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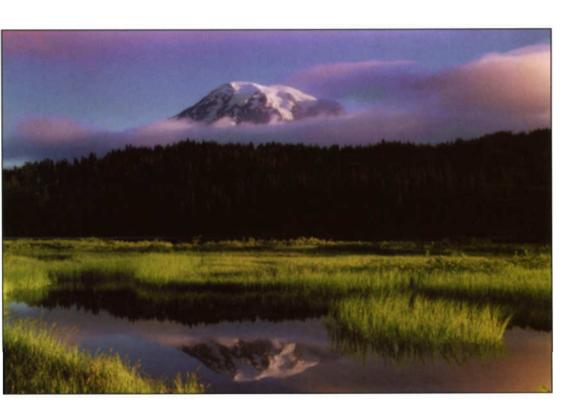
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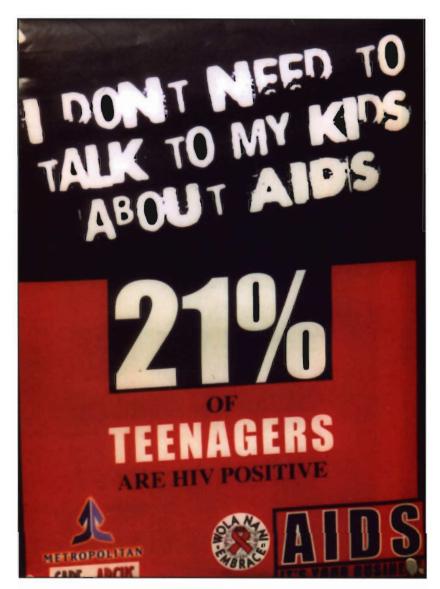
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Plexus



UCI College of Medicine Journal of Arts &: Humanities 2002 Edition • Volume 1



Despair

Patricia Lenahan, Associate Clincical Professor, Family Medicine

Front Cover Photo: Jose Ospina, M.D./Ph.D. Student

Back Cover Photo: Eric Hegedus, Class of 2005

Plexus

UCI College of Medicine Journal of Arts & Humanities 2002 Edition • Volume 1



Pigeonhole in Venice
Betty T. Wong, Department of Pediatrics

Editors

Eric Hegedus, Class of 2005 Thanh Truong, Class of 2004

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Imaginations

My eyes were fixated on the gauge, Counting the number of strokes per minute, My body rocked back and forth by the rhythmic motions of the rowing machine, Going nowhere.

After a few minutes,
A warm drop of sweat, originated in my scalp,
By-passed my left elbow,
Ending up on the corner of my lips,
Tasting the salt excreted from my own body.

Muscle pains from the day before,
Gradually subsided under the influence of my endogenous opiates.
Rhythmic motions of my sweat soaked torso and head,
With my eyes looking at a fixed target,
Proved to be an instrument for hypnosis,
Administered by an eager young Psychiatrist,
Wishing to explore my soul.

Not long after, I was in a deep state of hypnosis, Oblivious of my surroundings.

The clutter of the irons on a bench press,

By a muscle bulging, young man followed by the loud grunt and encouragement by his overzealous
coach.

The grind of a rusty cycle,

Pedaled by a retired gray haired old man hoping to regain his youth,

As the character of Faust dramatized by Goethe and sung by Gounod,

Not realizing that the myth was a compact with the devil.

A flight below,

Four middle-aged men were striking at a little blue ball against the white washed wall. It generated a thunderous and ears piercing repetitive sounds.

In the next-door there was the rhythmic pounding of the basketball on a wooden parquet floor by a group of young professionals,

Just left their office after the stock market closed.

The squeaking of their shoes' rubber on the floor was followed periodically with a joyous cry for a three points basket.

Euphoria generated by my own endorphin made the gauge appear much like an arch opening to a Roman garden in early spring.

At the threshold were you,
Standing triumphantly in a satin dress,
Reached to your white marble ankles,
Wearing a crown made of the spring cherry blossoms.

Your lips gave challenge to the pink rose that was not yet fully open. Your eyes sparkled like stars in a moonless sky in a Middle Eastern desert. Your scent made the jasmine blush.

As I reached for your hand in ecstasy,
Leading you to the altar,
A little blue ball,
Bounced from the wall below,
Strikes me on the forehead brought me back to reality.
I gazed at the clock on the wall and told myself,
I better call you that I would be late for supper.

- Houchang Modanlou, M.D.



Danyol Leon Graduate Program Coordinator, Department of Pharmacology

WATCHING FOR THE END

The end of sleep, The end of afternoon, The end of our conversation When do I have to go?

The end of a sunny winter day, The end of a day with good news, The end of travel at the end of vacation When do I have to go?

The end of rain and feelings of rejuvenation, The end of the letter, The end of hours of lovemaking, The end of seductive interaction, The end of orgasm.

The end of applause followed by silence The end of a rose in bloom. When do I have to go?

> - Andrei Novac MD, Department of Psychology

for m

you fooled me with the sunset bronze on water mottled rich warm sand supporting your calves, your heels it's what I wanted to see. not the flavorless landscape tacky gray soil the pointless sky says nothing, silent settling on the passive ground dulling it further while alkaline airs twist the stalks of infrequent weeds stretching through asphalt. like when your mother told you for living when your brother died. you were five.



Tanya Kumaria, Class of 2004

I anger because there was never a sunset.

Diabetes y Navidad

Ahhhh....making tamales Con mis comadres A long time family tradition

We gather together In all types of weather To cook for our familias at Christmas

No other sabor Ni con more amor Like those made from mi abuelita's receta

While talking and talking Tanto munching and munching Comiendo mas que we made that night

A letter from the cartero Reminder to see la Doctora in Enero Uh, oh...mi azucar will be way too high!!

9.1 fue the number y la doctora started to grumble No puedo cocinar those tamales next Navidad.

Michelle R. Gutierrez, Class of 2003



Stephanie Dittmer Class of 2005

First Year

The instrument's in place, Draping my shoulders like a superhero cape. My hands, at the sides, "Open, friendly." Glasses, now. More distinguished-looking. Even a wedding band! just to calm the nervous Mabels and Pollies, Thomases too. The knowledge is there, in the corners of my eyes, and in Those three horizontal lines. The pen, Mont Blanc; heavy, wise. My memory, purged of rubbish, Brimming with molecules and lives. Two alarms. Extra scrubs. Pager, nerves, and Stedman's. Pharmacopoeia, Vivarin.

- Monya De Class of 2005

And still-The chill-I am not ready.

The best of wishes.



LOVE

Love know no language
nor color
nor ethnicity
nor country
nor boundaries
nor numbers
nor age
nor time
nor space
nor distance
Love only knows that it has the right of way

Tandis Kazeminy, Class of 2003



"The Embrace" Tandis Kazeminy Class of 2003



a stupid poem

i think i'll take up smoking.

i'll try some camel non-filters.

and not just smoking, but smoking at gas stations, right next to the pumps with ashes falling everywhere, grumbling incomprehensible grumblings to nervous eyes customers in the middle of the night. they just want the pumps to work faster, so they can race home far away from this lunatic and slide into their own miserable, safe existence.

and when people come to shoo me away, i'll just come back or cross the street to the next station.

then when i run our of cigarettes, i could look at the gum on the ground and make up stories as to how it got there.

maybe it fell out of a hooker's mouth or maybe even some slack jaw from Waxahachie, Texas drove 1,834 miles to California and when he saw it the gum just popped out of his mouth.

then i could look around for pennies lying on the ground and when i found 6 or 7 of them i would put them in my mouth and suck on them.

i'd wait until i built up a mouthful of saliva.

saliva that was mixed with the filth of man and money and then i'd swalllow it and feel it hit the bottom of my stomach and make it rumble and twist and push upwards toward my esophagus.

then i could go around to the back of the station, making my way past the dank and smelly urinals to hang out by the dumpster.

maybe there'd be boxes of old Twinkies in there and i could eat 17 of them and start running around spitting out gibberish and roll on the ground making sounds like a seal in heat.

after that, i'd go back out front and offer people pumping gas a Twinkie.

i'd tell them that if i guessed how many gallons of gas they pump, i'd give them a Twinkie or at least a stale doughnut that was only slightly nibbled by thick, greasy rats.

then as the night air gets heavier and as the sky gets lighter, i'd crawl into the cab of my 3 colored 1973 Ford pick-up and drive down to the beach.

it would be more of a glide than anything. i'd pull up to that parking lot that's right next to the sand looking out to the sea.

then i'd lay out on the bench seat of my truck and gently close my eyes.

i'd dream about what it's like to have no imagination.

- Jack Voltner

Danyol Leon Graduate Program Coordinator, Department of Pharmacology

Bleeding

If I have compassion running in my blood Then I must have cut my wrist.

Lecture Slide Show

Here's one of a woman who went into cardiac arrest during labor

The surgical interventions are described

"Unfortunately she woke up without a brain"

I hear the doctor say

I think of the mother who never lived to see her child

I think of the child knowing she lives at the price of her mother's death

No time to think of those

We're on the next slide

I see a drop leave my punctured wrist

will I miss it?

Next we have the boy with the cut trachea

He was fifteen

The slide must be showing something about the surgery

But I can't take my eyes off his face

I see myself giving his parents the news

"I'm sorry" I say

to the woman who cradled him and sang him lullabies

"we did everything we could" I say

to the man who stayed up at his fever bed all night

I put on my happy face

just in time for dinner with my own child

I must focus on the next slide

Another drop leaves me did I need that?

Next comes the young man who jumped off a bridge broken bones everywhere

vet all fixed up and sent home in a week

Why did he jump off the bridge?

I wonder

No time, next slide

Drip, drop

will anything in my marrow replace that?

Anatomy lab

This one has her glitter nail polish



Scanning Electron Micrographs of a Laser Irradiated Rabit Femur

Lih-Huei L. Liaw

This one wasted away to nothing
That one looks so young and in good shape
Cancer
This woman has breast implants
She died on July 4th I hear
I think of the bitter Independence day holiday
for her family
In the same breath I decide
to cut her up and see the implants

Another drop hits the floor I pretend not to notice

Should I attempt to heal this puncture?

If I do I will be consumed by grief

If I don't I will end up an empty shell

why did she ever choose to become a doctor
I hear them say

I can't think of that now there are exams, you know I don't see the next drop as it trickles out over my wrist courses down my thumb and it is gone

Sayeh Beheshti
 Class of 2005



Myra Wong Class of 2005

Snowflake You

I watch your shape, like heavenly sugar Dusted with no break.
I catch you in my palms.
Like words of love,
Dancing silly and shy,
Just to disappear,
Without a trace of dust
Without a sheared gray past.

- Andrei Novac MD, Department of Psychology



Marisa Chang Class of 2004

The rain has stopped. . .

Only the soaked remains of kinship linger on the tips of glassy leaves.

Mother has spoken, her breath straight but stern,

They speak of untold anguish, and withered dreams.

The key to uncertain solace, lingering on each careless word.

Prophetic illusions scarcely imagined, never heard.

I awake to find no peace of mind.

Falling deeper, the incessant wails of the damned creep steadily from behind.

Winter's breath is whispered upon the lips of the autumn morn.

Tortured, sordid fingers grasping that of which is bloodied and torn.

The sun turns sour on tomorrow's eve.

Rendering afoul the spawn of the creature's seed.

All of its nervous greed exudes black bile sin,

Running rampant down back alleys searching for a way in.

A hero's soul worn thin,

Foolish deeds observed through a mirrored twin.

Dignity lost to untold shame,

Looking inside the womb to place the crown of blame.

Through the eyes of a child, we witness the pains of injustice.

By the will of humanity, we arise from faded sleep

to revive what was once conceived from tainted lust.

Generations who follow will be pure and unstained,

Never learning the truth of what was, Or what it truly means to weep.

S.D. Lin, Class of 2005

the promise of a young man to his tomorrow

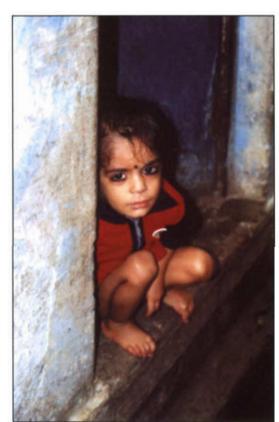
There will come a day
In the darkening hours of my life
When all the good battles have been fought,
All the innings played,
And a quietness will descend upon the land

On that day Abilities I now fight hard to achieve Will have been realized and used never more And children not yet blessed to this world Will long be grown and moved away

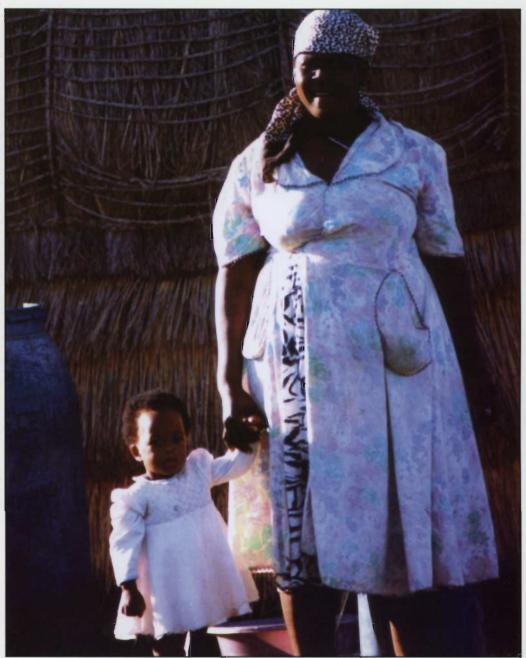
On that day
When the rains fall softly upon the earth
You will be by my side as you are now
And I will think back
On all the times we will have spent togetherThe good done for the world
And the good done for one another

On that day
I will not fear nor will cry
For I know of all truths this is the truest:
Then, as now, the best is not what is yet to come
But what I carry within me
And share with you always
In each and every moment

- Michael Doo, Class of 2004



Robin Bitner Class of 2004



"The Townships" Patricia Lenahan Associate Clinical Professor Family Medicine 17

VOICES OF HATE

I hate the gook because he killed my brother It was under a clear moon in Da'Nang No one suspected what would follow No one expected us to succumb.

Hating makes me strong
Don't tell me it is wrong
I see their shadows all alike
We'll be just different than they'll ever be
There'll be nothing in common to see.

I hate the Jew who killed the Lord It was spring so many years ago (it was a cabal's saying) Old Judas him to soldiers sold Saint Paul may have actually told The crossing, as Christianity's mold.

Hating makes me...

I hate the German baby, His grandfather wiped out my family tree. In Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine In all, six million souls perished in vain Now all I think of is revenge and pain.

Hating makes me...

I hate the Turkish grandpa, He was raised a cocky Ottoman They never gave Armenia a full chance To cry for all their daughters and their sons.

Hating makes me...

I hate the Russian military hunks
Who kept invading our I and In I astern I urope and beyond.
Lor a Sci Ii noble idea.
Brain washed, its luture no one could foresec

Hating makes me

I hate the next door Bosnian mom who says: "We have been Muslims since grand-grandfather's days."

A traitor of our western creed, It makes her just a foul seed, On clean, cultured European ground; A monkey world of values turned unsound.

Hating makes me...

I hate the young Polish man
Anti-Semitism flows in his veins,
Millions perished in ditches and by gas.
Now I, a Jew, have difficulties in this case
Mine and his similar past to face,
The difference between victim and the foe
My long forgotten elders forego.
The hateful faces of his ancestors, I was told,
Bore stories full of cruelty and of fault.

Hating makes me...

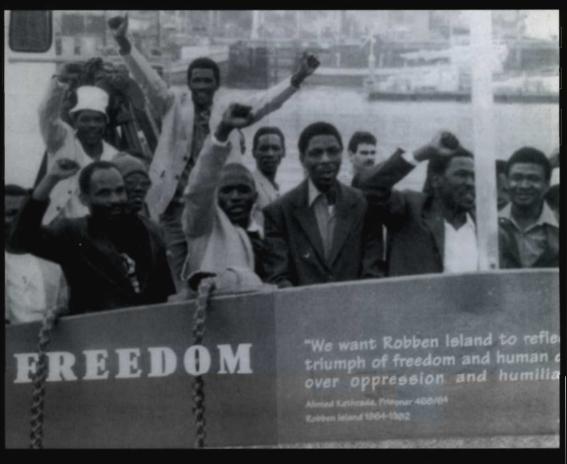
All day, all night, all day, all night, My brothers told the saga of Allah's might No one asked me if I'd miss the sky No one asked me if I'd miss the sun, I'm now on a bus to Ashkelon, Packed with explosives, at twenty-one What does it mean to perish for Islam?

Hating makes me...

Hating is revenge in the miniature
It lets the blood but doesn't cure
It turns past wounds to future acts
Caves an illusion of repair
Turns potential love to permanent despair

Now suffering made me wish I were Transformed into your heart and hair Ship under your people's skin. Leel just your pain under my name See the absurdity of this game Of hating babies and their brothers. For deeds of murderers and robbers

> Andrei Nov..c MD/Department of Psychology



"Freedom"
Robben Island
South Africa
Patricia Lenahan
Associate Clinical Professor
Family Medicine

Don't Ever Say Goodbye

Don't ever say goodbye in the darkness of the night Wait until the morning comes

For in the darkest of the night a meteor will fall and in this unfair journey a light will shine for all.

Don't ever say goodbye to that one who loves you so. For it's in the loving that the living bears the burden of the fall. Wait until the morning comes.

Wait until the night crosses to the day When the quiet dawn greets the breezes of the morn. And light will shine for all.

Don't ever say goodbye before the dawn arrives. It's not that you have gone away, and it's not that I've learned to love without you.

It's just too much to say... "forever" in the darkness of your night.

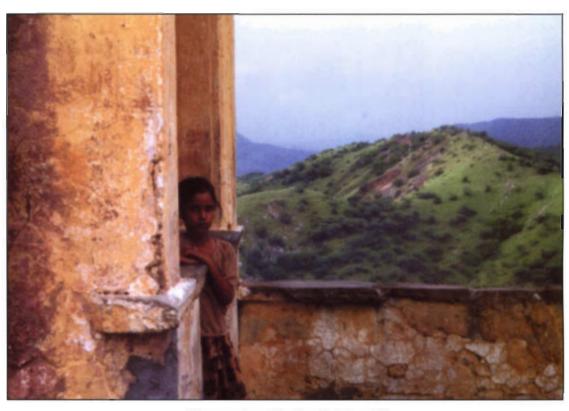
Wait until the morning comes.

Hope is where you find it and it's here in me for you. Take the burden for your loved one and ride the meteor now. And in this faithful moment, a light will shine for all.

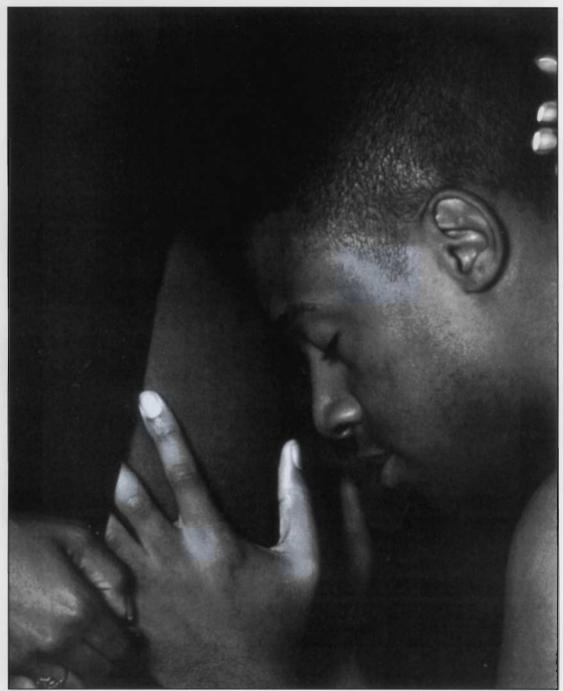
Never stop the singing, the dancing, or the laughter. For in the darkest of your night A meteor will fall and in its final, fiery grace A light will shine for all. Don't ever say farewell
Never wish me a goodbye
adieu
avoiur.
For it's in your eyes
I see
the forever and amour

Don't ever say goodbye, in the darkness of your night For the courage of your hope brings miracles at dawn. Wait until morning comes.

> - Frank L Meyskens Jr. Director Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center



"The caretaker of the Sun God Temple" Jaipur, India Rakesh Marwah Class of 2004



Shanee Porter Class of 2005



"Beach Art" Judith Hopkins Gynecology / Oncology

The Coal Miner

I was born in West Virginia
To a family of mining men
And women widowed young
I was the only boy in that company town
To come down with polio in the summer of '27
Two girls got sick
But I was the only boy It was curious.
My leg brace was a curiosity too
When I came home
From the hospital in Lexington
A year and six surgeries later

With my disability
I couldn't be a miner
That world of perpetual night,
Humid tunnels, dust, glowing lamps,
Danger lurking like a psychopath,
Was lost to me
"And a damn good thing too," my daddy said,
His skin slightly blue from coal-dust that wouldn't
wash out
Or from black lung disease
We never knew which

(He died in a mining accident when I was six)



"Nature's Revival" Judith Hopkins Gynecology / Oncology 24

I was small and crooked But I could talk a coin out of my mother's purse And prove to my daddy why a tomato wasn't a vegetable

At school they told me to be a lawyer or a clergyman

Instead I became a traveling salesman

Talked my way through the mining towns of Appalachia

(Having had practice all my life talking to lonely women)

I sold the tools of women's work -Cleaners, disinfectants, pungent soaps -What they used to scrub out the coal, What they used to make their world seem pure and womanly

Moving where I wanted
In the light of day
I saw sights my daddy never saw
And slept in places he'd never heard of
I spent most of my time among women
Hollow, dried-up women
Like empty gourds
Whose seeds rattle when you shake them
Convinced them they needed floor polish
Or a brush for their toilet
Persuaded them they would feel better
When they had those things
And I came home to women Widowed mother and widowed sister -

Also hollow, dried-up, empty

I lived my life

On the surface of the earth

But I never stopped wanting to go down
Because that's where the men spent their lives
Plunging below in the momentum of the cage
Till they reached narrow paths where they couldn't
walk upright
Swinging pick-axes, setting explosions
Watching for signs of methane or CO2
Smelling the salty stench of raw coal in their nostrils
Their skin slippery with water and sweat...
Of course I can't describe it, I wasn't there,
There where all the men went, even the boys.
Only the women stayed above

Now I live alone
Mother and sister both dead
(each surprised in her turn that she didn't
outlive e)
I've had two heart attacks
Can't get around much anymore
Post-polio syndrome my doctor calls it
(Funny it should sneak up on me again
After almost sixty years)

I don't complain
Men of my generation don't
We were taught to endure
So that's what I do
I set my alarm every morning
For five a.m.
Because my daddy told me once that
Men don't need more than six hours of sleep
I get up and make myself a cup
Of coffee, bitter and black
And I wait patiently
I wait to go beneath the ground
To join the men at last

- Johanna Shapiro, Ph.D.

Hour of Reckoning

I am awake in the hour of reckoning between them and yet to be

When my Lord's angels fear to tread as do I and thee.

I bare witness to the final hour of mercy fleeting When soul and body join in acts that stop hearts from beating.

I have seen the death of the very last innocent being. My burdened heart can no longer bear what it's seeing.

I am awake in the hour of reckoning between them and yet to be

When angels of Hell walk the earth as must I and thee.

I look to the sky and see the brightest star of which I cannot tell

Tis him that is left in my Lord's retreat, the first brimstone of Hell.

My sleepless body has brought me to Hell's darkened door.

I am once more innocent martyr whose tears shall flood its floor.

But wait the warrior's of light return and herald the end of this hour.

Gone is the darkness, its prince - his domain and his power.

Returned is the start of a new day when time runs once more.

With the return of the sun from the darkness I am tore.

Ended is the time of reckoning when yesterday is undone

By the light of the next day, another chance for all is won.

 Amir Bernaba Class of 2005



Marianne Ross, Ph.D.



I remember it all too well. More than I care to. I had just started my surgery rotation as a third year medical student. We were rounding on the SICU and I was assigned a very sick postoperative patient to follow.

I felt horrible as I listened to the intern present this man to our team: Mr. X is a 54-year-old white male status post... The legless man lay there tied to the bed so he would not pull out the feeding tube that was inserted into what was left of his abdomen. He had a large gap in what used to be a longitudinal suture line from a major abdominal surgery. We, in our jargon, call this a dehiscence. The dehiscent wound was filled with a combination of poorly healing tissue and the liquid diet that had somehow made it out of his feeding tube. The room stank of infected flesh. To this day my memory is cued and I have a mental image of this man whenever I smell an infected wound.

What made this common scenario an atrocity was that we all knew this man was going to die and prolonged and inhumane death. And we, that includes me, were just going to stand there and watch. He had already been on the unit for over three months and he had never shown signs of improvement. He was a homeless man with severe schizophrenia and no known relatives. In other words, we were not supposed to pull his tubes and lines. The best we could do was give him lots of morphine and hope that we could continue to feel good about ourselves or at least allow ourselves to forget.

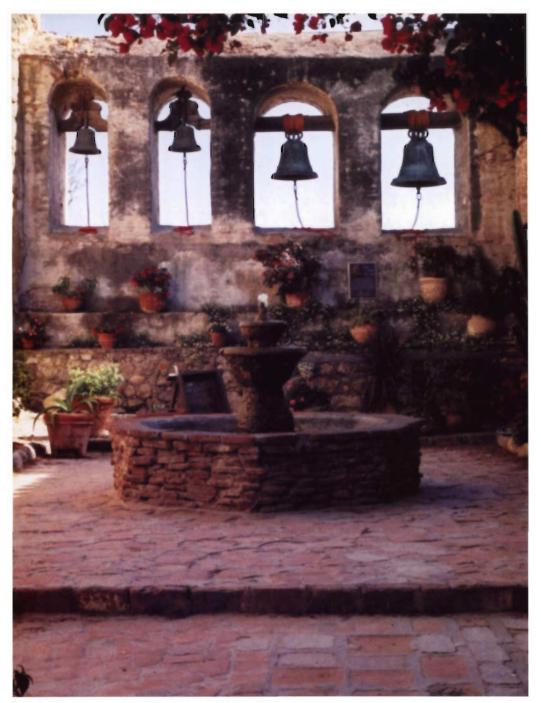
As I sit here and write this essay, I cannot hold back the tears. This is really the first time I have told this story to anyone. Of course the team and I would joke about the situation, our morbid way of dealing with the pain. To an outsider our jokes could seem cruel: hey someone needs to get that man a priest; another would say, he has no lap - the stripper would have to give him half off the going rate...lol. Seems cruel indeed, but an outsider will never really understand the pain we were feeling. Many nights I would contemplate an act of mercy. I would contemplate how I could do it, my superiors know far more than I do; after all, I am a mere third year medical student. However, deep down inside I knew I was deceiving myself. We all knew he was going to die in the worst, most undignified way. I saw it in his eyes every day for weeks.

In hindsight, I wonder if I learned anything? Would I have the guts to do the right thing in the future or would I worry about my career? Euthanasia is controversial in our society. We talk about patient autonomy, etc. What about a patient like Mr. X? He was a patient without competency, so did that preclude autonomy? (not clear) What about our own feelings as medical professionals who are, at times, required to watch a person die a medieval style death? Does anyone ever think about the emotional toll these situations take on us as physicians?

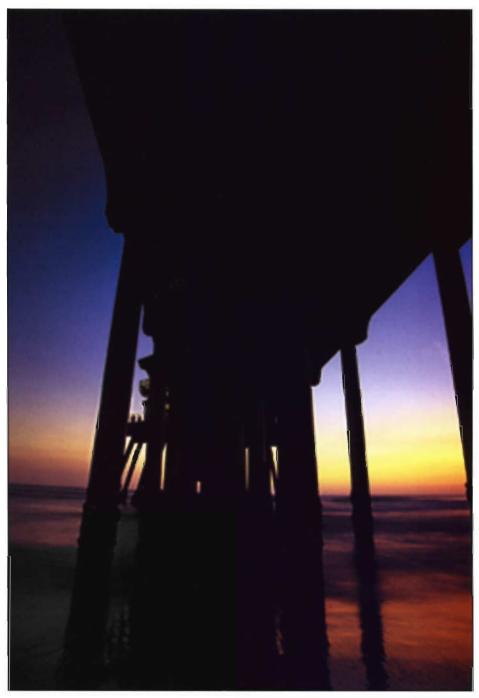
I have not been confronted with a patient X in a long time and I hope I never am. Maybe I will never, again, have to face such questions. I have a feeling I am deceiving myself, again...

Anonymous





Thanh Truong Class of 2004



Vin Nguyen Class of 2005

The Other Neighbor

A child's life floats in The air Drifting slowly from the Playground, to the neighbor's Backyards

The back of my knees
Sweat when he came near me.
He talked with his face so close
To mine.
I was there to play with his sister,
I wanted him to go away.

I loved my closest neighbor from My bedroom window. Staring hard at his window, I imagined, created, destroyed, and lost Myself in him

My neighbor Jackie was fat. They dared me to tell her. I wasn't afraid, Not afraid of anything-I remember the pain in her eyes As I defied my neighbors. I still believe I have bloodstains On my hands

Boris, the dog, Sometimes looked like a horse to me.

It seemed that he belonged To all of us The other neighbor excitedly Showed me his new wardrobe. I marveled at his sense of style and fashion, i didn't know he would die so soon

He died a few days after The birth of my child: An exchange

Somehow his death is more real Than anyone's death. I don't think I know why. I knew him as a chubby Funny boy, who acted like us. Like us girls

They said it was a rare virus, But the disease was everywhere. I didn't know he would die so soon

My neighborhood was so whole So dynamic. It grew with us And left us, when we reached our limit For childish things.

Anonymous



- Alberto Manetta, MD Professor Obstetrics & Gynecology Senior Associate Dean Educational Affairs



Robin Bitner Class of 2004



Jose Ospina, M.D./Ph.D. Student

Confession

That finally-first cut, not deep enough, Folding of skin to the side, like some twisted origami played with human flesh Picking, picking, picking, picking Some choose to tie you with string, impale you with nails Tag you with labels, The paper windowed by grease

Once gleaming instruments of steady deconstruction Now encrusted with biological remains Work to fill bright red bags costumed in their proclamations of danger and avoidance My stomach rumbles during almost every lab I eat meat-But I think of you and hesitate

You are at once A careful explosion of autumn-greens and yellows, reds and browns But at times too recognizable all the same Your shaved head, shrouded I have sliced through your skin, fingered your organs, broken through your bones Still I do not know your face

Your scars and staples and solid masses What stories your body tells me A history of surgeries, and diseases But nothing of your dreams Why did you choose this? Did your family object? Would you care what I do now?

The smell is like hickory smoke Sickly sweet and oh-so sticky I wash myself religiously Such thoughts to be cast aside As part of the recipe: Heaping layers upon myself while stripping yours away

I stand in the twilight That first step toward isolation? I will grow into this responsibility.

> Michael Doo Class of 2004



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