

the BEAT



editor's note

Dear Readers,

It is our immense pleasure to present the 18th annual edition of The BEAT, The David Geffen School of Medicine's Arts and Literary Magazine. In the following pages, you will find artistic and literary expressions from a diverse group of artists and authors. Each piece of work is the product of a thought, emotion, or vision that reflects the inspirations driving the hearts and minds of UCLA Health community members. We hope you enjoy this refreshing edition of The BEAT as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

And The BEAT goes on...

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Christina Harview and Christine Shieh

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Special thanks to Mary Ann Triest and Aurora Reyes from the SAO for helping us continue the tradition of the BEAT.

vital signs awards

literature
first prize: Emily Miller "leukemia"
second prize: Jesse Hanchett "Heart Attack"

art
first prize: Cindy Cheung "The Siren"
second prize: Thomas Luong "Stars Above Joshua"

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We welcome submissions from all faculty, staff, and students at the UCLA Health Sciences community at medschool.ucla.edu/current-the-ucla-beat.

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Stages

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people

BY B. RICH ADAMS

Some of us will win, some of us will lose, some of us will end up on the booze,
some can do no rights, some can do no wrongs, some of us are born to sing the songs,
some have to be led, some can take the reins, some of us are born to break the chains,
some of us are smart, some of us are fools and some of us are born to bend the rules.

We're all people, we should be treated as equal,
no race discrimination, that's the opinion of our generation.

Some of us are black, some of us are white, some of us are children of the night,
some of us are quiet, some of us are loud, some of us are born to please the crowd,
some of us are dumb, some are born with voice, some of us are born without the choice,
some of us are short, some of us are tall and some of us are born to take the fall.

We're all people, we should be treated as equal,
no sex discrimination, that's the opinion of our generation.

Some will take the risk, some will throw the dice, some of us are born to pay the price,
some of us are free, some of us can vote and some of us are born to rock the boat.

We're all people, we should be treated as equal,
One big united nation, that's the opinion of our generation.

Some of us will live, some of us will die and some of us are born to ask the question why?



Paris, France

BY SAMANTHA ASARCH

4th of July
BY DORWIN BIRT



leukemia

BY EMILY MILLER

as though we were dipoles, the atmosphere clung to our skin: all that mattered was that there were big words and a small child, and none of it seemed to fit. with nothing between us and the girl, i remember almost hearing atriums split in the beginning -- listening about her (the patient) while watching her (the daughter) creates an aching impossibility (just look, how can she be sick, she is going to be the president some day or an artist, see how she likes to paint?). the father was the first to cry.

"it'll be harder for you than it will be for her," the doctor offered softly as i slipped the door shut. the last of the room's bright-eyed hope flew out before it, pinning to the girl's iv pole in the shape of a butterfly. while rivulets scarred her parents' cheeks, i let the tectonic barrier slice our room from the hall. resolve flickered -- there was nothing to do now but listen, clutch, and spend the next three years trying to accept.

the explanation was one that the doctor had rehearsed and memorized in her early anxious years; now it seemed almost commonplace for her to speak, motor memory instead of raw. still, familiarity can be as much struggle as brand new. admittedly, it was a story i knew well too, from textbooks and diagrams and strewn abbreviations with memories filling in the gaps. on our side of the line, the terminology was routine and worn like river rocks -- but on theirs, quivering hands were feeling the stones with unblemished fingertips. i closed my eyes for a moment and passed under their wave of tumbling, wide-eyed inquires; they were impatient to solidify all of these words, not yet realizing that they would soon be desperate to dissolve them.

once those syllables slide beneath your skin, they never re-emerge.



Alone on the Lagoon

BY HUAN DONG



The Modern Doctor

BY ROSE SHAN

tiny cuts

BY JENNIFER RITCH

She asks again this week, "How is the cutting" and again this week he answers "The same". There were a thousand this week, like the week before and the week before and the week before. She asked him again what he did with the paper that he said he cut. And again he said "That's not important, it is only garbage, what I cut is only garbage anyway." And she believes him. And he believes himself.

"Well" she finally says, "I'll see you next week?" He checks to see that the sleeves of his turtleneck sweater are pulled down and he places a hand onto his thigh, grimacing ever so slightly. As he rises from his seat he looks her in the eye for the first time ever. "No." he says. "I don't think so, I've run out of paper and I think we're done here anyway."

Sky-scraping

BY CATHY CHUI

I sat down to be carried up
by a storied man, towering, bedridden,
his gaunt facade ravaged,
his present a dirt road unpaved.

All of this became memory.
His words tripped along softly,
breathing hard up lonely stairwells,
the night outside frigid, winds
stretched to snap on absent motors
(passing us by below).

He told me of sunburnt youth,
swimming naked in unclaimed rivers.
Shouts splashed, laughter glistened
in white droplets full of summer air.

Muffled rebellion flowed forward
from upstream, passed wilder country
and drenched them loudly. Inspired
young men mocked senseless order.

Quiet ripples were silver-plated whispers
lining shallow pockets to anchor the spirit
in a world at war with fear.
A hydra of many minds springing forth
devoured all thoughts in flight, rooted beyond
faraway rice-paddies and tangled jungles
to toss up those who sat still,
watched on silver screens
and only had their words to choose.
Fighting men threw away their medals,
minted new currency for sober dissent.

He tells me that protests mattered
when war was not a soldier's business,
always to profit someone else.
He would know. He was there.
Every young man was a statistical line item,
insubstantial in the margins
of a cold standoff, bottom line unchanging.
The world could end tomorrow.

He sees little of the rebellions today,
hears no firm voice, nothing enough
to reclaim justice from disorder.
Progress is motion and not change,
young men are safe, thus muffled,
even when anger births chaos.
Ideas are no longer seeds

armored with dreams of trees and sky,
never to see beyond undergrowth.
All of this he watches, his world (still).

The embers hesitate in his eyes.
I see his fire flicker, splitting semicolons,
how high we've climbed in the smoke.
The present is below in the shadows-
one evening, one patient,
storied and towering beside me.



Hiking Above the Clouds

BY THOMAS LUONG

the greatest game

BY TREVOR MOONEY

My dad taught me how to swing a golf club at an early age. No, not with the overbearing nature of an Earl Dennison Woods. Robert Mooney Jr., a brilliant emergency physician with a respectable high school swimming career, never wished to live vicariously through my future sporting exploits. Perhaps having personally authored the genetics of scrawny paleness into my genetic constitution, he knew a losing battle when he saw one. Like his father before him, Robert Sr., a hardened amateur pugilist shaped by the Great Depression, my dad never expected physical greatness from me.

In fact, Bob Jr. never told me how I was supposed to end up. He certainly never told me I should be like him. In high school after a couple of bad experiences at the hospital as a patient, I snottily told him that I would never want to become a doctor. He smiled, telling me, "Son, I don't blame you one bit." Yet, here I am less than a decade later, studying medicine at my father's alma mater, where every morning I walk by his groovy 80s countenance framed alongside the equally hirsute members of his graduating class. And, in the most appreciative of ways, I blame him every bit.

When I was old enough to carry my own golf clubs, my dad would occasionally take me out to a public course in Castro Valley, California, where he'd put up with my handicap for nine or 18 holes, depending on which side of daylight savings we fell on. One balmy summer afternoon, we drove through the Caldecott Tunnel, passing one of my other favorite childhood haunts — The Knowland Park Oakland Zoo — on the way to the golf course. At hole one, a narrow, bending par four with aquatic and arboreal hazards aplenty, we met up with the other half of our foursome — Pete, a mild-mannered, ginger-haired man no older than forty and Linda, an intense thirty-something with a lady's prim visor and a lumberjack's vice-like handshake. It was apparent from the get-go that Linda wasn't a social golfer — she was out for blood. Pete, on the other hand, was congenial and talkative, summarily striking up a conversation with my father, who gave me a knowing glance before hitting his first tee-shot — a towering drive that perfectly crosscut the left-dogleg and softly landed in the center of the fairway. Of what he knew, though, I was oblivious. Shrugging, I teed up, hit my drive, flung my bag straps over my shoulders and started hiking toward the ferny quagmire to find my first shot. "Offroading already," I groaned. We were off.

With Pete seemingly engrossed in conversation with my dad, I (perhaps guiltily) sought to similarly engage Linda in some good ol' fashioned golf talk. Spinning through some tired tropes in my mind, I decided to talk about the climate. "With this humidity and these ferns," I said, "I half-expect a velociraptor to spring out of the woods any second." Now, I was ten and had just the week before

watched Jurassic Park, and my ten-year old logic told me that she obviously loved Spielberg's masterpiece as well. "Excuse me?" responded Linda, looking at me as if I were crazy. "Nevermind," I mumbled red-faced, hacking through the ferns in search of my ball. Maybe I came on too strong with the velociraptor bit. Linda looked away, and that was it for our conversation — for the entire day. No way this mental kid was going to get in the way of her course record. Of course, I was also a little shit, so I could hardly suppress a smile when her second shot hit a cart path next to the green and bounced triumphantly onto the street, pinging dangerously close to an elderly woman just minding her own business on a daily walk. "You might want to take a provisional," I said to her, smugly, before taking a drop and launching a beautiful approach to the center of the green.

The rest of the round, I stuck with Pete and Dad. Pete was much nicer than Linda, and could clearly carry on a conversation about subjects at least as interesting as Jurassic Park. On the fifth hole, he volunteered that he was a member of the Fitzpatrick Family of Breads. Or, was. He had long been estranged from his family. My father told him he was sorry to hear that, and Pete told him not to worry about it, that it wasn't his fault anyway and that if it weren't for the Kennedy assassination, his family would be singing a different tune about him. He could reveal no more to us, Pete concluded, sorrowfully. My father nodded in apparent understanding. As for me, I was beyond fascinated — what did this guy know about the Kennedy assassination that no one else did? But I quickly bottled up my curiosity when I saw Pete's expression — vacant, baleful and full of loss. This was clearly a difficult subject for him. But, as if snapping out of a trance, Pete's face quickly brightened and he proceeded to ask us if we wanted to hear about the time an invisible alien batted down his tee shot on hole nine. Clearly a man after my own heart, I thought. Emboldened by having a playing partner with an imagination like my own, I decided to ask him what he thought of Jurassic Park. For the record, he agreed with me. My dad flashed me his knowing look. Meanwhile, Linda was shaking her head at Pete, betraying a look of distrust. "She must really hate Jurassic Park," I thought.

The rest of the round was pretty "par for the course," so to speak. My dad gracefully navigated the course with a swing plagiarized from Ben Hogan's Illustrated "Five Lessons of Golf." When I wasn't buried knee-deep in Jurassic ferns, I would try to mimic my dad's swing, hip wiggle and all. My game improved as the day went on, and I even miraculously holed out a chip on seventeen. To my chagrin, Linda had rebounded nicely from her starting debacle, and played near scratch golf from the women's tees the rest of the way. Pete wasn't too shabby himself, shooting somewhere in the nineties and provid-

ing some of the most colorful commentary I'd ever heard on the links. For some reason though, from hole five on out, Linda avoided Pete like the plague. I didn't think anything was wrong with Pete. Sure, he often interrupted his grand stories with the same vacant gaze I first noticed on hole five. And yeah, he occasionally spoke of JFK as if he knew him personally. And sometimes, he would matter-of-factly point out instances on the course where aliens had clearly altered his shots. My dad didn't act like anything was unusual about Pete. Pete certainly didn't act as if anything were out of the ordinary; in fact, his face was expressionless most of the round. My dad treated Pete like any other gentleman, so I simply followed suit. Plus, I thought that "aliens" made for a brilliant, hilarious cop-out for an errant golf shot.

After the round, we shook hands and parted ways, Linda to her bright blue Volkswagen (of course), Pete to the clubhouse for a beer and Dad and me to his GMC Suburban (Priuses weren't exactly in vogue yet, give us a break). I quietly loaded my golf clubs into the back of the car, and hopped into the passenger seat next to pops. I waited silently for an eternal minute (maybe a record for 10-year-old me), before blurting out, "Dad, what was Linda's problem with Pete?" My dad gave a thoughtful pause before carefully choosing his words. "Linda didn't trust Pete because she didn't really know him, Trevor. It's natural to feel that way about strangers." But, ever the pithy little shit, I quickly pointed out to dad that you and I liked Pete, and we didn't know him either. At this point, my dad saw no reason for further evasion. Letting out a sigh, he told me Pete was ill. "Oh no!" I said. "What's wrong with him? Does he have cancer?" My dad shook his head. No Trevor, he explained, Pete has schizophrenia, an illness of the brain. He has a hard time telling the difference between what is real and what is not. I sat there, dumbfounded. "Is that why he kept on talking about aliens?" I asked. My dad nodded his head.

I spent the remainder of the ride silently grappling with this notion — that Pete's stories weren't just stories to him. My thoughts drifted back to the first hole, where we first met Pete. I remembered Linda and the mortified look she gave me when I mentioned velociraptors. I remembered Pete and how quickly he opened up to my father. But most of all, I remembered my dad and the knowing look he gave me before I sent my golf ball on its first tour of duty in the fern quagmire. As our car pulled up the driveway, I finally turned to him, "It's cool that you were there, Dad. You knew Pete was sick the whole time, but you acted like he wasn't." "Exactly," my dad said, looking at me with pride.

Proud of what? I couldn't tell you at the time. For heavens sake, I just spent an entire golf round using my pitching wedge as a weed-whacker. "Dad, you weirdo," I said. I hopped out of the car and ran inside, hoping that my older brother was around so I could brag about that chip shot on hole seventeen. The rest of the round, in my mind, wasn't worth mentioning. And I didn't remember it

until 12 years later, when I came across my dad's yearbook photo as a first-year medical student.

Sometimes, I forget that my dad's yearbook picture hangs in the first floor hallway at the medical school. I'll rush right past it, late to lecture, hoping I can sneak inside the lecture hall without incurring the wrath of our block chairs. Just as I wasn't the greatest golfer at 10, I am not by any accepted standard the greatest medical student at 23. No one would look at me and say, "Hey, there goes Dr. House." I'm by no means irrevocably wedded to any specialty yet, but I have been slowly building an interest in psychiatry. In light of this, perhaps it isn't so surprising nowadays that when I do stop by his portrait, my mind wanders to that balmy Jurassic afternoon with Pete, the schizophrenic.

Maybe shave some of Dad's 80s flow, push back the hairline a couple notches and add some speckles of "distinguished"-tone gray, and that's exactly the smile my dad gave me in the car many years ago. It is the smile of a proud man, someone who has just taken the Hippocratic Oath to "first do no harm," and who vows "to remain a member of society, with special obligations to all [his] fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm." And, many years and many patients later — when his 10-year-old son was able to quit being a little shit for just a fleeting moment, to recognize the compassion it took to honor this vow — his pride broke through. I didn't realize it at the time, but I learned a valuable lesson that day. My dad certainly knew it. His smile said it all.

To this day, thanks to my dad, I am a huge Ben Hogan acolyte. I've perfected the grip, the stance and the patented waggle. I keep my hands close to my body, and I don't avert my gaze from the ball until steel meets plastic. It's been a long time since my dad beat me out there, and I don't plan on changing that aspect of our relationship one bit. Not that he ever cared. He may have told me how to swing a golf club, but more importantly, he showed me how a great doctor acts — with unwavering compassion, on and off the wards.

I don't know if he saw a future doctor in me that day on the golf course. Yet here I am, where he once was.





The Siren
BY CINDY CHEUNG



Composition 1
BY MANASH PAUL

conversations with you

BY CHRISTINA HARVIEW

You told me: don't fall in love with the moon
Until I was on it then you told me: don't expect to come back
Until I was back then you asked me: is it because you are crazy?
To which I responded no it's because I am a Moon lover

Moon lover why do you love it
Because my soul bears its mark.
Is it a scar or a lipstick stain or a wisp of a smile?

You will have to ask Moon, I don't know.
But the moon does not speak
No, you just don't listen to Moon;
Moon speaks in the infinity of your unrealized silences.

If you stop and listen, you just might hear
the sound of Moon Flakes falling.
Be sure to wear your Moon Hat.

I feel you quiver next to me and
I am reminded that not all humans speak Moon.
But not all Moons speak human either.
I think that is just fine.
So I lay there next to you in the sand, smiling.
You stare at me from under the towel
and I stare at the moon.

Oh! Where's My Liver?: A Liver Transplant Surgery

BY VICTORIA GROYSBERG



200-proof pain

BY DAMOND BARRICK NG

A beard the likes of Gandalf the Gray
with the stoic countenance to match.
A heart of gold with eyes a similar hue.
He never left his single occupancy room
without his shades a tint of midnight blue.

Everyone has a deliberate vice in life,
whether it be unimpeded love, drugs, or a McFlurry.
Mr. O's was chilled malt liquor,
countless forties with a fifth here and there.
It was hard to imagine how he
was only fifty.

His demons tugged with much fervor.
A father, a brother, a best friend
all consumed by consuming.
Olde English was his solace during winter's bane
for a man becoming more brittle by the day.

On the way to urology and dialysis
the hospital soon became a labyrinth.
He felt dizzy with weakness in his legs.

Ironically, we were lost in the place
he'd most fortunately be found.
His blood pressure dropped to 80/68.
A flurry of faces, resonance, endless beeping –
the courting calls of a rapid, digital age.

I sat at the foot of his gurney and kept his mind off
things;
Updated him about the NBA championship game
and bantered about the new king of hoops to proclaim.
Orlando told me he used to shoot the shit this way
with his best friend over a bottle of Jack or Tanqueray.
For a fleeting moment I noticed a slight grin –
embattled, but with an unmistakable vigor.

Back to the St. Vincent in the cover of night.
A hotel named for the patron saint of the poor.
Icy streets with visible breaths billowing in the breeze.
"I'll be back to check on you tomorrow, Mr. O."
"You know where I'll be."

dear intern

BY ELIZABETH RUBIN

Dear Intern,

I have to thank you.

I was exhausted. Like a dirty pair of scrubs twisted inside out before being kicked to the edge of the room, touching the edge of the hamper, as if too tired to get up and over the side.

I was spent. At first I thought my lack of sleep was my only problem, easily remedied by a rare day off, a large coffee, a muffin. Or maybe I was in need of the sun, exercise, my family.

But when I returned to work the next day, at 6 am to pre-round, I realized that I was missing something else. Something deeper. I was cynical, callous. Chart reviewing my patients as if they were machines that needed new parts or cars that needed a tune up. A high WBC? Send cultures. A hemoglobin drop? Type and screen for transfusion, and maybe a scope to see what was bleeding. A creatinine bump? Hold metformin, cancel that CT scan. Sure, I went in, smiled at the patients as I said good morning, asked how they were feeling, went through the motions. But I didn't really care. I was just really good at pretending.

It went on like this for days. Weeks, almost. Through much of my rotation, honestly. I saw my attitude sharpen, mold into this darker, uncaring, exhausted, sarcastic person as other people around me complained about the workload, the patients waiting for the placement, the ones who came back again and again and again.

But then the resident cycle switched and I met you. And you cared. You really cared. You saw the human who was suffering and mentioned how sad you were during your H&P. You didn't hide your emotion with sarcasm or your frustrations with a joke. You were open. You laughed and cried and hugged and connected. You showed me that was okay.

I had treated my patients the same no matter what. Under all my residents and interns the patients received extraordinary patient care, felt cared for, lauded the team's bedside manner. But I felt different. I felt human again. I felt like the spark of interest, hope, kindness, curiosity, and compassion I described in my application 4 years ago was coming back, slowly, awakening like a spore in a more favorable environment.

So, thank you, anonymous resident, for reminding me about my humanity. Thank you for showing your own emotions, so raw, so honest, so true, so that I could realize that I had a little compassion left in me. So that I could recognize my own feelings and acknowledge them. Hopefully one day, I'll be that resident. And I owe you that.

Thanks,
Med Student

sissy's tea party

BY KATHY CARLIN

Sissie was trying to be brave, but it was terribly hard.

She had been fighting a case of the blues ever since Papa, Harry, and Johnny left for the baseball game with Uncle Kevin. Yes, she understood when Mama explained that while they mostly did things together, sometimes Harry and Johnny got to do special things without her, just as Sissie sometimes got to do special things without them.

Hadn't she really loved the time Papa took her, all by herself without Harry and Johnny, for tea at the fancy hotel in the city? She had gotten dressed up in her blue taffeta dress, socks with lace on them, and black patent leather shoes, and Papa wore his very best suit and tie. While they sipped tea and eat fancy little cakes and candies, they talked and talked all about her, and she didn't have to share Papa with anyone. Oh, yes, that was really, really fun. And she mustn't forget about the time Mama, Aunt Connie, and Grandma took her and Cousin Emmy to see Cinderella, not the movie, but a play with real people on the stage. She had to admit, that was particularly nice.

Yes, she would have to be brave, but she surely was lonesome. She had had a grand time making cookies with Mama, especially since several ended up inside her tummy, but they had finished the cookies ages ago, and now Mama was tackling the stack of mail on her desk. Kitty was sleeping on the windowsill, and she wouldn't play. It seemed as if Harry and Johnny would never come home. Poor Sissie, she just plain felt left out.

When Mama peeked over at Sissie and saw her sad little face, she had an idea. She had just opened a fat envelope full of advertisements on colorful little cards. She said, "Sissie, would you like these pretty cards. Look, each one has a beautiful picture on it."

Sissie's eyes grew round with excitement as she looked through the stack, "Oh, yes, Mama, please. They look just like fancy invitations. Thank you, Mama. I know exactly what I will do with them. I will have a tea party and invite all my dolls."

Sissie went right to work. She ran to her bedroom, and of course, Honey Bunny was the very first one invited. She pulled out every other doll and stuffed toy she could find. She looked in her closet, on her shelves, even under the bed. She had to admit, she had quite a collection. Each one was personally delivered a lovely invitation to the party. Next she went into Harry and Johnny's room and invited each of their action heroes. All in all, her party would be quite well attended.

She got down the very elegant tea set that Grandma had bought when she first found out she was going to become a grandma. Well, when Harry came along, the tea

set wouldn't do for a grandbaby boy, so it just had to wait for the first grandbaby girl. When Sissie was born, it became hers, and she kept it for dress-up occasions. Since she would have so many guests, she would also need the plastic tea set that she used for every day events along with the miniature one Mama had found a yard sale. She set the table, pulled up chairs and boxes for her company, and filled the teapots and creamers with water. Being a very gracious hostess, she wanted everything to be perfect, so she made cookies out of colored paper and filled the sugar bowls, well not the miniature one, with Johnny's marbles. They made very impressive sugar lumps, and Sissie, being particularly fond of sugar lumps, thought they were the perfect addition to the party. She was finally ready except for one last invitation for the guest of honor.

Downstairs, Mama was finally beginning to make a dent in the mail when she felt a gentle, little tap on her knee. When she looked up, there was Sissie proudly holding out a beautiful invitation to a very special occasion. She had picked the prettiest card of all for Mama. Sissie joyfully giggled, "Mama, I would be most glad if you would join my friends and me for a tea party in my room. I will be serving tea and cookies, and I will also have sugar lumps and cream for the tea." Mama glanced at the stack of mail and back at Sissie. It only took a second for her to decide that this was one party she would definitely not want to miss.

She smiled and said, "My, my, Sissie, what a beautiful invitation! Thank you, Darling; I would be most honored to attend. A nice cup of tea with sugar and cream and a cookie would be a lovely break from all this work."

So Mama took Sissie's hand as she led her up to the tea party. They sat in the chairs surrounded by dolls, stuffed animals, and action heroes. They talked and they talked all about Sissie. Sissie was extraordinarily happy because she had Mama all to herself, and she did not have to share her with anyone.

When Papa and her brothers finally came home, Sissie was beaming. She couldn't wait to tell Harry and Johnny about the wonderful tea party and her time with Mama. As Sissie told about her day, Harry and Johnny listened and ate the chocolate-chip cookies Mama and Sissie had baked. Then it was their turn to tell Sissie about the ball game and how they almost caught a fly ball and about the hot dogs and soda pop Papa had bought them.

Papa and Mama smiled as they watched their laughing children. Papa was glad he had accepted Uncle Kevin's suggestion to go to the game even though the lawn needed cutting, and Mama was delighted she had at-

tended Sissie's tea party rather than catching up on the mail. The lawn and the mail could wait until tomorrow. Right now the Bruberry's were a happy, happy family, and a slightly overgrown lawn and a small pile of unread mail no longer seemed important.

Mama's heart overflowed with joy as she thought, "After all, how often do I get to attend a formal tea party as the guest of honor amongst a room full of friends and have Sissie all to myself without having to share her with anyone?"



Golden Moments

BY HAJAR BEHZADNIA

consciousness, guaranteed

BY EVAN ADAMS

“I am so pleased to meet with you both today. On behalf of the Karma Corporation, I want to give you the first opportunity to utilize a novel procedure that will absolutely revolutionize the way we view the human life cycle.” Andrea Hiemstra, M.D. Engineer, smiled broadly, exhibiting her bleached, white teeth. She held it to radiate warmth and confidence. It was how she'd been taught to open a sale.

Brother and sister sat across, fully attentive to their final option.

The machines sustaining their father's life force whirled nearby, meticulously performing his vital physiology. Metallic orbs were an asteroid field around his body, injecting flares of electricity to maintain basal central and peripheral neurologic activity. Various mechanized pumps had been inserted into kidneys, heart, and liver to maintain clean blood flow. His vasculature was insulated with a synthetic fibrin polymer, capable of both holding blood pressure and communicating with the pumps. A continuous motion machine surrounded his lungs, perfectly expanding and deflating. Engineered, immortal follicular adenomas had been autografted into his endocrine glands. Food was delivered tethered to its necessary transporters. A pre-exposed synthetic immune system had been injected into his bone marrow, with an adaptive arm capable of recognizing and combating every known pathogen on the planet, and the best predictions for future disease. Autografted stem cells in a synthetic spleen provided perfectly biconcave red blood cells. Synthetic T cells filled in the gaps: preventing autoimmune reactions, monitoring endocrine output, stimulating production of non-cellular tissue, and everything else the engineers could prove was useful to their rodent and computer models.

His labs were as normal as they got for someone just shy of four hundred years old. Even so, for the last six months he'd been experiencing increasingly severe bouts of loss of consciousness from which he could not be recalled for several hours. Other times he had seizures, staring spells, and paroxysms of jerky, repetitive movements. “Little deaths, the Creator must grow impatient to see the finished product!” he would say when he was healthy as he flashed his charming smile through beautiful, white teeth. He smiled no longer and could not be revived. Even for those who hadn't suffered the rigorous toils of medical engineering school, the situation was evident. He was dying.

“He is a great man,” said Dr Hiemstra, leaning forward and lowering her voice in an attempt to make the conversation more intimate. “He deserves the best medical care the planet can offer.” Her eyes searched the son, judging if she had found her mark.

Cass Otobani always weighed his words. It was a trait imbued from watching his father conduct board



Belladonna
BY ROSE SHAN

meetings. Silence in this instance stemmed from his self-awareness of his limited medical engineering knowledge. For the technical details of the pitch from the Karma Corporation representative, he relied on his sister, seated next to him. Instead he watched the saleswoman's body language, listened to her vocal inflections, and tried to hear between her words. He had not reached any definite conclusions, but he knew a sales pitch when he heard one. That was fine, the medical engineering profession was at its core a service industry. The ultimate service industry. But just because it was a sale, it did not mean this was the wrong decision...

His gaze met its counterpart in Dr. Hiemstra, and after holding it he flicked his eyes towards his sister. Dr. Hiemstra understood the deference, and shifted her attention to Eliza Otobani, M.D Eng.

“Look, the retrograde cellular differentiation techniques developed at Karma Corp. are landmark, possibly seminal for a new field.” Eliza spoke with the natural poise of someone who'd made self-education her life. She'd learned to recognize important ideas by helping her father pore through research and development reports from his company holdings. “But we cannot make a decision before we hear the specifics of the process. And to be honest, further stem cell transplantation seems unlikely to be helpful. His fundamental issue is probably an inability to maintain appropriate plasticity and dendritic connections. He's already had neural stem cell transplants, and I speculate they've been unsuccessful because the issue has more to do with synaptic density than absolute neuron count. It's the ultimate effect of a lifetime of learning, of constant remodeling. It's never been documented because no human has lived long enough for it to become a problem. He's essentially experiencing a widespread synaptic concentration abnormality. Some regions have hypertrophied, while others have evidence of paucity. Maybe engineering microglial cells could fix it, but that's unprecedented for this situation. Not to mention the restrictions on synthetic cell engineering use in the central nervous system.”

With a knowing smile, Dr. Hiemstra responded, “We believe we have a solution, but the technology is unpublished. I need non-disclosure agreements, from both of you. And while it is non-binding, I present it in good faith that you are at least seriously interested in proceeding.”

Cass and Eliza didn't need to confer. They had both been intrigued enough to take the meeting, and neither had given their covert sign to pause for private discussion. They nodded in assent. Dr. Hiemstra handed over two tablets, with a document containing the usual jargon— no discussion under penalty of death plus torture of your most beloved house pet. Cass and Eliza knew how to hold professional confidence. They signed.

“The fundamental idea,” began Dr. Hiemstra, “is that his brain has reached its inevitable inability to perform self-maintenance. It is a problem faced by every

tissue of every organism ever made. How does life solve this problem?" She smiled, satisfied with her delivery.

Eliza, with a hint of exasperation in her voice replied. "Progeny. Resetting the molecular clock. For my father's DNA, specifically, us." She hated teleological questions. "Precisely." Dr. Hiemstra continued, "For the species this is an adequate solution. For the organism, however it's... suboptimal. What we believe is that we can reset your father's DNA, to build an entirely new body, without sacrificing his consciousness."

Eliza stared. The pitch continued.

The process would begin by harvesting large tissue samples from primary locations: bone, intestines, adipose, lungs, vasculature, liver, and select areas of his brain. Next, flow cytometry, would isolate his remaining adult stem cells. The cells would be grafted onto a 3D culture to the best approximation of relative embryologic location and grown to an appropriate density. After that, Karma's induced pluripotency protocols would use an onslaught of transcription factors and chromatin remodeling agents to gradually induce earlier and earlier embryological cells in a cohesive organism. Eventually, they would revert to the neural tube, the beginnings of the central nervous system. Finally, they would guide the system forward, giving life to an organism with their father's genetic code, using his cells.

Eliza's spoke while maintaining a penetrating stare. "The fundamental process you're describing is dangerously close to human cloning."

The nearly imperceptible uptick in the corner of Dr. Hiemstra's mouth told Cass that she had prepared for that. "We view the procedure as an advancement of autologous stem cell transplantation. Dr. Otobani, I'm sure you're aware that has been a fundamental tool in medicine since the inception of the field with cord blood to treat hematogenous cancers."

Eliza's eyes narrowed. "I don't share your belief on that point, seeing as you aren't grafting onto anything. By such massive retrograde differentiation as you're proposing, there's none of him left to act as a recipient. As such, the process is more akin to embryonic stem cell creation, and since you're moving backwards, it would be a later stage at that. As I'm sure you're aware, that is a highly restricted developmental time point for procedural and research purposes, and what your proposing is not a clear cut procedure. I suppose this explains the astronomical price tag. It's not just for geneticists, molecular biologists, medical engineers, and reagent production, you're going to need biomedical lawyers for this. Smart ones"

Dr. Hiemstra took a deep breath, composing herself. "Please, let the company worry about procedural approval. I understand your concerns. However I think we should stay focused on the goal of restoring your father's health. Your family is a shining leader in solving the world's many problems." She paused for effect, and then said, "Solve one more."

Ever the saleswoman, thought Cass.

Eliza was quieter as she expressed her final concern "You can't disassemble the most complex biological structure in the universe and expect it to regrow the same. His life has been translated into inimitable, infinitely minute neurological modification. His memories and personality are intricately tied to his neural architecture. They could never be preserved, and as such he'd inherently be a different person. Plus, he'd be a child!"

Dr. Hiemstra pursed her lips. "He would be biologically younger than you, yes. But with current human longevity, that would hardly matter for the majority of your lives. You're both young, and neither of you have children... Eliza and Cass exchanged looks.

"...And yes, he would lose his specific memories. But his consciousness would be preserved. We believe for him it would be like slipping into a coma or deep sleep. Unawareness, factory reset, and then life as we all first remember it.

She paused to let the implications sink in, and then continued in a softer voice.

"Our mouse models are consistently able to reidentify their favorite toys in the presence of similar control objects. They perfectly reintegrate with their families and previous social structure. They exhibit nearly identical feeding and sleep preferences. We take this as veritable evidence that consciousness is preserved. Of course, if you were willing, we would love to run more elaborate experiments on your father. It would help us understand the essence of the human soul."

Eliza was torn. Curiosity burned through her every fiber, and she began to unconsciously tap her foot. She wanted to see the data. She wanted to critique the procedures. Her mind fantasized about the implications of infinite cycles of human life. But her stomach churned and refused to settle. Would it be her father? The process wasn't new life, and it wasn't death either. It was a brilliant loophole in the lifecycle. Would the changes be so different than a backwards acceleration of the gradual process that inherently change us every day? She looked into the void and, seeing only darkness, desired to keep looking.

"I... we'll have to see the data before we make a decision," Eliza eventually stammered.

Dr. Hiemstra smiled with every perfect, white, tooth. "You'll be impressed. Like I said before, retaining his consciousness is guaranteed."



Sand and Shadows

BY NOAH KOJIMA

With Toil and Fruit

BY JESSE HANCHETT

82, His voice held in a soft shell,
weak, subtle and distinct at his old age
82, bruised by regret, not knowing where he fell

His wife died, wouldn't eat. When she was well
she used to read all day, whisper each yellow page
62, her voice held in a soft shell.

His first man's job, at the mill, he could smell
the citrus in the wind; it was an honest wage
22, bruised by regret, not knowing where he fell

His first love, only a dream for him to tell.
Her thoughts, what she felt, impossible to gauge
16, his voice held in a soft shell

When he was young, he would hear only the school bell,
run, snag the fence past the courts as if it were a cage
6, bruised by regret, not knowing where he fell

Back in bed, as if it were a spell
his mother's birthing cries set his wailing stage
his voice held in a soft shell
bruised by regret, not knowing where he fell



Composition 3

BY *MANASH PAUL*

Lost Dog: Reward 1 Million

BY *CHRISTINA HARVIEW*

Today, on my way to school,
I found a cool seedpod.
It was too hard to open at first,
So I slipped it into my coatpocket.

I thought about it all day;
I couldn't focus in anatomy lab.
When I finally got home,
I went to get a tool to open it.

Slipping the screwdriver between
slits of the hardened pod,
I got leverage
and heard a crack.

Then I heard a yelp,
Possibly from the seedpod?
My body responded viscerally,
Fearing I had hurt something.

Peeping into the seedspace,
I heard a scuttle inside.
Then I saw the dog,
Cowering in fear.

I reassured the mut;
Soothing him with a gentle call.
Crouched in caution,
He slowly approached.

First smelling, then licking,
I named him Marrow.
He lived with me for many years,
Before disappearing one day.

Ever since he left,
I have searched the ground,
Desperate to find my old friend.
If you find a seedpod, will you bring it to me please?



Monsoon Season
BY NOAH KOJIMA

Leave of Absence

BY MICHAEL MCGOWAN

Mom called me at four o'clock on a Thursday morning. "Michael, the people were so rude on the freeway today," she said. "I can't figure it out."

"What are you talking about, Mom?" I was half asleep, my eyes crusted over, my fingertips numb. I thought it was a dream. Mom rarely called me.

"People were screaming at me and calling me names." She sounded so delicate; it was as if her voice needed a cane. She had been acting different for the last several months after her 74th birthday, not exactly strange, but slightly different, absent-minded kind of different.

"Mom, go back to sleep," I said. "I'll come over on Saturday and we can talk about it."

She explained everything to me when I saw her. She'd been driving her little British roadster on the freeway when people suddenly began honking and swearing at her.

"One man gave me the finger," she said. "I don't understand. I was doing sixty-five."

I calmed her down over lunch and told her it may not be a good idea to take the freeway anymore. "Surface streets are safer, Mom."

On my way out I stopped to have a look at the car to make sure there was nothing hanging off the bumper, or that the trunk wasn't open. I was suspicious; mom could be oblivious at times, forgetting to turn off the lights, the stove, and more recently, even the car. Then I remembered that the roadster had a metric speedometer. Mom was cruising sixty-five kilometers an hour in the fast lane. That was the beginning.

The bathroom mirror was shattered. A large chunk had been smashed in at the center and an intricate web of tiny fractures splintered out in every direction all the way to the edges. Shards of glass filled the base of the sink and a broken blue coffee mug was lying next to the bathtub.

I walked back out into the living room where my mother was sitting on the couch, frail and wrinkled hands resting on her lap. She was staring at the wall, expressionless, as if she were looking into it.

"Mom, why is the mirror broken? What happened?" There was a long silence as her eyes slowly wandered across the room to meet mine.

"Oh, that," she said. "There was a stranger in the house. I threw something at him and he ran." It was then that I

raised my eyebrows and began to seriously question my mother's sensibilities.

I cleaned up the mess and replaced the mirror the next day. The following week I went back to visit her in the small condo where she lived by herself because she had outlived my father. It was a quaint place, perfectly suited for an old woman, sparsely furnished with antique dressers and tables.

Family photos of children and grandchildren stood on the counter-tops and the mirror in the bathroom was broken again.

When I asked my mom what happened, she gave me the same explanation. "There was a man in the house," she said. "I threw a glass and hit him."

It occurred to me then that my mother might slowly be losing her mind and, in a way, it was fitting because she actually looked like a crazy old woman. Her hair was wild and messy, shaped in a quasi beehive and swirled with streaks of gray and white. Her eyes were a light blue, almost translucent, deeply set into her face, the kind of eyes that harbored mad thoughts.

Strings of large beads and other cumbersome jewelry hung from her neck. Eccentricity and senility had consumed her simultaneously as she aged and now she'd simply gone loony, or so I thought. It grew worse as time passed and I was left to deal with it.

I debated whether to call my siblings and tell them about mom's situation. My brother was married with children and living in northern California. My sister was an environmental lawyer and lived out of state. Meanwhile, I lived alone and worked as a substitute teacher. For reasons that weren't fully clear to me, I never managed to stray too far from my mother. I lived about thirty minutes away so the responsibility of looking after her had naturally weighed itself on my shoulders.

To my knowledge, the conventional wisdom was that this kind of decline in mental health happened over a period of years whereas in mom's case, it appeared to be a matter of many months. I tried to pretend it wasn't happening, that maybe it would just pass like a storm. A freakish, horrifying, unpredictable storm.

I knew I had to do something when I received a call from La Trattoria, an Italian restaurant down the street from where my mother lived. She was good friends with the manager's mother and they used to play bridge on Monday afternoons.

Mom had apparently made a reservation the previous

evening for a party of six. She took five photos with her into the restaurant and ceremoniously propped one up at each place-setting. Then she sat down and ordered five different meals for the five photographs and the shrimp pasta for herself.

I found out afterwards what the photos were: my sister's high school prom picture, my uncle John holding a martini at my brother's wedding, a photo of my grandfather fishing in Lake Tahoe, a baby photo of someone I'd never seen, and a Presidential headshot of Ronald Reagan.

"She was quietly eating with the pictures, sir," the manager said. His voice was low and he pronounced his words impeccably. "At first we thought there would be people meeting her for dinner, but, you see, nobody showed up." "What the hell did she do with all of the food?" I asked, astonished. "She requested doggie bags, sir."

That was it. I had to call my brother, James, and figure out what to do. When my father died the family seemed to undo itself, split and drift apart, as if the reason that held us together died with him. It was just the natural progression of things—a slow, almost painless dissolution of already wavering ties. We'd all turned into strangers.

"Well, I can't really worry about it right now, Mike," James said over the phone. "I've just got too much going on. Call Jen and see what she says."

James was in the process of completing his dissertation on conscientious objectors during WWI. In the meantime, he taught junior college history classes and his mind worked strictly in historical terms. It was almost impossible to carry on a normal conversation with him. When I called my sister, Jen, it was more of the same. "Mike, you're in California, I'm in Denver," she said. "What do you want me to do?"

"I don't know," I said angrily. "What do you want me to do about mom?" I despised the fact that Jen had me call her at her office.

"Just put her in, you know, one of those communities for now and we'll have worry about it later. Besides, I wouldn't be able to make it out there for a few months until my case is over. I'm sorry." Then she said "bye," and hung up.

I didn't like my sister. I was jealous of her success, something I was never really able to achieve to any significant degree or, at least, I felt like I hadn't. She was making six figures and owned a classy, log cabin-style home in a gated suburb of Denver. Mom had paid for a majority of her law school expenses and then Jen all but disappeared. Before the phone call, I hadn't talked to her in eight months.



Florence, Italy

BY SAMANTHA ASARCH

I found myself utterly alone as I typically did, alone to manage my mother. Her doctor wasn't much help either and mentioned something about cognitive impairment and a referral to the neurologist and left it at that.

"If you see any sudden behavior changes, give us a call," he said.

"Sudden behavior changes?!" I said.

"Yeah, red flag stuff," he said on his way out of the office.

After the La Trattoria incident, mom told me she was upset because 'Ronald' hadn't eaten anything. She was a danger on the road and a financial threat to herself. Her condition worsened over the next month. There were times when I didn't think she recognized me. She'd smile at me, the kind of vacant smile you grant an unknown guest at a party. She was still occasionally shattering mirrors in her house and I was left with no choice but to move her in with me.

I took a leave of absence from work and lounged around the house with mom keeping her occupied and making sure she didn't break anything. We put her condo up for sale and I gave most of her furniture to the local Goodwill. She didn't seem to care or much less even notice the transition or the fact that her things were gone.

It was strange having a stranger in my apartment. Mom spent most of her time sitting on the couch making photo albums or quietly designing her own jewelry. She'd always been creative; the dementia, or whatever it was, must have sparked some sort of personal renaissance in her.

Initially I thought I could use the time to catch up with her as we hadn't really been involved in each other's lives for a long time, if ever. I saw her as a cold and detached woman, very isolated and preoccupied with herself. While growing up, I imagined her as the ruler of some far away frozen land, icy and frigid. My sister and I would secretly call her 'Queen of the Snow.'

I remembered my mom calling me into the garage when I was a teenager.

"Michael," she said. "This is the casket I want to be buried in." She pointed to a coffin propped up against the wall next to the water heater. It was made from thick, varnished wood and looked very modest but sturdy. "I don't want worms," she said. I walked over and opened the lid which was bisected into two large panels. There was no padding on the inside.

"Mom, why did you buy this?"

"No worms," she said.

Talking to mom proved to be more difficult than I imagined. When she spoke, she spoke mostly of the past, recalling events and people that I knew virtually nothing about. Not once did she mention anything about us,

her kids, and although I wasn't familiar with most of what mom talked about, I knew that I loved her. She was 'mom.' I had classified her as that my entire life. Then I started to wonder if it was because of the classification that I failed to understand the woman she was or the life she had led.

My live-in plan didn't last long. When mom started calling me Jerry I got panicky. She was having trouble dressing herself and I wasn't comfortable taking care of someone so intimately. Then she disappeared.

I came home from the store one morning and mom was gone. I checked the bedrooms and closets and asked the neighbors if they had seen an old woman leave my apartment. I drove by the small park down the street where mom and I would walk on occasion. Nothing. She just up and vanished.

I called the police and told them my mother was missing. They told me they couldn't file the report until twenty-four hours had passed then asked what she looked like. "She's a seventy-four-year-old woman," I said, "barely five feet, probably a hundred pounds."

That's when the absurdity of the whole situation dawned on me. There I was trying to take care of my mother when I had no idea what I was doing or where she was and I could barely take care of myself. She was missing and it was my fault. I stayed up the better part of the night before passing out on the couch wondering if perhaps, on a subconscious level, I moved her in to try and reconnect with her, not to take care of her. It must have come back to haunt me.

Early the next morning I woke to knocking at the door, then a loud thumping, evenly spaced like a zombie ascending a staircase. Two policemen were standing with mom. They found her sitting at the bus stop fifteen miles from my apartment. She was wearing her nightgown, slippers, and purple robe tied at the waist.

"Where exactly did you think you were going?" I said.

"San Francisco," she said nonchalantly, as if she already informed me of her plans to vacation there, as if she had any clue about anything.

"The people were so nice at the bus stop," she said. "One man offered me some wine."

She shuffled off to the bathroom. "I'll visit again sometime." I just stood there, numb. Mom clearly needed constant supervision which was something that I couldn't provide so after a litany of failed attempts and frustrating phone calls, I placed her in a nursing home.

The home smelled old. Like old people, old furniture, old flesh, old urine. Smooth tiles lined the hallways and they made me nervous. There was something cold about tile

floors, something unforgiving and sterile. Outside was a small, grassy courtyard where children could wheel their ailing parents out to sunbathe or read or stare into a void. It was the only home in the area and the coordinator assured me that mom would be taken care of. I went back to work racked with guilt for feeling relieved of the responsibility for mom.

"It's all for the best," the coordinator said. "All for the best."

It wasn't long before mom became incontinent and completely dependent on the staff. Often times she didn't recognize me when I came to visit. I always brought her a sunflower. She used to keep them in the kitchen window of her condo. Generally, I brought one because it was one of the few things she acknowledged. "Thank you," she always said, oblivious as to who I was or what I was doing there.

I would usually stare out the window with her or take her outside. Sometimes I would sit with her in silence or sometimes I'd watch her spit out her food and refuse to eat while accusing the nurses of being savages. Other times I would watch an old movie with her or read to her and wonder what was going on in her head. Mainly, I stifled the horrible feeling in my stomach.

It was on a Thursday when it happened. I came with my sunflower as I usually did. Mom was in a chair by the window. She smiled. "Oh, Michael," she said. Immediately I rushed to her. The coordinator had told me not to be frantic in the event that mom should recognize me, and that I should remain calm, as if everything were normal. "Mom," I said, scooping her tiny hands into mine. "Michael," she repeated. I didn't say anything; I only looked at her eyes, watching the life in them flutter. I tightened my hold on her hands. I wanted to hold on forever. I latched on to that moment with a quiet desperation, thinking that the next day, or the next hour, or the next minute she wouldn't recognize me anymore, she wouldn't know me, we wouldn't know each other, and then I looked away because I knew that we never did.



A Third Kidney is the Best Gift of All

BY VICTORIA GROYSBERG

The Warm Blond

BY JENNIFER RITCH

I cradle her. Though I not a mother, and she not a child. I cradle her. Warm and soft against the curve of my breast. I inhale the scent of her hair, her mouth. Her breathing in sync with mine, though her heart so much faster and slightly irregular. I take in a sudden deep breath and exhale heavily, letting go burdens I cannot name, and she, a few moments later, mimics me. Cynic and innocent, locked in slumber, roused by whispers too faint to hear yet completely understood. She is still, but I stir, ever vigilant, knowing that someday, something will come to take her from me. I lightly kiss her tiny head and remind myself that for right now, for tonight, for this moment, she is safe, and I am safe, and we are in love.

The Undead

BY JUAN SARQUIS

Sophistication had become the sophisticate's status quo in the 25th century. No longer would people die at 100 years of age or so as they had done in previous centuries. If a person took care of themselves, they could expect to live upwards of 500 years of age. And to whom can we thank for this incredible breakthrough? To none other than Dr. Peter Pan Young, who discovered a cure for oldness and decay by creating a simple miracle pill. Dr. Young discovered this cure about 100 years ago, and is himself now 200 years old and still living. Many people who have taken Dr. Young's miracle pill are now 300 years old and quite healthy. However, some rumors have been circulated to imply that it was not really Dr. Young who invented this pill, but rather his evil assistant, Dr. Ulysses Grave, - a wacky doctor who attempted to put coffin makers out of business, so that no graves would ever be needed again.

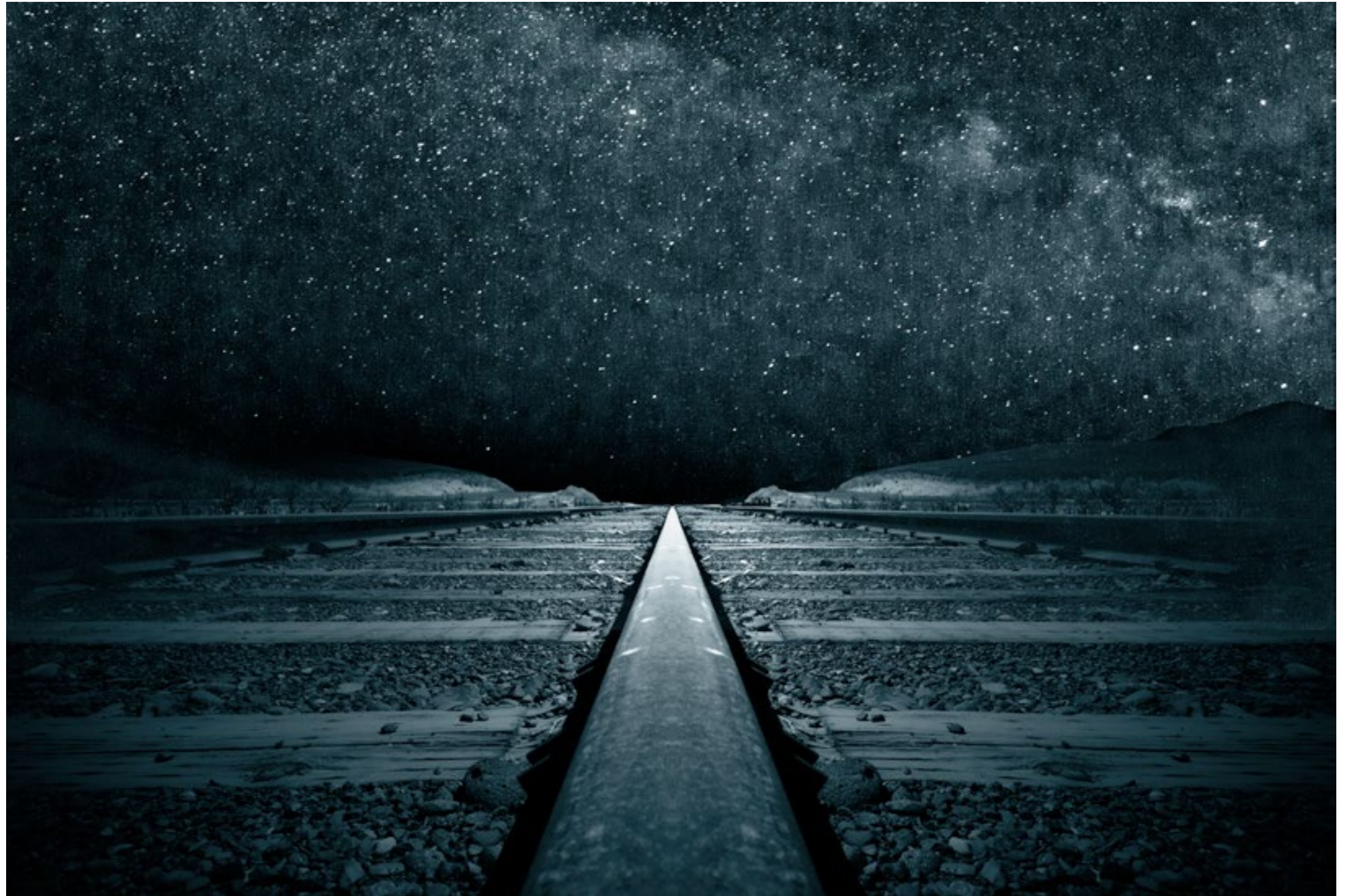
Dr. Young had married his high school sweetheart, Miss Chocolate Vibrant, and they had been together for 150 years. If there was such a thing as true love, then he had found it in Chocolate. As drugs are, Chocolate had gotten a terrible allergic reaction after taking the miracle pill, so she would only live to about 300 years or so - as opposed to others who had taken the pill and were expecting to live upwards of 500 years of age. Dr. Young said he would end his life once Chocolate died, because he couldn't endure life without her. Society was very logical in the 25th century, so people accepted dying as they did living with little to no qualms. As Dr. Young had foreseen, Chocolate dies 100 years later at the age of 299. He stayed at her bedside until the very end.

However, who do you think was lurking around when all of this was taking place? - None other than Dr. Grave. Dr. Grave wanted to get back at Dr. Young for taking all the credit for inventing the miracle pill. The pill had made Dr. Young the wealthiest man on the planet. Dr. Grave on the other hand was not doing so well financially. That said, Dr. Grave was considerably smarter and more brilliant than Dr. Young. Dr. Grave was currently experimenting with a potion that would render those who drank it immortal - indestructible!... Dr. Young loved chocolate almost as much as his wife Chocolate. He wanted to drink one last cup of hot chocolate so as to remind him of how sizzling his wife Chocolate had been. Dr. Grave secretly sprinkles some of the potion in the cup of hot chocolate that Dr. Young was about to drink. Dr. Young drinks the cup of hot chocolate. Afterwards, he takes cyanide poisoning to end his life.

Dr. Young wakes up the following morning to the realization that he's not dead. "Something is wrong," he thinks to himself. He walks to the nearest railroad tracks and throws himself in front of a very fast and futuristic train. To his dismay, nothing happens to him. In fact, he feels stronger and healthier than ever before. He tries to drown himself to no avail. After attempting to end his life over and over again, he finally gives up.

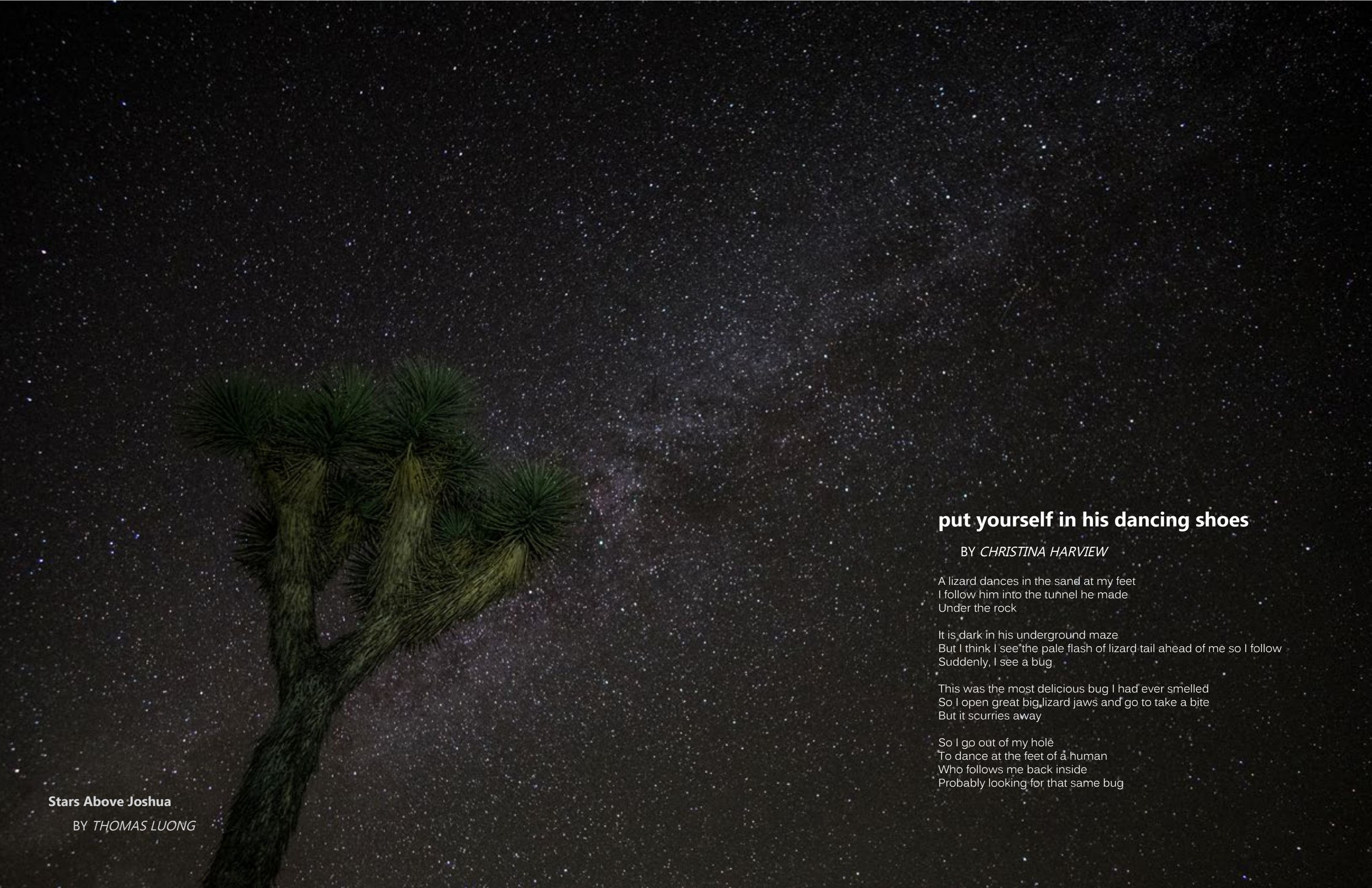
He's now aware that he has become immortal.

Dr. Young now finds himself attempting to find a cure for living, whereas once he was trying to find one for dying.



Night Train To

BY DORWIN BIRT



Stars Above Joshua

BY THOMAS LUONG

put yourself in his dancing shoes

BY *CHRISTINA HARVIEW*

A lizard dances in the sand at my feet
I follow him into the tunnel he made
Under the rock

It is dark in his underground maze
But I think I see the pale flash of lizard tail ahead of me so I follow
Suddenly, I see a bug

This was the most delicious bug I had ever smelled
So I open great big, lizard jaws and go to take a bite
But it scurries away

So I go out of my hole
To dance at the feet of a human
Who follows me back inside
Probably looking for that same bug



straw that broke the camel's back

BY *EMILY MILLER*

and i wonder precisely how many camels,
vertebral columns splintered,
lay splayed across the sahara before
their demise became embedded into our
vernacular.

how many mammals must have
collapsed in the scalding sand
and the unrelenting straw
before we became convinced that
there is a distinction between
enough and too much?

how many mammals must have
collapsed in the scalding sand
and the unrelenting straw
before we became convinced that
there is a distinction between
enough and too much?

Pine

BY *KRISTEN SMITH*

heart attack

BY *JESSE HANCHETT*

On the third floor near the Dewey two hundreds where Greek mythology was his weekly pastime, he found himself sitting sloppily on the floor in between the musty aisles of books. He liked that smell. This wasn't heaven, but it was close and his eyes were fading fast. As usual, adorned with a thrice ripped argyle bunnet, a pair of oily reading spectacles and plain matinee clothes—a sport coat and pressed trousers—he made this place his home. Across on the shelf at about eye level for his crippled posture was Eros and Psyche, one he never actually got around to fully paging through. He smiled as if it were 1934. His mind was there now, before, when his farm back home was the greenest, not made into steel and his wife was a young summer tomato, not dust-to-dust. Oh, and the rain back then was a sight, a feel, a sound. For days it would pound and for days the roof would sprout unfamiliar leaks to the point it seemed it would all crash in. He almost wanted it to, to take on the storm, but he never did. Then the morning after with pots filled to the brim and the wood, logged, dripping with god's wrath and the wallpaper sloughing, the sun and the shine would bring back faith as nothing else could. And in the field not long after would the reddest, sweetest tomatoes come 'round. But now, we wait. In the place where the mind can meander all knowledge, with shards of glass in his chest, a smile falling off his lips, he waits for the rain and the summer feast and clouds gate the yellow rays.

just for today

BY JENNIFER RITCH

He decided that just for today he would fight the desire to destroy, to hate, to covet and to despise.

It was 8 am.

It was going to be a long day.

Waiting Room

BY DORWIN BIRT



milieu of a momma's boy

BY *DAMOND NG*

Streaks of crimson run across the skyline
against the dying of the mid-autumn light.
Her lucid eyes glisten
with the embrace
of his trembling hand.
She brushes his auburn hair aside
and whispers ever so gently, but
he cannot make out those final words
as her fingers falter down his rosy cheek.
Taken far too soon
into the shadow of the wind.

An invisible, hollow man now
wandering to find direction
on the streets of the—all but tender—loin.
His tears hit the pavement like bullet shells.
He walks alone down neon-lit corridors,
a heart of frigid darkness.

Grief and fatalism bore holes
in his already frayed soul
barreling into deep despair.
A bump or two—black as tar
the unmistakable clink of a cooker
flick of a Bic
drawn up ever so carefully
flash of crimson
rush, release, repeat.

Memories of a warm embrace
he could never have again.
His ephemeral heroin(e)...
The only thing that ever
felt like home.

Scarlet Sails

BY *VICTOR SIGALOV*

the beauty of decay

BY NICK SCOTT

This is what happens
after we die
after our hearts stop
and our breaths end:

A trillion cells
flood with acid
and that good protein
eats us up inside.

Our blood settles
Pallor mortis in our veins. Our
heat dissipates
Algor mortis
and we are cold.

The slides in our muscles?:
Rigor mortis.

This is our terminus, our souls'
omega.

But alpha is our body, and fire
is our essence:

Though we grow stiff,
we bring fluidity to life;

Though we grow cool,
our heat warms the world;

Though we grow colorless, we
feed the irises!
We putrefy, decompose, skele-
tonize—are made nothing.
We contained multitudes!
But now we are large



Withered Yet Captivating

BY GAYATRI NAIR



La Cientifica

BY ADRIANNE MARTINEZ-HOLLINGSWORTH

she was a child but so am i

BY EMILY MILLER

and i didn't know her before i met her
so to me she will always look
like the moment after
a sentence begins to be erased
and the moment before it is gone -
smeared, grey, and with only porcelain
fingertips on each side of the fragility.

her name flickers through my trachea
dances against my larynx
i know her disease and her age and her
face and her stage and her
o2 sats -- but
that's not her
i don't know her
and neither does she and
neither will she

she was five when she blurred
from the page, from the bed;
i met her on her dying day
but i wish i knew her smile
i wish i could hold all of her
(365 times 5) days in my palm
and miss her, properly,
so she's not just another
name face scan test obituary

with my medical future in front of me
and hers, incomplete, scattered over the seas
i vow:
i cannot will not must not
let myself numb to the death of
a child



Lighthouse
BY MICHELLE LO

faustina richarddaughter

BY JUAN SARQUIS

“Goethe's Faust is a genuinely classical production, but the idea is a historical idea, and hence every notable historical era will have its own Faust.” -Søren Kierkegaard

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

THE LORD
Stealth and strength
possesses she
Victorious and triumphant
as only she can be
but without Satan's aid
Do my children agree

MEPHISTOPHELES
Disagree my Lord
As I shall prove to thee
Tempting and cunning
as only I can be
Her soul is mine
as you shall all soon see

GABRIEL
Lord and Brother
I say to thee
In search of a playing ground
where the contest can be
It's now eve on Earth
West Hollywood it shall be

EVENING IN A WEST HOLLY-
WOOD NIGHTCLUB

FAUSTINA
Practice makes perfect
for imperfect we are
I slaved at the gym
morning noon and night
I take proper vitamins
to keep fit and bright
The Decathlon I'll win
then marry my bride

MEPHISTOPHELES
Faustina you're the morning
light
cometh and goeth
on the earth tonight
if your soul mine be
you'll win first prize
the Decathlon is yours
bid your soul tonight

FAUSTINA
You're not my Lord

to him I owe my might
Stop bothering me
Mephistopheles
or I will punch you tonight

APHRODITE
Faustina my lover
whom are thou addressing
shadows I sense
but no one I see
are you going mad
or perhaps it's me

FAUSTINA
No fairest one
it's not thee but me
I sense Mephistopheles
was conversing with me

MEPHISTOPHELES
I sense conflict
not coming from me
give me thy soul
and triumphant you'll be

fifteen hundred meter run
means fifteen years to me
thou shall win the decathlon
followed by years of luck

after those exuberant years
death will take thee
I'll then come to collect
for soul will belong to me

Eat the caramel apple
a sign to me
you've sealed the pack
that's all I'll need

FAUSTINA
With Mephistopheles
I've sealed my pack
showers of medals
I shall have
Aphrodite I'll marry
with fifteen years of good luck

MEPHISTOPHELES
Faustina my daughter
fairest thou are
You've sealed your fate
and can't ever go back
But you've made the right
choice
I shall see to that

COMPETITION IN MOUNT
OLYMPUS

APOLLO
Brother, Do you think she'll win
decathlon, or return to USA emp-
ty handed?

DIONYSUS
Faustina shall win
as few I have seeing
breaking the record
then on her way she'll be
she won't be forgotten
immortal as you and me

APOLLO
Mephistopheles is aiding her
side. She's not playing fair

DIONYSUS
Satyrs of my soul
keep away from me
Faustina is the one
as you shall all soon see

APOLLO
I see someone who is gifted and
disciplined, but who refuses to play
by the rules.

DIONYSUS
Rules are for weaklings
The gods so declare
Get off your high horse
begin breathing earth's air

HAIKU TIME

APOLLO
The decathlon
a great competition
like none on the earth

Hera the goddess
Is jealous of Faustina
so is Athena

Zeus loves Faustina
but he also loves Hera
his wife and sister

Mephistopheles
will take Faustina one day
the Lord will prevail

Power strength and drive
are with Faustina and Zeus
Hera's revenge

The earth won't succumb
and Heaven will always win
over anyone

GREENWICH VILLAGE NEW YORK CITY

It's now December of the year 2030, and Faustina has had 15 years of great luck and prosperity. She married her lover, Aphrodite, and they've been very happy living in New York. They've adopted 2 children and have been excellent parents to them. Aphrodite was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer, and has but little left to live. Mephistopheles has moved the Earth further from the Sun, so as to please Faustina, who loves cold weather. Faustina knows her contract with Mephistopheles is about to expire in a few days. Faustina will die, and Mephistopheles will take possession of her soul as agreed. - Last, Faustina doesn't like the sea, so Mephistopheles has eradicated half of the world's oceans.

MEPHISTOPHELES
The Sun rises high
as Sagittarius dances below
Faustina will soon die
and I'll possess her soul

FAUSTINA
Mephistopheles
spare my lover Aphrodite
and with thee I'll go
keeping our agreement
exchanging my life for hers

MEPHISTOPHELES
Faustina
a great woman you are
that's why I bid for your psyche
But it's now time to collect

so please fear not
you'll suffer a quick death
then mine will your soul be

FAUSTINA
Not asking for me
but for my wife instead
spare her life
must I ask thee thrice

MEPHISTOPHELES
You bargained with me
and my part I kept
your soul will be mine
let us not forget

FAUSTINA
Not for I
but for my lover I bid
spare her life
and I'll go with you quick

MEPHISTOPHELES
Time to bid farewell
leave this earth you will
I'll soon possess your soul
and spirit as well

EPILOGUE IN HEAVEN
Aphrodite has died and gone to Heaven. She bids god and the angels in Heaven to save Faustina's soul. The angels are begging god to forgive Faustina for having sold her soul to Mephistopheles. Chorus of Satyrs are making fun at Faustina, and mocking the angels for asking god to save Faustina's soul. At the end god intervenes and saves Faustina's soul.

ANGELS
Save Faustina
she loves you so
Her lover Aphrodite
is begging for her soul

SATYRS
Silly angels
Tra la la
Faustina is doomed
ha ha ha

ANGELS
Silly satyrs
don't you know
god is great
I tell you so

SATYRS
Faustina's soul
will Mephistopheles be
nothing you'll do
can halt the decree

THE LORD
Faustina is good
save her soul I will
be gone Mephistopheles
I'm sending you and the satyrs to hell

APOSTROPHE
JOHANN WOLFGANG von GOETHE
- Long live the 'Eternal Feminine';
and, long live the 'Eternal Masculine'!



ever-spring

BY CATHY CHUI

Roomed in midwinter,
She leafed through dream-
woods, volumes
tangled in birdsong.

Reflection 1

BY PAUL MANASH

crazy things got in the way

BY KATHY CARLIN

Waking up I heard the clamor
Of a rhino with a hammer
I pulled the sheets over my head
Till Mommy called, "Get out of bed"

A crab crawled inside my shoe
I asked aloud, "What should I do?"
Then sternly said, "Get out of there!"
He shrugged as if he didn't care

A camel came to our garage
Asking, "Sir, would you massage
My aching hump and tired feet?
I would consider it a treat."

My bag was going click and clack
So I took it off my back
And with a tiny train I found
An engineer and his hound

An elephant arrived for brunch
I said, "The school is serving lunch."
He said hot dogs were quite okay
And piled them high upon his tray

Opening my blue lunch box
I found a crow in bobby socks
When I said, "You sure look silly."
He started crowing, willy-nilly



Wired

BY LEONARD WALTS

My apple had a purple worm
Whom I told, "You'd better squirm
Away from here fast as you can
And please do not come back again!"

After school I hit the frig
Thinking that I'd have a smidge
Of cake, but the only trace
Was a possum with a chocolate face

Coming from the living room
I heard a loud varoom, varoom
Looking in, I saw a star
On a teensy sheriff's speeding car

Everywhere I went today
Crazy things got in my way
Who and what will come next?
Oh no, Tyrannosaurus Rex!

When I finally climbed in bed
I felt a teeny bit of dread
And as I peeked under the sheets
I distinctly heard the bleats

Of the sheep dancing around
Trying to get settled down
So I started counting them
And was asleep when I reached ten

biographies

B. Rich Adams, Program Analyst II - Writer, Poet, Storyteller from the UK. **Evan Adams**, MS2 - Evan Adams was born in Sacramento and received his undergraduate degree in Biochemistry at Berkeley. After Linda Costanzo, his second favorite author is Kurt Vonnegut. **Samantha Asarch**, MS1 - Samantha Asarch is a first year medical student at DGSOM. She completed her undergraduate neuroscience degree at UCLA. She enjoys adventuring and capturing moments with her camera as often as she can. **Hajar Behzadnia**, CRMS Coordinator - I have always been passionate about the visual arts and writing. During my free time, I enjoy photography singing, and writing poetry. **Dorwin Birt**, computing support coordinator - Dorwin Birt is a computing support coordinator at the UCLA Intellectual Development and Disabilities Research Center. He has worked at UCLA for 33 years. **Kathy Carlin**, Application Manager, ISS - I have worked at UCLA for 11 years in IT. I have been the CareConnect Application Manager for the Professional Billing Application for the past five years. **Cindy Cheung**, MS4 - I'm a fourth year medical student who has grown up with the arts. Even with the start of residency next year, I will definitely continue to draw and paint on my free time. **Cathy Chui**, Nursing Student - Cathy Puiyen Chui sees stories all around her and enjoys collecting them all in her own work. She is passionate about writing, particularly poetry, fiber crafts, video games, and taking care of other people. **Jing Di**, Postdoctoral Scholar Employee - I obtained my MD and PhD degrees in northeast China where I also taught anatomy before moving to Japan, then New York, and now UCLA to do research on Alzheimer's disease. I joined Gal Bitan's lab this year to continue working on the role of tau proteins in Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, and on possible therapeutic approaches to slow or stop these diseases. I have always loved art, and began drawing and painting when I lived in NYC. **Huan Dong**, MS2 - Huan Dong is currently a Drew/DGSOM MS2 student with a passion for health, food, travel, and theatre. He tends to not take very good pictures of people, but sometimes he gets good shoots with animals and scenery. **Navid Eghbalieh**, Vascular & Interventional Radiology Fellow - Artist and Fellow physician Navid Eghbalieh is donating his painting "Stages" to be auctioned off, with proceeds going directly to homeless children in Los Angeles. The scene of these children was taken by photographer Jennifer Browning and inspired Eghbalieh to put oil to canvas. Navid is currently completing his training in Vascular & Interventional Radiology at UCLA Health. **Victoria Groysberg**, Staff Research Associate I - After graduating UCLA, Victoria Groysberg became a Staff Research Associate at the UCLA Immunogenetics Center which services various organ transplant physicians. The experiences of the organ transplant patients is the inspiration for this work. Victoria uses vibrant color in her work to reflect the brightness and humor in which she sees the world in. She wants to give back to UCLA, to her community, and to the world, through art and medicine. **Jesse Hanchett**, MS1 - Jesse Hanchett is a medical student at UCLA. He is fascinated by the real things imagination can bring to us. **Christina Harview**, MS2 - Christina Harview is a second year medical student at DGSOM who believes that medicine hovers elegantly at the intersection of art and science. As an artist, Christina attempts to capture her understanding of the world in writing, drawings, and photography. As a scientist, she works to uncover and describe the beautiful and mysterious patterns of nature. **Noah Kojima**, MS2 - Noah Kojima is a second-year medical student who is interested in infectious diseases and global health. He spent the summer in India studying infectious diseases and pregnancy outcomes. **Michelle Lo**, MS4 - Michelle Lo is a fourth year medical student applying to internal medicine residency. **Thomas Luong**, MS1 - I am a first year medical student who loves to explore humanity through hobbies. These hobbies include: hiking, photography, astronomy, archery, music, and medicine. **Adrienne Martinez-Hollingsworth**, Doctoral Student, School of Nursing - Adrienne Martinez-Hollingsworth, MSN, RN, PHN is currently pursuing a doc-

toral degree in the UCLA School of Nursing. Ms. Martinez-Hollingsworth designs qualitative studies exploring correlates and protective factors in elder Hispanic women diagnosed with or at risk for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM). Her research considers mechanisms of personal health prioritization, social membership and cultural membership as they impact exercise participation in the older, Hispanic female cohort. **Michael McGowan**, Research Interviewer - Mike McGowan, MA, works as a research interviewer for both UCLA Neurology and the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. He is a seasoned interviewer of patients with Parkinson's Disease and caregivers of people with Dementia. **Emily Miller**, MS1 - Emily Miller is a first year medical student at DGSOM who is originally from Portland, Oregon. She attended an art magnet academy for 7 years prior to entering college, and is looking for a way to combine art and medicine moving forward. **Trevor Mooney**, MS2 - Trevor Mooney hails from the rolling emerald foothills of the East Bay Area, where he learned to love golf, medicine, and writing. In his mind, these passions comprise the perfect trifecta for a fulfilling career. **Gayatri Nair**, Lab Assistant - Gayatri Nair is a Lab Assistant at UCLA. She enjoys a good story and loves to day dream. She is looking for her passion and happiness. **Damond Ng**, MS1 - Damond Ng is a first-year medical student from San Francisco, CA. He believes art and narrative are at the heart of medicine. In the immortal words of Maya Angelou, Damond's mission in life is "not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style." **Manash Paul**, Post Doctoral Fellow - I am a post doctoral scholar in dept. of pediatrics, UCLA working in the field of lung stem cell and cancer. I love painting and photography. **Jennifer Ritch**, Assistant to the Chief of General Surgery - Jennifer Ritch was born someplace, but she is here now. Someday she will be another place. She mostly sits, but sometimes gets up and walks around. She puts paper into machines and takes it out of other machines. Sometimes she lets the phone ring for fear of what she may say to the person on the other end. She knows how many steps there are from her car to her desk, how many minutes in the day, and how many days in the year. She counts. But she often forgets what number she's on and has to start over again. She's tired, but remains moderately hopeful. **Elizabeth Rubin**, MS3 - Elizabeth Rubin is a MS3 who has a deep, genuine love of medicine and the stories each patient has to tell. She grew up in Los Angeles and received her B.A from University of Pennsylvania. She is eternally grateful for her husband, kids, and family who keep her sane, happy, and motivated through her training. **Juan Sarquis**, HIC II Insurance Coder - My name is Juan Sarquis, and I work for UCLA. I'm a composer, poet and writer. My philosophy on art - if you're going to rip off the greats in literature and music, just make sure you do it in poor taste, or better yet, in very rich taste: 'The Lesbian Faust'. **Nick Scott**, Junior nursing student - Nick Scott is a third year nursing undergraduate at UCLA. His work generally conveys his passions in life, which include healing, education, and giving voice to those who have none. **Rose Shan**, MS1 - Rose Shan is a first year medical student who began drawing and painting as soon as she could hold a pen. To her, art is both mindlessly soothing and intriguingly philosophical, and she enjoys getting lost in her art and using it to better understand the world. She believes that art can heal both the patient and the clinician. **Victor Sigalov**, Radiologist - I work in the Department of Radiology. In addition to photography, I like traveling, teaching, and reading. **Kristen Smith**, Interim Manager Skills Management - Long a fan of the square format, I now use Instagram and digital technology in lieu of Polaroid film. I create compelling images by combining the spontaneity of found subjects with the formal structure and design sensibilities of traditional graphic art. **Leonard Walts**, Professor Emeritus - I was a member of the Department of Anesthesiology for 40 years. Since retirement, I have returned to an old hobby photography. Now, however, I have progressed from analog and dark room to digital and light room.



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