

*the*  
M O S A I C

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2022



Wyatt Waters  
*Angles and Angels*

*The Mosaic* is a medical humanities journal written by students, faculty, and staff at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Just as a mosaic is formed from a unique composition of glass, stone, or tile, so is our diverse community of patients, students, staff, and professionals at UMMC.

Many components are required to create one unified form, and while they are all different in appearance or function, they serve a single greater purpose. This journal is comprised of written and illustrated art from students, residents, faculty, staff, and patients.

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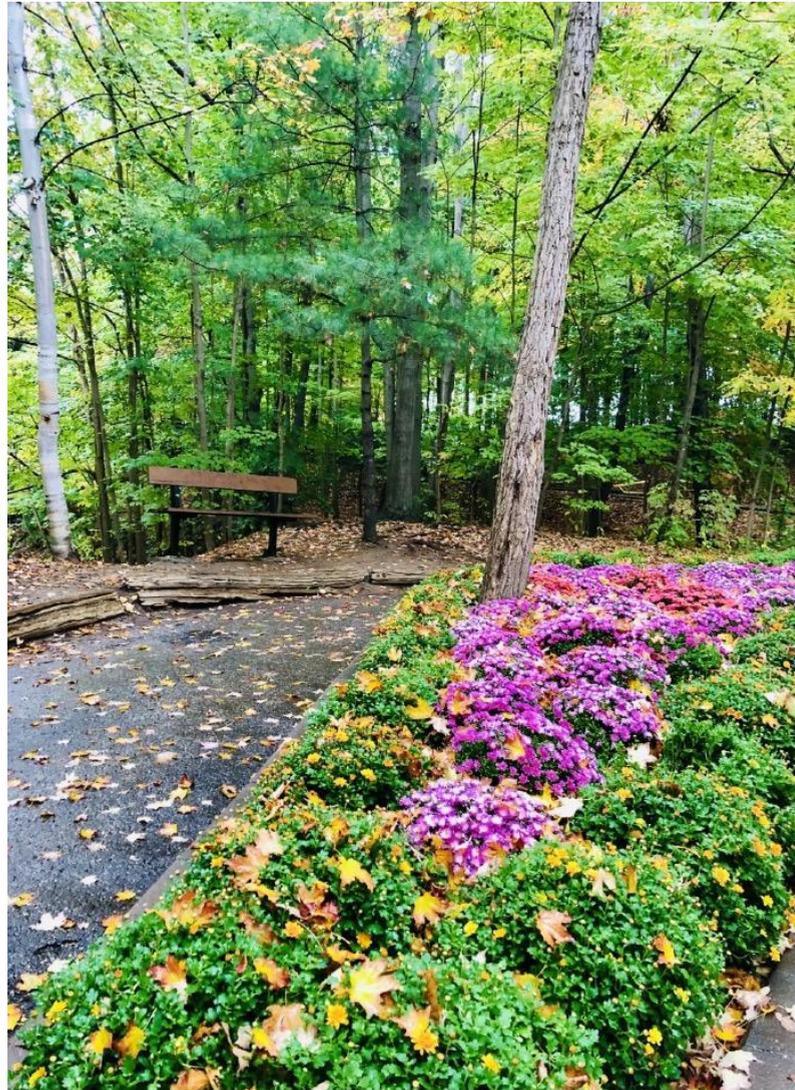
# Photography

**Laura Helena Jung Alberto**

**G2 Ph.D. Student at the Biomedical Material Science Program**

Photography always enchanted me. Registering a specific moment that is never going to be repeated the same way feels magical. Photography has the power to find beauty in common things, places, and situations. It also allows showing your point of view, your perspective to others. As an international student, ordinary sights for the ones who were born and raised in Mississippi, stand out in my eyes. The peculiar nature and sunsets always amaze me and make me feel grateful for the opportunity to enjoy them.





**Iram Aman**

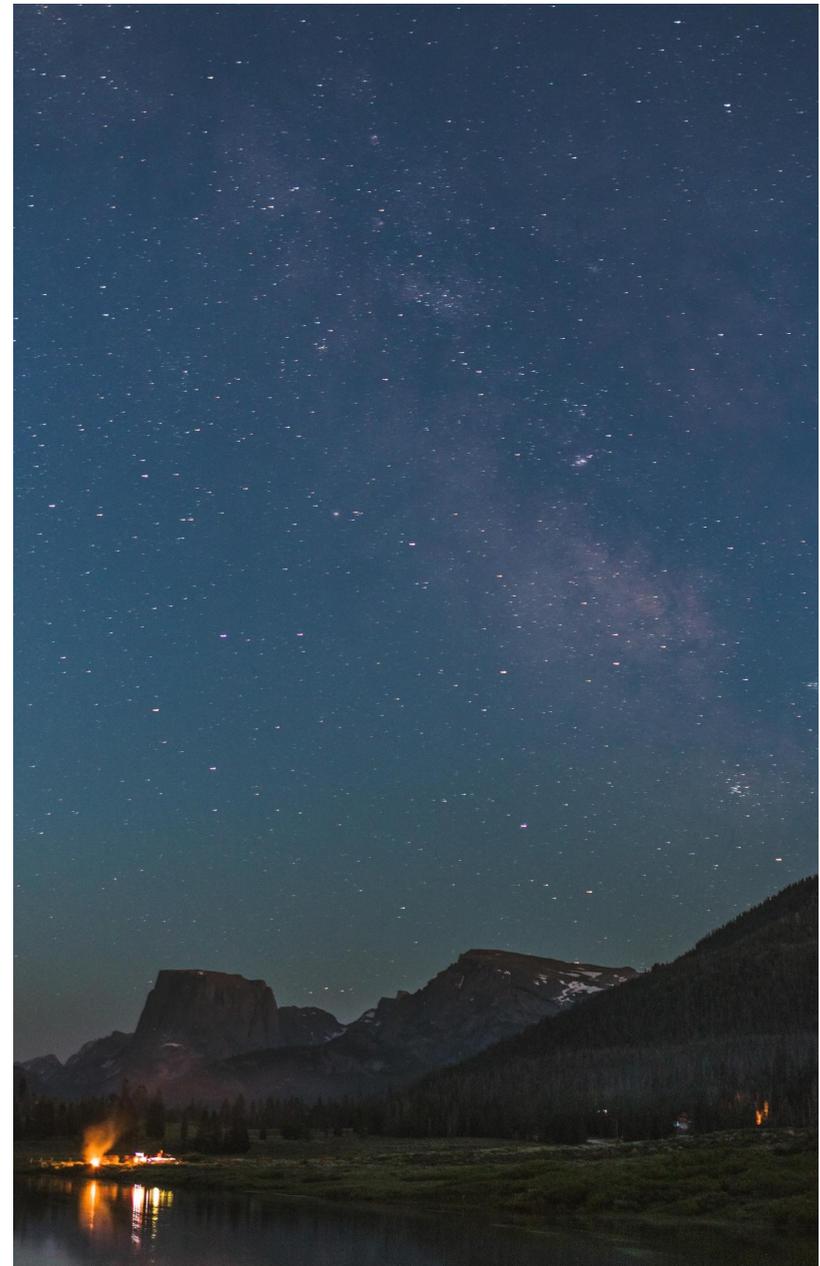
**House Officer-PGY-2 Preventive Medicine**

*Autumn*

After strict isolation rules during pandemic 2020—when people were allowed outside in parks after 6 months of isolation in Canada just cannot stop myself to capture the scenes.

**Tripp Edwards**  
**School of Medicine, M2**

This is an image I captured on the Green River in Montana. It encompasses all the things I love about being outdoors: a starry sky, a burning fire, a beautiful view, and friends to enjoy it with.

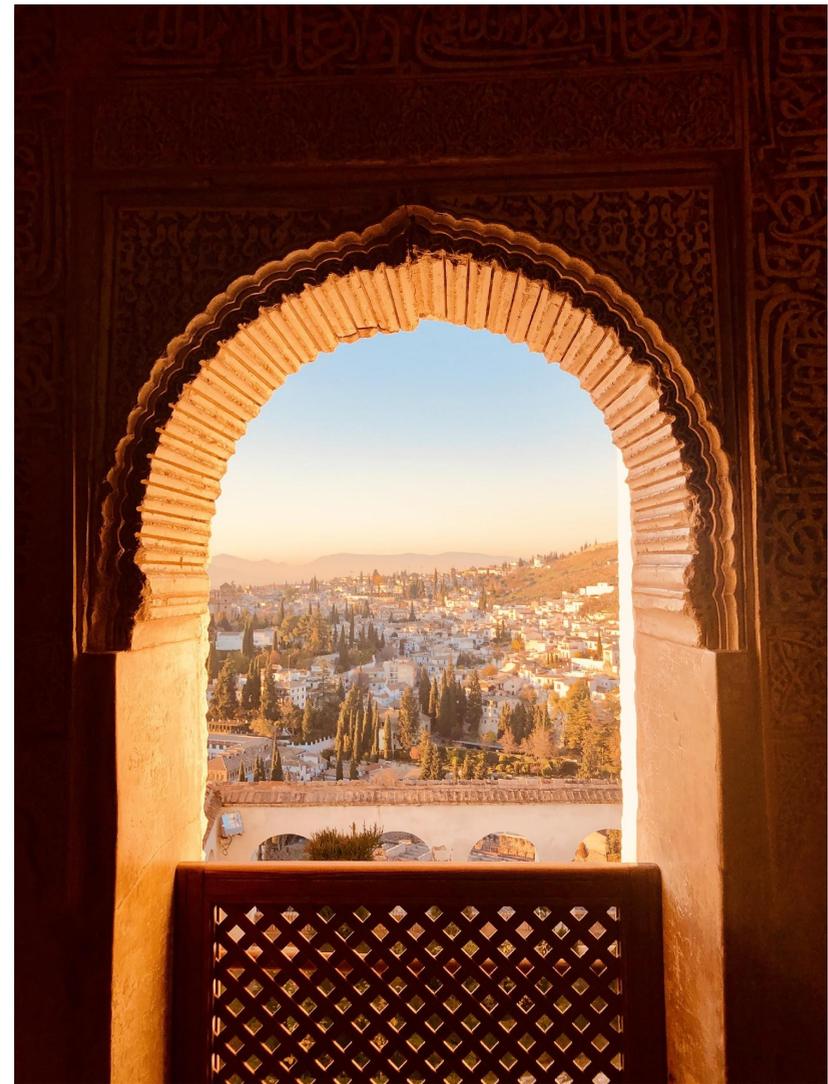




K.R. Fairley  
PharmD Candidate, 2022

**Maggie Holmes**  
**School of Medicine, M3**  
*Recuerdos de la Alhambra*

There is a joy in reflecting the beauty of places that you have seen—that is why I titled this photograph “Recuerdos de la Alhambra.” The Alhambra is palace and fortress complex located in the Andalusia region of Spain and is considered the most important surviving remnant during the Islamic rule of the Iberian Peninsula. In this picture, there is great warmth reflecting against the sun-dried brick, highlighting the contrast to the white-painted houses of the Albaicin quarter in Granada. This photograph will always be a personal memory of mine of year filled with personal adventure prior to starting medical school.





**Katelyn Jackson**

**School of Medicine, M2**

In 2020, I studied abroad in Barcelona, Spain and decided to take a trip to visit Italy. This picture was taken when I was traveling on boat on Lake Como. I was inspired to take this picture when my breath was taken away by this beautiful sunset glaring over the mountains.



**Timothy C. McCowan, MD**

**Professor in the Department of Radiology**

Shot this with just an iPhone 6 on the 4th level of the C Parking Deck (now D). Very little digital processing and it is not a combined photo. It was amazing how vivid and complete the rainbow was despite the relatively clear sky and minimal moisture in the air.



**Timothy C. McCowan, MD**

**Professor in the Department of Radiology**

Taken at the annual Little Rock Air Force Base Air Show in 2004. The paratroopers landed just a few meters from the audience. One walked over to speak with us. My daughter and her friend were amazed and excited to see that the paratrooper was a young woman.



**Hemanth Nannapaneni**  
**School of Medicine, M3**

This photo was inspired by the Ugandan chimpanzee I encountered on my travels throughout Uganda. I believe photography is one of the best ways to capture irreproducible moments in our lives.

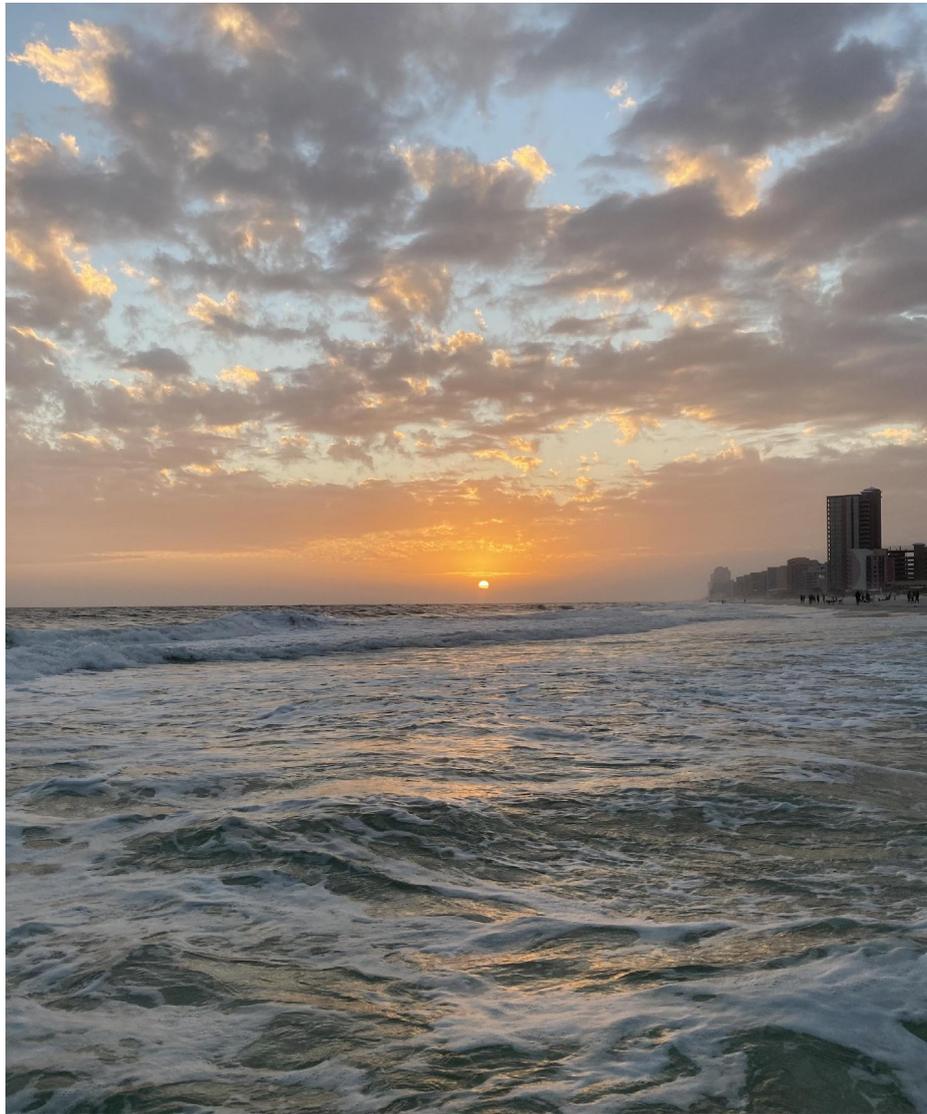


Niki K. Patel  
School of Medicine, M4  
Somjade J. Songcharoen, MD  
Plastic Surgeon, Mississippi Premier Plastic Surgery  
Marc E. Walker, MD, MBA  
Assistant Professor of Plastic Surgery and Orthopedic Surgery  
*Surgical Theatre: The Art of Form and Function*

In this photograph, a surgeon's hand is positioned behind a reconstructed child's hand status post pollicization, in which the index finger was repurposed as a functional thumb. Like drawing or painting, we view plastic surgery as a form of art, using the human body as a canvas to restore what is damaged or reconstruct what is absent.



Niki K. Patel  
School of Medicine, M4  
*Awe and Beauty*



**Khoula Saleem**

**School of Medicine, M4**

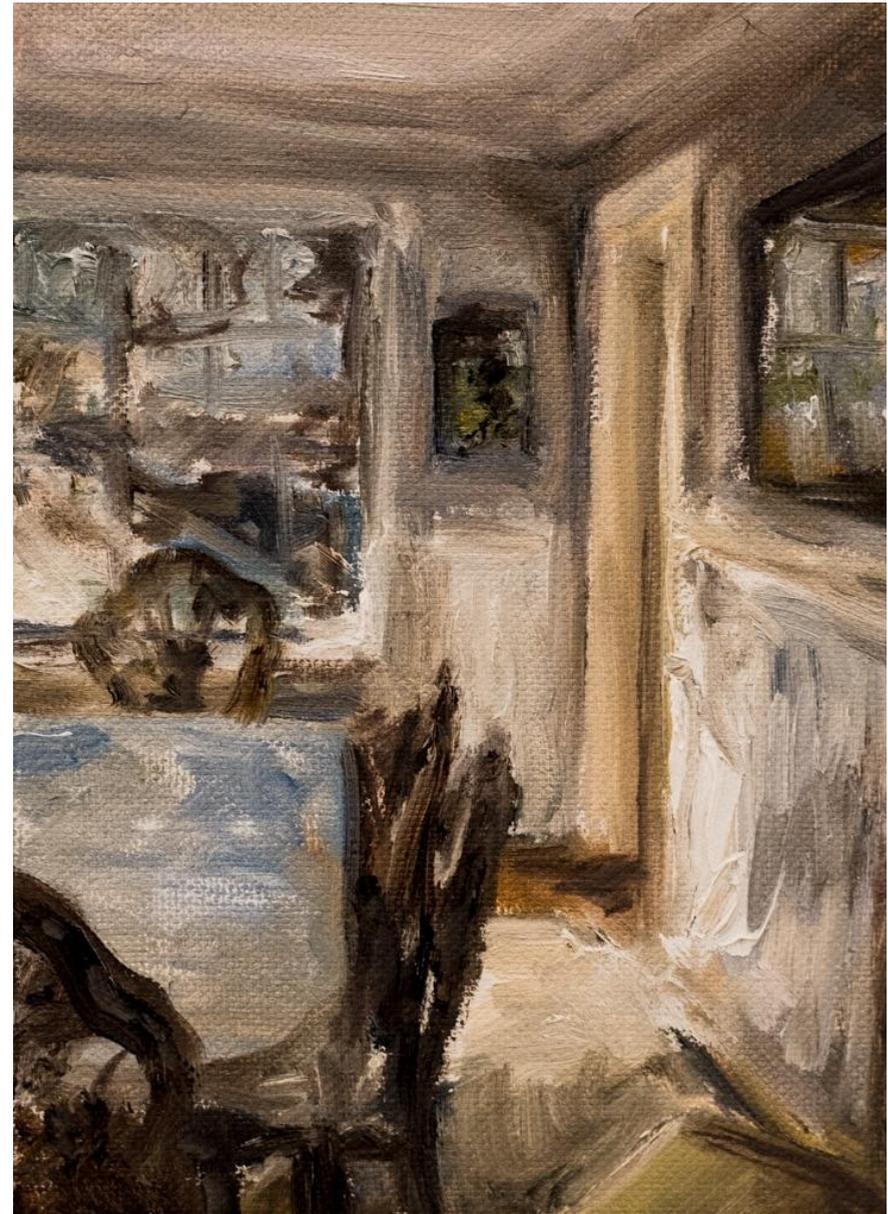
*Sunset on the Beach*

Photographed the sunset on Orange Beach, Alabama located along the Gulf of Mexico to remember my first jellyfish sting and a beautiful day spent with family.

# Illustrative Artwork

Amanda Blackwell  
School of Medicine, M3  
*Home*

This painting is from a “mini” series on light that I did a few years ago. All of the pieces in this series were 5” x 7” or smaller. For each painting I chose a setting in which I found the sun hitting the area in a uniquely beautiful way and attempted to capture that natural light before it was gone. This is a particularly special painting from the series because it’s the dining room in the home that I grew up in. I attempted to capture the welcoming and comforting feel of this space as well.





**Janice Kelli Irby**  
**SOPH – NDSS program 2021**

*Twin*

Pencil drawing of my dear friend David Womack, who I knew for twelve years as a homeless man named “Twin.” On one of my trips with Jackson Street Ministry, I met Twin standing on the corner of Valley and Raymond Road with two prostitutes wearing a beautiful smile. Every Wednesday night, we would find Twin on that corner or under the bridge where he lived. In 2012, Twin fell into the path of an 18-wheeler truck and spent nine months at UMMC. Afterwards, he purchased a house with the settlement and married the love of his life, Roxy. Twin wanted to tell his story, so on Wednesdays, I’d pick him up with printed copies of his testimony to hand out to the homeless. He always gave glory to God for seeing him through extraordinary times, and he passed away as he was praying and reading scripture with Roxy. Twin is a legend to the street people of Jackson as well in my heart. He will always be remembered affectionately and with great wonder at the eternal work that we saw the Lord work out through his life.



Lakshmi N. Kurnutala, M.D., M.Sc.  
Associate Professor and Director of Neuroanesthesiology  
*Beautiful Sunset on Countryside*

To manage COVID and work stress, I started painting with acrylics in March 2020 after almost 18 years. I've noted improvement in my skills. My wife and daughter are my two great critics, challenging me to be my best. My inspiration for paintings has always been women (e.g., mother, sister, wife, daughter) and nature.



Lakshmi N. Kurnutala, M.D., M.Sc.  
Associate Professor and Director of Neuroanesthesiology  
*Grandpa's Barn*



Lakshmi N. Kurnutala, M.D., M.Sc.  
Associate Professor and Director of Neuroanesthesiology  
*Magnolia*

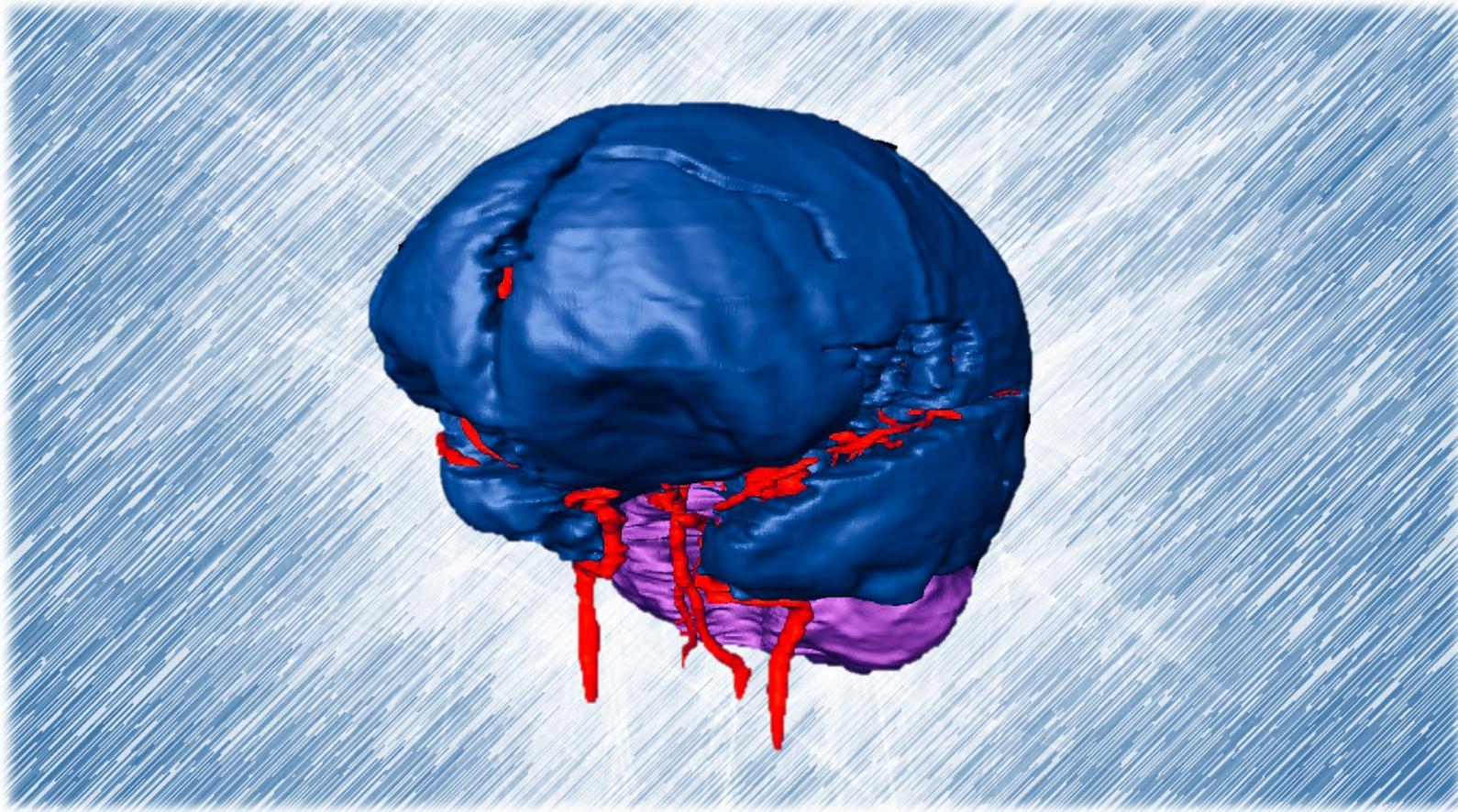


Lakshmi N. Kurnutala, M.D., M.Sc.  
Associate Professor and Director of Neuroanesthesiology  
*Veena – Soul of Indian Music*

**Caroline Annelise Lambert**  
**School of Medicine, M4**  
***Morning Rounds***

Thinking of rounding in Batson Children's Hospital, my mind flips through a number of children's faces—giggly smiles, red-faced tears, peaceful sleep, and so many more. Yet quite a few of these faces always appear at the top of slightly different shades of blue, green, and yellow oversized gowns, in the same purple-walled rooms. In my mind, I see myself knock and gently open the door, say a soft "good morning", glance to see if the parents are still asleep on the sofa, and then smile under my mask as I start my morning by checking on the precious, wide-eyed kiddo looking back at me.





Shiv K. Patel

School of Medicine, M1

Niki K. Patel, MS

School of Medicine, M4

Dongmei Cui, MD, PhD

Associate Professor, UMMC Department of Neurobiology and Anatomical Sciences

*Cerebral Wonders*

Cerebral Wonders was inspired by a project that originated with the production of a 3D stereoscopic model of the cerebral cortex, cerebellum, and associated vasculature. The purpose of the project was to enhance understanding of the spatial relationships found in anatomical structures. Cerebral Wonders intends to show that the brain is central to everything; hence, we placed the cerebral cortex front and center emanating its information into the periphery.



Lauren S. Pongetti, OTR/L  
Art journal page created by myself as a reminder to celebrate my creativity, grow, heal, and be aware of how my thought patterns affect my goals and focus.

# Textile Artwork



**Sonya Shipley, MD**

**Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine**

*Venus*

My grandmother died my junior year of college, and it left a huge hole. She was my person—my cheerleader—my friend. I thought I had time. To learn all the things—sewing, canning, crocheting, how to make the best roast beef sandwich—but I didn't. Since her death, I have been on a mission to reclaim those skills that died with her. During this time of social distancing, I took the opportunity to learn to how to quilt. This pattern is called Venus after the goddess of love (Notice the "V"). I think it is quite fitting that these quilts have been gifted to people whom I love dearly.



Sonya Shipley, MD  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Family Medicine  
*Venus*

# Sculpture



**Joanna Stevens**  
**School of Health Related Professions**  
**Medical Laboratory Science**  
**Class of 2022**

From a 50-pound lump of mud and mindful hands, clay is fired and glazed with the synergy of science and then used and viewed by the audience in basic moments such as drinking coffee from a mug in the early morning hours or eating ramen noodles from a small bowl at 2 am. Pottery merges art into the everyday routine of rushing about and encourages us to slow down and sit in the moments we have. From slip and sludge, there is a reminder to who will listen, of beauty in every molecule, little beams of light in every state of living. No matter how tired or worn down a body becomes, in the tired withered bones, there is wisdom and hope. There are still vibrant swirls of warmth and color in a cold, foggy morning breath as we all march on. Messy and muddy means you are making good art and life is so much better when you embrace the mud.

# Poetry

## Tuesday Night

Katelyn R. Fairley  
PharmD. Candidate, 2022

You've told me goodbye so many times before.  
How was I supposed to know  
That this time,  
You really meant it?

That it was, actually, a goodbye  
And not just a, "see you soon"—  
A toast to the end,  
A cry of, "Here's to new beginnings"  
Without the implication  
That I would be a part of them, too?

Am I selfish for saying that?  
I'm sorry.

You know how I can get.

It's Tuesday. It's late.  
Not excuses, just an answer.

Would you still answer?  
Would you still answer if I dialed your number?  
I memorized it, you know  
Just like how it used to be before caller I.D.  
And people walked around with the world in their pockets  
And got so sad.

I'm talking like I knew that time,  
Rather than just the cusp of it,  
But you get my point.

I know you've always hated talking on the phone  
But I really hope you get better at it.  
And I hope that you find those new beginnings.

I hope that you run with them,  
That you sprint right down that road less traveled  
In your beat-up Converse,  
Stained pink by the first glass of wine I ever tasted,  
The first glass of wine I ever spilled.

You weren't even mad at me.  
I ruined your shoes, and you weren't even mad at me.  
That happened at your parent's house,  
The weekend you tried to throw a party while they were out of town  
And no one came.

I guess that must have been three or four years ago now.

I still remember the blue and white Christmas lights you tangled  
Through the gnarled, old branches that lined the driveway,  
Sparkling like the stars we knew were above us but had never seen.  
We lived so far inside that city.

## Tuesday Night Cont.

Katelyn R. Fairley

PharmD. Candidate, 2022

Crickets and cane toads sang on a lawn  
Striped with late-blooming azaleas and St. Augustine green  
As we popped the cork on a bottle of wine  
That looked expensive  
And tasted like wood.

I thought you'd be sad,  
But you just grinned and poured me another glass.

*"Small parties are much more intimate."*

*"That's not the right quote."*

*"Well, what's true isn't always right."*

In that moment, I knew I would do anything for you.

But would you have let me?

You were right,  
That night when we were both sixteen.  
And you were true.  
True blue—  
But also yellow,  
And purple.  
And orange.

Crimson like the inside of my mouth.  
Viridian like the deepest depths of the sea.

You were iridescent, moving color—  
Flashing through a sky cut clean in two with low-hanging telephone lines.

I know now that that was why you had to leave.  
And why I had to stay.

I should have told you then.  
But I was scared.  
I was so fucking scared.  
Because I knew that if I pulled you close to me,  
I would never be able to let you go.

I know we'll never discuss it.

But I do still wonder if you think about it, too.  
How we kept missing each other,  
Year after year,  
Like two constellations that dip toward the horizon in unison,  
But never cross.

I'm sorry.  
Like I said, it's late.  
And it's Tuesday.

I don't know how else to say it.  
But for what it's worth,  
I think I'll always think of you when I see blue and white Christmas lights.

And sometimes, I still hope that you think about me, too.

## Triple Scorpio

Katelyn R. Fairley  
PharmD. Candidate, 2022

Menthol.

It's that subtle hint of menthol,  
Tucked between softer, cleaner notes  
Of lavender and sandalwood,  
That brings me back to that night—  
The night the sky was on fire.

I remember squinting up through the windshield of your dad's old pickup truck,  
Your hands on the wheel,  
My foot in my mouth,  
And thinking that the sun really did look like a fireball,  
A cherry,  
A mirror,  
Hanging low over the crest of the deep purple hills  
That ringed our hometown;  
Nature attempting to imitate your incisors  
As they flashed through pursed lips—  
The sun your lit cigarette.

They're your colors, right?  
Crimson, gold, orange.  
Your season.  
Two more weeks and the moon will be full again.

*Triple scorpions are dangerous*, you had said,  
Passing me the sun through a cloud of thinly veiled metaphors.

Why?

*Because our ruling planet is Pluto.*

I wasn't so sure about that.

You grinned at me,  
And I swear I could feel your eyes growing warm  
Behind those oversized sunglasses.

I don't think I've ever felt safer  
Than when I was sitting next to you.

*Red or pink?* you asked me,  
Eyes pulling away from the road again,  
As two tubes of lipstick appeared between chapped knuckles.  
They weren't yours.

How I knew that, I couldn't exactly tell you.  
But they had to be your sister's,  
Or your mother's,  
Or else stolen from the makeup counter at JCPenny  
In an attempt to feel something bigger.  
(Did it work?)

I had just begun to wonder if residual feelings held any physical weight,  
(And if so, where?  
Sometimes, I thought I felt them  
In the hollow of my neck.)

And if Pluto was the planet that ruled over  
Sex and death and regeneration,  
(Or was that Mars?)

## Triple Scorpio Cont.

Katelyn R. Fairley

PharmD. Candidate, 2022

And about what you had meant last summer when you told me  
That my ruling planet wasn't a planet at all,  
But a comet,  
Nicknamed the "wounded healer" by someone who knew people like me  
A lot better than they knew people like you.

But I stopped thinking entirely when you asked me that.

I took a pull from the cigarette and rolled my head back  
Against the split leather seat  
To look at your face through the fire above us:

Freckles covered in iridescent powder and beige paint,  
Late golden sunlight slicing through sandy lashes,  
Casting strange shadows across your cheekbones  
That somehow reminded me of strange things like spiders  
And moss  
And stairs that lead directly down into the sea.  
Teeth clenched, heart racing, I wondered what would happen if  
I uncapped one of the tubes myself And dragged it across your lips,

Those lips that folded inward so perfectly at the corners  
Like seashells,  
Like flower petals,  
Melting into dimpled cheeks—  
The work of many years of smiling,  
(Were any of those smiles for me?)  
I wish you would tell me if they were.  
If those smiles, even just one or two, had been mine.  
Maybe then I wouldn't be sick with hope that I might

Taste that lipstick,  
Mingled with sun-warmed Coca-Cola  
And menthol cough drops,  
The ones you always kept tucked inside your purse  
For after coffees and cigarettes  
So that your parents wouldn't know what we did.  
Maybe then I wouldn't be so scared of you—  
Of the heat coming off your skin,  
Your low-throated laugh,  
Mouth gaping like a blood orange,  
Torn right down the middle,  
Sticky, sweet,  
The color of honey and pearls and harvest moons,  
Inches, centimeters away from mine  
As the first few lines of some old Neil Young song bled through the radio  
Your eyes shifted from mine.

No.  
Don't stop.  
Please.  
I don't want you to stop looking at me.

You turned the dial, the music washing over us like a solar flare.

*"This is a great song," you said. "He was a Scorpio, too, you know."*

When you fixed your eyes on me again  
To ask for the cigarette back,  
I saw that you had already chosen pink.

## People Like Us

Katelyn R. Fairley  
PharmD. Candidate, 2022

Here's a secret.  
One thing that no one knows about me  
Is that I've spent several years of my life underwater.

I take another sip,  
Vodka and tonic,  
Lemon, salt,  
Ice,  
Sliding down my throat with a dull burn  
That somehow reminds me of your voice  
As I stare at you levelly from across the blue.

I look toward the window.  
You order another drink.

Who knows?  
Maybe I'll go home and write about it.

On writing, Ernest Hemingway once said  
That all you have to do is sit down at a typewriter  
And bleed.

I guess this isn't quite the same thing,  
But some parts are a lot cleaner.

I like to think he'd still approve of it anyway—  
This method of inspiration—  
Because what else would you call this if not masochistic?  
And he was all about that.

*How can you say that?  
Because I know him.*

I grew up on him.

He wrote about things like this,  
Like us,  
All the time.

Shining black bulls,  
Clouds of rancid breath dancing before  
A redness that existed both in front of  
And behind the eyes.  
Beautiful women,  
Tragic women,  
Their allure only increased by the tears  
That glinted like diamonds at the corners of their  
Baby-blue eyes.

White flags bobbing in the distance,  
White fish larger than fishing boats,  
Young blood spilled across burning sand.  
*Ole!*

He loved that shit.

Entertainment for men with big dicks, you'd say, tossing the book down.  
I guess you'd be the one to know.

## People Like Us Cont.

Katelyn R. Fairley  
PharmD. Candidate, 2022

And I'd be one to tell you that I saw you  
Reading that same book later that night,  
Under the light of the microwave oven,  
Drawn back in,  
Or else trying to prove something.

Look, let me restart.

You know as well as me that  
People like us are content to live in our heads;  
Our biggest downfall,  
But maybe the most understandable thing about us  
In the end.

We know that it can be the hardest thing in the world  
To speak through salty vocal cords,  
To conceal a bleeding heart,

To try to explain what you mean to me  
Without using my hands to spin a better  
Idea of you into existence.

Shit.  
These thin-stemmed glasses fall over so easily, don't they?

*Are you okay?*  
*Yes, darling I'm okay, how are you?*

You told me once that my eyes grow large and wild  
When I start talking about these types of things,  
That they scare you sometimes.

Ha!

You scare me sometimes.  
You scare me the most.

*Why?*

I'd tell you,  
But I'm not sure you'd be able to hear it over the roar of this place,  
Or the buzzing of the phone in your pocket.  
Or the slick, wet sound that stripped tires make on oil-coated streets,  
As music in another language rips through a radio,  
Twenty years out of date,  
Leather seats sagging underneath the weight of my head  
And clothes too nice to be worn by people like us,  
As the lights change from red to green to yellow,  
And your dark eyes yawn into mine,  
Impossibly large,  
Like copper disks,  
Like pearls on the bottom of a stormy sea,  
Your heartbeat almost as loud as your labored breathing as you  
Pull yourself onto me,  
Whispering my name,  
My real name,

## People Like Us Cont.

Katelyn R. Fairley

PharmD. Candidate, 2022

Once, twice, three times against my cheek  
In a bed that smells like linen and sins  
We both “quit months ago”.

I feel like,  
At this point,  
If I really did sit down to write,  
I’d bleed out before I could finish writing down all of the things  
I want to say about you.

But part of me feels like that would be okay.  
*Do you like who I am even when I cannot talk to you?*

I knock back another drink and run my finger through the ring of condensation  
It has left behind on the scarred wooden table,  
Writing paragraphs in my head  
I probably won’t remember later.

I’ll go home with you tonight and let you slide your tongue inside my mouth  
And taste that same lemon and ice,  
Blood and sand,  
That consumes me now,  
Continuing to talk about terrifying things  
Until my eyes grow so big,  
They swallow you whole.

God, I wish I had my notebook to write all of this down.

*Let’s go home.*

*Okay.*

Oh well.  
If I don’t remember,  
I guess it just wasn’t meant to be.

## The Rookie's H&P

Will Lorenzo

School of Medicine, M3

First let's make a toast  
to what bothers you the most  
And in addition, if there's more  
A condition that's unwell  
Then before you hit the door  
My proposition's that you tell

Next it's time I shift my tact  
To observe details and facts  
Quickly mark down on my page  
Your gender, race, and age  
Now, addressing you by name,  
Let's keep first things first  
If it's pain could you explain  
Where and when it hurts the worst  
It's your turn to hold the mic  
So tell me what it feels like  
On a scale of one to ten  
How much does it make you cringe?  
Is there a person place or move  
That makes it worsen or improve?  
And is there anything else  
Compromising your health?  
When you think about your life  
And all the things that this has changed  
What about this brings you strife?  
What all has it rearranged?

Now that I get the gist  
It's just the details that I need  
So please forgive the exhaustive list  
Of all the symptoms I must read  
If you think to yourself  
It seems as though I've gone askew  
Keep in mind that for your health  
I need a comprehensive view  
Stop me if you have a question  
Otherwise I will proceed  
At this time, shakes, nods, and gestures  
Are all I really need

Now, what seems like ages later,  
that we're finally done with that  
My understanding is much greater  
And I'm liking where we're at  
At this time if you don't mind  
I'd like for you to share  
The previous times that come to mind  
You've received medical care  
Any chronic diseases  
That I should know about  
Clonic seizures, diabetes,  
hypertension, or some gout?  
Broken knees, surgeries  
I need to know it all  
Understanding your disease  
Will help me make my call

Now with that behind us  
It may seem that that's enough  
But understand that even science  
Is concerned with personal stuff  
So moving forward let's be clear  
Of the importance to understand  
That although this stuff is weird  
That it's all part of the plan

So please tell me if you will  
All about your friends and fam  
Do you drink, smoke, or pop pills?  
Is she your wife or just a ma'am?  
Keep in mind throughout this time  
That the more you let me know  
Our intentions will align  
And our understanding grow

And to close our conversation  
I must ask that you please  
Tell me any medications  
And relevant allergies.

And now, Attending, there you go  
It's all the info that I know  
I present to you the facts  
No missed crannies, nooks, or cracks  
There's your patient history  
As comprehensive as can be

## A Purr-Fect Cinnamon Roll

Brittany Amber Sims

Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing

*I started writing poetry in high school after being inspired by William Carlos Williams. While at the University of Mississippi, I took creative writing and poetry classes to further my experience and receive a minor in English. Poetry and healthcare are two of my strongest passions and when given the chance I like to make connections between them.*

With their icing  
dripped whiskers, cats are fluffy  
cinnamon rolls. They start off needing all the

finest ingredients—  
fresh water and rich milk with  
lots of sugar and affection. They begin

to flourish and  
sprawl out. All the stiff areas  
need to be kneaded until smooth satisfaction.

So squishy soft,  
the dough conforms to any shape  
transforming into a swirled roll, and rises

to the warm call  
of cream as it stretches to  
its peak. All toasted and snug next to the heat.

Across the crown  
and the back, sugar is spread.  
Not a spot forgotten. The roll leisurely lays

with its glazed  
coat, contently curled, as it  
steadily awaits a subtle, sweet embrace.

## Delusions

### Imitation of “Maelstrom” by Claire Wahmanholm

Brittany Amber Sims

Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing

There are more *positive*  
than negative symptoms, more  
ambition than simply weakness. Week  
after week, she sees as fan's vicious blades speak, spoken  
words in ear, and wades in a mind filled with her own vicious  
thoughts. Through  
their lies. Her eyes  
stage the scene. She is being called down into the wood between, caffeine  
stained cracks, body noiseless as light whispers, her name, repeated  
with malice, hands over ears. She ignores the voice, to feel her back on the familiar,  
crisp floor.  
Minutes since standing. Minutes until realized reality. *A blanket of unknown, as  
reality itself, where the world is as  
unknown*, on which field  
the voice breathes the truth into dust.

## Springtide

Brittany Amber Sims

Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing

May could never forge strawberries without devotion;  
her honeyed fruits grow a ruby-red complexion.  
They are false berries, loved with emotion.

Vines cradle strawberries, like waves of an ocean,  
they encompass the land and connect it to their collection.  
Strawberries may not thrive without devotion.

The aggregate fruit, wearer of seeds tells untrue notions:  
“share half with your true love to stop rejection.”  
They are fabricated berries, shrouded with emotion.

The strawberry’s sweet aroma is like a fragrant potion.  
A caramel, candy flavor, nourished for months, with perfection.  
Strawberries may never flourish lacking devotion.

The magical berry, a cure-all beauty promotion:  
“One bite to have whiter teeth, and a radiant reflection.”  
They are liars, smothered with emotion.

As strawberries ripen in a vibrant motion,  
the spring weather gives life with affection.  
May could never forge strawberries without devotion;  
they are untrue berries, infused with emotions.

## **Wisteria Haibun**

**Brittany Amber Sims**

**Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing**

Hairy, purple vines climb through crevices and creep  
along the soil. They extend their hands and cradle your mind  
once more. The past days turn into nourishment for the vines—  
memories fade like the light from your green eyes.

As the seasons change, the vines never die or wither away;  
they are weeds and only grow stronger. The vines squeeze  
as they strangle your body. You forget how to move—how to walk  
through the lush fields. You were once a young spinning seed  
able to explore, but now you are an old pine rooted in place.  
Your needles knit slower with each day and your name slips your mind:

*Forgetful flowers  
settle and dissolve you,  
taking the thoughts left.*

## Trypophobia

Brittany Amber Sims

Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing

Honeybees crawl from callous crevices  
in caramel combs. The hexagonal holes tunnel  
into the nest. Spit and wax through emesis  
glare as white larvae bore past skeletal  
pollen. Fruit flies target honey with eyes  
covered in clustered cells. A crater-coated  
net drapes each orb. Clogged cavities fortify  
thousands of eyes like the lily flower loaded  
with brown beady seeds. Seafoam churns  
as compact bubbles of hollow caverns crash  
against gritty granules. Wretched worms  
wiggle from fissures to burrow into grass.  
The honeycombs filled with dark, grimy holes  
stare into the mind and send goosebumps to bones.

## Jack Daniel's Old No.7 Whiskey

Brittany Amber Sims

Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing

The bottle kissed his lips  
and burned his throat.  
He drowned his depression,  
parked in an empty lot.

He smirked at his burned throat.  
His wife had begged him to stop,  
so he parked in an empty lot.  
He outsmarted her.

His wife would never make him stop;  
his liquor was all he had left.  
So he outsmarted her,  
sneaking drinks in his truck.

Liquor was all he had left;  
his wife knew he was  
sneaking drinks in his truck.  
He wasn't at work.

His wife knew he would  
never give up his addiction.  
He wasn't willing to make it work.  
So she said what he couldn't.

Fueled by his addiction,  
he ignored the accusations.  
So she said what he couldn't:  
"I quit".

He ignored the accusations,  
and let the bottle kiss his lips  
Never to say, "I quit".  
He drowned his depression.

## **Pareidolia**

**Brittany Amber Sims**

**Traditional BSN, 1st year, School of Nursing**

Granules in walnut wooden grooves  
stare in the shape of faces. The inky  
lines contort, twisting into the hooves  
of demons, and wild animals. Whiskey  
hares leap across the man in the moon  
as clouds mold into cobblestone castles—  
that still inspire da Vinci in his tomb.  
Stains on stains transform into enamel  
mountains. Surprised outlets in valleys watch  
from their hollow, slit eyes with mouths agape.  
Corners hold phantom features in notches  
darkened by shadows revealing the shape.  
The faces of creatures creased on coarse walls  
and tender clouds exist in the mind with its flaws.

## Monarch Butterfly

Laura Frances Swalm

Junior in the BHIIM Traditional Program

*I wrote this for my high school English class. My inspiration was a time when I was in the third grade, and I had found a caterpillar in the hedges of my front yard. I waited all winter. Then one morning, I let the yellow monarch butterfly go into the sunny, Sunday morning sky. This is nature's example of how you can always transform into something beautiful no matter how deep a winter you may go through.*

Trimming the hedges stopping suddenly to  
look on with wonder at this wriggly squirmy thing though  
then it did not look like much one day I hoped soon it would turn  
into something marvelous spectacular and new  
So I kept and jarred it and put on it a lid and waited for the  
delicate new creature to appear then one sunny Sunday morning  
what to my surprise but a beautiful yellow  
monarch butterfly

# Essay

## Magnolia Grandiflora

Peter Carlos Martin

School of Medicine, M1

*I was inspired to write a reflection on the new Mississippi state flag, adopted over a year ago in November of 2020. Having studied art history before entering medical school, I am fascinated by the power of symbols and imagery, and some of the most powerful imagery I have ever encountered has arisen from the pages of Mississippi authors, especially William Faulkner, Jesmyn Ward, and Walker Percy. In this poem I tried to encapsulate some of what seemed most powerful—indeed, most Mississippian—within our new flag. Chief among these was, of course, the Magnolia, which is to me the best representative of our state's beauty (as well as the ideal tree for climbing). The Biblical inspirations arose mainly from contemplating the design of the flag: blue and red, flood and blood.*

And how is that she—

who bore me up in her crowded boughs before the universe had banged any bigger than my front yard, indeed she from whose limbs I, like Magellan before me, discovered other front yards—how is it that she now stands for all the front yards, back yards, patios, living rooms, chicken coups, underpasses, overpasses, kudzu vines, sand dunes, and fire ant hills of this, the twentieth spangling of the starry banner?

She, whose cones I launched at my brothers and whose flowers I cut for my sisters, has now let fall one bloom for every brother and sister from Yoknapatawpha to Bois Sauvage. This one bloom, the biggest and boldest of a big and bold bunch, floats on the blue of our Southern flood, her petals a Mississippian olive branch. And when the dove returns—slowly, perhaps, laden with the tremendous Grandiflora—how will we emerge from the ark?

Baptized anew in the Mighty Mississippi, will every family, every beast, every bird, and whatsoever creepeth upon this humid, pine-riven earth process forth, be fruitful and multiply God's blessings? The deer certainly will. Yet first the ark-builder himself, stumbling on six-hundred-year-old sea-legs on the soggy Mesopotamian soil, raised up an altar to worship his Deliverer. What shall our sacrifice be?

Blood and Sweat poured kneeling—kneeling beside hospital beds, kneeling beside students' desks, kneeling beside freshly tilled soil, kneeling beside freshly tucked-in sprouts, and kneeling beside neighbors every Sabbath. Through flood, plague, poverty, and subjugation, these scarlet bands mark our offering to Him who first saw that Mississippi is good, and behold, very good. Sing out our Magnolian prayer! Sing out, "In God We Trust!"





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