

HIPPOCRENE

Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis | 2014

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 picking up this issue of Hippocrene and for continuing to support the arts in all its forms within our community.

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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.

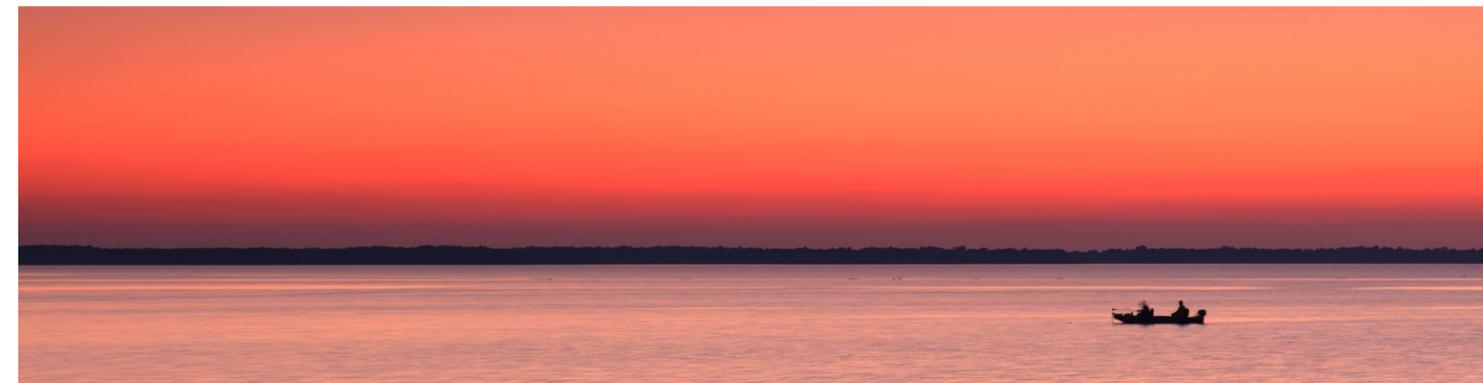
In addition to Hippocrene, the Arts Commission supports these events and programs:

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.

FRONT COVER - Untitled photograph by Valary Raup, WUMS III
 BACK COVER - *Tranquility*, photograph by Tirth Patel, MSTP
 INDEX - Untitled (cropped) photograph by Tim Supakorndej, MSTP



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Nil Per Os

To the patient on rounds:
“Your upper GI is scheduled for tomorrow.
Nothing by mouth after midnight
Except sips of water to take medications in the
morning.
Hopefully, we get some answers.”
Necessary
Preparation
Obligatory

Imprisoned repeatedly,
Yet refusing meager rations.
Voice of the pariahs.
Satyagraha, insistence upon truth.
Nonviolent
Poverty
Outcry

Abstain from meat.
Dawn to sunset.
Self-discipline, sacrifice, empathy.
Prescribed asceticism.
Nameless
Pious
Ordained

To receive Holy Communion,
One must be free from mortal sin.
Arms crossed.

Unworthy to ingest God’s graces.
Nadir
Prostrate
Outcast

You are what you eat.
TPN cannot replace a home-cooked meal.
Which media do we consume intravenously in our
lives?
Why do we starve ourselves of true substance?
We no longer masticate, ruminate, season, or savor.
Novel
Profound
Obverse

Austin Wesevich, WUMS III



Never Alone / Sarah Wondmeneh, WUMS I / *digital photography*



Untitled / Tim Supakorndej, MSTP / *digital photography*



The Moon / Daphne Xiao, WUMS II / digital art

Behind the Cover

She brought a book to breakfast
A read I'd like to thief
"Read those thousand pages
Don't let them slip past you
Your mind is not a sieve"

Trudged my way through it
Absorbed every word
Until I couldn't overcome
The friction of the leaves

That book was my pillow
"Til I woke without a headrest
Found the book
Tore the cover
But only saw the typeset

Gave it back at dinner
"Where's the cover?"
It's gone now.
A shame to what lies under.

"So now you know the author?
Her beliefs? Her dreams?"
Don't know.
I never thought to wonder.

"Then you've read it all wrong

You looked
but didn't see
Now don't just hear,
but listen

That's how you can find
the writer in their fiction"

Eye Contact

Her eyes were knowing, enormous on her small face
with no hair to frame it.
She was five years old.
Already she'd had brain surgery, chemotherapy, countless infections, and been labeled failing to thrive.
The medical team took blood pressure, pulses, scans, veins, and her strength.
Her body seemed not to belong to her.
But her eyes were her own.

His eyes were warm. He chuckled and joked.
He tried to smile, but could not.
Nor could he puff out his cheeks.
Myasthenia gravis prevented his facial muscles from working.
I knew I had to come in when I started choking on my steak, he told me.
He could not shut his eyes, either. And his left did not move at all.
They weren't under his control.
But his eyes were kind.

His eyes were fearful. It was Parkinson's, they told him.
No cure.
He was desolate, lost in solitude and hopelessness.
There's nothing you can do for me, is there, he said. It was not a question.
I held his hand. I saw his eyes. Would you like to speak to a chaplain, sir?
No, no, he protested. I talk to God every day. I'm ready to die.
But his eyes were afraid.

Her eyes were hopeful.
She wanted always to be compassionate, to remember
who she was,
And to ask why.
Sometimes she felt weighted with expectation, wondered how she had gotten here, and whether she was
worth it.
She always decided she was.
The past sometimes called to her and reminded her to love.
Her eyes held on to truth.

Her eyes are mine.



Untitled / Mengxuan (Jo) Tang, WUMSI / pen sketch

Jordan Cole, WUMSI



Long Neck Tribe / Kailie Asam, Master of Science in Deaf Education (MSDE) Program / *digital photography*

The Breath

It's an odd thing—every time she calls,
every day when I talk to her
or see her for the first time,
it's like...
it's like that first breath you get after being held under
water for a long time.
You come out, and you take a breath
so deep,
so sweet,
it feels like the best breath of
your life,
the breath that saved
your life.

That's what seeing her is like.



Untitled / Valary Raup, WUMS III / *digital photography*

Andy Wiegert, Student Programs Coordinator
Medical School Student Affairs

The Kind of Light

The four of us crowd around the counter
supported by stools and elbows
passing stew and reaching into the middle
to crumble the loaf between us
silence always seems masculine
even when it only exists to hide
a quivering mass in your heart

“To start anew comes easy”
he says between mouthfuls
“To start again is labor.” I nod
and feel the stiffness of the unused muscle
the awkwardness of the half-remembered gesture
My thoughts dwelling not in the now
but on the shadow cast by yesterday’s sun
the darkest phantom of the moonbeams

But the kind of light that shines in Georgia always dwells
between the rust and the stone, behind and below
the snarl hidden in the smile and the fists hidden in a handshake
It can clothe you, cover you in warmth like the wine
somebody’s drunk uncle distilled in his basement
First sweet, then bitter, then fire and then you’re buried
dirt under your fingernails, blood on your lips
a distant burning in your heart





Bed Sheets and Battle Cries

I want a battlefield
where our only weapons are teeth and skin
and I wear ink stains on my wrists
like war paint.

Across the darkness
I wait half-patient for my eyes to adjust,
as your fingertips plot the topography
of my spine.

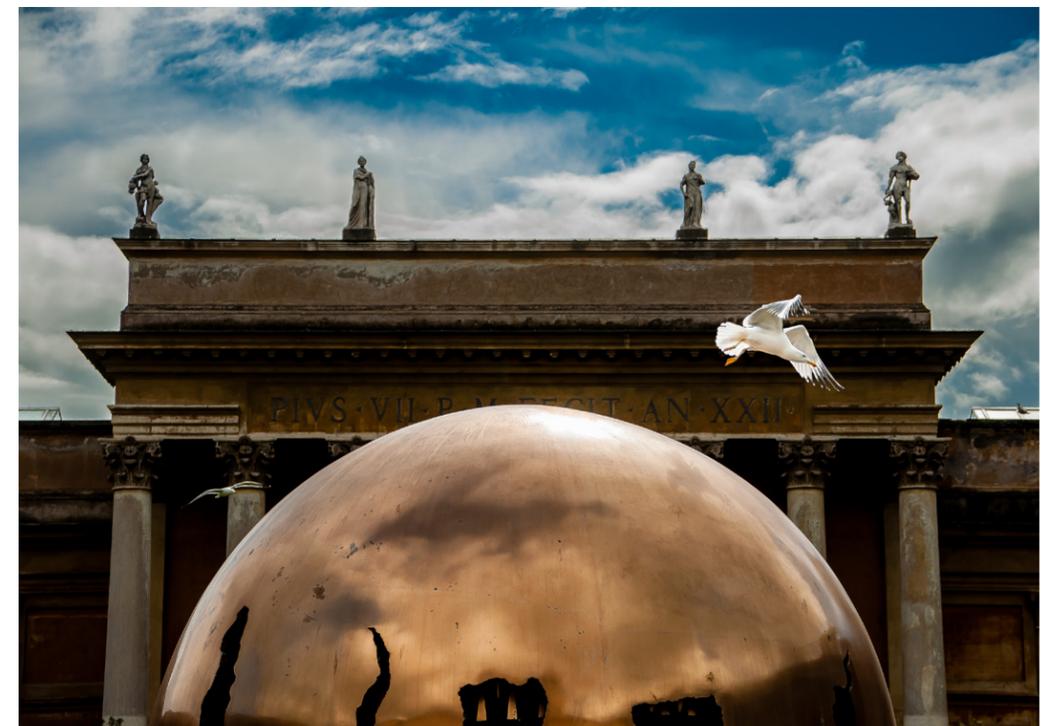
The rhythm of your quiet inhale
creates a negative pressure
in your lung space
for my pulse to fill with words unspoken.

My ribcage rises to challenge
the heat from your skin.
Night fades just enough
and I stare you down,
daring you to live up to this poem.

Rachel Graddy, Program in Occupational Therapy



Wrath of the Gods / Michal Skowrya, Division of Biology & Biomedical Sciences (DBBS) Doctoral Program / *digital photography*



Bird / David Rubins, WUMS IV / *photomanipulation*



Untitled / Sally Vogt, Graduate Student Coordinator,
Division of Biology & Biomedical Sciences (DBBS) / *digital photography*

The Valves of Our Veins

Like tollbooths—say, *Please
stop here and pay your respects
to gravity.*

Grace Um, WUMS III

Transformation

As we enter the anatomy lab, cuts become incisions, bodies become cadavers. These cadavers—our first “patients”—lie supine on the dissecting tables, dispassionately numbered. They are our grandparents, our aunts, our uncles. Our parents. They are time in itself—forgiving yet unyielding, infinite yet ephemeral.

We alone possess this unnatural privilege to explore the human body in so literal a manner. We inspect the cadavers, piece by piece, organ by organ, fiber by fiber. We locate each muscle and name it: action, origin, insertion. We trace each nerve and artery and vein; and they, too, are each carefully identified and named. We name ducts and glands, lymph nodes and bones. We name everything in the body, except, of course, the body itself. All of our knowledge cannot tell us this—the name of the person, who they were, what they stood for. The very essence of the person who we have come in such close contact with—that is kept an enigma. With every scar we see, every wrinkle we feel, we sense the ubiquitous weight of all that we cannot know.

The questions multiply, and we wonder about the falls that gave the scars, the laughter that formed the wrinkles. We know anatomy can reveal disease and inflammation and abnormalities, but can it show us a person’s happiness? Can it show us loneliness, or hopefulness, or belief? Can it show us love? Impenetrable, these crucial elements are invisible to us as we invade our cadavers. We will not ever know these people, though we have known them in a way unique to any other. We realize this, and in recognizing it, we see the beauty that is missing from this mechanical practice, and though the purpose was to teach us structures and appearances and positions in the human body, we have learned something else, something more important. We have learned what it is that has drawn us to this profession—it is not the organs, the bones, the muscles—it is the human spirit and the connections to be formed with others as we heal them.

And so, as we enter the anatomy lab, cuts do become incisions, bodies do become cadavers—and we?

We become doctors.

Lyndsey Cole, WUMS I



Cemetery / Andrea Bennett, Program in Occupational Therapy / *digital photography*

Night Out

They don't want you anymore,
great warrior of the underground,
caught between nirvana
and "Where the fuck
have you been?"
You prowl the dark streets
of suburbia—
the final frontier.
Headlights catch,
like a raccoon with
eyes glowing red.

They don't want you anymore,
great lover of the betrayed.
You befriend shadows,
pale wisps in back alleys—
"Want a hit?"
The bottom falls,
they are after you now.
Shouts in the distance,
footsteps crashing through the brush,
but you are at peace with
eyes glowing red.

Words Leave Us

Words separate us from the animal world. A child hungers to grasp language very early, often before age two, and seemingly effortlessly, becomes quite verbal at three. Words are the tools by which humans interact. Words can be interminably lengthened or curt, harsh or lyric, hurtful or comforting, cadent or cacophonous, prayerful or cursing. They have power and let us give our soul a voice. Words can antagonize or appease, implore or demand, deceive or bear witness to the truth. It never occurred to me that they can be fleeting. But they can. And do.

It pains me to watch my mother struggle to pull from her mind tangled with the confusion of Alzheimer's just the right word. Her eyes, darkened from macular degeneration, stare as if the memory will suddenly peak from behind her fog. Eventually, it comes to her and I silently cheer for her. Or not. Then I glean from the context what she cannot release from the secret places in her mind.

It frightens me to find myself struggling to get the ideas in my head to translate to written word. The nugget that I want so badly to give life to irritates me like the grain of sand does to the oyster — trying so hard to form a perfect pearl, finally expelling it and giving it a life separate from itself.

I recorded Mom talking about her early life and recollections of older family members years ago when I was working on my heritage album, never realizing then that it was not so much the content that I would later need, but the lilt and cadence, the seamless unhesitating flow of her voice cradling me.

Words give our spirits wings to fly outside of ourselves and, if we are very lucky, touch another's soul, however briefly. Words can give us reach much longer than our grasp. Who would have thought that words can have a shorter life span than life itself? Words can leave us. And do. So do mothers.



Fire / Sarah Wondmeneh, WUMS I / *digital photography*



The Tree that Grows Hearts / Tingying (Vivian) Chi, WUMS I / digital art

Las Cumbres and Armita

Shoulders hunched forward, stomach in your chest,
another day on the road.
Counting minutes, counting kilometers,
and counting on backseat laughter
to raise your drooping eyelids.
When their eyes succumb behind you
yours follow the curves of the road
the skyline, drifting from rectangular patches
of green slanted cabbages to bright blue expanses,
and precarious gray fences that tease you about the vales below.

The sun sets and you count once again:
cars lined up like ants, buses spewing black fumes,
the low-droning hum of traffic the bass
to the backseat's revived running commentary.

You come home to his face:
lips curl downwards from rustic pleasure to an anonymous frown
(you don't always say the right thing),
his eyes change from country to city.

To the Powers That Be

Leo, you sound like a bad dream.
You won't ever really live up to what people expect.
You do it to yourself, making entrances like that.
At least you're not a Virgo.
Virgo is a man who you can immediately tell
Looks exactly like his mother
And stands beside her at the sink
To peel off the shells of hard-boiled eggs.
He'll never catch a woman like Aries.
Aries, Aries—
You are painfully beautiful,
Your red curls are blooming so fast,
You're in art school, you're getting high,
You've changed your name,
Your twin sister doesn't have anything to say.
You're such a tease.
You and Aquarius in the same room
Would never get around to the sex.
Aquarius is just there because she hates being alone.
She'll never tell you how much she loves you
But she'll make your bed, bring you flowers,
Change the roll of toilet paper, whisper in her sleep.
She deserves a Pisces, sad and trusting,
To draw her sketches of the world he knows.
Taurus, will you ever change your mind about her?
Or will you forever remain an asshole
That believes the beer he chooses
Says everything we need to know about him?
Gemini, will you ever make up yours?
Fickle as a housefly,
Your small-boned smile has us all in line.
Let's leave them to their drama, Libra,
Leave everything to chance.
Meet me at the terminal,
We'll land in a place with warmer colors

And gods with a hundred heads.
We can spin in place.
We can lie in bed fully clothed with the lights on.
We can visit my childhood.
I will make sure you don't know how much I love you
Because you'll stay with me longer that way.
Lately, I have discovered that
We don't really know the people we love,
For example, Sagittarius, you're my sister,
But I never knew your favorite color changed last year
Or that you can dance on your heels like a queen.
I have no idea who you are, Cancer,
Even though you were the one who taught me
How to use a tampon, and I broke your dress
That one time we made out on a dare,
And you write me letters every now and then
Because you like how it feels to hold a good pen.
But Scorpio, I know you least of all.
The night I was born
My mother's cervix opened and closed and opened
Like a lasso to pull star by star by star
And pin-pricked us into the darkness.
When you and I look each other in the eye,
I am either keeping some violent secret,
Or we are falling in love and you are
Grabbing me by the hand on the way to Pluto and
Hanging an opal around my neck.



The Solitude of a Shogun / Lily Zhang, WUMS I / digital photography



A Day's End / Lily Zhang, WUMS I / digital photography

Shoes in the Stall

“Professor is out, be back in a minute.”
Perfect, I say, I don’t have to postpone it.
I make a quick left and head down the hall
open the door and head for the stall.

But alas! My genius plan is foiled!
Tan colored tailored cotton coiled
around a pair of tennis shoes.
My muscles begin to lose.

I make a hasty shuffle to the lower level,
Parasympathetics innervate smooth muscle.
Is it available? Thank my lucky stars.
No thanks to that masquerader upstairs.

My business now complete,
I head upstairs to sit and meet.
“Greetings professor, how are you?”
Then I notice a familiar shoe.

Andrew Perry, WUMS II



