

SCOPE

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 *SIU School of Medicine*

SIU Southern Illinois University
CARRBORDALE



SCOPE is the annual literary arts magazine of SIU School of Medicine, a showcase for the artistic talents and myriad voices of the medical school community. It is produced each year by an ever-changing group of medical students who volunteer to coordinate the magazine. The work published demonstrates how the SIU School of Medicine community embraces creative, empathetic, emotional, and spiritual components of healthy lives.

On the cover

Street Musician

Mark Gordon

Community

First Place, Visual Art

2012

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*Thank you to all the students who reviewed the entries
and helped create SCOPE 2012.*

FROM THE EDITOR

Hippocrates once said, "Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is also a love of humanity." Artistic expression is one of the purest ways that an individual can explore the topic of humanity and in doing so gain further insight into various aspects of life. Those in the medical profession are privileged enough to bear witness to moments of life where individuals bring their inner humanity to the surface. It is with this in mind that *SCOPE*, SIU School of Medicine's literary magazine, is put together. With contributions from students, faculty and friends, our magazine is the product of inspiration and talent. It is through storytelling, poetry and various art mediums that life is explored further and, in that, the significance of the art of medicine.

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to *SCOPE* including the artists, staff and faculty. We would like to extend a special thank you to Karen Carlson, Dr. Phil Davis, Jim Hawker and Dr. Nancy Henry for their guidance and support. Welcome to the 19th edition of SIU School of Medicine's *SCOPE* literary magazine. We sincerely hope that as you page through this magazine that you are able to spot small glimpses of humanity's inspiration.

Sara Ros, MS II

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Our Old Movie

Shannon Kelley

Community

The movie in my mind of my mother
flick-flick-flickers in time like no other.
“Behave yourself, you hear.” A mother’s touch.
She searches for first gear, then pops the clutch
on a lackluster loner Chevrolet.
The movie in my mind begins to play.

She gases the pedal, gravity breaks—
a dead-handed gambler raising the stakes—
the car swerves backwards like a drunk downhill.
Our heartbeats lock, mother and son, then shrill
“Stay back, stay back,” she screams as I attack
cracked blacktop on six-year-old legs that lack
the speed to keep up, let alone catch her.

Fifty years later, I still can’t match her.

Washrooms, Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp

Kelly Armstrong, Ph.D.

Department of Medical Humanities

Third Place, Visual Art



Dying

Linda G. Allison, M.D.
Class of 1981



in the days of my youth

Sumi Rebeiro
Class of 2014

i walked alone always through
cold bright halls, the chatter
crushing surrounding but not including
i would have preferred silence
no escape excuse to proffer for
absence; instead i sat frozen eyes downcast
& icy hand upraised
the sound of my name from a distant
far as the mountains and as unseeing adult
the only warmth beneath
my uniform, the dry brush
of a dead leaf
against my heart

The City Has

Sumi Rebeiro
Class of 2014

the City has a pulse
even after it sleeps;
the sweetlow rush of air
among its empty buildings like
the deep quiet breathing
of a child at rest, or
a woman exhausted
after a night of love

The Great Land O'Lakes Mistake

Cara Anne Vaccarello

Department of Pediatrics

Third Place, Prose

The day I miscalculated the amount of butter necessary to make it through Thanksgiving 1993 was the day I put fruit cobbler before family. Turkey Day in our family usually ran like a well-oiled pan—smooth and without residue. Guest chef appearances were encouraged, but were held to upmost scrutiny. To attempt to introduce a new meal component to our regulars took guts. The odds that your fallen soufflé, overcooked corn or burnt biscotti would join the reunion tour at the following Thanksgiving were dismal. Still, I was 9 and an overachiever by birthright and boredom. I would attempt the unthinkable—a cherry cobbler with a 4.5 out of 5 star difficulty rating. This was well before the days of checking reviews and your sanity online by reading recipe horror stories. All I knew was that the seasoned chef (pardon the pun) on PBS said it was a “delightful crowd pleaser.” Bingo. I was already planning my modest speech for the impending accolades.

In order to pull off this stuffed soirée, each family member was to submit an ingredient list to our head chef (Le Chef Momma). This ensured that we pilgrims would have all the provisions we'd need for a successful giving of thanks. Feverously, I scribbled the list of items that would comprise my cobbler concoction. Bing cherries (which I sadly realized were very different from those found in my kiddie cocktails), cognac (because the woman on TV said it “added sophistication”), and your usual suspects of flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and so forth. It was the “so forth” that ruined me. The tragic assumption that butter need not go on my list, because sure as snow, the Land O'Lakes lady always built a holiday mansion in the corner of our fridge.

On Thanksgiving, I began the recipe and made my way about the kitchen like a choreographed dance—a relevé to reach the flour, a sashé to the salt, and a pirouette as I poured in the vanilla. When it was time to add the butter, I noticed there were two sticks left in the fridge. What luck! Two logs of fat left and they were all mine. Just enough to earn that James Beard Award.

As the cobbler baked, my mother started the final item on the menu, her infamous candied yams (more candy than yam, really). Then I heard it. The kind of

yell that really makes the holidays bright, “TOOOONNNYYYY!” It could only mean one thing—we were out of butter. Before I could say Santa Maria, our grocery store voyager, my father, was being grilled about how many sticks of butter were purchased. I knew my family. They were thorough and watched too many Columbo episodes. They would review the evidence, render a verdict, and shame the offender. I had to cover my tracks before my mother looked back at the individual recipe lists for the error. Within seconds I was holding a blue pen in one hand (matching the original ink of course—I watch Columbo too) and my ingredient list in the other. Stealthily, I inserted “2 sticks of butter” to the final line of my list. With that stroke of the pen I sealed our fates. I branded my father as a failed hunter/gatherer, and saved myself from wrath and ridicule.

The aftermath was neither pretty, nor holiday-like. We rushed through grace and weren't kind when asking to pass the cranberries. Sweet potatoes became the sour note, and my cobbler couldn't save us. I nearly let a marriage go down in flames rather than admit my folly. I considered burying my face in the gravy boat, but instead kept my mouth stuffed with turkey to prevent spilling my lie. The phrase “like the time you didn't get enough butter on Thanksgiving” has a permanent spot in our family's arsenal of guilt. And it stings every time. I learned that butter really does equal happiness. Someday I might own up to my big fat lie, say in another 15 years. Until then, my darling father will take an undeserved jab or two about the time we had to settle for reduced-fat yams.

How Did It Happen?

Jerry Abrams

Community

Second Place, Poetry

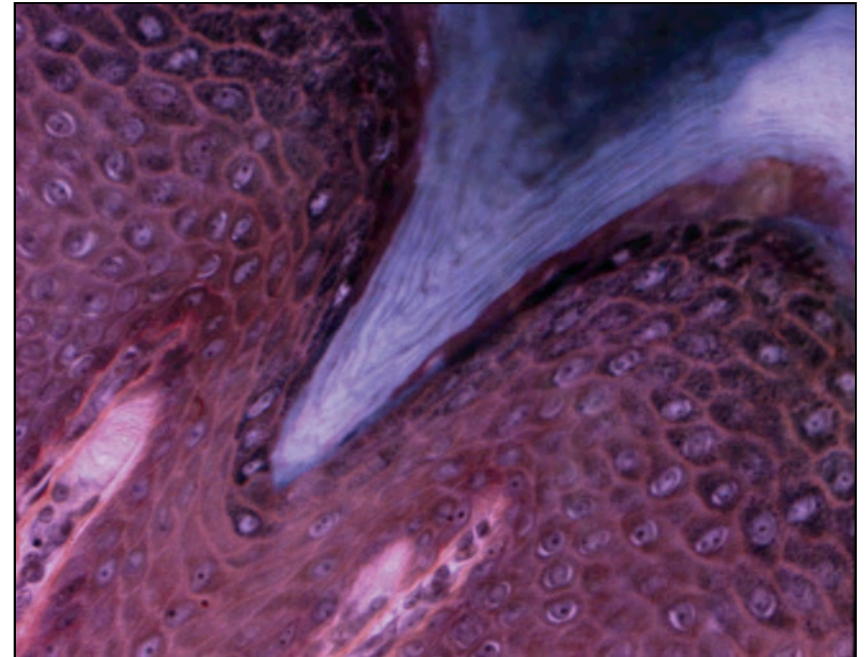
Here's my question, what's your answer?
How the hell did I get cancer?
All whole-wheat, no red meat,
Organic-grown is all I eat;
Jogging, swimming, low-fat diet;
Drugs, alcohol, tobacco—nyet!
Early to bed, early to rise,
Healthy life my enterprise.
No triple bypass surgery,
Joint replacement, hip or knee;
Liver's good, bowels better,
Kidney functions to the letter;
A hundred per in every facet,
Never thought that I would catch it.

Here's my answer, simple fool,
Your fate's not governed by a rule;
Ain't no use in livin' clean;
Life teeters on an errant gene.

Touch

Nancy Henry, DVM

Department of Anatomy



Penguin Suit

Amelia Frank

Class of 2013

First Place, Prose

I sat back into the plush scratch of the car seat and sighed. The humidity condensed on my car windshield and I turned on the wipers to clear it. It was one of those awful summer days: the kind with an overcast purple sky, so muggy you feel your fingers getting pruney when you go outside. We wouldn't be able to take the kids outside today.

I thought I liked kids; I just assumed the maternal instinct was simmering underneath the surface and being a camp counselor would kick it into high gear. I thought I'd be one of those people covered in grass stains and sticky-fingered-purple-crap on my shirt, my hair half out of its ponytail and in absolute bliss. As it turns out, I'm not.

The knot in my stomach grew tighter and tighter as I pulled into the employee lot. After only a few seconds out of my car I could feel the sweat beginning to pool under my bra. As I trudged toward the Visitor's Center a raindrop plopped on my forehead and swam down in my sweat.

I passed the crocodiles on my way in. They are kept in the older enclosures in the front – these tiny cages, really, made before animal rights activists were angry – because people don't stop and watch them for hours. I don't blame them, the crocodiles just kind of lie there all day like old fat men and nobody wants to watch old fat men. But there's like ten crocodiles all stuffed in this little sunken-in pen with a tiny pond for them to swim in. One night at the beginning of camp, I got off work and glanced at them as I walked by; I ended up staying at their pen for what seemed like forever, watching them not move, just breathing, occasionally slipping into the muddy water and squishing around in it.

I stepped into our meeting room – a big open cavern with blue carpeting and white walls absolutely stuffed to the brim with toys – and immediately got put to work. Each counselor had five kids to look after. Doesn't seem so bad, but the zoo is big and these are kids who are used to having their own way. Some days I wish they were on leashes. Some days I wish they were in cages. Especially Jordan – but I didn't even want to think about Jordan.

We all hustled about getting ready for the kids to arrive with parents in tow. I grabbed my nametag – “Amy” written in big, purple, block letters – and pinned it

on and as I looked up, I saw Nate out of the corner of my eye.

He wandered past the open door and waved to me, just one short flip of the hand like he wasn't sure if I was available for a chat. Nate has worked at the zoo all summer, every summer since he was fourteen. He started as a cashier four years ago and has worked his way up to being Tux the Penguin, part of the “Zoo Team”. Over the summer we'd become friends. He's the one guy here who isn't creepy and old, or wants to be a camp counselor for a living – which is a whole different kind of creepy. He's my work buddy.

“What's up?” I asked, coming up behind him as he grabbed the penguin suit from a locker in the “Employees Only” room. It stared at us with big glassy eyeballs and its plush feathers smoothed down.

“Not much,” he said. “Just preparing for another glorious day encased inside a 200-pound penguin suit.”

“I'd give anything to be Tux.”

“It's all hot and heavy and the kids are always coming up and kicking, punching me, stepping on my feet –”

“But they don't know who's under there, so you know they're not trying to hurt you; they're just trying to hurt whoever. With me they know who they're going for.” I glanced at my watch as I stood up.

“Some kids run away in absolute terror when they see me – do you know how awful that is?” He looked at me sincerely and I shrugged.

As I left, to join the kids, I saw him grab the penguin head and start to pull it over his own, but the door closed, and I didn't see him put it on. A girl headed toward the Employee Room, pushed the door open, greeting Nate as she entered. I could see a whirl of black and whiteness and as the door swung shut I could hear them laughing behind it.

The first half an hour of camp is always chaos, with children coming and parents leaving and tears of separation and shouts of joy at regaining a friend long-lost since yesterday. I finally got all of the kids arranged around our table and took a deep breath. Jordan wasn't there. For just a moment my heart leapt at the thought that he might not come today. But then, I swear, I felt a chill on my neck

Penguin Suit (cont.)

and turned to see a little six-year-old boy with big blue eyes and black hair with a cowlick stuck up in the back. He had a petulant frown on his face and his arms were crossed over his Hulk t-shirt.

“Hey Jordan, how you doing today, bud?” I asked – when I talk to the kids my voice goes about three octaves higher. I crossed my fingers and hoped today might be different.

“I don’t like your fart-face, Amy.”

“Well, that doesn’t make me feel very good, Jordan. Maybe we can be a little nicer today?”

He looked at me bright eyed, tilting his head and looking for all the world like some magnificent zoo bird – an eagle or a condor or a really intelligent peacock – perched on a branch.

“Maybe. Will I get a cookie?”

“Maybe,” I countered and proceeded to gather up the kids for the first activity. We lisped the pledge, made puppet shows based around our group mascot. My group was Kangaroo Group and we had a scene with Kangaroo and Crocodile arguing about being nice. Jordan and I argued about being nice too, after he hit Sarah on the head. Our play reminded me of the crocodiles out front. I wondered if they liked the rain, if it gave them a chance to really get wet, instead of just living in that tiny pool. I wondered if they felt it at all. On the way out I’d have to stop and see.

The Lion King was next on the agenda as the rain poured down outside, and then lunch, filled with Jordan’s shouts of “fart-face,” and peanut butter sandwiches. But it was after lunch that I was afraid of. This is the time the kids are the most restless, after they’ve downed forty ounces of sugar, and we had no big group activity to do. Anne, the head counselor, jumped up when all the kids were finishing their cookies, and yelled that we had special visitors. A door magically opened – I swear it was backlit like you’d imagine heaven to be – and the entire Zoo Team stepped through: Roary the Lion, Queenie the Peacock, Pokey the Turtle, Spits the Llama and Tux the Penguin. They and their handlers spread out across the room like a fan, in formation. Tux careened toward me and my kids.

“Hey there Tux!” we all shouted at him. Some of the kids were jumping up and down. Tux waved a wing at us all and his handler told us all about penguins while he did a waddledance. Then the kids bombarded them with questions.

“Are you the biggest penguin in the world?”

“Do you miss the ocean?”

After the Zoo Team had been entertaining us for about an hour, they waved goodbye. Tux waddled over to me and gave me a high-five and his eyes twinkled before following Spits the Llama’s wavery neck.

I turned around to see all of the kids sitting on the floor with glassy eyed stares. We sat them down at the table with crayons, paper and markers and had them draw their favorite animals, their favorite part of the zoo, whatever, so long as they were sitting.

I was helping Sarah with her drawing of a black bear giving her a hug when it happened. A quick mumbling of voices at the other end of my table and then a loud wail. I sighed and looked over; Jordan had his head down on the table and a paper clutched in his hand.

He was sobbing.

I stared for a second, then walked over and knelt by his chair, expecting him to turn away into the table. But instead, as he felt my hand on his tiny shoulder, he turned and curled up into my arms. He dug his face into my neck and sobbed with everything he had, still holding the piece of paper. I was shocked and I saw it reflected in the faces of the other children and counselors.

“Jordan,” I said softly, “Jordan, what’s wrong?”

I detached the paper from his hand, figuring it would be some insult. It was a picture of a hamburger, as far as I could tell. A hamburger with ears.

“Jordan, what’s this a picture of?” I asked

“Spike,” he sobbed.

“Who’s Spike?” He lifted his head – tears streamed down his cheeks and left shiny lines that made the rest of his face look dirty, and snot was highjumping out of his nose – and said, “Spike’s my guinea pig.”

He looked at me with despair and loneliness and gently took back the picture of Spike the guinea pig, smoothed out the wrinkles.

I took a guess. “Jordan, did Spike die?”

He nodded and took a shuddering breath in.

“Yeah,” he said, sniffing, “I got him when I was four, and he died,” his voice started rising again, “and he died, and now he’s gone,” the tears spilled out, “and I loved him and I drew a picture of him to make me happy, but I’m sad!” He

Penguin Suit (cont.)

sobbed again and threw himself into my arms.

I rocked him back and forth. As I held him I found myself humming a song so low that I almost couldn't hear it, but I felt the vibrations travel through my chest and quiet him. He stopped crying after a few minutes and collected himself with a snack.

All I could see was that terrible picture and I didn't know if it was funny or sad. For some reason it reminded me of my crocodiles. I stepped out to catch my breath and passed the "Employees Only" room. I thought of Nate and how much I wanted to tell him the story, so I pushed the door open.

"Oh my God, Nate, you will nev—" I stopped in my tracks. Nate stood alone, in the center of the room; he was still wearing the bottom of the Tux suit, the body, but he had taken off the head. His face streamed with sweat, flushed with heat and his hair was stuck-up all over. I gasped and blushed. And he stood there, a glass of water held in one wing, his eyes peering at me. Not blinking, not accusing, just softly looking.

I tried to talk, but nothing came out. All I could feel was my heart bouncing around and all I could see was him standing in half of this penguin suit. I had never seen that before. I had seen him out of it and inside it, but never this half-and-half thing and I felt like I had seen something private and sacred. I felt privileged in a way, but I didn't know if I had the right.

"I-I'm sorry," I said, "I didn't realize—" I couldn't finish. My hands were shaking.

"No, its okay," he exclaimed. He waddled toward me after setting the water down on the table. "It's okay."

We stared at each other for a few seconds. Then he smiled. A wing of the penguin suit came out and brushed my arm, my wrist, going up and down very slowly. And Nate kept smiling. His eyes were twinkling, like Tux's did.

"I've got to get out of this thing before I burn up," he whispered. I nodded.

"But I'll catch you after work, okay?" he said.

I walked out of the room and leaned against the wall. The world kept shimmering and moving. I was breathing hard and the white paint was cold on my face. My wrist brushed the plaster and I felt his wing on my arm again. I walked again, blinking hard, toward the door.

It was absolutely pouring outside, the sky cheerfully falling down. I waded

through the puddles to that spot by the crocodiles and peered over the cement railing. I don't know if it was the rain or the right time of day or luck, but the crocodiles that usually lay still, some of them were moving. It wasn't a tap dance or anything, but three crocodiles were standing in the pond, faces turned toward the wind and blinking slowly against the raindrops. One crocodile had his mouth hanging open a little and it looked exactly like he was grinning.

Herndon Cabin, Winter

Mark Gordon

Community



Spring Cleaning at Bear Creek Cabin

Shannon Kelley

Community

With an updraft of inhibition,
I opened the vintage ice box door
mindful of last year's cache
of nuts among mattress stuffing
and the squirrel that skittered
insanely across my feet as fear itself.
I was unprepared for the nosegay

Of mice, pink as mountain mushrooms,
that lay dead in mused straw
like figures alive on canvas.
Cold to the touch, they seemed
recently abandoned. Grandfather
assured me our arrival
did not make us responsible.

Four in a circle. Toss them
into the woods, Grandfather said.

As the screen door diced dust
behind me, I strode processional steps
into Bear Creek, soon rib-high, waded
downstream to my secret spring
where the tepid turned ice cold.
My arm a shadow of energy
above the lifting waters,

I held the mice in my hand.
When my legs bolted blue
and chest wrenched taut,
I lowered the dead to the artesian
surface, spread my fingers' pale geography,
and, only then, seemed to float
companion to those travelers.

tom

Wayne Byrnes, M.D.

Class of 1976

lying here
trapped
inside my body that
no longer responds
to m(myself and i)e

thi(dream)ing
no
the dreams
are gone
all there is left
is the thinking

there used to be dreams
i had it all
i was handsome
a real girl magnet

i was smart
not valedictorian
but above the norm

and i could play
oh man could i play
football

 basketball
 BA(BA)SE(LL)
that was my love the crack of the bat

the sight of the ball
 fence
 the
sailing over
 sailing

and then my turn on defense
the wind up
the release
the sight of the ball
speeding toward the bat
that was swinging hard
then
 the
 drop
of a perfect slider
and the swoosh of the bat
contacting
n(thing)o but air
strike three
and the inning is over
the game won

then
the break in the season
i'm home with my friends
a picnic
by the quarry

(continued on next page)

tom (cont.)

a dare

a d

i

v

e

the air moving
past my body
the water approaching
racing toward my perfectly
stretched arms
the impact of the water
and bla(ness)ck

when light returned
i couldn't mo(feel)ve my legs
my arms just flopped
i had a tube down my throat
my lungs move on their own
by the noise of a machine next to my bed
my neck was broken
and all i had were the dreams

but now they're gone
and all i do
is think

Mud Prairie Portrait

Tom Handy

Research Imaging



In Memory of Dave

Hope Baluh, M.D., FACS

Class of 1983

Second Place, Prose

There were times we would be up most of the night. Cramming, studying, laughing, and talking, really living. We were friends, just friends, but close. The kind of guy who you could hang out with at 2 a.m. and not feel awkward that something else was in the air. I remember times we would be “studying” going over the same minutiae for a test, knowing we were remembering the detail that didn’t, wasn’t going to matter but not being able to get it out of our heads.

He was athletic. A runner. All muscle — no fat. His body fat percentage had to be in the single digits. He was lean not bulky. He was kind of a country boy. Liked to fish and hunt. We went fishing that first year in med school. Don’t know where we found the time. One of the Profs let us use a little flat boat. It was fun. We didn’t catch much that I recall. It was just fun. I remember we were walking back at dusk and came upon a cemetery and became really scared — at least I did and we ran and ran and laughed at ourselves later. We, he and I, could really bare our souls to each other. We could talk about our relationships with others.

He had a girlfriend. I had a boyfriend, sometimes. We would analyze them.

There was no texting, no phones. He would just show up at my apartment mostly alone but sometimes with a cadre of his buddies — they all seemed liked good guys — even the one that stole his former girlfriend. They still got along. I was a bit of a loner — lived away from the bulk of the class. I wanted it that way. When he knocked I was always glad to see him — at least that’s how I remember it.

He was sort of an unlikely doctor. I guess many of us didn’t look professional back then. His family background was muddy. Sisters were always asking for money — he had no money. His parents had split up. His grandfather seemed to be his main support. He would tell funny stories of his grandfather running around in his underwear. His grandfather gave him an old, beat-up Ford pickup. I remember him trying to teach me to drive it. It was a manual. I kept rolling it back on hills at intersections — it was a disaster. I was un-teachable. That first year we really became friends.

Later, when we all moved north we probably saw each other a little less as clinical responsibilities increased. Fast-forward to graduation. Classes were done, electives done. He had bought a motorcycle. He came by, wanted to know if I

wanted a ride. A hot beautiful day. We went out to the Lincoln cabin area. I hadn’t been on a motorcycle since high school. It was powerful — or felt powerful. A little scary but fun. He drove and drove — like he, we didn’t want it to end — the day, med school, all that we had. I remember at the graduation crying. Feeling like I was leaving the best time of my life. Not wanting it to end. The ride was like that. I was for once really living the moment, not thinking about the future or problems. He pulled over under a bridge.

We never really had a physical thing, but that day under the bridge we kissed. It was passionate; it was electric — we both felt it I knew. I remember thinking — if this is how one kiss feels . . . I guess it was the culmination of a lot of intimacy — not really physical intimacy but closeness. Then we graduated and moved and I never talked with him again. I never saw him alive again.

I got the call from one of our classmates. I was in my fourth year of surgery residency, pregnant. Dave had killed himself. He had shot himself, alone, in a cabin.

Dave in a suit, in a casket. It was surreal. If only we had kept in touch. If only he had called me or I had called him. Dear God, I wish I would have.

'The Quicks' and 'The Slows'

John Grace, M.D.

Class of 2000

Third Place, Poetry

Sometimes your brain goes fast,
Real fast.
It dances, runs, spins, and jumps.
We call that, "The Quick."
And you're fast. So fast.
Man you're slick,
And everyone knows.

Then ...it slips...

Cause it's tricky,
Running fast.
You trip,
To a place,
Called, "The Slows."

"The Slows" sink to your bones,
Then you slow, and you're slow,
Far you slip, down.
Far from being fast.

The world stops, nothing grows.
On and on it slumbers,
A stagnant, empty, void.
Moving slow.
Certain you'll never move again,

Until...your eyes open.
Then...you raise your head.
You stand up, look around,
Gingerly...you take a step forward.

And another,
Another.
Then...you're walking,
Walking.
Then...a hop,
Then a jump,
Then walking,
Walking,
Walking fast,
Then running,
Running,
Running quick,

Watch out,

It's slippery slick.

November 23: A Sestina

Amelia Frank

Class of 2013

First Place, Poetry

They walked hand in hand, their steps quick
and small, like tiptoe hurried. She blushed, her heart
climbing as he smiled at her lips –
faintly tinged blue in the cold air that fell like a blanket of snow
around them. Ahead, past the café, the mountain
rose up like an exclamation. Let's go, he said. I'd like a cup

of something warm. He laughed and curled his fingers to cup
hers, pulling her for a lovely moment. She grinned, then, a quick
flit of joy (like a star at night flashing over a mountain –
that's how it seemed to her). Her heart
jarred, excited and nervous, when her feet slipped on old snow
on the patio, but he held her upright. They stumbled in. Her lips

wished to say, let's stay outside and dust off the clouds from our lips
as we breathe. It'd be easier – but they ordered a cup
of coffee for him, a hot chocolate for her that came with a snow
made of peppermint on top. They drank, set the drinks down, drank – nothing quick,
and talked and the sharp mint taste stayed in her heart
like a clean wind rolling down off the mountain.

Loud laughs and sparkling looks hid a mountain
of words unsaid, of feelings that never left lips –
(whatever color they were in the warmth of the café). Her burning heart
tried to pound its way into his cup
where he could drink her in and keep her in quick
movements of his tongue. Outside, it started to snow.

She stood (to leave her cocoa and hold his hand in the snow
for so long that around them grew a mountain
to hide beside and beneath, where no one asked them to be quick
and go). They did leave and he kissed her red lips,
sweet with peppermint, arms circling like figurines in the cup
of a snow globe. Now, in the cold, her heart

shook, still. His hand clasped hers for warmth and his heart
tangled in joy. She closed her eyes and – delicate, soft – she saw snow
behind her eyelids. It was a moment to take and cup
forever in their minds, she knew and he knew. The mountain
watched as they floated back, quiet resting on their lips,
neither of them wanting to end the journey quickly.

The horizon moved to cup them in an embrace as they walked, as if its heart
held them precious, kissed them to its lips. Quick, now, in the distance
the snow fell around them and the mountain looked to the horizon.

Editor's Note: A sestina is considered the most complex form of verse. It is composed of six stanzas of six lines each, then a concluding stanza of three lines. The final word used in each line of the first stanza repeats in a different order as the last word of each line in the remaining stanzas. The final stanza is three lines in which the six key words are repeated again.

A Child Without Hope

Joseph Butler

Class of 2014

Ten minutes left until the bell rings. Science is our last subject of the day. I'm not paying attention anymore, I'm thinking about how horrifying it is that school is about to end. You know how most kids are excited when school ends? How they can't wait to get out of class? Well I'm not one of those. That last bell signals the worst part of my day. The walk, or rather, the run home wasn't very far. It was only six or seven blocks, but it might as well have been a marathon. I rarely made the journey unscathed.

Their numbers varied; I never knew who would be in on it that day, but they were never alone. Waiting for them to leave first wasn't an option. They would wait with me, and then they were more prepared for my departure. They would wait between me and safety. This had been going on for years. They knew the places I would go where they couldn't follow, and of course they always waited until I was off of school grounds.

You see, my mom tried to get it all stopped. She went and complained to the school administration, but the school always said that if something happened outside of school property, they had no control over it. The truth is they didn't even care half of the time when it did happen on school property. I was lucky if I could even go to the bathroom without someone trying to pee on me or trip me while I was pissing. I learned to hold it all day, until I got back home. Anyways, the school wasn't going to help, and my mother had to work. No father or other family that lived near enough to help.

My best option was to take off as soon as that bell rang. If I got out of there quick enough, I could get a head start home. I wasn't the fastest though and they often had the same idea. More often than not they caught me, and when they did it wasn't pretty. If I got caught I would be kicked, punched, spit on, called a fag or a homo. If any of them had a stick handy they would poke my backside with it and laugh before beating me with it. They wanted to humiliate me and make me feel small. They wanted me to live in fear, and it worked. I hated my life, and I was terrified of that last bell.

Shit! There it is. I pick up my bag and start making my way to the door when the teacher calls me. What could she possibly want? Past due library book! That's it! I lost my head-start because of a stupid library book. No problem...if I hurry, maybe I can still get lost in the crowd of students heading home.

I make my way outside and the mad dash begins. I keep dodging people as I make my way, but before I even get off of school property there are three of them

chasing behind. My heart is pounding as I run as fast as I can. It isn't fast enough, but if I can just make it to the tree in the park I'll be safe. I might not be the fastest runner in school, but I am definitely the best climber. If I can make it to that tree I can be up out of reach before they have a chance to touch me.

I keep running past students, but one of them is right behind me now. I've learned a trick or two from these encounters though. Just as he is about to push me over, I drop into a ball. His legs strike me and he goes flying face-first over me. I am up and running again before he has a chance to figure out what happened, but now the other two are closer. Just a block left before I get to the park. Suddenly I'm on the ground with a face full of dirt and scraped palms. I didn't see him waiting for me. I didn't see his foot dart out in front of me.

The first blow lands as I try to get back up. A kick to the stomach and I can't breathe. My mouth is open and I'm trying to get air in, but my lungs refuse to obey. All four of them are around me now, and as the blows start falling, I curl up into a ball and try to make my mind go blank. I almost have to laugh at the position I'm in. Curled up face down with my hands locked behind my neck like they teach us during tornado drills and they keep kicking. It doesn't hurt too badly; I'm used to the pain. Honestly, the fear of being caught is worse than actually being caught. The outcome isn't as unknown anymore. The only thing that is left for me to do is ignore what's happening and see if I survive. One way or another I doubt I'll live past sixteen, not that I'd be missing much.

Suddenly there is a blinding flash of light that tears through any thoughts I was having. I'm lying on my back and feel one last kick before I see them run away. I get on my feet, but my head is spinning. Blood starts pouring down my face and there is a dull aching in my head. I reach up and can feel a gash in my head. My hand comes back down red. It's over for now, I survived. It's almost too bad. I clasp my hand to my head and begin walking home.

I need to call Mom.

Mystery

Amelia Frank
Class of 2013

Your breath, slow and steady in moonlight,
ghosts down your shoulder –

I can almost fill
the space between
your arm and mine and now

would be the perfect time
to cover myself –
feel your fingers
tighten around my wrist in your dream,
like a secret,
without thought.

But I couldn't stand it if
you pulled away,
if your body jerked
from my pulse;
if you turned over in your sleep
unconscious though it was
(unconscious as a heartbeat) –

so I content myself
from here:

content myself
with counting jutting bones inside your back
tapping them out

with hungry, learning eyes
(they rise, fall with breaths
like ancient hills,
like evolution).

Ribs indent lines
that muscles make along your side.
You seem cold, you know.

Bones sharp through
your velvet skin –
support your breath –

and I,
from here,
could bless each one

but I don't know their names.

Crack Ride

John Grace, M.D.

Class of 2000

I've heard horror stories about "bad" neighborhoods. I've been told, "Don't go near the projects." I've been scared as we drove by "those" parts of town.

But there's a different side to every crack village, a peaceful side, a serene side, a side that few employed people even know exist...and even fewer experience.

Crack heads need sleep. And when they sleep, it is a deep sleep, a peaceful slumber where the machinations and ruminations of a cocaine-laced mind are laid to rest – even if only for a few hours. Their teeth gone, gums displayed, like newborn infants they embrace their resting state...vulnerable to the world but at peace with it.

That is the heart of our story.

Filled with new optimism, my last of year of residency I vowed to ride my bicycle to work. Every morning, I set out, venturing ten miles through the most crime-penetrated, drug-ridden real estate on the west coast of Florida...all for the sake of doing something "green" for the planet.

At first, I feared for my life, riding quickly, looking both ways, anxiously keeping a vigilant hand in my pocket holding a small container of mace. I'd paid up my life insurance and gotten my affairs in order. I was prepared to become a statistic.

But the truth is...I was never in any danger. In fact, over two-hundred and fifty days, two-thousand-five-hundred miles of ghetto, I never had any contact with another person.

I saw people. Lots of people. People sleeping on cars. People sleeping on each other. People sleeping on the ground. People sleeping naked.

But no one...and I mean no one...was ever awake at six o'clock in the morning.

There are two lives to every crack house. A night life with people moving, shaking, wheeling, dealing, and getting high. And a day life characterized by a deeper state of existence that transcends hibernation and verges into suspended animation.

You're more likely to see a vampire in a garlic patch at high noon than a crack head up for breakfast. All of them were asleep.

Eventually my morning ride took on a new emotional perspective marked by an eerie silence, a serenity, even, dare I say, a beauty? They slept like children...too overwhelmed with the world to be concerned for their own well-being.

Life proved very predictable in this place and that predictability gave it comfort, somehow combining the nostalgia of a small neighborhood with the beautiful isolation of the arctic tundra.

I felt safe there, safe in the most dangerous place I'd ever been. That contrast made the experience all the more memorable.

Today I live far from the crack houses of the city. SUV's, soccer moms, and suburbia dominate the landscape of my life. I ride my bike along busy streets sharing the curbs with joggers, walkers, and a pet or two.

Strange as it may seem, I often find myself longing for those quiet rides through the wasteland, serving as the last witness to some lost humanity.

I felt important. Like I was the only one who even knew that world existed.

Rooted

Ashley Urish

Class of 2014

Second Place, Visual Art



The Drive

John Grace, M.D.

Class of 2000

“How long have you been planning to kill me?” Jim asked his wife of thirty-five years.

“Don’t make it sound so deliberate and cruel. You know that I love you.” Susan answered.

Jim stared down at the wheel of the 1966 Mustang fastback. He loved that car, knew every inch of it. Susan wasn’t terribly surprised that he discovered the brake line had been severed. Living on a mountain road, it would have been fatal.

“I do know you love me. Or at least loved who I was.” Jim answered.

“What now, Jim?” asked Susan.

“I don’t know.” he said. “How did it get here? I mean how did it come to this?” he asked.

“Is it really that much of a stretch? You’ve been so sick for so long. Your illness is decimating our finances. You’re falling apart and I’m so tired. In a way, prison will be a break.” Susan answered.

“I know.” Jim said staring ahead at an imagined road. “It’s not like I haven’t thought about it. What kind of life is this...for either of us?”

“None. None at all, Jim. You know something. I really love you. I still love you. I wasn’t trying to hurt you.”

“I believe you, Susan,” Jim said.

“But let me ask you again Jim...what now?”

“I don’t know. It’s not like we can go back. Don’t take this the wrong way but I’m not sure I’ll feel totally comfortable crawling into bed with you.” Jim said.

“Yeah. That’s an understatement.” Susan chuckled.

There was a strange levity between them as if the elephant in the room was finally acknowledged. They were actually talking, actually talking for the first time in almost a year. And both of them missed that, and remembered how much they cared for each other.

Jim took a deep breath.

“I’m gonna leave, Susan. I’m gonna go for that drive now. But I love this car. So if it’s all right, I’d like to take your car instead....besides...they would have found the cut brake line. You would have gone to prison. That wouldn’t have helped anyone.”

The Drive (cont.)

“You’re going to do it?”

“I don’t see as if I have a choice. It’s either that or the police. Lesser of two evils I suppose.”

“No Jim. No. I don’t want you to go. Please. I was insane. I was stupid. I was lost. I was so lost! But now I see. I want to talk more. I want to spend every night talking with you, however much time you have.” Susan started to cry.

“I’ll tell you what Susan. I’m going to go for a drive and see what happens. I need that for me, okay?”

“No.” She said sniffing.

“I need this. Okay?” Jim was firm.

“Okay. Okay. But please come home. Please come home Jim.” Susan pleaded.

“I will. I promise.”

Susan let Jim drive down the driveway, wondering if she would ever see the man she loved again.

An hour passed.

And another.

And another. Susan’s heart sunk.

After nearly nine hours, Susan was certain Jim was gone forever. Just as she reached for the phone to call the police, it rang.

“Hello.” Susan said.

“Hi.”

“Jim? Oh Jim! Jim where are you?”

“Actually...I’m in Key West. I drove all the way down here. Just saw a beautiful sunset. Do you want to hear about it?” He asked.

“I don’t understand.”

“I drove up to the cliff, three or four times. Drove to the police station a few times as well. And finally I decided. I wasn’t ready to give up on either of us...you or me. Neither option felt right. So I just drove. Drove to Key West because I wanted to look at the sunset. I wanted to look at the sunset and eat some shrimp.”

“Do you want me to come?”

“No.” Jim said. “Would you like hear about it though?”

“Sure.”

“Sometimes the sun goes down fast like its falling into the ocean, and the world seems to be spinning right under your feet, moving on without you or in spite of you. But sometimes, every once in a while the sun sets so slowly that it almost seems like the earth is raising up to meet the sky. As the ocean gets closer and closer to the sky it gets painted a soft warm orange. Everything gets slowly dyed in that deep soft glow.

That kind of sunset makes you thankful. It becomes a part of you. You’re better because of it and it always stays with you.”

Susan started to cry. “It sounds beautiful. I wish I was there.”

“You are Susan. You are. You’re here with me.”

They talked for hours that night. And it reminded Susan of when they were teenagers and would spend hours on the phone talking about pointless things. When she looked at the clock it was well past midnight.

“Susan?” Jim asked.

“Yes.”

“I have to go to bed now. I have a busy day tomorrow. Can I call you tomorrow night and tell you about it?”

“Of course.”

Jim and Susan spoke every night for hours for the next few months. And every night Jim would describe his amazing adventures of the day. He made the most of his last days snorkeling, sky diving, and soaking up the sun on beautiful beaches across the country. And he shared all of it with her every night. The two of them grew closer than they had in years.

Until one night the calls finally stopped and Susan knew that was the end.

Two days after last speaking to Jim, there was a knock at the door. It was Steve Aris, the family attorney and Jim’s best friend.

“Hello Susan.” Steve said.

“Hi Steve.”

“Jim’s gone.”

“I know.”

“He asked me to give this to you.” Steve handed her an unsealed letter in Jim’s handwriting.

“Thank you.” She said.

Steve left and Susan put the envelope on the table, waiting several hours to

The Drive (cont.)

read it. After a few glasses of wine, and a few good cries, she went over and started. It wasn't a long letter.

Sweetie,

I wanted you to know I never gave up. On me. On you. On us. I soaked up every piece of life I could with whatever was given to me and tried everything I could think of to give as much as possible.

It's sad.

But it's not sad what we did with it. And I'm proud of who I was, who we were. I'm proud of us. This ended as good as it could have ended. Thanks to us.

I love you and I'm thankful for you.

More now than ever.

Love, Jim.

Susan smiled as she folded the letter and thought of Jim's countless adventures across the country. She was happy he got to do so many of the things he'd always dreamed of. She slept soundly that night.

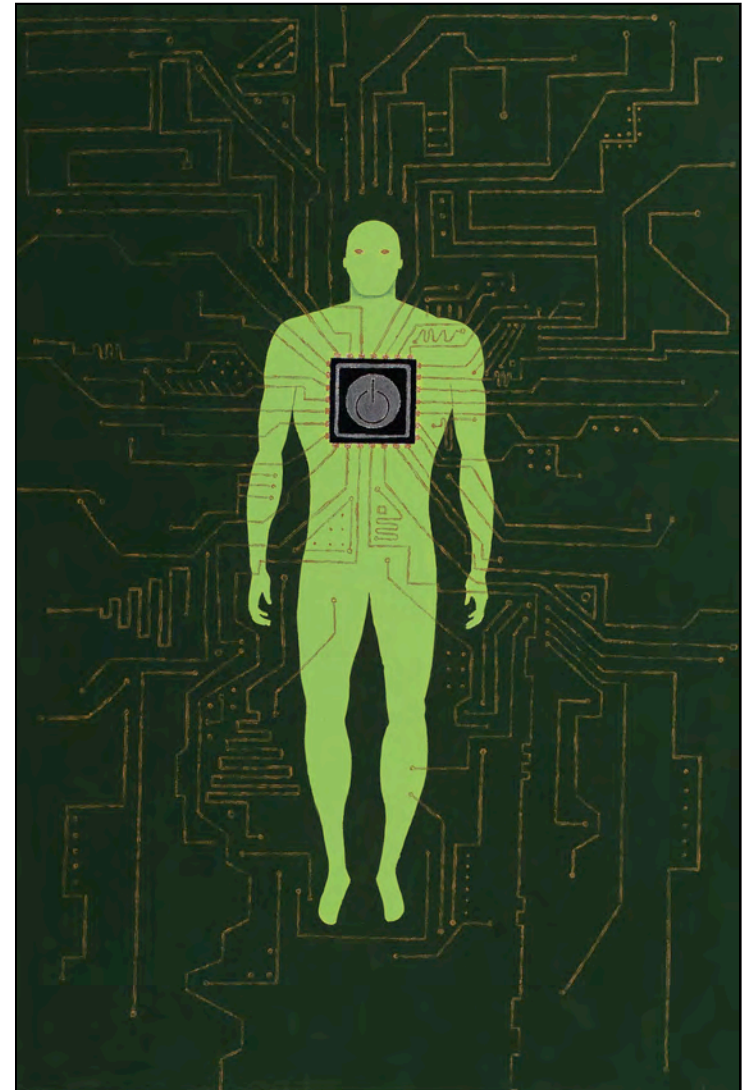
The next morning Steve returned her car. It was still in excellent condition but Susan didn't care about that.

And she never noticed the odometer. It had only increased nine miles since Jim left that day.

Technology Dependence

Kenton Barnett

Class of 2015



Aix Sponsa Domus

Joshua Kelley
Community



Once Upon a Christmas

Sandra Shea, Ph.D.
Department of Family and Community Medicine

My father, Ed, died in March. He and Mom, Gini, had been living with me for almost 4 years, and to say Mom was desolate doesn't begin to describe her pain. At first she couldn't sleep in the bed they shared for almost 60 years, nor could she sleep alone, so she and I slept together on the foldout sofa in the living room. After a couple months she started taking afternoon naps in her own bed, then for weeks we slept in her bed at night together. Eventually, she managed to sleep there, sadly and desperately alone, calling me to come help her through some bad nights, but sleeping soundly only on those nights she felt Ed near.

She smiled rarely and was interested in less.....less food, less company, less activity. She came back to life a little while talking to her grandchildren. She grieved more when trying to reach her twin sister who was sliding deeper into the pit of Alzheimer's. Her physical ailments, especially her arthritis, were made worse by her inactivity and grief, limiting what I could get her involved in outside the house. She bravely tried reading, finding new television shows, calling friends, but nothing could ever fill the hole in her heart, and nothing could make the house any less barren while I was at work.

As the first Christmas in 60 years without Dad loomed ahead, I worried for her. Mom loved Christmas passionately and joyfully, most especially when she had little children to share it with. Her father and grandfather had both died when she was just 5, within weeks of each other during the same Christmas season. All Christmases after that, she said, would be better. Almost had to be, and yet, I could not see how to make that come true this year. Her grandchildren were 1,000 miles away and she was in no shape to visit them. Then I saw the Joffrey Ballet was coming to St. Louis to perform Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Clara, the Mouse King, the Sugar Plum Fairy, Drosselmeyer and the rest have always been special parts of her Christmas. Now I finally had a gift to give her, but as happens in life, sometimes the best gifts are the ones you never see coming.

Once Upon a Christmas (cont.)

We made a weekend of it, driving the 100 miles to St. Louis on Friday. We went to her favorite hotel, had a nice dinner and an early evening so she could rest overnight and sleep late in the morning. Saturday night was the ballet, so Saturday midday we went to the Galleria Mall to have lunch, do some shopping, do some people watching and look at the decorations. As we approached the main atrium I weaved her wheelchair through and around a very large crowd of children and adults.

“What is the crowd for?” Mom asked, unable to see very far.

“It’s Santa,” I said, “we’ll go around to the other side where the crowd is smaller and you can see him.”

“Is he handsome?” she asked (she liked her Santas a little chubby, with a big white beard and a real smile) and I had to admit, he was a very good-looking Santa Claus. Smiling at the pre-schooler who was whispering in his ear, adjusting his wire-rim glasses, he certainly looked like a classic St. Nicholas.

I “excused us” through group after group of people watching from along the storefronts and finally nudged into a spot near the roped off exit gate where she could see Santa and the children. She leaned forward, intent, almost smiling. We hadn’t been there a minute when Santa spotted us as he waited for the next child. Mom couldn’t see small gestures at that distance, but he caught my eye, signaling with upraised finger to wait, then turned his attention back to the 2-year-old girl who was looking doubtfully at this bearded stranger. When she and her blue teddy bear got off his lap he signaled his elf to hold the next child a minute. He rummaged around in the big bag next to his chair.

“What’s he doing?” Mom asked.

“He’s coming to see you,” I replied.

“Really?” She asked, with true excitement in her voice.

“I’m sure of it.” As I said it, he rose from his chair and crossed the space to Mom with a big smile on his face. He leaned down to her and said clearly and just loudly enough for her hearing aids to pick up, “Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, Santa, how are you today?” she said.

“Oh, I’m fine now that you’re here. I’m so glad you came to see me today.”

And he winked at her. “I would like you to have this present from me,” and from behind his back he brought forward what he had pulled out of his big bag – a brass bell hung on a braided red cord, “to remind you of this day, and of the meaning of Christmas.”

“Oh, Santa!” she said, with a big smile on her face, one of the first genuine smiles I’d seen in months.

“Will you accept it? And celebrate Christmas and keep its true spirit of Christ’s love with you always?”

“Oh, yes, Santa, thank you very much. And I hope you and Mrs. Claus have a wonderful Christmas.”

And he laughed, bent lower, and took her arthritic, gouty hands (very softly) between his white gloves for a minute and said, “oh we will, we will, we always do.” He smiled at me a second and said, “I must get back to the children now, but thank you for coming.”

“Goodbye, Santa,” she said, “and thank you!” And then to me, still with a broad smile, holding the bell to her heart, “He IS a wonderful Santa!”

And he was gone. Gone before I could tell him how gloriously he succeeded in continuing “to make glad the heart of childhood” in Gini (and in me). Gone before I had a chance to wipe my tears. And gone before I even had a chance to introduce them, to tell him that, “Yes, Santa Claus, this is Virginia.”

Pandora's Curiosity

Keith Jacobs
Class of 2014



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801 N. Rutledge St.,
Springfield, IL 62794
217-545-2155
or e-mail scope@siumed.edu.

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