

SPRING 2022

VOLUME XXIX

# SCOPE



# OUR LADY OF HOPE

*On the Cover:*

*Wood Block Print on Canvas - 2nd Place Art*

*Helen Moose*

*Staff, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*

# SCOPE

Scope is the literary arts magazine of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. This publication showcases the depth of talent within our campus community as we seek to enrich our lives through creativity. SIU School of Medicine encourages our patients, employees and learners to pursue wellness of the body and soul, and we are proud to provide an outlet for some of those pursuits here.

## Scope Staff

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## Editor's Note

There is a lot that fills our days. Words and images create experiences and embed memories that alter and define who we are and who we desire to be. As a medical community of learners at various levels, we speak words and share images with our patients that oftentimes alter and even redefine who they are today and who they will be tomorrow. How powerful and impactful words and images truly are.

Medicine, an artform in itself, is studied and practiced by artists who use their skills to serve individuals, families, and communities every day. We are medical students, residents, physicians, community members and ultimately, storytellers, who desire to evoke a smile, provoke self-reflection, and show our creative nature as authentically as we can. It is our hope that you will find our collection of poems, prose, art, and photography engaging and perhaps inspiring today and in the many tomorrows.

I am proud to introduce the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of Scope, a literary journal of SIU School Of Medicine. Scope is not only tradition but also a staple within the SIU community. Students started Scope in 1993 with the generous support of Mr. Roger Robinson, and it has continued to grow over the years thanks to people like you.

I would like to thank the many contributors to this year's Scope magazine. To the new and returning artists and authors, thank you for taking time to contribute to such an amazing creation. Thank you to the wonderful faculty and staff advisors, as well as the review staff. And thank you to the readers – Scope is our small gift meant to brighten your day.

Catherine Greene, MS3

Class of 2023

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# THE MONOTONY OF ACQUAINTANCES

*1st Place Poetry*

*Emma Johns*

*Class of 2024*

---

*Hello  
How are you?*

My brain is buzzing with radio wave static  
while the gunshots of our conversation ricochet in my skull.

Don't talk about the cup of coffee I shared with my co-worker,  
how butterflies raged in my stomach but now insects crawl on my skin.

I'm on a new diet called force my ass to run and race the rising sun.  
My mother thinks I will be skinny soon – oh god, do you?

*I'm good  
How are you?*

Don't talk about the blisters I got from scrubbing the stained kitchen tile  
Or how my father thinks I owe him rent, a quarrel we've had many times.

How an automated voice told me my card was declined,  
And how my eyes are still dotted from staring at the sun.

There is gravel in my throat and stones in my head  
which I consider both complementary and contrasting conditions,

but my doctor says it's from swallowing too many words.

*I'm good too.*





# OMICRON PARTY

*Digital Photography*

*Amit Sapra, MD*

*Faculty, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*

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# FALL IN LINCOLN PARK

*Ian Pollock*  
*Staff, Medical Library*

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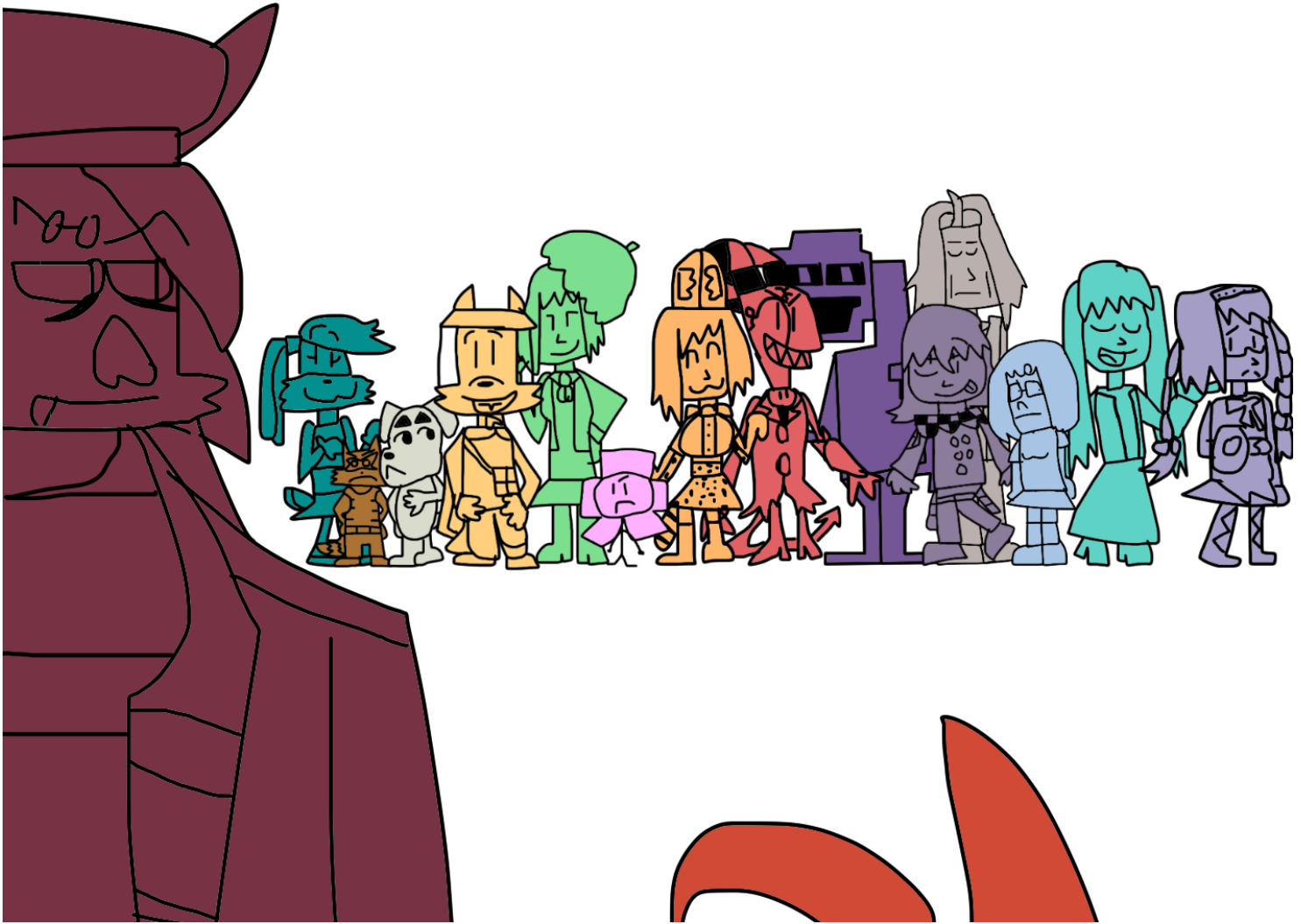
# AUTUMN'S DEMISE

*Cynda Strong*  
*Community*

---

Hastily discarded mud encrusted boots litter wooden stoops.  
Migrating birds pepper silvery skies.  
Rotting pumpkins litter frosted fields as  
barbed wire barriers ensnare wind whipped leaves.

A lonely howl cut short by moaning branches and fluttering fowl  
signals the absence of autumn's glow and advent of winter's chill.



# INCLUSION

*Digital Art  
Thomas Hingle  
Community*

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# HUMAN MOSAICS

*1st Place Prose*

*Emma Johns*

*Class of 2024*

---

When I drive past cemeteries, I hold my breath because my grandma once told me that is how you trick the reaper. It is so curious to me, the idea of her turning blue as she cheats death. I like to order my drinks made with a little extra love, ever since a barista told me that is what she put in mine. It is a silly and simple request, but I love that people will find a way to make a stranger feel special. I keep an envelope of 5-dollar bills in my car because I always remember my dad with bills in his wallet and his strange friendship with the homeless man on the street corner, and it made me realize that I want to be the type of person that makes everyone feel seen. A stranger once asked me for my happiest stories, and I've never met someone so dedicated to listening. Now when people share their stories, I try to ask them the best questions I can. I believe in handwritten thank you notes because one of my professors told me it was a lost artform of kindness, and now I must keep writing them in case there are others who perceive this form of thanks as more sincere. When I know someone is going through a hard time, I tell them my phone is on loud so they know that they can reach me because one time my brother said that to me, and it really meant a lot. I like to reach out to people when they cross my mind because this same sentiment brought me back in contact with a friend across the seas. It is a wonderful feeling, someone remembering you fondly. I love black coffee because my mom told me it was an "acquired taste" and I think I am a bit of an "acquired taste". That was the first I heard the phrase, and it made me realize that we can grow to like things we once could not appreciate. None of us are who we are without other people, and that's why other people matter so much. We are all mosaics. I am a part of your mosaic, and you are part of mine.

# FULL CIRCLE

*2nd Place Prose - Tie*

*Ann Augspurger*

*Community*

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What happened to me is etched in my inner-most being. It is part of me, part of my life story. In the spring of 1991, my husband and I were thrilled to learn we were expecting a baby. I worked at a hospital at the time, and my boss agreed to a job-sharing arrangement. I was thrilled to have the opportunity for a more even work-home balance.

Pregnancy met me with ups and downs. At eight weeks, I miscarried a twin. Having thought I was pregnant with only one child, I felt a strange mix of sadness and joy when Dr. C explained what had happened.

Later in the pregnancy, about seven months along, I noticed my arm itched, but I didn't think much of it. Later that evening, other parts of my body started itching and I began to notice a raised rash. I learned I had a condition in which my body was having an allergic reaction to being pregnant. Perhaps my body knew what was to come.

Itching my way through the seventh month, sleeping on the couch (my incessant itching actually moved the bed), and taking cold oatmeal baths, the prednisone I reluctantly took (but was assured it was safe) gave me relief by the ninth month.

On the night of Nov. 15, we went out for Mexican food. I waddled my way to the table and ordered an O'Douls and a meal that I don't remember. Later that night, muscle contractions that were faint at first moved their way across my abdomen in waves. As they got closer together, it was time to go to the hospital.

Labor was, as expected for a first pregnancy, slow. My daughter, still stubborn to this day, dug in her heels and did not want to make an appearance: failure to progress, the medical team called it. They prepared me for a cesarean section. I remember the cold yellow fluid they sponged on my stomach and the paper-thin cap that gathered my hair. I remember my husband by my head taking notes in his small spiral notepad just as the Lamaze teacher suggested.

He meticulously wrote down the times and medications given, as well as other details like contraction starts and stops and the exact time our daughter was born. He often looked up and over the blue paper drape that protected me from seeing the gory details. I thought he was brave to look, and I was so glad he was there.

Before my daughter was born, a slow swell moved up my body from the waist up. It felt heavy and oppressive and eventually I couldn't speak. I mouthed this information to my husband who reported it to the team, and they said it was normal.

I remember kissing the wonderful, beautiful extension of me who had indirectly caused my awful rash, my ankles to swell beyond recognition, and my awful heartburn. But at that point, none of that mattered. She was here. I kissed her on the cheek, and that is the last thing I remember.

I don't remember leaving the surgical suite or being pushed down the hall. My husband, Randy, who had already been sent to a waiting room, had no idea I was slipping away, falling asleep, perhaps missing out on ever raising my daughter for even one day, even one minute.

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Randy heard the code red. He immediately knew it was for me since I was the only patient in Labor and Delivery. He witnessed the flurry of activity, everyone dressed in scrubs running down the hall.

Later, my husband was told either amniotic fluid had escaped into my system or a blood clot traveled to my lungs, either of which was fatal.

Birth. Then death.

Randy tried to hold our precious little daughter cocooned in a blanket with a pink bow in her hair during what was supposed to be one of the happiest times of our lives. He felt limp. He felt betrayed. He felt like a single parent.

Then, when I survived the night, the anesthesiologist assigned to our delivery explained that the drug fentanyl that was pushed through my epidural had gone intradural. The drug traveled up to my brain and anesthetized it. My body's control center rendered helpless, I went into cardiac and respiratory arrest and then a coma.

I will forever be indebted to the resident who had delivered our beautiful Laine Elizabeth. That same resident saw me being wheeled down the hall and noticed I was turning blue. Not missing a beat (so to speak), she straddled my chest and began administering CPR. She did it so long that her hand was imprinted on my chest as a bruise.

She shouted out the order for a crash cart, but there wasn't one on the Labor and Delivery floor. She said to bring one from another floor, but to my husband's disbelief, he heard them say it did not fit on the elevator. "I don't care how you get it here, just get it here," he recalls the resident shouting.

As I woke up from the coma, I remember the doctor shining the little flashlight in my eyes. "You gave birth to a girl. Do you remember that?" he asked. My brain resisted transitioning from my past to my present.

My dad, stepmom and sister were told to come to the hospital to see me because I was not expected to survive. I remember that each time my dad came in the room (he left for frequent smoke breaks), I would ask, "Dad, when did you get here," feeling absolutely thrilled to see him.

One or two days post-coma, a nurse placed my baby girl on my chest. I struggled to wrap my arms around her. Oh, how I longed to, but my arms were tethered to all kinds of medical equipment. I was in the hospital for a week. I remember my husband constantly quizzing me on who sent which bouquets in my room that was overflowing with flowers. I was annoyed he kept asking. He quizzed me about what kind of car we had. I remember my sister being pleased with me when I mentioned a doctor stopped by. I did not realize I had lost my short-term memory.

My family and the medical team (although they did not admit it) were keenly aware my short-term memory loss might be permanent. Each little thing I remembered was like a seed of hope.

As the week went by, I remember having excruciating headaches and struggling to feed my daughter in the middle of the night. I tried to breastfeed but could not get her to latch on. I remember crying in the night, calling for the nurse to take her back since I was unfit to meet her basic needs in that moment. Not realizing what I had been through, I felt like a failure.

The anesthesiologist stopped by with the department head, who tried to tell us that they didn't know what happened. The stoic boss was trying to quiet the truth that had once come out of the young anesthesiologist's mouth.

I later obtained my medical records, considering whether to take legal action, and the word "fentanyl" was covered with whiteout any time it appeared.

Oh, the deception.

As if it what happened wasn't bad enough, doctors dished up the suggestion they didn't know why it happened, as if it were a mystery. We craved the sound of the words: that a mistake happened; that they

were sorry. But those words were never formed.

The only doctor that acknowledged it was Dr. C. That simple act made me feel he was on our side, that he cared. For the first year of my daughter's life, I struggled to feel like my old self. My short-term memory came back, but other doubts and cobwebs lingered.

Months later, I remembered the image of me reaching for a hand after I had slipped off in that surgical suite. I remember thinking it was either the hand of my grandpa or Jesus. I did not reach out for it. I might have, but the resident intervened to get my heart beating again. She made sure I was around to raise my daughter and eventually have a son, once my husband came around to the idea.

Today, I wish I could say I live every day to the fullest since I almost lost my life that night in November 1991. I am so very thankful when I think of what could have been.

I still have bad days. I still take things for granted. Such is the human condition, I suppose. I'm just glad I'm still around to appreciate the really good days and to ask for forgiveness for when I falter on the bad ones.

Ironically, I suppose, I almost didn't survive when I was born almost 60 years ago, weighing only 2 pounds, 5 ounces. Then, as if in full circle, I almost died after giving birth.

It was as if God directed the scenes, stating loud and clear it wasn't my time yet. Now a "mimi" to a sweet granddaughter and looking forward to the next phase, I take stock of my life. My younger years were filled with raising two kids and experiencing a wonderful marriage. The only thing I felt like I sacrificed (by choice) was my career, taking a variety of jobs through the years that fit our family — some in my chosen field, some not. But in another full circle of sorts, I now have a phenomenal job doing what I love. I just had to be patient, learning what I wanted and believing in myself, both of which seemed to have gotten lost somewhere along the way.

From 2014 to 2017, I worked in Education & Curriculum at the SIU School of Medicine. I watched with curiosity as the second-year medical students soaked in anatomy, symptoms, diseases, and pharmaceuticals. Although I never did, I wanted to share with them what I went through. I wanted to tell them what not to do. But eventually, I picked up morsels throughout the halls of 801 N. Rutledge. I learned that doctors in training are now taught to be honest with their patients.

They now know what I know: that truth heals.

Turns out, the truth sets the patient free. And, the doctor, too, I imagine.

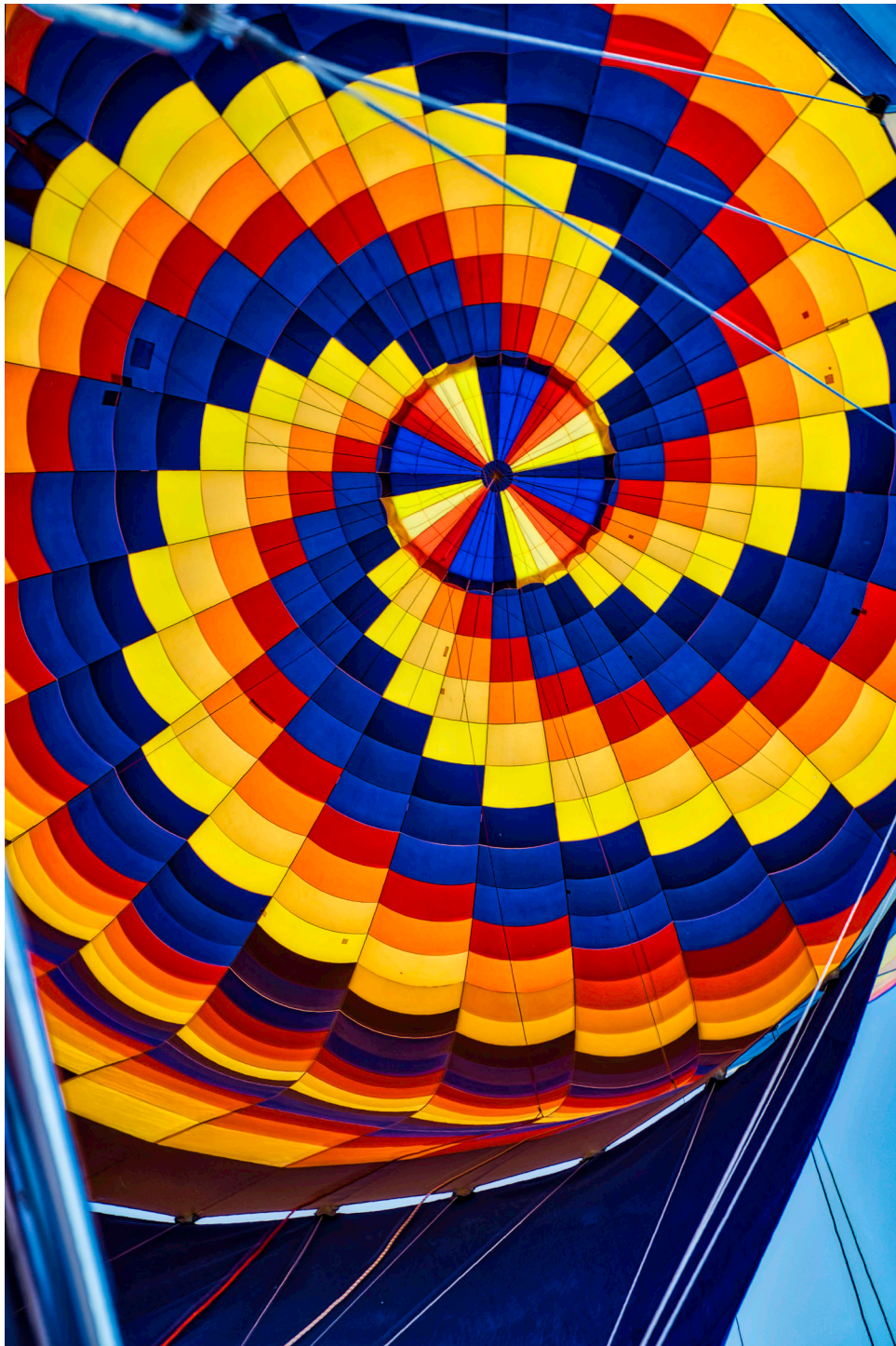




# GOING UP

*Giclee  
Peter Somers, PhD, MD  
Alumni, Class of 2000*

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# DAWN OF HOPE

*Digital Photography*

*Amit Sapra, MD*

*Faculty, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*

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# LETTERS ALONE

*Mike Honan, MD  
Alumni, Class of 1991*

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Kind, gentle, grandmother seen by Hospice nurse  
87yo COPD Alz Dem dm2 HTN CAD cabg hx CVA  
LTCF res NYHA 4 chf pt  
DNR  
PPS 30% Fast 7c  
Inc of B/B sp colon ca anx dis ckd3  
Max Assist Djv Hx hip fx  
O2 sats 85% RA, on O2 2L NC PRN  
Comfort Care requested.  
All that is left are letters



# MARINA BY NIGHT

*Digital Photography*

*Tom Ala, MD*

*Faculty, Neurology*



# SERENITY: FRINGES IN THE WIND

*Photograph, Seed Bead Jewelry  
Felicia Olawuni  
Class of 2022*

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# PARKINSON'S SEVERAL YEARS LATER

*Acrylic on Canvas*  
*Glen Aylward, PhD*  
*Emeritus Faculty, Pediatrics*

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# ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

*2nd Place Prose - Tie*

*Vidhya Prakash, MD*

*Faculty, Internal Medicine*

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I started by wanting to become a writer. "My little red book is the first of many," I thought, as I continued to write. However, after reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the seventh grade, the inspiring and dignified Atticus Finch was my new hero. The excitement and thrill of courtroom drama were quite appealing to me. My Hello Kitty notebook was replaced by a staid, plain, black notebook. I would look up words and write down their meanings in my notebook, adding them to my daily lexicon. I knew someday that notebook would transform into an important legal brief and I would walk into a courtroom just like Mr. Finch, ready to argue my first case. Years went by and I became increasingly determined to fulfill my desire to become a lawyer. Then, I met Mr. Allison.

"Anatomy and physiology," he announced with gusto. He began to pace behind his large desk, his hands behind his back. He was in his fifties, casually dressed but stately, with brown eyeglasses that preferred to stay perched on the tip of his nose in spite of all his efforts to continually push them upward. He stopped mid-stride and paused. He took a deep breath and said softly, almost to himself, "Anatomy and physiology." With a flourish he finally faced the class. Pindrop silence. Nobody stirred. No high school classroom had ever been this motionless. A small smile crept to his lips. "Can we really have one without the other?" The notion that this was just another class was immediately dispelled, the whispered, multi-leveled question one that I was determined to answer. I was overcome by his intense passion for this subject and couldn't wait to find out what all the excitement was about.

We started with protozoa, one of the most basic organisms. My lab partner and I spent what seemed like hours at a time looking at the tiny, fascinating critters, awed by their very existence and astonished by our complete lack of awareness of or appreciation for them prior to this class. We would painstakingly draw them with careful attention to detail, making absolutely sure we picked the correct colors to do them justice. Mr. Allison seemed quite pleased with our work, showing his support not so much with words but with an expression of satisfaction and pride, both eyebrows raised and a half-smile more pronounced on one side of his face.

He soon decided the class was ready for a true challenge, the fetal pig. The smell of formaldehyde was not as distinct as the somber mood that seemed to envelope our class that day. "That's good," Mr. Allison declared. "You have respect for the pigs. This is essential before you dissect and master these animals." My lab partner and I drew straws and I was the one selected to do the honors. My right hand shook like a flimsy tree branch caught in a violent wind, my heart racing to keep up, not to be outdone. I finally took a deep breath and placed the scalpel on the little pig's chest, knowing full well I had earned this—I had not only read the lab manual cover to cover the week before, but I had also done some reading on my own on the anatomy and physiology of the fetal pig, hoping I would make Mr. Allison proud. One cut down the middle and it was over—my very first attempt at dissection. Soon came Mr. Allison's eyebrow-half-smile special and I was overwhelmed with pride and a true sense of accomplishment. Over the

next few weeks, my lab partner and I became completely engrossed in our work. We would spend extra hours dotting over our little pig (affectionately named Norbert), little by little mastering the anatomy and physiology of each of its various organ systems.

Finally, the moment of truth arrived—the lab practical. Mr. Allison stood at the front of the classroom holding a small rubber pig. “We will be starting the practical shortly,” he declared. “You will have three minutes per station. You will know when time is up when the pig...” He then squeezed the pig and it emitted an unbecoming sound. “flatulates.” A roar of laughter came from our class and the practical had officially begun. The hour moved by quickly. I identified everything from the cerebellum to the common femoral vein, eager and impatient to get to the next station to identify another organ or nerve. It was a combination of determination, zeal, and true love for the subject that compelled me to move forward. The practical eventually concluded and so had the class. I couldn’t believe it—in a blink of an eye, a whirlwind of riveting lectures and countless pages of each muscle, organ, and blood vessel that encompassed Norbert had drawn to a close.

The plain, black notebook had been replaced by a lab practical; daydreams of rattling a witness in a large courtroom turned into hours of interrogating my lab partner on the intricacies of the fetal pig’s heart; Atticus Finch faded away into his fictional land in Maycomb, Alabama and Jim Allison, with his brown-rimmed eyeglasses, rubber pig, and unquenchable thirst for his subject, was now my newfound hero. I realized that my fascination with the inner workings of the fetal pig did not end with this class. There was so much more I wanted to learn and discover. I developed an insatiable desire to learn how the human body worked and how and why things could and would go wrong with it. In the process, I realized I wanted so much to work closely with others, like I did with my dedicated and equally passionate lab partner, to put together the delicate pieces of the puzzle that was the human body and, in turn, influence others the same way Mr. Allison did.

You still remain one of my heroes, Mr. Finch. However, I am unable to credit you with my career choice. That honor goes to a brilliant, distinguished professor by the name of Jim Allison, a fifty-some year-old high school football coach and anatomy and physiology teacher whose charisma, drive, and passion all are at the crux of why I became a physician, and why I evolved into the physician and teacher I am today.

Excerpt from *Learning to Listen: A Memoir*



# HEIMSKAUTSGERÐIÐ

*Giclee*

*Peter Somers, PhD, MD*

*Alumni, Class of 2000*

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# OUR HUMBLE ABODE

*Digital Photography - 1st Place Art*

*Amit Sapra, MD*

*Faculty, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*

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# TO THE ME OF YESTERYEAR

*Catherine Greene*  
*Class of 2023*

---

Tear dried and eye determined,  
Jaw set and body emboldened,  
She rose.  
Leaving yesteryear and misery to accompany  
themselves on path dwindled,  
She set forth anew, with new hope rekindled.  
Strength.  
When they labeled her weak.  
Fearless.  
Even when fear peaked.  
Me.  
I found who I was meant to be.

---

# WAKE UP CALL

*Digital Photograph*  
*Anastasia Dufner, MD*  
*Resident, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*



# DR. HOSOKAWA - THE COCOON

*2nd Place Poetry*

*Amelia Frank, MD*

*Alumni; Faculty, Family & Community Medicine-Taylorville*

---

*They say a butterfly  
when it's becoming a butterfly  
living its life  
(or is it even alive?)  
inside its cocoon  
is  
essentially  
just organic ooze  
warmed slightly, cautiously, by the sun  
filtering in through the stained-glass  
window panes of its silken wrap  
– or maybe the warmth is the memory  
of its past as a caterpillar,  
the vestiges of the cells that used to be its heart,  
the reminders of the soul  
and life  
of the caterpillar  
twitching and thrumming*

*is it dreaming?*

*is the goo remembering the time it caught the eye  
of a wren  
and scarcely made it out alive,  
hiding  
underneath  
the waxy green leaf it proceeded to snack on –  
the inner stems hardy and a little fuzzy  
like the caterpillar itself  
(or so it thought as its strong jaws munched away)  
(maybe)  
or maybe the steaming roux imagines flowers  
in hues not imaginable*

*or the idea of flight*

*or maybe turning into a butterfly is painful –  
agonizing to rearrange all of yourself into  
something new  
(then again, that sounds familiar)*

*but I like to think that the warmth of the cells  
that were the caterpillar's heart  
and soul  
and the fire of memory of a flashing bird eye  
and the agony of transformation  
and the heat of the sun bringing things to a simmer  
all wrap the sleeping leftover caterpillar up*

*and there is peace and contentment*

*and the certainty of future joy*

*because  
when the butterfly emerges, finally,  
wetly,  
airing out delicately,  
it retains its memory of its time as a caterpillar  
the taste of the milkweed, perhaps, or the  
color of the bird's wing.*

*The butterfly, despite having been nothing,  
remembers its life from before.  
It keeps its heart.  
Or so they say.*





# A MOMENT'S REST

*Digital Photography*  
*Anastasia Dufner, MD*  
*Resident, Family & Community Medicine - Springfield*

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# SNOW DAZE

*Digital Photography - 3rd Place Art*

*Tyler Fulks, MD*

*Faculty, Emergency Medicine*



# AN ODE TO THAT PUMPING MOM

*3rd Place Poetry*

*Kavi Komeswaran, MD*

*Alumni, Residency Program*

---

They said motherhood was hard  
That it would be tough playing the part  
And it has been tough, I won't deny  
But it has nothing to do with my lil guy  
It was easier carrying him within me  
Compared to my pump bag, a monstrosity  
I thank technology, no doubt  
But I wish pumping, I can do without  
I sometimes envy the moms at home  
No tubes attached, they freely roam  
Whereas I find myself running nonstop  
From clinic to wards until I drop  
I wake up before 5 to dream feed  
Encroaching upon sleep I really need  
It doesn't help that I drive so far  
So now I pump on my way in the car  
Pumping is a commitment, I say  
It is micro planning your entire day  
It's a feeling of always running behind  
A bit of guilt in the back of your mind  
Guilty of entering every meeting late  
Or making patients in the ER wait  
Tearing yourself away from rounds  
So your baby can gain those pounds  
Noon lectures make my heart stop  
That's a pump session I have to drop  
I start to hope that the baby doesn't take  
More than what I managed to make  
Don't cry over spilt milk, said he  
Who has never been on a pumping spree  
Don't get me started on washing the parts  
More tiring than reviewing patient charts  
I've learnt to multitask like never before  
And like me, there are so many more  
Although I am venting, I'm truly glad  
That I can go to work and not feel bad  
But next time you meet a pumping mom  
Know she does more than she lets on  
- white coat mom



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# SUNRISE AND FOG IN THE VALLEY

*Pastel*  
*Mary Corrigan Stjern*  
*Community*

# STILL LIFE WITH MAN AND MANGO

*Christine Todd, MD*

*Alumni; Faculty, Medical Humanities*

---

At the auction they offered up a floor from  
an old great ballroom, golden parquet wood, scuffed.  
He bought it and had it piled in his living room  
where the heavy planks stacked six feet high.  
There they sat for three years, waiting for him to  
rip up the shag carpeting and place them down.

In the sunny afternoons the woman opens the curtains,  
watches the dust drift. She climbs to the top of the  
stack and surveys the world from there:  
magazines piled in every corner, dirty dishes in  
the sink, five stray dogs, one red haired man,  
not ready to commit.

The ballroom floor a slick perch, she recalls  
summer days guarding at the pool, the  
way she could peer down into the clear water and see  
transgressions, how all things could lead to danger.  
This is not the man you spent those summers dreaming of,  
she thinks. Trailing phone messages and mutual friends  
she dives down and swims away.

He plants fifty tomato plants in his yard, neglects them.  
The rotting plot attracts pestilence. Neighbors call councilmen,  
the red-haired man considers how he will explain,  
when the time comes for it, what has happened to his life.  
How plans for a winter of spaghetti sauce have  
gone horribly wrong, how the plants grew so fast they  
were almost obscene, the sinister vines reaching for his ankles,  
how close he came to drowning in the sinister musky green.  
He has lead a life of loose ends, is all he can think.

Now there are so many pieces he can never pick all of them up.

When the married woman presents herself, he sees her  
As a perfect partner, already whole without him,  
another man's problem but for right now his delight.  
He takes her to Hawaii, sits with her on the beach,  
squires her about in a rented car.  
Mangoes rot along the road to the hotel. He collects them,  
piles them like ammunition against the walls in their room.  
Every morning he takes one into the shower with him,  
tears it apart with his teeth, devours it, lets the juice and  
pulp run with the water down the drain. He wakes up,  
tries not to think about the woman in the next room, and  
promises himself that from here on out,  
from this moment forward,  
he will be clean, clean, clean.



# ROSES

*Acrylic*  
*Laurie Rollet*  
*Staff, Facilities Management*

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# KILL KENNY

*Giclee*  
*Peter Somers, PhD, MD*  
*Alumni, Class of 2000*



# LINCOLN

*Oil on Canvas*  
*Laura Mutua*  
*Community*

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# CONCERTO FOR A GEMINI

*Emma Johns*  
*Class of 2024*

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and the days were *adagio*

An aching crescendo of shuffling strangers like a Nike sponsored funeral procession, a half full kale smoothie poured into the gutters, drops of soy sauce on a store-bought cherry cheesecake. (oh well) Smoke filled veins and Velcro-ed lips that only smirked and never smiled. Candied eyes that sang sharp melodies to those who looked away from shuffling flip flops and cement/dandelion monsters (Oh my) how a simple task becomes an arduous undertaking

and the nights were *allegro*

Ethereal wind chime giggles and staccato-ed stars, pulsing lights from bars, billboards, or maybe cop cars (who knows). This modern Gatsby approach alluding to the theory of friends by night Strangers by morning. Ineffable silence of white noise crickets in Goose bump worthy weather and goose bump worthy people; and I wondered how it would be different if caffeine kept me restless and the lights were fireflies instead of dying embers from our freshly burned bridges.

# A COUNTRY WINTER EVENING

*Cynda Strong*  
*Community*

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Remnant stubble of autumn's harvest congregates in rutted fields.  
A solitary fowl flutters up from its gleaning  
as the darkness swallows its movement skyward.

Snowy dollops linger in roadside ruts and gnarled tree trunks while  
barren branches bow in surrender to whipping winds.  
A distant rustle and scamper through brittle leaves  
disturb the silence for a fleeting second.

Stars litter velvet skies like shards of crystal;  
Twisted curls of smoke from chimneys drift away in silence.



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# WINTER DAYBREAK AT HOME

*Pastel*  
*Mary Corrigan Stjern*  
*Community*

# SINK OR SWIM

*3rd Place Prose*

*Kathryn Waldyke, MD*

*Faculty, Lincoln Scholars Program*

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One of my earliest memories is of my mother crying. I couldn't tell you if it was when she was changing my diaper, which she got pretty tired of doing. Or maybe she found out I needed another surgery, since there were many. Or someone offered me a toy I would never be able to use, like a tricycle. No matter. Suffice it to say, I gave my mom plenty of occasions for shedding tears.

I myself don't cry—except once. The first time someone took me to the beach and gave me a snorkel and mask and put me in the water, I knew I was home at last. I cried with joy when they put me in and with deepest sadness when they came out in the surf to catch me and pull me back in. I wasn't about to leave voluntarily.

The next time I got to snorkel, after 3 days of relentless lobbying, I did not cry. I got down to work figuring out how to move around in the water, get in and out of the surf, keep my mask from leaking and keep salt water out of the snorkel.

For my birthday that year I wanted only things for snorkeling. My Liberator had already given the mask and snorkel to me. I wanted a smooth plastic sheet for sliding me from sand-to-surf and back out. Also I wanted floats for my legs and fins for my hands. (Yes, they make these.) And a book about the fishes and other reef-dwellers.

On land I had to use a wheelchair and rely on people to get me in and out of the chair, up steep ramps—stuff other kids did themselves. I hated that. But put me on my slide to the water, and I ruled the seas. Other kids could never maneuver like I did.

In no time I had local reefs mapped in my brain. I knew where the eel hid and sometimes poked out. I knew where the urchins were too close to shore at low tide—bumping one of those was a mistake never to make a second time, trust me.

Most weeks I got 2 or 3 outings unless either the weather was bad or I was. I tried to be a good student, and my teachers tried hard, but I really didn't have much interest in spelling or writing. I liked science, especially biology, and social studies when it involved coasts. I worked some at math because I knew it would be required for studying science. Spanish? Fish don't speak Spanish; why should I?

I started pushing for trips to other reefs after about a year. I read about the barrier reef along Belize and the big one off Australia, some of the spots in the Caribbean, dives with Manta rays off Baja California or with porpoises or with the manatees in Florida...I was insatiable.

Early on I would sometimes have to stop swimming and snorkeling for a week or two at a time when I'd get swimmer's ear or my brain shunt was threatening to malfunction or I had another UTI. Later on as I needed various procedures for my bladder or my legs or spine or shunt, I'd have to stay out of the water for weeks at a time. I didn't cry, but I sure was not happy about it. Now I feel bad about being so angry and crabby with my mom. I know she hated my health problems as much as I did. Probably more, since she blamed herself for not starting prenatal vitamins sooner. But I don't think the hole in my spine was her fault, just bum luck.

When I was 17, I had a growth spurt and suddenly my bladder went crazy and I got new pain in

my back and legs. They told me I needed another surgery for a “tethered cord.” The first procedure seemed to go fine, and I was back in the water in a month, but then I developed an infection at the scar, so I was out of the water again for a month.

I’d only get a couple of months, 6 at the most, before another infection would crop up there, all through college. They did dye studies and finally found a tunnel, a “fistula.” I had a “fistulectomy” just before moving to Hawai’i to start grad school in marine biology, of course.

Mom cried again. She knew this was my dream, and I got a decent fellowship to help pay for the degree, but there was not enough money to bring her to Hawai’i or me back home, at least not in the first year. She cheerfully helped me pack my stuff, and brought me to the airport, pretending the whole time to be happy and excited, but I could see behind that. I was breaking her heart. When we got to the airport, I started to doubt myself.

“Am I doing the right thing, Mom?”

“Graduate school? Yes. Marine biology? Of course. What else have you ever loved?”

“You, Mom. Will you be ok? Will I be ok?”

She looked sad but did not hesitate, “Yes. We will all be fine.”

I finished my master’s degree in 2 years and decided that going on to the PhD was more research than I wanted to do. Math and reading had always been hard for me, and at that level, it was damned hard math and reading.

I still had a lot of exploring to do on the Islands, so I found a job teaching biology and leading snorkeling outings for rich kids at a prep school. It didn’t pay a lot, but it was enough to afford living on the Big Island and plane tickets to bring Mom out for a visit at last.

I’m glad I found the latest infection on my back after she had gone home, so I didn’t have to tell her right away. I had gone in for my usual 3-month check, and the nurse found another oozing tract. She sent me straight to the surgeon, who told me I would be out of the water at least 2 months. This area again needed to be excised, and with all the scar tissue around it, and grafted.

It was time to involve Mom. I did not know if I could find someone to care for me after surgery, so I needed to see if she would come back, or if she thought I should come home to the surgeon who did my surgery before, if he was still operating at the hospital near Mom.

I couldn’t. She couldn’t. He was. I resigned the teaching job and moved back.

I think my funk started about the time the infection started up, just after Mom left. I figured I was blue because I missed her. But it got worse with moving back, again not surprising with a move. And it got worse as we arranged surgery. Worse after surgery. Worse after going home from surgery—now I was worried. Things should be turning around, but no.

The surgical site was very slow in healing. I couldn’t get in the water until the blessed thing healed. I felt a little more hopeless each day. I tried to tell Mom I was “a little better” each time she asked, but I wasn’t.

She took me to a therapist, and we talked a few times. I told Mom it helped.

I needed to be in the water.

I arranged for the handicap bus to pick me up and take me to my favorite beach. Luckily not too many people were there to stare at me as I slid out of my chair and pulled my way across the sand to get in the water.

At last I was back in my element. I started to swim. I thought I would just go a little ways, to visit

some corals and fishes, but it felt so good to move through the water that I swam around the point to the next beach. Then the rip tide caught me. I know to swim parallel to shore, and it would even have brought me back to the beach I started from. Instead, I rode it out to the deep water. If anyone saw me drift away, they made no effort to bring me back. I swam the rest of the day toward the sun, knowing that was away from the shore.

After sunset I started to feel bad for Mom, who had no doubt come home and wondered where I was then probably set out to find me. She knew my favorite beach, so I could picture her finding my chair. I bet she cried again.

I almost tried to figure out how to head back toward land, but by that point I was just so tired. A day with rougher seas might have been a better choice, in retrospect. It might have tired me out sooner, and I could have just gone under. Instead I kept floating around in the night, not fully conscious, unspeakably thirsty. Because everything that could hurt did hurt, I couldn't tell you if the surgical site was worse than any other pain.

Finally I saw lights, very bright lights that hurt my head but felt comfortingly warm. Then those left and the early pre-sunrise glow started to brighten, and before the sun rose, more warm bright lights. Oh, no! Thank God! My fuzzy brain was at war with itself. There was a boat, and uniformed people on board pulled me out of the water. I was shivering cold. I could not tell if they were talking to each other or to me as they wrapped me in blankets. It felt so good I drifted off to sleep again. I wanted to ask for water to drink. I wanted to ask them to call Mom. I wanted...to sleep....

#### Disabled Man Dies After Rescue at Sea

A 29-year-old paraplegic man was pulled from the ocean 32 miles from shore yesterday morning by crew members of a Coast Guard cutter alerted to a man at sea by a passing cargo ship. The man, whose name has not been released, was apparently hypothermic but conscious at the time of rescue; he later died at the hospital. Cause of death was reported by family as a severe brain and spinal cord infection. Why the man was so far from shore and how he came to be swimming so far out is unclear. Family asks for help from anyone who may have transported him to that area or have other information.



# RELAXING BEACH

*Pastel*

*Mary Corrigan Stjern*

*Community*

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# SUGAR CREEK COVERED BRIDGE

*Digital Photography*  
*Ian Pollock*  
*Staff, Medical Library*

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# NOTE TO SELF

*Catherine Greene*  
*Class of 2023*

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When you rise today,  
do it for you.  
Be your own inspiration, self's motivation.  
Relinquish the inclination to live for approval of others.  
Deep breath in, eyes closed,  
Inhale today's freedom,  
Exhale yesterday's negativity  
Eyes opened, mind is made, day is seized.

When you get dressed,  
do it for you.  
Put off the old self and dress in the new.  
Remember all that God has called you to be.  
Leave that old armor hanging in the closet  
and put on the new armor,  
Heart protected, mind is directed, spirit is filled.

When you arrive at the battle,  
stand tall for you.  
You rose for this,  
Dressed for this,  
Were made for...  
This life is full of strife undoubtedly,  
But you, you erupt with strength.

When you rest tonight,  
rest for you.  
Allow strength and stress to undress,  
Relinquish the inclination to sleep awakened by troubles.  
Deep breath in, eyes closed.  
Inhale tonight's quiet,  
Exhale today's noise.  
Day finished, peace has descended.

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