

SCOPE

Volume 22 ♦ 2015



 *SIU School of Medicine*

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CARBONDALE

On the cover:

Lindsay's Communist China

Amanda J. Ross, MD

Acrylic painting

First Place, Art

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Submissions for the 2016 edition of SCOPE will be accepted from October to January 2016.

From the Editor:

Though he left this world almost a quarter-century ago, the many works of the late medical illustrator Dr. Frank H. Netter continue to illuminate the medical field. Dr. Netter was acutely aware of the challenge in balancing his creative passion with the accuracy his paintings necessitated:

“One must keep in mind, ‘what am I trying to say in this picture?’ That’s number one because it’s so easy for an artist to fall in love with his own artistry, to add a little here, to embellish a little there until the essential part of the picture gets practically lost.” (Elsevier)

The struggle to harmonize one’s obligations and emotions is profoundly human and profoundly medicine. Dr. Danielle Ofri describes her feelings and those of her patients as a “basso continuo running underneath” every encounter (Ofri). Were our day-to-day sentiments to be portrayed as musical accompaniments, the nature of each piece would likely vary wildly from fulfilled to disparaged, invigorated to agonized, tranquil to overwrought.

Despite the opportunity for such contrast, the vital importance of every piece in the context of one’s self and one’s society is unwavering. The 22nd edition of SCOPE has definitely tapped into the “basso continuo” of the SIU community, and the range of content found within truly does justice to the publication’s title. I will leave it to our readers to determine what this year’s theme/creative prompt “progress” means to both the artists and themselves.

I would like to thank every artist who submitted work for giving us the opportunity to explore both your thoughts and our own, and the staff for the care and effort that went into this publication. I would also like to thank the School of Medicine for its continued support of this creative outlet. Finally, I would like to thank you, our readers, for taking the time to “listen.”

Nick Petre, MSII

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Kathryn Waldyke, MD

CME + ADD?

Conference! Here we go again:
Time to listen if I can
to the talks while sitting still
With the doodles pages fill...

All the information's good
Love to focus, wish I could...
But an hour, maybe two
seems to be all I can do.

Soon the mind will wander off,
get distracted by a cough
or my phone, his clothes, her hair--
For distractions all is fair.

So I sit and think and write;
Nibble cookies, hear the light--
quiet buzzing: do you hear?
There I go again, oh dear...

And I learn! You might think not--
miss a few things, not a lot.
Some of sights and sounds sink in,
Make it worth a try again.

A Show of Hands, Charcoal



Sabha Ganai, MD, PhD

313, Acrylic



Yuri Fedorovich

Night Fever

Cool and uncollected, secrets ran about our feet like library whispers,
Meant to be heard, but only by the trusted troubadours of the night.
Three kids ran through light dark light dark lit unlit lit unlit path
As our secrets neighed and brayed beneath us and beside us.

We let out thoughts interlace like fingers and swing together like
hands

As we walkrunskipped across the shaded unshaded shaded unshaded
concrete.

Maybe it was having words and ideas that were more than echoes of
the insides of the buildings we ran by,

Words that were completely separate and free from that place and
those days there.

Maybe it was accomplishing in one night what we were struggling to
do in four years—be bigger than ourselves.

Maybe it was being.

In hoodies and laughter and cold and carelessness,

Which we forget how to do,

Because here it's always doingdoingdoing,

So we runfastfastfast, fasterfasterfaster,

Inoutinoutinout of the light dark of the streetlamp lit path

To get away from it

And remember,

And feel, at least for a bit,

Unbound,

By our night fever.

A Sister In Need, A Sister In Deed

Two cats live with me. I'd say I owned them, but anybody living with cats knows "ownership" hardly applies. Bill-payer, sure, but owner? Hardly.

They are sisters, this pair. At a few months of age they were abandoned at a farm with a dozen cats and a half dozen dogs and needed no more. Luckily, the woman of the house was a technician at my veterinarian's office. She brought the kittens in for de-worming, shots and spaying. When ready for adoption they were put in the waiting room to charm passers-by until some sucker, um, well, some good soul, gave them a home.

At that time I had a rough collie who, like many rescue pets, had developed major health issues. The veterinarian put him on digitalis and for a week required daily blood pressure readings and a quick exam to assess if she'd hit the right dosage. The 1st day we went for this check-up the kittens were spending their 1st day in their waiting room cage looking cute. The 2nd day I went over to say "hi." The 3rd day we played "catch the human's finger through the cage wires." The 4th day I said, "just put them in my car.....we all know they're coming to my house."

Being kittens they skittered and jumped and shied sideways. They danced with each other and with the dog and with the sunbeams. They pirouetted with the leaves. They chirped in jazz sequences. Their names followed naturally - Tango and Minuet. Tango became the better hunter, but was the more sedentary, running and climbing trees only when necessary. Minuet sprinted up trees or vaulted over walls seemingly just to flaunt what James Herriot once called "the newly minted energy of youth."

Late one afternoon in their 3rd summer I heard distant rolling thunder. I called the sisters in. If they were hunting they might not come, but if they were hungry or felt the threat of rain, they would. I spotted Minuet in the backyard. She'd heard me and was headed in, albeit at her own pace. I couldn't see Tango. I went around the house and called again. I heard a faint squeak (these girls don't meow - they squeak). I called again and waited - "squeak." But the noise wasn't from a bush or the garage, it was down the hill but seemed high. I looked up in the dimming light preceding the storm. Tango was pinned flat against a branch about 30 feet up in a hickory, crying, but unhurt as far as I could see.

Dogs must have put her up. A neighbor who kept 4 or 5 hunting dogs let them loose morning and night for "exercise" because he was too busy to do it. Now and then they'd put a cat up a tree. Minuet would laugh and scoot up any tree in a heartbeat. Tango would climb more laboriously, but she'd get up to safety.

Lightning flashed and I counted — thunder followed in about 40 seconds. We had a little time, but I couldn't leave Tango hanging off a branch in a powerful thunderstorm. My ladder would not reach.

I called to Tango to come down, thinking maybe my presence would convince her the dogs had gone. She turned a little, moved toward the trunk, lowered her tail and a hind leg, but then another lightning flash instantly returned her to her position on the branch, crying.

I needed a better climber. For lack of a better idea I called Minuet. She came trotting around the house, tail held high, asking “Yes? What? Here I am.” I wondered if somehow she could go up the tree and remind Tango how to get down. How I could ask that?

With nothing to lose, I called Minuet over to the tree and patted the trunk at her level, then my waist level, then head level, then the maximum height I could reach. She looked at me as only a cat can and I read her expression to be along the lines of “idiot human...”

Then Tango cried.

Minuet almost came to a point. Her ears up, Minuet squeaked her “hello sis” greeting. Tango cried again. Minuet, tail swishing, crouched, squeaked once more and vaulted up the tree. Every other jump she squeaked and every other jump Tango cried. Up Minuet went, up through the small branches, up around the bigger ones, up and up, until she attained her sister’s position.

Minuet hung vertically, squeaked and reached out her nose. Tango squeaked “hello sis” and reached out her nose. Nose touched nose. Minuet’s paw patted Tango’s hindquarter.

Then Minuet took 1 step down. She squeaked. Tango watched closely. Minuet took another step down. Tango backed up to the trunk, dropped her tail and a hind leg down the trunk. Minuet squeaked and went down another step. Tango stopped. Minuet jumped back up to Tango’s level and they touched noses again. Minuet took a step down.

Lightning flashed. I counted the seconds. 23. Silently I sent them a “hurry” message.

Minuet squeaked. Tango moved her other hind leg across and down, now vertical on the trunk. Minuet squeaked and came down a step. Tango cried and came down a step.

Down they came. Minuet came down that tree more slowly than I’d ever seen, hanging on each step, waiting for Tango. First one would step, then the other, in staggered rhythm. Tango stuttered down the tree, making headway, lacking her sister’s grace. She must have been hanging on intently because each time she moved she had to yank her front claws from the bark, sending showers of tiny wood chips down the trunk.

The gap between lightning and thunder was down to 12 seconds. The scene was eerily lit. The sky had gone green-black. The garage’s security lights had come on in the gathering darkness.

Finally, finally, Minuet got down to about 10 feet. She made 3 quick steps, turned at about 6 feet and vaulted off the tree. She stopped, turned back to the tree and squeaked. Tango inched down to about 10 feet, pushed off and thumped onto the ground next to Minuet. Together they bolted toward the house with me trailing, gaining the porch just as the huge early raindrops arrived.

Safe and sound and dry, they promptly started a fight over who was going to sleep where on the sofa.

Sisters.

ICU A-10

Press on,

Press on.

The night lingers, but the daybreak awaits better news.
Amongst the scattered starlight I'll keep the watch for you.
Muttered under shrouded breath and shuffled feet,
A final plea to the heavens is whispered.

Press on,

Press on.

The echoes from your endless youth fill the room.
With warmth so sweet, Love is spoken here.
"Nine lives," they say with a smirk and a downward shifting glance.
"One more," the brothers count.

Press on,

Press on.

The lids of flesh, weighted with gold, are a heavy lift.
The fluttering of beats holds in rhythm, in step, precisely.
Fight for that stirring, that twitch, that spark which remains.
Fight!

Press on,

Dear friend,

Dear family,

Dear faith.

Press on.

Reflections of Peaceful Coexistence, Digital Photography



Kelly Armstrong, PhD

The Freshman

“What’s your major?” she asks him.

“Mine?” He looks up from the containers of ranch he’s labeling with a permanent marker.

“Yeah.”

“Business.”

“Hm. Okay,” she says.

“... Why?”

“Because I’ve seen you around a lot. And I’m an art major, so I was just wondering if you were one too.”

“Oh. No. I was a graphic design major for a bit, though. And before that a political science major.”

“Getting all your major-switching out freshman year, huh?” she grins. “That’s good. Best not to wait until your junior year like I did.”

He laughs.

“I really like your hair by the way,” he says. “I’m kind of a sucker for blondes.”

She smiles and laughs too. “So how are you liking your first year at OSU?”

He continues to clean up the stuff behind the counter of Rubino’s as they talk.

She has to get back to her homework though, and he says he’ll see her later and is glad she stopped to talk to him.

On her way back to her dorm, climbing the stairs up to her room, she resolves that she won’t look him up on Facebook. Of course she won’t. He’s a freshman. Of course she isn’t interested in a freshman. That would be ridiculous. And of course he isn’t interested in her either; she’s a senior.

But this guy flirted with her. I mean *really* flirted with her. Not in a, could-be-misconstrued-as-just-being-friendly flirting but in a, you’re-pretty-I’m-available-let’s-get-together-yeahyeahyeah kind of flirting.

At midnight, she finds herself on Facebook, on his page, looking at a picture of him.

But in this picture, he’s in a tux, next to a gorgeous brunette in a bright pink prom dress. With a profile that reads “In a relationship.”

But that’s okay. She wasn’t interested in him anyway. He’s a freshman.

* * *

She walks through the student life building with her ear buds in. It’s one of those days—an ear buds day. It’s really more of an ear buds and hoody day, but she’s realized from previous experience that hoods, instead of making

her look cooler and more anonymous, really just cut off her peripheral vision and make navigating and walking more difficult.

She imagines herself in a dimly lit tunnel—walking through the student building, going to class, sitting in class, able to see out but no one can see in. Because when you're sitting one foot away from the person to your left, and one foot away from the person to your right, and the person across from you, and adjacent, there's no privacy. And you're not really allowed to be sad.

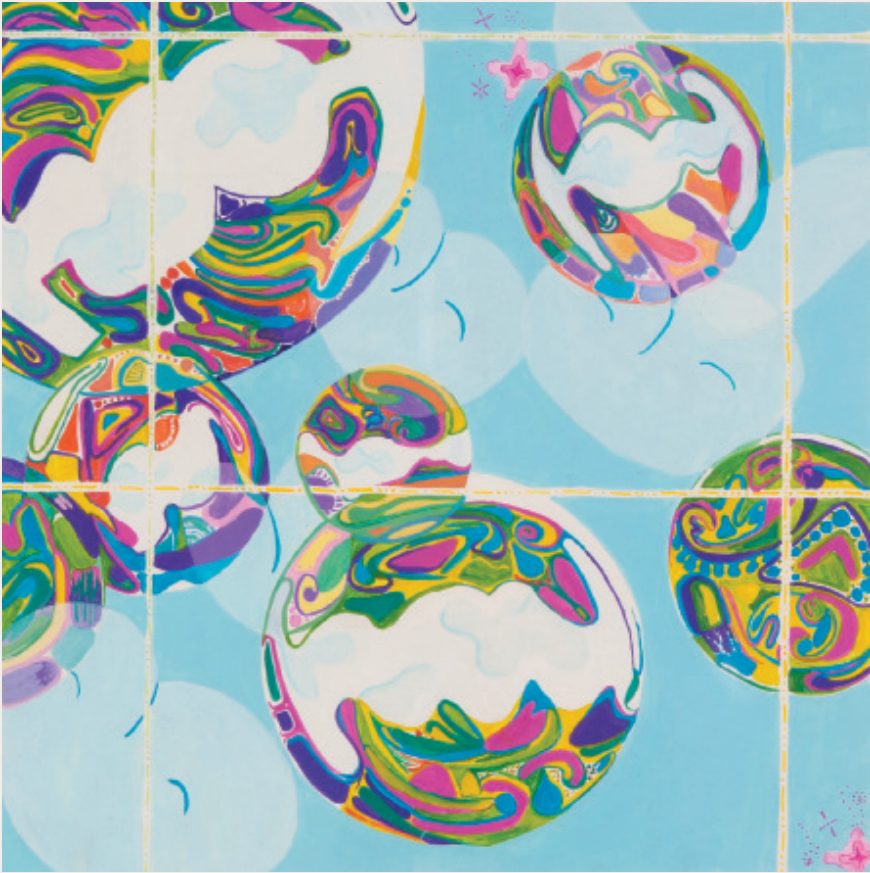
She passes a potted plant of bright blue orchids and thinks about how she is like them. Or perhaps, how she wants to be them. Or perhaps she just wants to be the soil beneath them. Yes, the soil sounds much better. Rich, and dark, and soft, and earthy, and deep, and there, in that pot.

Her heels. Her heels are loud. Yes, she's wearing heels; she's wearing heels on a day she wants to be anonymous. How couldn't she? She looks best in heels. But now they're click clacking down the student building, and she's calling attention to herself. She regrets these heels and wishes she'd put felt on the bottoms to make them quieter.

She passes Rubino's. How embarrassing for a senior girl to think—woman, senior *woman*. She supposes that's the correct term: senior *woman*. But she doesn't feel like a woman. She feels like a girl. A senior girl. A senior girl who has never been in a relationship, who really thought she would have by now. Nobody graduates high school without having ever been in a relationship, and NOBODY graduates college without having ever been in relationship. But apparently she will.

But since marriage doesn't exist in heaven, she supposes none of that matters anyway. Of course, she understands why it's necessary on earth: Adam needed a companion, a helper, he was lonely, blahblahblah. But it's so temporary, this thing that people search their whole lives for. How in vain this search is. How pointless. Eighty years from now it won't even matter. In the span of eternity, "the one" will be "the one" for about a speck of it. And in heaven he or she will be just another kiddo. They'll all just be kiddos. She likes this thought. And yet, even with this knowledge, she wore heels today, hoping to impress some guy who, in eighty years, will be just another kiddo.

Untitled, Acrylic Painting



Lacey Wood

Seeing Hearing

The eyes are the windows to the soul, but the ears are the pathway to the heart.

The whispers,
the sighs,
the screams,
the threats,
can nurture or bruise.

Why do we protect the windows and not the pathway?

As the pathway becomes cobbled and torn,
the high frequencies “sh”, “s”, “t”, “th”, “f”, “p”, “k”, “ch”, “wh”,
lose their way,

First in noise,
Then in quiet.

The little chuckles, the tweaks, the soft asides that bind us together
start to diminish.

Until we only hear pieces.

I become harder and harder to fill in emptying pieces. I feel like
thinking is slowing down.

My take are embarrassing that you will draw.
to iring. to lonely. to depreing.

And then the quietly is worse. I all runs together.

youing only make the low redundancy
ounds louder.

Peering aids than much things louder but high frequency sounds are not the same
as they were.

So often we can't cure it. But perhaps we can prevent it in some. Phase 3.
We are making progress...

Nephews

Nephews playing
With them staying
Legos spread out
Sometimes boys shout
Time outs, chair times
All done—clock chimes
Nosebleeds staunching
Rockets launching
Making lunches
Love them bunches
Tune out rude words
Hike to find birds
At times fighting
Bike falls righting
Helmets checking
Silence wrecking
Read at bed times
Recite short rhymes
Auntie clever
Best job ever



Linda Harris

A Mother's Love

Sometimes clarity knocks you over the head, but sometimes, it's more subtle.

I grew up in the '60s and '70s as a product of divorce. Back then, there were no classes for parents or discussions about how to make the transition smoother for children.

I was awakened out of a deep, middle-of-the night sleep by my mom. I was about 11 years old. "Wake up," she said. "We're going on a trip." My mom was sweet, musical, and smiled a lot. I loved it when she smiled at me. It was as if she was saying "you are enough" or "you are perfect" with her eyes. There was always a twinkle in them. She would play the piano or the organ in our basement and we would sing. I would do anything for her. I try to wipe the sleep from my eyes and follow her to her boss' car.

She is vague when I ask her where we are going. I'm still in my pajamas. I don't recall a packed bag.

After we get a ways down the road, she explains that we are moving to Illinois. But not just the two of us—we are moving there with Jim, her boss. He is an extravagant, arrogant pipe-smoking man with a smile I didn't trust and an annoying habit of deeply sighing all the time. I didn't like him. At all.

I tried to understand it but I was in disbelief. My two older sisters and dad were still at home in bed. We lived in an unassuming ranch house in a small town in southeastern Iowa. Oh, and my cat, Pierre, was still at home. How I loved that cat. He was strangely affectionate and social compared to other cats I knew. He was my pal. I couldn't picture my life without him.

The next few years brought a very awkward time at a new junior high school. I dressed differently than the hip, popular polo-shirt wearing girls in the large Chicago suburb where we landed. I was plump, had a bad shag haircut and wore out-of-fashion bell bottom jeans and non-fashionable silk shirts that my Grandma (also in that Iowa town) had lovingly sewn for me.

After my parents' divorce was final (which seemed painstakingly swift), Mom and Jim married in a civil ceremony I didn't attend.

Why did my mom take only me that fateful night? I can only guess it was because Jim told her she could only bring one child, and she chose the youngest. I only weighed two pounds, five ounces at birth and my mom was always fiercely protective of me.

Needless to say, my sisters were jealous of me during my adolescent years (and young adulthood as well), although I didn't understand why.

As I was bullied in that new junior high school and struggled to fit in, my mom's familiar twinkle in her eyes was disturbingly absent. I needed her. I felt

alone, out of place, and awkward.

Almost as fast as the ink dried on their marriage certificate, Jim changed from a pursuer of her affection to a mean man. He would get drunk often. He would go into rages. To deal with where her new life had taken her, my mom drank as well.

My dad offered to fight for custody of me but I felt loyal to my mom. I did not want to leave her. It was my job to protect her.

The rage got so bad one night that I called the hotline my high school teacher had given me in health class. Jim was drunk and he was hurling his body against the locked door my mom was behind where she had tried to escape his fury. My mom picked up the phone line and eventually the police came.

I was around 14 years old then. From the day we left Iowa in the middle of the night until that moment, and especially in that moment, I questioned whether my mom loved me. After all, if she loved me, she would have gotten me out of there. She would have paid more attention to me. She wouldn't have drunk so much. She would have noticed how much I was struggling.

In the next ten years or so, my mom would leave Jim and return to him several times. She managed to finally leave him (physically, at least) after I graduated from college.

I was never so happy to go anywhere in my life. I loved college. My dorm room was safe.

But the question of whether my mom loved me followed me around for the next 25 years or so, although I'm not sure I realized it. I was happy. I married a man the opposite of Jim. We had two wonderful children.

But when I turned 40, I began having recurring dreams that when I was in junior high, I did leave. I went to live with my dad. I finished high school in that small town in Iowa. The dreams were so vivid that I decided to get counseling.

My mom and I talked but we weren't close. I longed for the relationships I saw my girlfriends have with their moms. There was no going to lunch, no shopping, no long discussions about child rearing, no deep talks about life. You could say it was superficial most of the time. We said we loved each other, but in my heart I wasn't sure I believed it.

To my mom's defense, she did try to apologize. I think I was in my 20s, but I wasn't ready. My wall was up. It was as if a one-time apology wasn't enough. I wanted my mom back. Where was that closeness with the mom I had idolized

as a kid? Who was I and why, in my eyes, was I not worthy of a mother's love?

And due to her use of alcohol to mask the pain, where was she when my kids were born? Why couldn't she remember their names? And why did she get mad at *me* when I didn't call?

My counselor urged me to bring up the forbidden subject with my mom. Until then, with the exception of the brief apology, it was not discussed.

I mustered the courage to ask her my questions during a phone call. *Why didn't you leave him? Why did you marry him in the first place? Why was it so hard to leave him? What kind of hold did he have over you?*

My mom patiently and calmly answered without the defensiveness I had expected. She explained how he wrote her extravagant love letters about how he would ride in on a white horse and make her happy. (She and my dad were not emotionally connected, as far as I could tell from my childhood recollections.) He promised they would run away from small-town Iowa and start a new life together. He actually treated her like a human being until he 'conquered' her.

Then he changed ... from Jekyll to Hyde.

He would walk ahead of her in public and smite her in private. My mom explained how she wanted to go back to Iowa but didn't know how. It was a small town. People talked. How could she go back? I don't think she thought it was an option.

She also clung to the hope he would change. I think he said it in better moments and she believed him. She clung to the romantic pursuer in him. But that part of him was long gone.

That 15-minute conversation with my mom would change my life. I digested it quickly at first and then slowly over the next several years. Our relationship was not perfect. But slowly I began to understand the scared woman inside of her. In an ideal world she should have paid more attention to me once we moved across state lines. But she was scared. Life the way she knew it was forever changed. It was as if in the pursuit of feeling loved, she found something counterfeit.

My mom later moved back to that small Iowa town. She lived in the same house where my grandma had sewn me those silk shirts. She stayed in touch with Jim throughout the years although I never understood why. As I look back, I realize it was probably because the heart cannot reason.

My mom went in and out of a nursing home later in her life due to COPD. Perhaps it was seeing my oldest sister care for her and completely forgive my

mom that really softened my heart. (I believe God commands us to forgive; I just found it hard to do in an instance. I prayed for it but my heart didn't always follow.) Or perhaps it was seeing my mom struggle in the last few days of her life trying to mutter the word "sorry." It was getting more and more difficult to understand her in the last few days and hours but she kept trying to say the word.

Standing by my mom's bedside, I realized those vivid memories from my early years didn't seem to matter anymore. I knew my mom loved me. She loved all three of her daughters. One choice in life just took her in a terrible direction, from which she never really recovered.

My precious revelation came in my grief. I now realize just how much I loved her and how much I still love the idea of her. I still think of her often, especially when I play my flute or hear a song she played (and we sang to) out of her Reader's Digest piano book. *Ja-da, Ja-da, jada jada jing jing jing. That's a funny little bit of melody ... It's so soothing and appealing to me.*

The best part is that I still remember the twinkle in her eyes that told me I'm enough. And that makes me smile.

Light on the Path, Pastel



Mary Corrigan Stjern

Frost

We reinforce the fortress of brick against the impending attack.
Camouflaged carpet conceals the unarmed;
We wait its approach.
Darkness increases, engulfing the sunlight
While barren trees like sentinel guards wait the onslaught.
Drooping corn stalks shiver in anticipation and
Summer fowl dot the horizon fleeing for refuge.
No one hears its surprise attack, but its icy dust-covered victims wilt
in surrender.
Shards of crystal shrapnel glisten under dawning rays –
The victor retreats until darkness comes again.

Sanctum

I've come to you so many times before.
Always it is the same.
You rise above me.
You surround me like a fortress, hemming me in on every side.

I stop and breathe you in.
I listen for intruders and discover we are alone.
You wrap me in your arms and I live.

Endangered, Film Photography



Steve Hinrichs

Adjusting to the EMR

Even though it's been a few years, I am still adjusting to the electronic medical record (EMR). All those boxes to check or not check, the risks and benefits of using the "copy to new note" option, the possibility of getting your notes done more quickly with "macros," those one-size-fits-all prepopulated descriptions that you can paste into your notes. The worry that your notes might start to blend together. The knowledge that your electronic documentation has more longevity than a handwritten problem list on a paper chart.

¿Cuántas veces ha estado embarazada? When I met Maria, I asked her how many times she had been pregnant. Perhaps other clinics had medical assistants or questionnaires to ask all of those past medical history questions; I didn't mind asking these questions myself. Maria was 63 and it was her first time at my clinic. Her daughter knew that my clinic takes care of undocumented patients, patients with no money and no insurance.

Eleven times, she said, with two miscarriages. I live with my oldest daughter here in Chicago.

There was a space for me to type it in the EMR: G₁₁P₉₀₂₉. Eleven term pregnancies, no preterm pregnancies, two miscarriages, nine living children. So much life, and suffering, and joy, in those 8 little characters: G₁₁P₉₀₂₉. Maria told me that she'd had a hysterectomy in Mexico after she was diagnosed with cervical cancer. I clicked the "hysterectomy" button under "Past Surgical History."

And your husband? I asked, wondering if she were widowed or divorced. "Partner" did not come easily to me, talking to this woman from rural Michoacán.

My husband was one of those men who believed that when a woman's female organs are removed, she is no longer useful as a wife. Compassion leap-frogged over the anger that flashed out in my mind. No longer useful as a wife? After nine children, two miscarriages, and a cervical cancer caused by a sexually transmitted virus, Maria's husband left when her uterus was gone. *Divorced*, I clicked, under "Social History." I move on through the encounter, finishing her history, doing my exam, ordering routine bloodwork, and adding "hysterectomy for cervical cancer" to her problem list.

Problem lists are useful because they follow the patient throughout the electronic medical record. Whatever I add to the problem list can be seen by other doctors: consultants in the hospital who don't speak much Spanish, colleagues who cover me when I am away. In my EMR, there is an ICD-10 code for "Stress at Home." You can select "Stress at Home" but then check a box that says, "Display As," which allows you to elaborate. "Two paraplegic adult sons" is what I wrote for Fidelia, under "Stress at Home." I didn't write "sons shot by gangs while defending neighbor against abusive spouse," which is how she

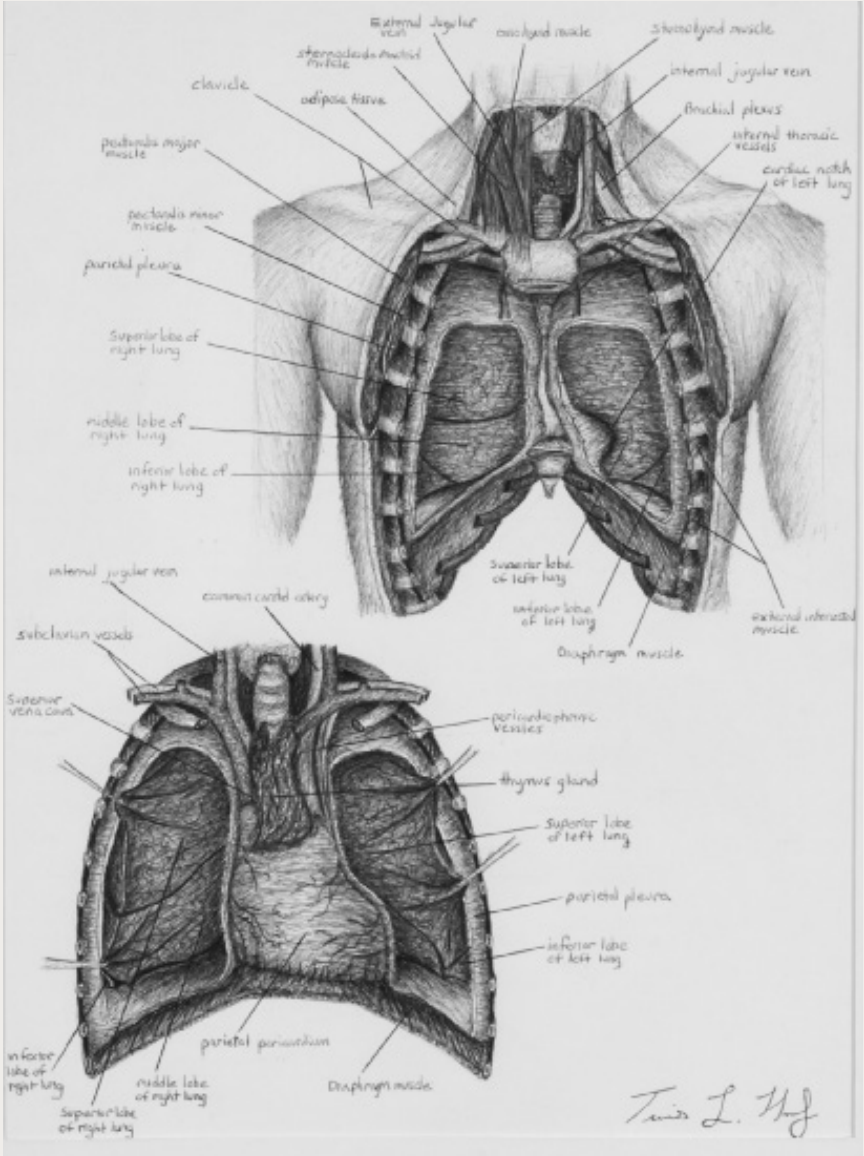
came to have two paraplegic adult sons. I didn't write "raped by uncle at the age of 12; abortifacients administered without knowledge or consent." That history was part of who she was, and it was part of her lifelong depression and anxiety, but it didn't belong on the electronic problem list.

I struggle with how many details to put in the EMR. Details help me remember the stories of my patients the next time I see them, but is it strange for my colleagues to encounter such details in Cerner?

Maria Albertha told me how happy she was to be able to spend time with her two grandchildren, how wonderful it was to be playful and affectionate, and how different it was from her own childhood. *Tell me about your own childhood*, I asked her. *Yo cuidaba a los demás*, she told me, *I took care of the rest of the children. There were no diapers and my clothes were always soiled with the wastes of the little ones. I was the oldest of twelve children*, she said, *but six of them died in early childhood.* Maria Albertha's mother stayed up late most nights, doing mending by a single light bulb; her father struggled to grow enough corn and beans to feed the family. *No tengo educación*, she said. *I have no education, but by the grace of God I can read and write. For my husband Chuy, things were worse. He was orphaned at the age of 6 and had to go from door to door, asking for food.* I know Chuy as a man who likes to fish and whose diabetes is never quite controlled; he has been my patient for years but I had never known about his Dickensian childhood in Mexico.

I am humbled by her resilience; I wonder to myself if I should somehow mention this history in her problem list to help colleagues and consultants understand her better. The ICD-10 has some strange diagnostic codes, including R46.1 "bizarre personal appearance" and V97.33XD "sucked into jet engine, subsequent encounter," but there is no code for "overcame tremendous hardship with grace and joy." There is no way to distill this lovely woman into a code for the EMR. Her stories will stay with me, not in the EMR, that cyberspace of medication reconciliation, patient self-management goals, and Quality Indicators. And maybe that's why Maria Albertha has decided to keep coming back to me, year after year; the levels of her thyroid hormone are readily available in her chart, but her stories are not.

Through the Layers, Ink



Travis Healey

Shades of Adalia

Adalia is yellow

Like Lauren is lavender
And like my mother is sky blue like her eyes.

Adalia is yellow

But she is pale yellow sometimes
And bright, sunshine yellow others
And maybe goldenrod, once in a while.
Sometimes Adalia is like the shy, fuzzy glow of sunshine after a rain
When there are puddles on the sidewalks and the air smells fresh
And walking around is like looking through a window.

Adalia shades fast

Like summer storms.
She's bright
And with a flash of lightning
She's night, cloudy, and overcast.
She's sandy beaches and sun-kissed skin
That tans
And burns
To the dark copper sunset of the evenings
That makes the whole sky bronze
And casts a hue on the world
Like we're all seeing through sunglasses
Just like her.

She puts her daffodil and starlight on

Adalia is yellow like faith

I Have No Clue, Bro, Mixed Media



Joe Clemons

In the Name of Progress

Old Billy McNeal slowly gathered his bills which he nervously sat down to pay.

He paid this bill then that, 'til all were near done, but with the last bill exclaimed, "There's a huge mistake in this one."

So off to the phone Billy hurriedly did go, with his pen and 10-digit customer service number in tow.

He assumed, I'll get this straightened out in no time at all.

And so Billy called.

The toll-free mechanical voice spoke in both Spanish and English, it's true.

So Billy chose English . . . the language he knew.

"Press 1 if you're inquiring about your bill."

"Press 2 if you have other options to fill."

"We require the last 4 digits of your social security number," it said.

"Please state why you're calling." "Is there something you dread?"

"Press 4 if all lines are busy. Someone will assist you real soon."

So Billy reluctantly listened to a barrage of "while you wait" music and learned a new tune.

Poor Billy now 45 minutes frayed and tired of this state, knew that the night was getting dark and late.

And just as his frustrations came to a boil, Billy heard a human voice speak. "Hi Mr. McNeal. How can we help you? How can we accommodate your call?"

And Billy sighed, Eureka.

Under Water

This is it: I'm living the nightmare most submariners do not allow into conscious thought, lest their feet refuse to step off the gang plank onto the conning tower to get underway again. I write in my waning consciousness in a now dimly lit, deathly quiet but blessedly dry compartment. I was working here when I felt the lurch, heard the grinding as the pilot brought her down as gently as possible with what forward momentum we kept. The sand must have cushioned our landing, as the jolt threw me across the space and into the bulkhead but did not breach this part of the hull, or even knock me out. I think.

I have been mostly alone since then. No one else is here, and the other noises have stopped. At first after we hit bottom I could hear people hitting metal, some in the SOS Morse code, telling each other we are alive, maybe wishfully thinking someone above would be looking for us and track the noises to here, hoist us up and save us. Or perhaps the realists were simply venting their anger at this unthinkable fate.

It has been a long time since those noises last came through. I can't say how long—I purposely ignore my watch as it mocks me by marching on in the usual ordered time and not in this accelerating/decelerating mess of impossible hope of rescue; the hope and fear of a sudden rupture or fire that would mean quick death at this depth; or the growing fear of suffocation in this finite supply of oxygen.

What will suffocation feel like? I try not to think, as the rising panic causes me to breathe faster and speed the arrival of the answer to my inquiry. I've never read any accounts of what lies ahead—which makes sense, since they can't come back from the dead to tell me what to expect. Or who knows? Maybe "they" will. My brain already feels sluggish, unreliable. If I am going to have hallucinations at least I hope they are pleasant ones or give me some good advice.

Colder. I'm getting colder. I'd guess the water here is about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, not far above freezing. This metal hull is going to transfer a lot of heat out. With no more heat being pumped this way from the reactor—crap, the reactor. It didn't explode or melt down—yet—I guess. It's in a pretty protected area, but if seawater gets in—well, I won't be waiting to suffocate.

Was that one more strike from one more survivor? Or was that just another section of the hull failing? Or the first hallucination? I can't tell. I want to think that rescuers made that noise, but I know rescue will not come in time.

Thoughts are coming more slowly now. It's harder to form them, write them. Why do I write anyway? Do I think this journal will make it back into the hands of my family? Or make me famous posthumously, a martyr of sorts, sacrificed to National Security or even Maintaining World Peace? Hah. I don't have enough air to laugh at that. If they could not find us and haul us up when a few were still alive, would they bother after we—I?—die? No, I write this to

calm myself, to keep from going completely mad while I wait for oxygen to run out.

Or run in? Could they send a line down—no, getting stupid. Get a line though the hull with oxygen, hull collapses from the pressure. Reminds me of “That’s as stupid as a submarine with a screen door” from my childhood.

No, wait! The technology! The Navy would not raise the sub to bury bodies that are already “buried at sea,” but they would raise it to keep the technology out of other hands. Well, maybe we are too deep so they will just destroy the remains. But on the chance the sub is raised intact, and this is found and not destroyed or washed away: I love you Mom and Dad. I’m sorry I did not say that before we left this time. Or just about ever. I should have. Sis—I love you too, in case I maybe never said it before—? Take care of Mom and Dad. I’m sorry I won’t help. And marry a good guy, one who will treat you good and help you take care of Mom and Dad. And if you have kids, don’t name one after me. Just now I am thinking anything connected with me is bad luck.

Must not shiver. That uses oxygen faster. Nothing in a work space to wrap myself with.

I wonder how deep we are. What fantastical creatures are out there witnessing our debacle? Or snacking already on some of the less lucky crew members? They have to eat something, and there are no plants out there—nothing that needs light. The utter blackness out there is crowding in on me as the battery in the emergency lamp loses charge. Which will go first, its light or mine? Why does this matter? Why do I write? Oh yeah, right—sanity, legacy...

Maybe end nearing. Breathing a lot harder now and sometimes vision gets spotty, but light almost gone too. Who loses race? Both of us. No winner.

This was written to honor the memory of the 118 men lost in the sinking of the Kursk, 12 August 2000.

A Series on My Room

Dave, the Crocheted Cactus

We desire from reality
The crocheted cactus
Mariah made for me last summer
That sits on my desk at college.
The real one at my window, I'm pretty sure,
Is dead.

Kyle, the Alarm Clock

We would all be better off
If honesty were alarm clocks
That would tic-tock
Away at you
No matter your feelings
That day.

Frederick, the Decoy Pigeon

Sometimes I think men are like
The decoy pigeon in my room,
Which I searched endlessly for
And bought
For no good reason
But because I thought it was silly
And would make me smile.

Lola, the Hula Dancer

Contentment is the hula dancer
Who belongs on the dashboard of my car
But ended up on my desk at college
And dances anyway
When I slap down my books and spirals.

Beauty in the Grass, Digital Photography



Steve Hinrichs

Moment of Truth

Feeling suddenly alone,
She watched herself
In the mirror of memory,
Beautiful, ebullient,
Lithe and supple,
Disciplined sinews
Moving with subtle
Elegance to music
They had felt
So many, many times –
Music resonating
A beauty that is
Enduring, ageless,
Its mesmerizing
Sweetness born of love,
Lifting the spirit,
Nourishing the soul.
This dance,
Brief minutes
From relevé to révérence,
Infused with eternity,
Lasting a lifetime,
The arabesque
Motionless,
Timeless,
A congealed moment
Of subdued ecstasy
Portrayed in chiaroscuro
And pink pastel
On the canvas
Of her life –
An indelible record
Of her artistry.
She curtsies once more
To a final, fading, “Brava,”
Hears her name announced,
Walks briskly across the stage,
Smiles, “Thank you,”
Deftly adjusts the tassel,
And steps quietly into
An indifferent world.

Birches on Stockton Island, Pastel



Mary Corrigan Stjern

The Guilty Chair

Kendra greets me, smiling, as I walk into the room, and lets me pick out which chair to sit in, recommending the big wicker chair. But now, sitting in it, I regret my decision, realizing that that makes Kendra, sitting in the computer chair, taller than me.

Kendra only wears mascara. Which makes her eyes look like little ovals with shoots coming off them, like little spriglets. I smile, pretending I don't know what we're about to talk about. Kendra closes the door. Kendra is my RA. And this is weird, because she already emailed me, so I know what's about to happen, but we're both acting like it's a regular, friendly get-together, like she's about to put her hands on my knees and tell me, with a giggle, that I'm her bestbestbestbest friend and eeeehh!! How exciting! But in reality, Hilary told Kendra that she found a cracked mug with a bloody tissue in it on my desk. And I really don't know why Hilary was snooping over there anyway, as the only possible business she could have had on my side of our room would have been to open the blinds or adjust the heat, but somehow, through the plethora of disgusting things on my desk, past the empty soda cans and bowls of dried oatmeal and papers and books and pictures of my friends, she seemed to spot that mug. And now I'm here in front of Kendra, because Hilary couldn't address me like a grownup and had to go to our RA. I wasn't quite sure why we had RAs at college; it's not like we'll have them in the real world. So I got the impression that Hilary thought this was a much bigger deal than it was. If it were a big deal, I would have actually hidden the mug and the blood; it's not like I'm some idiot with some big secret. I'm moderately smart-ish. But more importantly, it's not a secret at all, and I really doesn't mind if people know; I just don't want them to care.

And Kendra is smiling and her face is very clean and smooth and she has a lot more skin than most people and maybe it just looks that way because she doesn't have very good facial structure. But now she is asking me to pray with her before we discuss anything, which is such a Christian college thing to do. I love this practice, I suppose, but as I bow my head, I'm really just thinking about how embarrassingly fake we're both being and how we both know it. Now Kendra approaches me with the topic and puts on her serious, concerned face, where the eyebrows go up and meet in the middle and the lips press together and the face becomes longer, and I quick flash to that blue guy's face from "Megamind" and how that's a great movie. But now Kendra tells me what Hilary told her about and asks me, very slowly, very cautiously, if I cut, as if it's a delicate subject and I'm a little girl, to which I answer, sitting up straight, "Yeah I did, I used the jagged edge of the mug that broke when I brought it to college. It was a coping mechanism that I used when I'd gotten another call from my mom about my brother, and it just sucked, so that was what I did, all

up and down my leg, then later with a razor in the bathroom on my arm,” and Kendra is very impressed with how mature I am about this. And perhaps it’s the subject matter, that makes people tiptoe; perhaps it’s that such behavior usually comes from delinquent, unstable high schoolers, and maybe Kendra thought I would cry, but if anyone knew anything about people who cut, it’s that people who cut aren’t people who tiptoe, they’re people who yell and get mad and passionate about things that perhaps they shouldn’t be so passionate about, and Kendra is glad that I told her the truth, but now I realize that Kendra expected me to lie, or to not want to talk about it, and that’s so weird that Kendra was worried I wouldn’t come out and say it. I’m an adult. And now Kendra says I have to go talk to the RD because that’s required for circumstances such as this. *Are you kidding me?* I think. And now I take a deep breath in and think how I’ve really done it this time. I can’t believe this is actually happening. I have to talk to the RD? I cut and I’m getting punished for it? I got hurt and now they’re treating me like I’m the criminal? I’m getting in trouble for doing something that only hurt myself? Who knew it would be such a big deal.

OUTWARD: SUMMER [Lake, Galaxy & I]

At 2:30 a.m. on the morning of my birthday, I went for a drive [*the dam at Devil's Kitchen*].

2:30 a.m. on a small lake in the middle-of-almost-nowhere is many things:
Uncluttered [*insects and frogs and me*],
soothing [*sigh of wind and susurrus of water flowing*],
dark [*no lights for miles*].

Starry.

I saw the Milky Way for the first time in a decade.

Stood on black asphalt, leaning on the white concrete of a small dam [*dark shallow waters below and behind me*]

looking up at the stars [*scent of honeysuckle weaving together sound of water & brush of blown hair*]

while mind gave body a surfeit of summer night [*wind on water on skin*].

Stood on the inside of the Orion-Cygnus arm of the Γαλαξίας (*Galaxias*) [*standing in and looking out*]

moving at approximately $0.07c$ (the speed of light) [*eyes ears tongue funneling the world backward into my skull*]

looking outward at its edge [*neurons firing the reality of night & lake & galaxy*].

Visual cortex filled to overflowing [*band of horizon skyglow rising 15° above black-spiked trees*]

with a near-hemisphere of starry night [*dark pastel fade of cerulean to sapphire*]

the attenuated night deepening quickly [*silky midnight with diamond-bright flecks of fire*].

And stretched behind that fire [*compressed at 60° off the galactic plane*]

a milky, rippling ribbon of paler flame [*stippled with staccato darkness: nebulae known but unseen*].

Now the Milky Way hangs above the roof of my study [*shimmering and spinning through 600km/s*]

but it is time and past time for me to go to bed.

So I will fall asleep on damasked sheets [*inside a minor arm of a barred spiral galaxy*]

on a small side street in Carbondale, Illinois [*quietly merging with the Virgo stellar stream*].

At home [*I will not need sweet dreams*].

Overwhelming, Digital Photography on Canvas



Samuel Hughes

Progression, Digital Photography



Tom Ala, MD

II. Keeping Time

The tiles on the hospital floor always looked the same. The dingy greenish-white marble was never really clean. Perhaps the overhead fluorescent lighting did little to improve the aged appearance of the tile in this institution. One would think hospitals would keep the floors and ceilings as clean as possible. I only viewed the floor. I am sure my grandfather only stared at the ceiling. As I gazed downward, head hung low, my strides were large and swift. Strands of curly blonde hair swung back and forth as if ticking away the moments in their own beat. I kept the beat of my hair timed in my head.

‘One, two, buckle my shoe.

Three, four, shut the door...’

Throughout the maze of the hospital, I nurtured the beat. It beat back that moment when the sides of your mouth turn upwards as if a smile would appear. It halted that moment when your eyes wince and your lips purse, as if you ate something sour. It dried the flood that pours over the rolling hills of your cheeks. I forced myself to connect with that beat to stop the breakdown. After all, a puddle on the green tile would only cause me to slip even more.

‘Five, six, pick up sticks.

Seven, eight, lay them straight.

Nine, ten...’

Suddenly, the horrendously soothing tile abruptly ended and made way to the obscenely sterile linoleum of the Intensive Care Unit.

Chhhh chhhh chhhh pshhhh. Chhh chhh chhh pshhh. The ventilator cycled rhythmically. With each cycle, the instrument measured the life still within his lungs. How many more remained? 100? 1000? The clicking continued, replacing my previous metronome. With each passing cycle a part of me died.

I cautiously approached his body, and I cupped his enormous right hand in mine as if I were a child in need of assistance. The blood strenuously pulsed through the swollen fingers and imprinted his heartbeat onto my flesh. His purplish hands were cold but soft. My fingertips ran slowly over the veins protruding from the thin veil of skin. As I passed each ridge, the vessels below deformed from the pressure and blanched a greenish-white. It reminded me of the tile floor, and I cringed. Reaching over the arch of his palm, I curled around its most hearty spot. There was no reflex that grabbed back at my hand, no stirrings of the man that once was. He was being slowly replaced with the workings of human machines and medication for artificial suspension.

As family members gathered around the bedside, we watched the laborious heaving of his chest rise and fall in motion with the hissing of the ventilator. Tears from my mother and grandmother graciously fell in sync to one another. They dropped to the floor and splashed with perfection as the EKG monitor glided up and down. We prayed aloud.

II. Keeping Time

“Our Father.” *Beeeeep*

“Who art in Heaven.” *Beeeeep*

“Hallowed be Thy name.” *Beeeeep*

We chanted the verse in measured time. We acknowledged that our time with him was to end. One more prayer, one more tear, one more memory could not prevent the clock from stopping, let alone from ticking.

I bent over to where his head rested. He stared up at the dirty ceiling with clouded vision, unaware of who was at his side. My face slid down to his, and my lips pursed next to his ancient ears. I parted my mouth in an attempt to produce an intelligible thought. My hand grazed over his jaw line searching for something I needed to remember.

“I...I...I...”

...I could hear the television blaring from the living room, all the way down the hall and into Grandma Helen’s kitchen. The sultry mid-August afternoon weather report mentioned rain. I chuckled and continued on with the day’s work. Uncovering the fiesta orange Tupperware container I found freshly cut peaches bathing in a sea of simple syrup.

Grandma had left me in charge of baby-sitting Pops that day. The thought of a 19-year-old sitting for a 94-year-old oddly hit a strange note in my thoughts. I shrugged it off and plopped the fruit into two matching bowls.

As I approached the living room, the intensity of the television grew louder, almost deafening. Grandpa rested in his plush La-Z-Boy recliner. I gently placed the bowl near his giant hands. His eyes gaze up to mine as if to ask if it was all right to eat what was in the dish. His pale blue eyes glistened in the fading afternoon rays and gave thanks for the sweets that were presented. I turned down the television.

“You know what? You have a pretty smile,” Pops said in his usual tone of innocence.

“Mary Annie, where is my sweetie Helen?” he questioned as he slurped up the yellow-rose colored peach in one fluid movement.

“Pops, I’m not Mary Ann. I’m Amanda, your granddaughter. I’m a Creighton Blue Jay, just like you!” I pointed to the mascot of Creighton University on his hat, his alma mater. He nodded his bald head in semi-comprehension.

“Oh!... Well I’m glad you’re here. I love you. Georgie Porgie loves you!”

I turned the television back up and let him enjoy the colors and sounds. He fell asleep in the recliner some minutes later with his chest heaving and sighing. Walking towards the kitchen, I grabbed the dish still cupped in his huge hands. I bent over to where his head rested. My face slid down to his ancient ears. My hand grazed his jaw line.

“I love you too, Pops,” I whispered softly and kissed him on the cheek.

Beeep.

Some Paths Are Better Than Others, Digital Photography



Kelly Armstrong, PhD



Mark Gordon