

PALETTE

Issue V. May 2021.




MEET OUR TEAM

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Editor-in-Chief





SHEILA Y.
Editor-in-Chief



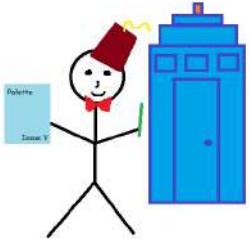
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FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,


Life has felt like a constant tug of war during this era of the pandemic. There have been some lows—from ICU beds filling to capacity again—and some highs—like watching a grandparent finally receive their vaccine. On some days, we wake up to sunshine and a good morning until we realize everything is in hibernation. A small sanctuary for us has been the collective sharing of creativity and talent within our U of T community. Through art and humanities, we connect through more than just pixels on a screen. We hope you take from this current issue a feeling of peace, gathering and family during times like these.

Palette is a student-led arts and culture publication founded in 2019 by two U of T medical students with the aim to promote self-expression and creative dialogue for medical learners at U of T. To showcase the varied and astounding talents of our medical students, faculty and alumni, *Palette* Issue V is once again divided into three sections: visual arts, creative writing and lifestyle. In visual arts, we feature over 15 pieces of photography, drawing and painting, each of which brings about a new perspective to scenes across the world and within ourselves. In creative writing, we feature over 10 pieces of uniquely written poems, short stories and prose that spark discussion over identity, experiences and the concept of time. In lifestyle, contributors continue to share hearty recipes and thoughtful book recommendations. We are also very excited to be sharing the experiences and journeys of our fellow classmates, Bomi and Andreea, and our long-time inspirations, Drs. Ariel Lefkowitz and Eliza Pope.

We are beyond thankful to the Student Initiative Fund and the U of T Medical Society for their continued funding and unwavering support despite an everchanging landscape. We could not have adapted as seamlessly to the pandemic without your flexibility and encouragement. To our team—Cindy, Fatimah, Nancy, Rachel, Shamir and Zahra—we cannot express our appreciation enough for your unrelenting energy and dedication. We don’t know how we would have made it through this difficult year without you. And of course, we would like to express our gratitude to our contributors, interviewees and readers for sticking with us and making all of this possible.

As the end of the academic year approaches, we will be saying our goodbyes to our role as Editors-in-Chief. Working on *Palette* for the past two years, first as Layout and Content Editors and then as co-Editors-in-Chief, has been an absolute privilege and joy. *Palette* was more than simply a passion project and platform to share creative pieces from our talented peers, it was also an avenue to foster community within U of T Medicine. From *Palette*, we found family—and of course the drama that comes with it—within our incredible team of Editors. We also grew a lasting friendship between the two of us, all within the virtual realm and confines of Zoom! Although we are saddened to leave *Palette* behind as we move into clerkship, we could not be more excited for Cindy and Zahra to take the reins. Cindy and Zahra, we can’t wait to see all the amazing places you take our “abstract baby.” *Palette* could not have been left in better hands.

As always, we hope each issue of *Palette* finds itself in safe and welcoming hands.

Sincerely,

Jessica Trac & Sheila Yu
Editors-in-Chief

Cover Photo: Fields of Wenshan
Grace Huang, 2T3 MAM



Description: This is a picture I took during my travels in China. I was captivated by the endless rows of crops, clear sky, and hardworking farmers. I wanted to remember the warm morning sunlight of the peaceful scene.

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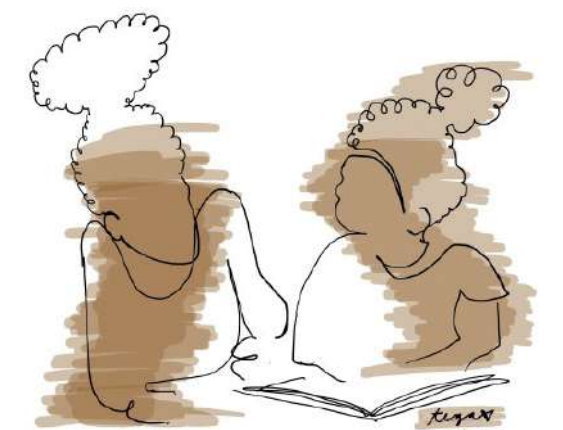
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“The world always seems brighter when you’ve just
made something that wasn’t there before.”
— Neil Gaiman

01

Visual Arts

Autumn 2020
Emma Price
2T4 MAM

Photography



Taken with Olympus OM40 using Kodak Gold 200 35mm film. Mount Nemo, Ontario.

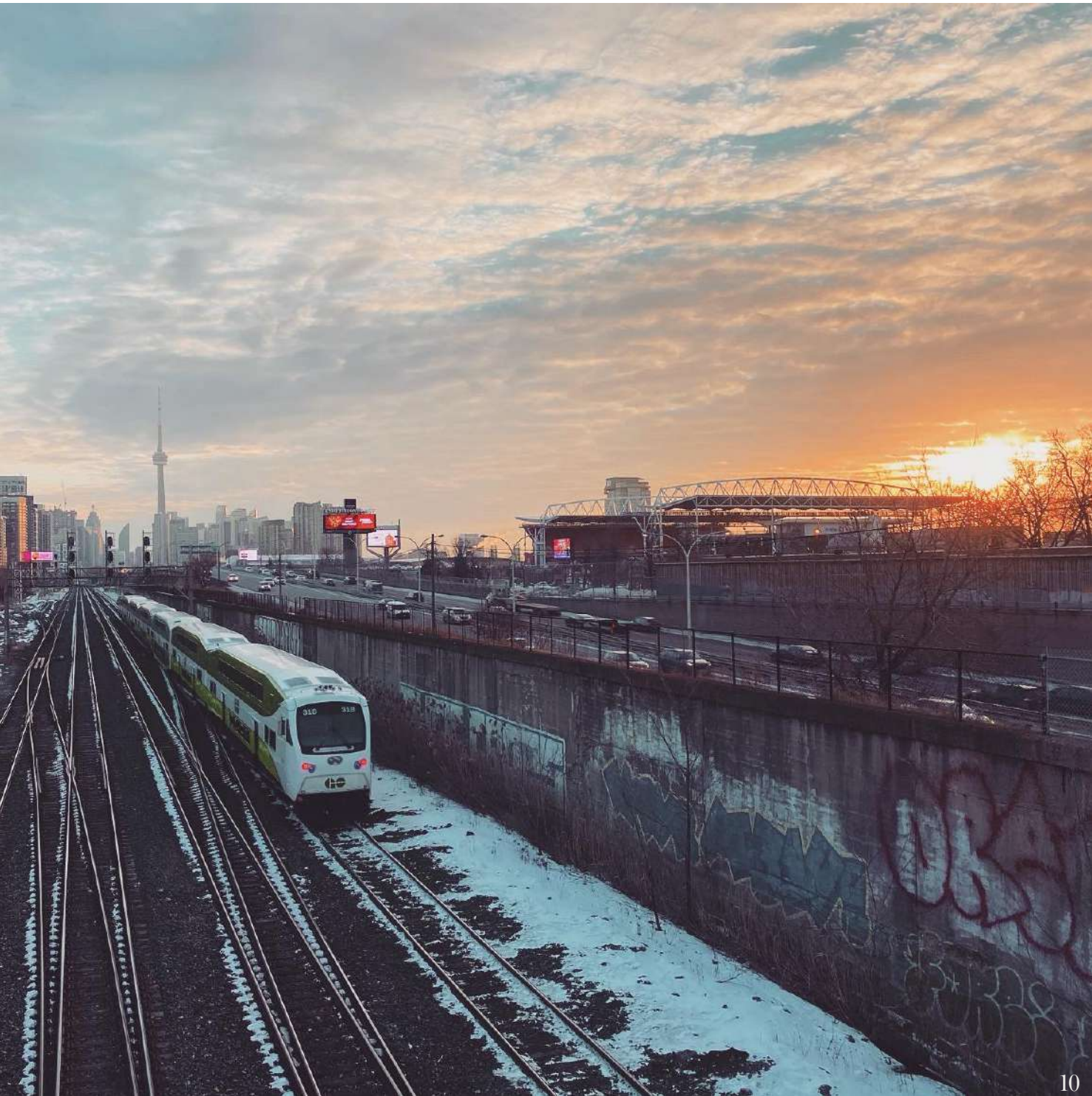
It is what it is

Harsh Naik
2T4 WB



We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes
it has gone through to achieve that beauty - Maya Angelou

Instagram: @photosbyharsh



Warm & Sunny Skies Ahead

Ammar Hafeez
2T3 MAM



We had some pleasantly warm and sunny days in the past week. It's a great idea to make the most of these days by going on a walk, jog, or run.

Rejuvenate yourself!

Take a break from being inside the house all the time. Feeling cooped up at home over a long period of time can be very draining.

Breathe in the refreshing air outside. Take a deep breath and let the air fill your lungs completely. Gently exhale.

Close your eyes and face the sun. Feel the warm embrace of the sun's light.

Move your body, get your heart rate up, and feel your heart beating. You are well and alive!

Hope this helps improve your mental health, lifts your spirits, and promotes self-care. I also hope that you enjoy these cool pics.

Instagram: @ammar_hafeez502
Facebook: /ammar.hafeez.921



Home
Cindy Cui
2T4 WB



Photos from a backpacking trip through the mountains and villages of central China.

Instagram:
[@cindycuiphotography](#)



Morning light

Ashlie Nadler
Staff Physician 1T0

I have been trying to find inspiration for photography despite the pandemic, so I have turned from travel photography to finding local inspiration. It was amazing to watch the sunrise in Toronto and capture this photo during golden hour.

Instagram: @ashlie.lauren



A Conversation

Jessica Purbick
2T2 MAM

Drawing & Painting



Not Fall

Sabrina Campbell
2T3 WB



Peaceful Work

Grace Huang
2T3 MAM

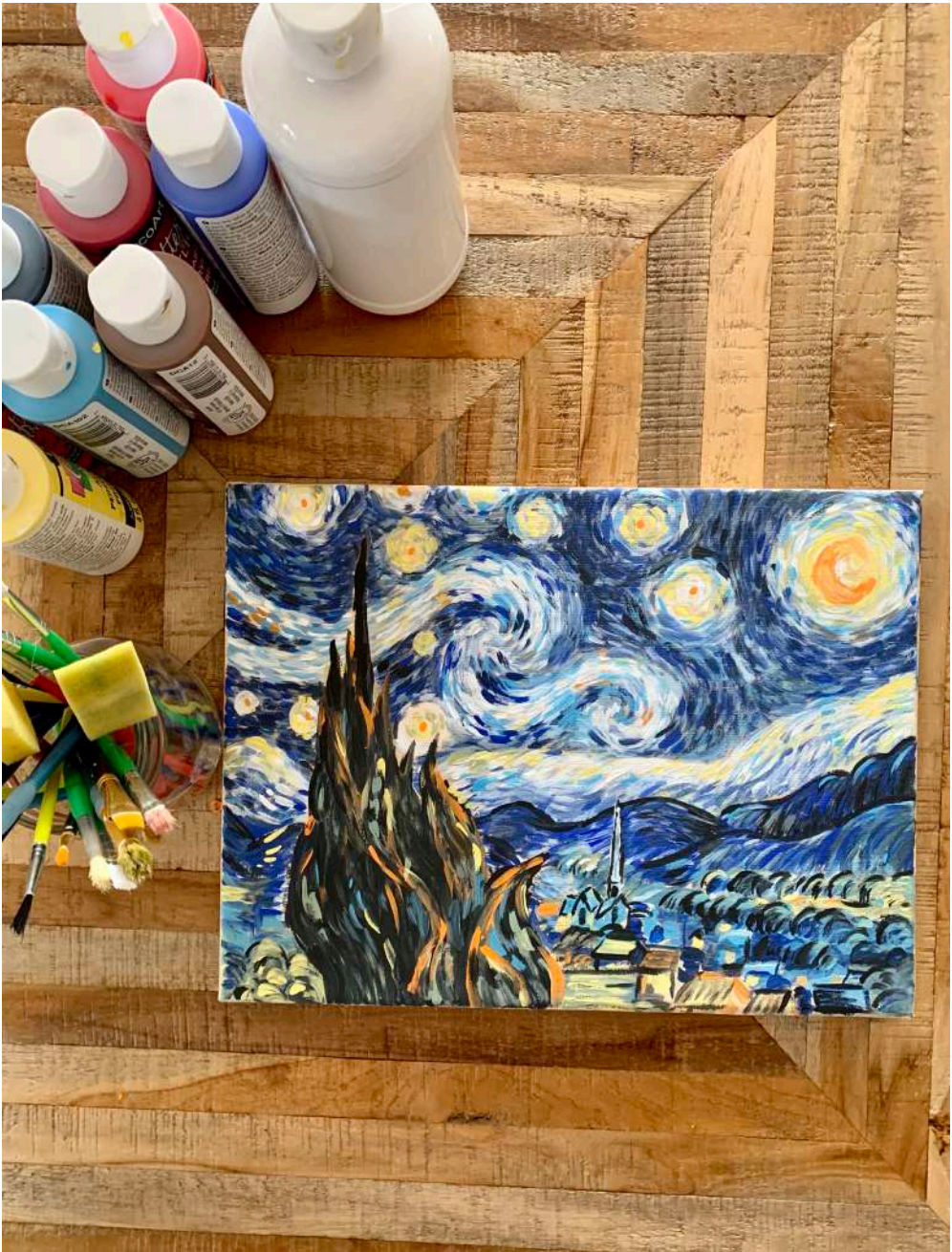


Gogh paint with me

Tingting Yan
2T3 PB

Vincent Van Gogh is one of my favourite painters. I've always gone out of my way to visit his exhibits, and I was so happy to see Immersive Van Gogh in Toronto! This was an inspiration to recreate 'Starry Night' using acrylic on canvas.

Follow me on TikTok! @tt_bean



painting(s)

Grace Xu
2T3 MAM

I've always liked painting. Ever since my parents put me in art classes years ago, I have found a safe haven in the studio, spending a few hours a week staring at vases of flowers, trying to flatten them from their three dimensions into two. I was never naturally talented at painting, and oddly enough, the lack of expectation freed myself from feeling self-conscious about my work. I never felt the need to be the best painter or artist by a mile, so art classes became a refreshing break from a childhood defined by the pursuit for excellence and success.

I hadn't painted for years after leaving my childhood home—until the pandemic hit. Now, with vast swaths of time on my hands, I still feel the urgency and need from childhood to be productive, but with more self-awareness in seeking healthier ways to channel that energy into projects that don't require expectations. That's how I came back to painting.

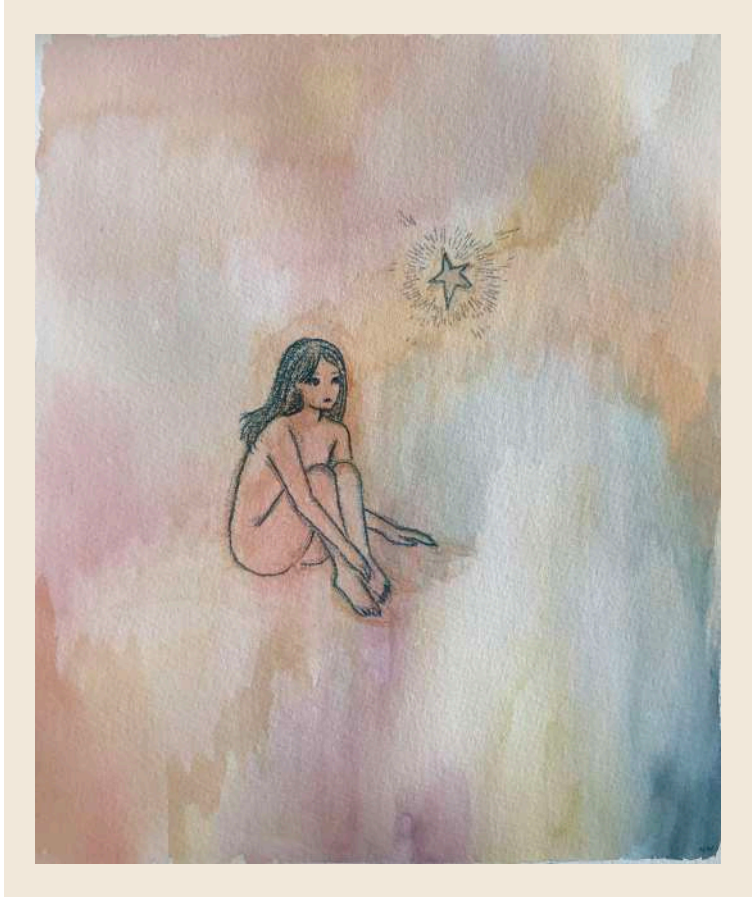


*...painting is the best way
that I can eternalize a small
fraction of the infinite and
intangible love I have for those
who have nurtured and upheld
me onto a definitively finite
and tangible canvas.*



It's funny to think that painting is one of the oldest forms of expression. 20,000 years ago, cavemen were already painting animals in France, memorializing and honouring an essential part of their livelihood by preserving these animals onto rock walls. To me, painting is a ritualistic form of commemoration, of making things—not necessarily objects but perhaps feelings or thoughts that are important to us—permanent.

One of the most important lessons that I've learned this year is that painting isn't predicated on looking inward. I feel more connected with loved ones, with the community around me, through art. Painting has become the activity of fun Friday nights with my roommate, a way to destress from the week before us. Paint night Zoom calls have been a way I can feel close to friends that I can no longer see in person. And when I feel a creative block, I return to painting things for my friends, as there is no greater inspiration than the admiration for those around you. I joke about how much art I've gifted over the holidays (and continue to gift), but to me, painting is the best way that I can eternalize a small fraction of the infinite and intangible love I have for those who have nurtured and upheld me onto a definitively finite and tangible canvas.

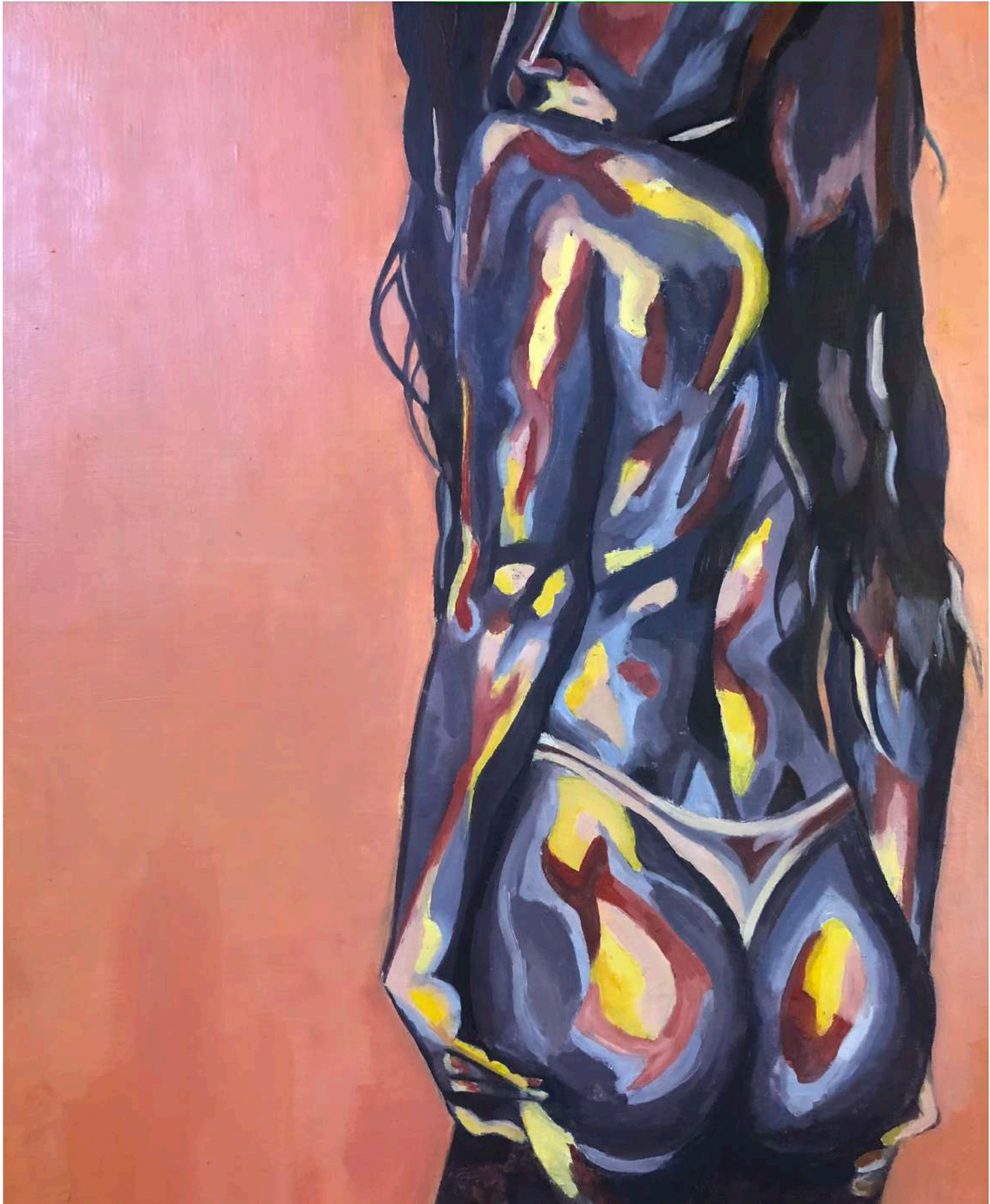


**Home is a
space inside
my head**

Nancy V Wu
2T4 Fitz



Flow
Isabella Fan
2T2 MAM

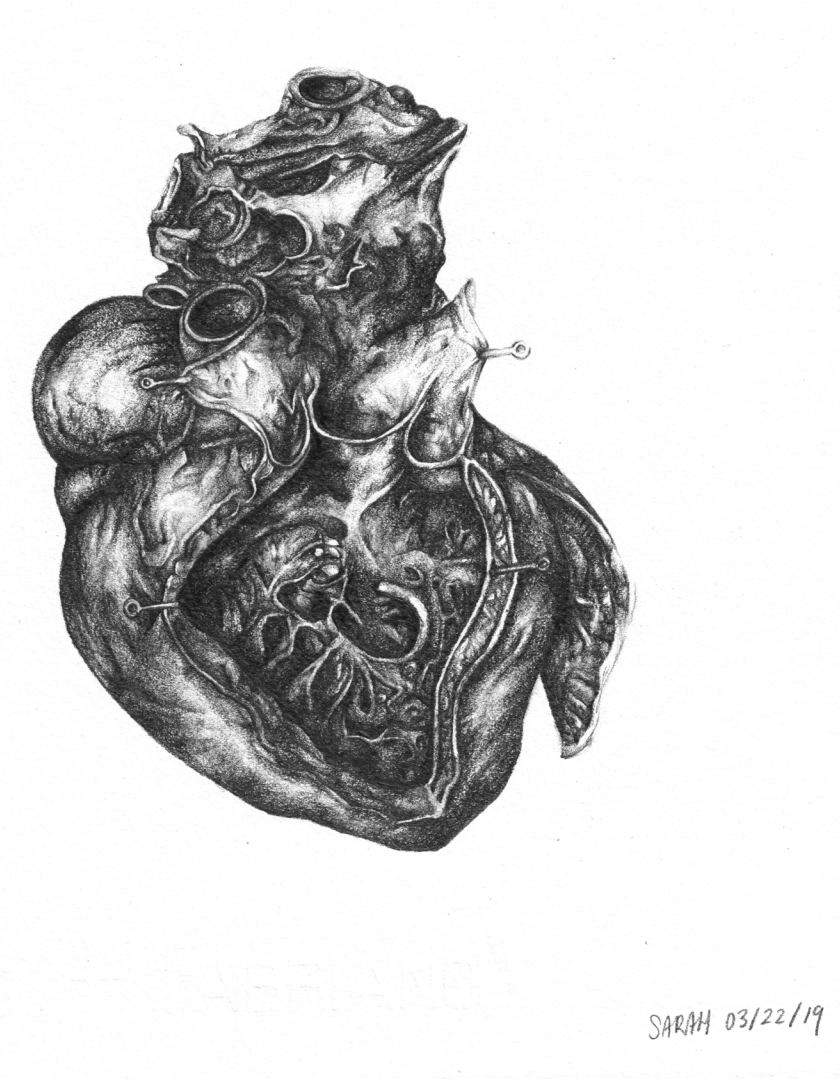


Unabashed

Anshika Jain
2T2 WB

Untitled

Sarah Ge
2T2 Fitz



Growth
Shamini Vijaya Kumar
2T3 MAM

Perspective

Zahra Emami

2T4 PB

Walking through the empty streets of Prague at night alone didn't give me the chance to properly appreciate the Prague Castle, which even in daylight could be an intimidating structure to gaze up at.

Sketching the castle was my way of revisiting the city from the comfort of my own home; and juxtaposing something imposing, opulent and rich with history against the bright, ephemeral innocence of bubbles was my way of taking back the hurried and anxious experience with a change of perspective that has helped me demystify the grand structure.



Pencil/pencil crayon on black pad

A photograph of a sandy beach with gentle waves on the left side. Several footprints are visible in the sand, leading from the water towards the right. The number '02' is overlaid in large white font in the upper left quadrant.

02

Creative Writing

“Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow
until the faucet is turned on.”
— Louis L’Amour

representation matters

Tega Ebeye
2T4 MAM

the first thing i noticed was her shy smile
from across the classroom

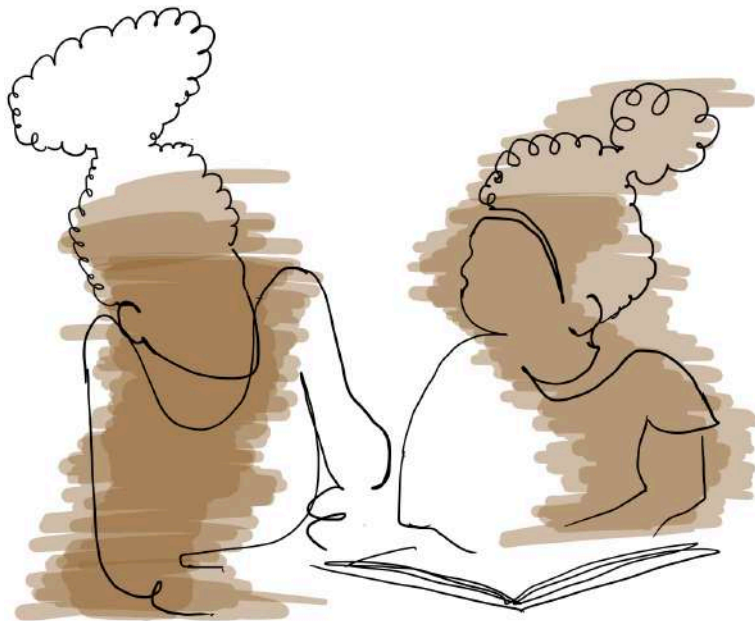
i tend to notice shyness
or recognize it
like an old friend in my midst
even in the darkness

today, found in the middle of a fijian village
volunteering at a preschool
with so many other volunteers
none of whom share our heritage

she eventually found her place beside me
from across the classroom

all of age four, maybe five
with round deep eyes
that open right into her mind
busy as a bee's hive

she taps me and says, with surprise and awe,
“you’re brown”
i smile and say, with pride i made sure she saw,
“you are too!”



The Morning Person

Benjamin Keating
2T2 Fitz

It was about one am and I was brushing my teeth, looking into
the mirror and thinking about what makes a good design.
That one kept me up for a while.

Sometimes it’s abstract, other times it’ll take certain forms, like
a wristwatch or a coffee maker.

Maybe even the thought of the feel of the gritty grinds between
my fingers



TW: sexual abuse

What Do You Do?

Anonymous

What do you do
When the one who is meant to love and protect you
is the one who hurt you the most?
When home is the place you will never feel safe,
Memories forever etched in your mind.

What do you do
When you’ve been covered in stains,
From your head, to your chest and below?
Dirty rags don’t need to be handled with care,
Out from the filth I wish I could grow.

What do you do
When every day is an act,
“Hi dad, would you like some more tea with that?”
A happy family on the surface, but every family has its secrets,
Thin ice we may fall through.

What to do you
When you want to forgive and forget
But you can’t even imagine how?
If acknowledgement is step 1, we are at ground zero;
The slightest move risks it all crashing down.

What do you do
When you’ve been trapped in his box,
Wishing you could erase the past?
Keep trudging along, one foot at a time,
One day, this too shall pass.



Snowflakes

Golsa Shafa
2T3 PB

The wind carries the snowflakes
against all the odds
to above and beyond

Yet I want to hold onto
that one snowflake
aiming for the ground

to hold it against my palm
to save it from the fall
to marvel at its intricacy
for just a little while

the wind carries the snowflakes
floating in the air
higher and higher above
as if they dance with flair

Yet all I’m doing is holding on
to a past that has already crashed
like the snowflake
that missed my palm and
melted in a flash

And now I hope for a blizzard
that could wipe away the past



OR #1

Brian Hyung
2T2 Fitz

Artist Statement:

This is a poem that tries to capture a patient’s perspective as they prepare for a surgical operation. It was a piece generated while talking with patients about their experiences, as well as my own observations, inside the operating room.



One beat, two beats, my heart groans

One step, two steps, I walk alone

Enclosed by white walls, I’m led within

A room, a theatre, a place I’ve never been

A chill blows through my robe, too short

One face, two faces, strange eyes, I don’t know

Loud voices heard, but unseen veiled by masks

One tells me to lie down, two remove my gown

My arms outstretched, my soul held bare

Wires, a cuff, and a prick, I swallow my fear

One beep, two beeps, I try to breathe

One second, two seconds, and I escape to sleep

welcome to the dichotomy of my existence

Joanna Matthews
2T4 MAM

welcome to the dichotomy of my existence

on one side we have:

hopeless romantic. soul searching for another good read. for an emotional connection in which a figurative device strikes a chord so deep and profound that it cracks something open within the core of one’s very being...

a girl who longs for purple autumn twilights and embers of a sunset which glow like fire and wine. a girl who is insanely sensitive and embodies the heartbreak of a protagonist as much as she would a death or strife in the family. who has a sudden surge of giddiness and giggles, like yellow paint overflowing in a can, spilling art, words, imagery, and imagination...

yet on the other side we have:

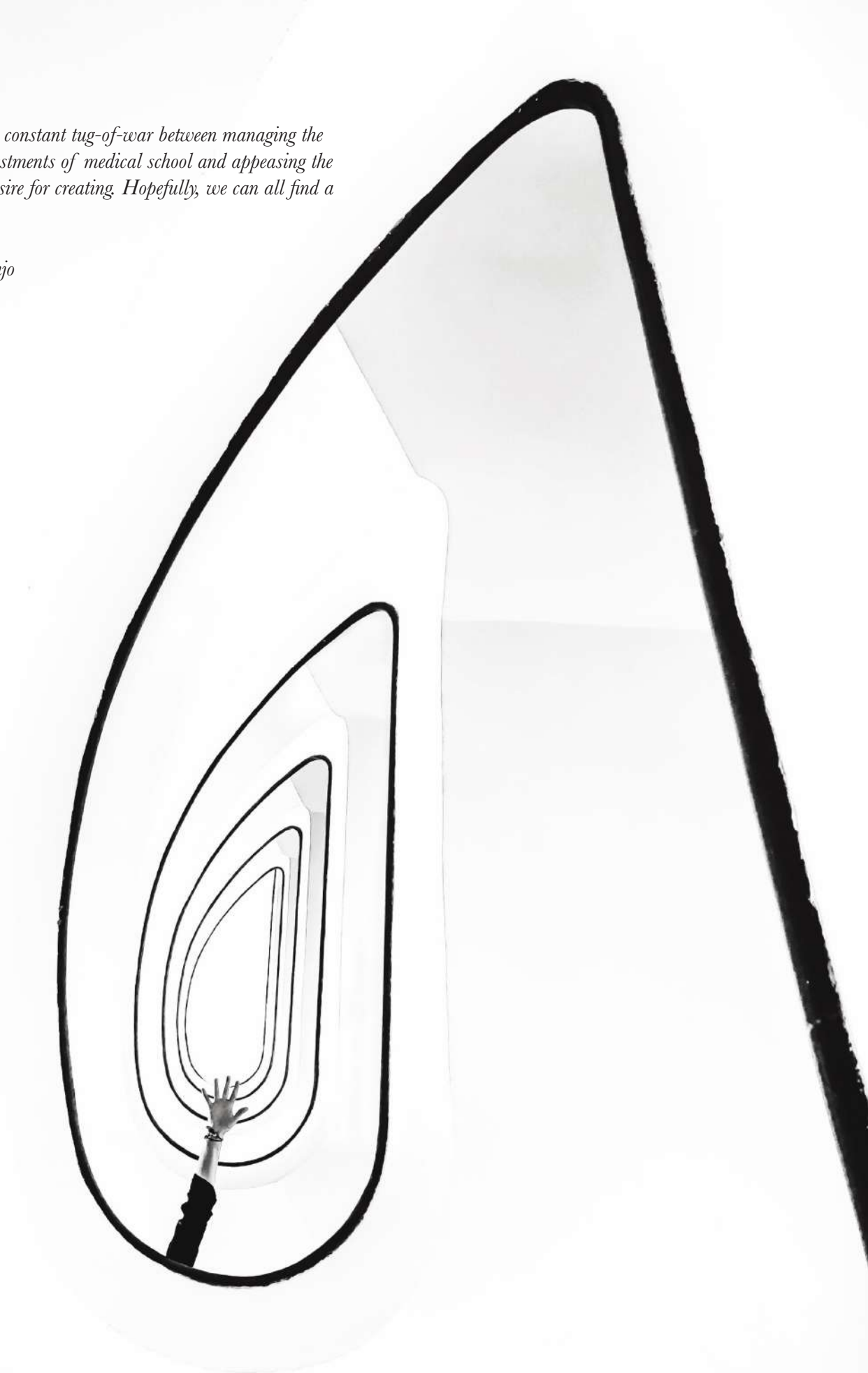
academic perfectionist who bends on the edge of neuroticism. who needs facts, not emotions and silly, childish fantasies. who craves formulaic reason and puzzle pieces that will fit precisely together—forming a biochemical cycle or the anatomy of a femur. who needs a profession that is *noble* and *worthwhile*, working for the betterment of *society* and better health for all *individuals*.

always teetering tottering between these two spheres, trying to grasp at the equilibrium.

Artist Statement:

This piece is about the constant tug-of-war between managing the demands and time investments of medical school and appeasing the artistic impulse and desire for creating. Hopefully, we can all find a way to cultivate both.

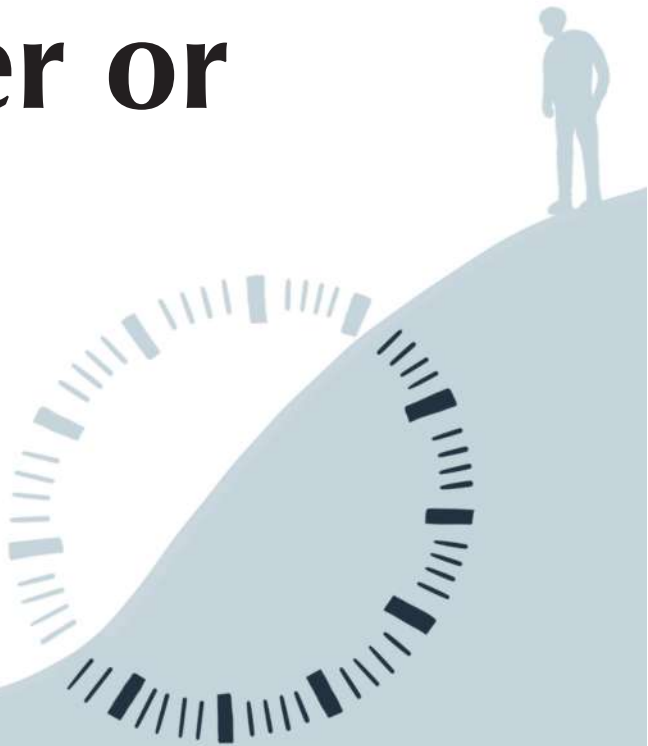
Instagram: @medwithjo



Time—Master or Slave?

Ammar Hafeez
2T3 MAM

Instagram: @ammar_hafeez502
Facebook: /ammar.hafeez.921



Time is precious, time is limited, time is irreversible—so, lost time can never be recovered. I’m sure that you have heard of these sayings—and many more—about time. You will not disagree with me when I say that they highly idealize time. While what they assert is true and they are not necessarily wrong to put time on such a high pedestal, it is important to not become obsessed with time.

Never think that time spent on self-care is wasted. Never think that you have absolutely no time to spend with your friends and family. Never think that the time you spend on your hobbies could be better spent somewhere else. Never think that it’s too late for you to pursue your passions.

Based on my observations and interactions with people this year, it seems that certain groups of individuals are more susceptible to developing an unhealthy obsession with time. In particular, I want to share these messages with all students, classmates, and those with busy schedules.

You want to use your time wisely, but don’t let it dictate every second of your life.

Take control of time. Don’t let time control you.

Signing off—for now!

Reflect: What does good use of time mean to you? How strict are you in following a daily schedule? What does a typical work week look like for you?



Clarity

Mari

Artist Statement:

This was inspired by one of many conversations I have had with my grandma over the past year.

I spoke to her yesterday.
Her voice gravelly with disuse, a voice once infused with the memories of many lives lived
I asked her how she was

Silence

I asked her again

Silence

Then like a dam burst open

She spoke

The words we would have exchanged in person spilled out of the phone

I listened

I couldn’t see her face; her eyes

And she couldn’t see mine

She couldn’t see me wince, with every ask of when we would visit again

When we could visit again

This period of darkness has been more illuminating than the light

It casts shadows that spotlight the plague that is

Loneliness

And all I could do, **hearing** the loneliness, the desperation take over her voice, was

Listen

Listen and truly hear everything I wasn’t able to hear in person

I listened harder than I ever have, as if the fervor with which I paid attention would make up for the kilometers that separated us

Her in her home

Me in my own

I stoked the flames of conversation with my own questions

Until her voice was again filled with light and life; until her voice rang clear, reflecting the emotion I might have seen on her face

Is this the power of letting another speak and **listening** in earnest?

Did it truly have the power to keep the loneliness at bay and foster the connectedness that I had taken for granted when face-to-face?

It did

But did I always **listen** this earnestly when face-to-face?

No, I did not

But I should

If this were the antidote to loneliness and if I had the power to help, then I must

And with this clarity, I gained far more from this encounter than she did

And with this clarity I go on



Paroxysmal Fantasies

Austin Lam
2T2 MAM

Artist Statement:

This poem, “Paroxysmal Fantasies,” is a reflection on the chaos and uncertainty brought out and emblemized by the pandemic and its repercussions. The violent fantasies that play out in this poem are spoken by a hypothetical figure embodying COVID-19. This anthropomorphized character brings about its own vision of amorphous, paralyzing vitality. The question arises: what can this distorted version of vitality mean for us? Relatedly, how can it be a source of truthful disclosure, opening a deeper wellspring of life?

We have been and continue to go through a way of experience (Erfahrungsweg, Ernst Tugendhat). A full look at the worst has afforded the vision to see a path to the better. Although ‘the better’ remains in an opaque form, ‘the worst’ has and continues to be exposed: how quickly Faustian bargains are made; how heroes are created and destroyed by the same breath; and how lives become statistics.



Strip back the cranium
Tear it off
Cannibalistic orgy
Indulgence in multitudes of sin

Purple numbness
Stabbing pain
Blood-stained clouds
Remedios Varo paints

Penetrates this cellular burlap sack
Pointed knife
Slices to the bone
Through butter

Flesh parts like the Red Sea
Dig in
Scoop out worm-like strands
Pink, meaty Jell-O

Bonbons, flesh candy
Rabbit escapes the hat
TA-DA
The magician has done the trick

Tell me why
You think you should live
Whence your value arises
Growing with the limbs of rigor mortis

It don't matter
It never did
Now whisper to me
As I blow into your ear

Life anew.

Blueberry as process—a story of dissonance

Kabisha Velauthapillai
2T4 Fitz

Artist Statement:

I wrote the prelude to this piece one morning, when I was sitting with my jar of oatmeal, thinking about slowing down and really giving thanks to all of the processes that brought this jar to me that morning

Twitter: @Kabisha2



I paid attention to the sweetness of the blueberries, the beautiful purple colour that was mixed with the white of the one tablespoon of yogurt. I was thinking about my relationships with food, and more specifically, with the meal I was eating.

I was thinking about the path of the blueberries: their growth, who picked them, how they got to the grocery store, how they came to be, in my jar of oatmeal. What are all the processes, interlinked, the people whom these blueberries inadvertently brought together.

The growth of the blueberries, isn't it incredible? From a bush-type plant, they burgeon. Layered leaf-like pieces, out of which grows a flower, out of which grows the blueberry. From the rich soil beneath, microbes, insects, and molecules, coming together. Water seeping through, the cracks and cackles of the browned soil. Sun, in all its ember, basking the soil and plant in all its glory. The living and the non-living coming together, giving the blueberry the power to make heaps of glucose, which it keeps snug in its flesh and juice. Stowed away for the lucky being

that consumes all of its delicacies. What a journey that was, Blueberry.

And what here, what now? Our blueberry friend is being picked.

I got my blueberry from a large-chain grocery. Who picked this magnificent blueberry? Likely, a farmworker, whose name and story I am far from. A person who is kept out of my understanding of the journey of this blueberry. Farmworkers who are rendered invisible. Through the current workings of our food systems. How did this person, who picked my blueberry, become a farmworker? And why? What economic forces, and what additional, social, structural forces, pushed them into this work? Were they a migrant farmworker? What are their working conditions like? What about their labour rights? Are these rights even adequate? What about their human rights? Are these rights respected? How about their health and overall well-being? What are their exposures to the various pesticides and herbicides, to viral and bacterial beings in their surroundings? For how long

are they exposed
to the overbearing sun?
And what about the people they love,
the people they call family?
Are they nearby?
Do they get to see them,
frequently?
Why don't we think about this,
much more?

Because we are comfortable,
with our ignorance.
We are comfortable,
putting to the back
of our minds
that the person who picked our
rounded fruit.
was likely not paid adequately
for their time, for their labour.
Likely has working conditions
that put them in danger,
of ill health.
We think we are powerless
to change the system.
And perhaps,
we have become comfortable,
in feeling powerless.

And next, in line,
in the journey of this plump fruit,
is the transport to the grocery.
as it bounces,
left to right,
up and down,
in the truck bringing it from the States,
over the colonial border,
into "Canada."
Along its journey,
the blueberry is part
of an emissions process,

that is slowly,
but ever-so-quickly,
warming our earth,
harming our lungs.
Eventually making it even harder,
for Blueberry itself,
to grow.
Blueberry reaches the grocery.
and this is where I pick it up.

At home,
I go through the process
of bringing the blueberries,
oatmeal, flax meal,
nutmeg, soy milk,
and yogurt,
together.
I put the work and time
into bringing this mixture,
together.
It's a process.
And the next day,
when I sit down to eat,
I think about all the processes involved.
I think about all the dissonances.
The growth of the rich blueberry,
in contrast with
the unjust labour practices
and the political economy
of blueberry production.
The harms to the environments
around us,
in contrast with,
the magic of the process
of bringing the different pieces
of my oatmeal together,
and taking the time,
to sit down,
and appreciate

the incredible combination
and all who, and all that
came together
to make this moment
of appreciation
possible.

As I bite down on Blueberry,
feeling the burst
of sweet energy,
imagining the community
of glucose
as it journeys into
my body,
entering a universe
we have only scratched
the surface of.
I think to myself,
something is not quite there.
something is missing.

And I pull from my memories,
the sight of my mother,
as she pulls together
different ingredients
in a dance so swift,
so seamless,
that only she could dance.
She adds a dash of love,
and a tablespoon of sizzle.
And I realize
that Blueberry would taste
ever-so-sweeter
if only from the hands of
my mother.
Blueberry,
would taste
ever-so-sweeter
if I saw their growth,
their harvest,
their transport,
in a world where

relationships were prioritized
were valued.
Where people
were valued.
Where our wider environments,
the more-than-human,
were valued
In the food-growing
and food-making
processes.



Hotel Transylvania

Shamir Malik
2T4 PB

Warning: Not the Kids Movie

It was a dark and stormy night. Tree branches lurched in response to the harsh wind that blew throughout the land. A jet-black hearse navigated the landscape with an intuitive ease, and barrelled towards the towering silhouette of the distant castle. Only death lay ahead.

At least, that was how it was supposed to be. Much to Vlad’s disappointment, the weather and labor in Transylvania could be so unreliable.

Vladimir the III, grandson of Vladislav the Impaler and heir to a long dynasty of vampiric overlords, had always been a difficult child. Unlike his father and grandfather, Vlad was not born with any of the insidious gifts and abilities most vampires possess. He could not control bats, let alone turn into one. His grasp of telekinesis and mind control was amateur at best. And perhaps most problematic was his inability to stand the sight or smell of blood. He also went by Vlad—he thought that Vladimir the III was a bit pretentious and that the nickname made him more approachable.

Unfortunately for Vlad, much of the Transylvanian economy was dependent on its vast stores of blood. The country was known to many as the world’s blood bank, an international leader in transfusion technology and research. A vampire’s bite, while deadly, was admittedly quite efficient. Blood was also a form of currency for Transylvania’s elite. The ghoul lords and skeleton kings that occupied the nation’s crypts had yet to learn about credit or debit.

Vlad, who was petrified of human blood, knew at an early age that he was hopelessly unqualified to manage Transylvania’s ever-expanding blood industry. He was a true millennial in all senses of the word. He was a thousand years old, disdained his parents’ work ethic and loved avocado toast.

Instead, Vlad decided to try his hand at hotel management.

Seeing the popularity of supernatural horror movies and shows, he figured his ancestral home was a gold mine. All he needed was a few good *Yelp* reviews. But the weather was clearly not doing him any favors.

“The sky is blue! Have you ever seen a horror movie with crystal clear skies and white cotton-puff clouds? What are we, *Disneyland*?” Vlad continued his rant, undeterred by Caligula’s obvious indifference.

“My name is Caligula. And I was busy last night,” she spoke, eyes fixed on the *iPhone* in front of her.

Vlad’s younger sister, Caligula, was a vampire of unparalleled strength. Unfortunately for the royal house of Transylvania, she was only two hundred years old—far too young to become monarch. Vlad accepted that eventually his sister would replace him. Gender equality came naturally to Transylvanian royalty. Men and women tasted the same, after all.

“Cali, enough! Our great uncle, whose name you inherited, is famed for his brutality. I can assure you that his achievements have little to do with *Candy Crush*!” scolded Vlad.

“Whatever, I have a streak going. Shouldn’t you be at check-in? Your reviewer has arrived,” Caligula stated, retreating into the shadows of her room.

Vlad’s face paled immediately—an impressive feat considering a vampire’s naturally pallid complexion.

“I’ll be bac—wrong franchise!” Vlad swore under his breath, eager to meet his new guests.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fudge’s taxi ride from the airport was nothing like advertised. The driver talked incessantly about his family and how excited he was about his upcoming vacation to Cancun. Mr. Fudge didn’t care for the driver’s life story. Mr. Fudge was a connoisseur of finer experiences. He had paid to be scared.

He frowned at the large wooden door now ahead of him, unappreciative of its millennia-old embroidery.

“Come to Transylvania for the scare of your life,” he thought to himself, confident that he had been scammed.

As if on cue, the door swung open. Mr. Fudge stared into the darkness within and saw nothing. The door appeared to be moving on its own, its slow but consistent creaking echoing off the castle walls. Mr. Fudge wandered the halls of the castle. Growing impatient, Mr. Fudge barely noticed an entity lurking in the shadows. A pale white hand, with nails as sharp as claws, extended from the shadows towards Mr. Fudge’s neck.

“Welcome to Transylvania. My name is Craig. May I take your coat?” the entity spoke, its voice cracking every other syllable.

Mr. Fudge turned around sharply. The boy in front of him was unimpressive. Mr. Fudge barely made out his face through the darkness but estimated at least five pimples. He had been scared by a pubescent teenager.

“Craig! I told you to use the accent! People like the accent!” Vlad chided his nephew.

“Ah yes—Velcome to Transylvvvvania. May I take your coat?” Craig repeated to Mr. Fudge, lowering his voice an octave and adopting a thick Slavic accent.

“Better!” Vlad encouraged.

Mr. Fudge was confused by the man he saw in front of him. He was truly terrifying—he was over seven feet tall, his blood-shot eyes gleaming in the dark. And yet, his voice was welcoming and polite.

“Sir, I must inform you that your costume department is quite lacking. What are you supposed to be exactly? A freakishly tall zombie?” Mr. Fudge asked. Mr. Fudge, like most of humanity, did not believe in the existence of the undead.

“No, Mr. Fudge. I am a vampire. Do you know of any zombie with a fashion-sense like mine? I bought these off *Amazon* recently.” Vlad answered, showing off his red silk cape and infinity scarf. In Vlad’s defense, he had answered honestly—zombies cared very little for their physical appearance.

“A vampire! Prove it then!” Mr. Fudge exclaimed, pulling a worn copy of *Twilight* out from his bag. “Vampires sparkle in the sunlight!” he continued, shoving the book in Vlad’s face, standing proudly.

Vlad’s welcoming smile quickly faded. Mr. Fudge, much to Vlad’s disappointment, was a fan of the *Twilight* series.

“Goodbye, Mr. Fudge.” Vlad turned, leaving Mr. Fudge to his inevitable demise.





03

“Life is trying things to see if they work.”
— Ray Bradbury

Lifestyle

Interview with Bomi Park



Q: Tell us about yourself. What inspired you to get into photography?

My name is Bomi Park, and I'm a second-year medical student. I guess to explain what I love about photography, I'll first have to explain what I love most in general: ever since I was little, maybe around seven years old, I've loved writing in my journal (I have stacks of journals piled up in my room). I have always enjoyed the process of recording my thoughts and capturing the moments that meant a lot to me. But after I moved to Canada from Korea—I moved to Canada late, around grade 9 or 10—I lacked the vocabulary to express myself. In that sense, photography kind of replaced my writing; the joy that I used to get from writing and recording my thoughts using words now came from photography. That's why photography was more important to me in the beginning—I felt like it was the only way that I could express myself back when I couldn't speak or write [in English].

Q: Can you describe your philosophy when it comes to photography? What is it that you aim to capture in your photographs?

I love travel photography—I love that there's a component of humanity to nature. Because I moved here pretty late, high school was very difficult for me. It felt like I was constantly pushing myself just to keep up with everyone else. It wasn't even to compete with my peers or prove myself in any way—it was just to survive that I had to push myself so much at that point. The first real trip that I took was after high school: that was when I walked the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrimage way. I walked 800 kilometers over a month, and that's when I started taking photos with my phone. What I love about nature is how grand it is compared to ourselves; we're so small, nothing

compared to the great big world. That actually comforted me a lot; it reminded me that I had been so caught up in my own world. I had felt so out of breath from pushing myself constantly [in school], and it felt like I wasn't getting anywhere. I was so tired of feeling that way until I saw nature on such a grand scale.

That trip was also very lovely in terms of how many people I got to talk to along the way—people that I would never be able to interact with in my daily life because they had come from all over the world. All the life stories and wisdom that I gathered from them—all the different ways of living that they portrayed through their actions and words—really comforted me. That memory became a spark for my photography journey; I've been searching for the same thing ever since.

Q: That's really beautiful. I've noticed your travel photos often feature a subject in the center, looking as though they're wandering through or exploring a whole new world. Is that the feeling that you're trying to communicate?

Yes, exactly.

Q: It sounds like the beauty of the natural world inspires a lot of your travel photography. Do you ever find yourself in a creative rut, and if so, how do you stay inspired?

Something I've learned about photography is that you have to be really focused when you're trying to take photos. And what you have to focus on are the little things that we tend to dismiss in our daily life, like where the lighting is coming from, or what the clouds look like in the sky. Those little details matter so much. Thankfully, this can be applied to so many areas of my own life, and so I'd say finding those little components of joy is very important.

Q: Travel and wedding photography are very different. How did you know you wanted to become a wedding photographer?

This is an interesting question. In my opinion, it's

very similar to finding the specialty that you like in medicine. I started by trying so many different types of photography: portrait, event, nature, product, etc. Then, I got to try wedding photography, and I just loved it so much; I would dream about brides in my sleep. I was obsessed with so many aspects of wedding photography, like how fast-paced it is and how much control I have [as the photographer]. Second, I love that I get to build a relationship with my clients.

For other gigs, it's more of a one-time thing—you meet your clients, shoot, and deliver the photos on the same day—whereas for wedding photography, you build up a relationship with your clients over a year because that's how far in advance clients book their weddings. We'll start with an initial meeting, where my clients tell me about their love story, their family, what they love about weddings, what they're expecting, and what they're excited about. I prefer to be more involved in this process, more so than other wedding photographers, because I really love my brides. Usually, I'll ask them to take me with them when they go shopping; for example, when they shop for their engagement outfits, they'll send me photos, and I'll tell them, “This will look really good in photos!”—that kind of advice. Even after the wedding, I like to catch up with my clients from time to time. What we as a business really believe in is building that relationship with our clients. A year after we deliver our clients' wedding photos, we'll celebrate their one-year anniversary and check in to see how newlywed life is going. I just love that process of getting to know someone, and it's even more special on wedding day because that's when I get to meet all of my clients' loved ones. It's such a precious opportunity—I've never even met my best friend's close relatives! I feel very privileged and grateful to have that connection with my clients.

Q: As a wedding photographer, I imagine your job is to capture your clients' happiest but also most emotional and vulnerable moments. How do you go about building trust with your clients so that they're comfortable working with you?



I think a lot of introverted photographers tend to blend in and be invisible, and some couples enjoy that. But given my personality, I love to be more involved. I usually bring that up at the very first meeting; I let my clients know that it's really important for me to capture those emotions. Even before they sign a contract with me, I'll tell them, "As soon as you start smiling or crying, I'll be next to you with my camera." Because I repeat that so many times, I think they're able to prepare themselves. We also encourage our couples to do an engagement shoot with us, because we want them to get used to how we work. We'll usually give them some homework, like telling them to look in the mirror and find the facial expressions that they like. We'll practice that with them as well so that by the day of their wedding they feel a bit more comfortable in front of the camera.

Q: How would you describe your style of wedding photography? What do you think is the reason your clients come to you?

I think it's because I just love photography. I'm always searching for styles that I would love to be a model for. I spend a lot of time researching and collecting styles and ideas, and in that process, I end up browsing both American and Korean styles. I feel like my style is a combination of Korean and Western styles, and maybe that's why certain clients prefer my work. I also know that a lot of wedding photographers, because they deal with so many photos, like to keep their colour schemes very consistent. Recently, earth tones have been in trend, and so a lot of photographers have created very similar colour schemes. But for me, because I love nature, I don't believe in painting the world in a different colour—I want to make sure that I capture colours as they are and change them only slightly to reflect my style. In





that way, I think my wedding photography captures a wider range of colours.

Q: Do you find that your creative thought process changes when you're taking wedding photos versus landscape photos or other types of photography?

For travel photos, my focus is more on composition and colour schemes. But for wedding or portrait photos, I'm all about the client having a good time—whether that's laughing, crying, or whatever it is. My favourite part of wedding photography is capturing those sneaky moments of grooms shedding tears or parents dabbing their eyes—those are the most meaningful to me. With wedding photography, if my clients aren't having a good time, it's really hard for me to love the photos.

Q: How do you balance your competing commitments to art and medicine?

Balancing art and medicine at the same time keeps me motivated in both areas. They become breaks from each other; in that way, I find it very satisfying. Wedding photography also matches well with my academic schedule because the high season for weddings is usually during summer break. That was really important to me last year because I think I was feeling really tired of being a student. I couldn't wait to feel more valuable—I wanted to feel like what I was doing was more meaningful than getting good grades on a test. That actually motivated me more to be a better photographer. I also think having that kind of work experience allows me to enjoy this long, long career in medicine.

Q: Medicine can be a demanding profession. What role do you see photography playing in your life in the future, as you progress in your medical training/career?

This past year of COVID has been really frustrating. I've been financially independent since undergrad, so it was really important for me to make money during the summer through wedding photography. Unfortunately, that didn't work out, which also meant I didn't have photography to counterbalance the stress of medical school. As well, for wedding photography, business is all based on referrals; not shooting for one year can impact your business for years down the line. So it's been stressful, but something I've gotten out of all this, thankfully, is portrait photography. I started a mini-studio in my house because I was stuck at home and had lots of free time. I've always wanted to try portrait photography, but because I was always so busy with wedding photography, I never had time for it. For once, I actually had time to sit down and learn how to set up studio lighting. That was actually really fun—I really enjoyed taking more professional portrait photos of my peers and other medical students. Hopefully, I can continue with that and focus more on portrait photography in the future.

My dad also used to love photography when I was little. Now that I'm into photography, we have photos of our family from when I was young, taken by my dad, and photos of our family now, taken by me. I'm thankful that I got to spend more time taking photos of my family during quarantine. My parents were so shy about taking photos at first—they thought it was so silly, and they didn't want to do it—but now it's automatic for them; they can put on a smiling face so fast. I've really enjoyed that, and so hopefully I can continue my photography with friends and family.

In terms of my wedding photography business, we're currently going through the process of handing the business over to my partner. At the same time, I've been trying to teach my mom how to edit photos so that she can do it from home. Once I can give



my mom some feedback on her edits, I think it will be easier for her to recreate my style. Immigrant parents often have difficult jobs that aren't always the most well-paying, whereas photo editing is less physically demanding and pays much better. That's why I'm hoping to transfer part of my business that way. Ultimately, my goal is to be a physician and have a side job as an exclusive wedding photographer, where I only take on three or four weddings a year, charge expensive packages, and go all out for those clients. Hopefully, depending on my financial situation, I can either donate that money or put it toward a scholarship.

Q: That's really thoughtful! Out of all the photos you've taken so far, do you have a favourite photo or project you've worked on? If so, what stands out about it?

I have two projects that I love. The first one I call "Portrait Project"; this is what I've been doing with my mini studio setup, where I've been taking more professional photos for my friends and peers in the program. I've really enjoyed it—it's so thrilling to



see my photos being used as their profile photos or CARMS photos. Another creative project I love is called “The Patronus Project.” I love Harry Potter so much because I grew up with it. I also love when I get to really know my models and how they identify themselves—I want to learn their stories and how they want to be portrayed or perceived through my photos. “Patronus Project” was interesting because I was asking my models what animal they felt represented them (in Harry Potter, everyone has a different Patronus or animal guardian). At the time, I was in university, so I asked this talented artist in my program to draw these illustrations. I did the editing, and I also collaborated with makeup artists. My Photoshop skills weren’t great at the time (laughs), but it was a fun project to work on, and I really enjoyed it.

Q: Lastly, do you have any advice for people who may be interested in learning photography but are unsure of where to start?

I have two main pieces of advice. In terms of gear, I honestly think your phone camera is better than most DSLRs. Please stop buying expensive gear! And if you decide to buy a DSLR, please don’t use the kit lens that comes with it. It’s not really about the camera body; it’s what lens you use with it that really makes a difference. Second, I feel like finding an artist that you really, really love and copying their style is the best way to get better at photography. I know people think that their photography should be their own unique creative process, but I don’t believe anything is truly unique in this world. Find a style you like and try to copy it. In that process, you’ll find out what you like more and how you can translate a style you love into your own.

Interview with Andreea Damian



From a young age, Andreea Damian has spent most of her spare time on stage through theatre or musical theatre. Her passion for the performing arts brought her to the Arts York Drama program at Unionville High school where she learned more than she ever imagined about acting, and herself. During the evenings and weekends, Andreea would attend individual vocal lessons with her vocal coach, dance lessons at York Dance Academy, musical theatre training at Randolph Academy or rehearsals for community theatre shows. During her Bachelor’s and Master’s, Andreea continued writing plays as a creative outlet. By being a part of Daffydil as the assistant director last year and the director this year, Andreea continues to incorporate a lifelong passion while supporting a cause that is very personal to many of us.

Q: To start, can you please tell us a bit about yourself?

Hi, my name is Andreea. I’m currently a second year UofT medical student. Growing up, I did a lot of theater; I started with acting, then did “triple threat” training (learning to additionally sing and dance). I attended an arts high school and majored in drama. Up until Grade 12, my dream was to move to New York and work on Broadway.

Things changed when my mom said, “You can do that, but first, get a degree.” So I thought, “Well, I really like microbiology,” so I did my undergrad at McGill in microbiology and immunology. I kind

of fell in love with medicine and specifically with microbiology, so I stuck around and did my Master’s in it. I then did some work in neuroinflammation before entering medical school. It’s been a long road to medicine but being here is really exciting because I’m involved with Daffy; I get to do theater as well as medicine, and I’m having the best time!

Q: Amazing! What interested you in theater to begin with?

Honestly, I don’t remember. All I remember is that even in preschool, we had career days where I dressed up with a shirt that had a star on it, and I kept saying I was going to be a singer. I don’t



remember what started my love for theater, but I just know that the first thing I remember about it is that I loved it.

Q: For people who don't know, what is Daffy and what can they expect this year?

Daffydil is a musical put on by UofT medical students, but we occasionally have undergrad students that contribute as well. The musical is produced, written, and directed by students, and the entire cast and staff are students. [Daffy] raises money for the Canadian Cancer Society, which is very important to me personally. There's a lot of people who have been personally affected by cancer so it's great to raise money for it while also incorporating a passion for the arts. The arts, in addition to being enjoyable, helps to connect people and to motivate them to get through hard moments in life. I think Daffy is a wonderful way to give back to the community and also inspire people.

Q: How did you become involved with Daffy?

Even before I came to UofT (I actually interviewed three times here), I was dead set on being a part of [Daffy]. In each of my interviews, I asked the student interviewer, "Were you involved in Daffy? What was your role? How was it?" Once I got accepted, I asked around for positions that would be available for students. At first, I thought I'd be writing Daffy because I've written plays in the past,

but I had a change of heart when I learned what all the different roles entailed. I became assistant director in first year, then director this year because I wanted to be as involved in all the creative aspects of the musical as possible.

Q: What do you do as director of Daffy?

With my assistant director, Aleksandra Uzelac, we block scenes and we're in charge of all of the acting. We are also the lead of all the creative leads, overseeing everything that they do, and help with the visuals, sound, music, and dance numbers. We block some songs—the ones that are more "acty" and not necessarily huge dance numbers (we leave the complex choreography to our talented dance leads). We also work closely with the vocal leads in order to ensure that the cast learn the music. We're in charge of rap songs, because although I have experience in singing, I'm not as musically skilled as our talented vocal leads.

Q: Are you involved in the process of selecting the cast? What you are looking for in an audition?

Yes, I was in charge of the auditions for the cast chorus. I didn't necessarily look at who was the strongest, say, vocalist. Rather, I looked at the ranges the vocal leads set, and as long as they met a bar, that was good for me. I then looked for who was the most enthusiastic and willing to take risks.

A big part was also seeing who could potentially fit the character.

Q: Do you have a favourite memory that you want to share from your time as assistant director or director?

My favorite memory of last year was just being in the theater and on the stage. Up until that point, we were working so hard for so many hours during the week but it didn't really feel like, "This is actually happening!" until we got into the theater and everyone got set up. Seeing everyone backstage bonding together was my favourite part. This year, even though we're not going to be in a theater, I'm still really excited to finally meet the cast, chorus, and dance team, and to work with them in person. That's always the best part, and it'll start to feel like we're actually making a musical again, even though it will be on film this year.

Q: What's been the most challenging aspect of being the director?



I think this year especially, everything has to be really organized. A lot is up in the air with COVID, and we are literally working with two show dates, or as we like to call it, two film weeks, concurrently in order to plan for any possible changes. You have to have a lot of flexibility.

Q: On that note, how has Daffy been adapted to COVID?

It's adapted better than I ever expected. The team that we have this year is really determined and dedicated. Our exceptional producers have figured everything out logistically in terms of how we're going to make a film, and they have incredible foresight into every tiny little thing that we need to get this to happen.

Our creative leads have adapted rehearsals to Zoom; for vocals, only one person gets to sing at a time, so we have to pre-record all the vocals beforehand. But the vocal leads and us (directors) have started putting the cast/chorus songs together and sharing them with everyone so that they can feel like they're together, and also get excited for the real thing.

For the acting, we get cast and chorus to practice their formations and rearrange their furniture as it would be on set. Then they have to, in character, turn around and pretend to talk to someone even though they're talking to themselves. A big part of acting is reacting so I have no idea how the characters are actually going to react naturally in front of the camera. During filming, things will change and they'll come to life, so I'm really excited to see the acting and dancing come together.

Everyone who's involved in Daffydil has been so adaptable and made it work really well. I think the show is going to be incredible.

Q: Wow, I didn't realize that Daffy will be filmed. How is that going to work?

Right now we're just waiting for lockdown to be amended. We have everything pre-approved—we're going to be wearing face masks, we're separated in groups under the size limit, and these groups will not overlap with each other. The producers have made a very, very explicit safety protocol for us to

follow and the faculty has approved it so we are good to film in person once the provincial restrictions allow for it.

Q: What does the musical format mean to you and how do you think it works as a whole to create impact on the audience?

I was always trained that theatre and acting is life, so everything you show in a musical has to be relatable to the audience. [The audience] can recognize, “Oh, that’s me, and if someone else can go through these experiences and make it through, maybe I will as well.” I think as medical students too, we really struggle with imposter syndrome and the uncertainty of why we got in and how we’re going to do in the future. This year’s message really tries to show that even in the midst of a pandemic, everything will be okay and that you should be strong and follow your dreams.

Q: That’s a really nice message. I’m looking forward to seeing it even more! What was the rationale behind making Daffy a comedy this year?



Our writers are honestly the most hilarious people you will ever meet. As I mentioned earlier, because of the pandemic, we really just need an escape and some lightheartedness. We want to bring some joy to everyone and that’s where the comedy aspect of this show is really important.

Q: Do you think that the musical is going to have the same impact on its audience now that it is virtual?

I definitely love seeing a show live because the best part is when something happens and the audience reacts together. This year, I hope that everyone watching the show in their own home will still gasp and react, and feel connected through the show. We also have some virtual screenings planned to try and bring a sense of community back, because to me, that’s the most important part when I go see a musical.

Q: You mentioned that Daffy is a big time commitment. How have you been balancing Daffy and medical school all at once?

It’s definitely a juggling act. I love being busy though. As early as I can remember, even in high school, all my evenings were booked with theatre, vocal, or dance lessons and so going into university, I kind of kept that up as well. I’m also the type of person where if I’m busy I’m more efficient when I actually get to study. If I had nothing to do on my evenings I would probably be procrastinating, so this keeps me accountable—when I do have an hour or two to study, I’m making the most of it.

Q: What would you tell other students who are interested in the arts or music and also going through medical school? What advice would you give to them given that you’ve done a really great job with integrating both parts of your life?

Yeah, I think that’s very important. I actually struggled with this a lot in undergrad. I completely ignored the artistic side of myself because I thought to get into medical school I needed to do A, B, C—and none of that was in the arts, it was all science, research and volunteering. So I always felt like

something was missing. During my Masters, I had a bit more time and so I started participating in things like the Toronto Fringe Festival and writing plays. And so I realized, going into medical school, there’s no reason I should cancel that part of me again now that I’m a student. I decided to make time for the things I love and prioritize them, because while it is busy and it does take prioritization, it’s definitely worth it and I definitely feel happier and more satisfied with myself personally.

Q: That’s great advice! For those who see Daffy this year and want to get involved, how would you recommend doing that?

Honestly, try everything. I say this about Daffy or anything you’re passionate about. If you want to get involved, always try. Don’t be afraid to fail. Rejection is common everywhere, but you gotta keep trying no matter what. And, if you love it, you’ll find a place for it. We have so many students doing so many things—even if you don’t think you can sing, act, or dance, you could design our costumes or paint our set. There’s just a thousand ways to get involved so don’t be afraid to reach out and try.

Q: Do you find that your passion for theatre has had an impact on your career in medicine?

I definitely think my theatre experience will help me be a better doctor. I’ve always been a very empathetic person and I think that with acting, you always imagine yourself in someone else’s shoes which leads to you being an empathetic person. Additionally, I think with acting, you get used to a lot of rejection. And that’s helped me to be resilient and move on when things don’t go my way. And lastly, there’s a lot of improv in acting that needs to happen. Even as a script actor, things on stage go wrong all the time and you need to improvise at the last minute. It really helps in medicine so that you can adapt if something goes wrong and improvise a new solution.

On the other side of things, I don’t know if I’ll be continuing with the arts as a physician, but I do think it’s important to get involved in it as a hobby, and also as a way to connect with patients and with the community.



Q: What role will the arts and musicals play in your life in the future?

I always naively say that my favourite playwright, Anton Chekhov, was a writer and also a physician. So, my goal in life was always to be a physician, but hopefully write plays in my spare time and see them produced on stage—so that’s the goal. I’m not sure if life will go that way, but medicine and Daffy have taught me that I want to continue it as a hobby.

Q: Is there anything that you want to leave readers with?

I just want to really reiterate that I know medicine can be overwhelming. And I think that I lost myself before joining medicine. So if anyone out there is feeling like they’re losing their passion in the arts, I strongly encourage them to seek it out because I don’t think you need to lose part of yourself to become someone else—I think you just need to grow with the different parts of yourself.

Interview with Dr. Ariel Lefkowitz



Ariel Lefkowitz is an internal medicine physician at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. He obtained his medical degree at McGill University before completing internal medicine residency at the University of Toronto, followed by a year as Chief Medical Resident at Mount Sinai Hospital and a fellowship in General Internal Medicine. He completed a Master of Education at OISE at the University of Toronto and a research fellowship at the Wilson Centre. His research interests include ethics, equity, narrative medicine, and the involvement of patients in medical education.

Q: Many of our readers, I'm sure, are already familiar with Dr. Lefkowitz, but nonetheless let's start off with you telling us a little bit about yourself.

I'm an internal medicine doctor based at Sunnybrook and I teach at the University of Toronto at both the undergrad and postgrad levels. I graduated from medical school at McGill before coming to Toronto for residency and last year I completed a Master of Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). My background is in philosophy, math, and computer science, which has informed my interest in ethics and equity. And certainly, narrative medicine has also been a great interest of mine.

Q: Speaking of your interest in narrative medicine—it's been almost a year now since your first two weeks on the COVID ward, which you documented and published for the Toronto Life. What motivated you to share your story?

Creative writing has been an interest of mine throughout my life and throughout my medical training. But I'm not the sort of disciplined writer who sits down and writes every day. I write when I'm struck by something important or emotionally transformative happening to me. The first piece I wrote was as a first year medical student upon meeting a patient on the palliative care unit. It was a transformative moment where I was suddenly gripped by the need to write and was encouraged to publish and share my piece by excellent mentors.

for my patients and for the world—everyone was talking about the COVID ward in the news—after this incredibly exhausting two week block, the day after I finished on the COVID ward, I stayed up until 3 AM and wrote it all down. I realized that it was something that people would want to know about. And I'm the sort of person who doesn't mind sharing my vulnerabilities, but certainly I know that there are people who would not feel comfortable doing that. But I felt that it was important, and I decided to submit [the piece] to see if other people felt the same way.

Q: It sounds like you were able to immediately recognize the gravity of the pandemic at a time when the public maybe did not. What gave you that impression?

I could sense from my own discomfort and how different this was from normal life. In medical school and residency, when everything is new, everything is scary. But then eventually to an experienced person, it all feels normal—even things like running a code or doing a surgery feels run of the mill. And so, when I was on the COVID ward and realizing I was very out of my element, I felt afraid for my life and the lives of my colleagues, family, and patients. There was this element of familiarity with the discomfort because I recalled what it was like to be a trainee, but at the same time, there was this element of it that felt almost historical. Suddenly, I—as a COVID doctor at a time when lots of people hadn't taken that role yet—could feel the eyes of history on me, and I knew that meant something.

“Suddenly, I—as a COVID doctor at a time when lots of people hadn't taken that role yet—could feel the eyes of history on me, and I knew that meant something.”

That experience has since guided my perspective. And so suddenly, on the COVID wards, I realized that every single moment was a moment worth writing down. You know, gripped by all this anxiety and the feeling that what I was involved in was so important

Q: How has your personal response to the pandemic and even just managing your day-to-day changed since last year?

I shared in that piece that even by day 14, things

started to feel normal. I think that’s the blessing and curse of humanity—that we can come to terms with things that previously were unimaginable. Since then, many more colleagues have taken on the role of COVID doctor and we’ve learned a lot more about the disease, about how it’s transmitted and even treated. I just came off my latest two week stint on the COVID ward and these days are nothing like [last year]. So while the world is still in a tough situation, it feels personally and professionally a lot less stressful.

Q: Speaking of the two weeks that you’ve just spent on the COVID ward, have you been struck again to write any accounts or diaries?

That’s mostly a no. I was struck again to write when my daughter was born. She’s 4 months old now. Something I didn’t share in the piece in Toronto Life was that two days before going on the COVID ward, we found out we were pregnant with our second child, and that really contributed to my understanding of myself during that time. The first person to find out we were pregnant was my wife, the second person was me, and the third person was the Head of Infection Prevention and Control at Sunnybrook. It made things more stressful, but it also allowed us to count the days off in a way that felt more meaningful as we approached our due date. When our daughter was born it felt like she was giving us a promise and hope for the future. So, I wrote a piece for her baby naming which tried to capture my feelings and hopes for her and for us all at a dark time, when welcoming a new baby shows more clearly than anything else that the future will be brighter.

[Please see story attached at the end of the interview.]

Q: What do you believe is the value of storytelling, both within and outside medicine?

I think in the clinical context, storytelling is incredibly important. Storytelling is how patients gain an understanding of their situation that can be captured and contextualized in a way that makes it more meaningful. The same is true for physicians and physicians-in-training. Part of why

I value creative writing so much is because when we are suffering from emotional or moral turmoil, thinking of it as a story gives it a beginning, a middle, an end, and a meaning. It allows us to grow from an experience rather than only suffer through it. I tell my trainees that if they think of taking a patient’s history as gathering a list of facts they’ll have a tough time remembering it. But if we think of history as an exchange of stories, suddenly it becomes really easy to remember, to understand, and to think of the next question to ask. Humans are natural storytellers and story receivers. It’s incredibly important and something that I think we need to talk about more explicitly in medical education.

Q: You mentioned earlier you recently completed a Master of Education at OISE. When did your interest in education and pedagogy start and where do you see it going forward?

I have a background in acting and theatre and I find that teaching and acting have a lot in common. You’re not just a presenter of facts, you’re a presenter of a story. You are bringing your audience into this world that you’re creating. The added bonus of



teaching is that you are accomplishing a different type of good. You are enlightening a new group of professionals, you’re hopefully inspiring them, and you’re creating a relationship with them that can be as powerful as the therapeutic relationship between physician and patient. So certainly, from a selfish perspective, [teaching] ticks a lot of boxes for me as something that inspires and fulfills me.

“Medical education has the capacity to fulfill this greater moral and ethical agenda, and I don’t think that the soul-searching transformative potential of medical education has been explored to the fullest yet.”

Going forward I’d like to explore the ways in which we can do this sort of transformative education in realms and towards goals that it hasn’t been used prior. For example, I gave a lecture to the second-year class in the fall on the lessons from the Holocaust that physicians and physicians-in-training can learn to gain a greater sense of ethical duty. Medical education has the capacity to fulfill this greater moral and ethical agenda, and I don’t think that the soul-searching transformative potential of medical education has been explored to the fullest yet.

Q: It sounds like there is a foundation of philosophy and medical ethics to your teaching. Do you see philosophy and ethics being taught in a more explicit and purposeful manner in medical education in the future?

You know, I came into medicine with an undergrad in philosophy and I knew that that was going to make me somewhat of a weirdo. I certainly felt out of sorts at the beginning, not having had a background in anatomy and physiology. I always felt like maybe my background in philosophy would lend something extra to my perspective, and you’re right about the role of philosophy and ethics going forward—the truth is, I think that research, education, clinical practice, person-centred care, all of these things should be guided by a deep exploration of the theoretical underpinnings that grounds our practice.

Q: Just as your background in philosophy informs your teaching, do you see the reverse being true for you? Do you see practical experiences as a physician forming and shaping your philosophy on life or teaching?

Oh, 100%. I recall in undergrad I used to have an absolute disdain for anything practical. I did computer science but I only wanted the theoretical—I didn’t want to learn how to use a computer, I just wanted to think about computation. And since then, I have learned how clinical practice teaches you what life is like. Practical experience guides theoretical exploration. Narrative medicine fits into that as well, because it captures the reflective lessons of an actual experience and lets that guide you to your next idea or to your next revelation.

Q: And how do you lend legitimacy to narrative-based medicine when the medical and scientific field is obsessed with evidence-based medicine and the more “objective” facts?

From my experience, you cut through the noise with a compelling story. So much was written about COVID in March, I just happened to write something that hit home. For example, it’s not as if no one had ever identified that there were not enough black medical students at the University of Toronto, but Dr. Chika Oriuwa used this medium and this power to cut through the noise and reach a greater audience with greater force. In some ways, a compelling story transcends the delegitimization of narrative-based medicine. I’d like to see that change. I want to see narratives stand at the power and stature of other forms of communication.

Q: You mentioned that your interest in teaching, and I imagine storytelling, stems from your background in acting and theatre. Can you tell us more about that?

In high school I did improv at SecondCity and started performing in SecondCity shows. Some of my peers and I at SecondCity were recruited to host this TV show called *Workforce* for a season. And then in undergrad, I did a bunch of theatre and loved it. I believe that medicine is, in so many ways, also improv. In clinical practice, especially as a trainee, you take on a role that you don't believe is true. You say "Hi, I'm part of the surgery team," or "I'm a medical student on psychiatry." And then you pretend to be a surgeon or a psychiatrist—and that's improv. What are OSCEs if not improv? Certainly, I think that background has really helped me in my journey, my training, and how I teach.

“Part of why I value creative writing so much is because when we are suffering from emotional or moral turmoil, thinking of it as a story gives it a beginning, a middle, an end, and a meaning.”

Q: Speaking of all your different interests, and past and present pursuits, how do you balance it all?

I think first and foremost is the importance of following your own inspiration. If you had told me that improv and philosophy was going to be a workable combination in medicine—I wouldn't have thought that it was going to work. But it was what

inspired me, so that's the path I followed and I am so glad that I did. The only way to make it work is to be passionate about what you do and to combine the field you've chosen with your own unique factor. You and your interests are your most powerful assets, so never neglect those things that rev your engines.

Second, I would say there is a delicate dance between saying yes and saying no. You want to say yes to those opportunities that arise and are so new and exciting and important that you can't possibly go on without participating in them. And sometimes that's even at a time where you're too busy. You know, I should never have written that article at 3am in the morning after 14 of the most exhausting days of my life. But I had to do it, because it was an opportunity I couldn't say no to. There are some times where you must say yes to an opportunity.

By the same token, you have to learn how and when to say no. It's very easy to get sucked into the trap of the trainee—the person always willing to go the extra mile. That can really get you into trouble. And being able to say no when it's going to do more harm than good is an important skill and difficult to gain due to self esteem and power differentials. The ability to differentiate between what is going to be that critical opportunity and what is really going to just destroy your time management, the delicate dance between yes and no, is just consummately important.

Q: I'm sure that advice will be very useful to a lot of medical students. We're curious, what's next for you?

I think that at the level of the medical school, the interests of the faculty and my own interests are aligned in a lot of exciting ways. My interest in ethics, equity and narrative-based medicine are dovetailing with the direction of the university and, I think, of medical education in general. And so, I do hope to be involved in that most transformative effort. For example, I recently developed the new curriculum on religious discrimination, which I hope may have a big impact.

In life, I will be starting as a clinician teacher and assistant professor at Sunnybrook in July. And I am

hoping to shift the culture of medicine away from the stodgy spirit of traditional med ed and inject some energy, levity and inspiration in areas of med ed that were previously considered dry. I think that we can engage our patients, trainees, and colleagues in ways that enhance our delivery of health care, our communication with one another, and our compassion for one another. I want to be part of that change.

Name Story

In February, we started trying to have a second child. It feels like a long long time ago in a completely different world. Then, the world as we knew it was flipped upside down, plunged into a global pandemic, and in those early days of the lockdown, when uncertainty about the scope, spread, and severity of the virus was at its highest, I was asked to step into the role of managing the COVID ward. Two days before starting on the ward, Sarah and I found out we were pregnant. We were overjoyed, but also daunted. Daycare shut down, I became a COVID doctor, and the world and our local communities went into a frozen crisis. Etai and Sarah were at home all alone as Sarah struggled with intense nausea and fatigue through the first trimester. We, along with everyone in our lives, were lonely, scared, and worried for the future of our world.

Roey Belle is named after my grandmother, Belle Feig, born Belle Adler, known to friends as Bobby, known to me and my siblings as Safta. She was born in Hungary, and in World War II, she and her sisters survived the Holocaust. They survived through grit, courage, determination, and loyalty to family, and of course, a bit of luck. Safta came to Canada an immigrant, an orphan, a witness and a survivor of the world's worst atrocity. And despite all this, she was able to rebuild a happy life for herself and her family. My Safta was the kindest, gentlest, most generous person I have ever known. In our family, to be "like Safta" was to embody her kindness, her goodness, her generosity. She had a huge hand in raising me. She and my Zaidy were star-crossed lovers; they would tease each other, dote on each other, and would often kiss like teenagers, in front of us. Every Saturday she and Zaidy had us over for lunch, and Safta would make us our favourite dish, chicken paprikash. Safta was always there to listen, never judgmental, always caring, joking, forgiving, and would squeeze your hand apropos of nothing, just to make sure you knew she loved you. She survived because she was strong, but she thrived because despite the incredible hardships she faced in her life, she always saw the beauty in life, and in other people.

The name Roey comes from the Hebrew verb "lir'ot", "to see"—"hee ro'ah" means "she sees". Belle, Safta's first name, means beauty in French, so Roey Belle's name means, "She sees beauty". We know that Roey Belle will exemplify Safta's spirit, her generosity, her strength and determination, and her ability to see the beauty in every person. Roey Belle was our light at the end of the tunnel. In our darkest moments this year, we realized that even though everything felt really hard, we weren't counting days in lockdown into oblivion. Knowing Roey was on her way helped us see the hopeful future, see the light through the darkness. Each day was an opportunity to see the beauty



in the world, no matter what. Just as Safta could live through so much heartache and still see the beauty in life, still strive for kindness and righteousness and happiness, so, too, must we resolve never to lose our optimism in the future, and Roey Belle is the embodiment of that promise.

Sarah’s grandmother Sophie also personified seeing the beauty in everything. She believed strongly in the pursuit of knowledge, in the sciences, literature, and the humanities; at the core of these disciplines is a profound awe in the world and everything in it. After raising her family, she went back to school as an older student and earned her Masters in English at a time where women in academics faced even more obstacles than they do now. She became an English professor, and taught at a historically Black university in pre-civil rights movement North Carolina, because she believed it was the right thing to do. Her curiosity for life and its wonders, her creativity and drive, and her passion for standing up for the disadvantaged are qualities we hope are passed down to our daughter Roey.

Roey’s Hebrew name is Roey Cochava Beila. Cochav means star in Hebrew, a symbol of light in the darkness. My Safta’s Hebrew name was Chana Beila, and her mother’s name was Chava, who, when faced with pogroms and antisemitic attacks in Eastern Europe, migrated her family across the continent looking for a better life. Roey’s Hebrew name links her to her family, to her heritage, to all the strong and tough women from whom she descends, most important among them her mother Sarah, who succeeded in landing multiple positions in film and TV and gaining membership in the union within months of coming off of mat leave, who took care of our family while in the throes of first trimester and pandemic lockdown, who gave birth to Roey calmly at home without anesthetic of any kind, and who continues to amaze me every day with her strength, her resolve, her colossal intellect, and her boundless love. Roey Belle is incredibly lucky to inherit the gifts of her foremothers.

Roey Belle enters the world at a tenuous time in history, when the future is still murky, when we as a community are still forced to be apart, and as we enter the darkest month of the year. But she, and her mother and grandmothers and great-grandmothers teach us that even in the darkest hours, we must look to the future with hope and strength and kindness and commitment to family and to community and to those less fortunate than ourselves. She is born just in time for Hanukkah, the festival of lights, in which we tell the story of having faith that it will all work out if we stay the course with enough courage and dedication. Roey Belle, you have a bright, bright future ahead of you, and you will meet every challenge in life not just with a steely resolve but with joy and love. Your Mama, your Daddy, and your big brother Etai are so so happy to welcome you into our family.



Interview with Eliza Pope



Eliza Pope is currently a first year Pediatrics resident in Toronto, as well as a big-time foodie, jazz singer and songwriter, and all-around music lover. She released her first album entitled “Call Me a Fool” in 2015 and a single “Canvas” in 2019. She’s one of those people who is either listening to, talking about, or playing music at any given moment of the day, and she is so proud to be from a city with such a rich musical tapestry. She’s also very grateful that working with kids means that breaking into song mid-day is strongly encouraged, and is a special kind of medicine for both her and her patients.

Q: Tell us about yourself.

I’m originally from Toronto. I grew up here, and I was lucky enough to come back here for medical school. Now, I’m a pediatrics resident and have just started my first year at SickKids. I’d like to think of myself as someone who loves the arts, and I think that has really engrained itself into who I’ve become. I’m a musician mostly, but I dabble in a few other arts things, too. When I think about who I am and how I look at life, I always come back to the role that the arts have played in my life. It’s nice to be able to talk about that side of my life.

Q: Can you tell us about your musical journey? How or why did you start singing, and where are you at now in your singing career?

I started singing in Grade eight. A family friend who was an opera singer back in Romania kindly offered to give me opera lessons, probably after hearing an over-enthusiastic rendition of some pop song at our family dinners. Me, being 13 and not knowing anything about opera, said, “Sure, this is great!” While in the end [opera] music, as beautiful as it is, wasn’t really my cup of tea, it got me started in the direction that led me here.

For my whole life, I have loved jazz music; it was always on at home. There was something about jazz I found really compelling, so I naturally transitioned to taking jazz vocal lessons. Jazz is one of those things that the more you get into, the more invested in it you become. Eventually, I was able to push myself to explore different styles of jazz and start performing on my own. I started gigging at the end of high school. In undergrad, I was lucky enough to put out an album [Call Me a Fool]. More gigs followed, and I put out another single [Canvas] in medical school. And of course, it's hard to balance all of that with curricular activities. I think there are many talented people in medicine who have other passions and can relate to the difficulty of finding balance. But I think those "pockets of joy" as I call them, when I had time to do music and do a gig while in medical school, were really wonderful. It's hard to find balance, but when there is, it makes both sides that much more enjoyable. It gives you more energy to go back refreshed. So that's where I'm at today. My plans for the future are to record another album—hopefully only originals this time. I'm working on that as best as I can.

And in the meantime, music is my therapy. My parents always joke that ever since I was a kid, whenever they noticed that something was wrong, or when I needed time for myself, they knew to set up the piano and let my emotions come out—and they did. I would feel amazing.

I think [what drew me to singing] was that way to connect with such raw emotions when you didn't necessarily have the words in your day-to-day life to do so. It's a beautiful thing. I was talking to someone recently, and they said, "I think music was the first language before any of us could speak." I thought that was so true. I think in many ways, [music] is the universal language still, though it's cheesy to say. You don't even need a vocalist to convey an emotion, which is pretty incredible. I think that's what keeps me coming back to it.

Q: Can you also tell us about your experiences in songwriting?

I think "frustration" is the first word that comes to mind. That's a little jaded of me to say, but it's

one of those processes that can be challenging until inspiration strikes—then it feels like the most natural thing in the world. It's easy to romanticize the process and say that it's really simple, but, often, it's hard to capture the feeling that you're feeling. That being said, I think it is very much a cathartic process. Even with the frustrations, the ability to be able to capture where you were in that place in your life, or how you were feeling, or what was happening around you, and then to be able to share that with people in a way that they can relate to is a very special process. [Another thing] is to be able to look back on your songs.... I now have these memories from this album of "Oh yeah, that's where I was in that place," or "That's what I was thinking of when I was writing that." It is like a scrapbook of where you were in your life, but set to music. And again, it pulls you back to that place really quickly. That's the emotional power of music; I think you can recreate exactly where you were in that moment. It's interesting to look back and see that some things still apply. I think some things are new, but, for me, being able to write something that's honest and that other people can relate to is a really beautiful thing. It's incredible.

One of the best feelings at my shows is when I sing my originals, and I can see that it means something to people. It's a very cool feeling.

Q: What inspires you to write songs?

Most of the originals on my album are about self-discovery and exploration. One of my favourite songs that I've written is a song called *Try*. It's all about wondering whether you can put yourself into something, whether you can jump in with both feet, and that feeling of excitement when things work out. I think this feeling of hesitation is universal, so a lot of the songs that I write are drawn from that: my own personal internal dialogue. As I write songs for this "possible" album (I cautiously call it a "possible" album), I'm trying to draw from some of the experiences of other people in my life. There's only so much that a kid who's gone straight to residency can say about life!

One of the reasons I feel really lucky to be in the field [of medicine] is that you learn so much about life. The people that you meet in this role completely broaden your horizons. When I think of songwriting and being able to tell a story, we see stories all the time, we hear them firsthand, we hear them in more detail than most people in those individuals' lives hear them. That's not to say that I broadcast my patients' stories, but I think their messages are universal and are really compelling. When I meet a person and they make me stop and think or they make me reconsider the way I'm seeing things, I just jot down a few notes. That's led to some really interesting songs in the works.

“That’s the emotional power of music; I think you can recreate exactly where you were in that moment. It’s interesting to look back and see that some things still apply. I think some things are new, but, for me, being able to write something that’s honest and that other people can relate to is a really beautiful thing.”

Q: You have released an album, *Call Me a Fool*. Can you tell us what the creative process of producing an album was like? What did you enjoy most about the experience? What did you enjoy least? What lessons did you take away from the experience?

Like most things in life, I didn't know much about



recording an album before I did it; I think it's a lot of learning on the fly. I had the idea of doing an album, but I needed a lot of encouragement from other musicians that I was working with. Once I decided that I was going to do it, the first step was song selection. There are a couple of songs that I included in the album that I just enjoy singing. Some have emotional ties to them, like *Here Comes the Sun*, which brings me back to my childhood. Then, I included some of my originals that I felt ready to share.

I was very fortunate to know a really talented pianist and arranger in Toronto, Mark Kieswetter, who is a lovely human being as a whole. He took me under his wing and we worked together on arranging the different songs. He helped me elevate my bedroom recordings to what an arrangement would look like for a professional set of musicians. Once we had gotten all that done, he was able to connect me with a recording engineer (John "Beetle" Bailey), who, unfortunately, is no longer in Toronto, but he's one of the best in the country. Then, I got some musicians that I had worked with on previous gigs. There were some who I was meeting for the first time (Band: Ross Macintyre, Eric St-Laurent, Max Roach). We basically all met at John's recording studio in August 2014. For a lot of the guys, as I

mentioned, it was the first time I was meeting them; they had never heard my music.

“It was unbelievable to hear a bare bones song that I thought up in my bedroom on the piano turn into a whole recording with professional musicians; it was the most exhilarating feeling I can describe.”

Then, this crazy, unbelievable creative process happened. First, I talked them through all the songs. I told them the feel I was going for. Mark had prepared charts—jazz works with lead sheets, so you just have a basic melody and a chord marker—and for a lot of them, it was then a process of creating on the fly together. It was unbelievable to hear a bare bones song that I thought up in my bedroom on the piano turn into a whole recording with professional musicians; it was the most exhilarating feeling I can describe. We spent about a day with the band laying down what we call “bed tracks,” or instrumental

tracks. I then came back to the studio for a few days to do my vocals over again, the first day to get everything on paper recorded, then coming back to tweak things and work on the mix.

John (recording engineer) also took me under his wing and said, “Okay, you want to be part of this? Let me show you how it works.” He showed me how we edit, how we play with levels and all these compressors and EQ and all the technical aspects of making a mix. It’s a whole other world, and I have so much respect for people who do that. It’s a constant process of reworking. The thing that was so humbling for me was just seeing the amount of talent that these musicians and technicians have. I feel really, really lucky to have gotten to work with them. To be honest, I still can’t believe that as the newbie I got to work with some of the best in the city.

As a sidenote, I think another thing that I learned from recording an album is the harsh reality of the music business and the impact of streaming on artists. If you have a musician that you support, I really encourage you to support them by buying their album, if possible from a direct source (e.g. website). If you’re able to do more than stream it on [a streaming service], it makes a big difference, because it’s really, really hard to make a living as a recording musician these days. I hadn’t realized that before being in the seat of the individual trying to market their music. Since recording the album,

I always try to invest in the artists that I really love.

Q: How does studio recording compare to live performance? Do you have a preference?

I think that’s a great question. Studio recording is cool; there’s a lot of novelty to it. You get to be in this new, high-tech space. You’re surrounded by this incredible equipment, and it’s dead quiet when you walk into the sound booth, which is an eerily exciting feeling. Again, seeing your songs come to life is really exciting, but, for me, I will always say the most

comfortable and the most “myself” that I feel is when I’m onstage in front of people. I think the beauty of music comes out when you can see people’s reactions, when you can play off the crowd, when you can get people so invested that you can hear a fork drop onto a plate. That feeling is just so powerful because you’re all there together. It’s not supposed to be me performing for you; it’s supposed to be this back-and-forth, this dialogue.

When a really upbeat song comes on, and people start dancing or shouting and clapping, it becomes a meaningful experience for everyone. I like to do a little bit of sing-along with the crowd, too. It may be cheesy, but I think it’s really nice to get everyone involved. People come to hear music, to feel something, to hear a story. For me, that works much better when you are there together and you can play off each other. All this to say, there’s really no feeling like being on stage. You’re so vulnerable; you are so exposed to everything, but, at the same time, you let it be that way, you embrace it in some ways. I think that was really scary for me at the beginning, but once you let yourself settle into that, you feel a real sense of freedom in the vulnerability.

“There’s this philosophy of just rolling with it in jazz. If you play a wrong note, you don’t stop. You just find a way to make it work; you turn that into a lick of some sort, or you turn it into a new melodic phrase, or you change the chords underneath. You evolve with the mistakes, and I think, in a lot of ways, that’s a very healthy philosophy to have in life, too.”

Q: How did you develop your style as a jazz singer? What draws you to jazz singing in particular?

I think the most unique thing about jazz is improv. For people who aren’t totally familiar with that, or who have never heard about improv, it’s basically making things up on the spot. Jazz is one of those genres that really embraces that process more than any other genre. The reason that’s so wonderful is,

one, it’s an extra opportunity for creativity, but I think there are a lot of lessons that you can learn from a genre that so freely embraces change and coming up with things up on the spot. Jazz is one of those genres that really embraces that process more than any other genre. The reason that’s so wonderful is, one, it’s an extra opportunity for creativity, but I think there are a lot of lessons that you can learn from a genre that so freely embraces change and coming up with things on the spot.

In my life, as is the case with most people in medicine, I have a tendency to lean towards predictability and structure. It’s really scary to step outside of that, in life and in music; to all of a suddenly be put on stage with no notes in front of you and just rain free. But it can also be incredibly liberating. Being in that setting on stage, it’s taught me a lot about being okay in a state of uncertainty, where you don’t necessarily have things scripted and your next move may very well be a mistake. To put it differently, there’s this philosophy of just rolling with it in jazz. If you play a wrong note, you don’t stop. You just find a way to make it work; you turn that into a lick of some sort, or you turn it into a new melodic phrase, or you

change the chords underneath. You evolve with the mistakes, and I think, in a lot of ways, that’s a very healthy philosophy to have in life, too. In a career like medicine, where we come down on ourselves in such a powerful way with any performance short of perfection, I try to remind myself of this same process. Of learning from mistakes, but also learning to recognize that even when things don’t play out the way you expect, sometimes you can find the good in that process too.



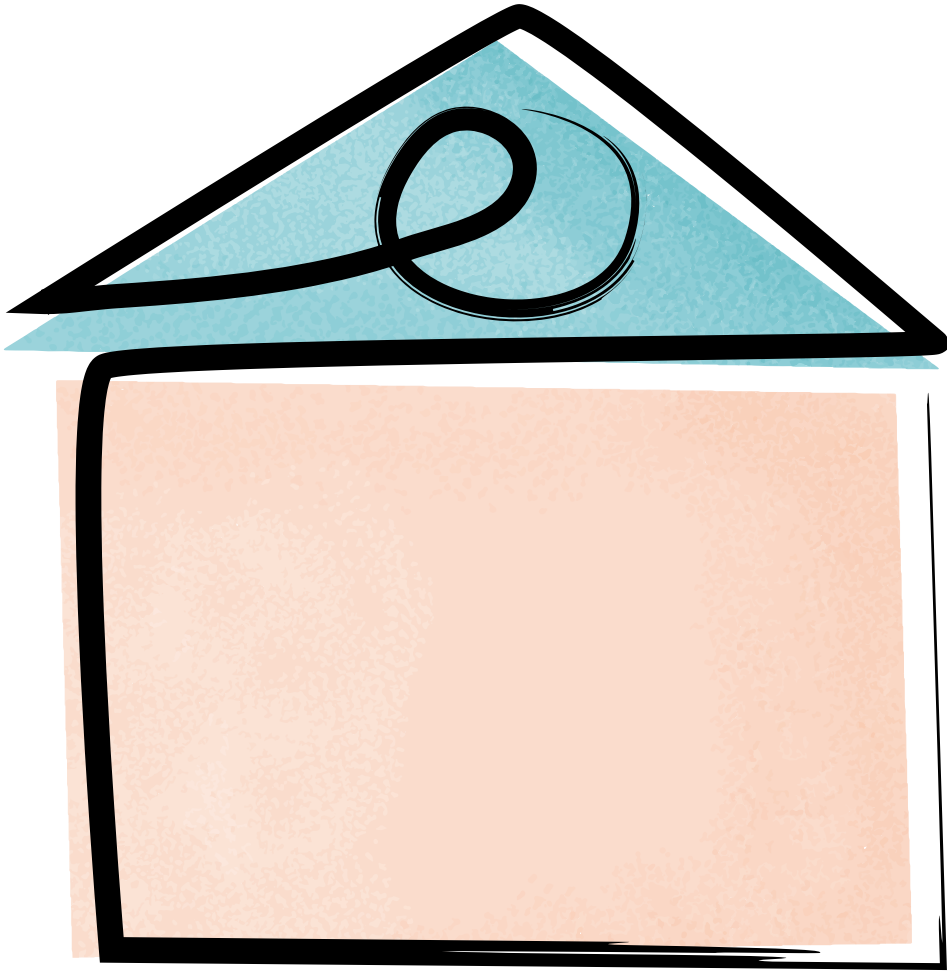
So that's one of the big things, the improv. I also will say that because it's dynamic, and because it's always evolving, you also have to rely a lot on the people around you. There's so much trust when you're on stage because if someone changes something, you've all got to change. One thing people don't realize is that you don't come to gigs having rehearsed; sometimes you show up to a gig and you shake hands for the first time and say, "Okay, let's do this thing." They have no idea what the songs are, and you haven't talked about anything. You just do it, and there's this magic way where it just happens. It works out. On stage, you're talking to each other, you're looking at each other and you're pointing. Some of that is also the theatrics of just performing, but it's also our way of talking to each other on the fly as it's happening, so I find that very exciting. I think, again, that comes with communities, that feeling that you're really there to perform together. It's not one person shining while the rest are in the dust; it's a team effort. You're all going through the song together and seeing where it takes you.

Q: Do you have song recommendations or places to listen to jazz?

We're very lucky here in Toronto. To name a few, The Rex [Hotel Jazz & Blues Club] is one of *the* institutions in the city. They do a lot of instrumental music and have some really incredible core artist music and have some really incredible core artists from Toronto that go through there. They also bring in excellent traveling bands that come through. If you want something a little bit more relaxed, maybe an introduction to jazz, it's a great place to go and sit at a table with friends and get a little bit of exposure. Moving up the ladder, if you want something cool and trendy, in Kensington Market there's the Poetry Jazz Cafe. They do a lot of jazz, soul, and R&B fusion, so if you're into any of those

things, it's a really, really cool spot. It's definitely the kind of place to impress someone, maybe someone who you're hoping to get into jazz or who you want to just show a cool spot in the city.

Then, probably on the fancier end, when you have the intent to enjoy a night out and see jazz, I love the Jazz Bistro on Victoria Street. Personally, it's probably one of my favourite places to perform. I think one of the amazing things about it is that people come there to hear jazz; it's quiet when the music's going, and they work hard to curate a great schedule; a lot of musicians they bring in are incredible international presences. It's really dedicated to jazz, so if you're ready for a nice dinner and great music, then it's a really lovely spot. Those are probably my three picks, but there are lots more, and more importantly, we have some of the best jazz musicians in the world, right here in our backyard.



Stay At Home

A collection of recommendations from UofT Med students on exploring new hobbies in the COVID-19 pandemic.



Recipe

The Chocolate Addict’s Thicc & Chewy Triple Chocolate Cookies

Michelle Lim
2T4 PB

INGREDIENTS

Dry Ingredients

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt

Wet Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp instant coffee

Other

- 2.5 oz unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 8 oz semisweet chocolate chips, melted over a double boiler and cooled
- 4 oz semisweet chocolate chips



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk together the dry ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Whisk together the wet ingredients in a bowl until the coffee is dissolved.
3. Beat the butter, brown sugar, and white sugar together in a large bowl until light and fluffy (about 5 minutes). Mix in the wet ingredients and beat for 30 seconds. Mix in the melted chocolate chips and beat for 30 seconds or until everything is combined.
4. Slowly mix in the dry ingredients until there are no more streaks of dry flour.
5. Stir in the chocolate chips until well incorporated.
6. Cover the bowl of dough with a lid or cloth and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. This will allow the dough to reach a fudge-like consistency.
7. While you are waiting, preheat the oven to 350°F and adjust the rack to the middle position.
8. Using a cookie scoop or tablespoon, scoop the dough into balls and place them on parchment-lined baking sheets 1 inch apart.
9. Bake the cookies for 10-12 minutes. The cookies are ready when the tops are cracked and edges are set.

Tip: If you want to make these cookies ahead of a crazy week full of MEs, bellringers, or extracurricular activities, make the dough up to step 6. You can refrigerate or freeze the dough to bake later as post-ME comfort food.

Spicy Kimchi Cream Udon

Jessica Trac
2T3 MAM



INGREDIENTS for 2 servings

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1/3 cup pork belly, chopped into small pieces
- 1/2 cup kimchi, chopped
- 1/2 cup cooking cream
- 1/4 cup kimchi juice
- 1 tbsp gochujang
- 1-2 tbsp gochugaru
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 1/3 cup chopped green onion (save some to garnish)
- 2 udon packs
- 1 egg yolk (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook udon according to package instructions. Set aside.
2. Set a pan on medium heat. Add butter and melt.
3. Add chopped green onion and minced garlic. Cook until fragrant.
4. Add chopped pork belly and cook until browned. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Add in chopped kimchi and onion and cook until softened.
6. Add in gochujang and mix.
7. Pour in cooking cream and kimchi juice.
8. Add in gochugaru (more if you like it spicy!).
9. Once combined, add in cooked udon noodles and stir.
10. Plate noodles and garnish with egg yolk (makes it more creamy), green onion, sesame seeds, and chili flakes.



My two friends and I started a small cooking blog on Instagram (@sousturechefs) at the start of the pandemic. Before COVID-19, I only meal-prepped and cooked to eat, not to enjoy. Some of the small joys of the past year have been learning new recipes and sharing them on our blog, and baking small treats for friends to enjoy at socially distanced drop-offs! I found this recipe online, and it's so good—a great spin on pasta with Asian flavours!

IG @sousturechefs

Book Recommendation: Severance by Ling Ma

Grace Xu
2T3 MAM

Favourite quote

“Memories beget memories. Shen fever being a disease of remembering, the fevered are trapped indefinitely in their memories. But what is the difference between the fevered and us? Because I remember too, I remember perfectly. My memories replay, unprompted, on repeat. And our days, like theirs, continue in an infinite loop.”



What is this book about? Why would you recommend it? Who would you recommend it to? What did you like about it?

One review described the book *Severance* by Ling Ma as a “coming of age immigrant experience anti-capitalist zombie novel,” which makes it seem a lot flashier than it is. I think that Candace’s apocalypse is much more of a slow burn—but that measured pace acts to accentuate the bleakness of the world she lives in now and the one she lived in before. The zombies themselves are not dangerous. Instead, they’re trapped in habits and cycles of their memories until their bodies disintegrate. But, Ling Ma carefully illustrates how the living are equally stuck in their mind-numbing modern day routines, despite not being zombified. The reader may slowly come to the question: even if we are living breathing human beings, when do we feel truly alive? This unnerving query is threaded through the language Ma uses. Her prose is very dry and blunt, but she weaves in the rare jarring illustrative and peculiar analogy (she’ll convince you that exchange rates are basically drowning swimmers). The lack of quotation marks also blurs the lines between characters’ statements, the protagonist’s thoughts, and the narration, resulting in a marriage and tension between individual voice and collective thought. Ma also does an excellent job of showing how Candace’s Asian upbringing shaped her into a person who would sacrifice almost everything for normalcy (too relatable—but also made me want to shake her out of her jadedness). It’s nice seeing a sci-fi(ish) heroine whose culture is essential to understanding her apathy—her severance from the world partially stems from severance from her motherland. Uneasy and unsettling, this book left my palms a little sweaty, especially while living in a pandemic of our own.

Palette Magazine

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Palette is a student-led publication that fosters artistic expression, collaboration, and dialogue within the medical community. Featuring student talent in the visual arts, creative writing, and lifestyle, Palette provides a platform to both celebrate creative authenticity and unite diverse interests among students.

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- Dr. Ashlie Nadler
- Dr. Eliza Pope

One beat, two beats, my heart groans
One step, two steps, I walk alone
Enclosed by white walls, I'm led within
A room, a theatre, a place I've never been