reason. Have I fallen in love? With magic or the magic man? He watches me.

"You are still so innocent" he observes. I snort. He obviously has no idea what I do for a living.

"No, you cannot imagine what I have seen, endured, what I know."

"Did you know that long ago everyone could do magic? Animals could talk, people could fly; everything was maya. Things changed, people became corrupt, greedy. There is no more magic. Only imitation. But somewhere, it lays within us just waiting to be discovered."

I cannot help but think him a fool. He then picks up my hands and raises me to my feet. The rain has stopped. He plucks a flower from the nearby Gulmohar tree and gently kisses it. He closes it in my hands and blows. I immediately open my hand. A little red bird sits in it. I look up in disbelief. Red birds fly. The magic man is gone. Just like magic. He should have taken me with him. I walk on the banks all the way to the Kali temple. I fall asleep on the steps with my red bird.

One cannot sleep for long in Calcutta. The hustle and bustle of the crowd, the auto rickshaws, the temple bells, vendors yelling the names of vegetables as if they sell the most precious good. I suddenly remember last night. The rain. The puddles. Dancing. Beggar. Soldiers. Slut. Feathers. Magic. My red bird. I look around. It is gone and only a red feather lies in its place. It must have flown away while I had been asleep. I flew away with it. I pick up the red feather and make my way back to the maze. Pappu must be having a fit by now. I'm sure he knows about Mr. Malik's death. I wonder what he will do to me. Actually, I don't care. I pass the rasgulla stand. Not tod...yes, today. I stop and eat to my heart's content.





## Conversation unspoken

Lorianne Burns, MS3

I didn't want to say goodbye to you Even though we both knew, we were doing exactly that.

I told you to stay strong, keeping that same optimistic spirit, which made you everyone's favorite patient.

You told me to tell your teenage children, waiting outside your room, that everything was going to be okay.

I promised I would. I told you that your children are wonderful, giving you so much support.

You asked me what I did for fun on my day off. I saw your face brighten nostalgically when I mentioned the beach.

You told me fondly of your surfing days, when you lived in Hawaii. And how you'd love to go back there someday.

As we talked, beyond the kind and gentle words, another conversation went on unsaid.

A conversationabout how this was the last time I would see you, since your cancer was incurable,

and we didn't have know if you had days or weeks left. A conversationabout your fears and your hopes regarding your children, and how you wanted them to think of you.

A conversationabout how I saw my own family members in your place, wondering how I will cope in the future, as a person and a physician

Instead I reached out, my hand on your arm, conversing all those things at once.

You smiled and thanked me. This was goodbye; But, I would take you with me.

My first patient as a medical student who taught me how to experience death and dying,

Through the powerful conversation between doctor and patient, both spoken and unspoken.

For me, this conversation was just beginning.

▼ First Growth Ellen Druffel Fred Kavil Professor of Earth System Science Fused Glass



# as my grandmother leaves

a cold spell has come over the coast washing away any hopes we had of a sunny spring, of a warming it brings with it tears, frozen on our faces, whipped free from our eyes by the wind hands that weaken with the shock of this

this winter has taken too much

we wait together gathered around a hospital bed knowing these moments are passing too quickly wishing we could swap them for better, warmer moments. happier moments this is not the kind of togetherness we would want in any other time

but we take what we can get we cling to it

my heart breaks for the man who loses the other half of his soul

after all these years, all these stubborn years while she pushes away any chance to try she won't even sacrifice her comfort for a moment

to be there for him

I am angry at her for all the years of being treated as a second for all the belligerence all the wrong things that she has said all the meanness she showed for making my father believe he was lowly

yet for all that I can forgive her I can let it go and say I, we, have grown stronger for it

I can't forgive her for being too selfish to try when the man who has done nothing but be by her side, be her steadfast supporter, companion, defender, protector and love needs her still and she refuses to try

in doing this, I fear she will be killing him, too

the cold always makes me think of death, of what I imagine it will feel like the blood slowing in my hands until the chill remains infinitely the fear of this weather is a stark backdrop as my family waits for the winter to take another one of us away

### Sterilizing the Erotic

Aaron Kheriaty MD, Associate Clinical Professor Department of Psychiatry



Reflections Stefano Sensi, MD, PhD Associative Adjunct Professor Photography

he ancient Greek philosophers and poets knew that sex was something divine, a reflection in man of the activity of the gods. Eros himself was a god. When speaking of love, the Greeks also invoked Dionysus, god of wine, and Aphrodite, goddess of beauty. Sex enraptured, intoxicated; it transfigured us into a state of ecstasy. Plato argued that the erotic desire provoked by beauty was strong enough to force man out of himself, into a realm bordering on madness. Love was not tame. The Greeks did not attempt to tame it.

The spirit of our age pales in comparison. Of all 20th century philosophers, almost none bothered to speak about sex--Karol Wytolya and Roger Scruton being notable exceptions. Our poets insinuate the intoxications of love, but their expressions are cheap beer in comparison to the fine wine of the Greeks. Take, for example, the lyrics that Dave Matthews sings to his lover: "Every single thing you do to me is like I'm drunk." Intoxicating, perhaps, but hardly enrapturing.

I suggest that physicians are partly responsible for today's timidity. Our profession requires us to behave as though it were perfectly natural to ask our patients about this most intimate mystery in the same breath as our inquiry about their bowel habits. To get around this conundrum, we attempt to create a sterile field around sex, placing it under the fluorescent light of our clinics. How many times during our first two years of medical school do we hear about the necessity to get used to talking about sex with our patients? We learn to be matter-of-fact, to avoid the supposedly childish blush. While this tact is certainly necessary to gather relevant clinical data, the danger is that we will get used to speaking (and therefore, thinking) of sex as though it were merely one more physiological process. In the wake of Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, the language we use to talk about

sex has changed the way we think about sex. As Ludwig Wittgenstein, perhaps the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, said, "the limits of mylanguage are the limits of my world."

What worlds are available to the physician, who must daily tread such dangerous ground? We can start with the obvious word, 'sex,' a most unsatisfactory term that I have already grudgingly resorted to in this essay. A hundred years ago, "sex" simply referred to the fact of male and female. (This usage has since been replaced by the more nebulous, plastic term, "Gender," as in the postmodern claims that "gender is nothing but a social construct," etc.).

On the street, the four-lettered word derived from the Dutch root fokken (a word used to describe breeding cattle) is still employed; but from overuse, this term has become, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a "meaningless intensifier." I argue that its power of intensification has also been lost, leaving it simply "meaningless."

College campus lingo has taken to using the term "hooking-up" to describe the emotionally detached sexual encounter, usually catalyzed by alcohol. The social commentator and novelist, Tom Wolf, captures the essence of the random hook-up by saying that getting to third base is going "all the way," while hitting a home run is learning the girl's name. David O'Connor has replaced the more colloquial term "affair," which at least carried the connotations of adventure. "Hooking up," on the other hand, is what we do with our VCR, what the cable guy does to our TV. Forget enrapturous, this is not even adventurous.

Even the quasi-divine Greek word "erotic" has today come to be almost "pornographic." Marketers routinely utilize a glossy veneer of the "erotic" to sell us everything from khakis to toothpaste.

The worst terms, however, are those we doctors employ in the clinic. O'Connor, in

an article entitled, "The Names of Love," (to which this essay is indebted) has this to say about the medical turn in our language of love:

"Sexual intercourse' comes from the same region of the language native to various sorts of -ectomies and -oscopies. It does not sound like something for which one would cross the hall, let alone the world. T'm sorry, I can't meet you for lunch today; I have to go to the medical center for a sexual intercourse." My favorite illustration of where this way of talking takes us is the phrase "sexually active." It seems to be modeled on "radioactive:" the sexually active teenager is an isotope with a short half-life, spewing particles of sexuality that threaten to case beta decay in the surrounding atoms.

I am reminded of the psychiatrist's constant recourse to the equally silly term "sex life," which is often spoken of as though one were asking the patient, "so, how's your golf game?" Such questioning usually provokes responses



 Podocarpus Brad Jacobsen MS2 Photography that mirror the golf analogy – some thing to the effect of "well, I'm a bit out of practice," or "pretty good, I've played eighteen holes a few times already this week." Another favorite clinical question is asking about the number of sexual "partners," a term that never fails to remind me of tennis partners--sex as mysterious ecstasy becomes sex as sport. O'Connor concludes, "The metallic aftertaste of words medical and the impudent tastelessness of words adolescent make every choice unpalatable."

According to this analysis, "Nietzsche was right to say Eros has been poisoned into degeneracy, but he misidentified the poisoners. It is the intellectuals [or clinicians], not the Christians, who have drugged Eros with a contraceptive mind." All out efforts at taming Eros, whether through language, latex, or countless mechanico-hormonal devices, have failed. Love is never tamed; sex is never safe. Our attempts to create a sterile field around it are useless. Even the Betadine sponges of our medical jargon, ceaselessly scrubbed into our minds, are not enough. As the Greeks understood, sex is something divine, and as such, it can only be brought under control by divine power. We should therefore approach it with a degree of awe, even of reverential fear.

It will come as a surprise to many that the church is the institution today that most visibly speaks of the divine character of human sexuality. Words such as the 'conjugal embrace,' and the 'nuptial meaning of the body,' while not likely to make their way into out everyday lexicon, are important reminders (after our umpteenth sexual history or pelvic exam of the week) that in the final analysis, sex is more than plumbing, more than the movement of fluids. Such elevated language is so foreign to our usual linguistic atmosphere, that to claim sex as sacred--to so much as hint at mystery--is to invite ridicule.

I am not suggesting we try to change our **21** PLEXUS 2014

medical terminology; such a solution, even if possible, would be doomed to failure. After importing language more equal to the subject, through routine use the sacred vocabulary would rapidly become profane. Instead, as physicians who inevitably employ the detached language of clinicians, we must be aware of the inherent dangers. We must be on guard, lest the banality of our reductive language completely anesthetize our thinking.

Our aspirations stretch further than our language. Words diminish the highest things; they fail to plumb the heart's deepest longings. Therefore, I say, let not the limits of our language be the limits of our world.



 Mobius 'Around the Twist' Alan D. Widgerow, MD Clinical Professor of Plastic Surgery Bronze Sculpture

Up, Up, and Away Kevin Gustafson MS1 Photography

#### Moments Nellie Said, MS2

Have you ever held a dandelion Oh so carefully Cupping your hands With the wonder and innocence of a child? Only to have it blown away Spirited off by a rampant gust of wind Captured by the forces of nature Gone for all eternity? Yet you scour the fields With a childlike hope That, perhaps, you can find An ethereal cloud-in-your-pocket No different than the one Just lost to the wind. Alas, you search in vain. For it was but a moment, irreplaceable and irrevocable A moment that your naive heart Had thought with such conviction Would last for all eternity.



# Gauntlet into Medicine, Year 1

Hey tell you that the path to becoming a physician, although long and treacherous, is one laden with honor, respect, duty, and wealth. No other profession can claim these attributes. You are a shining knight of Camelot: One of the chosen few cloaked in blinding white cloak and armed with a great weapon to protect the ill and weak from the villain named Death.

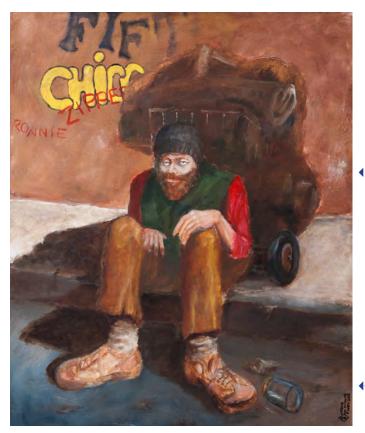
You set out on your quest to save the world, change the face of medicine, and eliminate starvation. But, a paragraph into our story, I'll give you the spoiler: you're actually the mule. Not even the black or white stallion with a knight perched atop your shoulders; you're the mottled and speckled genetic anomaly more fondly known as a pack mule. Your white costume hangs around your hips like saddlebags, and your powerful caduceus is the flimsy twig dangling a promising future before your strabismus affected vision.

When your journey beings, you are light in your step. Of course you are, as there's nothing in your brain that you don't know for certain

is still there after four (or more) years of training as an under mule. You happily accept the extra burden of snacks and extracurricular reading material of your colleagues and leaders. You bounce nimbly over rocks on the path, careful not to spill the golden load of index cards and past exams, which you will need to buy passage at the next stream crossing.

As dusk draws near, your friends Horse and Cow retire early. They have been keeping you company much longer than they ever expected. Horse has a hair appointment for her next TV show audition. Cow is getting a deep tissue massage in the morning. They mentally, physically, and spiritually can't continue to support you. And now that you think about it, do they really want to walk this long back-breaking path with you? In fact, you're wishing to rest yourself. Gently slide off the stuffed saddlebags, lay your throbbing headache to rest on a fluffy down pillow... But something burns in your mediastinal cavity. It hurts like that time you drank too much coffee during finals week. You can't sleep. You must





Homeless Vet Antonio San Nicholas Clinical Research Coordinator Acrylic

 Admittedly Confused Marlon Maducdoc MS 4 Photoshop, Drawing Tablet

continue towards your bobbing carrot. So you, the lonely insomniac beast, continue trudging along the path lit by the flicker of library lamps.

The night draws on and with each step, your spirits sink a quarter of an inch along with your saddlebags, until they are both smashed into the dirt. Why am I doing this? You wonder, That stick is so thin and flimsy. It will break before I get to the carrot. Is it really worth all this hard work?

You think back to the first day of your journey. So carefree and light, you proudly donned the white uniform of honor, and proclaimed your eagerness to know everything and assist everyone that crossed your path. Suddenly, it occurs to you that you are literally carrying everyone else's burden. Your sister's boy problems. Your parents' auto-proliferating list of health problems. Your friends Horse and Cow have stuffed their 'future career plans' into a side pocket. Strangers, even, have stopped to stare at the oblivious dancing mule and contribute to the strain on your trapezius. Ah yes, you sigh, as your hand grips the thin strip of paper near the crumbs at the bottom of your left coat pocket. Here is my own list of problems. You unfurl it slowly..."Listen to Master Goljan" advises the Panda Express fortune.

Overwhelmed, delirious on the brink of psychosis, and slightly hypoglycemic, you clutch your chest. Your rear falls flat, your lids start to droop, and the contents of your beloved white coat burst from the seams onto the dirt path...

To be continued.

#### Untitled 4

Alexander Boiko, PhD Asst. Professor, Dept of Molecular Biology & Biochemistry Graphite on Paper



# The Remnants

I would be simply enraged at her, Frustrated by her lack of understanding. Her moods, her screaming, her silence.

But then I saw it, the scar.

He had left when he hit her and threw her on the ground – I remembered. I couldn't scream. I couldn't yell. No saying no. No blaming her. She had been the victim.

They keep talking about victims being silent, But really, you see, Victims have a power To keep you silent.

They have suffered, They have reason, to scream, to yell, to curse, And do whatever they are doing. They have pain, They have history.

Here was she, the person I adore and everything, all in the same breath, With remnants of him who was gone. ■

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### Autonomy

Amish A. Dangodara, MD, FACP Professor of Medicine Adult & Perioperative Medicine

The cracks that line his thickened hide Define his weary age Now it's one last time his toughened mind The actor must face the stage His final role, his curtain call Still he pretends to be brave To fend off fear from those he loves... But from the corner of fearful eyes In silence a lonely tear does appear To expose his weakened heart As he learns he must part From all he has built here... Showing no sign of fear One last time he defies his fate And declines the hope we gave No knife to cut out with promise to save No cure to cleanse, other than what sealed his fate: Another cigarette, one last smoke instead of hope, DNR no CPR, his final breath escapes... And he'll smoke no more. Just like we told him more than once before, Some they shake their head not understanding As they walk away, He leaves us as he lived, the master of his fate







#### Havenwood Daniel Powers, UCI Extension

utty drove the sedan slowly through the tall wrought-iron gates. He almost stopped to close them behind the car, by habit. Instead, he eyed the gates, and the property beyond, in the rearview mirror. Between the stern heads of Mr. and Mrs. Gafferty in the backseat, the ochre brick façade of Havenwood drew away, wrapped in a shroud of thick mist. The gates remained opened.

The road ahead was clear, and would be for several miles of dawn countryside. Mr. Gafferty owned the land between the gates of Havenwood and the speedway, mostly marsh land, punctuated with forest groves, where enough quail but not nearly enough fox, to his vocal chagrin, was to be hunted. Looking through the window as the car floated through a thicket of elm, Roger Gafferty decided he wouldn't mind quail now, not at all. He'd joyously leap from his bed and run for his overcoat and birdshot, were he to wake up and find he'd been dreaming the last month.

"Gordon, sit down," Olivia said. The boy, PLEXUS 2014 ▲ Crossing Through Margaret Knight Dev. Asst in Health Advancement Acrylic

sitting across from his parents, had been arched and twisted to look over the back of his seat out the windshield. "Put on your belt." Gordon sat facing the rear of the car, and pulled the seatbelt across his lap and latched it. His brow furrowed and he stared out the window.

Next to him, Evelyn sat with a small blonde doll in her hands, running her gloved fingers through its wiry hair. She sang quietly to herself, "Ring around the rosey, pockets full of posey, ashes ashes, we all fall down".

"Mommy," Olivia said, pointing a small finger against the window. "There's a man in the field over there." Roger's head jerked around. In the distance, in the silver fog, stood a man in a torn overcoat and orange cap, a rifle in the crook of his arm, watching the sedan go by. Out of the fog next to him came two small children, both dragging wheeled suitcases across the wet grass. He made no move to raise the rifle, but put a hand out to stop the children at his side.

The car slowed, as Cutty spotted the trio. "Mr.

Gafferty, sir?" he asked to the rearview mirror.

"Keep going, Cutty," Roger said, not taking his eyes from the windows.

Olivia was trembling, and Roger gripped her hand tighter.

"Who were those people, dad?" Gordon asked. He'd undone his seatbelt again, and was craning his neck to watch the strangers fade into the misty distance.

"Gordon," Olivia said, and cleared her throat when her voice broke. "Sit down. Put on your seat belt."

In a huff, Gordon sat down and reached for the belt at his hip.

"Mind your mother, Gordon," Roger said, looking at his wife and then back to the children. "In fact—in fact, why don't we play a game, you two. To pass the time. Why don't sit down here on the floor boards."

The children looked at their father, confused and intrigued.

"Sit here at our feet, and pretend—er—pretend that you're riding in the belly of a tank."

Gordon's eyes lit up and he let his belt slap back into its holster. He slid to the floor, his Burberry coat bunching at the small of his back. His little gloved hands found the handle on the door, and he held on in mock unbalance.

"Go ahead, Evie" Olivia said, seeing hesitance in her eyes. "Do like your brother." Evelyn unlatched her seat belt and joined her brother on the black floorboards, feeling the vibration of the road under her small hands.

Olivia let out a quiet sigh.

"We have to look out for baddies!" Gordon said, poking his sister in the arm. "You take the left side, I'll take the right!"

The children went up on their knees to look out the window.

"No no no," Roger said. "You can't look out or the baddies will know our position. You have to keep down in the tank. For safety." The children looked at their father and then at each other, and flopped down again to their bottoms. Evelyn pulled her green skirt over the white tights on her knees.

"That's right. They'll never get you if you're-"

Roger's thought was cut short as he looked out the window to the speedway looming ahead. It was, on a normal day, a mound the length of the eastern border of the Havenwood property, upon two lanes ran in either direction from Batwich to Corrington with infrequent but regular traffic. Through the morning mist, out the windshield, above Cutty's broad tensed shoulders, he saw that almost the entire length of the speedway was on fire, as far as he could see in either direction. Thick arms of black smoke reached out of sight, and Roger realized that it was snowing ash.

"Rog—" Olivia started and he squeezed her hand, hard enough that she nearly yelled out.

"Children, they're—they're dropping bombs, we have to close our eyes really tight, close your eyes!" Roger, in excitement that hardly needed feigning, covered his eyes with his arm. Once again intrigued with the game, the children giggled and did the same.

"Keep your eyes covered," Olivia whimpered, grateful that her gasmask likely hid her trembling voice. She could feel the heat from the blaze on her forehead and eyelids, as their masks covered only their mouths and noses.

Cutty sped up and flew beneath the underpass, leaving the burning speedway, and Havenwood, behind them.

Roger breathed deeply. He knew beyond his land, east of the burning traffic, lay acres and acres of farm processing, open fields of wandering cattle.

The children giggled at his feet. "Are the bombs over, daddy?" Evelyn squealed through her mask.

"Yes, they're done, sweetie. We're safe now."

The car decelerated quickly enough that the children toppled backward. A large suitcase from the top of the car snapped loose and



#### Wood's Cove Arnold Starr, MD Professor Emeritus, Neurology and Neurobiology Painting

tumbled across the hood and onto the road beyond. In the mist ahead was a cluster of military trucks, capped with white tarps and milled about with armed men in gasmasks and breathing apparati. The entire family spasmed in fright as a gunshot rang from quite nearby. Roger and Olivia looked out to the fields and saw figures in full-body white suits milling about the livestock. Cows briefly scattered from the sound of the rifle.

"Daddy?" Gordon said, trying to regain his feet.

"Stay down!" Roger yelled, putting his hand on his son's shoulder to keep him from the windows. His heavy breathing was amplified through the gasmask.

Two white-suited men walked away from a felled heifer, and approached the next nearest animal, which one trained between the eyes and shot. The family jumped again.

"Daddy what's happening?" Evelyn cried. "Are the baddies shooting at us?"

"It's okay sweetie, it's alright," Olivia said. "Just stay where you are." She undid her belt and joined the children on the floor, hugging them each with an arm. Tears trickled down her cheeks and around the suction flange of the gasmask.

Fifty feet ahead, the armed figures near the trucks took notice of the sedan and gestured to each other.

"Cutty," Roger said. "Turn around, take us back home."

"Yes, sir."

Cutty threw the sedan into reverse and after a pebble-spitting three-point turn the car sped back to the underpass.

Roger put his hand into the pocket of his tweed overcoat and touched the pearl handle of his revolver. He wrapped his fingers around it, briefly reassured by the weight. His family wept at his feet, and he tried to swallow the knot of despair in his throat. He smelled urine.

They'd waited too long to leave, Roger thought. Too long.

As the car approached the speedway, and Havenwood beyond, Roger shuddered at the continuous convoy of forklifts which picked up the cows from where they had been shot down and piled them on the speedway to burn in the morning fog.

#### 45 Ronald Sahyouni, *MS1*

The shimmering scalpel blade Infected with HIV-AIDs Pierced the surgeons hand On a procedure to save A patient who placed A 45mm barrel on his face To blow away the pain Of a life that many praise

Treatment was started Hope was in place But medicine sometimes fails Those who need its grace

Years later the revered healer No longer able to save With eyes sullen into An emaciated face Picked up a 45 herself And raised it to face A life that once lived To save what one wastes

 Lights At The End of The Tunnel Tanni Thai UCIMC Controller Services Photography



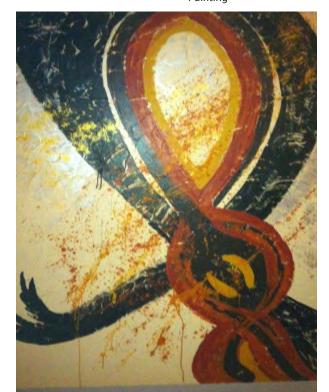
# The lepidopterist of shadows

Kevin Brown, International Programs

I fall into a patch of black not quite chewing gum spat but dapple, not zeroing dipple, nor appaloosa pap, but leafglobo, in still placement smack and I fall into it and in inky integument travel a quick subterranean arc, and glop up again through another portal, ignominious, tainted and dark and I keep on trying to catch these spots of covering devices, and my net, and my canister of death-bringing breath I never really get to use, but finally I've discovered this thing, this antithesis to the prism, a device for separating the invisible, is a falling through shadows and a concatenating, coagulating activity of self, a trying to put other bodies on display, in the name of science, extension of knowledge, or just a whimsical desire to decorate with shimmering, powdry iridescence, and none of these things are avoidable, until one's poverty or cowardliness shows one how to fall through darknesses and in winglessness we learn an upward buoyancy of empty-netedness

### Transformation Jessica Terris Staff Member

Staff Member, UCI-Executive Assistant for Associate Vice Chancellor, Dan Dooros Paintina



Matt and Granny Juliana Hallowell MOSC/Quality Assurance Coordinator Photography

### In Sickness and in Health

Steven C. Cramer, MD Professor, Depts of Neurology, Anatomy & Neurobiology, and PMR

> At last it rings "She's lost come help her please" I want to say "Again?" but bite my lip Each day your fog it thickens by degrees And so it is alone I steer our ship

How warm and reassuring were your eyes That now just stare a message cool and dry Fear not, my vow's as true as the sunrise And for this reason to you I now lie

Of your dead sister "Flew to Montreal" I only mention that one son was born You're blessed blind to the writing on the wall That warns we'll drift yet further by the morn

And as our plans from youth now slip your mind Remember dear to you I stay resigned



# Fear No More

Resident Physician, Radiation Oncology

Fear no more...

of long waits under the incandescent light waiting for the doctor of being anxious waiting for pending test results from yesterday's PET scan of counting each cycle of chemo, wondering when I can take it no more of more bad news that the chemo or radiation didn't work of juggling between being pain free and being nauseous and dizzy

and take comfort knowing ...

that you stepped up to the occasion to fight It that you tried your hardest to endure one more cycle that you have the time to say "Sorry" that you have taken the time to tell your loved ones by your side that "I love you" that you gave it your all

... for you will live on through the loved ones you taught and influenced, and they will practice your principles and values.

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Untitled Mary Pat Kelly, PhD Psychologist, Counseling Center

She's gone now. I knew it would happen Through me off balance Hoist my anchor and send me out – No home port to return to. The equilibrium of security shocked Inviting – no, insisting upon - transformation. Motherless child fully grown but still a child at heart Grow – become the anchor, the mother, the port. It is a fitting change where the end begins again.



Sofie & Imogen Janet Lim Pharmacy Technician, Chao Family Cancer Center Drawing



### Situations Like These

Lisa Lauducci, Associate Director, Marketing, Merage School of Business

The decision was made for us. We just carried out my Mom's wishes. She had always told us what she wanted. I would be the caretaker of the jewelry. "You want my jewelry, don't you?" She always probed me for my interest. "You'll be the executor," she explained. No one ever really wants to execute these kinds of tasks though. "Do what you want with the house," she commanded. I would fire back and ask her who should get what. She just said "you make those decisions." So when my Dad and I were going through her jewelry, he wanted to know "what do people do in situations like these?"

The situation was my Mom took a face plank into a cement sidewalk. She was walking next to my 78-year-old father who saw her fall suddenly. She didn't put her arms out, she just fell face forward rapidly. Not enough time for my elderly Dad to react. She suffered a traumatic brain injury, was unresponsive and in a coma. Her face black and blue, her head bandaged from surgery, and on a ventilator to help her breathe, she still looked like my Mom when I got to the hospital.

A nurse for more than 50 years, my Mom had run the respiratory care unit at a Veterans Administration hospital in Massachusetts. She specialized in geriatrics and spent so much time taking care of veterans that she knew exactly what she wanted when it was her time to go. She wouldn't want to be hooked up to a machine that would breathe for her to keep her alive, she knew her quality of life would be so greatly diminished and the hardship it would cause our family. She had seen it every day she had worked in a hospital. She had a living will and a do-not-resuscitate order and we all knew about this for years. She had already made all the tough decisions and all we had to do is carry out her wishes.

But carrying out these wishes is beyond the most difficult thing you could ever do. Nothing prepares you for this situation. Doctors pull you into chapels to talk. Social workers, caregivers, clergy, people in waiting rooms, family members you rarely see all turn up and hug you and give you food while you can feel your energy being sucked out of your gut.

It was my Mom's nurses who made me – and our whole family – feel better. "I heard your Mom was a nurse," our ICU nurse, Heidi, said to me when I first met her. Heidi had sparkling blue eyes, was 30-something with blonde hair and was a veteran. She had served in Afghanistan and told me she would take great care of my Mom. I thought she looked exactly like that actress Diane Kruger. She made me feel better. Her air of authority and authentic warmth was like a comforting blanket spreading over me.

Heidi took a few days off and a new nurse, Kristy, took over the day shift caring for my Mom. She was my Dad's favorite. "She's really sharp," he kept saying. She was a pretty pint-sized blonde whose family survived a catastrophic tornado that pummeled Joplin, Missouri. She understood tragedy and her empathy came out in her eyes. Every question my Dad asked she answered thoroughly, with a great kindness, while she explained everything she was doing to my Mom.

After about 7 days in the ICU, the neurologist, the pulmonologist and the doctor in charge of my Mom's care all delivered the very worst news – the traumatic brain injury had caused a brain stem stroke – and if my Mom awoke she would never be the same. Even as they told us the news, which we all suspected, we had seen her decline and develop pneumonia.

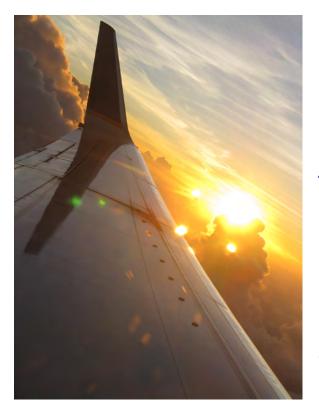
A day-and-a-half later my brother, me and my father all sat with her as her doctors removed her from her medication, her feeding tube and her ventilator. I insisted we stay by her bedside so she wouldn't be alone. The respiratory nurses said she wouldn't be alone because they were there with her. I was shaking and crying and they hugged me and told me it was okay if I needed to leave the room. So we all left the room for minutes that seemed like decades and finally one-by-one we came back into the room while the nurses listened to her breathing, checked her pulse until everything stopped. And she was gone. At the end, the nurses and my family were there with my Mom to her very last breath.

That's when I realized all nurses are part of a big family and take care of their own. I'm so glad my Mom was part of that family of people who helped her when it counted most and never left her alone.



Colors of Zanzibar
 Anjali Y. Hari
 MS2
 Photography

 Untitled Sarah Abedi MS2 Painting
 PLEXUS 2014 36

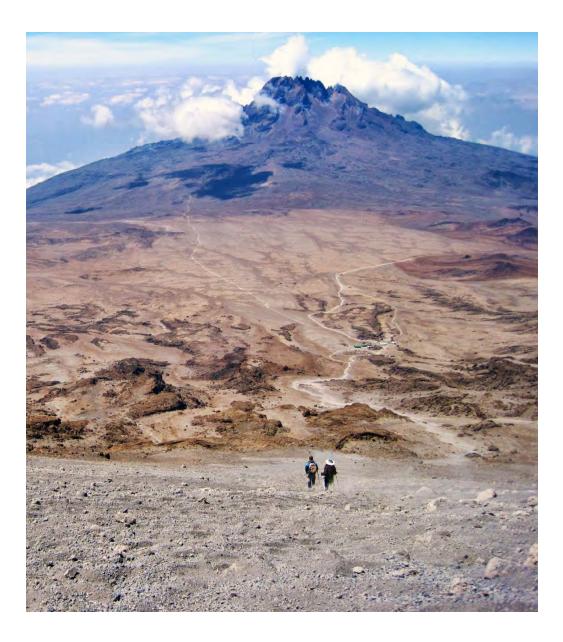


• Tembea Pole Pole Allison Zha MS2 Photography

 Head in the Clouds Valentina Bonev MS4 Photography

▼ Time Virginia Liu, MSTP Ryan Burris, MS4 Photography



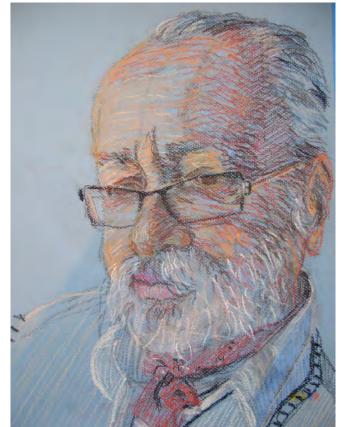




#### ▲ Icelandic Village Stuart A. Green, MD Clinical Professor, Dept of Orthopaedic Surgery Derived Photography

# $\underset{\text{the Soul}}{Art_{\text{for}}}$

The following are submissions from the Art for the Soul project at the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, UCIMC. Art for the Soul provides art classes to cancer patients, caregivers and family members.



 Bridge Through the Meadow
 Ben Franco
 Family Member
 Painting Self Portrait Val Engstrom Cancer Survivor Pastel





Self Portrait Bev Kilpatrick Cancer Survivor Acrylic

 Pink Hair Rolanda Engstrom Caregiver Acrylic, Mixed Media Collage

Afternoon Sailing Sandra Ruiz Cancer Survivor Wood Burning





• Portrait of a Survivor Ricardo Perez Cancer Survivor Acrylic 0

State and State

100

 Happy Alice Robles Cancer Survivor Oil Pastel

Golden Mask
 Norma Sanchez
 Family Member
 Pastel

0