



Heal

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature

The HEAL Mission

HEAL is a place for medical students to share their growth and development, for faculty and staff to impart their knowledge gained from experience, and for members of the community to express how health and healing have impacted their lives.

We hope this work increases your appreciation for the art of medicine.

HEAL Newsletter Team

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The Challenge

Saritha Tirumalasetty, Class of 2016

Tell me a story
One without bounds
Where creatures leap
Across lush fairy grounds

Sketch me a venture
With discord and chime
Where plot runs wild
Without concept of time

Paint me a dream
With colors untamed
Where wonders are conjured
From worlds unnamed

Envelop me in fantasy
While I sit agape
Hold me on edge
Help me escape ■

Untitled (Papua, Indonesia)
Tyler Wellman, Class of 2017



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your excellent submissions.*

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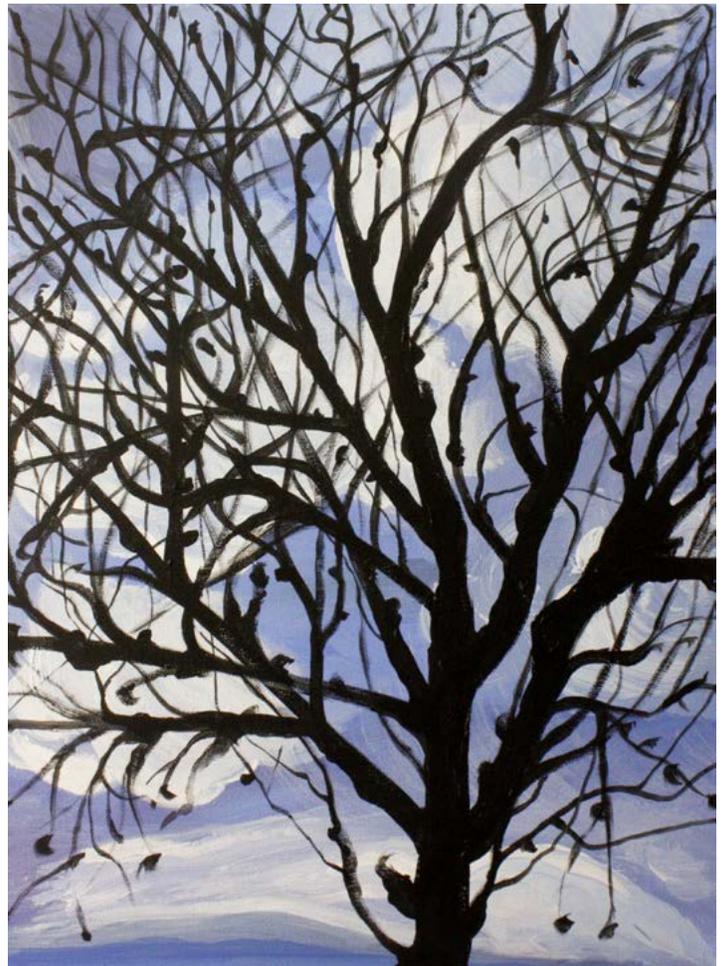
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HEAL: Humanism Evolving through
Arts and Literature

HEAL Newsletter, Fall 2013



Naked Branches Naomi Salz, Class of 2014

Starry Sky

Tyler Wellman, Class of 2017

We descend into a windowless
lab lifting bodies from sterile steel
coffins. Retracting a pale green

tarp to expose a nude
body, leaving a small cloth
to cover the face.

We cut to uncover a mosaic
of cells, tissues, organs.
Like Adam in the garden,

we give names to all we
see. The lab is
loud: names proclaimed,

functions recited, nerves mapped out.
"This Orion's Belt, this the Big
Dipper, over there the Little."

I find solitude in the shuffle, silently
contemplating the mystery: this
from union of sperm and egg.

For a moment please, do not
talk about constellations,
Let me gaze.

Let me know mystery.
The human body,
my starry sky. ■



Untitled (Kampala, Uganda)
Tyler Wellman, Class of 2017

Pen Strokes

Christopher T. Martin, Class of 2014

Devastation plowed through his brain, his heart, his soul—
When a simply uttered phrase took its toll.

Although he knew this made him a foolish son,
He had to deny the end would ever come.

“I’ve got tumors all over my lungs,” she said.

The day had arrived, that for years he did dread.

The cancer had spread; it would not relent
And quickly a strong woman’s health fell into descent.

To be sedated and intubated was a reluctant choice,
But she wanted one last time to hear her son’s voice.

Her son came scrambling to arrive

Only to find her barely alive.

She was without faculty, he was told, more tumor than tissue.
Doctors said no option; allopathic treatment was no longer the issue.

He wept at her side for days, saying everything for the last time,
All the while agonizing over to what next he was consigned—

The most difficult pen strokes he’d ever laid to paper.

The son will never forget those, he’ll surely always remember.

He often thinks about what those marks brought to an end,

And the wounds that would scar but never mend.

For those strokes of the pen, tremulously scribbled and wrought with tears,

Were the way a med student had to end his mom’s life in his first year.

Yes, he knew they would never again speak and he was done hoping,

But family, friends, and Mom’s dog helped with coping.

And the next morning he awoke with another deep breath,

Forever conscious of the frail balance between life and death.

Exquisitely reminded that blood still runs through his veins

As he meets new challenges and will someday smile again.

Time has some way to heal without letting him forget

Where he has come from and the sorrow he has met,

All the while still training to help his patients survive.

Someday he might even be your doc, but he’ll never forget why.

In memory of Jeanette C. Lorinz ■

¡Preguntas?

Stephen M. Quintero, MD

What do I do?
What to decide?
Which of the two kills the cancer inside?

Which is better?
Which is right?
Which one will help me continue the fight?

What if there's nausea?
What if I puke?
Will I lose weight or all of my hair?
What if it fails? Will anyone care?

Could it end in a coma or perhaps in a stroke?
Will someone be with me?
Will I burden my folks?

So many visitors, yet I'm alone
Some of them linger, some of them stay
Most of them tell me I'll be "OK"

How can they know?
None of them can
Will anyone be here to hold my hand?

Oh, what should I do?
What to decide?
Will anyone come and stand by my side?

Is there a way out?
Some "mistake" in a test?
Overworked doctors in need of a rest?

Perhaps it's an error?
So please double check
To suffer this terror for some lens with a speck
I just wait to hear that it's not too late
Perhaps I needn't suffer this uncommon fate

Why me? Why me?
Is it for sins I atone?
Or for some grave past, I must die alone?

Oh, what to do?
Oh, what to decide?
How from fear and death can I hide?

You've heard my concern, but not my cry
You've answered my questions and not my why
No comfort here, just treatment and dope
I'm not afraid, I know I will die
Something is missing—how will I cope?

Oh, what to do?
Oh, what to decide? ■

The Divorce

Joseph M. Limback, Class of 2014

They awoke at 4AM in different beds,
With what that day was to bring in their heads.
They both, separately, kneeled to pray,
that God would be near and guide them through that day.

You see, in the beginning, everything went well.
There were some bumps in the road, but nothing to tell.
In time things became gray, between black and white,
Where no person can tell whether things are wrong or right.

Then, from the shadows, the thoughts like an ember,
burned into passion, though hazily remembered.
Although unclear that anything really went wrong,
this didn't keep them from the courts for long.

This story ends with hearts of the same passion,
to heal and move forward, in any sort of fashion.
However, one has to win and one has to lose,
but that was up to the court to choose.

They pleaded their cases, that the judge may concede,
that neither had acted out of malice or greed.
Out of this hazy gray mess, the judge eventually resolved,
a settlement, that for patient or surgeon, saw nothing solved. ■

Nil Per Os

Lisa Cunningham, Class of 2013

“Well, aren’t you a pretty young thing,” Thad exclaimed as I walked into his room that morning. Having been lost in my thoughts, I was startled and pleased by this greeting. The last four patient rooms had been quite somber, so this was a happy departure from my mind’s path.

I greeted Thad warmly, explaining that I was there to get his story from the beginning. His reply, “I’m having a hard time eating and I can’t swallow too good.” To which I responded, “We’ll get to that, but I know your story started long before”.

Thad was born in a sleepy town outside Baltimore, Maryland in 1929. He grew up the son of a builder who had deep roots in the community. His mother stayed at home with Thad and his younger brother and sister. They didn’t have much, but nobody did during the Depression. They made it work though, because they had each other.

In high school, Thad worked with his father on construction sites learning the trade, but never felt that construction was his calling. After graduation, Thad chose to enroll in the Army with the hopes of having big adventures outside his small town. Instead, he found himself in post-war occupied Germany, a bitter place for a small town boy with big dreams. He found solace in the company of his American comrades while consuming heavy German food and pints of strong beer.

After returning to the states he began working as a police officer for Baltimore County, where he continued to eat and drink to his content. Thad described himself as a “true meat and potatoes guy, light on the starch.” During his time on the force he reconnected with and married a girl from his hometown. After a few happy years of marriage they decided to start a family. They thought they had met with success when she began to feel that her belly was getting full. What they thought was the beginning of a new life turned out to be the end of hers—that heaviness was advanced ovarian cancer.

Thad described himself as a “true meat and potatoes guy, light on the starch.”

Thad remained single for many years, eschewing romantic love for the comfort and routine of work. He lived the life of a true bachelor, going to the bar with the guys after work every day for his standard two gin and tonics, and ordering take out nearly every evening. He also started to smoke, initially just socially at the bar, but then regularly one pack per day. He didn’t care much about his health and the effects were starting to show. His blood pressure and cholesterol started to creep. During this time, in a cruel twist of fate, Thad’s mother was also diagnosed and died from ovarian cancer. Many years later his sister would be taken by it, too.

As Thad reached retirement age he longed for companionship. He was lucky to meet and marry a woman who had had



Southern Ground Hornbill

Kathleen Wood, Class of 2016

lost her husband to cancer, sharing a story similar to his. They were a happy pair as she loved to cook as much as he loved to eat. After Thad's retirement, they moved to Florida to take advantage of the warm sunshine that permitted year-round backyard barbeques. Neither worried about the health consequences of their culinary actions even as Thad developed diabetes, underwent open heart surgery for three vessel disease, and developed CHF. These bodily abuses continued until Thad realized he was having progressive difficulty swallowing. Now, no longer able to enjoy his most favorite activity, he sought the help of his doctor.

Over the next few years as Thad's ability to swallow further declined, his doctors performed many tests. An esophagram showed frank aspiration and a speech pathology exam showed severe pharyngeal phase dysphagia. No specific cause could be found for Thad's problem, so it was classified under the fall back catch-all term "idiopathic." Although the cause was undefined, Thad's history of smoking and drinking, as well as his other comorbidities, were frequently mentioned as likely contributors. Thad, however, preferred to focus on the unknown causes, not the probable suspects.

Eventually, Thad's condition declined enough that he began to lose weight and develop deficiencies from lack of eating. He was no longer able to enjoy his steak and (some) potato diet; instead his meals were reduced to purees, applesauce and puddings. Although food presented a problem to Thad, he was still able to enjoy his daily cocktails. Ultimately, these too were taken from him.

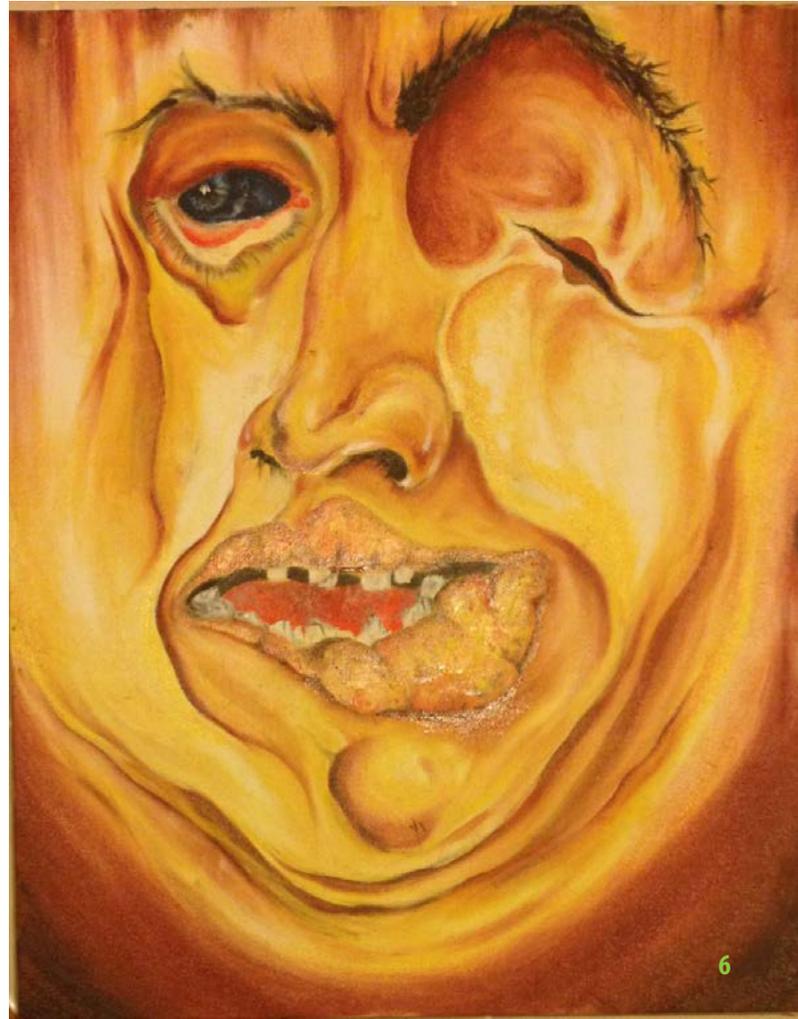
Over a few days, I saw a progressive decline in Thad's health at the hospice care center. That first day we met, he still had vague hopes of miraculously "pulling through," despite having opted for palliative care. Those hopes were soon lost as he continued to deteriorate and began to understand the reality of our conversations. Within three days, Thad was reduced to a diet of fortified shakes and thickened orange juice because everything else caused him to gag and aspirate. After another four days, he was reduced to nil per os, which should have been a hard blow to someone who loved food. However, Thad realized death had come knocking, so the loss was inconsequential.

Thad died on a Wednesday a few days later. I was at my chronic care preceptor's office when he passed away. My preceptor and I were trying our hardest to intervene in other's lives so they could live many long and happy years free of debilitating disease. After a couple of hours, I felt like a broken record counseling people on the benefits of smoking cessation, alcohol reduction, exercise and weight loss. I felt like my pleas for better blood sugar and blood pressure control were falling on deaf ears. Then, the last patient of the morning came in ready to commit to smoking cessation after numerous frustrating counseling visits. I left the office feeling invigorated

knowing that I changed the course of this person's future.

I learned of Thad's passing the next morning when I saw his death certificate on the desk ready for signature. Although I knew what Thad's outcome was going to be the first day we met, I was still saddened by his death. He was a good man who had made it through some tough times. I only wish there had been someone there years earlier, a nagging, broken record who could have tried to alter the course of his life. Someone who tried, tried, and tried again. ■

Pathology **Yaowaree Leavell, Class of 2015**



The Guide

Carol Warren, Circulations

You were there to guide
When I did not know the way
The rocks were oh so high
And dark clouds hid the day
Each step took me closer to the edge
To the broken sea below
The midnight sky was closing in
There was no place left to go

You did not tell me what to do
Or even point the way
You listened to my tumbled speech
You listen to me pray
Still afraid to take a step
I fell upon my knees
Yet in those words the clouds did part
And let me stand at ease

A flood of tears has washed the scales
Of grief and pain I wore
My eyes were open now
Much clearer than before
I see a path that takes me back
The brink is not so near
I take a step and take a breath
I now can face the fear

Upon the rocky cliff I stand
And welcome salt and spray
I see the far horizon now
So you must have known the way
Your silent presence spoke
You did not let me stray
My feet are still upon the path
Tomorrow and today

No one can build a life again
Except the one inside
The work is yours
The guide will walk beside
As ever onward goes the trek
The world goes ever on
We walk within its' walls of glass
To touch the rosy dawn ■

Forever Blind

Luke Stowers, Class of 2016

With worry and fear, I met you that day
Holding in tears as I saw how you lay
I knew we'd get to know each other
But I also knew you were someone's mother
As I held your hand, oh so cold
My only thought was of your story untold
You lived your life, but it was far too brief
You were here teaching me despite such grief
Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free.

My pain and sadness were soon replaced
At the joy of learning what you had faced
Joy because I understood
How one day I could do some good
For another will face a similar fate
And because of your gift I may yet save
The life of someone else's mother
Father, Sister, Child, Brother
Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free.

As I look back at what you gave to me
My only regret is I could never speak
With you to hear what made you smile
And what made you cry once in a while
To hear that for which you dreamt
To hear of how your life was spent
I knew everything of you and yet I missed
What made you You!
I only know this:

Forever blind, you taught me to see
Forever kind, now you are free. ■

*Written for the
Florida State University College of Medicine
2013 Cadaver Memorial Service
In Honor of the Men and Women
who Donated their Bodies to Science*

Mother

Thomas Edmondson Whigham Jr., FSU College of Law

As alienating and degrading as everyday experience could feel, it was substantially worse once the spark of defiance had died out, once the toughening sense of anger and disenfranchisement became fear, once that fear turned on loss, because this loss hurt deeper than the skin could thicken.

The world had taken something dear and beloved, her child, and the memories of him were fresh in her heart; the smile, the fact that she had held him and raised him, fed and clothed him, delighted in his growth, worried and loved and cared for him. With this loss came the recognition that life and this society were painfully beyond her control. It was not just the ever present assaults on dignity and identity that worked against her. It was also her emotional machinery. It could not sustain, nor endure, without even the merest scrap of nourishment and encouragement.

They said the tree could grow in Brooklyn, through the concrete, through the dirt and heavy traffic, but once the heart was broken it was a wonder it kept on beating for any reason but to ache. And yet that ache was the last solemnity, a refusal to surrender the love felt, a refusal to move on and accept it. It was so hard to grieve, and so unfair, and another reminder of the sick injustice of this place and time.

And it hurt so bad, to even think of this loss, and yet she rose each morning and walked, unsteady at times, into what had become her life. Strong and sick—at the same time.

She took some small comforts in the care and compassion expressed by those near to her. But in the quiet, private corners of her heart, she knew she was broken in a way that would never be fixed. It could maybe heal over, in time, through the reaching of acceptance and the grace of god, and god willing, one day it might. But it would never be whole. And it would never beat and glow and delight with the life of her son, not in this life. He was only in her memory now, and in her mind she wondered, and hoped and prayed, that these did not become poisoned also. The pain of dwelling there would be her companion in grief, but she also knew that she would never fully let that go. On his birthday. On the day he died. She would always remember.

And so what are we to do with this woman? What is our society to think of her? What are we to do with all of these masses, these people, each one a lifetime of stories, each one a volume of love and loss, mistakes and triumphs? How can we bear to endure that we all are aching, hurting, struggling, and yet we know each other little, if at all. And yet we can know we are all hurting and struggling and striving. Not as equals, and not equally. But what are we to make of this?

What are we, with all that is left undone, to do? ■



Neot Semadar Toby Davine

Para Ti... For You...

Ana C. Balarezo

Que nunca tengas caminos sin salida en tu vida, y senderos sin bendiciones.
Que nunca tengas días tan breves que no quepen el amor y tu linda sonrisa.
Que nunca tengas mañanas tan sombrías que no puedas mirar las maravillas de la naturaleza.
Que nunca dejes de descubrir y admirar la verdadera belleza, la del alma.
Que jamás la música deje de sonar en tu alma y la poesía en tu silencio.
Que nunca tu corazón deje de tener paz y tu mente lucidez para poder reflexionar.
Que nunca tengas a tus amigos tan ocupados que no te puedan ver, escuchar, ni llamar.
Que nunca tengas a tus seres queridos en circunstancias difíciles que no les puedas ayudar.
Que nunca tengas sueños más allá de tu alcance que tus bellas manos no puedan tocar.
Que nunca dejes de tener la palabra “perdón” en tus labios para los que hiciste daño.
Que nunca dejes de tener la palabra “gracias” para los que te dieron momentos de felicidad.
Que nunca haya luceros que no te puedan alumbrar cuando emprendas un camino.
Que nunca te conformes con menos de lo que puedas ser.
Que tu mente jamás deje de comprender todo pensamiento, palabra y acción, sin juzgar.
Que nunca tengas la insensatez de negar el amor, de afrontar y enmendar tus errores.
Que nunca dejes de tener la humildad para comprender a los que te aman.
Que nunca pierdas la valentía de enfrentar las adversidades y las fuerzas de cambiar para ser mejor.
Que jamás tengas palabras, pensamientos y acciones que ofendan y siembren dolor.
Que nunca se extinga tu capacidad de amar, tus ideales y tu sed de luchar por la justicia.
Que nunca puedas olvidar todo lo que tuviste desde el comienzo y que es y será tuyo para siempre.
Que nunca dejes de tener fe, esperanza y a Dios cerca de ti.... ■

El Caballo Kevin Yan, Class of 2015

