



**HIPPOCRENE 2007**

# HIPPOCRENE 2007

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

HIPPOCRENE is an arts magazine by and for the students, faculty, and staff of the Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM). We accept submissions year-round and publish each spring. Issues are freely available to all current medical students, graduate students in the Division of Biology & Biomedical Sciences (DBBS), and Medical School and DBBS faculty.

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<http://medicine.wustl.edu/litmag>

Please send submissions, comments, and questions to [litmag@medicine.wustl.edu](mailto:litmag@medicine.wustl.edu). Thank you for picking up this issue of HIPPOCRENE and for continuing to support the arts in all its forms within your community!

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## Washington University School of Medicine Arts Commission

*To foster a formalized arts tradition at Washington University in order to add richness to the medical school community. To provide a resource for students and groups in the cultivation and presentation of art – in all its forms – on the medical campus.*

In addition to Hippocrene, the Arts Commission supports these events and programs:

- **Annual Art Show** – Displaying visual arts created by students, faculty, and staff of the School of Medicine in the lobby of the Farrell Learning & Teaching Center.
- **Annual School of Medicine Musical**
- **Coffeehouse Concert Series** – A relaxed and informal setting for classical, jazz and other musical and spoken word performances by members of the medical community.
- **Grants for the Arts** – Encouraging the creation of art by providing selected students with funds for art supplies and materials.

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**Chain of Dorsal Root Ganglia**

**Julie Kosto Drobish**  
WUSM III



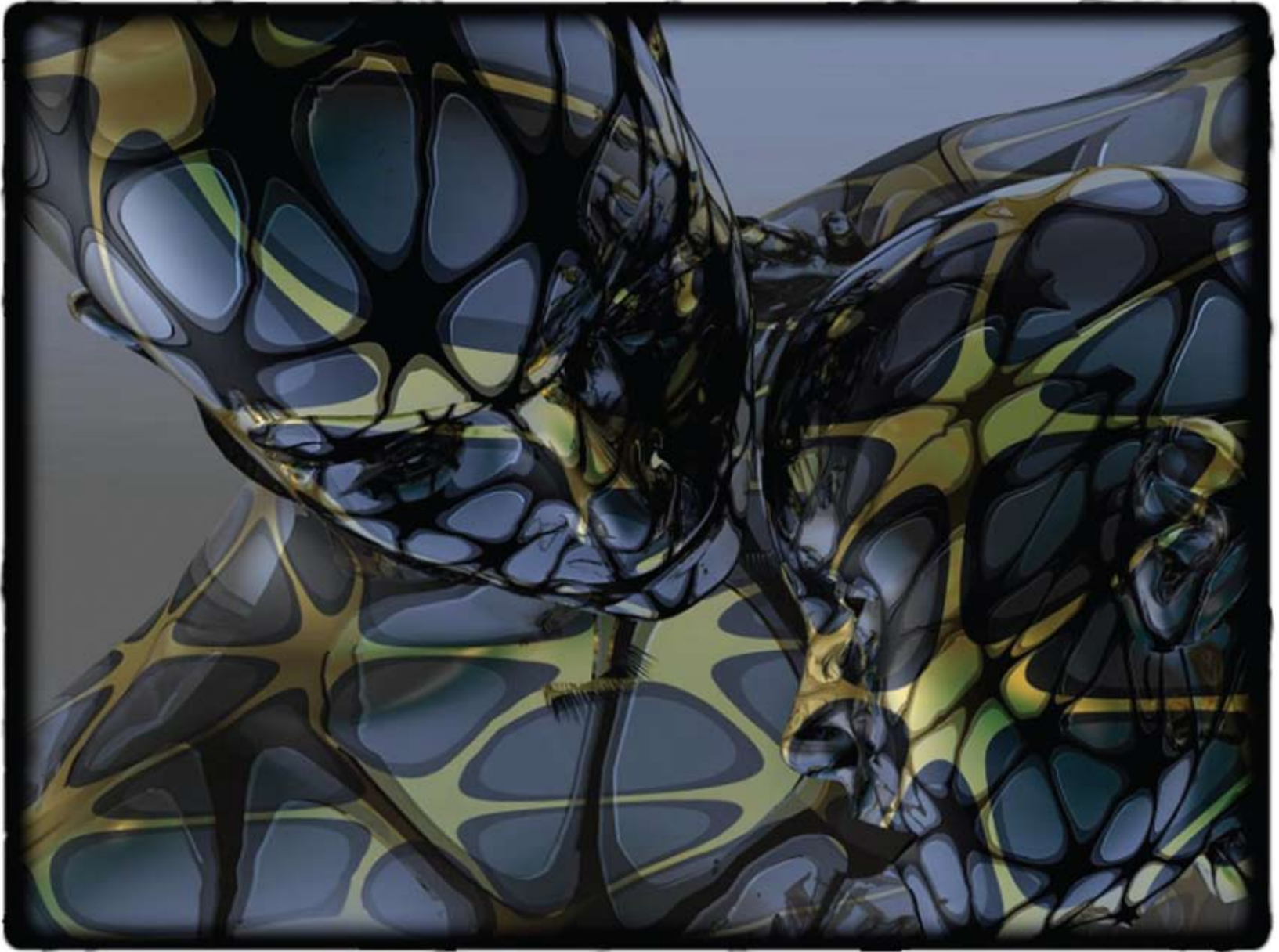
Chair

Rose Veile

Dept of Human Genetics

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**The Warmth**

**Larry Williams**  
Computer Room/Facilities Engineering

## The Way Home

Now this is the way I go home –  
traversing familiar paths with  
new consciousness, remembering  
the distinct landmarks, the road signs  
that hug the way, until eventually  
I will arrive suddenly- surprised  
it has become second nature, requiring  
little to no thought at all.

I have brought along everything I own;  
Some things have traveled with me  
my entire lifetime thus far- some it seems,  
through several. “Notice,” you said:  
“it is not all the ‘stuff’ we haul with us,  
but what we must leave behind  
that proves difficult, even painful.”  
It’s true: letting go of our attachments  
must precede stepping across a new threshold,  
or a new life, once imagined, now made real.

Soon I will stop tripping over all the  
cardboard boxes, tissue paper and bubble wrap–  
useful in cushioning all except my heart.  
Then I will find everything- all that is  
worth looking for, and name its new place-  
just as we must do now with each other,  
just as we must do with ourselves.


**Linda Ketchens**

Dept of Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics

## Opaque Clarity

Twisted morals direct our nation  
Like laurels hung in honor on our necks  
Self preservation perverted into aggression  
Self perpetuating patriotic hypocrisies  
seeding Crimson colored soils  
So long sovereign states  
Foreign fates sealed  
end of edification  
end of enlightenment  
enough  
twisted laurels hang on our necks  
nooses look like that

**Jason Hill**  
MD/PhD IV



Crack of Dawn







## Seeds

"You are the wave of the future—you can do anything. You can stop the wars, the hatred, the violence, the abuse." Professor Warner's voice echoes through the lecture hall. He takes off his glasses and pinches the bone of his nose, looks down at the podium, before slowly turning his gaze on us, the students, seated in front of him. "You have the strength, the intelligence, the power—and most of all the knowledge. Use it."

For some reason, everyone around me starts clapping, even standing up and cheering. Some girls have tears in their eyes, making their mascara run just a little. I've heard this speech a few too many times before, from different people and in different settings, but it's still the same speech. It doesn't mean that much now. I've always wanted to ask the speakers, "If we can't even control our own problems, how are we supposed to fix the world's?" But as usual, I keep quiet. It's better not to start arguments.

I walk out of the double doors, getting away as quickly as I can from all the students saying "That was an amazing lecture" or "He's so right, I feel so empowered." I do not go to lecture to hear some hackneyed speech on the power to change the world.

The Arizona spring heat hits me in a wave. I like the heat; it reminds me that I'm alive. My body works to sweat, I can feel my clothes sticking to my skin—everything becomes just a little uncomfortable. It becomes real.

The sky is blue today, like everyday, and birds are chirping. I'm sure somewhere out there, children are singing songs. I can see the Red Rocks of Sedona loom in the background. I like their contrast with the sky. Right now I think about how close to them I could get, about flying into the sky and away.

"Dave! Hey wait up, speed racer!" Tyler runs up to me and taps me on the shoulder. His t-shirt says "Save our Planet—it's the only one we've got." On the back there's a picture of earth with a happy face on it.

He keeps talking: "Dave, man, I'm surprised you showed up to lecture today. I mean, I heard about what happened. I'm really sorr—"

"I'm late. Bye." I start jogging away from Tyler, not caring how rude I'm being. Tyler and I aren't friends, we don't even talk. And I certainly don't want to talk to him today. Why did I come today? I guess I didn't know what else to do. My jog takes me to the middle of campus, and I find myself in front of some trees. One of them has apples growing from it, strange that they can grow in the heat. I would've thought they'd be dead. Still, they all seem red and healthy. Only one of them is within my reach and it grows on a low hanging branch stripped of all its leaves. I pick it off the tree and take a bite.



"People hate me." Karina pulls at her long, black hair. It's tangled again.

"No, they don't. They just—" As usual, I don't get to finish my .

"How the hell would you know? You don't even pay attention." She keeps pulling, and now I can see the dyed blond roots shining through.

There's no use talking to her when she's like this. It only makes it hard on the both of us. I reach over to one of the books I've accumulated from the book donations around campus. They form a miniature fortress around my bed. I open the book to a random page, "Brazil's population experienced a major growth in the—"

"Why don't you fucking respond?" She grabs the book out of my hands and throws it into a stack of other books on the other side of my bed. The whole stack falls down. She doesn't even seem to notice as she continues her tirade, "You never say anything—I...I never know what you're feeling. You just start reading again."

"Karina, baby, I guess...I guess I'm just feeling confused." I bring my hand and run it through the short cropped hair on the back of my head. "Baby, what's wrong? What can I do?"

I can see her tense at my words. "Do? Goddamn it! Do? You're just like the rest of

them. You fucking don't get it." Her eyes glaze over at this point and she starts looking at some imaginary point behind me. Her voice rises. "There's no fucking point. You sit there, you sit there and read your goddamned books. And you talk about doing?" She decrescendos now, "You don't do jack shit." She's looking at me in the eyes and I can see water welling up in them. "No one does jack shit." She's on the floor and she's crying.

I reach down for her and she clutches at my shirt. I manage to pull her up and she presses her face into my chest. I can feel the wetness of her tears near my heart. I keep telling her, "We're okay. Everything's alright. We're okay. Everything's alright", knowing just how hollow my voice sounds. She looks up at me and I cup her chin in my hands and lower my face to hers. We kiss.



Memories of Karina intrude into my life. Even the act of eating an apple brings her flooding back to me. Even this apple in my hand, this apple stolen from some random tree, this Washington apple grown in Arizona.

By now, I've made my way back to my dorm. Back down the hallway where there are doors on either side and not too much light streaming in. The hallway that's narrow; where two people going in opposite directions can't quite pass each other without that unwanted physical contact. It reminds me of old movies about insane asylums.

I reach for the door with my free hand, but it feels like something turned on inside of me. Some kind of imaginary switch stopping me from opening it.

I know exactly what should be inside. All the shades are closed; the room is dimly lit even during the day. My roommate, Tom, is sitting in front of his desk, back straight, face blank. His lamp is on. His desk is empty except for an open leather-bound bible. My desk is covered with the remains of old apple cores and bowls of oatmeal. There's a notebook on my desk filled with pages

of drawings.

The notebook is open to the picture of a nude woman. Underneath her it says, "I cried to dream again". I watch Karina flip through my notebook and add subtitles to the pictures. She looks up at me and smiles as she writes that one. She loves ambiguity.

But no—I know that's wrong. That's in the past.

I stare down at the apple in my hand as the memory fades leaving only the faint reminder of its presence, like the aftertaste of vanilla. I watch the apple's exposed meat turned slowly from yellow to brown. Eventually my hand leaves the handle and I head outside.



There's a trash can that's always to your left when you exit my dorm. It used to be green but after the rains came, it rusted brown. When that happened no one bothered to put a lining inside of it anymore. Why maintain what's already gone? I haven't finished the apple, but I toss it anyway. Instead of the satisfying clank of apple on metal, I hear an empty thud.

The trash can is gone.

There isn't even a circle of rust to mark where it had been. I stare at the ground where the apple now lays and see that it is covered in white flakes. For the first time, I notice that I feel strangely cold. When I look up, my whole campus is changed.

Frozen mist fills in the air and obscures everything from sight. The bright sunlight glints off the flakes in the air. The snow has already gotten a few inches deep in some places. Something about it all seems too clean to be convincing. It's like someone used a fake snow machine to make a snowpark for kids, and that someone kept waiting around for kids that would never show up.

I look around me not knowing what to do. I know the facts. I know it was hot and clear this morning. It hasn't even rained in weeks.

I can remember that day, stomping through the puddles, feet landing, the anticipation of

contact, for that plop! Karina has that look on her face when she sees me. Eyebrows raised, the hint of a smile. I reach for her, I touch snowflakes.

"We are in the middle of a heat wave," I say aloud as more snow continues to fall, and I feel myself begin to shiver from the cold. Nature has turned illogical, insane. I try to go back to the confines of my dorm, where only memories will haunt me. When I turn around to get inside, there is no building there, just snow in the shape of a building. I put down my apple and frantically start digging through the snow, trying to find the handle, the handle which must be there, to find a way in.

"We are in the middle of a heat wave," I say aloud as more snow continues to fall, and I feel myself begin to shiver from the cold.

I can see my heavy breaths in the air. They hang there, in front of me, refusing to leave. I keep digging. I scoop out a handle full of snow, then another, use what feeling I had left in my fingers and feel... only more snow. My hands seem to have already undergone rigor mortis. It's too cold, it's too strange, it's too much.

I stop digging.

The apple lies in the snow where I had left it, looking abandoned. I put it in my pocket and begin walking. I don't know where I'm going but I have to leave this place. What I know no longer applies to anything here.

I head in a random direction; everything looks the same—mounds of snow of different shapes

and sizes. There is no conception of depth, the snow mounds do not even seem to have shadows. It's only a two-dimensional field of white in front of me. Even the sky has lost its blue color and has turned strangely clear. The only indication that time has passed is the tiredness in my boot-clad feet and the cessation of falling snow.

The tags on my boots, my only pair of shoes, says they are waterproof. When I bought them I thought I would wear them camping or hiking. I was going to make up for all the father-son activities that I had never experienced. Karina said she would join me, maybe. Those activities never did happen.

We mostly stayed in my room, waiting for Tom to leave. To pass the time we would look through the stacks of books around my bed, hoping there was something in them worth learning. Karina was the first person not to laugh or look at me funny when I showed her my books, my fortress. She picked one up and started reading. Together, we tried old textbooks, Victorian novels, anything we could find. We liked some of them, but we still kept looking for more. My boots stayed inside with us.

I trudge on through the snow wishing I was wearing more than jeans and a t-shirt. I clutch my bare arms and rub in quick, short motions to keep warm.

There are no birds flying overhead, no tracks other than mine in the snow. I keep looking around me at the blank whiteness to see if anyone else is still alive, to have at least some human contact. Strange to want to be with someone, when usually I try to avoid others at all costs. Karina understood that being alone was the only way to be honest. But being with her was the same as being alone, I suppose.

At one point, I think I see another person in the distance. I shout and wave, but if they see me they give no indication.



Color. A Bright Red Color. For a moment I can't believe my eyes, it's been so long since there's

been anything other than white. Soon I stand in front of a red brick building. The cross on top of it is a brilliant white that matches the snow.

It's heated inside the church. The pews are made of polished mahogany that gleams in the candlelight emanating from the altar. They are surprisingly comfortable. The stained glass windows filter in light selectively—heavy and dark. I try to remember the last time I was inside a church. My mother gave up trying to force me to go in fifth grade, right after my father left. She looked at me with eyes that held back more than they told. She said she would pray for the both of us.

I yell inside the church, feeling strangely guilty as I do. "You should be quiet in church," I can hear my mother's voice talking to me. No one responds to the yells and I still have not seen anyone. Someone must keep the candles lit and the church clean. They can't do it by themselves.

I walk towards the altar, leaving a trail of melted snow behind me. The candles drip wax onto the floor, forming shapeless globules. I want to clean them up, since the custodians aren't here, but I leave them alone to see what shape they will eventually make.

Somehow the lighting, the warmth, the strange smell of cider in the air, the loneliness—I feel a pain building in my chest. It spreads through my body.

I drop to my knees and begin to pray.

My eyes are closed and all I can see is the inside of my lids. I want to say something profound, maybe quote something out of one of the books in my fortress, like Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But I can't remember any lines of it. I can't remember anything half decent. I open my mouth and what comes out is, "God, please melt the snow."

There are a few moments of heavy, expectant silence. This is juvenile, waiting for a sign, for something to happen. I try to fill the silence with more prayer. "Oh, and please watch over Mom." Everyday my mother used to spend hours at the local library looking through newspapers for names of children who had died. She wanted to



**Transposition**

**Edward Esparza**  
MD/PhD VIII

pray for all of them. The least I can do is pray for her now. Wherever she may be. I wonder if she is stuck in the same snow-ridden world as I am, somehow I doubt it.

The last time I saw her, the day I left for college, she had looked so frail and small. But the wooden cross on her neck seemed to support her entire body.

I think about praying for Karina too, but I think she would be offended.

I go outside to see if anything is happening and amazingly something is. All the snow is melting. A heat wave, it seems, has struck and everything quickly turns liquid.

I know I should feel grateful for the melting snow, but instead I just feel relieved. I head back inside, but before I make it to the door, it becomes almost impossible to move. The water is too high. It sinks into my clothes and holds me down like a leaden weight. Slowly, I wade through the doors

and into the church, but even it is flooding. None of the pews are bolted down so they begin to float. The lacquer makes them hard to hold onto, but I manage to grab one and paddle my way out of the church with my hands. Both my boots come off in the water.

The pew keeps bumping into the other pews no matter how hard I steer away from them. I kick at them wildly with my bare feet. Water rushes into my mouth and I can taste salt. As I begin to pull away from the remains of the church, the waters become more placid. I lay down on my stomach and slice into the water with open hands pulling the pew-boat forward with every stroke.

By now my arms are sore and my stomach growls. I stop paddling to take the flattened apple out of my pocket. With each bite I take, I see a new picture of Karina flash before my eyes. In some she's smiling, in most she's not. I want to savor each bite, each memory, each thought, but



## Off the Beaten Path

Ten years before Bob strayed off the beaten path, the city council wanted to create a symbol of the Osage tribe who lived here before the city council lived here, so they found a hollow tree and decided to plant another tree inside it. The woods grew thick around both of the trees, so the council had a sign installed on the edge of the woods. They didn't care that the sign was six inches square and faced the woods instead of facing the path that separated the woods from the golf course, and they didn't know that so much crime still took place next to the two trees. Only the criminals knew that, until Bob found the sign and found the first tree, and the crime, and the second tree, and the bat, and everything he never knew existed.

"Home run," someone said.

Bob could hear the music on the radio from someone's parked car.

"How bad did you kiss him with that thing, Smalley? We better get him out of here."

"What, you think I want to drag him back out so someone can see me?" said Smalley.

"Look, he's not even knocked out."

"He cut his tongue pretty good, though."

"*You* cut it."

"Shut up. He cut it," said Smalley.

"Well, we have to leave, then. Get in here. I've got to find somewhere to take a leak."

"You were in the forest—nature's bathroom—for an hour, and now you realize you have to take a leak?"

"Get in, would you?"

"All right."

Bob lay in the woods until the car left, and then he crawled back onto the path and rode his bike away. He never told about the tooth he left with the tree, or the other tooth he left with the other tree. He never told the city council, that is. He told his dentist, of course, who didn't care how he lost them and fitted him for two prosthetics that looked perfectly normal, except in black light, where they glowed a little less than his real teeth. He told his friends that someone threw him into the air at a Kid Rock concert, and that he hit his face when he landed. He knew he could invent enough details to make his friends believe the lie, because he had gone to a Kid Rock concert before.

"What was Bob doing last Friday?" asked Stephanie.

Ronnie said he didn't know, and asked what did she mean.

Stephanie told him Bob hadn't called her after his bike ride, or the next two nights after he went to the concert.

"He was supposed to call you?" Ronnie ate a forkful of macaroni.

"That's what he said. Don't you think he's a reliable person?" she asked.

"Definitely, Stephanie," said Ronnie.

"That's why I figured he would call," said Stephanie.

"Maybe he went to sleep early. He's been acting tired the last few days."

Once the swelling went away and Bob could open his right eye again, he went back to work driving a delivery van, but he waited a month and a half more before he rode his bike again, and he used to ride every day. He waited a year before he could take his bike down the path again, between the golf course and the batting cage made of trees.

**Andy Zimolzak**  
WUSM IV

# If Cadavers Could Talk

*“And the one on whom the seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” --Matthew 13:23*

Table 30

Age at Death: 92

Cause of Death: Alzheimer’s Disease

She never left us a name. So we made her one, one befitting a woman who was 92 and died of Alzheimer’s, Esther. Esther Williams, Venus of the Hollywood. Esther, bride of Ashuerus, daughter of Abigail. She is roughly 5’3” (I’ve only ever seen her in the anatomical, supine position). She was a feather in life, 96 lbs, but stiffened with rigor mortis and pumped full of embalming fluid, moving her an inch across the table is a group effort. She is quite literally dead weight.

We pull away her only clothing, a white plastic trash bag and a dampened sheet intended to keep her tissues from drying out. It is not a trivial point. This is what she is to us. This is her *raison d’être* or more properly her *raison d’mourir*. Tissues: connective, muscle, adipose, and bone. Tissues arranged in a particular order with a particular name in a particular dead language reserved for dead people, but then again I suppose I have *flexor carpi radialis longus* too.

I don’t care what they say, the dead are not so peaceful. Still, perhaps, but not peaceful. The clenching of their muscles contorts their faces and pulls their bodies into natural repose of agony, as if one took a picture of them in the midst of a spasm or seizure. It is a lifetime’s sum of anger and rage which was never resolved in the living, haunting those precious tissues (connective, muscle, adipose, and bone) even in their death.

Before we make our first cut, we must garb her hands, feet, and head with stockings to keep them moist. I’m paralyzed. I can’t stand touching her. Not even with gloves on. Not even with a million gloves on. Not even with a yard stick.

First her hands.

Her nails are yellowed and continue to grow even after their owner’s demise. I lift her arm, and she resists, each of the muscles in her body clenched in insolence. Her fingers are wrapped into fists. Like a woman in the throes of rape, who must yield to physical domination but still gives token resistance. She has been waiting for us, her assailants. Though too small and too dead to do anything about it, Esther’s muscles still say no. But Esther, dear Esther, I have a job to do.

*My hands are calloused, calloused from praying. I prayed for hours, making days, making years for one thing but the Lord never saw me fit for mothering. And yet I prayed and prayed and prayed for what seemed like a maternity. These hands went empty. More than life itself I wanted*



Etude for Digital Camera and Grand Piano



*a little one. I would have caressed its newborn hair. I would have pinched its newborn fat. These hands were always hungry for a baby that never was. I prayed so hard to the Lord for a baby, but in the end I have callouses only from praying not from mothering.*

Next her feet.

It is harder to get them over the feet. I can wrap my entire hand around her tiny ankles. The stocking resists over the unforgiving curve of her ankles. Her toenails catch the fabric, and the sound of thread breaking inexplicably makes me want to cry.

*I have been to those invisible cities. Those ones of Xanadu and Khubla Khan. I have walked barefoot through the gravel streets of Zoe and Byrne. Searching simultaneously for my future and my past. For the branches of my life that never were and will never be. Thus my life is one of reduction and obstruction. Never what is but what is not.*

Last, her head.

I look over at Danny. His uneasiness, which is my uneasiness, is written on his face. All of the cadavers' heads have all been shaven in an effort to make them more androgynous, less individual, less human. The effect is only partially successful. She is a bald, 92 lbs. woman. With her eyes closed and her mouth open revealing teeth that are grotesque in death and from the looks of it not much better in the living. She is in snarl. A deep and snarling sleep. It takes both my arms to life her head while Danny slips the stocking over her head.

*I didn't know it would be like this. Laying here naked on a table with toddlers clothing me. Touching my breasts. Setting scissors and textbooks on my privates. Probing me. Cutting me. Laughing at my vulnerability. Hoping to find anomalies, a tumor or a hernia so they can show me off. Baby, are you sure you want to do this? To bind my hands and feet and close my mouth? I have things to tell you, things that you need to hear because what is in my body is important but not as important as what was never in my body and why. That anatomy is unique to me. Listen and I will tell you. Listen. LISTEN. LIS...*

It is done. I am glad for it. With the sock over her head, it's easier to forget that she is a person. Through her tissue-wetting veil, only the faint outline of two orbits and a protruding nose can me seen. Her snarl is reduced to a muted sigh. It is only a grotesque and poorly-made Halloween mask. Now she is a factory product. Something imported from Japan for the instruction and edification of would-be doctors. Her skin is an unnatural hue, gray and rubbery. There are pocks and lesions over her naked body. Her breasts are wrinkled and deflated like pools of oatmeal. She is ready for inspection. She is ready for dissection. Her skin is old and discolored but whole. Perhaps this is the first cut she has ever had.

**Daniel Vo**  
WUSM, Class of 2006



**Michael C. Daft**  
BJC Dept of Laboratories

## Sunset and Sunrise (why I miss living near the equator)

I'd never thought I'd have to see  
the death of one so bright  
so early in the day.

Imagine my dismay as I watched you  
swallowed up by darkness  
and whirled down into the  
cold  
as the shadows  
unfurled and  
hurled me into  
a world of  
powerless pity,  
wallowing in the  
muck of  
self-hate and  
loathing

...Depression  
...Sadness  
...Oblivion  
...Fear

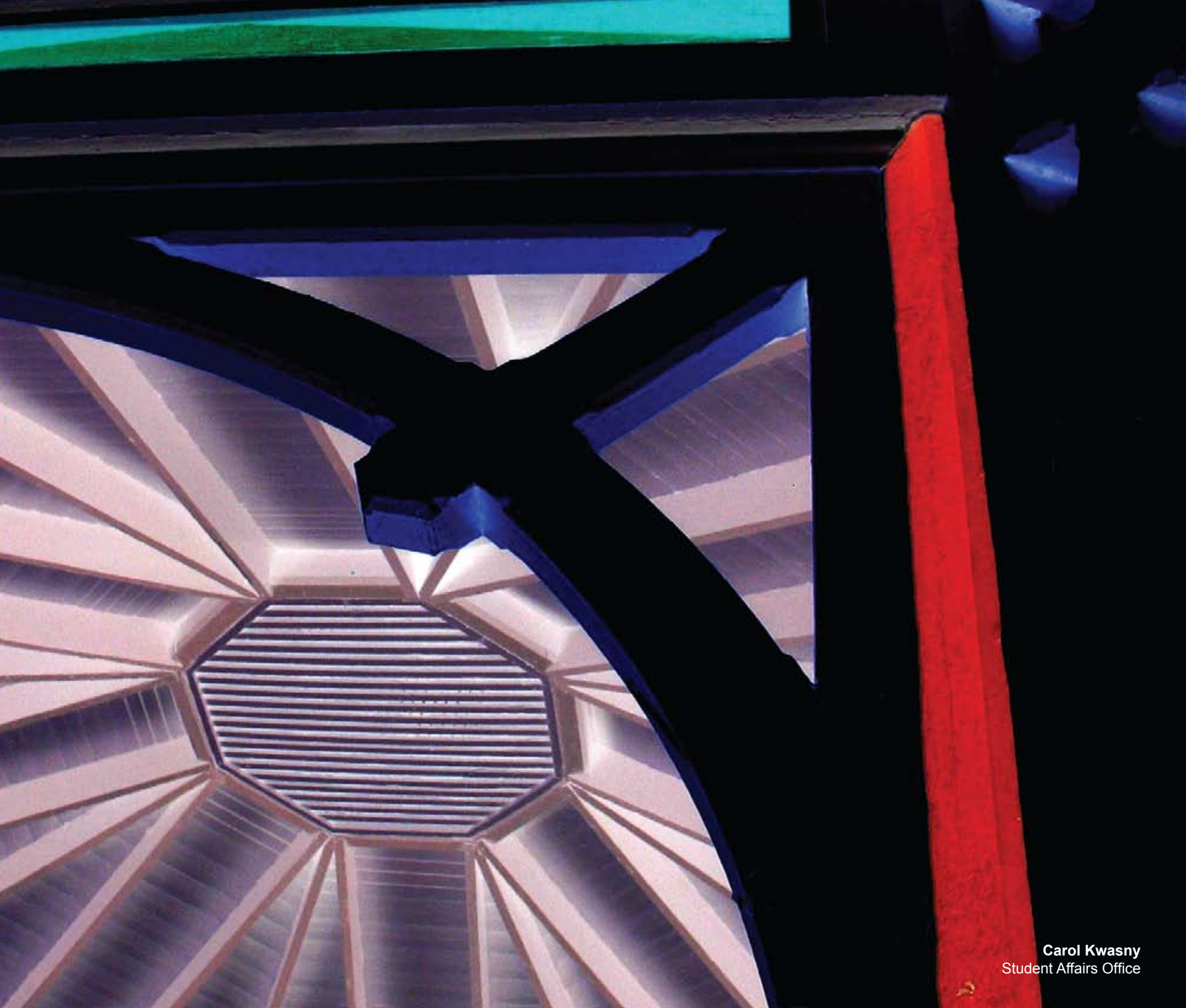
I can't find the word to  
describe the  
sour taste, the  
confused state that  
your absence brought to  
my existence.

So imagine my joy  
to see you next morning  
after all night's mourning.  
I run to the window to let in your rays  
and bathe in the shower of warmth  
that empowers my breath  
and gives me a reason to--  
to do!

But how quick the day passes.  
In a moment, it flashes.  
And, slowly I watch you once more slink  
away  
into the night  
away from the light  
only replaced by  
a dark,  
dismal  
gray.

**Anna Woodbury**  
WUSM IV







**Fleeting Fall**  
Tower Grove Park



Michael C. Daft  
BJC Dept of Laboratories

## Relief

Bob Burrell sat in the orange plastic shell-chair  
Like always,  
Waiting to see Mary,  
To hear the machines rasp life,  
Touch the dry folds of her  
Paper skin,  
Which even the most tentative hug could  
Would  
Rend and tear,  
The merciful made merciless.  
He would stay until the drugs  
Carried Mary away  
For a while.  
Relief.  
Bob remembered when it meant skinning over fences  
And diving into a neighbor's pool to escape the white August sun.  
At first he'd be blind-  
Then he'd touch bottom and push off  
Shedding both the heat and the weight of the water  
Heading toward the light.  
After he broke the surface the scales would fall from his eyes  
And then  
The colors!

**Matt Sorrell**

Building Coordinator, Farrell Learning & Teaching Center



Sway

Jama Rendell  
Dept of Radiology

all too soon I finish the apple. I save the core and put back into my pocket.

I want to remember what being around people is like, but somehow my memories are getting fuzzy. I run through the snapshots of Karina in my head, but memories of my mother keep intruding. In one, she's kneeling, hands clasped in front of her chest, head bent on her bed. I saw her in that position when I would sneak out of the house at night. I think she knew what I was doing, but she was praying for me anyway.

The other memories are not images, they are only sounds. They are all the unanswered voice messages she's left for me over the past few years. "Honey, no matter what I will still love you. Remember, whatever you do, you will be loved by Our Heavenly Father." She meant every word of those messages, but I still couldn't believe her. The calls had stopped a few months ago, at first I figured it was one less annoyance in my life. They never did start again.

Looking in front of me I can't see any breaks in the water. There is no wind, and besides that I have no sail. I float with the world looking flat around me. I decide it's time to turn again to the Father who supposedly will always love me.

Since I can't really kneel on the pew without capsizing it, I content myself to sit up, put my palms together and close my eyes.

"Dear Lord, thank you for listening to my last prayer, but could you please get rid of the water? Amen." I don't pray for mother again, with those memories burning so painfully in my mind, somehow it doesn't feel right.

The water begins to evaporate. This time I expect it, and I sit in the boat, waiting patiently for the change to occur. I wonder if there will be another catch to this miracle, if it was worth it to pray again.

Sure enough, as the water evaporates, the ground beneath it begins to change. But it's getting too hot, He's going too far. In one breath I breathe in the salt of sea water and in the next I inhale sand. Now, there's nothing around me but desert. The sandy dunes all around me look strangely like the snow dunes from earlier, only now they are yellow instead of white.

The heat makes me take off my t-shirt, which is dirty and sticking to my skin. Now I don't enjoy the feeling. I drop it, and it's quickly covered up by a wave of sand that runs through the dunes. I soon regret my actions as wind whips up grains of sand into the air and sends them hurtling

toward me. Each grain feels like a pinprick, together they are piercing through my skin.

I feel into my pocket and touch the apple core. At that moment I think about eating all of it, even the seeds, seeing what memories it would let me see. But a sudden fact that I read in one of the books around my bed, surfaces in my head. I had read that the seed was the equivalent of the plant's embryo and that thought makes me squeamish. Plus, someone had told me that there were trace amounts of arsenic in apple seeds.

I wander across the desert, across hills and dunes. The sand burns my bare feet. I feel myself float outside of my own body, looking down at myself, sweating and crawling. From this perspective, I'm curiously small, only a tiny speck, really. Far in the distance, I spot something. It looks like a big black structure in the midst of all the golden grains of sand. I feel myself returning back into my body and I crawl with a new purpose, onward to it.



The black structure is really an oddly shaped gate. There are big foot wide slabs of smooth and shiny, black metal spaced about a half-inch apart from each other. The tops of the slabs are pointed to a tip. I run up to touch the metal, to feel something that must be smooth and cool, to escape the heat. But when I touch it, my body feels like it has caught on fire.

I fly back away from the gate onto the sand. The electric shock from the gate paralyzes me and I lay in the burning sand, twitching. The world goes black for awhile.

When I finally wake up, it is still bright outside, but the sun seems a bit lower. I try wiping the sand off my bare skin but it hurts to touch myself. My skin is red from the sun. Bits of sand are embedded in it. I look at my palms where they touched the black metal and see that they are charred.

In my mind I scream, "God, why hast thou forsaken me? Just tell me what I've done!" Why were all these things happening to me? I hadn't done anything terrible in my life. Maybe I had walked by the smiling black man in the white Salvation Army uniform when he rang his bell at me and asked for donations. Maybe I had deserted my mother, just as my father had. Though I had left for school and he had left for some still unknown reason. But she had told me that she could never be alone, because she had faith. Anyhow, she wouldn't have known what to do if I had come back to her.



Contemporary



I was always her project, she was always working on making me better. If I actually changed, what would she have to do?

And maybe I did see the craziness in Karina. And though it did scare me, I did not want to stop it. I had cherished that insanity; it made her need me.



The last time I saw her, was it yesterday?, she was holding one of the books. The title was “Astrophysics in the Modern Age.” Her eyebrows scrunched together and she chewed on her pinkie finger. She looked so beautiful to me, reading something she probably didn’t care about, but reading it anyway.

“I love you,” I said.

She looked up from her reading, but there was no surprise on her face. I saw a smirk creep into the corners of her lips.

“No you don’t.” She went back to reading the book.

“Besides,” she said, “I don’t want you too.” She started pulling at her hair, but I couldn’t see the blonde roots since she re-dyed her hair in the afternoon.

“You know, Dave,” she looked up, “we’re all going to die someday. Why would you want to love me? It’s so transient.”

She wasn’t usually so flippant about death, but I didn’t care right then. I just want her to love me back. And somehow I knew she wasn’t going to say what I wanted. “You think too much!” I yelled at her. I grabbed the book out of her hands this time and threw it away. I pushed her down and started kissing her. She kissed me back.

Later that night, as we laid together, entwined, she told me about this pointless life which only led to more obstacles and hardship. Where every prayer for new beginnings only led to a new way to die. I watched Karina’s lips move as she told me this. She was smiling. I laughed at her then, thinking she was trying to be melodramatic again, and then I kissed her. When I woke up the next morning, this morning, her cold lips still had the same smile. It was only later that I found the empty prescription bottle underneath the bed.



Tango for Evora

Lourdes R. Ylagan  
Dept of Pathology

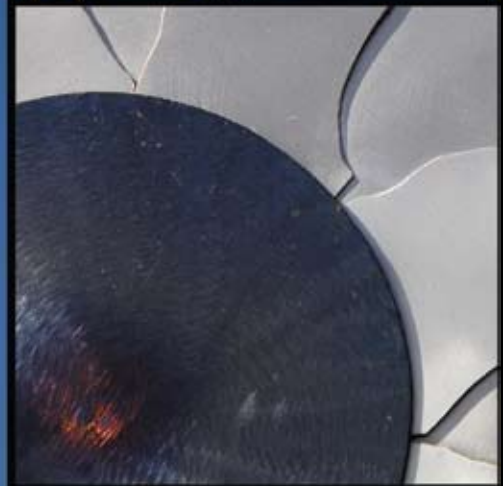


**Victory**  
Barcelona, Spain



Of Huachuca Moonlight  
A Bloom Everlasting

Sam Merrill  
MD/PhD III





She wouldn't have wanted me to talk her out of it. She wouldn't have listened. The memories of her now burn through my brain. She wouldn't have listened, I know she wouldn't have. But somehow telling myself that doesn't make it better. Somehow remembering everything is too much. I want to get rid of my memories anyway that I can. I force myself to walk, feeling parts of my skin ripping, blood running down my legs and arms. I clench my hands into fists and find that I still have the apple core in my hand. The minute amount of moisture I squeeze from it feels good. I slowly walk around the black structure, wondering if I can get inside, and if getting inside me will cleanse me of all my memories.

I get as close to it as possible without touching it, still fearing the pain of the metal. I look through the gaps between the metal slabs and for the first time I see what was inside.

It is all green. There is life in there.

My face inches closer and closer. The little hairs on my cheek stand up straight, anticipating a shock. Inside the black fence are trees of every type. Fruits that I have never seen as well as the familiar apple and orange trees. A bird flies past my eye. I even hear the sound of running water.

I continue walking along the side of the huge structure, but it all looks the same, more and more slabs of black metal. There is nothing that looks remotely like a door. I reach out with the hand not holding the apple to touch the black metal. If I can't forget by entering, maybe I can forget another way.

"What are you doing?" she says.

I pull my hand away. Someone is here.

"You're back I see. I thought I saw you earlier. He's not going to let you in. Don't you know that?"

I peer through to the garden and I can see a line of a woman: Long red hair falling over a shoulder, a breast, a leg. I step back away from the gate. But my need for her help is too great.

"Let me in. Feed me. Clothe me. Give me shelter." I cry at her falling to my knees wanting to reach out and grab the gates but too afraid now.

She steps back at my outburst and now I can see her full body. She isn't very tall and her limp hair falls to the middle of her back. She looks shocked for a minute but then she laughs. She laughs musically, like a nightingale.

"It's not up to me, you know that. You're the one that broke the rules. He punished you fairly, in my opinion." She is beautiful even with that plastic smile on her face.

"What did I do? Why am I out here?" The sand is crawling up my knees. I can feel it rising to cover me up.

"You ate it."

"What?"

"You ate from the Tree of Knowledge."

I look down at the remains of the apple in my hand.

"This? This is why I'm out here? Who the fuck cares? It's a goddamn apple!"

"Well that's certainly not going to make things any better for you." She looks at me, more closely now, up and down. She opens her mouth to speak again but stops herself.

There is silence for a few moments. I think I hate her. She stands there seeing my pain and studying it, not helping me. Has she ever felt any pain before?

She finally says, "Well...so what's it like out there?"

I look up at her slowly.

What type of question is that? Who is she to ask me this? She who has been living in the idyllic world. A world free from pain and suffering. The world I can't even remember. I want to yell at her, "I've been through snow, and flood, and desert". I want to tell her about my life before this, and how it was better anyway after my father left. How I have pushed away own mother. How Karina is gone, and maybe I helped her go crazy. I want to tell her about reading and learning. About spending so much time on books that meant nothing, to find one interesting passage. About understanding how the body works. About loving Shakespeare and hating Montaigne. I want to tell her about lying in Karina's lap, our fingers intertwined, and feeling her stomach rise and

fall. About wanting that back so much, but only getting good memories mixed with bad. I want to tell her all of this. But she wouldn't understand it anyway.

"It's big," I say.

She nods her head, her hair now falling lightly against her breast. She puts her index finger and thumb in her mouth, chewing on her nails.

"I want to go with you," she says.

She must be insane, to give it all up, to see me and still want to give it up. I am covered in sand and my skin is still peeling and bleeding. I do not have the strength to stand up. She looks at me, waiting. I want to tell her "No", but I know that this decision is not mine to make.

"How?" I ask.

She looks confused for a moment.

"Give me the apple."

There is really nothing left of it at this point. I open my palm and showed her what remains: a bit of stem, some brown mush, and a few seeds.

"It's gone, there's nothing to give you."

She looks at me, and tears begin to well in her eyes. She kneels down in front of the gate, looking at me and then the ground. The sun begins to set in the distance.

When she looks up she says, "I'll eat the seeds, just give them to me."

I put the seeds on the ground and roll them through the opening between the staves of the gate. They stop rolling once they hit the grass on the other side. She picks them up and puts them in her mouth. Her eyes close.

The hint of a smile forms at the edges of her mouth. She looks at me again.

"Thanks," she says. From the look in her eyes, I can tell she means it.

**Margaret Lin**  
WUSM I



**Like a Malaika**

**Julia Hampton**  
Dept of Facilities & Engineering

## Catwoman

“I’ve never felt so well before, Doctor—

Although the faint taste of tuna always lingers in my mouth,  
I find the night is not so dark.  
My pupils dilate wide to trap each ambient photon.

Must I explain myself? Very well.

My step is silent. I prowl  
the cubicles & elevators,  
glide past copier & water coolers,  
invisible, invincible, immortal.

Motes of memory float just out of reach—  
Herons swoop over the Nile’s rising flood.  
Stone giants and sand storms block the sky, then  
afternoon sun slices through pillars’ shade.  
Hunting in the granary and lounging in the palace.  
Incense-scented veneration. A benevolent  
*meow* delights the worshippers—“

“Let’s lower the dose on the fish oil capsules. And come back in a month.”

**Kathy Brown**

Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care

## Her Feline Audience

My petite grandmother, who always smelled of cats,  
sits hunched over her knitting,  
her dexterous fingers belying the age  
gnarled hands attest to,  
all the while mumbling gently to herself  
(or perhaps to her feline audience, I'll never know for sure).

Life in the squat red apartment building  
whose crumbling brick walls have stood for  
longer than my mother could recall:  
Remember the dew on the strawberry patch  
Refracting light from the waning moon,  
Washing out the color of pale white pomegranates ripening on their tree  
until it no longer bore fruit but pearls.

The dawn brought with her the music of cicadas,  
strumming lazily under the willow's shade  
as I bade farewell to the row of persimmon trees  
waving back and forth in the summer breeze.

**Thomas Jiang**  
WUSM II



Janie Tate

Clare Ridley  
WUSM III



I Can See

**Justin M. Rothfuss**  
Dept of Radiology & Rad Sciences

# Scrape

Scrape's in L.A. for two months and I wonder if I'll make it without chasing a bottle of aspirin with a tumbler of Jack Daniels. I knew it would happen eventually, him invading my town like this, and the end of anticipation brings a confusing flood of masochistic relief. He calls within hours of arriving, tells me he wants to spend time together while he's here, and, with just these few words, I feel eight months of anger eroding. I know this can lead nowhere good. But knowing something to be true doesn't mean you believe it.

I pick him up a few hours later on Ventura Boulevard. He's sitting on a bus bench, a black shape in the distance. I pull up and he gets in my car with a grunt. He's wearing a black shirt and shorts, black ski cap, mirrored sunglasses. He looks like a monochromatic thug. The first thing he says is that he's hungry. Not hello, just hungry.

"Can I buy you lunch?" he asks, as if we didn't make lunch plans when he called.

"Sure," I say. "Pizza, pork chops?"

"Something healthy."

I look at him sideways, surprised. He looks so different. New tattoos on his neck and arms. His hair is long to his shoulders, dyed the same color as his clothing. He's too pale for all this black and it makes his skin look pasty. I assume he's trying to look evil, but it comes off like he's got scurvy.

"You look great," he says.

"So do you," I say, wondering if he's lying, too.

We drive up and down Ventura Boulevard looking for a place to eat. I don't know the Valley at all, and he hasn't scoped out the neighborhood yet because he didn't rent a car, refusing to do so on some odd principle though he's here for two months and it's impossible to live in L.A. without one. He always does things in a way that makes

sense only to him. Like having me pick him up at a bus stop as if he just rode a Greyhound into town. I've learned to go along with Scrape Logic. He couldn't explain it himself if you asked.

The space between us feels empty. Maybe he's nervous, or he might be numb. We don't talk, we point out potential lunch spots as we pass. I'd forgotten how fussy he is about food --he says no to a café because it looks "too foofy," no to a falafel stand because it's "too foreign." I drive by a diner and he points.

"Didn't we eat there once?"

"A different location."

"Let's go there, then. Old times' sake."

We take a seat outside to avoid the wait. The

I assume he's trying to look evil, but it comes off like he's got scurvy. "You look great," he says. "So do you," I say, wondering if he's lying, too.

table's shaded and it's windy, I'm shivering, and I keep catching my napkin as it starts to blow away. I think about asking Scrape if we can move but he's already smoking, and I'm not in the mood for his anti-L.A., smokers' rant. A girl in a crooked paper hat brings us menus and an ashtray. I'm sure he'll do something soon to make me lose my appetite, so I order only a bagel and cream cheese. He orders steak and eggs.

"So much for your diet," I say. "You scared me with that healthy thing. Between the hair and the food, I thought I'd picked up your evil twin."

He laughs and twists a piece of hair sticking out from under the ski cap. "I thought I'd try to

be good," he says. "But you know me, I'm a pig at heart."

We both smile, as if we'd been waiting for one of us to stop acting like we just met. He leans back, sprawls so that he looks too big for the table. He's put on weight, it shows around his jaw and neck. I try to sneak a look at his stomach but he catches me.

"I'm getting fat," he says, clapping his hands over his belly. I see it jiggle beneath the cotton of his button-down shirt. There's a twisted blue "SM" on the pocket, the letters shaped in the Skid Mark logo. I wonder why he wears his own band's merchandise.

"You look fine," I say, but he knows I don't mean it.

"I hate it," he says. "One day I was so bummed out about it I just sat on my chair flipping channels all day. Crystal said I was scaring her."

"Crystal?" I try not to laugh out loud. "Is that her stage name?"

"Don't be mean, Sid." He smiles like he wants me to believe it's funny. He takes a too-large gulp of coffee. I'm making him uncomfortable, and I like that.

"So you guys are still together," I say, sounding casual and interested. We're five minutes into lunch, and, already, this.

"We fight, but we're happy. You know how it is."

"Do I?"

"Don't be bad," he says.

I raise an eyebrow. "How would I know 'how it is'?" I ask. "After all, I don't know what it's like to date a stripper."

"She's not a stripper." His voice is light, like we're making small talk, but he pulls out a cigarette and spins it between his fingers, studying it ferociously.

"Is she not?"

"She just worked at the club for a while until she found a better job." His voice sounds weak. He knows I don't believe him and probably doesn't believe himself. Yet. He has a talent for

making things be true if he wants them to be.

“What better job is that, being your house plant?”

He coughs and shifts in his chair, lights the cigarette. He looks miserable. I feel bad. I’ve yelled at him so many times in my head, I forget that he can’t hold his own against me. This isn’t how I wanted it to go.

The food comes, a welcome excuse to change the subject. He asks about my job, Claudia, my brother, I ask about his grandfather and his sister and his cats. Eight months of repressed anger is making me queasy. I pick at my bagel while he inhales hunks of beef and runny bits of egg. I hate the way he eats, holding his fork in his fist, moving it like a shovel. I’ve never admitted to myself just how much it bugs me, and the realization feels good.

“You eat like a pig,” I say.

“I am a pig, baby.” He grins, squishing hunks of egg yolk through his teeth. “You love me for it.”

We make it through lunch without bringing up any more uncomfortable topics. He talks about the band incessantly. He has no idea what it feels like to hear how well things are going for him, and I’m not going to let him know. I distract myself by calling up images of things I’d never actually do: jumping to my feet and shouting *I don’t give a fuck about your goddamn platinum band*. Selling old photos of him to *Rolling Stone*, bloated and shirtless and hugging the toilet. Leaving a message on Scrape and Crystal’s answering machine that says the test results came back positive. I consider it a sign of intelligence to imagine spiteful things, and a sign of dignity not to do them.

“So what about you?” he asks. “Are you seeing anyone?”

*Oh, god*, I think. *Not this*. “I’ve seen people,” I say. “You know how it is.”

“I heard a rumor,” he says. “You dated one of the guys in Mandible.”

I’m startled. I didn’t think anyone knew about Green. I feel like I’m in the middle of



Untitled

Aaron Biala  
Dept of Radiology





Longneck, the Couple

Joe Lennerz  
Dept of Pathology

that dream where you show up at school naked.  
“Sort of.”

Scrape nods. “So it was an F.W.B. arrangement.” He pinches empty containers of half and half, makes clicking noises with them.

“Huh?”

“Friends With Benefits.” He starts throwing the containers one by one at the empty table next to us.

I’m annoyed. “No, it wasn’t like that.”

“I’m sorry it didn’t work out,” Scrape says. “I like Green.” He signals for the waitress to bring the check, dismissing the conversation. It’s always like this. As soon as I talk about my problems, he acts like he’s got ADD. I want to slap him.

“Let me get it,” he says, picking up the check. “I’m sure I owe you.” He pulls a wad of cash out of his pocket and I can’t help staring. I’d forgotten he’s got money now.

“Yes,” I say. “For mental duress.” I allow myself to be pulled to my feet and led towards the car.

**Shana Kusin**  
WUSM IV



Metro

Leah Givens  
WUSM III

## Rhodie, the Toulouse Goose

a grey goose  
from Toulouse  
without a gander  
to match her gender  
used to wander  
past my window  
and peer into  
it, introspection?  
or her reflection?  
looking for someone  
to be the one  
for her affection  
a chance  
for romance--  
what's to lose?

but hark!  
a honk  
stentorian  
and stark  
something  
or someone  
all greyish-brown  
huger and grander  
than goose or gander  
she'd ever known  
a virile honk  
a handsome hunk  
who'd a-thunk?

it spread its wing  
    (as I got out)  
her eyes filled with wonder  
    at this super gander  
    running and flapping  
    honking and cackling  
    she threatened me  
    who held its wing  
        causing me  
        to flee  
    allowing her to be  
    beneath her Love  
    her gander above!

the mote in her eye  
    a cancer became  
    caused it to shrivel  
        into its socket  
    a deepening pocket  
it invaded her brain  
    and she became  
    increasingly insane  
    she'd imprinted on  
    a bug Volkswagen  
    Leda to her Swan  
    the two as one  
        until one day  
    she went away  
    to a fox prey?

can true love stay?  
    who's to say?

**W. Thomas Thach**  
Dept of Anatomy & Neurobiology



**Swallowed by the Mist**

**Jason Hill**  
MD/PhD IV



Our Church

Kareem Mawad  
WUSM II

## Wrong Guy's Girl

He lays on the gurney with his sleeveless plaid shirt opened casually as if to suggest that he meant to unbutton it, that he couldn't care less about the blood and goo oozing from his gut like a stuck pig. He blinks his eyes tightly and says, "damn, damn," his head lolling from side to side, and he's nodding off, only he keeps trying to play it like he's surveying the room. Even here, fat bubbling from his 17 year-old abs, corn-like, he wants to be the OG, the cool cat, the Man. "What happened?" she asks.

"Shiiiiit," he says, raising his chin like the bad ass he is. "Goddamn." "You've been cut, sir," she says. He laughs as if to say, "yes, fool," but it hurts too much, he breathes in sharply, and now his eyes melt and he is a child. He's bleeding and bleeding and is scared he's going to die and, now, he might be willing to let her near him. "I was talking to the wrong guy's girl," he says. He wipes his mouth. "Goddamn, I'm drunk."

**Shana Kusin**  
WUSM IV



Shadows

Xifang Zhang  
Division of Bone & Mineral Diseases

## adieu

the last time this sort of thing happened, it took nine days and a summertime fugue to camden town before i was restored to even a vague semblance of my former self. i believe that i woke in a defaced schoolgirl uniform with a pounding headache, separation anxiety thumping my inner skull.

i was damned to repeat a past that i found largely uneducational the first time around. honestly, a circle so vicious really ought to have corners;

at least then i could orient myself;

at least then i could brace myself to squander months on end mulling over memories like i used to long for the familiar hue of home as a kid. (it was that color of television-lit living rooms as coveted from staked-out outside sidewalks that i ached for: the calm blue absent glow that i loved... but i digress.)

nevertheless, the conviction rendered me useless and i collect more dust than thought,

locked in a rut of sunsets the calibre of beautiful that elicits a double-take and subsequent uncontrollable stare that bores deep.

it is sickening.

it pierces my heart and it tattoos my soul (but thankfully spares me of any outwardly-visible bodily modification)

that i have to say adieu.

**Leah K. Nchama**  
Dept of Pediatrics



**Thousand Island Lake**

**Mike Montana**  
MD/PhD III

