

Placebo Press

A literary press for poets in medicine



Issue III

2025

Foreword

Poetry need not reflect dramatic emotional moments, yet the endeavor of working in healthcare entails constant engagement with emotionally potent experiences on both sides of the spectrum. Placebo Press was founded with the mission to provide healthcare professionals, employees, affiliates, and students with community and publication opportunities. We humbly thank these authors for allowing us to share their work.



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Colors of Hope

Through tiny hands, the colors bloom,
In hospital halls that chase the gloom.
A splash of red, a stroke of blue,
In each bright hue, a heart beats true.

These windows frame a different view,
Where dreams take flight and skies are new.
For every line, a story told,
Of strength within, both young and bold.



Yu Zhang is a first year medical student at the University of Central Florida College of Medicine with a passion for blending medicine and art. Inspired by her experiences in children's hospital, she captures the resilience and hope of her young patients through poetry and photography. Yu's writing reflects her belief in the healing power of creativity, bringing compassion and empathy to her medical journey. She aims to inspire others by transforming the moments of vulnerability into meaningful narratives that celebrate strength and beauty.

Future Left Unwritten

Future Left Unwritten

He sat, pen in hand, as dawn rose slow,
A quiet morning with a fragile glow.
Breakfast half-touched, heart heavy but bright,
Waiting for news that could tilt day to night.

Hope held close, like a fragile thread,
Wishing for words that might ease the dread.
If fate were kind, it would be non-small,
A chance for a fight, a future to call.

The door swung open, the doctor appeared,
Her face unreadable, his breath disappeared.
She spoke of results, the kind that would steer
His life's fragile course, from hope to fear.

He stopped writing, pen paused in air,
Eyes locked on words too heavy to bear.
Her silence lingered, like a heavy mist,
Before she whispered, "It's not what we wished."

Small cell, the words cut clear and deep,

A cancer that wouldn't let him keep
The luck he sought in this final race
He sighed, "I've always been unlucky in this place."

He tore a page, notes scattered like dust,
Resolved to rebuild, though hope had been crushed.
"Let's start again," he said with calm,
But in the room, there was no relief.

He asked, "Are we speaking months or years?"
Her face fell low, confirming his fears.
"Days to weeks," she softly replied,
And in that moment, something inside died.

The room stood still, heavy with grief,
A stolen future, a life too brief.
He closed his notepad, empty and cold,
Asked his last question, quiet, controlled:

"When can I go home?"—his voice steady, slow,
To a place where time no longer flows.
In silence, they stood, both knowing well,
The words unspoken were the hardest to tell.

Close Your Eyes

I'm wondering if
You might want to get some air
Let's take a drive
Hand me the keys
I'll drive us
We'll roll down
Windows and roads
And maybe if you close your eyes
You can see it in your head
Maybe if you close your eyes
You'll remember when we leave

And you said we'll make a home
We'll build a life together here
We'll grow a tree on the front lawn
We'll watch it grow and change
We'll stay the same

Out the cul-de-sac past the willow
Let's imprint your mind
Left at the stop sign
Past those orange street lamps
And the perfect playground
Maybe if you close your eyes
You can memorize its map
Master its pattern
Maybe it can be
The last thing to go

And I said I can see it
We'll nestle on our couch
We'll grow old together
We'll slow down
We'll ripen
You promised that's what it would be
Do you remember?
I do
I remember
Because I promised too

So keep your eyes closed
Tie a string round your heart
Maybe if you do
You can freeze your mind
And maybe if I close my eyes
I can free my mind
And our new street will look like this
Our shutters still that faded yellow
Our lawn still lush and green
Maybe if I close my eyes too
I can still see it
We'll remain unchanged

Hand me the keys, love, it's okay
I'll drive us home

Maybe our new street will look like this

Maybe we'll also

Maybe if I close my eyes

I can freeze my mind too

Maybe we can stay the same

Hand me the keys, love, it's okay

I'll drive us home.

Out the cul-de-sac past the willow

Turn right at the stop sign

A girl on a bike, oh

No wait don't look

Close your eyes

I'll tell her to you

She's got that pink helmet

And those blonde curls

Kind of like our little girl

When she rode round and round

Just one more time, Daddy!

Do you remember?

And you said we'll make a home

We'll build a life together here

We'll grow a tree on the front lawn

We'll watch it grow and change

We'll stay the same

We'll ripen as we age

Our fruit overflowing

Our cups full

Maybe if you close your eyes
You can see what you promised
Dreams of sunset
Visions of pink and orange and yellow
You and me nestled on our couch
Slowing down
You promised that's what it would be
Do you remember?
I do
I promised

Strings tied round your heart

Maybe if you close your eyes
You can promise to remember
Maybe a promise will be enough

And now the boxes
Calls from doctors

So keep your eyes closed
Rest your mind
Maybe if you do
We can freeze time
Maybe our new street will look like this
Maybe if
I close my eyes I can see it too

Hand me the keys, love, it's okay
I'll drive us home.

Elaina Baker is a current second-year student at the University of Michigan Medical School. Originally from Ann Arbor, MI, she grew up playing the viola and studied music alongside pre-med while in undergrad, also at Michigan. She enjoys continuing to engage with the humanities especially as it intersects with medicine and reflecting on the role of the physician.

The Making of a Doctor

Sometimes all the words

Melt off the page like candlewax

And I'm left chuckling

At this alphabet soup of incredulity

Tell me... how is it all supposed

To fit into this little ole head?

The vastness of the human experience

The exquisitely fine details

Of our cellular machinery...

Our gross anatomy.

Differential Diagnoses

Every single muscle, bone, and organ

Tangled up in all the

nerves

arteries,

veins,

lymph nodes...

(That's the femoral triangle, isn't it?)

Pharmacology & Family Medicine

Bony landmarks & osteopathic manipulation

SOAP Notes & biostatistics

Awkward AF Simulated Patient encounters

Wait what was I supposed to say again?

Oh yeah...

Hello, my name is Student Dr. Morgan—

But as the words tumble out of my mouth

They fill the room with a thick, red smoke that chokes me as it spells out:

“Imposter”

Will I ever learn the pharmacokinetics

For how to fill the ventricles of my brain with something that can stop my head from spinning?

Nobody tells you how absolutely

Emotionally exhausting it is

Excavating every single organ from a human body

4 hours a week for 32 weeks

And that doesn't count the extra hours

I spend with the dead

Reviewing before every exam.

Studying their preserved flesh in grotesque wonder and gratitude,

Following their neurovasculature avidly

Like a roadmap that will lead me

To the ultimate truth

Of what it means to be human.

Sometimes, when I put my scalpel down,
I catch myself reaching to hold their hand,
I swear sometimes I can feel them
All still here, watching me tuck them back into their white sheets
and temporary stainless steel tombs,
And I wonder why we can't
Build in a unit to contemplate and study
Their soul, if only for a moment.

Oh right... TIME.
No time for your own life, no less
And yet life seems to always...
Happen anyways.

I find myself caught up
In the irresistible tension
Between going to bed early for "self care"
And staying up all night
In a manic fervor because the truth is...
You can never get through all the information...
And it's ALL SO FASCINATING!

Can these ribbons of electrical impulses
Written in delicate cursive

Truly decipher the poetry
That laces every heartbeat?

My soul's caught fire,
And yet simultaneously,
I already feel it wilting underneath the weight of it all.
Floating through this part of life
In which kaleidoscopic awareness
Is staccato, refractory, simultaneous
Cyclical and unending,
I'm diligently connecting these
stars of knowledge into
Constellations of wisdom...

And They're telling me
That I'm learning
How to save a life,
But what I really want to know
Is this how I finally understand my own?

Lauren Morgan, current OMS3, wrote this work over her first year of med school as an OMS1. Originally from Atlanta, GA and currently living in the PNW for medical school, Lauren hopes to always add a touch of soul to her patient encounters no matter what specialty she ends up in. She enjoys writing poetry, backpacking and camping, going to dance parties, fire spinning, and spending time with her husband and son in her free time. Instagram: @shadowfox.healingarts

Life and its Absence

His face revealed for just a moment
Then quickly covered.

We can't bear the idea
Of our participation in the massacring of
a man
So we pretend he is merely a body,
A vessel of our learning

A saw bends down to kiss his forehead
It's many teeth
Forcing the skull to crack
under pressure it's never known
My oddly steady finger over the neck of a scalpel
Impossible for me to cause pain,
And yet I feel afraid.

His plagued brain, which once carried his dreams
His halved heart, who valiantly beat in his every moment
His cold skin, must have once felt love's warm embrace
All on display to poke and prod,
Indifferent to his lack of a reaction

His pacemaker cried with its beeps,
Trying to fulfill its purpose once more
Interrupting my thoughts.

The reminder of life's only promise,

Its inevitable end.
Chokes my throat
blurs my vision,
but I can still make out an inscription

What I hope is true for the twenty that once existed,
now lifeless on silver steel slabs.
This cold and sterile room.
is indeed the place,
Where death delights to help the living.

Stories

Surely, the kismet of stories is to end.
Though it is not the end, but rather
The *defiance* of an ending that defines medicine.

Health is a fickle entity.
More resilient than the trunk of the greatest oak, but at times,
frailer than its leaves dancing at the mercy of the wind.

In medicine, we are graced with a uniquely
Rare opportunity: to shape and redefine the story.
With wisdom, we might even extend its pages.

First, physicians seek to fathom their patients' goals and dreams.
Only then can we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors and
Apply the auspicious remedies derived from their toils.

Sometimes, the vicissitudes of chance prevail.
Doctors inevitably will recognize Charon's countenance,
But he knows we seek to evade him as long as possible.
As earthbound foils, we continue to serve as stewards for the living.

An Observation on Limerence

An almost charming silliness seems to shroud
a man who does not dream,
does not think, does not ponder,
does not know, does not wonder,
of anything more complex, profound, or free.

The soft patient hand upon which rests her
chin,
how sillily charming too is she who pines after
him,
locking eyes in the shadows of window
reflections.
Fixated she is not on the natural romance of
birds gliding,
trees rustling and the clocktower chiming,
but only the allure of a back turned and
endless questions.

Finding some appeal in queues of empty
palms,
eyes that realize not to whom the back they
stare at belongs,
and suddenly I am unsure as to whether they
are even my own.
It was only this morning they did not seem so
pitiful,
admiring a handsome face barely
recognizable,
but still to which the delicate threads of sight
they have sewn.

Much like a horse in front of which a carrot
does dangle,
contorted into yet another creative angle,
is a stubborn neck that breaks and bends.
Seeking always the gaze casting light so
fragmented,
a single ray, a crumb with which to be so
enchanted,
only as it grows fickle, flickers, and dims.

Easy is it to mistake in the haze that lingers,
the jeweled beetle traversing joints and
knuckles of fingers,

an effervescent emerald never quite ready to
be mined.
Segmented legs and crumpled moving parts,
perhaps more akin to brittle mica shards,
embedded far too deep in gritty quartz and
wasted time.

Uncomplicated beings, they seem so,
the humble calendulas swaying always to and
fro,
unbothered they are by soaking torrents and
chilled winds.
Content without and unnoticed they become,
desiring not of the gardeners little watering
can or skilled thumb,
of being nestled away in homely greenhouse
planters like orchids.

Stubborn little plants and insects I hold so
special within,
to make such a claim would be inappropriate,
ingenuine,
that there lies no desirability in simplicity.
It is all I have seen, all I have sought,
preparing dinners upon polished stone
countertops,
laying in wild fields of fragrant stems and
fleeting apricity.

Though I may be accepting and content,
it is only now that my chest fills with a breath
at last, not in apprehension steeped.
There is nay a sparsity nor infrequency,
no demand nor urgency,
that would steal away my soul from this relief.

My heart has always known,
or maybe it was more recently shown,
that atop the flowers that grow through
pavement cracks,
sit glimmering beetles aplenty,
as eyes to meet my own there are many,
instead of strangers and their backs.

Remembered

Passion.

Something you've seen in me since I was a little girl

It's what got me to medical school,

It's what helped me justify my successes.

I may not be the best,

Or the brightest,

But my passion is unwavering.

It's something you told me I should never lose

Something that no one can ever take away from me.

And watching you

Express your passion

For art, for music, for fashion, for travel, for bringing people together,

I have never not known what passion is.

Until I saw the twinkle in your eyes dim

And the world go blank

As your memory faded

And I became unrecognizable to you.

I could no longer hear the passion behind your words

The art, the music, the fashion, the travel, the people you brought together,

Completely absent from your new identity.

Illness, I guess, isn't a person
Because it took your passion away from you.
Your legacy, however,
Unwavering.
And thriving.
The things you once loved
Continuing to inspire others.
Including me.
I hold my own passions
That will, too, be passed along and remembered with my legacy.
Thanks to you,
I will never not know legacy
And I hope mine is half as great as yours.

Dedicated to my grandmother, Julia, who suffered from Alzheimer's Disease. Thank you for inspiring me and so many others.

Jordan Maurer is a first-year medical student at Florida Atlantic University. A south-Florida native, Jordan grew up as a competitive dancer and attended both middle and high schools for the performing arts. She is very grateful to the arts community for always providing her a space to authentically express herself. Jordan is also grateful for her family, who have been her number one supporters in every endeavor.

A Matter of Perspective

I slip off my leather loafers by the door

Standing in front of me

A welcome mat—

A gift—from your mother

I half expect to hear silverware

gouging water and anticipate

you greeting me.

Welcome home

But

I stand here.

Socks on the wood floor waiting and waiting.

I walk into the kitchen.

The oven greets me

and hums, “chicken is 10 minutes till done”

I sigh and loosen my tie and to the bedroom

There, I find you,

Lying,

Without me

Claire Wu is a Pharmacy student at the McWhorter School of Pharmacy. Claire found a passion in reading and writing poetry in high school during a creative writing class. She enjoys reflecting, thinking, and connecting with people, nature, and life. She also enjoys a good run-on sentence, which provides a great workout.

Decades of Dampness

A look beyond the scope I see my fate I
walk among the men that count and mark I
took the wrong, the broke, beneath the
aches And talk against the pounding of the
heart

I lead when I can stand to see my face
And I will always try to make a spark I
know there is not much to see these days
Impeded by the coats and kits to
start

When I was young, I heard a different sound
The water rippled through the
hollow ground The rust was red as blood
but not as round The boy I was, was
somehow more profound

The light was clear, the air was hot and Still
The days it rained were like a perfect thrill I
hid away and watched the world through sills
Knowing, one day, my half-filled cup would
spill

Never-ending Nautical

I watch the waves that washed the way back home
Alone, aground, without a flare or phone
Through shells and rocks like cartilage and bone
I heard the distant cry in baritone

A ship, a vessel to take me from here
And this, I guess, will get me in the clear
To save my wife and son I lost at sea
A pirate's wayward lust and greed, I fear

Krakens, mermaids, Neptune's wrath
I sailed across that salty bath
To claim what's mine from evil's maw
And write to you just what I saw

I hit the deck and stared at bearded grins
With hooks for hands and wood in place of shins
I told them something worth its weight in gold
To help them think about the weight of sins

"If you take what cannot be replaced
The universe will steal from you in kind
And you will search the waves without a trace
Of freedoms that you always left behind"

A snake eating its tail forever looped
A möbius strip that has no start or end
To save the ones I loved, I offered them
The opportunity to start again

And so I fell onto that sunny beach
And walked along the rocky sands once more
And as my phone let out its final beep
I heard that helpful horn cry to the shore

Loser Life

It's okay to push the feelings down

It's okay to fail again

It's okay to be the bigger person

I'm losing a piece of myself every time

I'm losing my patience

I'm losing my friends

They don't understand

They don't know what I am going through

They don't realize the pressure I am under

I'm losing a piece of myself every time

I'm losing the ability to feel

I'm losing perspective

So I must become self-aware

So I must reconnect again

So I must go the extra mile to recover what I've lost

It's more than a number

It's more than what's on paper

It's more than what I can achieve

To lose myself is a shame, but to learn again and regain it, is life.

Helen Nguyen is a third-year medical student at ARCOM who is originally from Texas. She believes medicine and poetry share a common language with attention to detail and emotional resonance. When not studying, she can be found rewatching the 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* miniseries (Colin Firth's Mr. Darcy forever has her heart). Her biggest current aspiration is to get a cat.

Routine

A declaration of love, oh so happy
I swear I didn't mean to make it sappy

But it's not in the way that others mean
I think I fell in love with the routine

Volatile moments and angry sobs
That is not what I want in a job

Case with familiarity
True to my personality

Work-life balance with great fun
Can connect with everyone

Work hard for my patients
No thought about payment

I found my calling
Peace is not boring

Care I can give
Help others live

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Initiation

I named you Jonathan on the first day
Your face wrapped in bandages
To ease the mental burden
Of snapping through your chest wall.

I have intimate knowledge of your physical form.
The delicate crunch of your calcified aorta
The uneasy softness of the pressure ulcer on your back
The streaks of black in your lungs.

Why was your body not better cared for
Before it gave its final offering
Before I slicked away your fat
For the lesson written in your musculature?

You did not think of these things.
The brain I so reverently held
Did not note your heart was enlarged;
It only knew how it ached when it was broken.

My lungs are not fixed with formaldehyde.
My pelvis remains whole
Not yet sawed apart in the name of science
Marrying together in experience:
Student and outcast of society.

My body will one day look like yours.

Bedtime stories and first dates

Overtime hours and unexpected goodbyes

Secrets held and secrets told

Will not be seen upon dissection.

Jonathan, I honor you.

While I retain the privilege to breathe,

I will laugh easily.

While my eyes remain open, unbandaged,

I will seek wisdom.

While my heart still beats,

I will love my humanity.

Jonathan, I honor you:

I am relentlessly,

Rebelliously,

Alive.

Terminal Misdiagnosis

This poem is written from the patient's perspective.

The holiday started just like any other -
By going home for Thanksgiving
To my siblings and my mother.
Like everyone else I had eaten my fill
But while the rest of them napped,
I couldn't seem to sit still.

Fast forward a few days and I'm in a hospital bed
Watching the doctors go through broad differentials
Running through their heads.
They say from my recently diagnosed DVTs
I have now developed bilateral PEs.
But from that they still can't see
What exactly is going wrong inside of me.

When the doctor walks in, he says:
"This can't be right, son. I'm sure you'll be fine.
You're young and healthy;
You'll be back to normal in no time!"
I used to lift weights, I thrived on eustress.
Now I can't walk 10 steps without stopping -
To catch my breath.
In a gown with no clothes, IVs
And a fall risk bracelet on my wrist,
How am I expected to just
"Move on with my life" after this?

They say, "You're only 30"
And "You're so strong and healthy."
If I didn't need to be here,
Do you think that I would be?
It's Christmas day and I'd rather be at home,
But instead, my family is here at the hospital,
So that I don't have to be all alone.
Here's my problem, doc
And I've stated it clearly:
How can I trust your judgment
when you won't take me seriously?

Overheard words like infarct and effusion
Swirl around my brain in massive confusion.
So yet again I voice my forgotten refrain:
Can someone please tell me
What's wrong with the blood
Flowing through my veins?

After taking my blood, my sweat, and my tears,
The doctors came to confirm my worst fear:
My diagnosis was terminal and very rare,
They said I have so much life to live
And only two more months just doesn't seem fair.
With a bone marrow biopsy to set in stone my diagnosis:
They said I'd have to come to terms
With my hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis.

My siblings are crying, and my mother is breaking,
I can't sign the POA papers

Because my vision is blurring
And my hands won't stop shaking.
The doctors discuss new trials and treatments
But my body is struggling,
And I can hardly hear or see them.
How can I form opinions about my care
When the doctors' words are going in
And right out of my ears?

Dreading and waiting
For the confirmatory moment to arrive,
The results came back and we were all surprised
When the doctor looked at us and said,
"It's not HLH, you will survive!"
And though I am relieved that there are more days for me to see,
Still, no one can quite figure out what's wrong with me.

After another week of more tests to complete,
I was given a new, more hopeful
Diagnosis of SLE.
Though my future will be full of medications, and doctors' visits,
At least we had finally and firmly landed
On systemic lupus erythematosus.

While this story is coming to an end,
I'd like to remind you that a physician
Should show compassion and care,
Like a friend.
Someone who listens and is thorough,
Who will let no sign or symptom be missed

So you don't have to suffer the pain that is
A terminal misdiagnosis.

Jessica Forbes is a rising fourth year medical student at FAU College of Medicine. She has always had a passion for the arts and enjoys using poetry and music to reflect on the experiences she has had in her life - both inside and outside of medicine.

Instagram: [jessforbes142](#)

Heartbeat

On the floor clear fluid leaks,
A rupture of membranes at sixteen weeks.
Rush to the hospital to run blood tests
Check for signs of fetal distress.
No presentation of fetal station.
No indication of cervical dilation.
The fern test confirms a breaking of water
And a slim chance
Mother will hold her living daughter.
Trapped in a nightmare she has to decide:
Should she risk her life
And hope her daughter can survive?
Faced with social stigma, guilt, and scorn,
Mother has made her choice and begins to mourn.

What's yet to come is heavier still
As she's forced to carry, now against her will,
A baby lucky to be born alive,
And danger that mom may not survive
Due to high risk for infection without early induction
Because of those who would stand
Only for the baby's protection.

No option but to sit and wait
And go to the OB ED,
Every Monday:
Check for a heartbeat,

Draw a CBC,
Verify mom is infection free.
Schedule to see her --
Same time,
Next week.

All too common and unfortunately true
Is hearing the phrase,
“There’s nothing more that we can do.”
Providers advocate but there’s no use,
When there’s no choice left but for us to lose.
And just in case anyone was confused,
Know that if They had to choose,
To pick between the baby and you,
You should know:
It would not
Be you.

Jessica Forbes is a rising fourth year medical student at FAU College of Medicine. She has always had a passion for the arts and enjoys using poetry and music to reflect on the experiences she has had in her life - both inside and outside of medicine.

Instagram: [jessforbes142](#)

Happy When

I'll be happy when...

From the very beginning, I've heard this phrase said
And just as for those who came before me
It now echoes ad nauseam inside my head.
Beneath the honor of our sacred decree
Is the fear of unattainable happiness,
And the doubt of ever breaking free.

I'll be happy when I get into medical school
when I finish didactics
when I pass Step 1
when I finally start clinical practice.

This recitation is buried inside
Repeated like a secret refrain
In fear of being criticized
For how ungrateful you are
For not keeping your feelings inside.
You accept this is your life's purpose –
The very reason you're alive.

I'll be happy when I match into the specialty of my choice
when I join AΩA
when I write MD behind my name
when I make the diagnosis that saves a patient someday.

Medicine is a calling,

There's no doubt that that is true.
But healthcare providers deserve to enjoy life too.
Let us end the cycle and break this streak
To stop these pathological thoughts from ever taking seed,
And replace them with ones far more meaningful and freeing:

I am happy when I see my niece smile
When I make my friends laugh
When I slow down and take the time to cook a nutritious meal
Or take a long, well-deserved nap.

I am happy when I hug my loved ones
When my nephews ask me to play
When I watch the sun emerge over the horizon
And appreciate the happiness to be found in each and every day.

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Cash and Compassion

A sword can always cut sharp, reaping the benefits or loss
To be a physician one must pursue patient health regardless of cost
Using a sword to guide and support their patients.
To never lose to cash and equity those that are innocent.

Compassion is the root of our work, the root of our world.
But often we're hurled to the world of tender gold
Acting and prescribing as if we are controlled
The beauty of healthcare, once shown as the capital of support,
Now falls short.
Only rising now for greed.

We see now the push of speed,
The push of PPH, patients per hour.
Stacking the orders as if they were towers.
The sword that physicians one used to protect their patients
Now held against throats of physicians who stand defiant.
We must ask where went the physician of courage?
He is found in the hands of greed as a hostage.

As physicians we must uphold the decision.
The decision to uphold our pursuit of compassion,
We must forego the coming rise of greed and equity,
And instead stand as a pillar of integrity.

Abel Abraham is a first-year medical student at the Florida Atlantic University Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine. He was inspired to write this poem during an interview with a physician who spoke about the growing influence of greed and private equity in healthcare and its limiting effect on physicians and patient care. He hopes others can resonate with this work and strive to practice with the mission of prioritizing the patient above all.

Florid observations

There's a certain temperature where--
I think Jules Verne called it "bloodwarm"
the surface of skin seems suspended, indistinguishable
from the air.

It lasts longer here. The wind ruffling live oak leaves
Dropping acorns for squirrels that will never
get fat enough for a winter that never comes.

--

I wonder if the iguanas are warm.
Sunbaked, smooth skin like stone in retaining ponds;
They're warm enough for Salmonella,
dropping reminders of their existence into
fetid pools. Or nice ones.
Depends on how much your HOA cares.

--

Is there an inverse of seasonal depression?
My circadian rhythm feels off-time--
metronome fooled by the sunset, bewitched by the weather
I pull on a turtleneck and will it cold.
Not cold enough.
But it's still too dark out to see.

Peaches

softest skin supple like that of a summer ripened peach,
with hairs that stand in honorable salute to every earthly melody,
imbued with hues of blood and brown,
and an orange so true that you resemble the blazing sun in all her glory.

what a bizarre thing the brain is! this tangle of neurons and pale flesh, a tangible icon of
all that you are, lays idle and heavy, like a rusted iron anchor tethering you to this realm.
incubating inside your skull, it mirrors the limp, delicate thing that once buoyed in your
mothers womb, furiously aching to grow.

you feel so strong, so inexplicably human, so perfectly placed and put together.

stacked one above the other, your spine stands tall with blissful pride as if defiantly
proclaiming to the world, and all that yearns to break through you,

“I’ll never die!”

but like the summer ripened peach who moulds and bruises to the whim of any careless
touch,

we all eventually do.

Diagnosis: Emotional Void

In the corridors of knowledge, I navigate with care,
A second-year student, burdened by the weight I bear.
Volumes of ailments and symptoms meticulously arrayed,
In pages of precision, the human touch delayed.

Powerless in theory, I memorize still,
A cascade of knowledge, a mechanical drill.
In the silence of study, I wonder and yearn,
For the human connection, for patients to learn.

I yearn to bridge gaps, from facts to the real,
To find in the textbooks a tangible feel.
To move beyond theory, to heal and to bind,
To honor the patient, their body and mind.

The burden of responsibility, so daunting and grand,
Looms large as I ponder the patients I'll stand.
Will I bridge the expanse from theory to life,
With a touch that transcends the academic strife?

Healing goes beyond relieving physical pain;
It explores the patient's fears and emotional strain.
Understanding their struggles with compassionate insight,
Links clinical care with the human experience's light.

For in the realm of medicine, where facts alone can't suffice,
It's the stories of patients that truly bring life.
Thus, I strive to embrace this art with earnest devotion,
To make medicine real through the narrative's emotion.

Beatriz De Faria Sousa is a second-year medical student at the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. Having graduated from the University of South Florida with a bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences and Psychology, she brings a solid foundation in both the scientific and psychological aspects of medicine. Originally from Brazil, Beatriz Sousa's diverse background enriches her approach to medical education and patient care.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue!

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