

The BEAT

Volume XIII

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to present the 2011 edition of The Beat. As medical professionals and educators, both in training and in practice, we take care to know our patients inside and out, realizing how inconspicuous factors like their work or family life can be of great consequence in their care. However, as professionals, we are generally perceived solely as that--caregivers, diagnosticians, scientists, administrative personnel—a uni-dimensional and incomplete translation reflecting years of education and work experience, but little else. Yet our relationships, beliefs, interests, and values emerge in the various facets of our work, subtly fueling us through the most rigorous and difficult days. We hope that this installation of The Beat provides insight into these other elements, revealing some of the truly artistic, multidimensional constituents of the David Geffen School of Medicine as it celebrates its 60th anniversary.

And The Beat goes on... Sybil Zachariah and Ginger Slack

Vital Sign Awards

Art First Prize: **Photosynthesis** by Will Pannell Second Prize: **Reticulated Iron** by Huy Ngao

Literature First Prize: **It** by Ellora Karmarkar Second Prize: **J.Joyce on a First Date** by Stacie Nishimoto

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Photosynthesis Will Pannell Photographed by Amanda Mundell



It Ellora Karmarkar

I had never heard my mother cry like that before. dark gasping sighs searing the walls of the bedroom where my sister and I lay quietly huddled beneath the comforter. Maybe it won't find us here. She kissed us and left and brought us back a videotape of her sister lying in a casket, it left her so cold Pale and empty with laughter and tears muddled into a mess

I remember crying because I felt I should. now I cry because I know

Eight years later it crawled and seethed Over the thin tubes my sisters and I burst from. Stage three should be an act in a play not a pronouncement. Fifty percent, they said for us, fifteen percent for her. it rung harshly in my ears, They danced with little pictures of broken enzyme circles Like cartoon characters that laughed at me and I thought I could feel it grow inside of me, the false blessing of a new generation and she shaved her head and didn't tell me and I cried so much that day and I am so afraid that one day I will cry dark gasping sighs searing the walls



J.Joyce on a First Date Stacie Nishimoto

He ripped along the paper's jagged crease and scribbled along the tear. I opened the note within my copy of Ulysses, abandoning Bloom and his secret correspondence in a Dublin back alley.

A drawing. Not annoyed then? No there are words too. What does it say? Hot Chocolate?

written in bold block-letters over my penciled complaint, "Brain explosion imminent". imminent.

I anxiously scanned the query and its sketchy ballpoint border thenturned awayand concentrated again on reading, but the haze in my mindwas persistent blurring the type on the page.

DEAR UNCLASSIFIED,

I GOT YOUR LAST LETTER TO ME AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR IT. I AM SORRY YOU DID NOT LIKE MY LAST GCHAT. WHY DID YOU OFFER TO STUDY TOGETHER IF YOU HAVE NOTHING TO STUDY? | AM AWFULLY CONFUSED BY YOU. I DO WISH I COULD DEMAND AN EXPLANATION. I CALLED YOU ODD BECAUSE I LACK THE KNACK FOR LABELS. PLEASE TELL ME WHAT IS THE MEANING IN ALL OF THIS? ARE YOU NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR FIERCE REPUGNANCE FOR FACEBOOK AND MYSPACE AND POETRY READINGS NOT BY THE POETS THEMSELVES? I DO WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING FOR YOU. PLEASE TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF EVERYTHING AND ME. I OF-TEN THINK OF THE CONVERSATIONS WE'VE HAD. I THINK OF THE THINGS I CAN SAY TO YOU AND IT SCARES ME A LITTLE. I HAVE NEV-ER FELT MYSELF SO ANNOYED WITH A PERSON AS YOU. I FEEL SO BAD ABOUT IT. PLEASE, STOP READING WITH YOUR FINGER SCAN-NING THE PAGE IN RHYTHMIC, RASPY STROKES. IT'S DISTRACTING. IF YOU DO NOT, I WILL HAVE TO SPEAK AND I WILL TRY TOO HARD AND NOT FIND THE RIGHT WORDS. SO NOW YOU KNOW WHAT I WILL DO. HOW I WILL KILL THIS BY TRYING NOT TO.

STOP. That is not what it says. That is not on the page.



I am not Martha and you are not Bloom.

We don't speak of love but of novels. We don't speak in flowers but in chat rooms and junk food and panoramic views through clear, glass windows.

We like it because no-one else can. Or, at least, cannot the way we do.

Then reading slowly forward, I remember dinner again reliving our awkward dining hall banter.

Small bag of Doritos with you lonely Shakespeare throw you a rainbow lollipop if you don't please dismantle the Aeschylus how I long warm death by chocolate to well-chosen citaswhen we soon meet sunset, though I know you'd rather wander with cognac stanzas.

I unstick the post-it from the page and place it between us, brushing my fingers against the side of my book.

The night is too long and you know it.

We'll end up on steps between midnight and dawn with nothing to say that's not meaningful. Clutching empty hot cocoa cups and tracing grooves in the concrete. Why do we linger only to huddle in some student lounge, digging a hole with language and burying our chances. Yet you and I are still here, reading Ulysses and watching the sunset.

Family-sized fritos with you dearest Milton throw you a strawberry milkshake if you don't fall fairy pangolins. Hippolytus how I long curtain titter to shiny Schwinns when we soon meet bit-tersweet squares, though you know I'd rather sing jazz skylines.

I hurriedly sketch " Approved" like an official stamp over your "Hot

Chocolate?,"containing myscrawl and yourblock letters within solid, rectangular (heaven forbid not heart-shaped!) border.





Reticulated Iron Huy Ngaou





Shaka Through the Barrel Paul N. Fisher



Race Track Zhang T. Fan



The gears of my mind don't creak at night

Stacie Nishimoto

The gears of my mind don't creak at night they whir without oil or sunshine fueled by linty memories and leftover retorts. Dissatisfied with daylight explanations I sit absolutely still so the heater won't know what I'm thinking grumbling with its clinks and clanks I think it suspects that I'm no longer here but sinking in the ring of a coffee mug aware that the ripples overhead track a dangerous descent. Extracted in ether wafting amidst impressions in colloidal suspensions turning each over with trembling fingers handling without gloves! without pretense perilous unknowns.





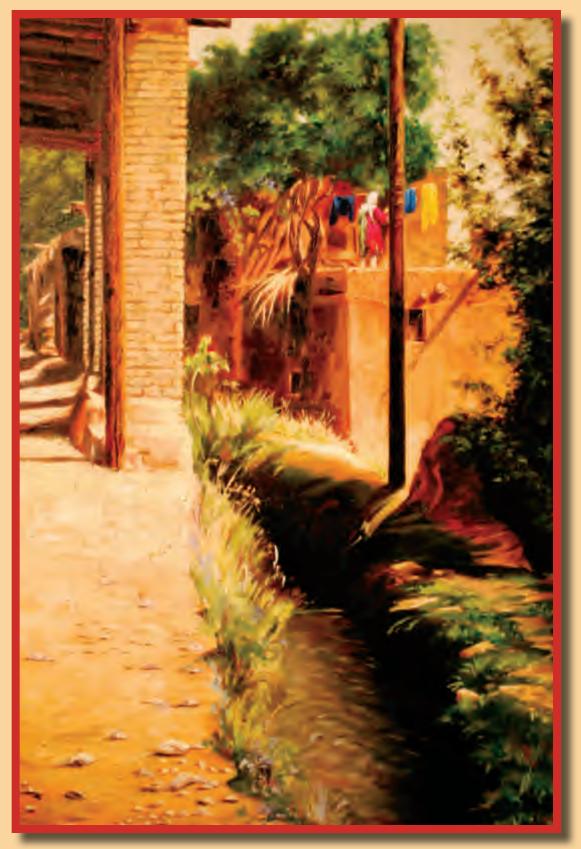
A Corner in Venice Jason Hsu





Cowboy Lissa Yu





Abiyane time travel Shahram Yazdani

Men Wearing Robes and Gowns

Doris N. Finck

Men wearing robes and gowns Is a disconcerting sight, Dressed in girlie clothes They look too scared to fight. *EXCEPT FOR:* Ancient Greeks in mini-skirts

Enemies violently did smite, Robed suicide-bombers Themselves and others do ignite.

Men wearing robes and gowns Women do not excite, *EXCEPT FOR:* Capped & gowned **professors** Look erotically erudite, Kilt-wearing **Scots** An arousing bagpipe sight, Robed charismatic **clergy** Convert congregant to acolyte, And lure away their dollars Even if money's tight.





Hawaiian Colors Paul N. Fisher

Calling Ellora Karmarkar

What is a calling? I imagine little boys hurtle down halls To the scent of December And grinning chimes. All toll the fair sun As you slip into your navy blues No ruffles in the wrong places No awkward sashes. Fitted just right to your Curves and quirks. But here, I can only imagine. Here, chimes are just windchimes. And the navy blues are My father's socks. Drooping off my toes As I search And wonder Where I got lost.



FRAIL THINGS

Michelle van Vliet

"Spider webs deserve a better fate than to be violently ripped from their foundations".

I've always had a problem with destroying something that I am utterly incapable of reproducing. I couldn't mimic their designs with a pencil and paper, let alone with any material know to man. I struggle with the fact that they're just an ingredient of the Darwinian gumbo, and stuff this defenseless will suffer unjust devastation.

I take pride in my window washing. I'm damn good at it, but I continually agonize over wounding these frail, gossamer homesteads ... Here, in Mr. Lewis' palatial abode, they are so vulnerable. The poor suburban spiders... launched on the winds of destiny. This handsome bug could have ended up in an Amazon jungle, and never been thought of as an intrusion upon someone's pristine view of the San Fernando Valley This single spider web must be destroyed. "Fear not Mr. Lewis!" I whisper, and give the web a good squirt of Windex, turning my head while I sweep it away with the sheet of newspaper.

As I gave the glass a final wipe, I felt the strange sense that someone was watching me. I continued gathering my cleaning supplies, and stood up looking toward a smaller window facing the California-Tuscan villa next door. There, standing in the archway near Mr. Lewis' fountain, is a young man. I'd guess he's in his early 20s ... and seems to be fascinated by my window washing. The boy has an eerie presence. Not quite emo, but dark and macabre. His clothes seem a size too big, mostly black, and a 70's style ruffled shirt. His posture is unchanged when I wave to him. He remains motionless, and continues to just stare.

I collected my supplies, and approached Mr. Lewis' salon I could hear music, and lifted my fist, preparing to knock, but the door mysteriously swung open on its' own. The dark room was filled from top to bottom with leather bound books. "I'm all finished Mr. Lewis. I cleaned the guestroom last week, so didn't think it needed it this time" A tall backed chair slowly spun around, and his voice was heard before I could see his face ... "Ah ... m'dear ... thank you so very much. Your work here adds a breath of fresh air in my home" He held on his lap a porcelain sculpture of an Elizabethan couple, the last chords from its music box just finishing. "I've been in the garden, and gathered countless roses." he said as he gently placed the sculpture on a small tea table near the window. "Would you like to take some with you? A lady as beautiful as you should be surrounded by roses every day of her life."

Allan Paul Lewis, III, is a fairly good looking man Early 60's ... never married, and has only flirted with me in an innocent, boyish way. One might figure he's gay, but the tabloids would disagree. He continues to reward me with little trinkets "...to let you know that I've been thinking of you." he says every time he returns from one of his many worldly holidays. Chocolates from Belgium, a delicate bottle of lavender scented perfume from Paris ... a writing pen from Africa made from a strange wood with a little hand carved monkey's head on top. But the strangest gift of all was a small ebony music box from Austria. It was embellished with an ivory inlay forming an abstract pattern that resembled a spider web. When opened, the box played a haunting melody unknown to me. I played it many times to musician friends, and none of them could ever identify the tune, but they always commented on how strangely beautiful it was, and that it "seemed familiar".

I was drawn to Mr. Lewis in ways perhaps not appropriate, considering our professional relationship. I don't mean to say that I had sensual thoughts; it's just that I want to cuddle him, to give him the love of which I believed him to be deprived. Nevertheless, I felt something odd about our rapport—something I

couldn't express, but through the mystical association one conjures from music... from the odd little melody that speaks volumes about the connection of the real and the unreal.

Monday morning was as usual. With Folgers in my cup, I took care of my self-appointed duty of feeding the crows on the roof top. Afterwards I decided to sit at the piano...whacking the keys with the confidence of a real player ...but quickly began to annoy myself. "Forget about this banging." I thought. "Let's hear how the master does it." The record is there, almost beckoning to me... Vivaldi's The Four Seasons. I very carefully placed the record on the turntable and pressed play. The disc began to spin, but before setting down the stylus, I picked up my 20 year old dust brush, and proceed to clean the shinny vinyl with the same delicate ritual I've used since owning my first phonograph. "Frail things must be respected " I thought, realizing it was what Mr. Lewis had said one day, as he entertained me with his LP of the Beethoven violin concerto, while writing my check.

As the music filled the room I noticed my crows were gathering again, but not in the usual noisy, caw cawing murder they normally form. They seemed content, and several had actually curled their little toothpick legs under their bellies, looking very comfortable.

"More coffee" I thought, and just as I turned to walk back into the kitchen, I saw something out of the corner of my eye. Did one of the crows fly through the open window? Suddenly a loud "whooshing" sound spun through the room In a split second of comprehension I felt as though I was being lifted into the air. I kept my eyes closed. I didn't want to see what was before me. My mind went reeling with thoughts of maybe a Tsunami? ... Tornado? ... Nightmare? ... I need to wake up!

Even though the sound became louder, I could still hear Vivaldi playing on my turntable. "Odd" I thought "I'm being spun through the air like a feather on the wind, but the record hasn't skipped once".

I finally opened my eyes, and peering through what seemed to be white, wispy gauze, I could see my body below me. There I was with coffee in hand, but stopped dead in my tracks halfway to the kitchen. My apartment had changed though. It was not from this time. All my IKEA furniture had become ornate, gold leafed, over-stuffed and formal. Old Master paintings adorned the walls instead of my Whisky A Go-Go posters, and the turntable had been replaced by a harpsichord, with a young man in Elizabethan clothing playing the keys. But wait ... I recognize the boy. He's the sickly kid I had seen near Mr. Lewis' fountain yesterday. The boy turned his head upward in my direction, but this time his gaunt face seems content ... almost serene. His lips are mouthing something, but I can't hear what he's saying

I also realize Vivaldi has been replaced with the haunting music box tune, and the young boy has brought the peaceful melody to a fevered pitch ... building stronger and more violent as he seemed ready to reach the crescendo. His long slender fingers were pounding the keys wildly, and his thin body swayed back and forth in time with the fast paced rhythm.

What is happening? Seriously my mind can't comprehend the difference between real and unreal. The gauze surrounding me became thicker, and I had trouble breathing, and could no longer move my arms and legs. The boy's body seemed to become larger and darker ... or was I becoming smaller?

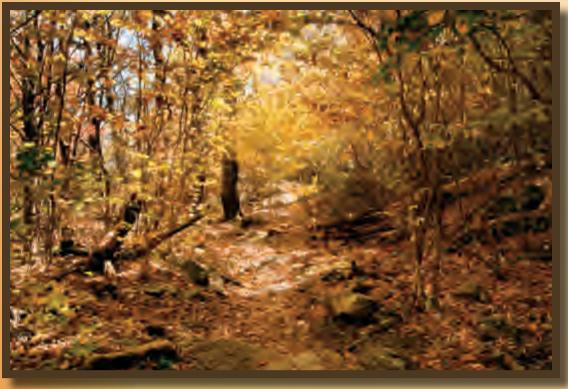
At the very moment I felt as though I would faint, another familiar face came into view. Mr Lewis?! Or at least I thought it was him ... but through the gauze he seemed enormous ... like a close-up on a movie screen ... His piercing brown eyes staring down at me as if I were a mere insect. "Ahhh ... there you are M'Dear" he said in a thunderous voice ... "You are too precious to be allowed to decay. Flesh is too frail ... "frail things must be respected"

I heard a rustling of the gauze at the bottom of my cocoon, and a part of the swaddle was removed, allowing me to see the view before me. I noticed the boy first ... His body was now lanky, and insect like. His head was bulbous and black, with 8 shiny ink black eyes peering in at me.... Two impatient fangs dripping silky threads came nearer and nearer. I felt a sharp pain run up my leg ... and then the scene darkened. All I heard was Mr Lewis voice repeating "frail things must be respected" "frail things must be respected" "frail things must be

The aroma of fragrant roses filled the room. The warmth of the morning sun was shining through the window, and I could hear the sound of sheer curtains gently rustling in the summer breeze. "Another beautiful California day" I thought as I struggled to stretch my well rested limbs ... but what's this? I can't move? Not my legs, not my arms ... I can't even move my fingers! None of my limbs will respond to my command to shift. What about my eyes? Should I dare try to open them, thinking that I must have been in a horribly disfiguring accident? My god what happened to me?

My eyes open slowly without my influence to do so. It's not a hospital room, but how did I get here, in Mr. Lewis salon? And these clothes?! Oh, but someone has been kind enough to leave me a pot of tea. "Oh there you are Mr. Lewis. May I pour a cup for you? Oh yes I will be careful ... I know how frail this pot is."

The young orphaned spider took his usual place on Mr. Lewis's ceramic shoulder, as we both assumed our positions. We would live here forever, undisturbed and unafraid of decay. Forever youthful and surrounded with roses, forever with a full pot of jasmine tea, and forever respected.



Fall Foliage Jenna Nguyen





Nomad and his daughter Shahram Yazdani



Early Morning Neil Parker



Blocked! *Eddie Garcia*

There once was a hermitly myocyte Who stubbornly refused to excite. It plugged its gap junctions, Stopping all functions And bid its neighbors goodnight.



Arrow Crab Tad Kremen





Seeing is not believing... it is only seeing Marc-Anthony Lecky



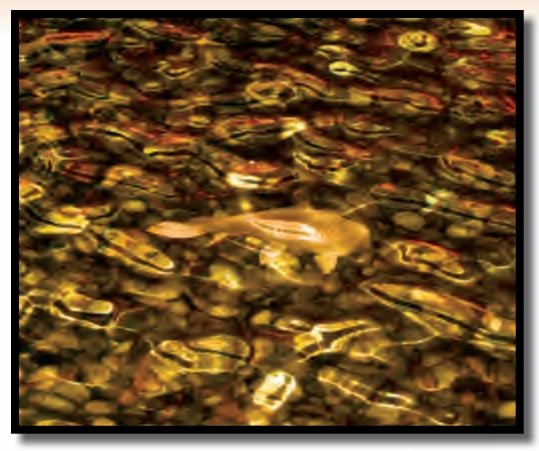
IBID AND ANON

Robert M. Kahn

Down through the ages, Relegated to bottom of pages-IBID and ANON could always be found.

Thus was their story, bereft of all glory.

One bright shining day, IBID and ANON went looking for FAME When it was found, Neither exclaimed-Because Anon never knew.....and IBID was just the same.



Fishy Goes Home Alejandro Meruelo





Uncle Sam *Marc-Anthony Lecky*



Mira La Luna Veronica Solorio

There's a name embroidered on the corner It's crisp, white and I'm the proud owner We finally made it dad! I'm finally a Bruin! I was convinced after I bombed the MCAT that my life was ruined

You taught me to keep fighting To always keep trying

Reluctantly I signed up to retake it Somehow, you convinced me I'd make it

And then you got sick And all I wanted to do was quit

The very day I got my high scores The Lord took you to rest on His shores

I wanted to so badly for you to know The see the pride your eyes would show

I didn't make it in time The white sheet still burns in my mind

I miss you more than these words can ever show

Even though you aren't physically here I can look at the moon and know you are always near

So as we used to say when I was a little girl...

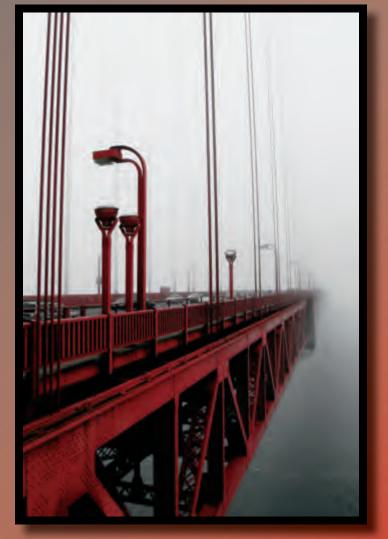
Mira la luna Mírala pues Vienes mañana? Ándale pues

See you on the other side daddy





Sunset David L. Rousso



Bridge to Nowhere Michael Yashar





Costa Rican Catapillar John Hann





Ephemeral Sybil Zachariah



Pomegranate

Ziyad Khesbak

On days when I wander a desert false held fast to a walk by some weirding heat, beads of sweat will fall upon my neck warm feathers, to rouse my senses and bid me greet a mother sun who plies my mind toward a land bereft, rivers that run deep through my blood to be the spirit of my life—the holy part of my heart.

The light pierces at angles, and I recall my desert twin— Where cool nights give dew to lonely palms bent forward like ancients, sentinels to a timeworn land or—set in reverence, with dejected stalks, silent witnesses to the scene before them

Before them, She is limp Her sweet essence, incensed with suffering Pillaged from the gullet of the earth That offering to ignoble suitors— A husk left to twist on the grains as they sift and scrape across her flesh like the breath of a lecherous man

But I see with a sight, and dunes traverse the smoothness of rolling sands—a fool's wonder Bricks which tumble from their heights—exhausted for want of reprieve from millennial wills Her winds, scars of softness and ferocity betray her loveliness and grace in that vigor which pulses in the kiss of her breeze. Those lips which I am sure must now be upon my brow— I press nails into my skin, and bite to set us each upon the other.

She sobs, and I writhe our hearts are connected. I fear you know not the sweet pleasure Nor the muted call.





Sweetest Smile Saddest Thought Amit Oberai



Sworn Disciple of the Germ Theory of Disease For Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis

Erica Lubliner

No matter how inconvenient I search for the Trinity: water soap towels

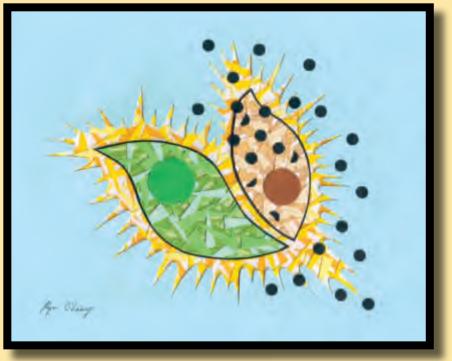
Constant handwashing makes others angry prompting threats by an ex that he would stop going out to dinner if I left the table each time long bathroom lines creating separation anxiety

Constant handwashing loses favorite rings forcing me to make up rules never wash with rings some rings go AWOL, suffer near misses in a dark drain or get locked up in solitary confinement of my jewelry box

Constant handwashing impacts my wardrobe clothes become storage containers i create an edict: wear clothes with pockets daily the brassiere as emergency pocket missing rings found in jackets worn 6 months ago

On days off I rebel releasing rings wearing too many resulting in absent handwashes after toilet flushes major taboo for a future doctor something never done in clinic or meals where OCD handwashing takes over and short prayers are whispered before, after patient before, after meal





Love for Innate Immunity *Ryan O'Leary*



Jelly Stephanie Oberfoell



Let There Be Light

Elaine Hirsch

I remember the time the world went dark. It didn't happen all at once and was hardly noticeable at first. It is only with the insight afforded by time that I recall the slight graying at the edges and the slowly increasing darkness, though I can't say for certain when it started. I'd sometimes experience periods of clarity during that early stage, and that would throw me off and make me think that everything was fine and I was back to normal and the fog was only a dream. But then those periods of light gradually became fewer in number and farther apart in time and dimmer and murkier until they disappeared altogether and a thick opaque curtain of blackness descended upon me and my heart was blind.

The problem with blindness of the heart is that it blunts sentiment, and I was now unable to feel. My former inner life of emotion seemed to have disappeared and taken any memory of its existence with it. Life was a pointless jumble of tedium. The future held nothing. The planet would disappear eventually anyway and our existence was just a temporary and completely meaningless blip so why bother with anything? Nothing was colorful or exciting and I was deeply bored. I grew even more hopeless when I realized that events I had previously looked forward to now no longer interested me. I wondered why I had ever even been excited by them because they were stupid and tiresome anyway. I watched my passions and aspirations crash to the ground one by one until not a single one remained. Food was no longer appealing and I resented my body for needing to be fed. Socializing became a chore and was soon discarded because what's the point? My heart was dull and I was empty inside and I didn't care.

My body sensed my indifference to life and my limbs now lost their spontaneity. I had never previously had to consciously command my muscles to act but I now found that they would heed only the most forceful and deliberate of instructions. Sometimes I remained in one position for many minutes, maybe hours, unable to muster the mental energy required to carry out simple but completely overwhelming tasks. I remember sitting on my chair one morning, with my shoes beside me and my socks in hand, trying to compel my body to go through the steps needed to become appropriately shod. Similar scenarios played themselves out at bedtime and undressing and washing required great feats of effort and were sometimes left undone. I wondered what kind of affliction could leave me so sluggish for so long.

Work was draining and felt nearly insurmountable. My brain seemed to be filled with thick dark molasses and I could barely evoke the will and energy required to propel my thoughts through the viscous medium. My drive to do well and succeed disappeared and my productivity plummeted along with my interest in work and in life. I was drowning in the stinking cesspool of self doubt and I knew I could never accomplish anything in life. Even emotions like frustration and disappointment, so familiar to anyone on the ladder to success, were noticeably absent. The presence of those emotions necessitates at least a modicum of care about ones state. But nothing matters when the world is black and the mind is cloudy and the heart is so dark that one wonders if it really is present at all. Yet despite the great effort that work required I clung to it as a life vest. And although I went through the motions of daily life on auto pilot, not understanding in the least what all the individuals that make up humanity saw in such motions, they acted as a temporary distraction from the awful nothingness that pervaded my being. I somehow knew that if I lost that last tenuous link to normality I'd sink into a pit too deep to climb out of.

One day, in a state of physical and mental exhaustion, I made my way outside and lied down on the grass. I felt heavy and imagined that gravity was tugging especially strongly on the miserable lump of flesh that was my body. The hard earth beneath me pushed up on my bones and I thought about what it would feel like to be laying within rather than above it. It was a comforting thought and it was my only comfort.



And then, in an odd and ironic logic, it became my raison d'être. Since I did not see any point in existing, and I knew that my existence was temporary anyway, it didn't matter to me whether I ceased to exist earlier or later and I indulged in the anticipation of the cold brown earth swallowing the void that was inside of me. It was this twisted reasoning that gave me the motivation to get up off the ground and play the role of Elaine for just another little while. Because when hope is so utterly and completely lost and when nothing has a purpose, death is something to look forward to. And having something to look forward to makes it that much easier to live.

People were starting to notice that something was not quite right. One morning a co-worker cornered me. 'You've lost weight' she said. 'You don't look right. Are you ok?' 'I have Crohn's Disease' I lied. 'Flare up.' It was a lie I was now using often, in response to the concerned questions about my skeletal frame and listless manner. It was also a lie I was beginning to believe even though much of my experience was not explained by it. A disease of the intestine seemed like a benign and unobjectionable reason for my state and I hid behind it. I ignored the better and more fitting explanation because it was dangerous and scary and completely unacceptable. I plodded on and deceived myself and tried to deceive others and smiled and made conversation. But smiling was wearying and hurt my muscles and conversations fell to the floor with a thud, and I knew in some small corner of my mind that something was dreadfully wrong.

I may have gone on in that wretched state indefinitely if my body had not then decided to play tricks on me. Suddenly I became filled with an inner rushing turmoil, and whereas before I had been lethargic and tired I was now restless and agitated. Whereas before I had not felt any emotion at all, I now experienced waves of fear so intense they permeated every fiber of my being and made me want to curl up into a ball and plead desperately for relief. The fear was vague; a sort of raw dread that was not attached to anything in particular. That made it feel all the more distressing because I did not know how to avoid or relieve it. Sometimes the fear would be directed at something specific and it would take hold of my thoughts and grow like a malignant cancer of the mind and it was like watching a horror film in slow motion. At work I paced the halls like a caged animal gone mad and found it quite impossible to remain in one spot for longer than several milliseconds before one of my limbs would start tapping or bouncing or kicking. It was becoming increasingly difficult to hide my internal state from the concerned eyes around me and I was beginning to wonder how I could survive any longer. The inner turmoil seemed only to intensify and soon every muscle of my body was taut and trembling and threatening to explode like an angry volcano. The distress was so terrible I wanted to strangle myself with the rope that I was at the end of. The angst was so acute I felt that I could not exist one more moment longer. And it was at that point that I went for help.

The woman that I met at the clinic walk-in hours listened to me with a look of sympathy and pain on her face. It seemed like the pain in her eyes was a reflection of the pain she was seeing in me and I wanted to shout at her and tell her not to look at me like that. I wanted to put my hands over her eyes and wipe out the pained look because it acknowledged and validated my pain and made it impossible for me to continue denying. And I was afraid of the pain that admission might bring. I wanted her to assess me purely through cold clinical eyes so I could remain detached and safe. I was not to get my way. The clinician listened and then calmly and quietly gave me her Professional Opinion and offered me a Drug, both of which I immediately rejected. I had already guessed the outcome of our meeting. A small part of my thinking brain had long ago stepped outside of my body and had been logically assessing my situation all along. And the conclusion it had come to was not different from the the connection between my own rational conclusion and the reality that I was living. Logic had been so completely divorced from emotion that I was incapable of recognizing in my heart that which I understood in my brain. So now the clinician's



frank definition of my state jarred me and jangled my protective armor of denial. I was afraid to disarm and accept the pain of truth.

I left the clinic feeling dazed and disoriented and collapsed onto a nearby bench. Then, for the first time since the whole ordeal had started, I cried. It was an anguished cry that came from deep inside of me and my whole body shook before any tears even came out of my eyes. As I sat there rocking and hugging my knees tightly to my chest I heard the clinician's words echoing in my head. They reverberated through me until they were a throbbing ache in my heart and I could ignore them no longer. Then, I gave in wholly and completely and accepted the verdict I had been resisting. And in that moment of succumbing I felt a deep sense of grief and loss and powerlessness and I sobbed quietly into my knees. But I also felt the first inklings of an ever so subtle hint of hope. Perhaps that was the beginning of my recovery. Perhaps acknowledging and feeling are necessary first steps in healing. Perhaps I needed a logic generated not by myself to shock me into accepting the conclusion I had already made. Acceptance increased the pain but maybe that meant that now it was more accessible and I could touch it more and manipulate it more and maybe make it smaller. And then I decided that I would take the Drug.

The clinician had referred me to another clinician. The other clinician, I was told, would see me once a week and help me out of this mess. It was the standard treatment for conditions like mine but I thought it was a load of new age voodoo horseshit. I went anyway because I didn't care enough to disagree and although I didn't think it would help, I didn't think it would hurt either. I was wrong. It hurt like hell. It helped too but I didn't truly recognize that until much later. I don't know what kept me going back. Maybe some hidden part of me understood the value of those discussions even though in the beginning they left me shaky and scared and despondent all over again. I suppose that kind of reaction is to be expected when one is undergoing a root canal of the psyche without the benefit of anesthesia. Because it hurts to touch the naked raw nerve endings of the mind and excavate the putrid black thoughts and replace them with soft and sweet smelling ones. The pain would reverberate and pulsate for days and the Drug was only just starting to take effect.

Recovery was slow – almost as slow as the descent into nothingness had been. At first I did not believe that recovery was even possible and even if I had thought it possible I wouldn't have cared because the future held nothing anyway. I simply wanted relief from the terror and the agitation and so I dutifully swallowed down the Drug every day. Then one morning on my way to work I noticed a tree. It was a beautiful tree, all green and leafy and majestic. Its branches reached upwards into the clear blue sky as if stretching after awakening from an extended nap. I wondered how long that tree had been standing in that spot and why I had never seen it. I looked around and was amazed to see beautiful gardens and flowers and bright green lawns. The air was heavy with the scent of blossoms and the birds chirped merrily from atop their perches. I was awed by the splendor and saddened when I realized that it had been there all along but I had not perceived it. Light was slowly returning to my life although many months were to pass before my heart could fully see again.

Several years now separate me from that time when the world first went dark. I've had many ups and downs since then and I can't say that life has been easy. It hasn't. Yet I like to think that the experience changed me for the better. I try not to take life for granted. I appreciate more. I feel more. I enjoy more. I am more sensitive to others who might be experiencing something similar. But I've also been left with questions. I wonder why I did not recognize the warning signs of a very common, very treatable affliction. I wonder why it took me so long to admit the problem and go for treatment. I wonder why I had been unaware of something so prevalent among those in my field and station in life. I wonder how a potential killer can be so well hidden.





Medical School Mixer on Mars Hubert Shih



Life in Green Huy Ngaou





Untitled Ellora Karmarkar



Evolution Joy Cealia Richardson

Captured in widen eyes Captivating Sorrow left vindicates its pain We are more Than a faint silhouette A lurking shadow positioned in a distance And tomorrow Demanding of respect A people of strength A people of sacrifice A people of power For we are no longer our yesterday





Confixum Mary Cambou



Untitled Ginger Slack





Drink me Uyen Dinh Chu



The Microtome

Tanya Liu

The microtome machine cuts plasticencased mice brains into eight micrometer sections. Thirteen times thinner than a sheet of paper, it ribbons out wrinkled, tissuethin tissue—plastic slivers of knowledge that flutter with every exhalation. As I cut I must remember to breathe, thin like paper, trying to avoid a brain scatter, a mind shower on the chemical-stained linoleum.

And I imagine that every section is a slice of secrets, an excerpt of experience, a piece of memory printed permanently in paraffin wax. Imagine a section that remembered my tail had an itch this morning, another that furtively thought I stole bedding from #76 while she was sleeping, or reminisced I've only ever had mouse chow and tap water.

Yet we can only visualize, if we're lucky, the markers of chemical consequence, and conclude that this mouse, with the numerical name and the identical genome of her colony, might have had a brain tumor.





Who Will Mourn the Forest Rat? Thearith Seng



Kanaka

Devan Jaganath

The dust lifted As her stick fell. The village girl Glared into haze, Proclaiming She would go to England To find her gold.

Like yarn, Loops through loops, One became two, She and him Traveled the world, England, America, And along the way Two became five, Five became Eight, Eight became Sixteen, Loops through loops, Knit together

And of course there was gold, Bars, rings, bracelets, She gave it all to us, Laced across our wrists, Pressed against our chests, She gave, Loops through loops, She gave.

Dust to gold, gold to dust, Time melts our precious metals That once held our fingerprints, Laced across our wrists Pressed against our chests, Returns to earth For the next village girl To find her gold.

But for us, Our hands sparkle, Shimmer of dust, Stains of memory, She became our gold.



Dominican Brothers Dipesh R. Bhakta



lie Beneath the PEAK *Evan White*





Pimping Ain't Easy Brian Lonquich



Baby Cheetah Susan Wollersheim



Twelve Ways of Listening to Maria *Ray Luo*

I.

One hand after the other, One step over the next along these walls. A light irradiating from some chamber Of the mind, a heart pumping from Maria.

II.

I hear in blue, I hear in gold, I see in green Maria's glow.

III.

While all dream of one-sided fractals not one itself Maria sits and nods.

IV.

Print and illustration Subsume the world. Print and illustration and identity Subsume Maria.

V.

I do not know whether I should look inside The album to read its mind, Or judge the cover To feel its heart; Whether Maria is outside, Or inside.

VI.

A radio blasting against Trumpets from a statue, "Long live my ideas!" Written down and Deciphered By Maria, Silent as a sculpture.

VII.

The walls push us in To look at one side of the mirror, Each angle a patch of color. Do you not see the refraction Of Sorrento, Amsterdam, Dusseldorf Off the Milky Way?

VIII.

I can write greetings In Hallmark style, And draw pithy figurines. I know also Maria is part of More than I know.

IX.

Paint easels, PF Flyers, pillows, We think we know. Not Oreos, Ipods, or watches. They come out of the reflection of Shards of glass on the wall.

Х.

As Maria moves from my mind To yours, Please listen to the whisper Without looking.

XI.

One after another along those walls. Where is the issue? The side-long glances off the prism, Are light split between you and I and Maria. What then is heard?

XII.

One pillow after another, The watch stopped ticking. Infinite time, Infinite turns, Infinite shards. There Maria stands, listening.

Literature Biographies

Doris N. Finck - Men Wearing Robes and Gowns

Doris Fink has worked at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior for 25 years. For the past 10 years she has edited the SIN & HB Newsletter, which is e-mailed twice a month to more than 1,000 NPIH staff and faculty, and ends each Newsletter with a "doris rhyme." She doesn't think of her un-poetic, "Doris rhymes" as "art" but as acerbic amusing comments about "life."

Eddie Garcia - Blocked!

Eddie Garcia is a first year medical student. He likes limericks, Morningstar vegan buffalo chicken wings and wearing scrub pants all day, every day. His limerick, "Blocked," is an allegory of the discontinuity of service between specialties in the current health system.

Elaine Hirsch - Let There Be Light Elaine Hirsch (pseudonym) is a graduate student in the neurosciences. She enjoys writing and wrote this essay out of a desire to communicate her experience and break the bonds of isolation that a mood disorder can create. This is her first published piece.

Devan Jaganath - Kanaka Devan Jaganath is a third year medical student at UCLA. He wrote this poem in memory of his grandmother, Kanaka Chari.

Robert M. Kahn - IBID AND ANON Robert M. Kahn MD is a Clinical Professor of Family Medicine, has been on faculty at UCLA for approximately 35 years. He also has a private practice in the Pacific Palisades.

Ellora Karmarkar - It, Calling, Untitled Ellora Karmarkar is a second year medical student and a proud Santa Cruzan who loves the lower case, poetry and art and music. Her mother is a fallopian tube cancer survivor.

Ziyad Khesbak - Pomegranate

Ziyad Khesbak, a first year medical student, was born the son of Iraqi refugees in the wintry city of Warsaw. Since moving on to warmer locales, he has developed a disposition tending to invert the contextual relevance of most things in his life. He enjoys kisses, onion dolma, and is the perennial opponent of all things kilter.

Tanya Liu - The Microtome

Tanya Liu grew up in Miami, graduated from Pomona College, dabbles in creative writing, and currently plays with scientific instruments at UCLA.

Erica Lubliner - Sworn Disciple of the Germ Theory of Disease

In medical school, Erica learned about Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweiss' pioneering idea in the 1800's proposing that- doctors wash their hands after doing work on corpses to prevent deaths in pregnant women. This poem was written during a cruise down the Nile River after realizing how washing hands affects people's relationships, wardrobe, and psyche; plus it's a small recognition to the doctor known as the "savior of mothers". P.S. Erica does not have OCD.

Ray Luo - Twelve Ways of Listening to Maria Ray Luo is a graduate student in neuroscience. He has written for the Daily Bruin, UCLA Westwind literary magazine, and stagehappenings. com, among other venues. He studied math, computer science, and European studies while at Berkeley, but these days, he'd rather make a living by writing Hallmark cards. His work can be found at http://rayluo.bol.ucla.edu/projects/ articles/.

Stacie Nishimoto – J. Joyce on a First Date, The gears of my mind don't creak at night Stacie Nishimoto is a first year medical student at UCLA. She enjoys chilled guava juice and 2am delirium. The J. Joyce piece is an interpretation of an early scene in Ulysses, where the protagonist (Bloom) receives a love letter written in a symbolic language of flowers.



Joy Cealia Richardson - Evolution Joy Cealia Richardson has been writing poems since high school. She is beyond excited to share her thoughts.

Veronica Solorio - Mira La Luna Veronica Solorio, is Jesus's daughter. Siempre luchando, MS1, UCLA PRIME.

Michelle van Vliet - Frail Things Michelle van Vliet is the Photographer for the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, and has spent most of her life behind a camera. Frail Things is the result of a writing workshop she's been part of for the past 3 years, headed by Pamela Des Barres, the famous Groupie, and author of the rock history, I'm with the Band.

Art biographies

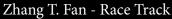
Dipesh R. Bhakta - Dominican Brothers Dipesh R. Bhakta (UCLA Family Medicine Resident, PGY3) took this shot during a medical outreach trip to the Dominican Republic with the organization International Medical Alliance/REM on February 10. With the driver of our minibus changing out a flat tire, two Dominican brothers engaged in playful childhood innocence, oblivious to their surroundings.

Mary Cambou - Confixum

What do you get when you cross a French producer with a Dentist from Kansas? It seems only natural that Mary would be a medical student who spends what little free time she has either watching movies, listening to any and every genre of music, or reading obscure literature. Mary grew up immersed in both the sciences and the arts, and carry them with her today.

Uyen Dinh Chu - Drink Me

Uyen Dinh Chu is an avid documentary photographer of all things quirky and raw. You can often find her silently sleuthing behind her camera but otherwise she's contemplating her next move.



Zhang T. Fan MD is an Associate Clinical Professor at UCLA in the Department of Anesthesiology, in addition to being a nature photographer. "Race Track" was taken in a difficult-to-reach part of Death Valley, and remains a scientific mystery since there is no good explanation for where these rocks come from, how they travel for a distance over months, and then disappear.

Paul N. Fisher - Hawaiian Colors, Shaka Through the Barrel

Paul N. Fisher grew up in Hawaii, fell in love with the ocean as a young boy surfing, swimming and fishing. "Hawaiian Colors" was taken from the water at Ala Moana Bowls, just as the sun was setting a storm moved down the Ko'olau Mountain Range creating a rainbow over Honolulu vibrant with colors. "Shaka Through the Barrel" is a photo of his friend Chad Andino throwing out a shaka as he passed under the wave.

John Hann - Costa Rican Caterpillar John Hann is a fourth year medical student going into family medicine. Traveling and backpacking provide the majority of his subject material.

Jason Hsu - A Corner in Venice

Jason Hsu was born and raised in Taiwan, and spent more than half of his life abroad. Besides the gig as a staff researcher at Department of Medicine, his passion lies in traveling, creating visual art, photography, and many more.

Tad Kremen - Arrow Crab

Tad Kremen is a fourth year Orthopaedic Surgery resident at UCLA. One thing he enjoys about photography is that it allows you to capture a brief moment in time and perpetuate that moment. This is particularly desirable when your on-call obligations are generating "moments" that you would prefer to forget.



Marc-Anthony Lecky - Seeing is not believing... it is only seeing, Uncle Sam Marc-Anthony Lecky moved to California from Jamaica when he was sixteen to pursue a career as a biologist or an artist. Art inspires him to search for simple truths that are a reflection of himself and the world in which he lives.

Brian Lonquich - Pimping Ain't Easy Brian Lonquich is a first year medical student in the UCR/UCLA Thomas Haider Program interested in global health and infectious disease. This picture depicts Dr. Shankel guiding a fellow first year in blood draw lab and is an homage to the notorious nephrologist.

Alejandro Meruelo - Fishy Goes Home Alejandro Meruelo is a fifth year trainee in the Medical Scientist Training Program at UCLA. His research is in systems biology, and he enjoys cycling and photography when he has time.

Huy Ngaou- Reticulated Iron, Life in Green Huy Ngaou ties to explore and capture the beauty in life's unassuming and simple moments.

Jenna Nguyen - Fall Foliage Jenna Nguyen is a second year medical student. She recently picked up photography and this picture was one of the first shots she took while camping in Shenandoah National Park.

Amit Oberai - Sweetest Smile Saddest Thought Amit Oberai is a first year postdoc in the department of biological chemistry, working in the lab of Siavash Kurdistani. His research is on the epigenetics of cancer, and on finding evolutionary trends in histone genes. He has always loved to paint, particularly people and trees, in an impressionistic style using oils and oil pastels. Stephanie Oberfoell - Jelly Stephanie Oberfoell loves art that makes the viewer pause. Pause because she has never quite looked at something that way before or because it captures a familiar emotion.

Ryan O'Leary - Love for Innate Immunity Ryan O'Leary is a first year medical student and his piece was a gift to the principle investigator of my laboratory at UC Santa Barbara. He hoped to create a piece that would spark wonder and imagination in the same way that innate immune research has for Dr. Charles Samuel and anyone else who has been inspired by the beautiful mysteries of nature.

Will Pannell - Photosynthesis (Sculpture photographed by Amanda Mundell) Will Pannell is a second year medical student who graduated from UCLA with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. He likes to weld and fabricate metal in his free time and sculpted this flower in the UCLA machine shop.

Neil Parker - Early Morning

Seeing beauty all around us is something we should not miss, and having a camera in hand allows one to caputre and see things others don't see.

David L. Rousso - Sunset

David Rousso earned his PhD in Neurobiology this month. He photographs various surfaces, textures, and places around Westwood/UCLA. This image was taken with a point-and-click camera using manipulated 35mm film.

Thearith Seng - Who will mourn the forest rat? Thearith Seng is a fourth year medical student entering Family Medicine who has been struck with wanderlust ever since his trip to Zion National Park last year, and can be found most weekends on a new hiking trail, camera ever ready at hand.



Hubert Shih - Medical School Mixer on Mars This piece is inspired by Hubert Shih's curiosity about whether intelligent life exists on other planets. If so, might they also have institutions such as medical schools, and if they do, might their medical students also engage in leisure outside of their usual course of studies?

Ginger Slack - Untitled

Ginger Slack is a second year medical student, interested in the field of surgery. A lover of music and the arts since childhood, she plays piano and dabbles in digital photography, modeling, and ballroom dancing.

Evan White - lie Beneath the PEAK Evan White enjoys traveling and bronzing. He uses photography as a means of capturing brief moments in time, so as to not be forgotten by one's selective memory. He greatly enjoys eating street food. Amongst his favorites are squirrel, tarantula, maggots, guinea pig, bear testicles, duck embryo, live octopus, raw Kobe beef, llama, dog, scorpions, cicadas, and raw quail egg.

Susan Wollersheim - Baby Cheetah Susan Wollersheim MD has loved capturing fleeting moments through the lens for years and hopes to grow up and be a doctor one day.

Michael Yashar - Bridge to Nowhere Michael Yashar is a 27-year-old male who has a special place in his heart for all things analog. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Michael developed his love for black-and-white film photography during his high school years, though due to time constraints he has recently resorted to digital photography. He hopes that you can enjoy the (inferior though digitally contemporary) fruits of his labor in the mean time. Shahram Yazdani - Nomad and his daughter, Abiyane time travel, The Storm As a pediatrician focusing on chronic and complex diseases in children, Shahram Yazdani finds art to be an essential and effective means of meditation, source of creativity, and inspiration. It is an escape from science and logic, while it is the endless curvature that completes the circle of cognition. Paint is the medium that depicts his romanticized mental images of exotic cultures and places onto canvas.

Lissa Yu - Cowboy

Lissa Yu is a third year medical student who enjoys music, art, and spending time with her friends and family. Her piece "Cowboy" was taken during a camping trip over July 4th weekend in the hills of Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County, CA.

Sybil Zachariah - Ephemeral

Sybil is a second year medical student who turns to working with various media--meticulous pencil drawings, messy pastel pieces, quick ink sketches--for relaxation, expressive creativity, and (now more than ever) a means of escape.



A special thank you to Dr. Neil Parker for his support of The Beat, without whose help we could not showcase the multitude of talents of our medical community.

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Journal of Arts & Literature Spring 2011

David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA