

HIPPOCRENE

Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis | 2018

A silhouette of a Joshua tree stands against a dark, starry night sky. The tree's branches are dark and spiky, contrasting with the bright, scattered stars. The background is a deep blue-black, filled with numerous small, bright points of light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

literary & visual arts

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

Download an electronic version of this issue, browse past issues, and learn more about our organization as well as local arts events at hippocrene.wustl.edu. Please send submissions, comments, and questions to litmag.wustl@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting the Hippocrene and the arts in all its forms within our community.

STAFF

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With special thanks to Andy Wiegert

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



The Arts Commission supports these events and programs:

ANNUAL ART SHOW. Displaying visual arts created by students, staff, and faculty of the School of Medicine in the atrium of the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center.

COFFEEHOUSE CONCERT SERIES. A relaxed and informal setting for classical, jazz, and other musical and spoken word performances by members of the medical community.

WINTER CAM CONCERT. An annual medical campus-wide concert held in January for musicians to perform in the medical school community.

For more information, visit us online at artscomm.wustl.edu.



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Ice | Aldrin Yim, DBBS

Dancing

No one has touched the soul of me
Not really.
I know that
Because sometimes I still feel it there
Waiting patiently in a corner
To be recognized.

The person who finds it
Will be the one to make me dance

I already dance alone
You see
I've created my own rhythm
Invented a harmony
That only I can hear.

But the person who finds my soul
Alone
In the corner
Will be the one to watch the sweep
Of a magnificent amber skirt
As it rises above the dusty earth
And flies free to the wind.
Maybe it's good
That no one has found it yet.
To let just anyone see it
Would be a crime.

Emily Wasserman
Administrative Coordinator, Genetics Department



Silhouettes | Vincent Ann, Program in Physical Therapy



Growing Pains

I

Saucy Walker, at 32 inches, too tall to be under the tree with the other presents, stood beside our tree on Christmas morning in 1960, six weeks before my 11th birthday. She looked just as advertised on TV - short strawberry blond hair framed her round face and blue eyes. She wore a red dress with a white pinafore adorned by a red heart-shaped pocket. Her shiny black shoes gave her a sturdy foundation allowing her to walk if she was carefully led by hand. It surprised me to find her there because my Mother had questioned why I would still want a doll at my age. Her query raised an indignation in me that I guess she didn't want to further aggravate.

II

If I didn't know better I would say that Brownie came out of my Mother's womb right along with me because I don't ever remember not having the soft, sleepy, light brown puppy with the stitched on eyes, nose, and mouth. He had been a Santa gift for one of my earliest Christmases. He was in a reclining position and had a short stubby tail, his body wonderfully huggable. My favorite feature were his long floppy ears with pink satin on the underside. Every night he accompanied me to bed, embraced tightly in my left arm while my thumb and forefinger rubbed the satin, feeling its silky coolness. Meanwhile, my right thumb invariably found its way into my mouth and together Brownie and I would drift off to sleep.

III

I arrived home from my first grade class just days before Christmas to find a basket under our tree that had a mewling bundle in it. I excitedly rushed over to see if Santa had come early to bring us a kitten. When I unwrapped the pink flannel blanket I found my brand new sister who had just come home from the hospital, earlier than expected. My parents decided to name her either Carol or Holly. She was christened Carol. Years later our dog - also a Christmas arrival - was called Holly. Fearing sibling jealousy since I had held the position of youngest for nearly seven years, my parents gave me a baby doll at the same time, who I naturally named Carol. She had a soft cloth body and hard plastic limbs and

head with beautiful furry brown hair. Her blue eyes opened and closed as I changed her position. Instead of displaying sibling rivalry, I followed Mom around, mimicking her actions as she cared for Carol. I washed my baby and her clothes, fed her, rocked her. When Mom's Carol napped, my Carol napped. I became quite the little Mother.

IV

Returning from school one afternoon in 1958, I found my little sister, 18 months old, with a badly bruised face. When she cried I was horrified to see that her new little front teeth were gone, replaced by a metal spacer. Mom had taken her shopping and did not notice that Carol had stood up and turned around in the stroller. She fell and hit her mouth on the metal handle. My parents, who had been trying for a long time to get me to stop sucking my thumb found my shock at her appearance to be the perfect teaching moment. "See? You will have to get braces that look like that if you don't stop."

That night I had a long talk with Brownie about needing to change my sleeping pattern. After several rough nights, I began to get used to curling the fingers of my right hand into my palm and, with the thumb pointing out as if ready for sucking, tucked the hand safely out of reach under my pillow.

Just as I don't remember Brownie coming into my life, I can't recall when he left either, being replaced by another pillow. I suspect it was a few years later, after I had loved most of the soft fur off his back with my hugs and the pink satin on his ears became dirty and frayed. As an adult, I still sleep with my right hand under my head and my left arm embracing a pillow. Only this is not an ordinary pillow, but a body pillow that is as long as I am so I can wrap my legs around it as well as hug it. My husband calls it my boyfriend.

V

Family lore has come to call the sewer backup in our home in 1960 "The Flood." Our temporary rented house, too small for all of our furnishings on the main floor, had much stored in the basement -

furniture that didn't fit upstairs, drapes Mom planned to use in the new house, our off-season clothes, and the washer and dryer. The sewer back-up, several feet deep, ruined everything it touched. The odor forced us to live in a hotel for weeks in an even more cramped environment. At age ten I realized my parents were quite upset - I caught some discussion about suing the landlord and remember my Mom and Dad going to court. But in my world, the real tragedy was the loss of several of my dolls - especially my Carol doll. I cried for days thinking about her drowning in the smelly sludge of the basement.

VI

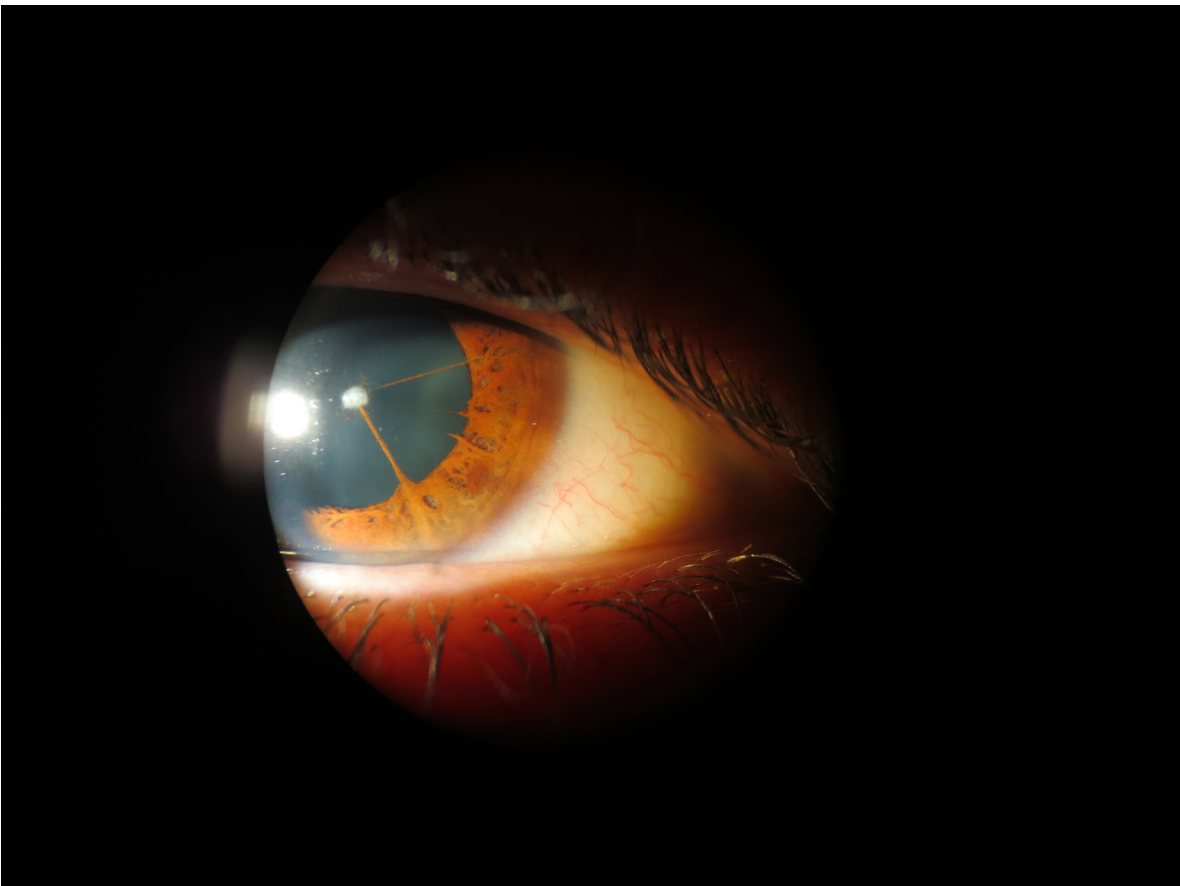
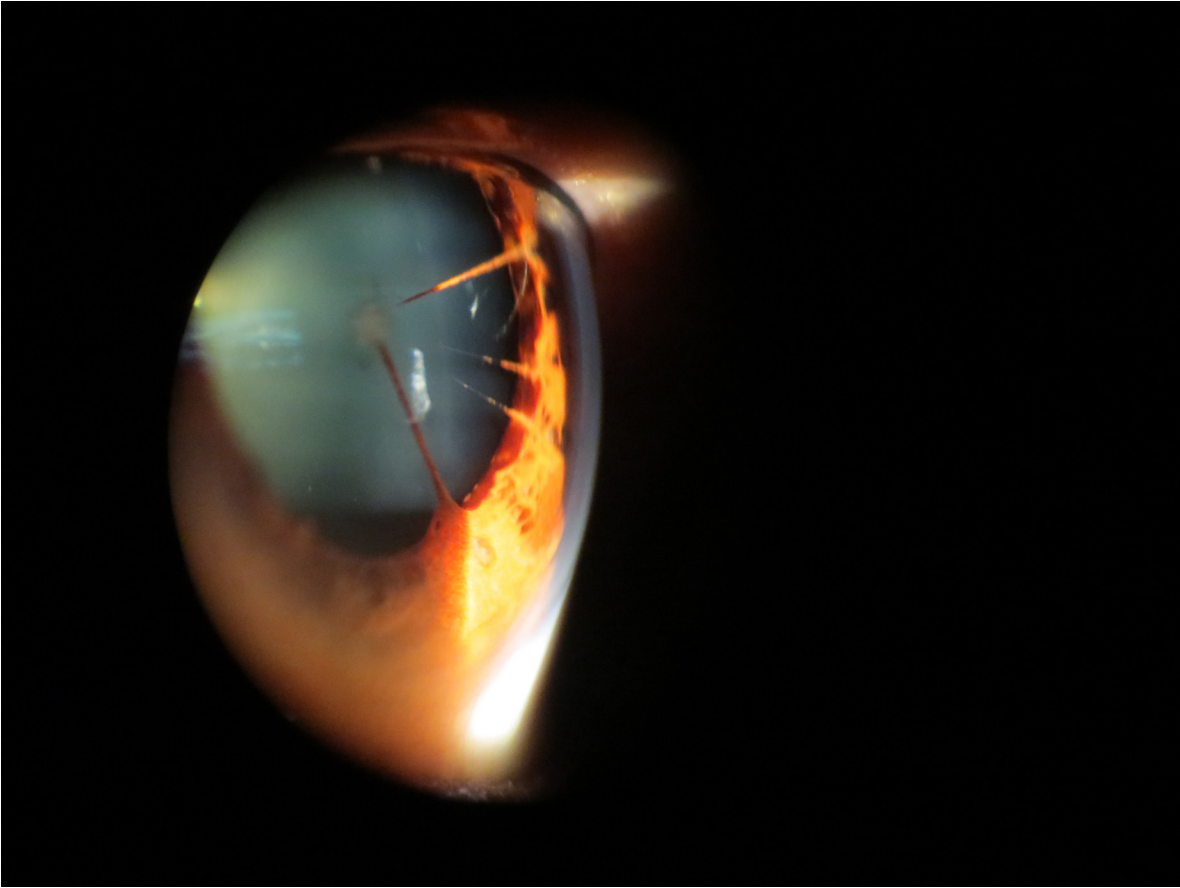
Saucy Walker stood for about two or three years in the corner of my bedroom. Positioned behind the door when it was open, I only saw her with the door closed, when the two of us were alone. Her eyes glared at me accusingly. I hadn't even loved her enough to give her a name of her own. I could never openly admit it, but Mom was right.

Transitioning from elementary to middle school, from child to preteen, was a surprise and a struggle. I remember feeling like the rules had changed on me without warning. As a child, being brighter than average sufficed to make me accepted in the higher social caste at school. But in middle school and later in high school, academics didn't matter so much anymore. The keys to the "in crowd" were looks, a certain swaggering attitude, and associating with the "hot" boys. Well, I held none of those keys; my appearance was ordinary and my attitude was to try not to be noticed. And, not having any brothers, boys might as well have been from another planet to me. Eventually, I did adjust and found my niche as a bookworm and wallflower, not exactly in the upper social stratosphere, but I was mostly satisfied with myself there.

About that time Saucy Walker was relocated to the hall closet where she remained undisturbed for over a decade. On the wall behind my door I hung a poster of Simon and Garfunkel, my favorite musicians. The doll, brought back to life when my own

little girl discovered her in Grandma's closet, finally received her own name - Nicky - and was played with until her arms fell off.

Patricia Winkler
Administrative Coordinator, Genetics Department



Dilated | Richard Whalley, Program in Occupational Therapy

intimacy

intimacy
familiarity with someone or something
it isn't always about sex
i don't have to remove my clothes
just for us to feel close
i don't need to reveal to you
the curve of my breast
when what's more intimate
is the shape of my thoughts
when i'm alone at night
at 3am and i can't sleep
because my mind is spilling
1000 words a minute
and i'm hoping to catch them all
before they fly away
into the dark corners
of my very empty room
it's the color of my voice
as i cry out
revealing my deepest fear
because my fear alone is intimate
but for you to hear how i speak of it
knowing that just uttering the words
will cut me to my core as i announce it
is more intimate than what the fear itself is
for it's way i turn blue
choking on these words
and it's the way they rush out yellow in fear
and the way my ears turn red with embarrassment
for allowing the thought of my fear
to have so much power over me
because it's not just the fear
or how i say it
the intimate piece
is the color of my voice as i speak
intimacy is the quiet moment in the car
between songs when the radio goes quiet
and neither of us feels the need to speak
for the comfort and familiarity
speak more than our words ever could
intimacy is the morning coffee as i'm getting ready
walking around in just my tshirt
before i have to begin my day
reading news articles from the paper
immersing myself in important information
learning something new every single day
it's at night before i go to bed
and the only thing i want

is to read my latest novel
to get lost in a world
that so wholly envelopes me
that there are moments
where i forget to breathe
when i cry at the death of a character
because i've become some attached to them
that i cannot help myself
because these characters aren't just fiction
they are bits and pieces of myself
they are my fears and my desires
who i am, who i was and who i want to be
it's dancing around my room
in my underwear in the middle of the day
simply because it's the only thing
that could make that day better
intimacy is letting you hear my thoughts
and not just the thoughts i say aloud
but rather the ones i put on paper
the ones that no one will ever read
because those words are my innermost thoughts
the thoughts that terrify and inspire me
they are put on paper
on napkins
online
anywhere to keep those thoughts safe
because those words are the truest words i will
speak
and the moment you have read those words
there is no coming back
because at that moment
you have reached the deepest level of my intimacy
don't ask me to remove my clothes
because the way my body looks
is the least intimate thing about me
stop taking off my clothes
and start undressing my mind

Kait Dvorak, Program in Physical Therapy

Don't Touch Anything

Where do I stand?
Stay out of the way.
 Don't touch anything.

Introduce yourself.
"I'm a medical student."
Why did they let me in here?

Do I put on gloves too?
 Don't touch anything.

The patient is looking up at me.
My eyes strain to hide my naivety.

The smell of antiseptic overwhelms me.
Then finally

The cut.

The room stands in reverence.
Blood starts to ooze.

While they cut, life stands still.
There is no hunger, thirst, or second thoughts.
Time bends to their scalpel.

I want to be them.

Their confidence is palpable.
They speak a language I do not understand,

Yet.

Then I hear the words:
"You're going to scrub on the next one."

My mind races between anxiety and joy.
I am becoming one of them.

Next time I'll get to touch something.

Kate Gerull, WUMS

Genesis

She'll tell herself that
she is eve
the first but that's
what sheep believe
in the beginning
there was me
original mistake.

You might pretend
you wouldn't know
my contour like
that serpent road
but don't it always
seem to go
that you fill in the blank.

Now I'm not saying
you were wrong
merely because I
love that song
but would you be both
here and gone
if I'd stayed in the car?

Your stature's safe
but might I share
it wasn't me
who cut your hair
you tried to climb
imagined stairs
that's why you fell so far.

Somewhere along
my dazed retreat
while dripping diamonds
down the street
I learned
surrender's not defeat
there's triumph in lost control.

In truth I don't
regret a lot
except not knowing
when to stop
for passion was born
on a Salem rooftop
and ours was all for show.

My unveiled spirit
has no shame
for I was not
created tame
and that was just
a borrowed name
that fit when we were young.

I hope you find
the little piece
you need to make
your slab complete
at dawn
you'll covet history
forbidden from our touch.

Graduation Party

The hostess dilutes
the spirits to make enough
for yesterday's toast.

Abby Rachel Rosenberg, WUMS

The Doctor's Office

A couple years ago I went to my primary care physician, and told him my shoulder was hurting when I made a certain motion. He asked me numerous questions, had me swing it around every which way, and concluded it might be bone spurs.

“Only way to know for sure is to go down and get an X-ray,” he said.

“And if it *is* bone spurs, then what? Is there anything that can be done?”

“Surgery, if you wanted,” he said. “It’s not too invasive, but it’d be up to you, and how badly it hurts or how obstructive to your everyday life it is.”

I asked how much it was to get an X-ray, and he looked at me quizzically, as if I’d suddenly asked him the square root of 7. “How much is it?” he repeated back to me, stressing the ‘much’. I said yeah, how much does it cost to get an X-ray. Again, brow-crinkles. He told me that he really didn’t know, and that I’d have to go talk to the billing receptionist.

Ok, I thought – I guess that makes sense. He’s not personally providing the service, why should he know how much it costs? Plus, he has people for that. When one has ‘people’ for something, the ‘people’ do that thing. He or she cannot be bothered with what they’ve deservedly outsourced. Certainly not.

When I got down to the receptionist, she greeted me...I wouldn’t say warmly, although I wouldn’t say coldly either. She greeted me the temperature of tepid water that matches your body temperature, so you almost don’t even know it’s there. I told her the doctor had suggested an X-ray of my shoulder, but I wanted to know how much it cost before I did it.

“How much does it *cost*?” Was I yelling this question into a cave?

“Yes...I understand my out-of-pocket charge will depend on my insurance, but what is the actual rate, the actual cost of getting the x-ray done here?”

She appeared a bit bothered that I would dare query the charge of a service.

“Well, I don’t...I mean, you’ll have to call your insurance company.”

I said I didn’t understand. Why would I have to call my insurance company, and talk to some rep based 6 states away in an office, when it’s *your* office that is providing the equipment, engaging in the service, and making the charge. What if I didn’t have insurance? What will you charge?

“It all depends on the type of coverage you have, and the type of x-ray it is...it depends on a lot of things. I’m sure if you have insurance it’s covered except for maybe a co-pay, or a deductible.”

“Yes I’m sure you’re right. But do you mean that you charge something different for diff...I don’t understand...ok, I’m just gonna call my insurance company. Excuse me.”

Somewhere between the “-y” in “company” and the “Ex-” in “Excuse me”, tepid water checked out.

After waiting to hear which number on my keypad would have to be pressed for “your doctor told you to get an X-ray, but you want to know how much it costs, and your doctor’s office has no clue what they charge for things”, I tried Zero. Eventually, a human.

After explaining the situation, I was told that it depended on exactly the type of X-ray I was getting—I won’t get into the specifics, mainly because I don’t remember or understand them. I had to find that out, and that would only tell me if it was *covered*. Now it was back to tepid water to see if she could actually help me.

“Oh, you’d have to ask the doctor about that”, she told me. The phone rang. I’ve been in hundreds of businesses and offices, and even managed a couple myself, and I’ve always wondered why people don’t just *answer* the phone. They prattle on, talking to co-workers or guests, like mothers who can amazingly block out their whining children. Don’t they

hear it ringing? Is it not bothering them as much as it's bothering me? Can't they just say excuse me and pick it up?

Tepid water didn't have this problem. Except the 'excuse me' part. She picked it up mid-first-ring, and her roly-chair mysteriously rotated her a quarter turn away.

After a 7-minute and 32-second (but who's counting?) conversation that I would say most closely resembled a revolving door, she hung up the phone, resumed work at her computer, and seemed to have forgotten my presence.

"Ma'am." She looked up, seeing me, seemingly, for the first time that day.

"Ma'am, on that X-ray, I just..."

Wait. She remembered who I was.

"Sweetie you're going to have to call your insurance company." Tepid water was beginning to cool down. Or is it heat up? Either way, I don't think she meant "sweetie" like my ghamie means it. I remembered that phrase the doctor had used... "obstructive to your everyday life".

"Yes, I did that, you said I have to talk to the doctor about the X-ray...so can I..."

"He's not in right now. I don't believe it should make a difference in the charge to you, just your insurance company. You don't care what your insurance company pays, do you? You should only owe your deductible, unless it's less than your deductible." For someone who 8 seconds ago didn't recognize me, she'd caught up on things quite quickly. Her tone, though, said, please ... please go away.

"Well that's my point...how much does it cost, that way I'll know if I'll owe my full deductible, or a lesser amount. And didn't I just see the doctor?"

"You need to talk to your insurance company. The doctor is on lunch." It was 10:13a.

As I walked out of the office, the standard exit door had a typed and taped sign requesting visitors use the revolving door to conserve energy (theirs, not yours). It was a bit difficult to push, with all the air sucking in and blowing out as it turned, and raising my arm to push it sent a painful twinge up through my shoulder. I don't need surgery, I thought. I'll just make a ton of money, and have people lift things and push doors for me. Then I won't have to worry about it...my 'people' can do it. Yeah...my *'people'*.

I smiled at the thought of it, and as the revolving door spun me out with heavy resistance, I could hear a familiar phone ringing in the distance...and ringing...and ringing.

Andy Wiegert, Student Affairs Manager



Ozark Mountain Glade | Zuzana Kocsisova, DBBS



Missouri River Bluffs | Zuzana Kocsisova, DBBS



Red-legged Seriema | Tony Hiran, Staff, Radiation Oncology

NUM8ER5/Don't Define Me

Content Warning: *This piece pertains to the author's personal experiences with an eating disorder, and includes specific mentions of weight and descriptions of disordered thoughts and behaviors.*

140

The blocky, black numbers on a neon yellow background, printed onto the top of a ten-foot-long fiberglass pole. A weight rating. To prevent cheating, pole vaulters must weigh in under the weight rating of their pole on the day of competition.

143

The digital readout of the scale at my first weigh-in that afternoon. My teammate tells me losing that weight will be easy. Wear an extra layer during practice, take a hot bath, don't eat or drink anything before your weigh-in on the morning of the meet.

138

The scale's final judgement, three days later. I've never been so excited to see my weight before this moment. Like my teammate advised, I had neither eaten breakfast (my favorite meal) nor drunk any fluids. I had, however, packed a granola bar to eat afterwards. I celebrate my victory by deciding not to eat it.

84

The tiny number next to my name, squeezed onto a spreadsheet listing all of the female competitors in the conference championship and their personal records in inches. I am near the bottom, having cleared the qualifying height, seventy-eight inches, by only half a foot.

90

The height I clear at the state tournament, besting my record by six inches. It is still six inches short of qualifying for the championships. My season is over. The image of my body hitting the bar, bringing it down, replays over and over again in my mind.

2

The number of workouts I complete each day, once school lets out for the summer. One in the morning, one in the evening; I am determined to improve my fitness for cross-country season, which will start

18

again in the fall.

5

The number of times I weigh myself in a day, at least. Once in the morning, before my first workout. Once immediately after, as I get ready to take a shower. Once after lunch and once after dinner, to ensure I have not eaten too much. One final time after my second workout, before I go to bed. It is exhilarating to see the number steadily decrease, to feel my shorts steadily loosen. My mother calls me a "skinny minnie" when I put on my bikini to go to the pool. I shrug it off. I am beaming on the inside.

0

The number of sweets I eat, even at birthday parties and celebrations. Even on special occasions. Even at my favorite ice cream shop. The number of rest days I take, even when I can barely get myself out of bed in the morning, even when my head swims as I climb a steep hill, even when my legs hurt and my feet are bandaged, even when it's pouring. Even then.

10

The number of times someone in my family compliments me on my figure during our vacation to Cape Hatteras. At least. You have so much willpower, they say. You're so fit. You look so good. I smile, say thank you, I really do work hard. But their praise falls flat, now. They see gilded exterior, concealing the rottenness inside. I rise at the crack of dawn to run, not because I want to, not because it makes me happy, not because of the fresh dawn sun, glinting off the deep blue of the Atlantic Ocean. Want has nothing to do with it. I *need* to.

40

My heart rate, when I visit my pediatrician a week later. My world crashes down on me as my mother sits in the pediatrician's office for hours, discussing my options. He says my BUN and creatinine are also elevated, and that I have amenorrhea, all words I don't understand. I stare at the door, unthinking. I may as well not be there. I hear the words "heart damage" and "stop exercise immediately". Far away, my mother, her eyes red and puffy, asks me a question. I do not hear her. Should we take you

to a hospital, or can you do this at home? She asks again. At home, I say, knowing only that if they took me to a hospital they would force me to eat.

4

The number of therapists I am taken to over the next several weeks. They all ask me about control, about perfectionism, about my childhood and my family. They throw around terms like “anorexia”, “exercise bulimia”, “EDNOS”, as if knowing the name of a monster will somehow help me fight it. I don’t understand what any of this has to do with whatever it is I’m going through. I don’t understand why any of this is a problem at all. Eventually, we stop going.

1

There is one person who helps me. One person who understands, who speaks to me in a way that makes sense, who I look forward to seeing: Betsy Davis, a nutritionist certified in the treatment of eating disorders. Her office is a brightly lit and well-decorated room full of books, food pyramids, and depictions of human anatomy. These last fascinate and distract me as she asks me to stand on the scale, which is attached to a device in her hand that tells her my weight without letting me see it. We talk. Sometimes, about the physiology of starvation, exercise, and food intake. Others, about creative ways to eat foods I will enjoy while minimizing discomfort. It is amazing how quickly she keys into the topics that make my eyes light up, how easily she can take something so terrifying and make it so fun. I leave smiling, food plan in hand, though the task of carrying out our grand ideas for the week is daunting. Talking about it is easy. Doing is harder.

12

The number of months I am in treatment. Little by little, I am cleared to do the activities I love again. Yoga and light stretching first, then walking, and, eventually, running. I am exhilarated; I can compete in my senior season of cross country. Under Betsy’s guidance, I increase my training regimen, balancing on a knife’s edge to meet my caloric needs while remaining competitive. My treatment is a constant struggle, a tug-of-war between my body’s intrinsic desire to eat and the screaming voice in my mind

that berates me when my jeans begin to constrict around my growing waist. The result is maddening: I think constantly about food. When I can eat it next, how much I can have, how much is too much. For years, my body and mind are two. The rational voice knows that I am still sick, that I should not focus on the numbers, that I need to eat. The irrational voice says that I am a slob, that eating is tantamount to failure, that I could start losing weight again if only I ate a *little* bit less. Amid the storm, I cross my high school’s stage to collect my diploma, walking in time to Pomp and Circumstance. I get a summer job working as a lifeguard on a motorboat, a job I would love if I could focus on enjoying such things. I stay up most nights, worrying about what college will bring, if I can maintain my careful balancing act.

13.1

The number of miles in a half-marathon. My college friends and I decide to sign up for one in Philadelphia, in November. I begin to search for training programs online, and find one which I tack onto the cork board above my desk. I keep to the schedule religiously, fitting in my runs between classes, marching band rehearsal, and obsessing over how many calories are in the dining hall food.

1:53:36

The time it took me to run all 13.1 miles. I am exhilarated—and exhausted—as I cross the finish line, limping due to a blister on my right foot. When our entire crew finishes, we walk to Reading Terminal Market; I end up purchasing six fried pierogi, a thanksgiving turkey sandwich, and an ice cream cone. I think about the sheer quantity of food this represents for about a second. Then I dig in, with the utter abandon of someone who has just run the entire perimeter of Philadelphia.

30

The temperature outside as I run along the bike path by my house. I am home for winter break, and I am determined to maintain my fitness so I can run a full marathon in the spring. Though the path is covered in ice I continue, persistent to the point of idiocy. My left foot slides out from under me. I sprawl forward, twisting my leg awkwardly in the

process. When I stand back up, the front of my left hip twinges a bit.

2

The pain continues for two months, worsening with time. Reluctantly, I take week-long breaks to help the injury heal, but the pain returns as soon as I start running again. It begins to hurt even when I walk. Finally, I see a physician at student health, who refers me to an orthopedist, who orders an MRI. It shows a tiny, jagged line, whiter than the surrounding, white tissue. He calls it a tear in the acetabular labrum, which I come to learn means a tear in the cartilage of my hip. He says it will not heal on its own - cartilage does not have much in the way of blood supply. He tells me I have two options: physical therapy or surgery. Given my age and activity level, he recommends surgery. In the meantime, he says, I am not to do any activity that would exacerbate the injury. Including running.

Adaptation

n. the process of change by which an organism becomes better suited to its environment.

The months I would have to go without running stared me in the face like a looming mountain. The surgery was not scheduled until May—the *soonest* the orthopedic surgeon could fit me in—leaving me with a semester’s worth of time to contend with the loss of an integral part of my identity. The sudden cessation of intense training left me with gaping holes in my schedule, which I filled with other extracurricular activities, including a martial art called Krav Maga.

Krav is self-defense at all costs: the only rule is to survive. Over the course of that semester, we learned a number of techniques, some purely defensive and some frighteningly offensive, to survive almost any sort of threat. I would leave every session sweating, exhausted, and exhilarated. Without thinking about it, I’d join my newfound group of friends as they walked to the Student Union to get some late night food. I’d partake in their waffle fries and mozzarella sticks as we talked about anything and everything. Slowly, the camaraderie of a group

of friends replaced the solitary comfort of long runs and calorie counts. Krav’s emphasis on strength and survival supplanted running’s emphasis on lightness and speed. Fighting to survive, unlike running, isn’t graceful. It’s ugly, you might get knocked down, and you walk away scarred and bloody—but you also walk away stronger.

Resilience

n. the capacity to recover from difficulties; toughness.

Spring turned to summer, and the day of my surgery approached. My mind was a cacophonous blend of thoughts and emotions as I went through several pre-op appointments, each with more specific information on how to prepare for the surgery. No food or fluids past midnight the night before. Wash the area with a specific antibiotic soap. Make sure you have someone to drive you home. Here are all the risks that could occur, up to and including death. Sign on this line, please. The morning of the surgery, the nurse took my blood pressure (elevated), my pulse (ditto), and my weight (I turned around). She instructed me to change into those ubiquitous, flimsy blue hospital gowns. I wondered what surgery the previous wearer had undergone.

I expected surgery to be this great cure-all: they fixed the problem, so I should be all set, right? Wrong. I discovered that recovering from the surgery would take more patience and resilience than waiting to have the surgery in the first place. My left leg refused to work as it was supposed to. I had *more* pain than before, not less. Crutches were challenging, particularly for someone who was liable to trip over her own two feet in the best of scenarios, so I jettisoned them in favor of hobbling around on my own two feet. Slowly, painfully, I rebuilt the muscles in my leg by taking progressively longer walks through the trails near my house.

Recovery

n. a return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength.

In many ways, my recovery from my surgery has paralleled my (hopefully final) recovery from my eating disorder. I came to the realization, on one of my long walks, that I had run these trails many

times before, but never noticed the things that made them uniquely beautiful: the way the sun shone through the leaves, speckling the ground with golden light; the way the birds flitted, carefree, through the trees; the way the water of the lake rippled as the wind played across its glossy surface. The extended break from running allowed me to begin thinking of exercise not as a means to an end, but as an enjoyable end in itself. Krav, biking, hiking, swimming: all brought me joy that I hadn't experienced in years. Though I lost the opportunity to run a marathon while in college, I used that time to develop many meaningful, lifelong friendships (and *many* great stories).

My return to running, nearly a year after my initial injury, was wrought with the bitter frustration of new beginnings. My muscles were weak, my pace was slow, my distance was severely limited. But in re-learning how to run, I also re-learned how to have a healthy relationship with the sport. My entire competitive running career had been focused on optimal performance, with little consideration for personal wellbeing. Through my parallel recoveries, I learned to accept that my leg may never be "perfect" again, and I may never reach the levels of training required for peak performance. But so long as I can keep lacing up my sneakers and taking in the world around me—at my own pace—I don't have to be perfect. Just good enough.

Jamie Moffa, WUMS



Children's in Yellow | Kevin Tamadonfar, MSTP

Neurotypes

We function.
We are the passing grades.
But our hands are unNormal:
unBroken
unChained (!)
Tremble twitch tremors - erratic dance
to the rhythm of electric jolts
our tempo, Ours Alone...
(Yours included.)
Eyes unmet, voices ignored
drowned by the rhythm .the.beats. in our heads.

thrummmm
 in our feet fingers free
 sway soaring to synaptic songs
 sumptuous serotonin
 emanates from fibers that glisten pale
 pulsate in time to patterns
 the tides of ions flowing
 through crevices clefts clarity

#@CHA©Sj!\$

.
..
...

Dendritic:
the branches of being
- feral ntypicals -
the algorithms of We.

Elinor Taylor, Program in Occupational Therapy



Nautilus pompilius | James Lucas, DBBS

Adjustment Disorder

My Darling, do you remember yesteryear
that summer that we spent upon the pier
the scent of dew and hot wet earth
the sounds of laughter and of mirth
Oh Muse! Return the days of ignorant bliss
when we indulged in idleness
why am I shamed to see the sun?
Alas, my life is just step one

In memoria meae vitae socialis

Vincent Peng, MSTP



Finger Without Its Nail | Vincent Peng, MSTP

Eventually

All that I have heard.
All that I have seen.
All that I have etched and carved into this fertile scene.
All that I have said and done and thought into this world.
All that I have reminisced, expected to unfurl.
All of it — no right or wrong, impression real or dreamt,
No step or stumble, shout or mumble, secrecy exempt —
All of it — yes, all of it — will live beyond my years.
All of it will harvest laughter,
Anger, pleasure, tears.
All of it will be perused in comprehensive view.
All of it will be forgotten and recalled anew.
All of it will wash ashore
As relics of the tides —
As smoothed, weathered sediment
With jagged, rigid sides.
When our being, as we know it, crumbles into dust,
All of it will follow suit, no matter how robust.
All the statements, deeds, ideas,
Work or lack thereof —
All of it will be for naught —
Except that I have loved.

Sid Sivakumar, MSTP

First Dates

One: fresher's week. They arrange a pub crawl, and I go even though I don't drink in the hopes that I might meet people – I've promised my mother I won't "hide in my room". So far I've met four boys named Tom; I've started nicknaming them in my head. Canadian Tom, red-haired Tom, Tom Zed (I'm in England now, after all). The latest one is "pretty Tom", and he walks me home from the *Mitre*. He's nice enough but the kiss is damp and we run out of things to talk about.

~

The girl with excellent fashion sense invites me in – she offers me tea and we talk about Jane Austen. I hope for a marriage of minds instead of a marriage of mouths.

~

Two: weeks later, I let the girls talk me into going to the "American Party". I lean against a wall, grumpy and ruffled and drinking water while everyone else does shots of Bacardi. We get to talking, but then I'm too forceful about the election, or maybe about the representation of women in media, and he ignores me at the Downing swap.

I take a walk with the physicist who sings in the college choir. She tells me "we're too much for them sometimes; they get scared off when women are... intense."

So should I tone it down?

"Of course not!"

I shake my head. I don't have time for this middle school shit.

~

Three: he's a PhD student. The food is the best part of the date – but I can't ever bring myself to go back to that restaurant. I didn't say no but I probably should have, and maybe it's my fault for not knowing what I wanted but I leave his little room and cry on the walk home.

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Ana and Beth, my friends, my lionesses; they tell me he should have known better.

"You don't need to see him again if you don't want to."

I just feel like I'm doing this all wrong! I don't understand –

"I felt that way with my first boyfriend – I was in high school –"

I burst out crying again.

~

Four: the last boy is younger, an undergrad. He meets me at the pub and we talk about science fiction. He's read mostly men. I talk about LeGuin, about Russ and Tiptree and Bujold, and he nods along and counters with Heinlein. He laughs at my wry comments on the absurdity of this town, but he's most animated when telling his own jokes. They're biting and clever and I don't always get the reference, but I try to pretend I do. Still, he's tender and kind and patient when I panic as he unhooks my bra.

~

"I study sexuality," says Ana over drinks. "Nothing you say can shock me." Nevertheless, I find that what I thought would be easy to talk about is hard to talk about. I struggle through the sentences.

It wasn't...mind blowing.

"It usually isn't."

But I still feel like...

"What?" I shake my head. "No, really, what?"

~

I see him once, twice, three times more. Before the third date I nearly make myself sick with worry – he'll be expecting me to go back to his room today,

I did it last time. That's what he wants out of this, isn't it? But he's accepting when I say I'm too tired tonight. I walk back through the darkening streets wondering why I was so anxious.

~

I write in my journal the words I am too scared to say aloud. I imagine calling my mother. I imagine what she would say.

Don't be ridiculous. You just haven't found the right person yet.

~

The next time he can't even wait till I've tied up my hair before his mouth is on mine and he's carrying me clumsily back to the bed. I bump my head a few more times on the sloped ceiling and I have my first orgasm and it feels like it's happening to someone else. I'd rather be doing anything else. My friends are at a party. I don't drink and I hate parties but I'd rather be sipping gin and tonic and dancing with strangers than lying here. I'm trembling all over and I don't think it's from pleasure.

~

Ana and I walk toward Grantchester as the sun paints the sky in streaks of pink and purple. It's just chilly enough for a jumper, but the summer evening is clear and calm. The cows roll their long-lashed eyes as we pass through their fields.

"You haven't seen him again?"

Didn't want to. Didn't not want to, but honestly didn't care enough to try.

"Fair enough."

I pause to pick a late blackberry. It's tasteless at first, then sour. Ana tries one of her own.

"I don't want that", I say, and for the first time I realize how right it feels. I don't want kisses, no matter how they taste. I don't care one bit for

anything that comes after. "I don't want that at all."

"That's okay," Ana says, and she means it. "What *do* you want?"

Earl Grey tea and Jane Austen, episodes of the West Wing on Netflix and staying up talking till the wee hours, long walks to see the cows, late summer blackberries that taste a bit sour.

I'll never understand wanting more – I'll never understand why it is "more". It doesn't matter. I slip my hand into hers and lean my head on her shoulder.

"I want this."

Faith Williams, WUMS



Pigeon Lady | Robin Hattori
Staff, Program in Occupational Therapy



Temple | Robin Hattori
Staff, Program in Occupational Therapy
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Frejya | Leah Jensen, WUMS
Reference Photographer: Sarah Beth

To You

You await with silent vigil, and stoic calm,
My tentative and clumsy ministrations.

You reveal all before I am even aware of what it is I will see.
My hand finds the answers in its explorations.

You never criticize or condemn, you are unconditional,
My examination continues unabated.

You showed me a mass on your side.
My mind wondered, were you afraid?

You gently held your lover in your arms with their head upon your chest.
My hands held your heart and I mused, did its beating comfort them in the embrace?

You held the hand, with yours, of the ones you loved and kept near.
My hand holds yours and examines the intricate structure that makes a loving touch occur.

You had a life, without me, of those who saw you every day.
My eyes saw more, and somehow less.

You will leave me now, with secrets I could not reveal.
My ignorance diminished, my gratitude expanded, but for this, I am indebted, to You.

Jane Hayes, WUMS



Mountains | Stephanie Tin, WUMS

Blissful Ignorance

Someone asked me a few weeks ago, “Doesn’t it make an injury feel worse, knowing all the anatomy that is involved in the injury?”

“No,” I said. No, because I loved anatomy. No, because knowing the anatomy meant I also knew how much worse it could be. Because knowing how something was injured also meant I knew how it could be fixed. Because knowing it could be fixed gave me hope.

But now, thinking back to that phone call this summer, I realize that my classmate was right.

It was July, during my first research rotation. A few days prior, I had told another classmate how my parents don’t tell me when things go wrong. My mom must have decided that the accident was severe enough to merit a phone call. She hadn’t even told my brothers yet. I guess she thought I would take things better. *Grandma fell. Subdural hematoma.* But Grandma was so healthy. When we spent summers at her house, I would find her lifting weights on her bed. Her father had lived to ninety-two. She probably had two decades left to live, and to live well, despite her retinitis pigmentosa and near-deaf ears. She had already fallen a couple of times, which had accelerated the loss of her remaining vision. (Now we all know: rods first, cones later.) But she had bounced back. She was strong and stubborn and independent, taking care of Grandpa even though she was the handicapped one.

They were about to perform surgery to reduce the pressure on her brain. There had been a lot of blood on the carpet, at the bottom of that flight of stairs. From the bridging veins, I now know.

Who would have known how often we would have to review hemorrhage? Lecture, radiology, dissection, anki. The first few times, my breathing would become shallow. My expression would turn cold. I would stop laughing or singing or whatever we were doing, and I would think about how I had lost hope so quickly. Last July, after my mom had called, I went back into the lab and googled *subdural hemorrhage, surgery*. The success rate was low: fourteen to forty percent. And by success, the website meant return of brain function.

Who would be there for Grandpa when she was gone?

I flew to Columbus thirty-six hours after my mom’s call. “You could have flown out last night,” my mentor told me, just before I left. “Family matters more.” I didn’t want to think about the possible consequences of having waited a day to join the family.

As soon as I arrived, my family took me straight to the hospital. Wexner Medical Center is a beautiful place, and the team in the Surgical ICU was so gracious and patient. My uncle and dad whispered into Grandma’s ears, which poked out beneath her head wraps and framed her bruised, swollen face. *We love you. Sarah’s here.*

“Where are her hearing aids?” I asked. “Shouldn’t we put them in?”

My uncle shook his head. That’s when I knew she was gone, for real.

I have always been a very visual learner, and now I can put words to the things I have seen. We talk academically about palliative care, or about DNRs, or about the *death rattle*, but it feels so different to experience it in person. To give up on someone’s life, and to hear her last breath. My grandfather asked the doctor over and over if we were doing the right thing. *Yes*, he asserted. *Yes*, the nurses agreed. The memories are like a painful stitch in my side, a hurt that doesn’t really go away. Sometimes, I think I know too much now about how my grandmother died. But I also hope that means I can understand a little better what a patient is going through.

Our class’s oath reads, “I will educate and empower my patients and their families to make choices that honor their values and beliefs.” We almost did not add “and their families.” Even though my contribution during that final oath discussion was small, and even though I did not come up with the idea, I would like to think that my classmates will go on to remember their patients’ families and the importance of hope. When there is no more hope to have, and it is time to let go, I beg my classmates for their patience and confidence so that families can go home knowing they did the right thing.

Roses and Wine

Some people love with roses and wine
Others with lilac and turpentine.
I learned to love thorns once
and drank acerbic words from a bitter cup.
All these years we let our love ferment
Ecstatic tears turned blue with time
Lamenting lovers lost and words we now rue
The weight of “should” slowed our steps
Clumsy in this dance, we were found ourselves
out of time

Yet, He made my tears feel like diamonds
sparkling through the night.
He was myrrh and sandalwood.
I, his lilac and rose.
Our hearts anastomosed
We built a house of words
With care, soft cherry, and strong oak
We dwell in the poetry we spoke

Elaina Stover, Program in Physical Therapy



Fireworks | Thomas Hong, WUMS

Miracle cure

I want to greet you as my kin. Embrace you,
with sterile precautions. And you will see me as your old friend,
and allow me to stick my finger in unpleasant places.

I want to carry the weight of one thousand books,
rounding room to room as light as a feather. See you,
and don the robes of your suffering. Move on,
and shed them for buoyancy.

Don't see me as penance,
but as her daughter, riddance.

I might not remember your name, but I hope you will
listen to me over those who gave it to you. Take the advice
of my teaching, but trade it in when the time is right
for a burger and a beer.

I want to give you the pill's gift without its bitter taste,
reach the intruder and touch nothing on the way.

But when the time comes to discuss the pill that turns
your body against itself,
I want to be free from hypocrisies and from Hippocrates.

You have come to me to cure your body and mind,
but I'll settle for either one.

I want to know when to take your life into my own hands,
and when it's wiser to leave it with you. Fight death
tirelessly, and stop precisely when it is not the enemy.

I want to bring you to this place of sickness to make you well,
lose you to follow up, and find you in a postcard.

Joshua S. Siegel, MSTP



Willows | Stephanie Tin, WUMS



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