

# MI ID MI ID C THE JOURNAL OF ART AND HEALING I UN I UN S

VOLUME III, 2016



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EAST MEETS WEST

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers, writers and artists from all corners of the world, welcome to the 3rd edition of **Murmurs: East Meets West!** Published in collaboration between the University of Ottawa and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, we hope to open your mind to new artistic perspectives, foreign languages and cultures, and to tease your artistic right hemispheres. Our vision is to expand your own view of medicine and art as two unique worlds that can collide into an expressive harmony. Indulge yourself in the beautiful paintings, savouring the nuances of poems and reliving focal moments through photography and stories. This year's Murmurs is the first international medical humanities journal proudly showcasing visual and literary pieces created by medical students across Canada and in Shanghai.

We hope that this magazine will be an inspiration to you as a future health care practitioner; where there is art there is empathy, and where there is empathy there is healing.

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# THUNDERSTRUCK

Gerhard Dashi, MD 2017, Queen's University

*"Thunder..."*

The student rushes into the OR. His last few bites from lunch barely swallowed. Nervous because he's late. Nobody notices.

*"Thunder..."*

He looks around. Three groups have formed; one with males, one with females, one man sits alone. The men are new, their foreign names on the white board. Must be the harvesting team, from the big city. The women are local, nurses and anesthesia.

*"Thunder..."*

He approaches the women, introduces himself, asks if it's ok to observe, he has permission. They look at his nametag. "Sure", looking at each for approval. "Stay at the head of the bed. We'll be running."

*"Thunder..."*

He builds enough courage, asks when the patient will come. "He has to be in asystole for 5 minutes." Two people open the OR doors, hold them open. He's never seen that before. "We'll pause for one minute of silence when we're cooling, a way to say thanks," says one of the foreigners. Everyone nods. The doors are still open.

*"I was caught..."*

"Here they come." Everyone perks up. A timer is started.

*"In the middle of a railroad track..."*

Between a human train, one nurse pulling, another pushing, a child on a stretcher. Eyes closed. Looks the same as any other, except the hair is wet. He wonders why.

*"I looked round..."*

He looks around. The doors have closed, black cardboard is taped over the windows.

*"And I knew there was no turning back..."*

The anesthetist prepares to intubate. "Why?"

"We need to recruit the lungs before removal."

*"My mind raced..."*

Surgeons race to the body, transfer it to the operating table. They take their positions, two at the thorax, two at the abdomen. The empty stretcher leaves the room.

*"And I thought what could I do..."*

A nurse rolls buckets of ice behind each surgeon.

*"And I knew..."*

Another hangs large, cooled IV bags.

*"There was no help, no help from you..."*

He doesn't know how to help.

*"Sound of the drums..."*

Sound of an electric guitar. Then chanting. Then drums. Then "Thunder, thunder..."

*"Beating in my heart..."*

His heart pounds, he's gone mad. No one else reacts. He definitely hears music.

*"The thunder of guns..."*

The thunder of metal in the corner. One nurse with an iPad and a speaker.

*"Tore me apart..."*

Two surgeons tear ribs apart, two split the abdomen. The callousness tears him apart. Is the music for timing? Motivation? Boredom?

*"You've been, Thunderstruck..."*

He is disgusted. These people are heartless.

*"Rode down the highway, Broke the limit, we hit the town..."*

They'd hit a car.

*"Broke all the rules..."*

Broke all the surgical rules.

*"Played all the fools..."*

Playing death for a fool, saving others instead.

*"They blew our minds..."*

They blow up the lungs. Alveoli inflate, contusions remain.

*"And I was shaking at the knees..."*

He slowly walks around, sees mostly anatomy. Tries to get the best view, he needs to learn after all.

*"Could I come again please..."*

"Could I change the song, please", asks a nurse. "Let it finish. It was his favorite song", answers another.

*"Yeah, them ladies were too kind..."*

Things make a lot more sense now. These people are human. The body is cooled, packed with ice and cold fluid.

*"It's alright, we're doin' fine..."*

"We're doing well. Let's stop for that minute of silence." No one pauses the music, a different song now. How long has it been?

*"Thunderstruck! Yeah, yeah, yeah..."*

The organs come out, one by one. Soon they'll be closing. "Do you want to scrub in?"

*"Thunderstruck! Baby, baby..."*

He's conflicted. He needs to practice, he never says no. But this is a donor, a child, now is not the time.

*"You've been, Thunderstruck..."*

He goes to scrub, hating every second. Decides to do his best. This child's memory deserves it. His gift, his family's gift, deserves honor.

*"Thunderstruck! Thunderstruck!..."*

He's soon left alone, the last person suturing. The surgeons rush out, new organs in hand. Nurses clean the hair and wounds. He closes the abdomen, with no contents inside.

*"You've been, Thunderstruck!"*



## WISHING on TIME

Selynn Guo, MD 2017, University of Toronto

# MEDYSTOPIA

Jacob Gordner, MD 2017, Queen's University  
(1st Place Literary Category Prize)

It's noon. I stare at a picture of the brain on the projector screen along with all the rest of the 2017's around me. 2017. That's the number they have assigned me and the rest of my cohort, based on the school-cycle when we are supposed to become Doctors. It's different than in the before times, when they identified us by a grade number. My grade number always made me feel proud, but 2017 makes me feel small and hopeless. A reminder of the impossibly far away time when I will finally have freedom.

I shiver. Even thinking the word 'freedom' fills me with anxiety, even though I have not actually spoken aloud. I am not supposed to want freedom- I know that. "I should be happy with where I am," they tell me. "My future will be great. I will help our society. I am privileged."

I know I am barely looking at the screen anymore, but after three hours I am too tired to keep staring. The Administration has all sorts of screens they use to control us: projector screens, computer screens, tablet screens, phone screens, pager screens -it's endless. Some people who really love screens become radiologists.

There's a sudden movement at the corner of my eye, and a new wave of fear rushes over me. Someone sees me not paying attention to the screen. If they are a false-face, a 2017 who pretends to be your friend but really wants you to fail to help them succeed, then they might report me to the Administration. False-faces are rare here at Queen's, one of the smallest programs. But I've heard stories of other, bigger programs with whole classes filled with false-faces, where 2017's manipulate and hurt one another to get ahead.

Wait, if they're looking at me, then they're not paying attention either, I realize triumphantly.

Ready to challenge whatever false-face sits next to me, I quickly turn to the side, and I lock eyes with Marrow.

I breathe a sigh of relief, and even giggle a little as he grins at me.

Marrow is my best friend. We met during orientation, almost two school-cycles ago. Since then we have done all our studying together, and he helps me keep up with my work.

He mouths words to me from five seats away, but I hear them as clearly as if he was whispering in my ear.

"Shouldn't you be paying attention, Melena? If you don't

learn about the brain, how are you going to become a neurosurgeon?"

I have to bite my lip to stop myself from laughing. Ever since I told Marrow that I don't think I'm smart enough to be a neurosurgeon, he's always teasing me about it. I don't mind, except that my friend Dyspnea says that when boys tease you it's because secretly they want you to Couples Rank with you. My pulse quickens as I imagine what it would be like to Couple's Rank with Marrow, but then a small voice in my head pipes up: This is what they want, it says, and immediately, I am torn away from my daydream.

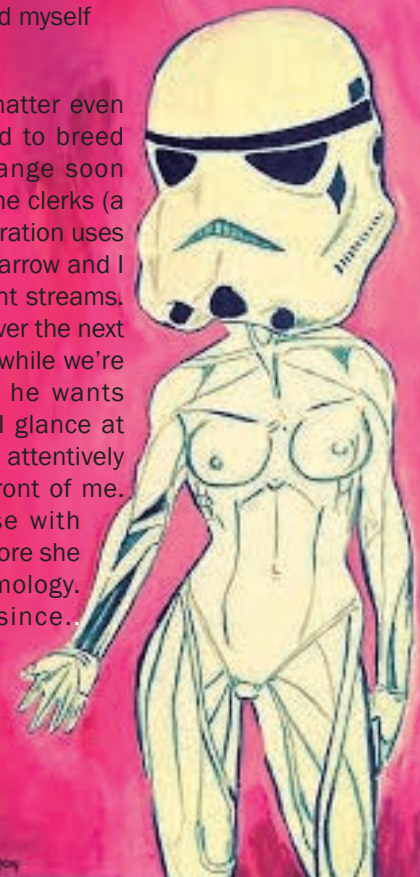
The only people who are accepted into the program are those who have specific characteristics. We are systematically analyzed and appraised for our abilities to think and solve problems, and even before that we must undergo a harsh and grueling test known as the MCAT. Once we are in the program, the close quarters we are kept in everyday ensure we will eventually breed with one another and there will be an accumulation of favourable genetics over the generations, producing superior Doctors with each passing school-cycle. That's what they want for Marrow and I.

I am privileged, I have to remind myself again.

Then I remember it doesn't matter even if Marrow and I are supposed to breed together. Everything will change soon because the 2017's will become clerks (a more proper word the Administration uses in the place of 'slaves'), and Marrow and I have been selected for different streams. We will barely see each other over the next two school-cycles. And what if while we're separated, Marrow decides he wants some competitive specialty? I glance at Areola Crepitus who is staring attentively at the screen a few rows in front of me. I used to be almost as close with Areola as I am with Marrow before she started gunning for ophthalmology. She hasn't spoken to me since.

## UNTITLED

Laura Schep, MD 2017,  
Dalhousie University



Laura Schep 2017

“...is The Match,” I hear our instructor say from his podium next to the screen.

Suddenly, every 2017 is completely focused on him.

“The Match,” I hear a girl repeat under her breath somewhere behind me. Several other whispers echo hers across the room.

But our instructor is only referring to the exercise currently being projected on the screen, instructing us to match different parts of the brain with their general functions. I ooze back into my seat as a soft sigh of disappointment escapes from the rest of the 2017’s.

I watch as Nephron Pica raises his hand and answers the instructor’s question in full. Nephron knows everything. And he’s done lots of research, a horrible trial that supposedly makes you more competitive. He’ll Match to whatever specialty he wants, I’m sure of it.

And that’s all that matters. Because the Match is everything. Everything.

At the end of four school-cycles, we are Matched to what is supposed to be our perfect specialty. It’s not like in other parts of society, where you might get a bunch of different career offers and you can choose the one you like best. Each 2017 will only get one Match, and if you don’t take it you have nothing. You might even hate your Match.

Stop being silly, Melena, I berate myself. Have you ever heard of anyone hating their Match? No. And at Queen’s almost everyone gets a Match they love! Just think how ‘privileged’ you are to be here.

But not everyone gets a Match they love. That nagging voice in the back of my head joins the conversation. Some don’t get one at all. What if you’re one of the ‘Unmatched’?

Unmatched. They tell us it hardly ever happens, that we shouldn’t worry about it. It only happens to the rare, foolish, unprepared students. Students that never want to

work hard, and can’t decide what they want to do until it’s too late. The students that somehow got through all the tests and evaluations that are supposed to weed them out.

The students like me, maybe.

That’s why I’m scared. I’m not like Nephron who is so smart he can match to whatever he wants. Worse, I’m not even like Areola, who is certain of what she wants to match to, and can direct all her energy into making sure she gets it. I could be an Unmatched.

Marrow doesn’t understand. When I tell him, he always just laughs and then in an instant he is transformed into a puppet of the Administration, and his lips open and close in tune with words I know are not his. “Don’t worry, Melena. Our Matches will all be great. We will be rich and happy. We will be Doctors. We are all so privileged.”

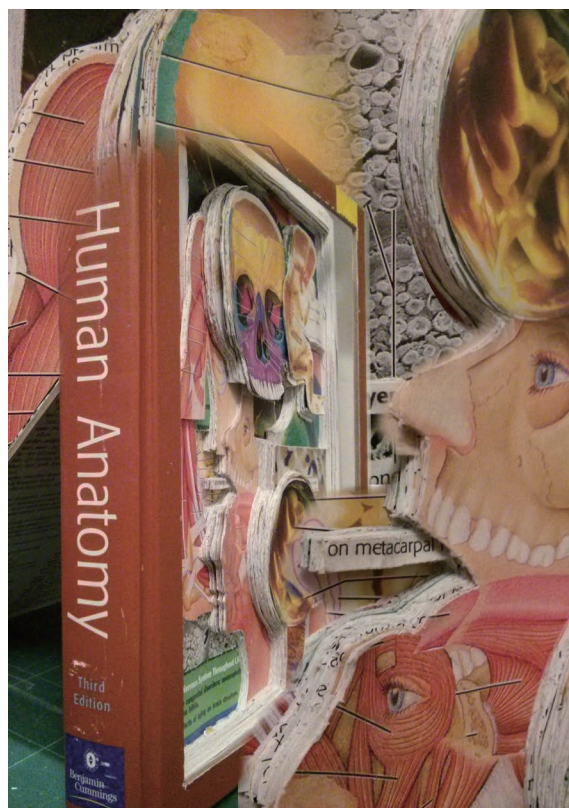
Once upon a time, that would reassure me. But lately, whenever anyone talks about The Match, I worry the unthinkable could happen to me. And then I don’t feel so privileged at all.

The 2017’s around me begin to stir, and I become aware that our instructor is dismissing us for our one hour break. We are meant to believe that these breaks were born from the generosity of the administration; but secretly, I think they are given to us so we do not revolt against them.

Still, I feel privileged to have a full hour today. Even though our dismissal time is a rule set by the Administration, it is rarely followed by the Doctors who instruct us. Like gods, Doctors have all the power to twist and warp the rules of the medical world, the world I am bound to, as they wish. “That is why you

must never make a Doctor angry,” we were all warned on our first days as 2017’s.

I stuff my computer screen into my orange backpack and throw it over my shoulders, along with the other one hundred 2017’s around me. My backpack is another gift I should be grateful for. Every student is given one when they enter the program, and they serve to remind us of our place in the rigid hierarchy



## UNDERNEATH the COVER

Michael Hart-Matyas, MD 2018,  
Dalhousie University

of the medical world. The colour was chosen by the 2016's, the class one school-cycle ahead of us. We are rarely given any semblance of power, and so the choosing of the backpack colour is almost always a way for one class to take out their aggression on the following one. The 2016's chose bright orange to humiliate us, but instead the orange just reminds me of how I feel like a prisoner here.

All at once, I realize the brilliance of the whole backpack colour system. Creating an endless cycle of abuse, and turning the classes against one another so we are too preoccupied hating ourselves to ever look to the Administration as our enemy.

I have a sudden urge to throw off my backpack and stomp it into the ground. But I know it would be pointless. That is because unlike other backpacks that deteriorate and lose their functionality over time, this one does not seem to break no matter what you do with it. And despite my best efforts, I have not yet discovered what futuristic, resilient material it is composed of. I will have to wear this backpack forever.

I exit the lecture hall and begin walking toward the Clinical Skills Centre. Today is a special day. Due to an inconceivable, once in a millennium error by the Administration, a prospect pre-med who was meant to

be evaluated last weekend for whether or not she is capable enough to be accepted into the program was given the wrong date, and will instead be evaluated during today's one hour break. I, along with another five 2017's, were privileged enough to be selected to be her evaluators at a six station interview held for only her. This duty is not mandatory, however no one will reject it because then we would have to forfeit access to the free pizza lunch that we have been promised. Students in my program are kept from purchasing and consuming food by the Administration's high program cost and busy schedule, and so food is often used as an incentive to encourage us to accept extra labour.

I reach the Clinical Skills Centre, and state my name for the hawkish Doctor standing in the foyer. She scans me up and down, and I know she is appraising my appearance, trying to determine if it meets the strict standards of the program. I can imagine a thousand variables trickling through her mind: my skirt length, the colour of my stockings, even my choice of hairstyle. Meanwhile, I read her badge and learn that she is Dr. Rubella Venule, a psychiatrist. I then realize too late that my own badge has flipped over on my chest, a childish display of unprofessionalism. I quickly attempt to restore it



## LUNGS

Laura Schep, MD 2017  
Dalhousie University

without alerting the Doctor. I don't think she notices. Today, I really am privileged.

She leads me to Room F, one of the many small rooms that circle the inside of the Clinical Skills Centre. These rooms are designed to mimic real patient rooms in the hospital, and I've passed countless hours in them, working to strip away my former, unprofessional personality and replacing it with the approved characteristics that a Doctor should have.

Dr. Venule and I will evaluate the prospect together, each of us checking the appropriate boxes on our forms, though in my heart, I suspect that only the Doctor's form will actually be used in the selection process.

She closes the door behind us and I sit in one of the chairs on the other side of the room. But before she can join me, her pager goes off. She yanks it from her body, as quickly as if she was removing some bloodsucking leech, and her brow furrows as she reads the letters that appear on the screen.

"I have to go for a minute," she says, startling me. "We're the last room in the series, so I should be back before the prospect gets to us, but if for some reason I'm not, just fill in my form for me. I trust you." She winks at me.



## IT NEVER ENDS

I am dumbfounded by her order. But, before I can muster up the courage to make any sort of protest, Dr. Venule strides from the room and the door shuts behind her.

I begin to sweat. This feels wrong. If the Administration were to learn of this deception, I cannot even fathom what could become of me. Being Unmatched might be the least of my troubles.

Then again, everyone knows Doctors can alter the rules to suit their needs. And if Dr. Venule was to learn I reported her... I shudder at the thought. Better to walk a tightrope over a pit of crocodiles, than to jump in the pit willingly.

Suddenly I remember that my fears are unfounded. Dr. Venule said she would return before the prospect came to our station, so I have nothing to be anxious over. I must be patient.

The next 45 minutes pass by in an agonizing blur. I hear bells ring, and doors open and close as the prospect moves through the different stations, but Dr. Venule does not reappear. I quickly wash my hands with a nearby bottle of sanitizer, a stress-relieving habit that is instilled in us early in our training. The Administration prefers us rubbing the alcohol on our hands instead of consuming it as I once did.

At last, I hear the sound of the prospect leaving Room E. In less than a minute, she will enter my room, and I will be evaluating her. Alone.

I pick up Dr. Venule's form and see that she has already filled out the candidate's name: Veronica. It is a strange name for a potential Doctor I think. Perhaps they misspelled Varicella?

But the prospect enters the room a moment later, and introduces herself. Her name really is Veronica. She smiles at me and I recoil. It's

not a plastered-on smile of contentment like the one I and the rest of the 2017's have rehearsed for

use with our patients. A real, genuine smile, the sort of which I haven't seen since before I began the program. It's so bright and full of enthusiasm - I feel soiled in its presence.

Veronica has already read the instructions outside the door which tell her to explain why she wants to be accepted into the program, so there is no need for me to speak for the next eight minutes. At first, she does very well, describing to me the wondrous adventures and enjoyable education she imagines will come with her entry to Queen's. Her fantasy is no doubt spurred on by the Interview Video, a heinous piece of propaganda the Administration forces us to produce every school-cycle to

draw in greater numbers of prospects. It is as though she truly believed in the vision we showed her.

In fact, the more Veronica speaks, the more I feel myself transported to the before-times. How long has it been since I've encountered someone like her: so full of passion and optimism? I realize that I would really like Veronica to join me here in the program, even if she will be a 2019.

And that's when the unthinkable happens. Veronica's cell phone rings.

My heart sinks. Veronica quickly shuts off her phone and picks up where she left off, but it is too late. The mistake is unforgivable. Leaving one's cellphone on while in a professional environment is easily comparable to second-degree murder in my program. She will never be accepted to Queen's.

The doomed prospect finishes giving her exposition, thanks me, and then leaves the room, seemingly unaware of her own condemnation. I bow my head, dreading the task of completing Dr. Venule's and my evaluations of her. One mark in the right box, and I will seal her fate.

Heavy with regret, I begin filling out the evaluations. I give her the excellent scores she deserves for her answer, temporarily avoiding the areas where I know I must record her breach of professionalism. Yet too soon, there is nothing else left to fill out, and my pen hovers over the 'red flag' box like an executioner holding up his axe.

I try and will myself to make pen touch paper, but no matter how hard I try, I simply cannot. The Administration would not want this prospect to enter the program, I know that, and I have never defied them before, not once. How can I now?

Of course, Dr. Venule defied the administration when she left me here alone to fill out her form. But I am not a Doctor. Not yet. I cannot bend the rules.

But Dr. Venule can! I realize suddenly, staring at her pre-emptive signature on the form. If I am deceiving the Administration by filling out the form as Dr. Venule, surely it's no more risk to leave out a worthy candidate's single mistake. I gulp as I consider the magnitude of what I am about to do.



## BENEATH my SKIN

LAURA SCHEP

*Laura Schep, MD 2017,  
Dalhousie University*

I have spent hours in these rooms listening to other people's hearts, but today for the first time, I will listen to my own.

I check off the 'no flags' box on both forms, drawing my pen across the paper with a flourish. Then, as the weight of what I've done truly dawns on me, I drop the forms on my chair, and dash out of the room, feeling more alive than I can ever remember.

Today, I made a decision. Today, I am a Doctor.

And today, Veronica is the privileged one.

# RULES for BEING a MED STUDENT

*Shuying Zheng*  
MD 2018, McMaster University

Rules are meant to be followed, they say  
listen well and you'll succeed  
but you ask of me to close my eyes  
and forget about my humanity

but broken is what I'll be  
if perfection is not reached

The pressure's on to reach the peak  
wondrous robot who can do no wrong  
perfect thoughts lead to perfect deeds  
follow these rules and you won't be wrong

Worry not, young one  
responsibility is far from you  
follow our footsteps, you'll surely succeed  
for we have what you seek

But is that what I seek?

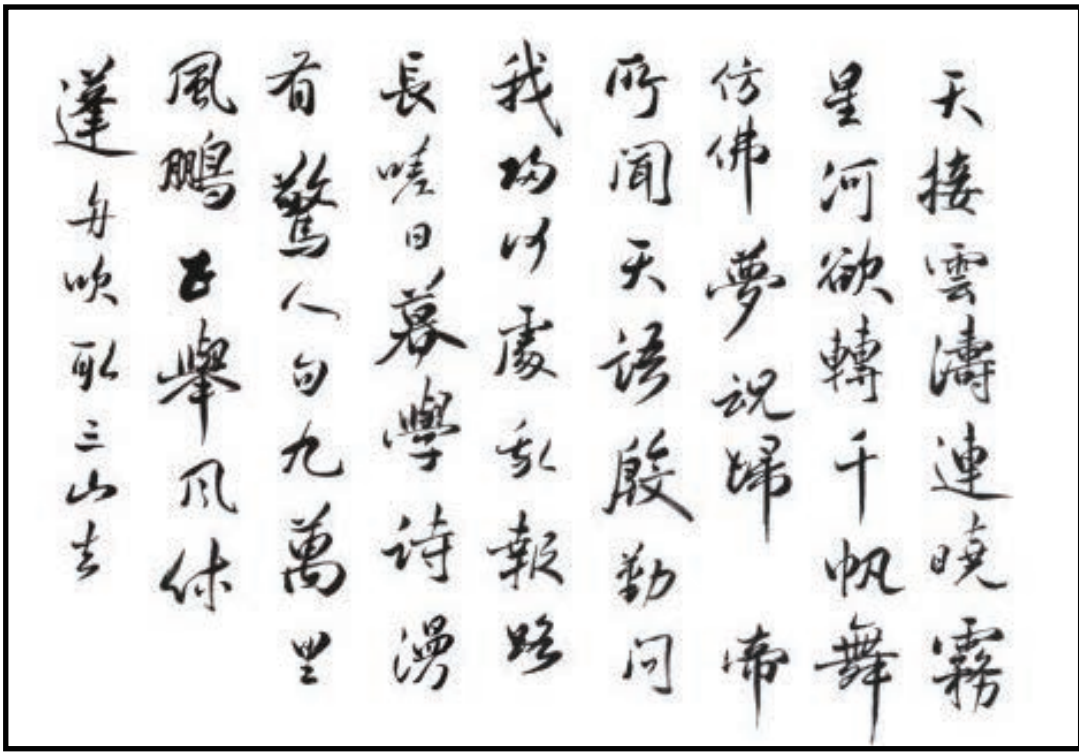
Who am I to rebel against  
rules forefathers decided were best?  
Listen closely, dear children  
you have miles to go before you sleep

Eat, drink, breathe medicine  
eat drink breathe  
throw yourself in wholeheartedly,  
you asked for this you see  
But did I ask for this?  
Is this the only way?  
They say rules are  
meant to be broken



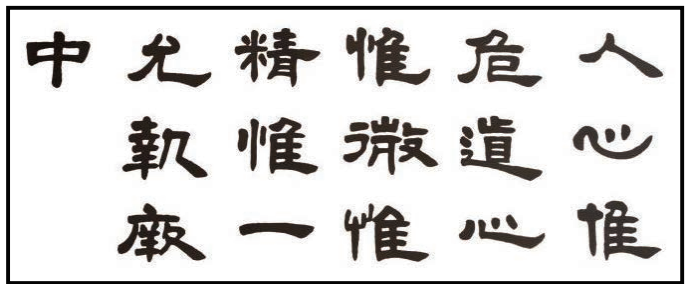
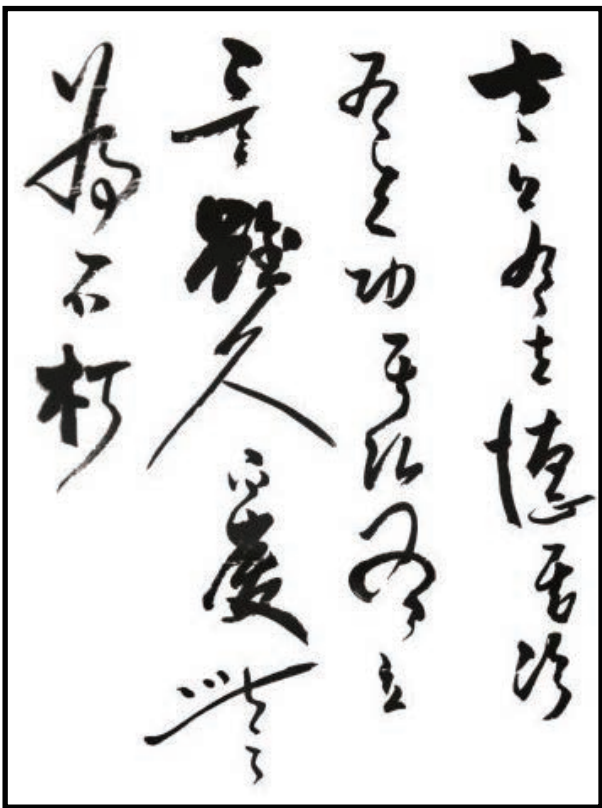
## CONNECTED- BRAIN and BODY

*Phoebe (Tsz Man) Cheng, MD 2018,*  
University of British Columbia



**C h i n e s e Calligraphy-**"Fog. Clouds. Sky. Stars. I sat in my boat and stared at the milky way. The wind blew. The boats flowed. I dreamed. I was in the sky, invited by the God. God asked me gently, do you have a place to stay? It's been a long way, I replied, and it's getting dark. I am getting old now. I can write great poems. But that doesn't make me anything. Look!

The hawks are flying in the clear sky, higher and higher. I wish that the wind would never stop so it can send this little boat to the three mountains, which is where I belong."  
 Zhou Yanzai, Clinical Medicine (8 yrs), Class of 2013



**Chinese Calligraphy-**"Fear the fear, but never change your dream for it."  
 Lin Liangjun, JiaoTong University, French stream of Clinical Medicine, Class of 2014

**Chinese Calligraphy-**"The great are moral. They make contributions and remarks. Morality, contributions and remarks can endure the test of time. This is called immortality."  
 Chen Lichang, JiaoTong University, Clinical Medicine, Class of 2011

# The GIFT of BREATH

*Melissa Maltez, MD 2018  
University of Ottawa*



## 初雪 2015

*Tianyun Wang  
MD 2019, University of Ottawa*

Dans un coup de coeur elle débarque  
me prend par surprise  
le lendemain elle disparaît  
comme si elle n'y était jamais

le coucou du matin s'envahit  
le blanc total m'étourdit

un miroir des nuages tombe  
sur cette terre recouverte  
d'une berceuse d'esprits vivants  
dansant dans un cocon charmant

De l'air frais à souffler dans le poumon  
malgré la température qui chute  
m'incite à lâcher quoi qu'il en soit  
pour me joindre à la nature libérante.

# MY BOYFRIEND, MEDICINE

Serena Deketele

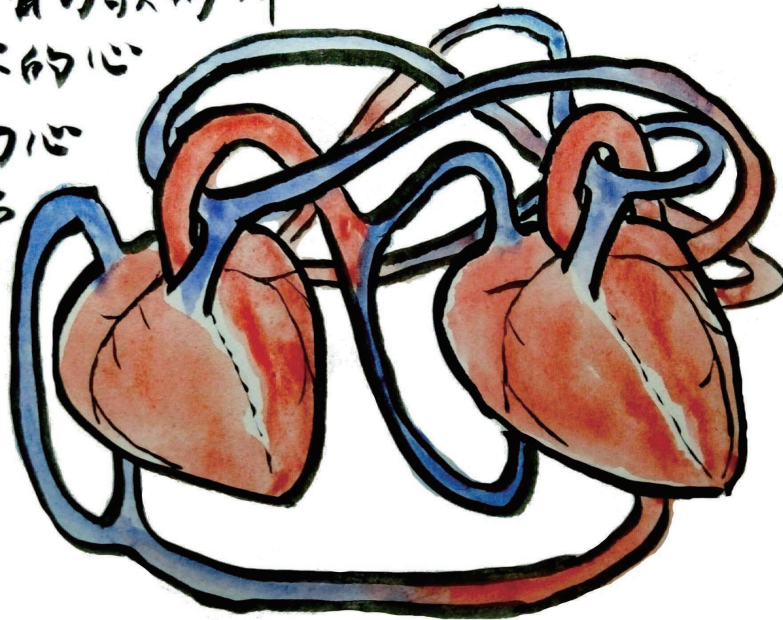
MD 2017, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

I'm seeing this guy, his name is Medicine. I've known him as long as I can remember and my parents are crazy about him: he has a bright future, intellectually stimulating, and handsome as hell.

Our relationship started very young, when I was 7 or 8 years old perhaps? He was the obvious choice from day one.

In high school, I started genuinely imagining a future with Med. We were great together, fit together like hypertension and heart disease. My parents, a pair of small town physicians, just adored having him over for dinner. They talked about him endlessly saying they dated someone just like him, once upon a time. I started imagining how we would spend a magical life together.

听说有句歌词叫  
把你的心  
我的心  
串一串



## CONNECTING the HEARTS

"I heard there are some lyrics, 'take your heart and mine, and string them together.' "

*Kaiqing Lin, Jiao Tong University*

In University, we went through some tough times, but the chemistry and love was undeniable. He was a jock and I thought he was the bee's knees. That brain! Those muscles! That bone structure! His anatomy in general! I was wildly in love! We were in most of the same classes, we studied together, and we were both involved in working with various athletic teams. He was always developing and challenging me to be my best self. I was obsessed, infatuated, absolutely enamoured with this exciting, astute, athletic side of him.

As University continued, I considered the fact that I had never dated someone else. I thought about the

excitement of dating an outdoor adventurer, or the sweet, comfortable satisfaction of dating a baker, or the exhilaration of even taking off abroad and adventuring on my own with not a plan in the world... however, I couldn't imagine any of those for the rest of my life. The adventurer... eventually I want to have a family and dragging toddlers up mountains for days on end might pose some challenges.

The baker... well, I think I would start to hate the delectable delicacies that I currently cherish. Adventuring abroad... this would be amazing if I could find a favourable income somehow... but I think eventually I would want someone I can rely on by my side. Medicine was still the one for me.

Near the end of university I started having a lot of nightmares about him being killed in an accident or that he'd

meet someone else, and troubled myself night and day that somehow I would lose Medicine forever. The panic of not having a plan or feeling like my life would be empty without him was overwhelming. The anxiety that ensued made it harder than ever to hold onto him.

We prevailed. He was supportive and invested in our relationship - we became stronger than ever before. We got engaged the summer after University while traveling in Australia - it was perfect.

The next couple years had their ups and downs but were ultimately successful. We moved up North together, and things became very 'real'. We had always assumed

we would be together forever but now the external pressure to 'make it work' seemed to be increasing exponentially. Some days, as we slaved away studying, feeling confused or fighting I would think, "Why do I bother?!" Other days, we would be learning exciting new things, feeling ourselves thrive over an interesting puzzle or tantalizing task - sewing, drilling, applying our latest skills - more in love than even I thought possible! Pressure or not, the refreshing summers Medicine and I spent apart during these years couldn't stop me thinking about him. He is the love of my life.

He's the perfect guy everyone wanted but I was lucky enough to get.

That brings us to now... we've been fighting a lot lately. We spend all day every day together, and now that we live together I don't get a second to catch my breath.

He keeps testing me - a lot of the time I'm not so sure I know him at all. I'm trying to give him everything he deserves but I'm exhausted.

I can feel myself starting to resent him and wanting to abandon the relationship, but you can't quit something you love that much! Furthermore, it's terrifying to feel so much hatred toward someone you ultimately adore; the internal struggle of it is draining to the nth degree. I think about leaving him, convincing myself I hate him and don't want to be with him anymore. It's hard and I

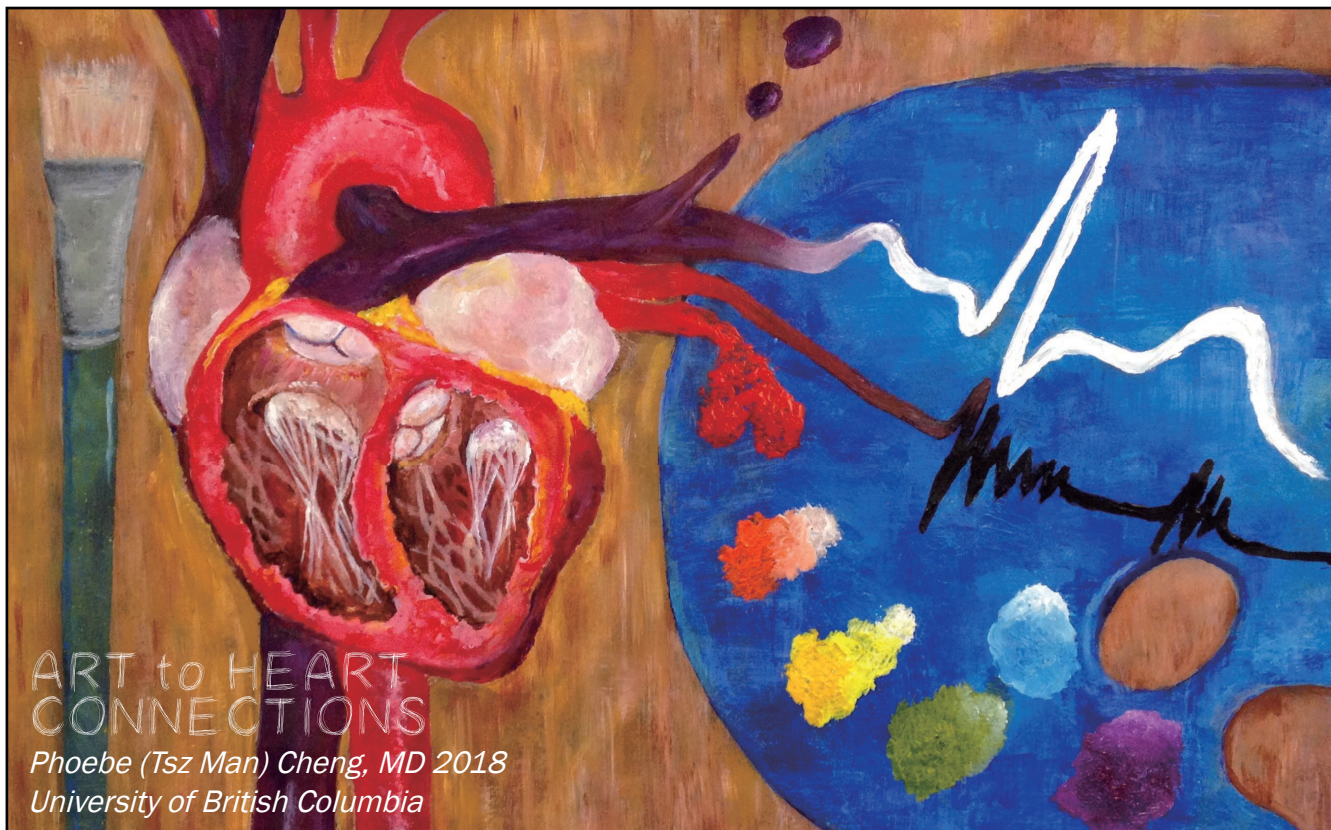
never feel like I'm doing anything right. Then, I start trying to imagine a life without him and I can't do it.

Our most recent fight was an eye opener. I've felt overwhelmed and drained by the relationship. I've realized now that in the midst of this chaos I've neglected Medicine, prioritizing frivolous things over one of the most important relationships in my life. This fight made me realize that if I don't rediscover my love and passion for him again I'm going to lose him forever... or even worse...we'll suffer together.

So, we spent the weekend together, just us, no stress of real life. We laid in bed together for hours, reading and listening to podcasts, watched intellectually stimulating videos, having clever conversations and chatting at the kitchen table animatedly, endlessly - just like we used to - it all came back! I saw the intelligent, rousing, enthusiastic person I'd been falling in love with since I was a girl. I was reminded how we had been bound together not just by time and obligation but also by passion and drive!

Our relationship is different now... we're in it. We've committed ourselves to one another and it's not just a dream. Yes, it's harder and the amount of work and responsibility is ever growing, but when it comes back to basics...

I love Medicine. It's part of who I am.



# 嗨 夏小腾

Juan Xu 徐娟

JiaoTong University, Postgraduate class of 2015

今天

看到阳光撒进第一班地铁车厢的时候，我想到了你。

好像我们曾经一起坐第一班车去某个地方

你靠在窗边。

阳光穿过你的睫毛在你的鼻尖上跳舞。

窗外是皑皑白雪和静谧的村庄。

我现在在的地方，没有雪。

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

Today, you hop up in my head

When I saw the first train filled with sunshine

If my memory serves me right

We've been on a first train once to somewhere

You were leaning against the window

Eyelashes as the filter, nose as the stage

The sunshine was tangoing

嗨 夏小腾

你曾说“如果 24 岁还在读书的话，这辈子会不会就完了”。

我还在读书。

我的这辈子还在继续，你却永远留在了 18 岁。

Outside the window

Villages, covered with snow, and silence

Sadly, I don't see snow where I live now

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

If my memory serves me right again

Here's what you said

If someone's still studying at school when she's 24

Maybe she's doomed for her whole life

Well, here I am, still studying at school

My life goes on

While yours is stuck at your 18th year

嗨 夏小腾

这些年

我好像去了很多地方

看了很多海

爬了许多山

走过不少弯曲的巷子

遇到过不少人和猴子

嗨 夏小腾

如果知道你只有 18 年，我想我会帮你递情书给你心爱的

姑娘。

嗨 夏小腾

即使知道你只有 18 年，我依然会撸起袖子问你是不是要

单挑。

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

It seems that I've been to lots of places these years

Oceans, Mountains, Winding lanes

Many people, even monkeys

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

If I had known that you only have 18 years for your life

I might have helped you send your love letter

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

Even if I had known that you would only have

18 years for your life

I would still have asked

“Hey, you wanna fight?”

嗨 夏小腾

峻有两个孩子了

姗嫁给了我认识的男人

我... 把眼睛搞近视了

还有

Hi Xia Xiaoteng

Jun is a parent to 2 kids now

Shan married some guy, who I don't even know

I am short sighted now

And I did not choose hematology

我没有选血液科

嗨

你有想我们吗

Hi,

Do you miss us?

— 夏小腾六周年忌日祭

--- For the 6th Anniversary of Xia Xiaoteng's Death

# SNOWFLAKES

*Lilia Panamsky  
MD 2016, McMaster University*

In room number one lies the 50 pack-year smoker with a new diagnosis of lung cancer who's still itching for another cigarette to satisfy his cravings.

He only has months to live but he's determined to live his life, to live the good life.

Beside him is the middle aged man with a list of medications too long to fit on one page, the modern day medical miracle who's defied evolution and is somehow still alive.

He groans when you try and turn him. He confides in you, telling you that he's fed up and ready to leave this world for a better place; any place but here.

Down the hall sits the little old lady with the hip fracture and delirium. She's just noticed a patient who is the spitting image of her granddaughter.

This young patient turned 18 last month and is seeing the ominous white walls of the adult hospital for the first time.

There's no decorations on the walls, and no one to calm her down when she's scared and alone. She cries silently, missing the comfort of the pediatric beds.

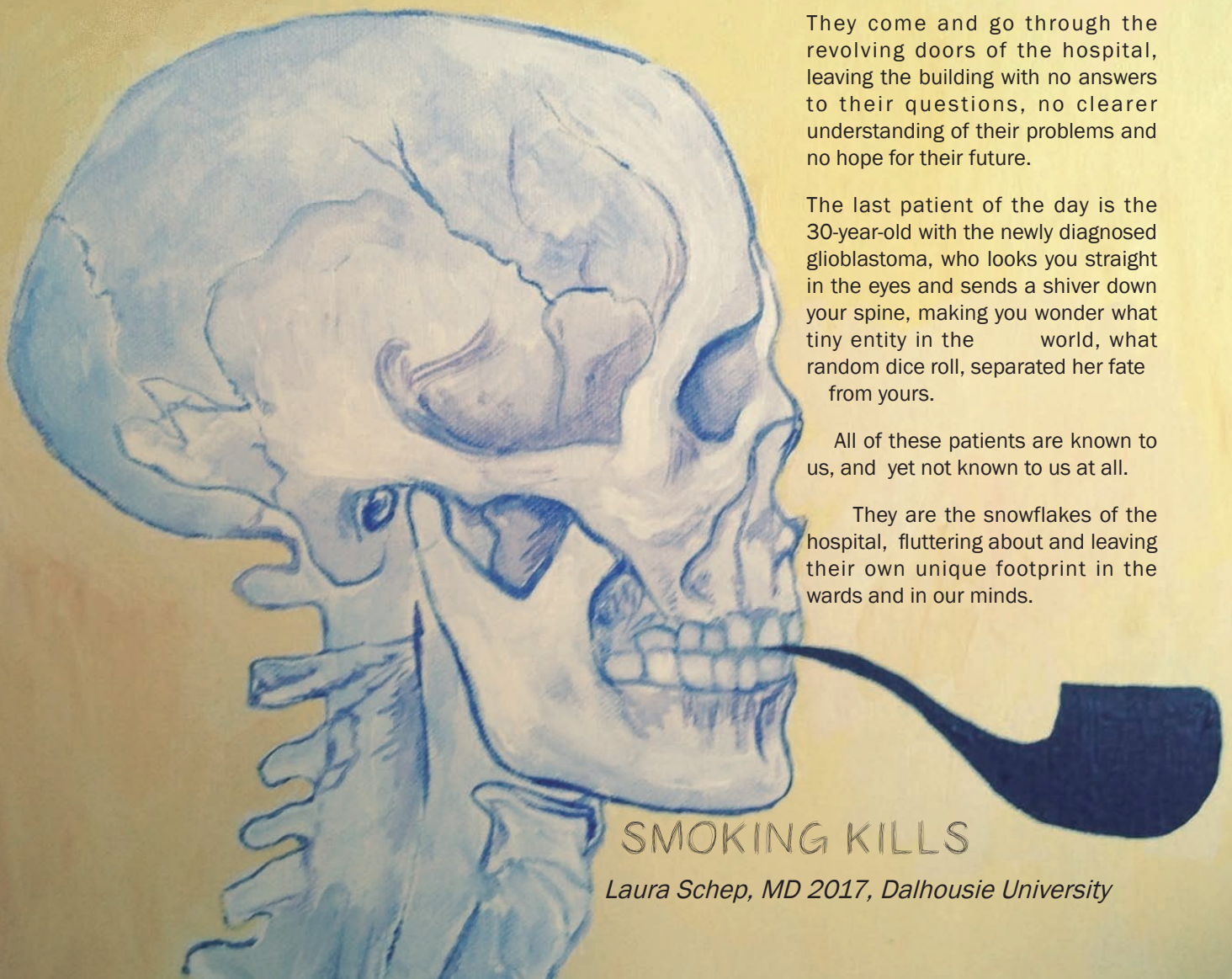
Patients 4, 5, and 6 all come in with vague complaints.

They come and go through the revolving doors of the hospital, leaving the building with no answers to their questions, no clearer understanding of their problems and no hope for their future.

The last patient of the day is the 30-year-old with the newly diagnosed glioblastoma, who looks you straight in the eyes and sends a shiver down your spine, making you wonder what tiny entity in the world, what random dice roll, separated her fate from yours.

All of these patients are known to us, and yet not known to us at all.

They are the snowflakes of the hospital, fluttering about and leaving their own unique footprint in the wards and in our minds.



## SMOKING KILLS

*Laura Schep, MD 2017, Dalhousie University*

# 愚比王百廿诞辰祝词

Liu Yixiao

English Stream of Clinical Medicine Class of 2014, JiaoTong University

食物，性，和一勺感情刺激，  
 一年四季无非欲望的交替。  
 我紧贴这只失控的蓝色犀牛背上  
 载着我们到处乱撞。  
 我很少思考，我什么都反对，  
 尤其厌恶那些干预我思想的行为。  
 自由最能填饱欲望的肠胃，  
 我爱自由，就像水族箱中的热带鱼类。  
 温暖使我快乐，  
 无尽地满足感官而已，  
 并非向往自由的真谛。  
 自由啊，自由，  
 我的罪恶可是假借你的名义，  
 于事于人于上帝，合情合理。

我信奉科学，科学是自由和犀牛的臣子，  
 我站在她肩膀上，像只没倒过时差的公鸡，  
 尽情嘲讽无知，暴露躁狂的本性。  
 别去见自闭症小孩就行，  
 他们写过字的纸，让我害怕接触传染的途径。  
 我来了，消耗了大地，却不想在地底下安息。

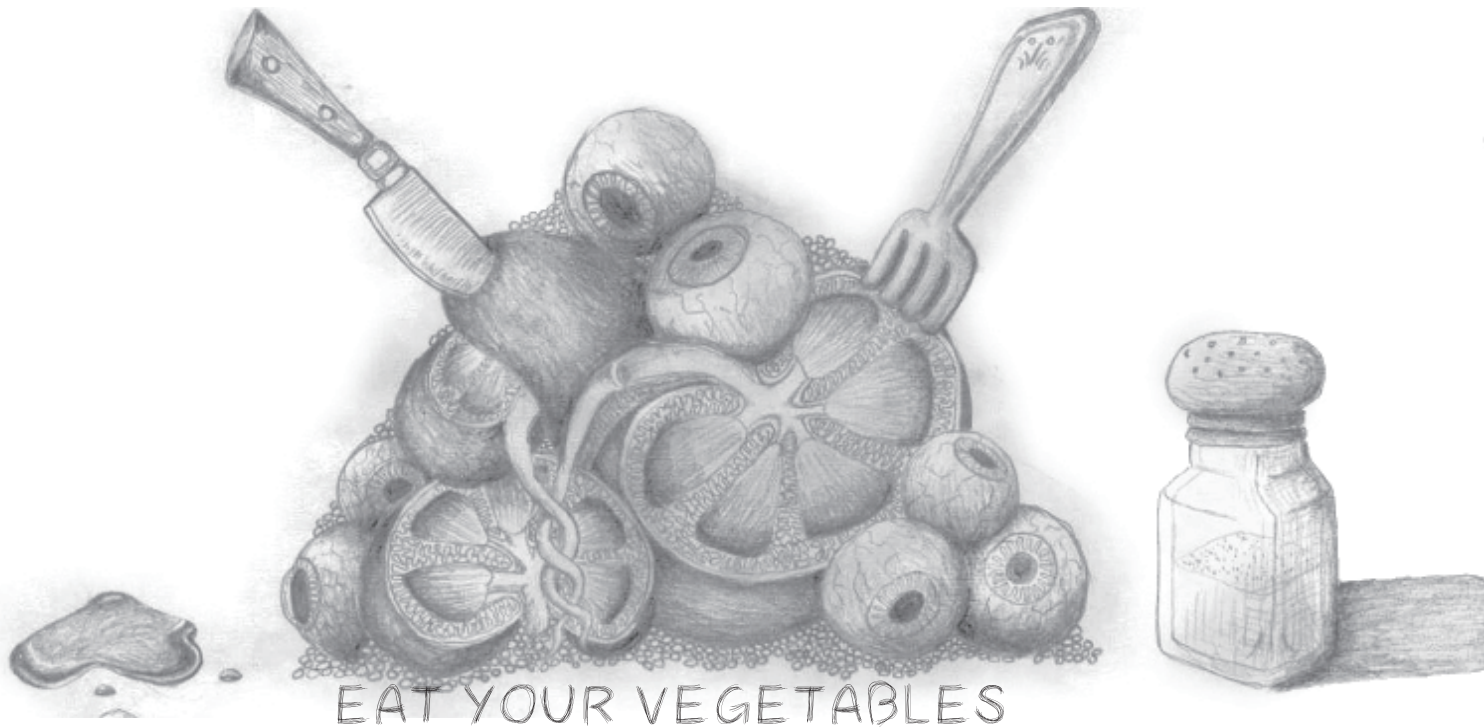
## COMMENTARY FROM THE AUTHOR

It is difficult to say where I began this work. I often feel as though I am desperately attempting to fall into the shoes of previous poets; their insights into the eternal concepts of humanity, and their unique styles never cease to amaze me.

Many lines from great poets have haunted me over the years, one of them being "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats, when he writes:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre, The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

He describes the falling apart of the world in such a continuous and romantic way. However, it evokes within me, as it may perhaps evoke within others of this modern world, a more violent and fiercer feeling that I try to recreate within the deepest meanings of my poems. Now more than ever, human beings are being forced to adapt themselves to a society rather than to nature- is it perhaps what every creature should have done?



## EAT YOUR VEGETABLES

Andrea Zumrova, MD 2017, University of Ottawa

# MY DAYS are FILLED

Melissa Pasqua  
MD 2016, University of Ottawa

My days are filled with sorrow –  
 not my own, but the tears of those  
 in blue uniforms, enclosed by  
 never-ending beige walls  
 locked doors  
 Ativan  
 and their own flesh-bound prison.  
 With notepad and pen,  
 I scribble down what these shattered ghosts say  
 what they feel  
 what makes them tick and break.  
 I take their vitals:  
 sleep, appetite, self-harm, suicidal ideation,  
 listen to their dying soul gasp for air  
 and move onto the next.  
 I check wrists here like any other ward,  
 not for the pulse but for the cuts,  
 thanking them when they pass me their sharp objects  
 (it means they trust me).  
 As I sip my coffee, I type out my notes:  
 Mrs A is having diarrhea from the Prozac  
 Mr P still hears God's voice and believes his parents  
 are out to kill him  
 Ms. S would still down the entirety of her mother's  
 cocktail of prescription medications as soon as she  
 were to escape the hospital.

My days are filled with new people:  
 I sit them down across from me in the office,  
 smiling,  
 questioning them softly  
 passing them the tissues as they tell me that they're  
 drowning  
 as if their mood was an anvil around their neck  
 that their soul died a long time ago and all that's left  
 is a corpse that barely sleeps or eats  
 that they've carved themselves like a jack-o-lantern  
 and try to numb the pain with 3 poppers a day and a  
 40-piece on the weekend  
 because they're trying to forget that Daddy molested  
 them at 5 years old  
 and Mom blames them for her drinking.  
 They undress their lives out for me until they're naked,  
 vulnerable, and numb  
 while I mark off a few checklists



## Reflection

Jingyan Pan, MD 2017  
University of Manitoba

then tell the doctor which chemical their brain  
 could use the most.  
 My days are filled with the same people:  
 Those who don't know who they are  
 who they love  
 or how they feel  
 because their emotions change with the wind,  
 so they hurt themselves and hurt others for a  
 sensation of fleeting permanence  
 in this world.  
 Those whose windows through which they see  
 the world are so misshapen  
 that their perception of reality has become  
 mutilated,  
 so that they start to believe the voices in their  
 heads rather than their loved ones  
 who they can no longer recognize apart from  
 the monsters they think they see.  
 Those who sit in the chair, tearing at their  
 handkerchief slowly, as they recount to you  
 that they are always on edge  
 always fearful  
 always on the breaking point  
 because the devil in their head is in the  
 details of everyday life,  
 and if not, they suddenly feel out of breath  
 and falling  
 so much that they run away from crowds just  
 to make sure they can escape when they go  
 down.

# BEFORE

Paige Zhang, MD 2017, University of Toronto

*This was inspired by a memory shared with me by a patient of mine who had recently lost his wife.*

Before the cancer took you, we had spent weekends at our wooded cabin at the end of an old logging road that wended through wild terrain. I recall the house in indistinct shapes: the blurred silhouette of red cedar we had shaped together in hopes that it would stand forever in harmony with the forest and elements.

My recollection of the route has decayed and the memories have become indistinct. I was always terrible with directions, until I had to remember chemotherapy regimens and resuscitation options. But many things have changed: the bramble bushes are thicker and the warm summer air has swelled the blue berries into ripe fruit.



Body Garden of the Medical Mind

Phoebe (Tsz Man) Cheng, MD 2018, University of British Columbia

My eyes blur against the hazy heat, but the smell of fresh earth grounds me. I can still feel the weight of dirt in my young man's hands, feel my muscles strain in the sun as we dug flowerbeds. How fertile the Earth seemed then. I remember the purpose we had tied to this land, to the idea of forever we had tried to mark on this earth.

Now, violent bursts of colour spring from wild growths by the roadside and dance in a haphazard wind: no one can predict where and when things will grow. Beyond, the tangle of trees close off a world of shadow – a place where chaos and unpredictability lies and which I know is untamable. It is a dark world, after all.

The turns blur and I drive mindlessly, the world surrendering into dense forest. The trees grow taller and wilder – almost swallowing the afternoon sun. The light now only comes in bright stabs, painful in a world that is accustomed to shadow. The scent turns sharp as pine needles.

The breeze cools and stops, trapped in this directionless place. Something has changed and this is no longer the idyllic escape of our youth, before we sought safety in sterile rooms.

As the path sputters into solitary wilderness, I take one final turn past the old cedar tree. A lightning strike (who knows when during those violent winters) has speared the beast in half. One side lies defeated and is colonized by amber moss. The other half stands barely erect, rotting and scarred.

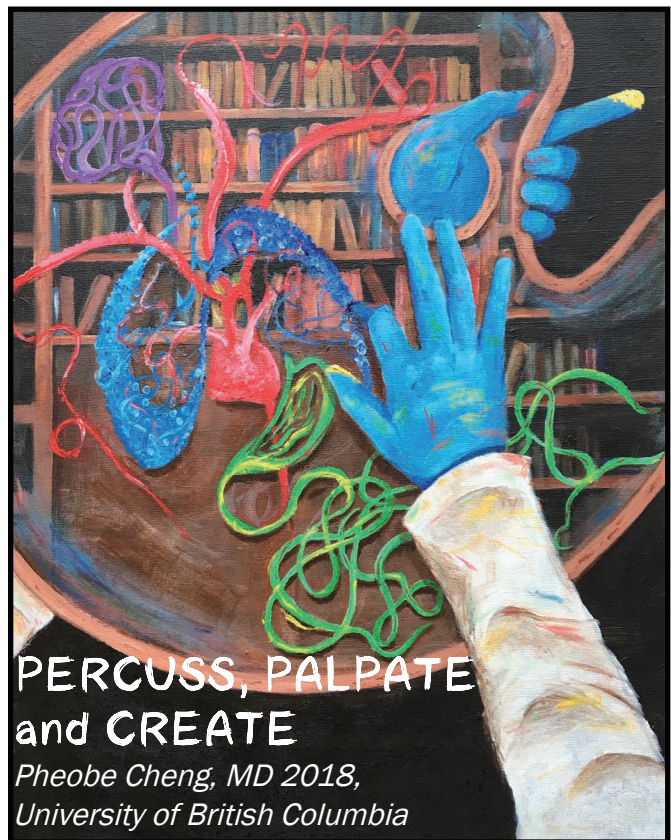
The day is descending, and darkness bleeds into the sky as the light grows bleary and tired with only so much energy to give. I know it won't hold for much longer, and I am relieved to see a structure in the horizon with steep slants of a roof that strike familiar. My eyes catch a glint of maroon at the door and I remember your red rain boots. And you: waiting at the door, waiting for me. When I blink, the colour is gone, unnatural against the cold grey tones of the present.

As I look closer, squinting in the evening light, I come to realize that the silhouette is not entirely familiar. There are cancerous overgrowths of shrubbery and a tree metastasizes branches through the window

panes. Irreversible changes have overrun what used to be our home. Corroded metal (an abandoned mailbox, a bent weather-pane, a forgotten spade) lie in the yard haphazardly. These are the discarded instruments we had used to try and tame this land. The air buzzes with mosquitoes and gnats as a thick smear of invaders now lay claim to the land.

I can't exit the car, can't bear the thought of facing all that we've lost. I don't know why I came. It seems foolish and naïve that I drove all this way only to have to turn around at this abandoned, overturned house. This is no longer our place, I lay no claim to this setting. We were but a passing disturbance, lost to the larger, longer-lasting laws of this land. As the last vestiges of sun descend, I turn around to leave, defeated. The house is lost, inevitably consumed by nature and time.

As were we.



**PERCUSS, PALPATE  
and CREATE**

*Pheobe Cheng, MD 2018,  
University of British Columbia*



**TREATS for a  
HEALTHY SOUL**

*Thuy Linh Do  
MD 2019, University of Ottawa*

Ingredients: passion, positive attitude, patience, care, failures, love

Equipment: a positive attitude, confidence and an open heart

Beat your passion in a large bowl with a positive attitude at medium speed until it has at least doubled in volume. Reduce the speed to slow, add patience and care. Gently fold in your past failures until just combined. Generously grease your baking pan with love. Pour and spread the batter evenly with confidence while being mindful not to deflate. Bake in your heart at 37°C until golden memories form on the surface, and the cake springs back even when pressure is applied. Decorate using your creativity before serving your loved ones the treat that sweetens their souls.

# DEMENTIA

*Shannon Chun  
MD 2017, Queen's University*

Soft sunbeams, filtering through shutter windows  
Fresh bed sheets and smoothed out creases  
I bathe in the warm caress of daylight  
My tired eyes glance slowly across pastel wallpaper

Unexpectedly, I become acutely aware of something...  
I do not know where I am!

Fiddling with unexplained locked doors  
Unblinking cameras and eerie stillness  
Racing past empty hallways, barren walls  
Heart pounding as I frantically search for escape

I strain to recall what brought me here...  
But I cannot remember!

Sifting through dark recollections and vague visions  
Muddled thoughts and clouded judgment  
My head throbbing from the mental exercise  
Nonsensical images, strung together haphazardly

I mull over what I know to be true and conclude...  
I do not belong here!

"Mrs Roberts, please come back to your room"  
A girl I do not know and a crooked smile  
Brusquely ushered, escorted away from the door  
Everything is unfamiliar, and I recoil

Disoriented and alarmed, I finally find my voice and  
yell ...

"I want to go home!"

## The DUALITY of the ROLE

*Anna Whalen-Brown  
MD 2018, University of Alberta*



“How about you sit down and eat your supper?”  
Microwave vegetables and that deceitful grin again  
I turn and dash towards the unyielding door  
Panic stricken by its unwavering strength

Pulled back again, I cannot win this alone; I need help...  
“Where is my husband?”

“He was just here visiting you in the afternoon”  
Endless lies and more strangers materialize  
I throw myself against the impenetrable exit  
Frustrated cries, blinded by the need to escape

There must be someone out there as I piercingly scream...  
“Let me out!”

Tears streaming, blurring the budding crowd  
Furious kicks and frantic, desperate blows  
“Call security; we need her IM olanzapine PRN stat”  
Surrounded and outnumbered, I  
stare them down


Something is terribly wrong, and  
all of them are liars...  
“Get away from me!”

“Mrs Roberts, we are just trying  
to help”

Uniformed men and “code  
white” blared overhead

Grabbed from behind and a  
sudden flash of steel  
Prick to the shoulder,  
overcome by sudden heaviness  
The world darkens as I am  
consumed by one thought...

Please! I just want to leave!



The DUALITY  
of the ROLE

*Anna Whalen-Brown*

*MD 2018, University of Alberta*

# The 12 DAYS of OBS/GYN

Csilla Egri

MD 2017, University of British Columbia

## ON THE 12 DAYS OF OBS/GYN MY PRECEPTOR GAVE TO ME...

<p>12 PATIENTS TO ROUND ON</p>	<p>10 VE'S</p>	<p>11 SURGICAL ASSISTS</p>	<p>9 CORD GASES</p>
<p>8 MULTIP BABIES</p>	<p>7 CARDINAL MOVEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHOULDER ADDUCTION</li> <li>• FORWARD FLEXION</li> <li>• HUNCH</li> <li>• SHIMEE</li> <li>• SHIMEE</li> <li>• CONTAMINATE</li> <li>• REPEAT</li> </ul>	<p>6 AUB'S</p>	<p>5 MINUTES TO EAT</p>
<p>4 EMERG CONSULTS</p>	<p>3 PROMPTING QUESTIONS</p> <p>GIVE ME YOUR APPROACH TO PPH</p> <p>AND THEN?</p> <p>AFTER THAT?</p> <p>AND AFTER THAT?!</p> <p>CHECK ABC'S, VITALS.</p> <p>2 LARGE BORE IV'S.</p> <p>CALL FOR HELP!</p> <p>CALL LOUDER!</p> <p>OBSTETRIC TIMER</p>	<p>2 ILLEGIBLE COMMENTS</p>	<p>AND ONE MEETS EXPECTATIONS!</p>

EGRI 2015



# Intrus nous le sommes

*Hassan Khanafer  
MD 2017, Université d'Ottawa*

Intrus nous le sommes!  
Je sens les herbes amères  
Partout où la nuit demeure  
La terre mère de toutes les morts  
La mer cimetièrre de toutes les récoltes  
Les forêts africaines ensevelissent leurs victimes  
Les larmes trempent la gloire éphémère des rois  
Les vagues cassent les ailes de l'espoir  
Les pigeons portent leurs lettres ambiguës  
À quelque pauvre destinataire

Au secours!

Mais aucun dictionnaire n'a le courage des martyrs,  
Attendons que les pages se déchirent, que les mots brûlent  
Que les lettres s'éparpillent  
Pour qu'un coeur sente  
Pour que des oreilles s'ouvrent, pour que des yeux explosent,  
Pour qu'une langue bouge?  
Trop tard les immeubles baisent les rues, les sacrifices bossellent les routes  
Les fumées dessinent des paysages ... ce tableau n'est pas à vendre!  
Les branches s'entrecroisent en face de l'orage,  
Mais la grandeur de la nature refuse  
Les activités humaines moulin des règlements naturels  
La terre souffre ...  
Leur dernier désir voyager entre les gènes, monter sur les chromosomes  
Les lois divines sous les pieds,  
Homme! C'est toi qui compliques tout!

DIFFERENCES

*Tetyana Maniuk, MD 2018,  
University of Ottawa*

# DIFFERENCES

*Tetyana Maniuk, MD 2018,  
University of Ottawa*

# PUTTING OUT FIRES

*Beatrice Preti  
MD 2017, McMaster University*

i am the monster who steals the light  
 whenever i speak, all hope takes flight  
 i watch it escape, watch it grind into dust  
 i watch the hearts freeze, then wildly combust  
 it's a balloon that i've popped, another flat tire  
 their eyes are all dead. i've put out their fires.  
 i've sent their souls south, now they're trapped inside hell  
 and i am just speaking to corpses, to shells  
 i feel like a demon for causing this pain  
 but each single visit is always the same  
 i watch as they cry, as they shout, as they scream  
 i know i'm the water which extinguished their dreams  
 and when they are empty and all light is gone  
 i rise from the ashes and swiftly move on  
 but they won't move on. i've drowned their desire.  
 i'm a fireman physician. i put out their fires.

# A letter to the doctor

*Sarah Park  
MD 2017, University of Ottawa*

When I was a boy, our family lived on the edge of poverty. Debt kept kicking at us, stepping on us, and spitting at us. We had no choice but to keep clawing our way back onto the edge—we never even noticed the bruises, the scars, the bleeding, and the exhaustion of our hearts. We fought. Every moment we fought for our lives. I hated it, but I wanted to live. I wanted to be the one to deliver our family from the pressing weight of debt. So I worked until my sweat felt like blood and spit in my mouth tasted like acid. My goal was to survive; I wanted to save my family. My life was never mine.

What was the happiest moment of my life? It wasn't the day I married the love of my life. It wasn't the day that I met my beautiful children for the first time. It was the day that I bought my first house. I had finally saved up enough money to buy the house that I had dreamed of when I was a kid—a home that was mine, and a home where my mother and my two sisters would feel safe. I remember holding the key in my hands, gripping it so hard as if to remind myself that it was real, and the tremendous feeling of happiness and utter sorrow. I remember opening up the door to that shabby little house, sitting on the floor, and spilling hot tears for hours as if to christen that little house.

When I look back on those years, I imagine how I would have reacted had I known that I would be living in a beautiful country across the sea, owning a house that dwarfed that shabby little house, and providing for my children so that they could live without want. I would have thought I was going mad from exhaustion.

I left home with a heaviness that permeated to the corners of my body, but it was less noticeable with the spark of excitement that I carried in my heart. I started working for the company with what seemed like foolish bravery. Equipped with my shaky English, I entered the familiar world of my discipline, but was assaulted with culture shock and a longing for home. Again, my goal was to survive. I had to provide for my family. I wanted to give my children the life that I could never have imagined—and I did.

I got my happy ending, but it lasted for such a short period of time that I had barely tasted it—barely chewed it up in my mouth before I choked and spat it back out.

Children are always told stories where the good are rewarded and evil are punished, and each one eventually has a happy ending. We never think the bad will touch us. As we grow older though, we realize that our stories never end with an "and they lived happily ever after." It's a silent truth that is never taught, but learned as we gather up our scars and bruises as we live our very real stories. For some people, it's learned at a painfully early age, but for the fortunate, I suppose, at a later age.

I learned at the age of 45.

The slowness came on so gradually that I thought it was just age—but when it really became noticeable, I knew it was too early. That feeling of unease, that toxic feeling of knowing something was wrong, and my happy ending slipping away—it felt like I was carrying around a stomach full of corrosive acid every day and desperately trying to ignore it. I got slower, my muscles stiff,

my writing became smaller and smaller, and my right hand trembled quietly—apparently they call it a “pin-rolling tremor.” When I finally couldn’t ignore it anymore, my wife and I held hands tightly and walked toward the terrifying answer that we both already knew. Within a few months, I was diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson’s disease.

To be honest, I don’t really remember the beginning so well. Even though I expected it, I was so numb from shock that my brain couldn’t even consolidate what was happening. However, there are a few things I remember regardless of the fog and muffled voices. When I first got those oval yellow pills, I remember sitting in the dining room alone and just holding it in my hands for a solid

hour. The doctor said those yellow pills were really the only things that actually helped. He also said that after a so-called “honey-moon period,” the effect promised by those yellow pills would start to wear off. To me, those yellow pills looked spiteful. I hated how it would make me feel normal, as if nothing was wrong, and then cruelly start taking it away later. I knew it was actually due to the degenerating cells in my brain, but really, I needed something to hate.

It took me five years to come to terms with it, but even now, I don’t think I’m fully there yet. I don’t think I’ll ever really come to terms with it.

I don’t think anyone will ever call



## FACING the BARRIERS

*Chandni Jain*  
MD 2016, University of Ottawa

me a hero. Nobody really thinks it's that serious—people just passingly ask how are you doing and move on. I don't blame them, It's exhausting to keep the concern going for so many years. However, unless you look into our lives, you'll never know how much it tears at us and makes us bleed until we are pale. I gave you a small snapshot, but you didn't see your wife getting more and more tired and dejected, you didn't see your kids somehow blaming themselves for my disease, and you didn't feel your body getting stiffer and stiffer until it feels like it doesn't know you anymore. I know there are worse things—I know—but does that somehow lessen what I've faced? Does that somehow make my pain insignificant?

I've been running a marathon for fourteen years toward a finish line probably decorated with a feeling of utter helplessness and my dignity disappearing into thin wisps.

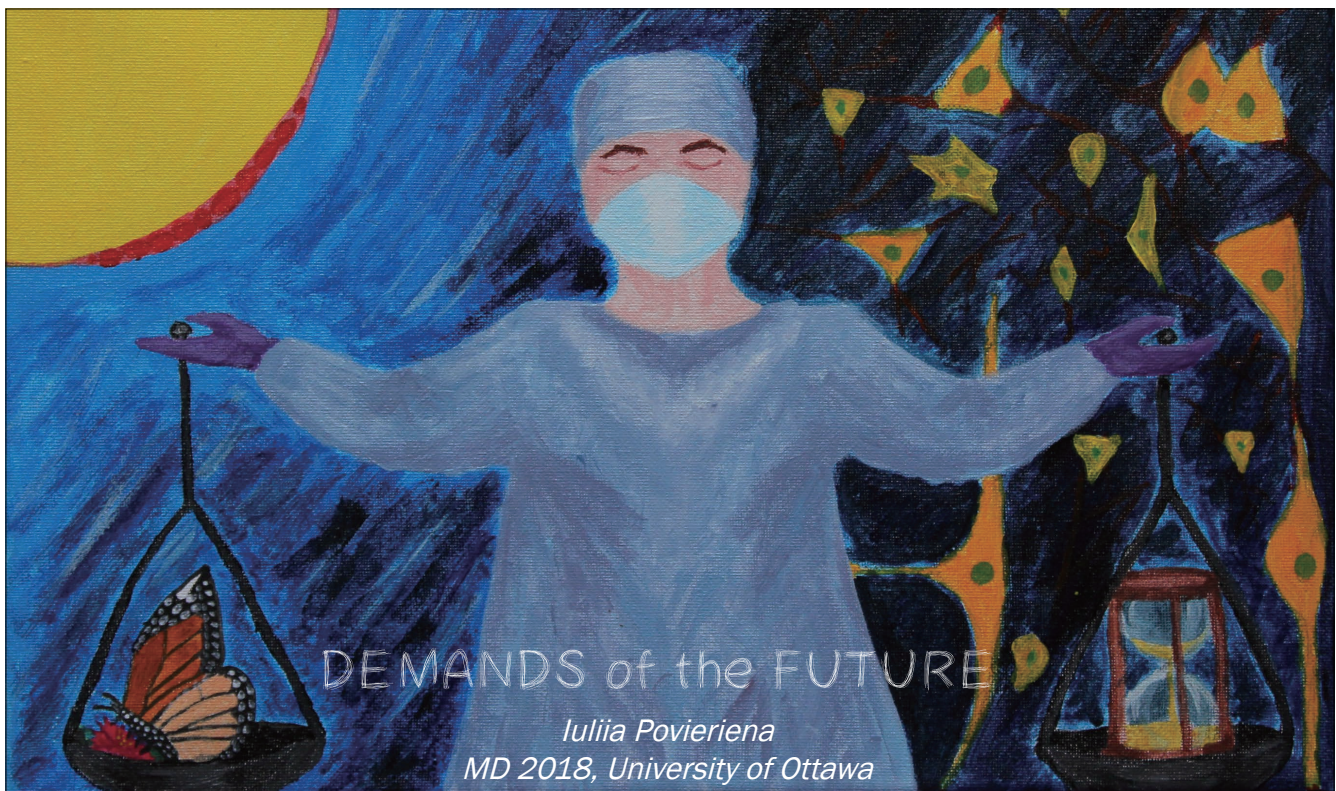
I hope I've given a good picture of myself—a picture that you'll never get from those five-minute

appointments.

I hope you get a good picture of what it's really like to live with Parkinson's disease. I also hope you don't get the idea that it's all miserable and hell for me—it's not. I'm closer to my kids than I've ever been, and I'm glad that I got to know them better when my body forced me to slow down. I still enjoy limited walks in the parks, and smile at the blue sky. I just wanted to have the chance for you to know what's behind the masked face. I'm sure a great number of patients have stories more interesting, more inspiring, more thought-provoking than mine, but I wanted to say my piece.

As I'm running this marathon, all I ask from you is to stand on the sidelines and pass me a glass of empathy every time we meet along the way. I know we all end up in a mass of faces, but at least during those five minutes we have together, please see me as me rather than the 59-year-old man with Parkinson's disease presenting with (blank).

Thanks doc.





# WAYS to my HEART

*Phoebe (Tsz Man) Cheng*  
MD 2018

*University of British Columbia*  
(1st Place Visual Category Prize)

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