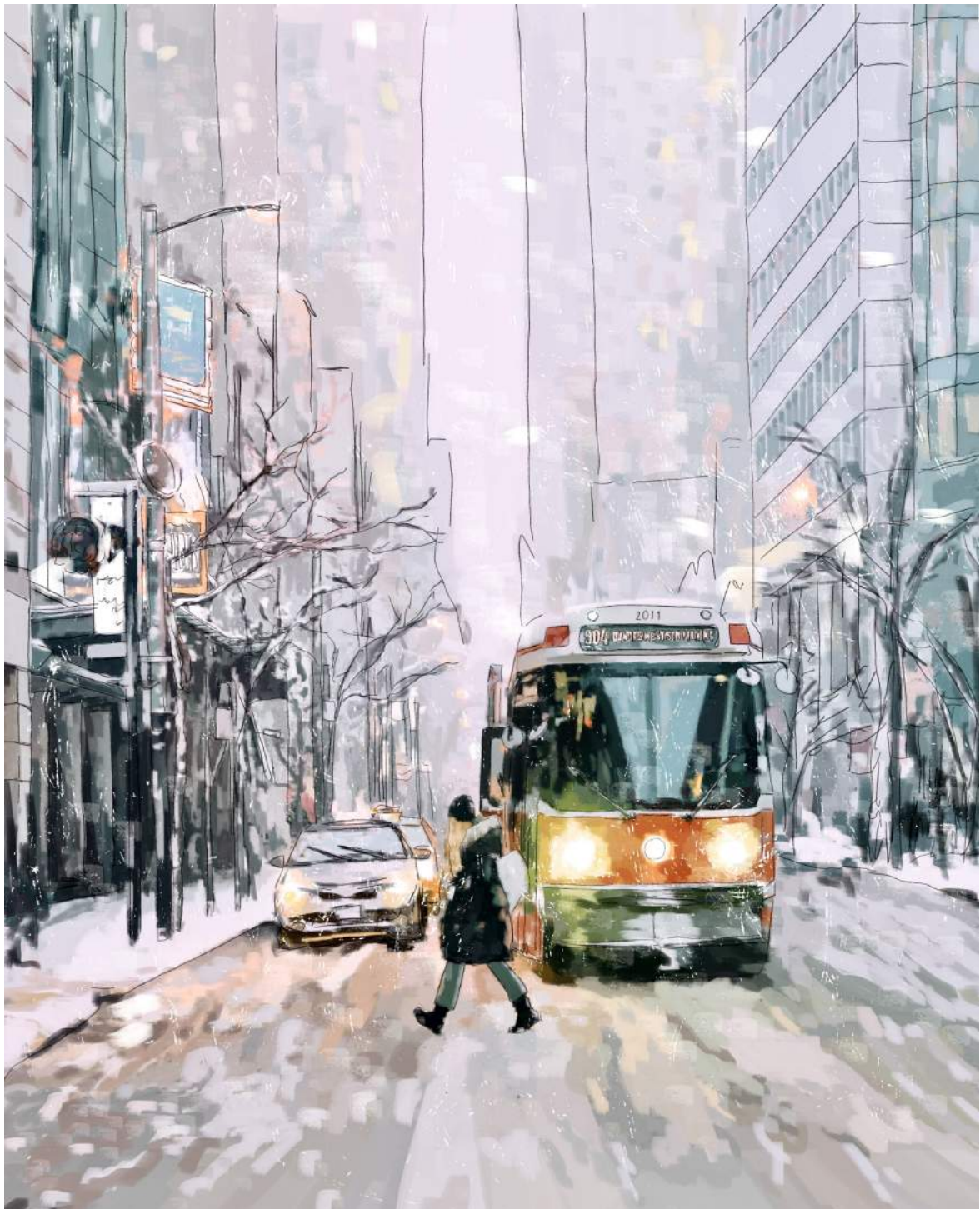


PALETTE

Issue VI. January 2022.



from the editors

Dear Readers,

As the days get colder, we find ourselves returning to the warmth and comfort of familiar routines. A morning coffee, a walk in the park, a favourite book, provide a sense of solace and stability during a time of constant change. The past two years have brought us joy and sorrow, hope and frustration, community and isolation, and everything in between. But as the snow lays down a blank canvas for gentle footprints, we are reminded as well of the blessing of change: the promise of a new season. A chance at renewal. The new year lies ahead of us, a fresh page, waiting to be coloured with possibilities. We wish you all an unimpeded journey across that canvas—a year painted with passion, in the company of loved ones, filled with every beautiful reason to be hopeful. As you set foot, may you find companionship in our medical community, inspiration in the arts, and both within the pages of *Palette*.

For our new readers, *Palette* is a student-led arts and culture publication founded in 2019, dedicated to promoting self-expression and creative dialogue among medical learners at U of T. Since then, *Palette* has successfully published five issues showcasing the impressive and diverse talents of our medical students, faculty, and alumni. Despite an entirely virtual presence this past year, the response that we received from our audience was overwhelmingly supportive, and has encouraged us to forge ahead. This year, we continue to exhibit the creative abilities of our medical community, and to shine a spotlight on talents and passions that extend beyond the conventional arts. We are also proud to share stories and perspectives from those often under-represented in our culturally diverse community. Issue VI has been divided into four sections: Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Lifestyle, and Performance Arts. In Visual Arts, we feature 17 exhibits of artwork in a wide variety of mediums: pencil, ink, paint, embroidery, digital artwork, and photography. Our Creative Writing section presents a collection of insightful poems, short stories, and reflections that draw attention to the role and importance of humanity in medicine. Listen to a wistful playlist and delight in a fresh batch of macaroons as you draw inspiration from our Lifestyle section. In addition, this section features our interviews with fellow classmates Chaithanya Nair and Candice Richardson, as well as with Dr. Dawn Lim, who models the value of creative expression in a medical career. We are also thrilled to share our very special feature on Daffydil: The Musical, U of T Medicine’s widely celebrated student-led theatrical production. We thank Daffydil alumni and the present cast and crew for sharing their experiences with us. Finally, our new Performance Arts section is devoted to celebrating music and dance, and rounds off the wonderful talent highlighted in Issue VI.

We are beyond thankful to the Student Initiative Fund and the U of T Medical Society for their continued funding and unwavering support. To our team—Ali, Brittany, Bronte, James, Jinny, Judy, Katie, Suhaila, and Olivia—we cannot express how lucky we are to work with you. This issue would not be possible without your endless dedication and boundless talent. Lastly, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to our contributors, interviewees, and readers for joining us in celebrating the remarkable talent of our community and embarking on this creative journey together.

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

Warmest regards,



Cindy Cui & Zahra Emami
Editors-in-Chief

Cover Design “Solitude” by Amanda Mac, 2T5



“One of the reasons why I love painting so much is the solitude that it brings me. Art has always been an important mental outlet for me and I find that it is one of the few times when I can be present. I wanted to capture the comfort of this solitude in my painting: surrounded by the busy streets and city lights, she is walking without any real destination in mind. As we become accustomed to the fast-paced world around us, being alone with our aimless thoughts for a period of time can feel unproductive, or even selfish. However, taking time to just allow our minds to catch up and rest can provide so much peace and perspective. I hope that I continue to learn how to feel more at ease with the sense of being alone and to see moments of quiet and aimlessness as opportunities to connect with and learn about myself.”

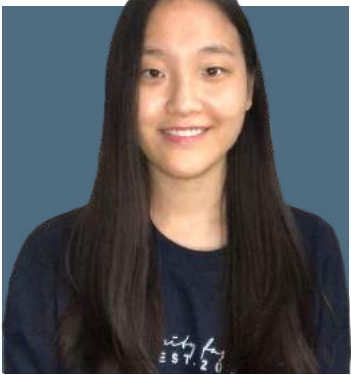
meet our team



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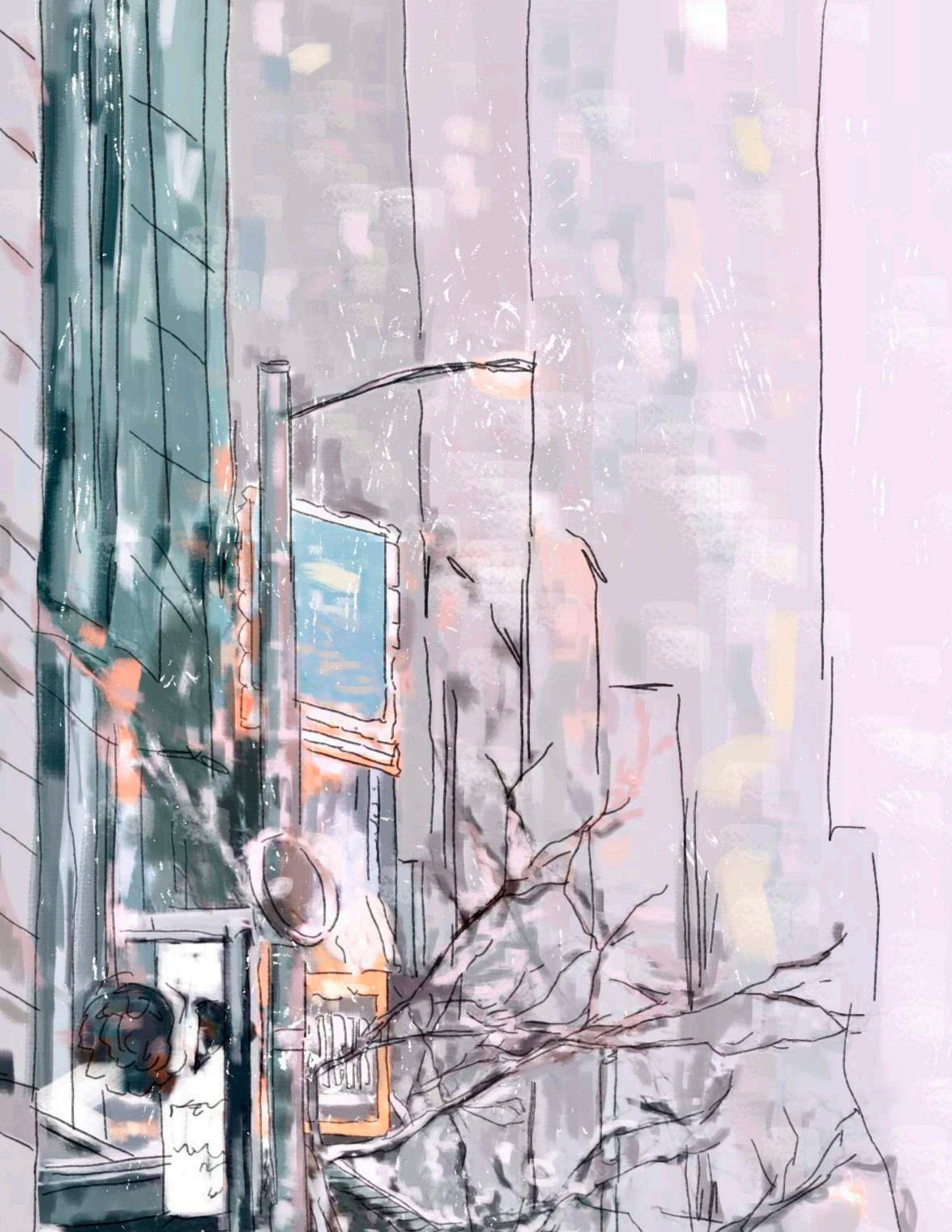
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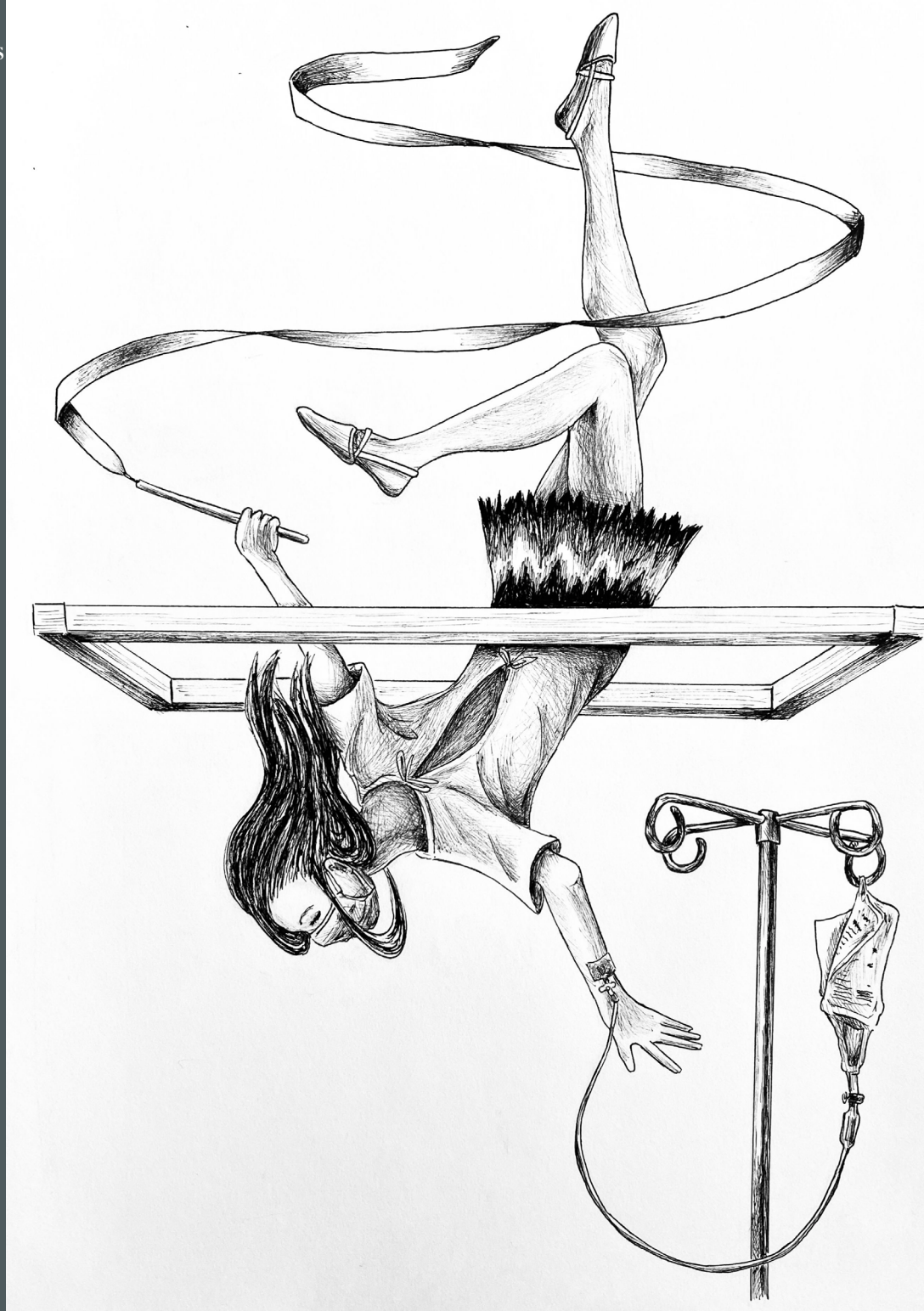
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01

Visual Arts



Two Worlds

Grace Huang
2T3 MAM

"It is much more important to know what sort of patient has a disease than what sort of disease a patient has." - William Osler

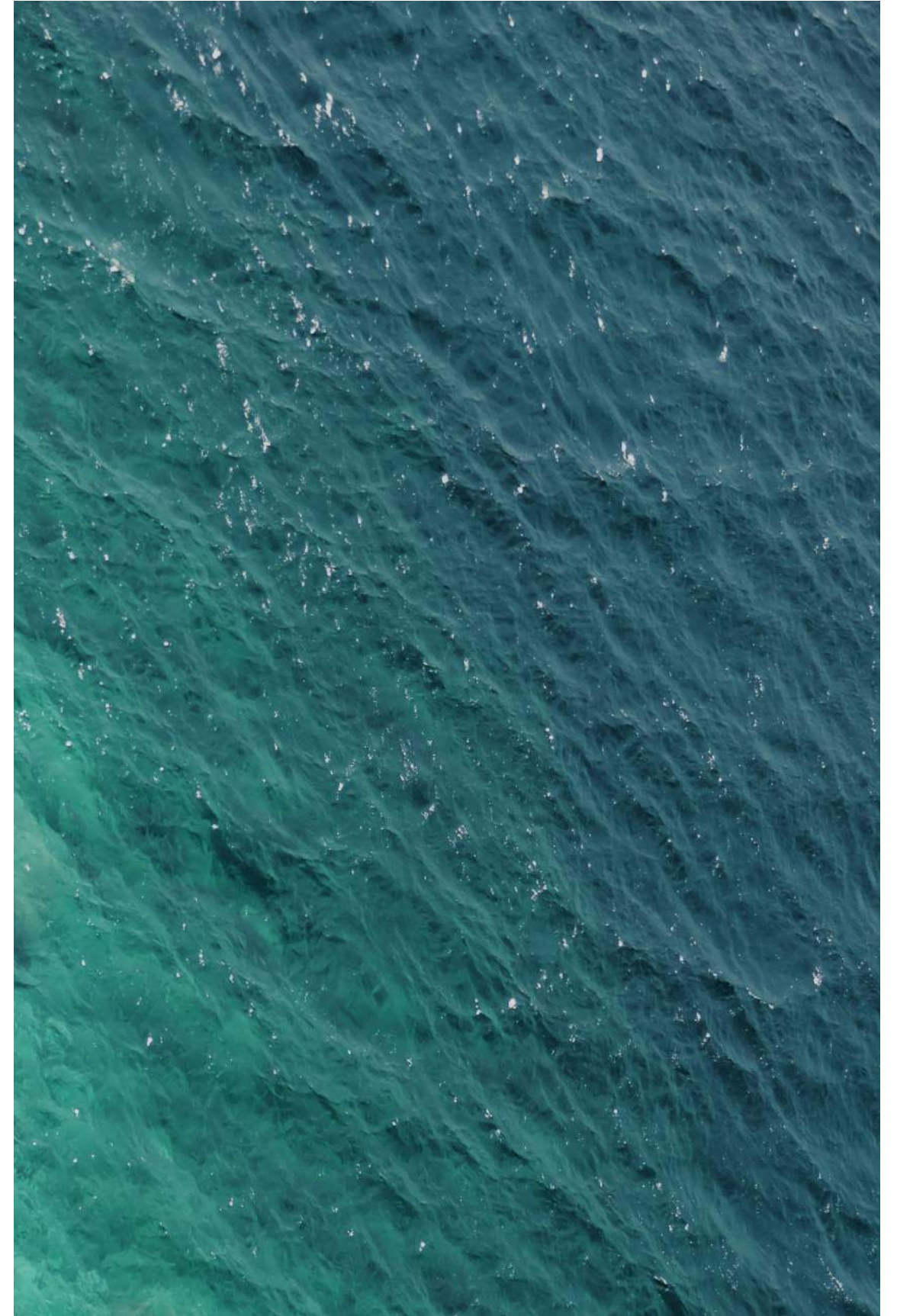
Website: <http://www.gracesfreetime.art/>

Eau Turquoise

Clémence Ongolo Zogo
2T4 WB

Lion's Head, Ontario - 2021

Instagram: @clemmsss



inked

Catherine Meng
2T3 MAM



1



2



3



4



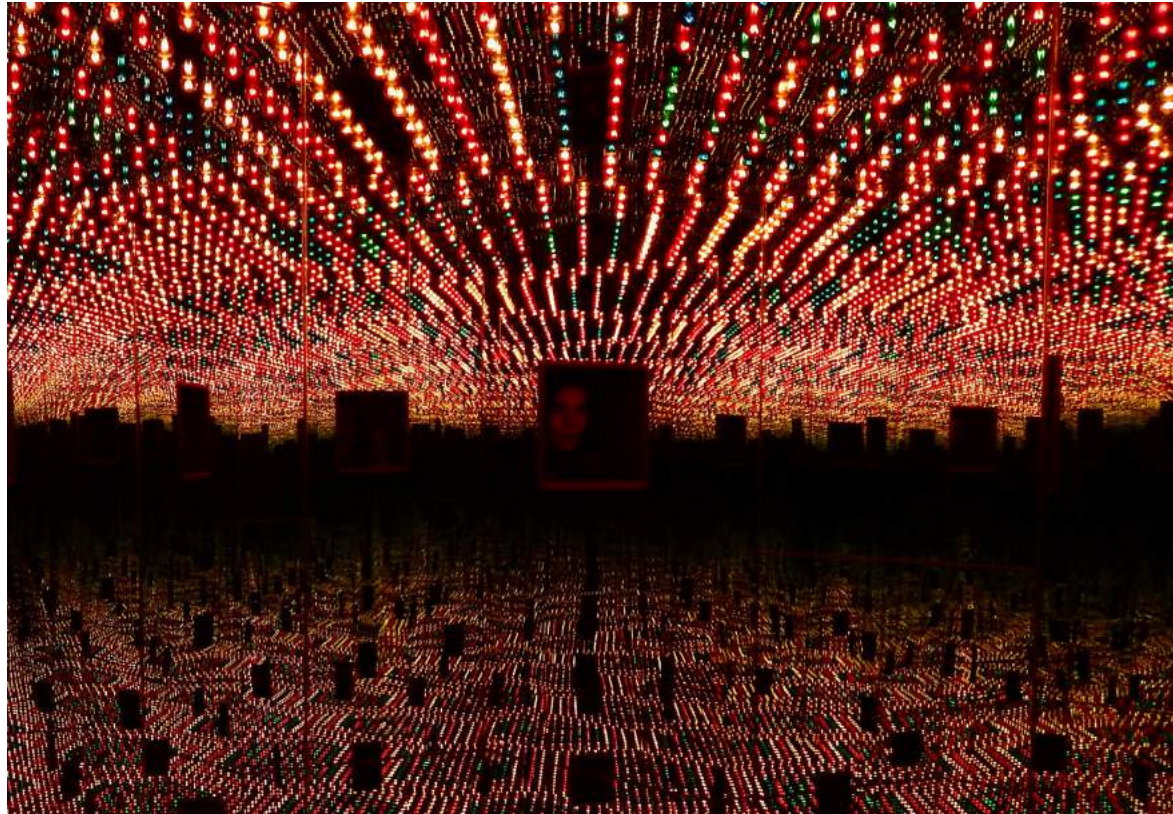
5



6

A selection of ink drawings based on prompts from Inktober 2021.

- | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. crystal | 3. moon | 5. spirit |
| 2. fan | 4. raven | 6. vessel |



Eternalized

Emily Nguyen
2T5 WB



I started photography when I was 8 years old. I learned from my dad, then continued to experiment with the art form in high school and undergrad. For me, photography is a way to freeze moments in time, convey emotions, and induce self-reflection.

I am always looking to explore new artists and exhibits. One exhibit that I will never forget is the 2018 "YAYOI KUSAMA: INFINITY MIRRORS" at the Art Gallery of Ontario. I thought infinity was a difficult concept to grasp and impossible to physically quantify, however, my doubts dissolved once I stepped into Kusama's iconic infinity rooms. Her immersive, multi-reflective installations crafted with glass, mirrors, and LED lights created an illusion of a boundless universe.

My aim with these images was to evoke a sense of "eternity" and transport you to this exhibition. In a room where you cannot see a beginning or end, one where your thoughts and observations are perpetual and continue without interruption, Kusama's extraordinary and innovative explorations of time and space allow us to grasp the vastness of life.

Photo captions:

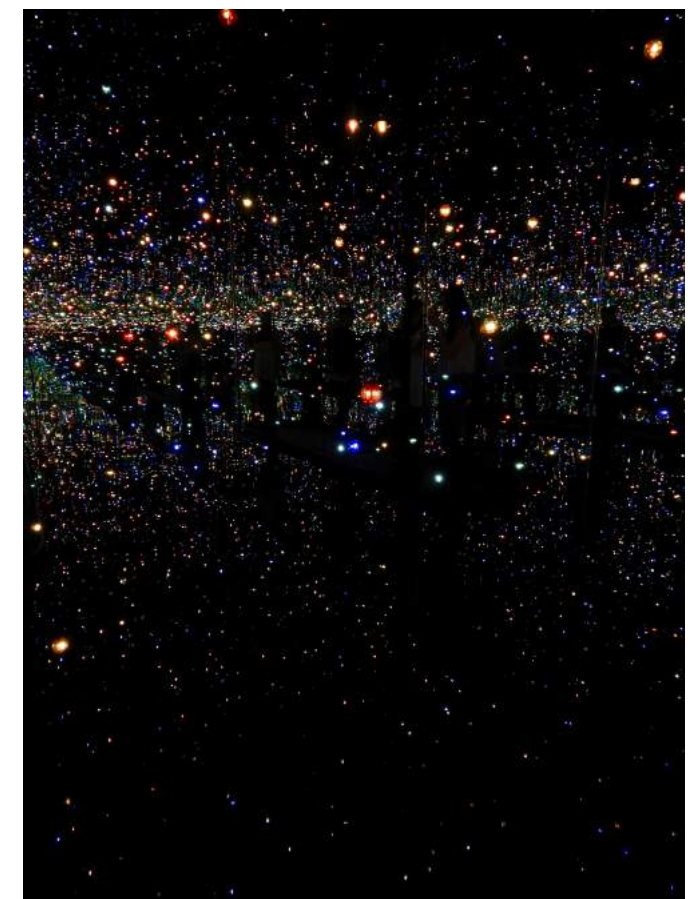
"Light of Life" by Yayoi Kusama, 2018 (top left)

"Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity" by Yayoi Kusama, 2009 (bottom left)

"The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away" by Yayoi Kusama, 2013 (top right)

"Let's Survive Forever" by Yayoi Kusama, 2019 (bottom right)

Instagram: @fikamusings



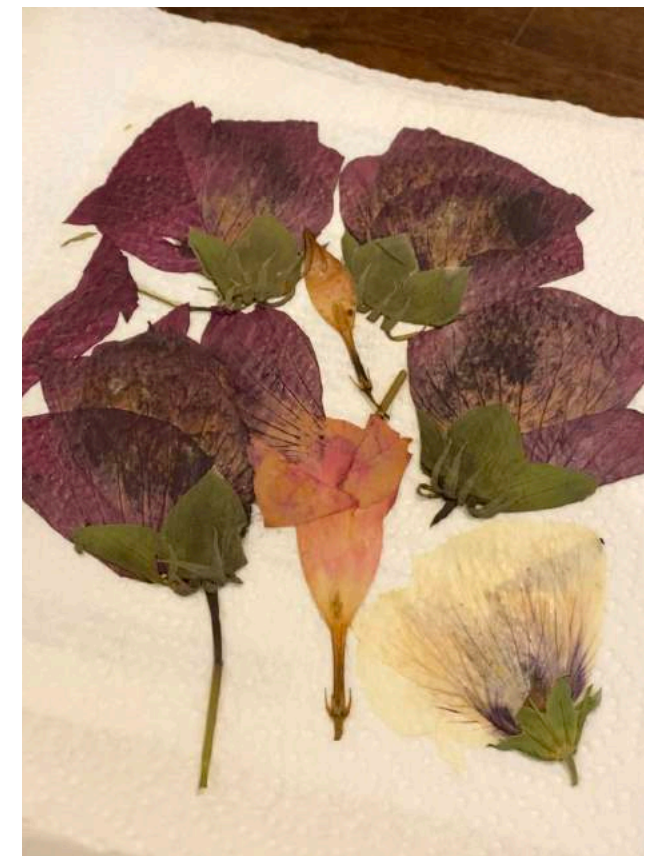
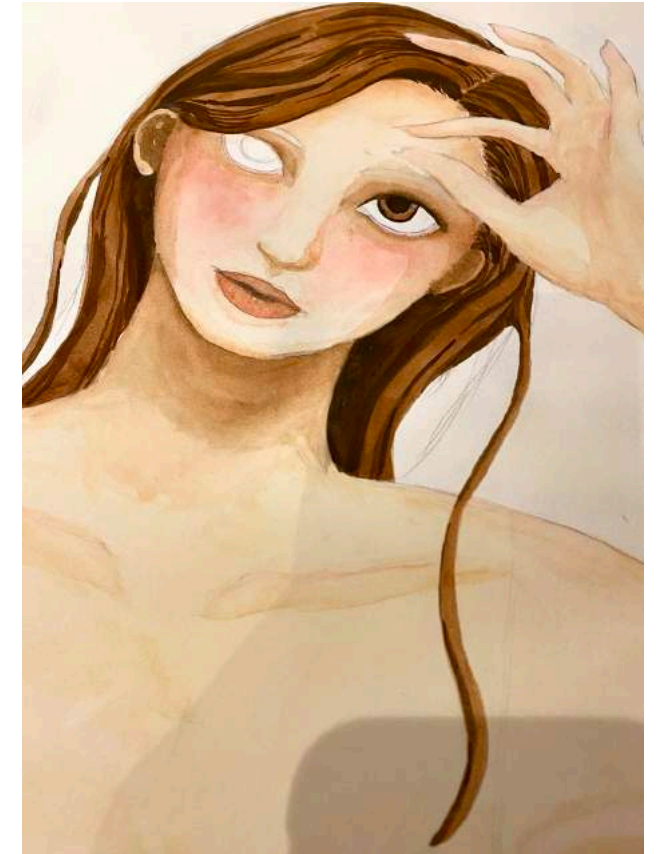
untitled

Nancy Violet Wu
2T4 Fitz



This piece is a product of various different bits. I painted the woman taking on the style of artist Fujiwara Kaoru. The pressed flowers are from my mom's garden. I bought the frame second-hand a year ago.

Website: <http://tinyurl.com/violetheart>



from turtle island to gaza

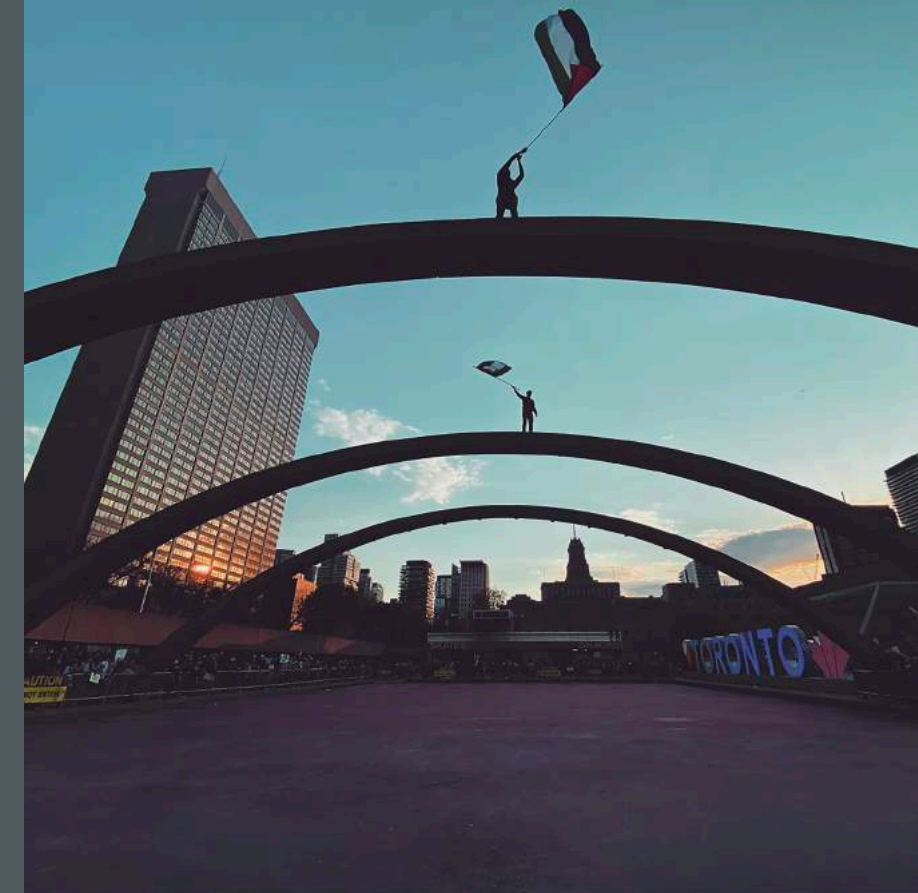
Harsh Naik

2T4 WB



*"When we speak of freedom
we must also speak of our freedom
to be kind
to be just
and to be in love
when we speak of freedom
this is what we
must speak of"*

- David Groulx



Instagram: @photosbyharsh





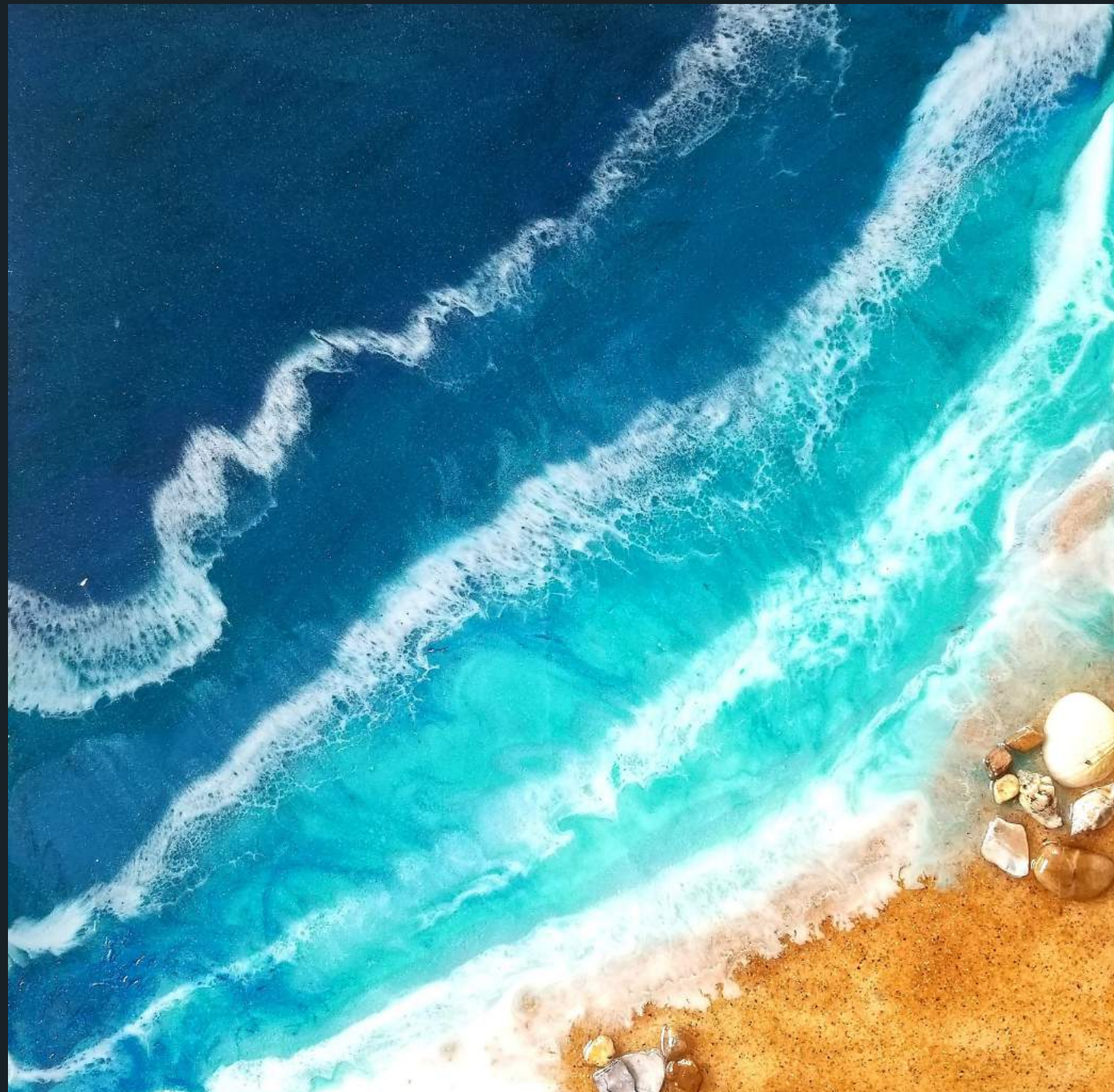
A Tribute to Lawren Harris

Heba Shahaed
2T5 Fitz

I have always been a huge fan of the Group of Seven. My favorite pieces come from the incredible Lawren Harris whose work I greatly admire. This acrylic painting is a recreation of his piece "Greenland Mountains."

Oceanscape

Maimoona Altaf
2T2 WB



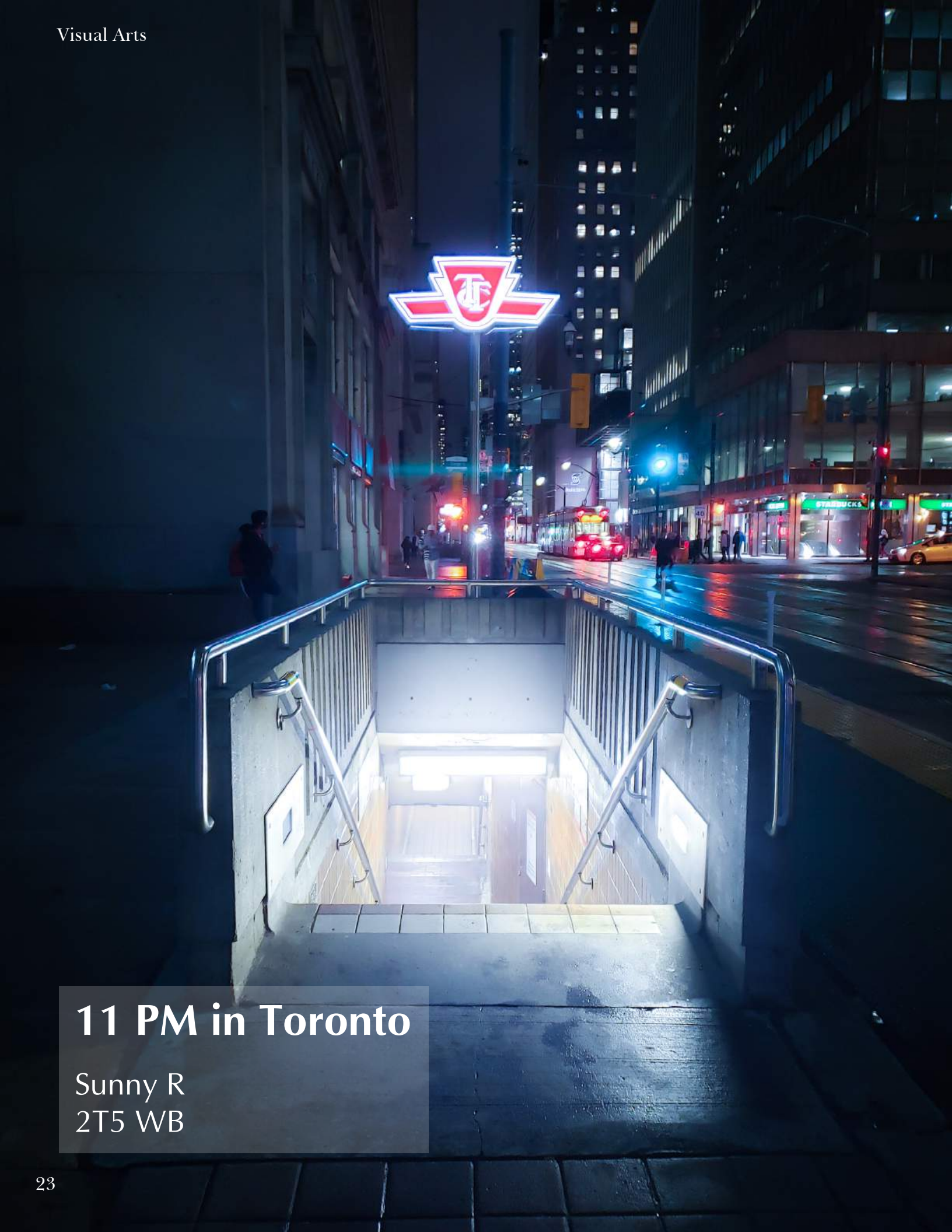
Medium: Repurposed furniture with epoxy resin depicting two contrasting perspectives of the classic oceanscape scene.

The first piece (left) creates a familiar sense of tranquility and peace that we often experience walking past a beach as the waves crash against the soft sand, or the crisp breeze emerges through those waves to overwhelm our senses.

The second piece (right) depicts a more unsettling view of the ocean, with an unsuspecting swimmer scarcely escaping a shiver of sharks. This highlights the mysterious and ominous nature of the ocean, with it being vastly unknown and unexplored.

This duality is a testament to human nature, our ability to accept experiences with nuance and resilience despite uncertainty.





11 PM in Toronto

Sunny R
2T5 WB

Breathe

Olivia So
2T5 WB

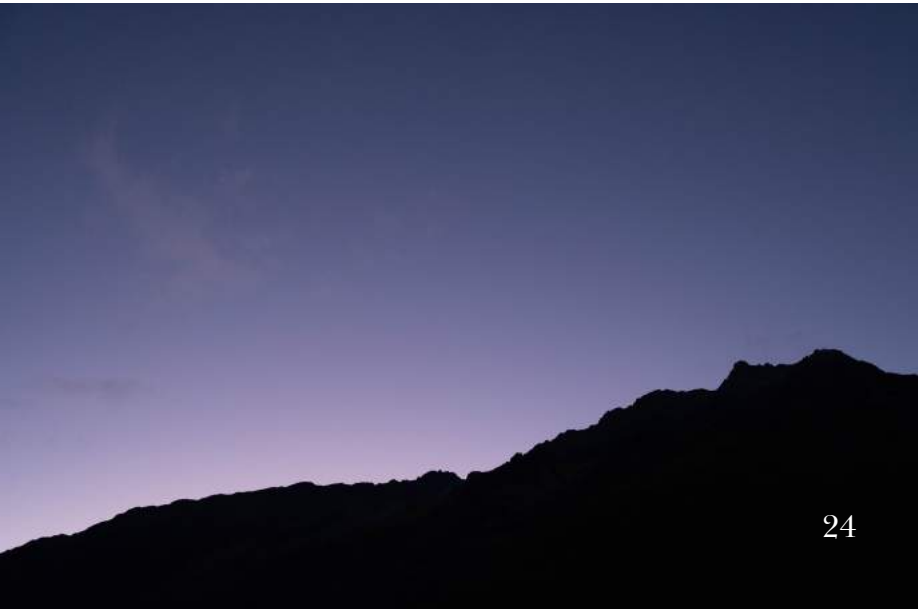


Photo reference by Iván Font



Places

Amanda Mac
2T5 WB



Photo reference by Alex Perkes



Instagram: @amacxtnsn

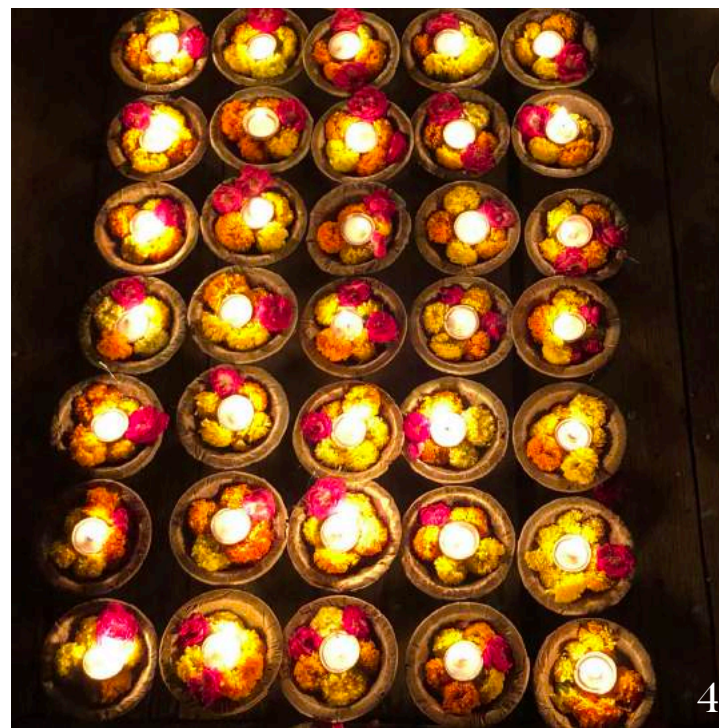
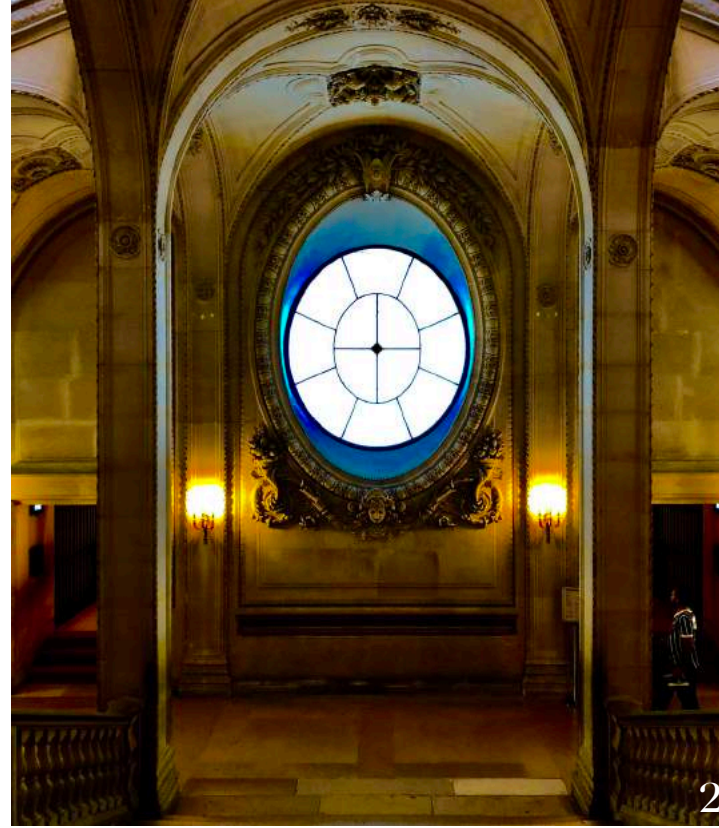


Photo reference by Junya Watanabe

serenity

Kesi

2T4 WB



1. An early morning
at the Taj Mahal—an
elite white marble
mausoleum

2. Musée du Louvre

3. Psyche Revived by
Cupid's Kiss - Antonio
Canova - Musée du
Louvre

4. Flowers and diya
lamps by the river
Ganges



Apocalypse

Ali Almail

2T5 Fitz

Medium: Watercolour and Micropen
Date: 2021

About the Piece: I sat down to paint something in a new-found medium of watercolor. It had been a while since I put brush to paper, so I expected that I would be exercising my muscle memory to paint something simple and whimsical. This piece, entitled *Apocalypse*, is far from that expectation. I realized that my heart was heavy with all that has been going on in the world: the earthquake in Haiti, the dire situation in Lebanon, the climate changing all over the world, and the many souls being vanquished in Afghanistan. These events barely scrape the surface of this bemoaning world. This piece helped me channel my feelings of helplessness and powerlessness amidst all of these circumstances; exposing how we are caught with the ground beneath us cracking, revealing a deep abyss below. I found meaning in this painting, and I hope you do too, as I continue to process how to be an effective member of our collective humanity that is currently hurting in so many ways.

Portfolio:
<https://almailali.wixsite.com/portfolio>

sunflower for my sister.

Ajantha Nadarajah
2T5 WB



Lifelines

Beth Boyd
2T5 MAM

Life from the Lifeless

Ali Almail
2T5 Fitz

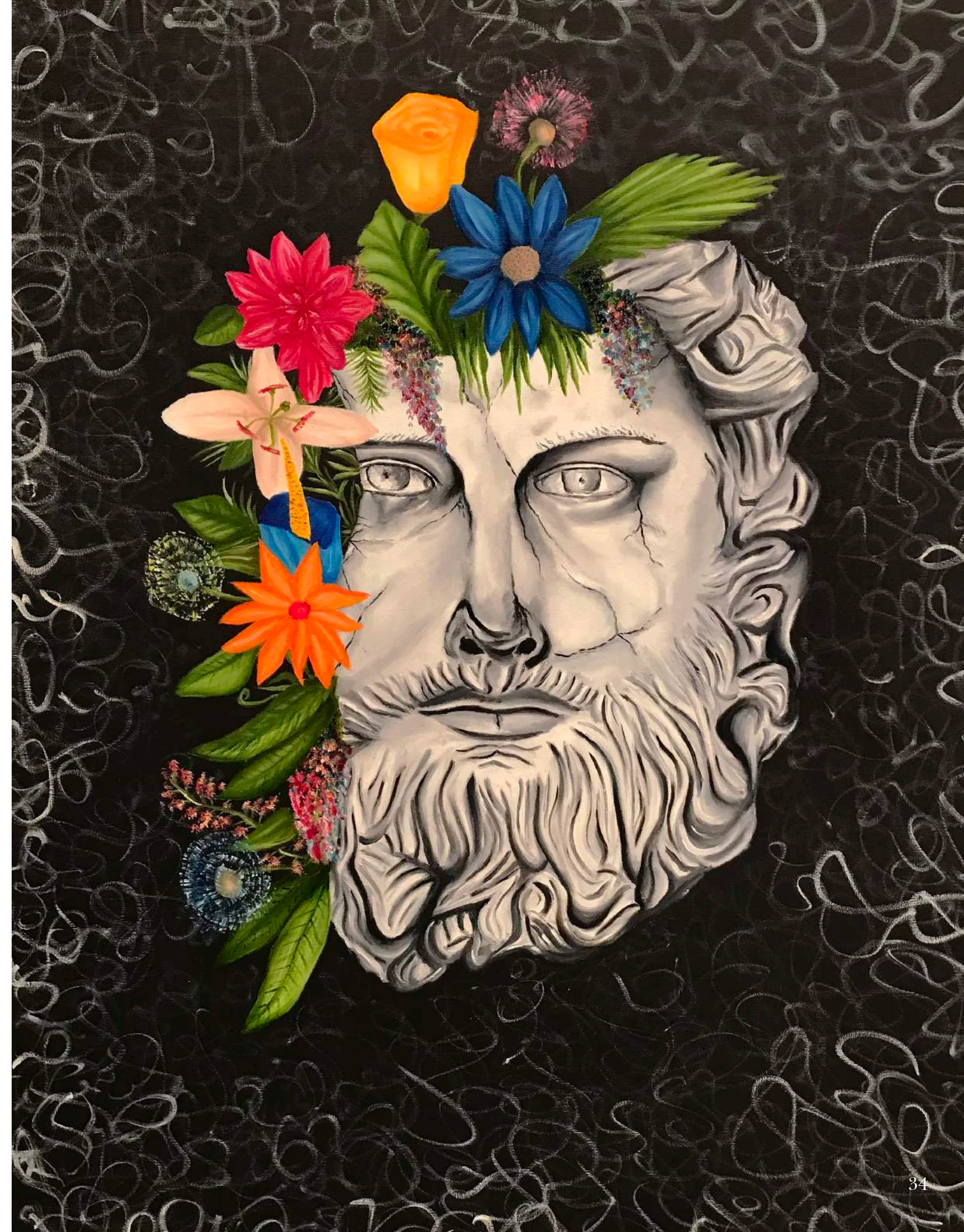
Medium: Oil Paint on Canvas

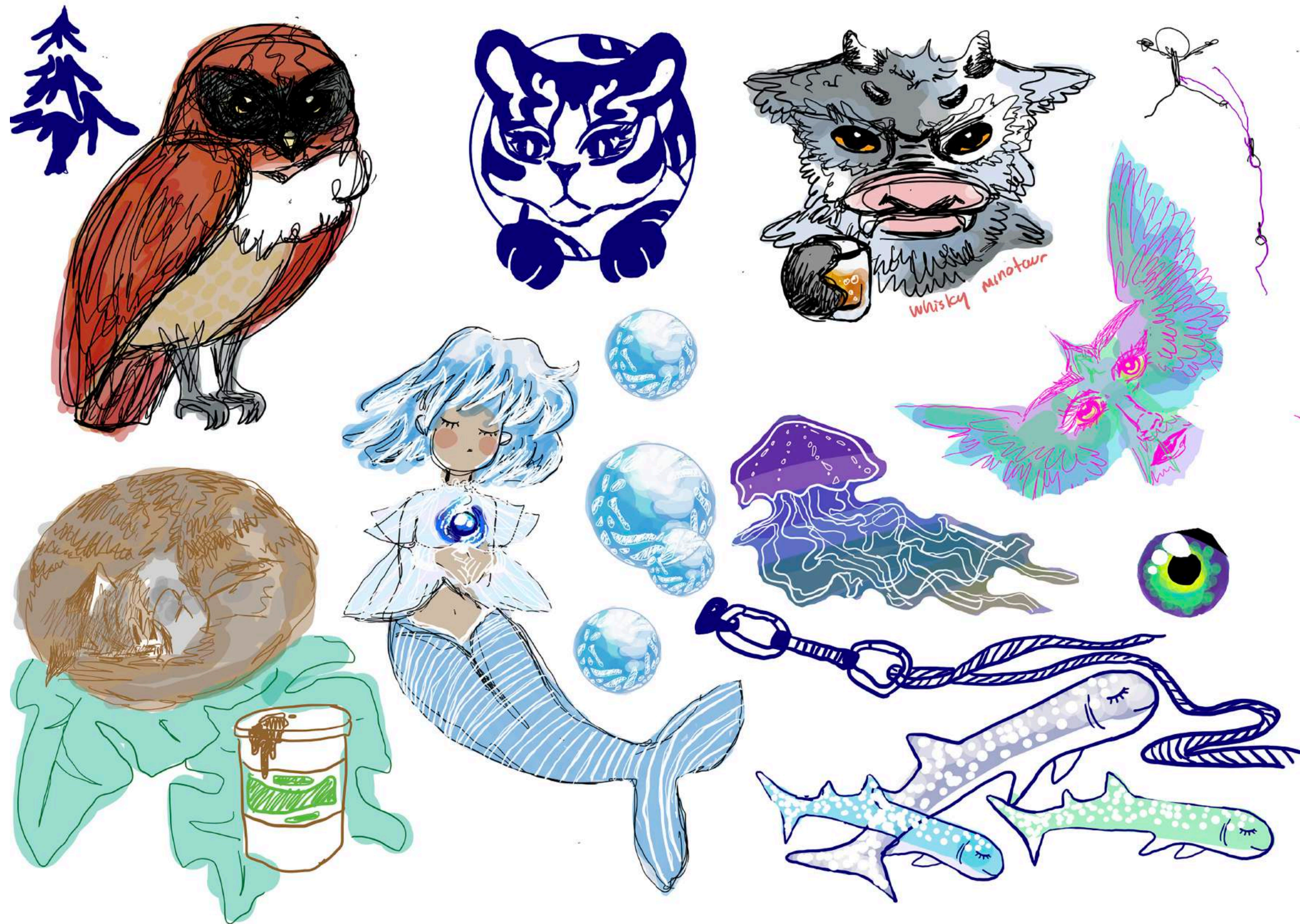
Size: 30x40 inches

Date: 2020

About the Piece: The question that this piece poses is: “Can life come from something lifeless?” Can a lifeless soul, symbolized by the cracked statue, be a foundation for foliage to take root? Hence, can the lifeless parts of our lives be a breeding ground for a more exuberant life?

Portfolio: <https://almailali.wixsite.com/portfolio>





Doodles Sep 2021 - Nov 2021

Laura Tang
2T5 WB

This is a compilation of doodles I've made on my lecture notes. I drew these in the small breaks between class and between bursts of motivation while studying. I use a combination of pens and highlighters in my note-taking app. When I have trouble staying still for long periods of time, these doodles help me recharge, refocus, and fight on!



02

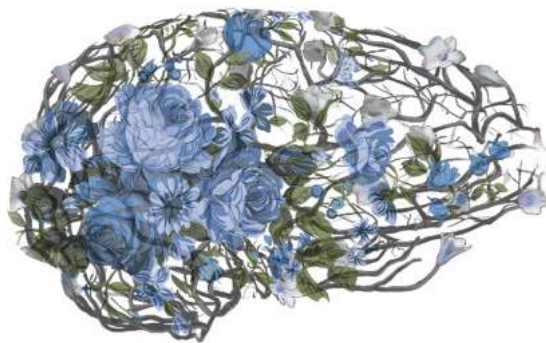
Creative Writing

Foliage of our Cerebellum

Kabisha Velauthapillai

2T4 Fitz

Artist’s Statement: *This poem was a product of my wonder for the more-than-human, my appreciation for the privilege of seeing the inside of the cerebellum we hold within us, and a deep dissatisfaction about the way we are made to ingest rather than digest learnings about the human body.*



A sagittal section of the cerebellum can show us a pattern akin to the foliage of a tree.

Branches,
with sub-branches, splaying,
displaying leaves that make up the foliage of
our tree.

Our tree—
Teeming with networks
of soliloquies, heard and unheard,
thoughts rushing through the white and grey matters
of what we call
our brain.

Our brain—
Perhaps where our consciousness lies,
that very abstraction,
that makes up the essence of you, of me, of us,
of the world that we have constructed around us
via our inner foliage that presumptively makes way
for this abstraction of consciousness.

My consciousness looks at the foliage of the trees
passing by
as I pass by.
The trees whose foliage
hits a tone of vibrancy
with the red, the yellow,
the green, the brown
against the grey of the city buildings,
against the grey of the clouds,
against the bold blue of the sky above us.

And I wonder.
I wonder about these connections
between us and the trees,
the trees and us.
About the patterns in our cerebellum
and the foliage of the trees.
Mere coincidence,
or something more?
So I wonder.

I wonder.



The house hasn't changed much

Katie Ann Lee

2T5 Fitz

The house hasn't changed much.

I can hear the TV on in the kitchen and my mother chopping vegetables. I know if I were to walk into the room at that moment, I'd be greeted by the smell of pasta because it's Tuesday. There'd be a bowl of cut-up fruit at my seat at the counter, and my mother would be lit by the late afternoon light coming through the window. On the TV, there'd either be the news or the soap she's been watching longer than I've been alive. She's not sentimental about most things, but this show seems to have her heart.

Music seeps through my sister's closed bedroom door. I recognize the song; it's one that I sent to her last week. It's a school night, and I know behind the door, she's sitting at her desk with her legs crossed on a crooked office chair. She's reading the same calc textbook that I used four years before, but she definitely understands more of the subject than I ever did. A stack of papers sits atop a sewing machine, and miscellaneous art supplies are scattered about the room. There are several lamps on at once, and I think this is the perfect representation of her controlled, creative chaos.

The door alarm chimes twice as my father gets home from work. I can hear him toss his car keys into the basket by the door before making his way to the kitchen. I know he'll get a glass of water for himself, and then another for the tomato plant that he's been growing. The plant was a seemingly random project to take on, but one that I knew he'd succeed at. His continued and regular care has helped the dirt and seeds turn into a plant that's almost taller than me. Standing by the backyard door, he'll mention something about a plan to clean the deck on the weekend so we can have family over. He'll stand at the window a little while longer, thinking about these things in the way that he does, before calling us down for an early dinner.

When I'm anxious, I've learned to reach for the things I know to be true. And since the minute I was old enough to think, it's been them. At home, time stands still at 5 pm on a Tuesday.



Commotion

Golsa Shafa

2T3 PB

My deepest and darkest feelings,
housed under the skin of norms,
I'm afraid may one day ooze
beyond my skin in all its forms

Deep desires of mine come with
unresolved emotions in barrels,
that no one dares to approach until
sudden commotions and quarrels

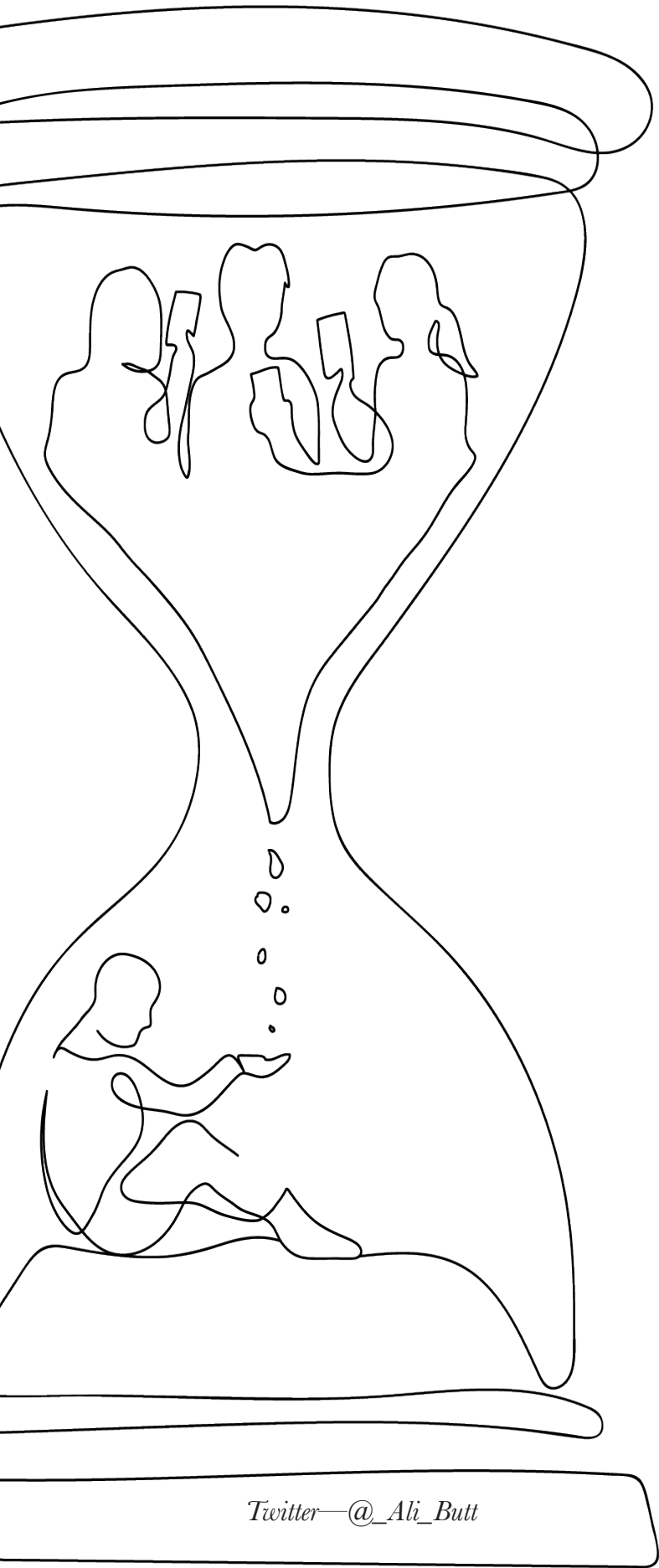
My darkest feelings whisper,
“Let's not bother with the pain,”
It's deaf, the masochist in me alas,
says, “Why bother staying sane?”

Before midnight strikes, my feelings
reveal themselves to a gentle soul.
To a stranger they find their way,
all in hopes of becoming whole.

With a code word for distress,
the stranger knocks down one by one
all the barrels that housed the dark
wine dripping through my heart

These dark feelings finally submit
To the medication I needed to treat
my thoughts, with a dose of fateful chat
with the stranger that I got to meet





Twitter—@_Ali_Butt

Call to Action

Ali Butt
2T5 MAM

Artist’s Statement: This piece explores the conversations around change but the lack of action from ourselves and others.

We see the hardship and we see the despair, so why is it that we claim life can be fair? The truth of the matter is: life isn’t. In fact, we are all so different.

Rather than converse, why aren’t we acting? Why is it that statistics are just that... statistics? Instead, we need to react!

Why is it that we call for action but hardly act? Why aren’t we helping rather than disputing the facts?

We are so consumed by the material that we forget about those without materials. We are so stuck to our phones in hopes to level up, that we forget to send our friend a care package to help them move up.

I put it in terms so that you could understand but clearly you aren’t getting the message. Maybe the Wi-Fi is down, should I retry sending?

Proportion

Benjamin Keating

2T2 Fitz

After I have drunk the whisky
after I have called my love
and filled my shoes with cedar
after I have strummed the song of my friend’s father
I contemplate the finite life that lies before me.

After I have wound my watch
and loosened my collar
I know that I have found peace
but only in such an amount,
that I fall upon my bed with my mind racing
and my hands clamouring
for the early afternoon dawn.



She pulls back the pristinely folded sheets and steps into bed, switching off the comforting yellow light from the nightstand. Darkness fills the room and envelops her until only her thoughts are visible.

Nope. She didn't want that.

With a note of agitation, she squeezes her eyes shut and turns over in her bed a few times, trying to find a comfortable spot.

Sleep. Why was it so hard?

She was able to solve dozens of overlapping patient cases a day and take care of herself and all others under the roof, but a simple human task that all 7.2 billion people engaged in on the daily suddenly loomed over as an obstacle.

Closing her eyes felt wrong. She wrapped her arms around her knees, which evoked a sense of the fetal position. Maybe I am still a child? How am I an adult professional? Sleep was for children; she had things to do, more problems to solve. Wasn't there something left on the to-do-list that she had skipped over? Her fingers quickly clasp for her phone. Scrolling. *Nope.* Artificial light is bad for the circadian rhythm.

Squeeze eyes shut. Phone back on nightstand.

Okay. We can do this.

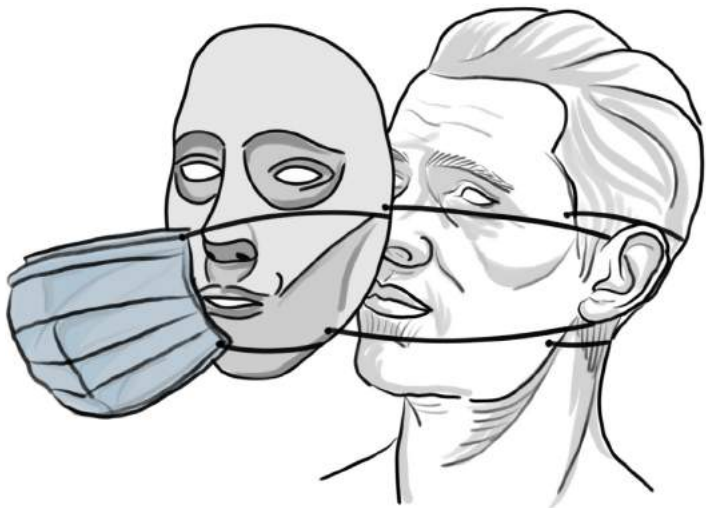
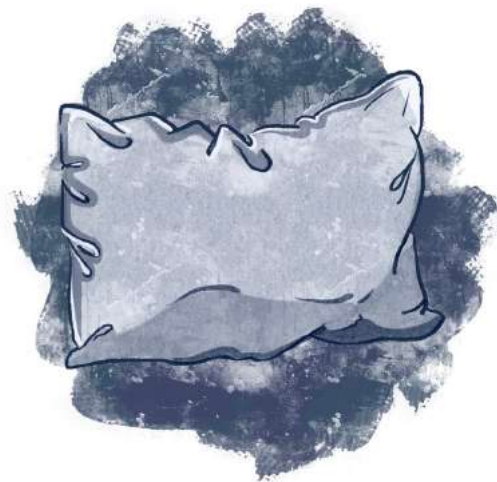
Hours and hours crawl by and as dawn creeps in she drifts into a restless slumber....

The next she wakes up heavy-headed. Folds back the sheets as pristinely as a capable woman would.

Sleep threatens her existence as she starts the new day.

Slumber of the Insomniac

Anonymous



My Mask

Mathepan Jeya
Mahendralingam

MD/PhD PB

Twitter—@mathepan

Each of us wore one
before this all started

An infectious smile
to charm. Ingenuine narratives
to coax. Inventive personalities
to compete

Mine defeats
inadequacies and
fulfills the need
to please

Mine protects
from their
Are you okays
and sympathetic tones

Mine has kept me too safe
to the point
that I don't know
or care
for which face I started with
but now I relax and rejoice
to hide under a
new blue one

Unfiled Case Report

Bronte Lim, 2T5 WB

ID: Ms. M is a 22-year-old university student.


CC: Ms. M arrived at the clinic late on a weeknight with complaint of a sharp pain radiating from the left side of her chest.

HPI: Pain is persistent and radiating, short-lived in duration but regular in occurrence, a 4 on a scale of 0 to 10, originating from a spatial displacement (a geographical dis-ordering) 2 months prior. Pain is aggravated by photos of home, the smell of dark soy sauce hitting a hot wok, and that sickening feeling of finding joy but realizing that that joy is being experienced in the absence of the ones more beloved. Pain is alleviated by warm baths and the background noise created by the next-door couple arguing, making amends, and preparing for slumber, which Ms. M describes as, “Simply lovely.”

PMHx: Ms. M insists I refer to her student medical records, which record up-to-date vaccinations and read only with an additional note of, “No known history.” Ms. M added that she has, since matriculating, developed mild lactose intolerance, which she noticed after experiencing nausea after having ice cream on a lousy date organized by her best friend, N.

FMHx: Ms. M is unsure if her condition is hereditary, but strongly suspects that it is. “Risk factors, shared behaviours. Immigrating then immigrating some more. I did it before I even realized, moving three time zones out—for school I thought, simply for school. Then they went and moved again.” Past family diagnoses are unavailable due to issues with translation, the limiting sizes of suitcases, the prices of international phone calls, and the lack of electronic medical records spanning the family’s decades of departures. No siblings. Both parents are living, 55 and 56, recently retired and recently relocated from Ms. M’s hometown back to their own hometown 2 months ago, 12 time zones away.

Nb. I asked Ms. M to clarify the locations she referred to. She appeared confused at my question and provided no clear reply.



SHx: Ms. M is a non-smoker and drinks socially, 2-3 standard drinks per weekend. She prefers hard liquor, Chinese *baijiu*, and brings her own to parties.

Medications: Ms. M explains she self-medicates on 3 cups of coffee per day, a cognitive analgesic (Tik Tok), and an OTC sleep aid most weeknights.

Nb. Ms. M asked me to note that baijiu has a bad reputation, but that I (and the health team) should check our biases, especially considering how popular Japanese *sake* and Korean *soju* are these days.

ROS: N/A

Nb. Ms. M responded to each question of the typical functional inquiry with, “Why?”

Summary: Ms. M is a 22-year-old woman experiencing pain in the left side of her chest. She does not seem to be in distress and has the close friendship of N, who picked Ms. M up from the clinic. Ms. M may be struggling with a lack of family support. She appeared distracted towards the end of the appointment and suggested that the interview with a medical student might very well be enough; that her problems were not psychosomatic, and that I ought not write that down anywhere; that she thinks a long phone call may be the best course of action. Ms. M states that 22 is a difficult age to be, neither here nor there, made all the more difficult by an indeterminate future and an obscured past.

Nb. When I inquired further about Ms. M’s feelings, she replied that the details were not relevant to my education as a medical student, but possibly relevant to my edification as an individual, also 22.

Impression: Ms. M and N left, arms linked, from the university student clinic. Watching them leave hurt my eyes; the icy wind of late autumn made them water. I find myself thinking about this exchange, hours later, though I should have already submitted this case report to my preceptor. Checking my watch now, it’s possible that Ms. M will call her parents soon because now—and twelve time zones from now—the two halves of her family may be experiencing a similar painful tug on the left sides of their chests.

Artist’s Statement: I find a lot of comfort and inspiration in that case reports, as much as they are filled with questions to answer and acronyms to go through, there is also a surprisingly rich space for portraiture, impression, and connection.

The Lighthouse Keeper

Chan Hwi (Matthew) Cho

2T5 MAM

Artist's Statement: *This piece was inspired by a conversation I had with a brilliant physician who compared their role to that of a lighthouse keeper—someone who guides and serves as a source of hope for those that are sick/lost. I wanted to contrast this profound belief in their work to the skepticism rampant in our day and age, and ultimately offer the conclusion I came to as a medical student.*

As another falls victim
to the sea,
I wonder how the lighthouse keeper
stands so strong,

Day and night,
they guide the lost,
who wander, wander, wander...
desperately fighting in troubled waters,

What does the keeper see
within the tempest's heart
that makes them want to stay?
I am tempted to turn my head away,

As all I see
are fleeting thoughts,
drowning boats
becoming specks of dust,

Only a fool
would dare disturb
the wheel that turns
and the scythe that waits below.

Still, the keeper remains,
continuing to shine
their meager light
in hopes of buying time,

Not from pity,
or detached duty,
but a lifelong search
for meaning and beauty,

And for one split instant,
they turn the sea of dust
into a sky—limitless,
a canvas of blinding stars,

I have seen this sky
with my own two eyes,
I wish to paint it someday
with my own two hands.

Perhaps a modest light
is all one needs
to row against the world,
blindly into a storm.



Peak and Valley
Brian Hyung
2T2 Fitz

Artist’s Statement: Inspired by the supposed fabled “6 word stories” by Ernest Hemingway, I wanted to write about my experiences with palliative medicine—especially of the patients I met and their stories. Each 6-word story can be read standalone or all together as one larger tale. Readers can choose to read the stories in any order they wish, and interpret as they wish as well.

Time
Until Christmas. That should be enough.

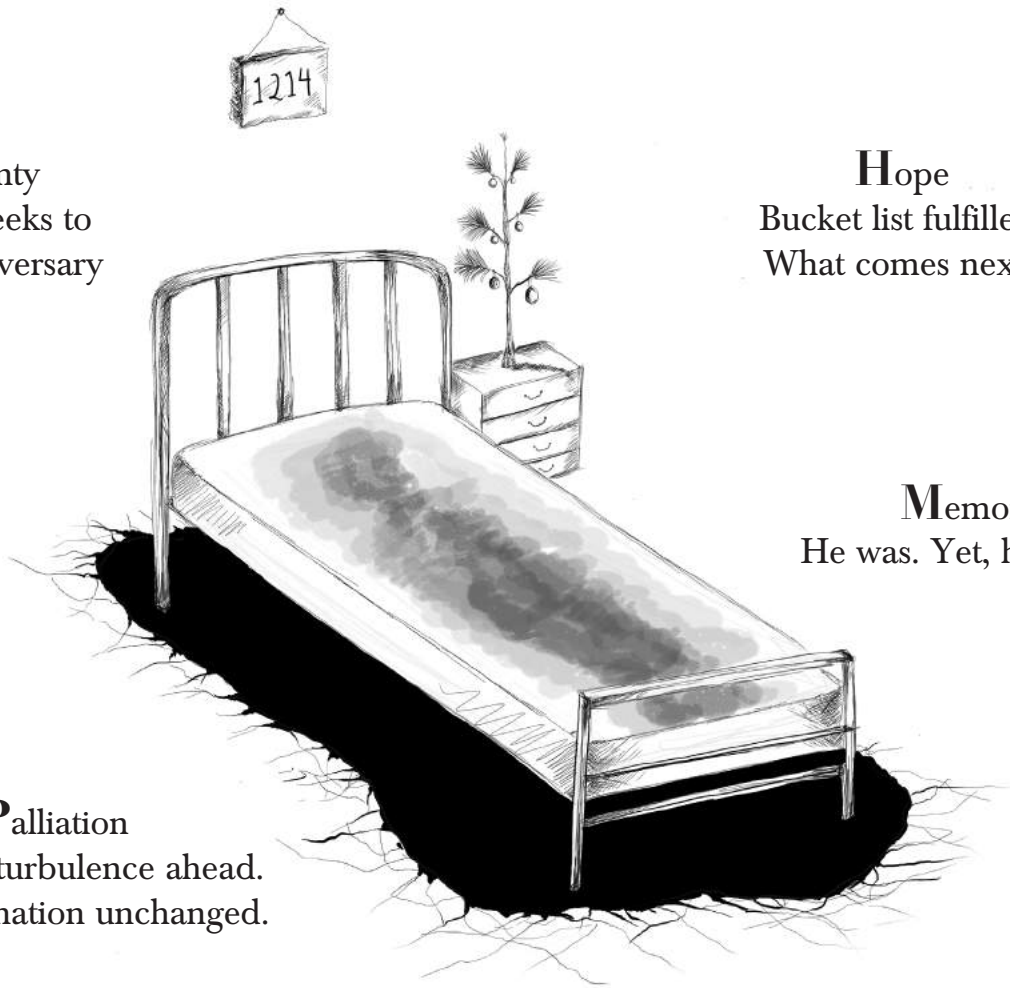
Uncertainty
Expected: weeks to months. Anniversary today.

Hope
Bucket list fulfilled. What comes next?

Memory
He was. Yet, he still is.

Palliation
Minimize turbulence ahead. Final destination unchanged.

Discharge
Bed 1214. Once warm, now cold.



the bloom
autumn sky

Artist’s Statement:
4pm.21.2021 / a reflection on covid-19 // 12:34

and then,
without regret,
without care or thought or recognition of its significance,
the final bloom
dropped.
pulled relentlessly by time and gravity,
down
down
plump petals turned to paper-thin wisps
a shadow of their former selves
down
down
without regret it fell.

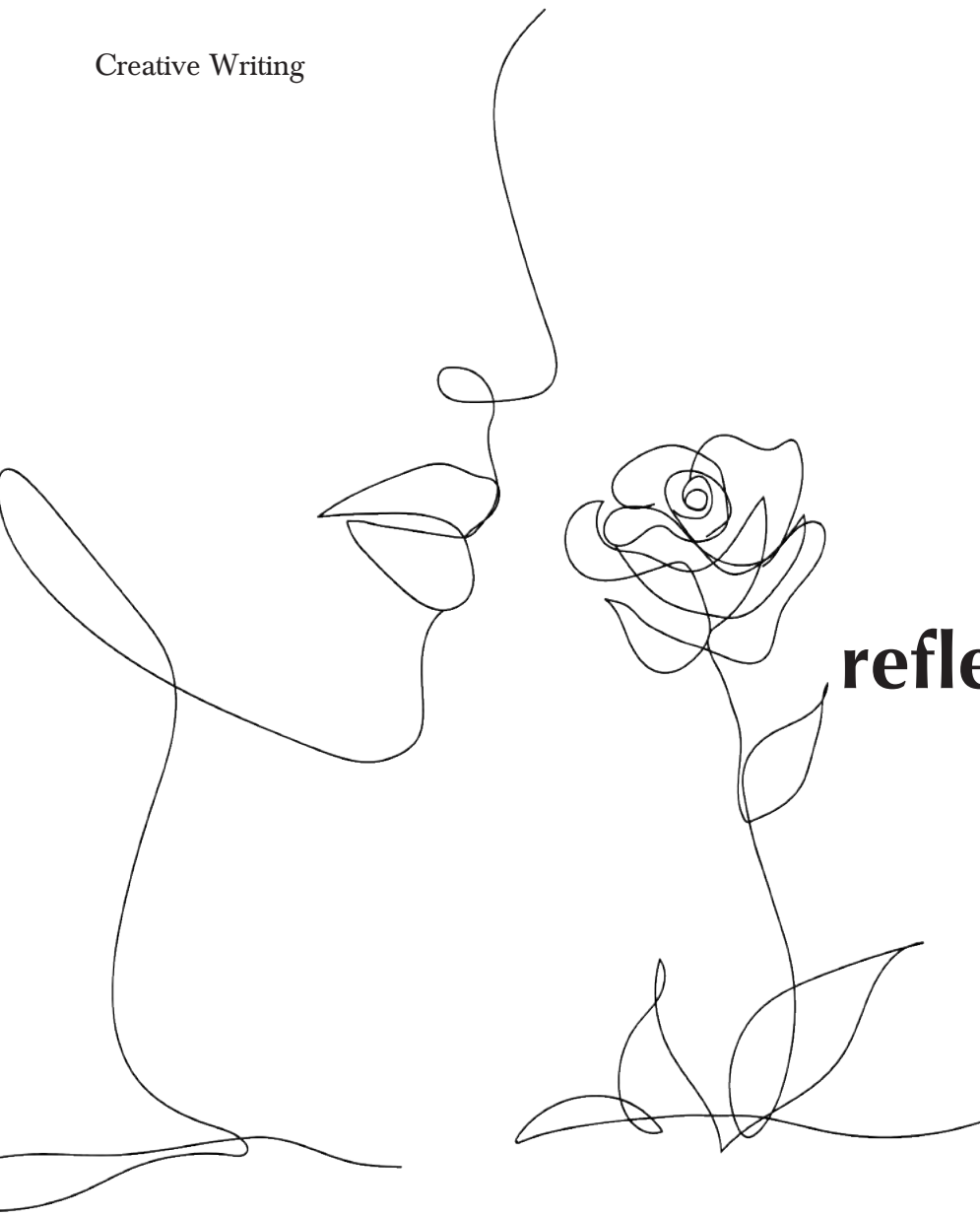
and so too whipped the flags in the wind
without regret.
flown at half-mast for the loss
once vibrant bodies turned paper-thin
lungs once pink
like the petals of those flowers
now a prison cell of cells
clumps of sticky masses turned against the
body dependent on them

flags beating in the wind
asking, without regret,
are you next?

day by day the creeping clock ticks relentlessly onward
meaningless and yet full of meaning
the youth cry out in silent, strangled moans for the loss of a life
once so bright on the horizon
the lighthouse was destroyed one night
leaving ships stranded,
floating in murky depths
crying out in silent, strangled moans
the sails flap flap flap on the mast
lifeless alone

we are those ships
stranded out at sea
no land in sight
no lighthouse

time only marked by the final bloom
giving way to its own mortality
without regret.



A moment of reflection may be what we need

Anonymous

Ever since medical school started, I have realized how often our focus sways, from one subject to another with new topics surprising our schedules each day. We are constantly on the move; completing assignments, attending workshops, meeting friends, and so on. Where is the time to process it all? Each day is filled with exciting developments, fresh new faces, and profound opportunities for growth and progress as medical students. Yet, it seems that we move on to tomorrow before today even ends. At least for myself, I have noticed how consumed I become with the completion of tasks and fulfillment of requirements that I forget to recognize my intention behind everything I was committing to.

Taking even a few minutes everyday to reflect would not only support my ability to introspect but also propel me to make important decisions in the way I navigate my journey through first year and medical school in general. Whether it's taking time at the end of the night to journal or putting up sticky notes around your room reminding yourself about something meaningful you extracted from a workshop or lecture, every small minute of reflection is valuable. I encourage all my fellow classmates to consider reflecting on every encounter, every experience, and every learning opportunity. Looking back on these impactful experiences and moments may provide significant insight and gratification as future physicians.

I sit and struggle against the weight
Of 41° and change.
I sit upright coughing blood
Into the cool water of the tub.

I thought by now
I might remember my name.
But who am I to say?
My mind is melting into the tub.

Clots of dark red float on the water.
I feel too weak to shiver.
I can only close my eyes.

In flame-licked visions
I see a tree with roots
Punching down and through
The cool, dark earth.
Every rootlet coalesces into one.

And thousands of branches unfurl
Like lifetimes glistening in the sun.
And now they're burning,

Smouldering at the tips, flames crawling
Backwards slowly, ever-hungry
As sixteen becomes eight
Becomes four becomes two.
And when the fire is finally done,
Every branch is tinged with ash but one.

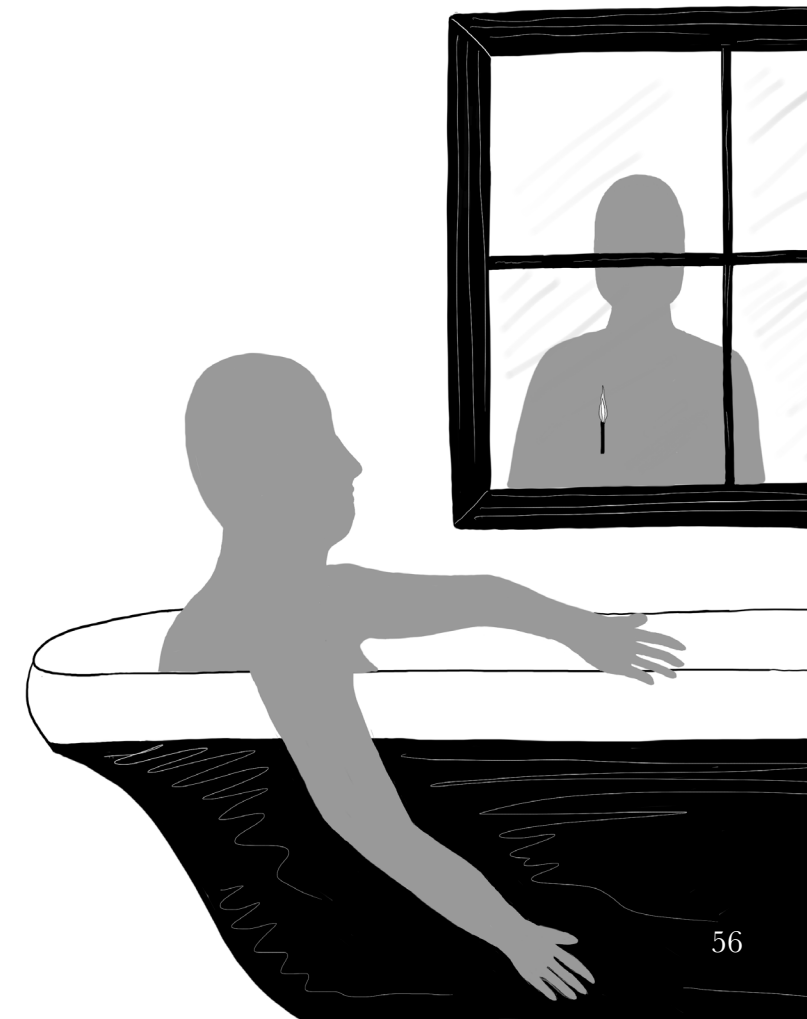
I hack and sputter, tremble in the tub.
My foot knocks the plug. I curse.
The water is lost to the cool, dark earth.

From the window I can only watch
The tree in the backyard smoulder,
Slowly drying in the dying light
Of the smoky, swelling sun.

Tender daydreams hang plump
From every branch but one.

Fever Dreams

Ryan Karimi
MD/PhD WB



The inner thoughts of a mortality-conscious being

Brittany Chang-Kit

2T5 PB

The tips of her fingers aggressively rummaged through the hairs close to her scalp. She had showered that morning, yet she could feel a thin greasy film beginning to collect underneath her nails.

Her reflection was adequate. Besides the flecks of dirt and unattended dust that settled along the edges, the mirror was adequate too. She wasn't aware of the time, but she had been in the bathroom for quite a while now. Very quickly the sky had darkened, and the yellow tinge of the overhead CFL bulb was growing more and more prominent with every minute that passed.

She was on a mission, and a very technical one indeed. Finally, with an inner *aha!* she plucked out *the* hair between her right index and thumb and began to examine it meticulously. Silvery, wispy, and relaxed. With her other hand, she pulled both ends until it was taut. Using one hand as an anchor, the other slowly wrapped the strand around her finger, pulling tightly until the underlying skin of her index was ever so slightly bulging out over the circumference of the hair.

How many dead cells are in this one hair? she asked herself, a thought fleeing as quickly as it came. *How much of my hair is silver?* was a more permanent contemplation. Acting promptly, she resumed foraging through her scalp, the silver hair now unwound and distressed, laying on the countertop in front as reference for new culprits.

Her vision was not the greatest, either. Near-sightedness and subsequently thick-rimmed glasses were common in her family. How many times in a given day did she clean her glasses? Two times? Three? No, it was definitely more than that. She now took off her glasses and ran them under cool water, and could see a barely perceptible fingerprint along the edge of the right lens. She dried them off with the corner of her towel. Blinking, she readjusted her glasses. A black smudge dashed into her sphere of vision and floated around. This often irritated her.

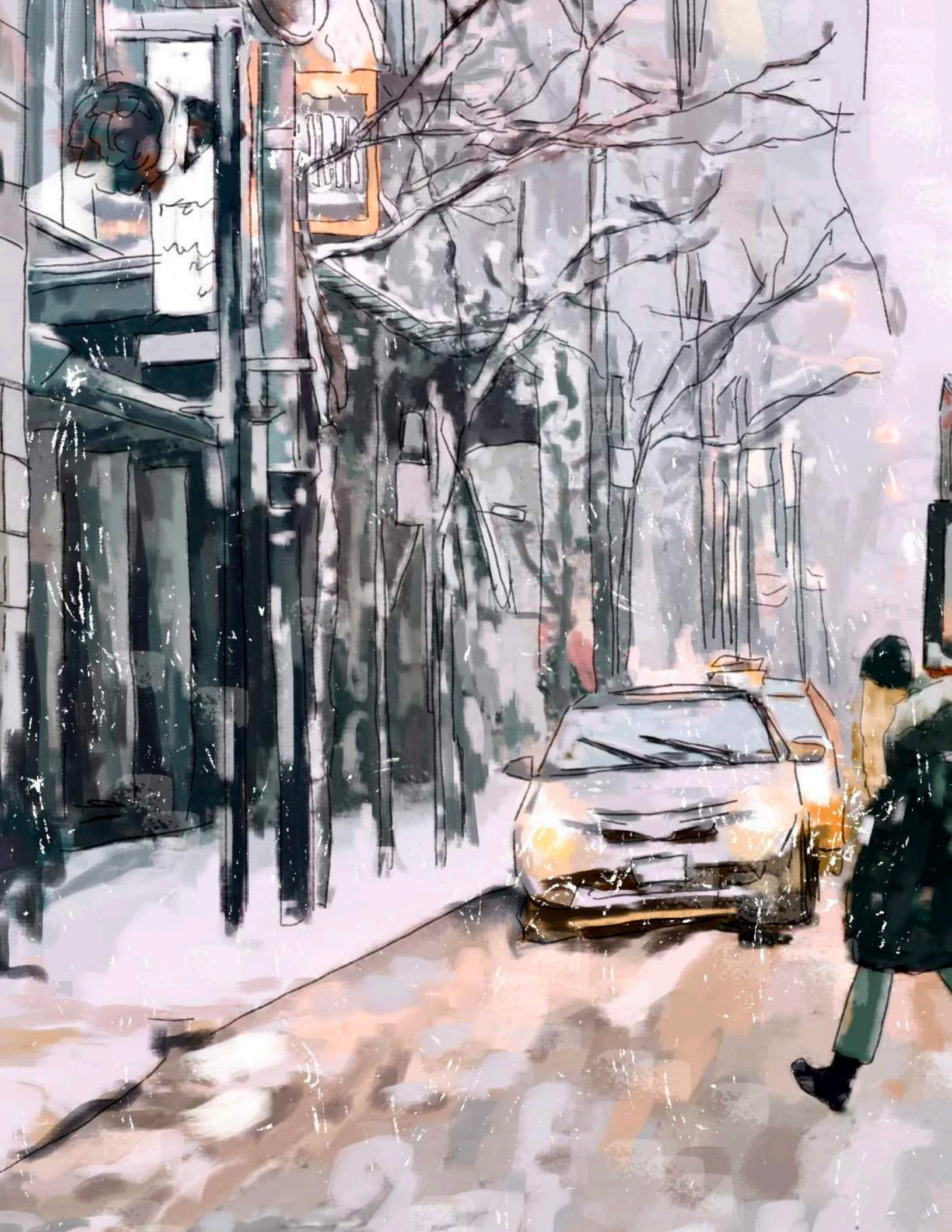
It started two summers ago, while she was hiking in the mountains with a friend. As she admired the elevated view before her, she quickly became aware of a foreign object invading the picturesque scenery. Was it dust from city pollution? A bird in the distance? No—it was a clump of protein inside her eye's vitreous fluid, according to her doctor. *Totally normal as you get older*, the doctor said. But what was one floating dark speckle became two, and what was two became three. *Just ignore it.*

This speck of blackness in her vision demarcated the beginning of her slow death. She could feel the vitality being sucked from her, night after night. How she longed to rewind time and scold her 10-year-old self for reading incessantly under dim lights. How discouraged she felt when she realized that the painful throb behind her right knee was a permanent ailment and not a temporary phenomenon that would recover in a few days. How disappointed she was.

She was ready to sleep now. She tucked herself into clean bedsheets and rested her glasses on the adjacent nightstand. This was the hour of bliss, when her thoughts could simply melt away and the discomfort of physical sensations could cease to be. As she shut her eyes and began to imagine a world of love and light, her limbs began to relax, and her heart slowed from a flutter to a lull. *I'm so tired.*

She felt tethered to the earth, burnt by the overbearing auburn sun, and drenched in anxiety. Only sleep could quiet her worried soul. Within seconds, she was pulled under, exhaustion dissipating and dreams of vitality vividly dancing through her repose.





03

Lifestyle

Interview with Chaithanya Nair

Chaithanya Nair is a first year medical student at the University of Toronto. She grew up in Singapore, Qatar and Canada. Music was one thing she always carried with her as she traveled through these vividly different nations. She really enjoys singing and listening to music from all genres and languages, but she does have a particular interest in Indian classical music. She has been learning Carnatic music, a type of Indian classical music, from a very young age, and it has been a defining part of her identity ever since.

Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself and your music.

Hello, I'm Chaithanya Nair. I'm a first year medical student at U of T. Outside of school, I really enjoy talking to friends and family, watching movies, and of course, listening to music. I enjoy singing and listening to music from all genres and languages, but I do have a particular interest in Indian classical music. I've been learning Carnatic music, which is a specific type of Indian classical music, from a very young age, and it has been a way for me to remain connected to my Indian cultural roots. Being an immigrant, it's easy to lose yourself in the battle of cultures going on in your head, and music helped define my identity as an Indo-Canadian.

Q: How did your interest in classical Indian music start, and why did you decide to start singing, in particular?

My parents are big music enthusiasts, and my mom was a really good vocalist. So, they were the ones who really wanted me to learn Indian classical music. My mom was actually my first guru, which is basically a teacher. She taught me the basics of Carnatic music. Later, I attended music classes at a local cultural center. At first, I wasn't too enthusiastic about it and didn't really enjoy the classes. As I grew older and learned more compositions, however, I began



to appreciate Carnatic music a lot more and see just how beautiful it is. Some of the compositions were about contentment while others were about devotion, and when I immersed myself in the melody, I could feel the emotion that the piece was talking about. I thought, "Wow, this is all so amazing." I found that I could just lose myself in a song's story, and that was a really beautiful feeling. I think that feeling was what made me want to continue singing.

“Being an immigrant,
it's easy to lose
yourself in the battle
of cultures going on
in your head, and
music helped define
my identity.”

Q: That's so nicely said. How much training did you do and what special skills did you need to hone for this specific kind of music?

I moved around a lot during my childhood, so my training has been pretty fragmented. I started music classes when I was four. My guru at the time was Shyama, and this was in Singapore. When my family moved to the Middle East, my training was interrupted, and I restarted after a couple of years with my guru, R Jayalekshmi and Usha Jayaram. We then moved to Canada, so my training was interrupted for a second time. Now, I train under Kottarakara Sivakumar, who has been my guru for the past seven years. It's quite interesting because I do online classes, and I haven't seen my guru in-person yet, which is pretty crazy. In terms of what classes entail, typically, my guru teaches me a composition by going through it line by line, and I'll sing it after him. As for skills, there's a lot of basics that you build on, just like in Maths, where you need to know addition, subtraction, and multiplication to do higher level operations. You first need to know how to sing at the right pitch and at the right tempo, but with my training being very discontinuous, that has been one of the drawbacks. My basics are not as strong as they could have been if my training was uninterrupted. So, my current teacher also focuses on building these basic skills during every class.

Q: What do you hope to inspire in people, or maybe within yourself, with your music and your performances?

This is super cliché, but I just hope to send a message of being yourself, fearlessly and unapologetically. When I arrived in Canada, I used to be really shy and embarrassed to sing for others or even say that I was learning music. I felt that set me apart, and I just wanted to blend in and feel like I belonged within the community here. Projecting something that was different about me went against that. What I did not realize back then was that I was attempting to sacrifice a part of my identity just to be accepted by others. Looking back, I regret that mindset. I hope to use music as a tool to propagate the

message that you don't have to be the same as everybody else. You can be your own self and be comfortable being your own self and proud of who you are.

“I just hope to
send a message
of being yourself,
fearlessly and
unapologetically.”

Q: Were there times where the pressure to assimilate was hard to work against?

One of the major struggles I feel that all immigrants face, and for me personally, is the question of “How Indian am I?” or “How Canadian am I?” I don't know where I fall on that spectrum. There's a lot of pressure to just be normal. Even when picking my songs, I sometimes feel that I'm choosing more Indo-Western songs rather than completely Indian ones just because I want to appeal to a certain audience. When I lived in Calgary, I struggled with remaining true to my cultural roots because I didn't really have a community there. There wasn't much opportunity to express my culture. But coming to Ontario, I found a bit more of a community here and more opportunities to perform. I even started volunteering to teach kids short songs that they can sing whenever they're tired. So, moving to Ontario was definitely an upgrade in terms of expressing my culture. Sometimes it still gets tricky, and I have a big debate inside my head: “Should I do this? Should I do that?” But at the end of the day, staying true to my culture is really important to me, because if I don't, it almost feels like I'm turning into a person that I can't recognize, and that troubles me a lot. One way or another, I'll find a way to come back. My parents also helped me a lot with that because they've moved around a lot more than I have, so they impart their wisdom to me and share a lot of techniques for staying grounded.

Q: You participated in the 2T5 O-Week talent show performance, and yours was truly a standout act. Why did you decide to sign up?

It's funny, I was actually not planning to sign up, mainly because I didn't have time to record a video. I also wasn't sure if my fellow medical students would enjoy Indian music. My roommates and my parents encouraged me to sign up. My dad was actually really sad when I said I wasn't going to do it. So, the day before the talent show, my mom convinced me to send a video in. This was a video that I had recorded a couple of months ago and released on Facebook, so I wasn't sure if Team NEURO would accept it, but they were kind enough to do so even though it was way past the deadline. In hindsight, it was a really good decision because I made a couple of friends that way, and a lot of people still recognize me just from the talent show. It's really amazing, and something that I did not expect at all.



Q: When you prepare for a performance like that, what parts do you find to be the most challenging and the most enjoyable?

With the pandemic, I have not been able to perform as much since in-person events have

not been held. So, I've switched to recording cover songs instead of doing live performances, and I find that even though it's a lot of work, I do enjoy it. The first step is to pick a song that matches my skill level and is appropriate for the occasion. I'd say this is the most enjoyable step because I get to listen to a lot of songs until I select one. Sometimes there's also music videos which are very entertaining to watch. It's a good break. Once I'm done picking a song, I spend some time listening to it to familiarize myself with the melody. Occasionally, I get very impatient, and I just want to get to the singing part, so I just get started on learning the melody. I'd say that's the most challenging part because it takes a lot of patience and resilience to understand and replicate all the nuances in a song. Sometimes, I have to go on YouTube and slow down a video to 0.75x and listen to the song at that speed just to understand what notes they're singing. That entire process can be really tiring, but it's also very rewarding when you get the finished result out of all of that effort. The process of learning a song can stretch over multiple days. Other times, when I'm in the mood, I just don't take off my headphones until I'm done. So, it really depends on what mood I'm in, which is not a great thing. It should be more consistent, but that's how it works for me. Once that's done, I keep practicing until it's showtime, if it's a live performance. If it's for a cover song, the next step is to record. That's been quite fun actually because I've been experimenting with a microphone I recently got. I'm trying to figure out how to use it to make a good quality recording. I'm also trying to figure out how to use GarageBand and different softwares to record a cover song. I'm not good with technology at all, so it's been quite a ride, but it's fun. It's fun hearing your voice in that studio recording quality. I always think, "Oh wow, I sound so different".

Q: How important is the role of instrumentals in classical Indian music and in your music, specifically?

Typically, Indian classical music is presented with a lot of accompanying instruments. You usually perform with a percussion accompaniment

called a mridangam. That's a South Indian instrument that you usually see with Carnatic vocal performances. There's also some kind of melodic accompaniment like a flute, violin, or veena, which is also an Indian instrument. In terms of how it changes the music, pairing instruments with the vocals adds a lot to the song and can completely change its character. Sometimes, the feeling that a song conveys is closely intertwined with the background music. Without that, the song itself almost sounds incomplete. Adding instruments renders that sense of completeness to the vocals, which is something that's really important to the listener and to the vocalist because you get the full experience of listening to the song. I also play the bamboo flute, called a bansuri, and the violin. I find that learning instruments has actually enhanced my skill as a vocalist. By learning the same type of music through different mediums, I gain a more complete understanding of the music.

Q: How do you decide what instrument will accompany your performance, since you're familiar with so many?

Typically, the only instrument I use with my cover songs is something called a tanpura. It's essentially an instrument that establishes the pitch of a song, and it's a staple for all Carnatic compositions. Playing that instrument in the background shows that your song is at the correct pitch and not veering away from it. I think that's a really important component in terms of presenting the song in a beautiful and appropriate manner. [A tanpura] would be my only permanent accompaniment. I don't tend to use other accompaniments because I don't have access to a lot of them. That's something I'd love to do in the future. Maybe with more connections I can find a percussion artist who can accompany my vocals.

Q: Music is described as a universal language. Many students who attended the talent show may have never listened to classical Indian music before, and yet were still very touched by your performance. Why do you think your music connected so strongly with people?

First of all, that's just a pleasure to hear. I didn't think my music could have that kind of an impact, and it's great to hear that it does. I think the reason people can have that experience with unfamiliar music is that sometimes the message of a song is conveyed in its melody and not necessarily in its lyrics or their meaning. Sometimes, just listening to the arrangement of notes sends a certain message or imparts a certain feeling that can be just as powerful as understanding the lyrics. That unspoken communication can foster a deeper bond than those formed with just words.

“If you feel chaotic inside, it's difficult to render any kind of calmness to your patients.”

Q: How do you feel that this artistic endeavour adds to your life?

I think it plays a huge role in defining my identity. It's a way for me to stay connected to my Indian cultural roots. This is very important to me because, while I've actually never lived in India, both my parents are from India. Our culture, our family, our traditions...everything is Indian. Even so, remaining connected to India without being in India is quite a task, and I think music helps me accomplish that task. Secondly, music is a way for me to temporarily step out of all the chaos and stress of life and cleanse my mind before returning to my daily activities with a fresh mindset. It gives me an opportunity to recharge myself. So, when I come back, I'm more capable of handling stress and difficult situations than I would have been if I hadn't taken a moment to step away.

Q: Many people think that science and art are two very different or opposing fields. You are here as both a medical student and as an artist. How do you reconcile those two sides of yourself?

With medicine, even when we’re interacting with standardized patients in our clinical skills classes, we’re always told to read body language or listen to how a patient is speaking in order to understand what emotions they’re trying to convey. That’s kind of similar to how the melody of a song speaks to the message it’s trying to convey. It almost trains you to read the underlying message rather than what’s being presented, so you can get a better idea of it. It helps you delve deeper into a situation, whether it’s understanding the concerns of a patient or understanding the message of a song. It’s all about reading beyond the surface.

Q: Do you find that your music enhances your role as a medical student and will eventually enhance your role as a doctor?

I definitely do think so. It’s a huge way for me to manage my stress, and it provides a moment of calmness in my life that I believe is essential to becoming a good doctor. If you feel chaotic inside, it’s difficult to render any kind of calmness to your patients. Having a pathway in my life to relieve stress is always a good thing, especially since being a medical student and a doctor are both associated with heavy responsibilities and high stress levels. Besides that, I believe that music therapy is becoming a big deal. In Carnatic music, you have different notes called swaras, and different arrangements of these notes create ragas. Ragas are supposed to be sung at a particular time of the day, and when sung in a particular arrangement, they send a message of a particular emotion. One of these ragas is called anandabhairavi, and it has actually been linked to helping with hypertension. I’m not sure if there’s solid scientific evidence supporting that, but these things make me think there’s a possible future where I can blend both the medical student or doctor side of me and the musician side of me.



Interview with Candice Richardson

Candice Richardson is a cardmaker, calligrapher, and first-year medical student at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine. Prior to medical school, she obtained a Master of Public Health and an H.BSc in Mental Health from the University of Toronto. When she’s not studying or working in clinical research, she’s likely crafting. While calligraphy and greeting cards are her current passion, she’s dabbled in everything from embroidery, knitting, and fiber arts to pottery and jewelry-making. She finds joy in sharing handmade kindness and combining her passions for medicine and mental health with the arts.



Q: What’s your story? Tell us about your journey in the arts.

I always feel like I live two separate lives: my artistic and creative life, and then my academic [life], which is what people usually know me by. In terms of the artistic side, I always did crafts growing up. My mom taught me and my sister how to knit when we were four, mostly because [my mom] was knitting and wanted our little hands to be out of the way. She would also scrapbook, so we would do that too. Growing up, teachers would sometimes ask me to make scrapbooks for the class. I always did little things—I very much did not want to do any sort of serious art because in school, you’re graded on it, and I grew up with a lot of perfectionistic tendencies, as I’m sure many people in medicine can relate to. So, I always strayed away from the traditional arts, and doing visual arts in class or anything like that.

I also grew up in competitive dance, and there came a point in high school where I had to quit because I had a lot of health problems going on. [Dance] was something that took up so much of my time and my identity—I didn’t realize until

I had it taken away...I asked, “What am I going to do with myself?”

I remember looking through the activity catalog at the local recreation centre, there was a pottery studio, and I saw pottery classes. I started in the usual beginner pottery class and was eventually moved to the adult class. I even got to start teaching other little kids. I did that all through high school and university and it was such a fun job to have; it didn’t feel like working because it was super awesome. I also started taking jewelry classes and then actually selling the jewelry that I made. At that point, I was selling pottery too, so it became kind of a side hustle to sell at local stores and craft markets. I later began creating these little polymer clay things that you can use as knitting stitch markers. I started selling those, and they became actually more popular than I could keep up with, demand-wise. This whole time I was also a science student publishing research, so it’s like living two completely separate lives—people are always surprised to learn about one or the other.

As things got busier, I started calligraphy. My train of thought was: “Okay, I can still work art



here to make my notes pretty and this gives me the time to do and benefit from doing art, but I'm still studying, kind of!" From there, people would see me do things and be like, "Hey, can you letter my name on this, do you think you can put this on a keychain, do you do invitations?" One thing led to another...and now I do big seating charts for weddings or signage. I did my best friend's wedding invitations. From calligraphy, I stumbled into card-making, which is now my main thing because it's smaller and easier to do. I fall into things backwards and randomly, which is the story of my life in a nutshell. I have way too many hobbies but they're all fun...I just like making stuff with my hands.

Q: You're right, you do seem to live two different lives. How do you reconcile science and art? Do they help each other? Or is one a distraction?

I do try to reconcile them wherever I can. "Art meets science" is my favorite thing. Especially during school, I was always wondering if I would have enough time for art, because it's actually something that's really important to me. I always wondered if I'm doing the right thing career-wise: I really love working with patients and I've done a lot of volunteer and mental health work and I love it so much, but

then I also love art. I was thinking that maybe I could do medical illustrations, but I've looked down that path and I felt like I did not have enough raw talent for it. It's partially imposter syndrome, but part of it was also the realization that I don't think it would bring me the same joy. I feel that if art becomes work, then I won't find as much joy from it, because there would be too much stress tied to it. So, I've kept art somewhat separate [from school], kind of on purpose, because it is such a stress relief and enjoyable to do as something outside of school.

However, I do also enjoy when there's crossover in art and a project that involves science or medicine. I worked at UHN for many years as a research trainee, and they had art in the conservatory showcase. I had a couple art pieces displayed there. I met a pathologist who made the Mona Lisa out of histology artefacts that he had taken, and I remember thinking, "Oh my gosh, these are the people who are like me, who enjoy medicine and health, but they also do art, and they find a way to do them together." Another time, one of my friends took me to an art night in the Department of Psychiatry, and I came to the realization that I can integrate both of my lives. So overall, I separate art and science in some parts of my life, but not in others. I've been lucky that I've been able to intermingle

"I fall into things backwards and randomly, which is the story of my life in a nutshell. I have way too many hobbies, but they're all fun...I just like making stuff with my hands."

them in some ways, such as in my mental health work and art therapy groups.

Q: Is there a specific project in mind that was your favourite?

I've volunteered at an organization in Toronto called Sheena's Place. They provide very low barrier support groups for folks who identify as being affected by disordered eating or eating disorders, which are unfortunately very stigmatized illnesses. I've volunteered with them before, and I do a lot of work in the eating disorder space. I was a camp counselor, but I got to lead some of the art activities, like card-making workshops...people could either make cards for themselves or to others, like loved ones or to other people who they knew were struggling. It was really nice that all of these things kind of came together: mental health and helping other people through art. That was really awesome. I've also co-facilitated support groups for folks with lived experience with eating disorders. One of them was knitting, and one of them was card-making. It's really cool to be a part of something that I, myself, find therapeutic—being able to help others feel that too, within a safe space. I always appreciate when I have opportunities like that.

Q: On your YouTube channel, I came across an eating disorder awareness "cardhop". Can you talk a little bit more about it? Can you explain what a cardhop is?

Yeah. So, hops are kind of confusing to people who are not in the card-making section of the internet. It's kind of strange...a lot of people are very social media-famous for having accounts with their hobbies. These well-known people will sometimes do "hops", which is when you post about something, usually like an awareness call. Sometimes companies will sponsor hops and will give the person a product. It's kind of like influencing, but not as mischievous. For example, a company might be coming out with a new product, so we'll do a hop to get it out there more. The first person will post and tag the next person, so it creates a train: you click the next

person and go and see their posts, eventually seeing more and more inspiration using this product. Sometimes, people will do a hop for important causes, such as trying to generate awareness about a disease. In these hops they'll include little information blurbs and pictures to raise awareness. Finally, cardhops are also an opportunity for people to see inspiration for cards or whatever the hobby is and find new people who do that hobby that they might be interested in following. Ultimately, a cardhop is community-driven.

"It's really cool to be a part of something that I myself find therapeutic—being able to help others feel that too, within a safe space. I always appreciate when I have opportunities like that."

I always thought that cardhops would be a great tool for advocacy and awareness...my public health self can't help it! When I was struggling, I was trying to fill time because I couldn't do competitive dance or any of that because my health was so compromised. That was when I started my whole art journey. I then found a woman who was also a card maker and who had an eating disorder, and she posted about her experience. That was when I first discovered card-making. Ever since then, I have always wanted [that experience] to come full circle. To this day, I'm actually friends with that woman, and she was in the cardhop I organized, which is super cool because she's very Instagram-famous and was the reason I fell into card-making. I was honestly so surprised by the amount of people who joined the hop and who voiced their own struggles. It was amazing. It was the first time I ever organized something like that. I expected it to be me and the 10 friends I've made, but it ended up being something huge and some of the biggest cardmakers took note and participated.

I tailored every person's post to have different information so that the cardhop was actually very informative. I wanted viewers to learn the things that aren't really known about eating disorders, because they are incredibly stigmatized and unfortunately [those struggling with them can] face a lot of barriers to treatment. It was a lot of responsibility, but it was really rewarding to see that come to life and be something so much bigger than I ever thought it would be. This was a way to get that information out there and help others who could be suffering. Our entire society is super deep-seated in diet culture, and a lot of us don't even realize. For example, making comments about people's bodies or erroneously framing food as "good" and "bad". Hopefully those little knowledge tidbits from my cardhop will stick with people and can be implemented.

Q: Do you see yourself growing this advocacy in the future?

I think so. I think it's hard because social media can be such a fantastic thing and a very scary thing as I'm sure we've seen with our digital professionalism modules. I very much keep my art self separate from my medical student self, yet I still always ask myself where the lines are. It can be difficult to see the boundaries sometimes, but I definitely love when art and advocacy come together. I have volunteered at the National Eating Disorder Information Center for about seven years now. I began in outreach and education, and then I started working on the toll-free helpline for people to call in if they're affected or worried about a loved one. I also did a lot for their social media using my art and calligraphy. So, it is definitely something that I want to continue to do, especially being able to eventually translate some of that medical knowledge we learn in school into little nuggets of art. Eventually, career-wise, I would love to be the one to put research-backing behind what I've witnessed as helpful to myself and others. Cardmakers find their craft therapeutic. It helps them and it makes them happy to see other people in their lives happy. But there are no studies showing [the therapeutic benefit of craftmaking].

It would be super cool to use [craftmaking] as an art-based therapy intervention and to establish a scientific grounding in something that a lot of us already know is helpful. That's many moons down the line. I think art is something powerful that people connect with, especially when it's about topics that can be taboo or scary. Art is such an important vehicle to be able to use because for a lot of people it's something that is very emotionally-oriented and powerful for them. So why wouldn't we be using it more, you know?



Q: It seems like you have quite a number of supporters and fellow enthusiasts. What does this community mean to you?

People broadly refer to it as the "card-making community". I recognize that sounds very weird to anybody on the outside, but it honestly is such a welcoming place where everybody is so nice. They literally make art to just give it to other people, because the whole premise of greeting cards is to give them to others. So it's honestly such a welcoming and safe space, with people from all different walks of life and all different professions—it really does span the whole gamut. And this community can talk endlessly about different types of inks and stamps and dyes. We have something that unites us all, even though we're so different in a lot of ways, which is a very beautiful thing. There are a few women who I have met who live in completely different parts of North America, and we get together on Zoom to craft on Friday nights. We started when the pandemic started and we still meet now! A lot of these friendships span continents, and on the flip side, I've been really lucky to meet some local people too. One of them is a scientist

"Art is such an important vehicle to be able to use because for a lot of people it's something that is very emotionally oriented and powerful for them. So why wouldn't we be using it more?"

and actually did her PhD at the University of Toronto; we're very similar in a lot of ways. She's a scientist and we randomly stumbled across each other. So it's really cool to find people who you can share these [experiences] with.

Q: Art is an incredible outlet. You created something. How many times can you say you truly created something?

And it touches so many people! During my undergraduate studies, sometimes I would turn scraps or drafts of crafts into stickers, and I would leave them on study carousels or stick it to my parking ticket back in the machines... and hopefully somebody would find it and it would brighten their day. And usually, I don't write inside of the cards. Instead, I'll put an insert on the inside that says something along the lines of, "Feel free to take this out and pass it along to send another smile!" That way they can reuse it. I love the idea of passing things on. I also have different stamps that I put in my cards with sayings like, "Share the love!" so they know they can reuse it. I'm big about trying to be environmentally friendly, wherever I can.

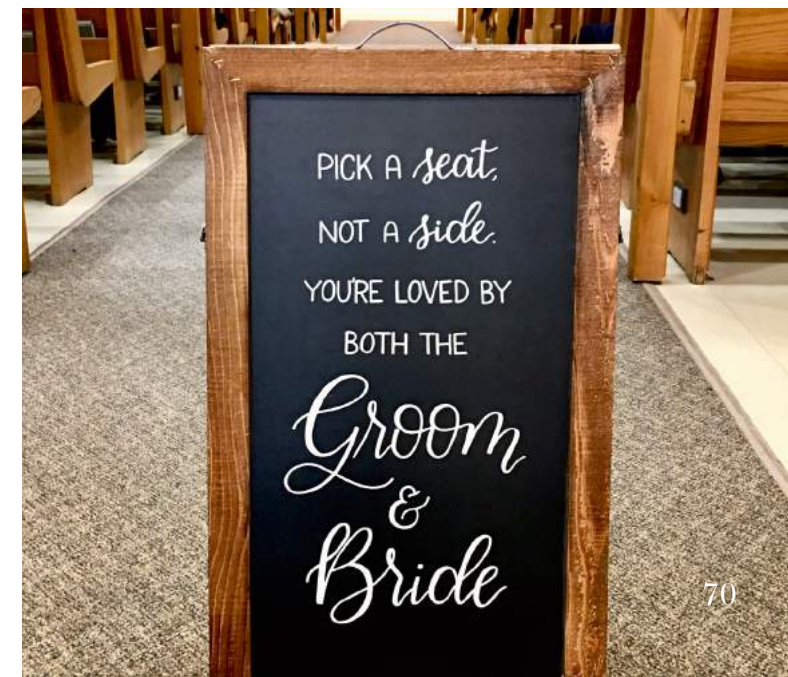
Q: Can you walk me through what you think about before making a card? What goes on in your mind?

It's funny because a lot of people will sit down and fully plan [their design]. They will do a little sketch of where they're headed. But for me, I'm more like, "I want to use alien stamps today!" I very much fly by the seat of my pants. I'm completely the opposite of that in every other aspect of my life. Usually, I have some sort of idea of the theme, and then I kind of look at a stamp that I have and realize what I want to do next. And I just pull everything together from there. A lot of people will be very methodical from start to finish because the video tutorials will be way easier to edit, whereas I don't want to interrupt my flow or process. I usually let things

organically flow. So, I just do whatever and then I always hate myself when I'm editing the final video product. Sometimes though, I will plan methodically. For example, I made my boyfriend a light-up card this year. There's always the pressure to "one-up" myself because I do a lot of interactive and pop up things, especially now. So sometimes, if things are more involved, I will pre-sketch something out in my mind. But a lot of the time it is very much spontaneous: I'm just going to make something and we're going to see where it goes. And sometimes, I do have to change gears partway through, because things don't always go as planned and that's okay, because it's handmade, not Hallmark! I try to create cards that are unexpected. Interactive cards are probably my favorite ones to make. I make a lot of these spinning cards that people seem to like.

Q: Can you describe your artistic style?

Quirky? I think I span across a lot of styles based on how my life flows. When I had more time, I'd always do very intricate and interactive things, and now I do clean, simple designs. It's because I'm in med school and have zero time for anything. My style has also evolved with me and changes as my life changes.



Interview with Dr. Dawn Lim



I am an emergency doctor at the University Health Network and an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Toronto. I research how storytelling can be used as a tool for building self-compassion in medical practice with a particular focus on changing the shame-based culture of medicine.

When I'm not practising medicine, I create. I am a photographer and creative non-fiction writer living and working in Toronto, Canada. I'm particularly interested in using storytelling to advocate and support humanitarian work locally and abroad. My work has been supported by a National Geographic COVID-19 grant and can be found in various national media outlets.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your experience with the arts?

I started studying photography, maybe two or three years into my burnout. That burnout was in 2012 when I had been staff in emergency for two to three years. Things had become very automatic. It wasn't easy for me to pay attention to the person who was in front of me, but then I started to photograph.

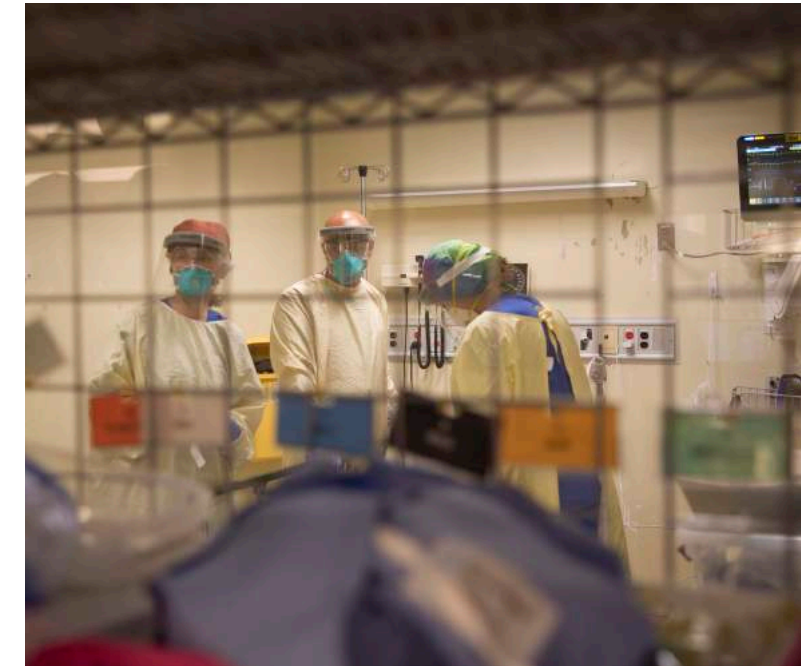
Originally, I was interested in landscape and travel photography. I wanted to capture the beauty of the places that I had visited. I decided to take photography classes because it was just such a different way to spend my days. I enjoyed the mix between working and teaching at an academic center during the day and then having photography classes at night. People at the photography classes would talk about things like what papers would be the best for this photograph, or what composition would look really good. I quickly noticed that my headaches would go away, and I would just feel refreshed to go back to work. That's how I started photography.

I also like to write. I used to do quite a lot of writing when I was in high school, but like most things, I'd given that up during medical school. I started to write again when I was pregnant with my first child. Over the years, I've started to blend photography and writing together. I write about my photographs, and photograph things that are interesting to me.

Q: There are some amazing photographs on your website, with a wide variety of themes. Can you talk a little bit about some of your favorite projects that you've put together and where you draw inspiration for your photos?

I think that there are two major themes that run through my work. The first is: medical life. My earliest experience photographing medical life was a project that my professor had given me. It was to capture a scene but have no people in it. I had this idea in my mind that I would love to capture what a resuscitation room looks like after the team has done a resuscitation. The

photo is called "*The Aftermath*". That day was a very cold day, and there was a hypothermic arrest in the emergency room. I waited and I waited for that shot. That photograph made me realize how much medicine goes unseen by people who are both inside and outside of medicine. It made me realize how much story there is in medicine that no one is talking about. I think that was the photograph that started my journey into the creative portion of my medical career.



Motherhood is the second theme that I've returned to. It's a very complex relationship that I find really fascinating. I started writing when I was pregnant with my second child, and so I was thinking a lot about my mother. My grandfather had died around that time, and I realized that I didn't really have that many good photographs of him—not with me. And so, as an expectant mother who was thinking about her parents, it was really the theme that resonated with me. It still resonates with me. It's going to be something that I continue to photograph.

“Capturing a story in one photograph is really, really hard... It's one frame to tell a story.”

Q: It's the quiet moments in which we can stop and reflect. How has putting together photo essays of frontline health care workers and the emergency department impacted you and your perspective of healthcare?

The practice of photography and the practice of writing was what helped me to avoid burnout during the beginning of the pandemic; the two practices also helped me realize the importance of stories. One of my senior colleagues said, "You know, after SARS, no one talked about it." I couldn't believe that no one took photographs. I even Googled photographs of SARS, and there was almost nothing. If I hadn't heard what my colleague said, I might not have realized how important it is to photograph this historical moment that we are living in. And so, for me, my photography helped me tell a story and saved me from burnout. If I hadn't put my energy into that creative project, I think I would have been overwhelmed with fear, anxiety, and the unknown.

Q: Are there any photos from the photo essay on healthcare during the pandemic that you would like to speak more about?

Whenever I do a photo essay, I have in my mind some photographs that I feel I would love to have. It's kind of like a wish list. For example, I really wanted to capture someone's face after a resuscitation so that I could see the spotlight on their face. One photograph that I really like is the one of the firefighter. He had just been doing CPR for 30 minutes, and he was as red as a lobster. He was wearing his firefighter uniform, and he had just taken off his PPE. He was trying to transfer the patient to the emergency team. I remember thinking, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe what this man has done." It's hard enough when you're just wearing scrubs. It's so hard to do that when you're wearing the firefighter uniform. I remember thinking, "I need to photograph him." The patient that he brought in actually died, and so there's also a photo where the team is taking a moment of silence. That photograph was my favorite photograph from that whole series. I think a lot of times we don't really pause

to think about what we do. When we pause after a resuscitation, I think it's a really great time for the team to not only think about what went well, but to also take a moment for ourselves and a moment for the patient. Those are two photographs that stand out to me from the essay.



Q: How do you feel like you have developed as a photographer since you first started? Do you have any advice for people in healthcare who are interested in starting photography?

When I first started with photography, I didn't even really know how to use my camera. My first piece of advice is to start photographing a lot. One of my first assignments was to take 1000 photographs. It forced me to start taking photos of things and start looking at things differently. I will say, some of my best photographs are actually from those initial days when I didn't really have any preconception of what my style was. It was really just about trying to find what interested me. Knowing how to use your camera is really important.

I also found that it was really helpful to photograph in stories. For example, I would try

to use 10 photographs to tell a story. Then, once I knew how to use 10 photographs to tell a story, that's when I started to learn how to capture the story in one photograph. Capturing a story in one photograph is really, really hard. I liken it to poetry. You don't have that many words to tell a story. It's the same thing with a photograph. It's one frame to tell a story. I haven't mastered it, obviously, but I think that's a really good start for most.

Q: You mentioned travel was a pretty big part of your life. On your blog and photography website, you documented your pilgrimage from France to Spain. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

I wanted to go on a pilgrimage when I graduated from medical school, but I wasn't organized enough. Then, when I was doing my MBA, I had the summer off. I said, "If I don't do it now, then I'm never going to do it." It takes six weeks to walk from the border of France to Santiago, Spain, so I blocked off the time. I also had a "why". At the time, I was basically working 24/7, teaching, and doing grad school. However, I was confused about what I wanted to do with my life. My sister-in-law had gone on the pilgrimage a few years before, and she said it was a really good time for her to think. I knew that's just what I needed. I knew I needed fresh air. I needed exercise. I needed stillness.

I took a six week pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. On a pilgrimage, it is really hard to carry anything, but I carried a proper camera over 800 kilometers. I only brought one memory stick and no charger for my battery. I wanted to be really specific and very deliberate. I also carried a small journal because I wanted to remember my time. The gift of a simple day was that I got to see a sunrise every day. I was a really slow walker and the Spanish sunshine is hot, so I would just start walking really early when it was cool. I would walk in the early morning under a sky so full of stars. I would meet random people, and I would ask them, "Who are you and why are you here?" No one asked me if I was a doctor. In fact, I don't think people even knew I was a doctor until someone had an accident and then I said, "I'm an emergency doctor. I can help." No one cared about what I did for a living. They just wanted to know about my dreams and why I was there. The routine was so simple: sleep, eat, talk, walk, walk, walk, talk, repeat, repeat, wash my laundry, and hang it up. There was no TV, no deadlines, and no admin. When that became my routine, it gave me a really good chance to think about all of the things that I wasn't doing. There were so many things that I did before medical school that I just dropped because I was so busy. I wasn't spending time with my family. I wasn't spending time with my friends. I didn't have that space in my life, or a creative space just for me.



Interestingly, when I decided to go, I was initially focused on figuring out what to do with my career. On the one year anniversary of coming back, I reflected on how many things I had learned. I revisited my photographs. I revisited my little journal, and I said, “You know, these are really wonderful stories. I changed a lot during that time.” And so I started the blog. If you read my blog and the things that I’m writing right now, you will quickly realize that why I had to go on this pilgrimage had nothing to do with my career. It wasn’t the career that was my problem. It was really about what I wanted my life to look like and how I had veered off so much from that.

“I knew I needed fresh air. I needed exercise. I needed stillness.”

Q: What is the most important lesson that you’ve learned from your creative journey as it relates to your life and career?

What I realized was that I couldn’t think my way to the endpoint. I had to live it. That’s how I got into photography more deeply. That’s why I said yes to the writing class, which led to the documentary class, which led to the story about the emergency department. People started seeing my work and associating me with creativity, and then more opportunities opened up. I would never have been able to predict where I would end up. When I started medical school, I wanted to be a cardiologist. Now, I’m an emergency room doctor, but also involved in photography and writing. My number one advice is to pay attention to the things that are interesting to you. Explore, and don’t be fixated on an end goal.



In medicine, we talk a lot about science and a lot about the evidence. However, for me, it’s the stories that matter. Photography and writing saved my medical career. Once I realized I needed to sit down and really listen to the story of the person in front of me, that brought back so much of the enjoyment that I had when I first started medicine. Somewhere in the rush of trying to go faster or dealing with hallway medicine, I forgot that. Even though the clinical work is quite the same, I reframed it in my mind. Now, I am someone who wants to go to work. It was that reframing, taking the time to really listen to the patient’s story, that made the difference for me.

• • •

Links to Dr. Lim’s websites:

Photography website:
dawnlimphotography.com
Blog: thecuriousdoc.co

Book Recommendations:
The Gifts of Imperfection by Brené Brown
Start With Why by Simon Sinek
Atomic Habits by James Clear



Daffydil

Past, Present & Future



Past



Dr. Hosanna Au
Sound and light crew (2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

I wanted to join Daffy because I had lived off campus for all of my first year—I was a commuter—and I never really connected with a lot of people. I wanted to participate for that reason. I also have an interest in music and singing. I tried out for a few roles in Daffy and was fortunate enough to be part of the sound and light crew. We got to experiment with what lights we wanted to put together with the music. I had never done this before, so there was a bit of a learning curve, but it was so much fun.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

I think Daffy is a great way to showcase the amazing abilities of the students. And of course, it's a source of donations for

the Canadian Cancer Society, which is amazing. I had a friend who passed away from cancer—she was my age—and another who is a cancer survivor. And certainly in my practice here, we see lots of children that have cancer and so I think it's definitely a worthy cause.

Dr. Lori Albert
Chorus (1st & 2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

I love singing. It was very exciting to be part of a real show, but it was also great to work so intensely with a group of colleagues. I developed some good friendships with some of those folks, so that was a really memorable part of it. I mean, the whole thing was so great.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Daffy was a real highlight during medical school because I was a part of this additional community of people who were working on a special project together. You know, I loved medical school and that feeling of being part of [Daffy] has stayed with me all these years. I have gone to see Daffy every winter. For the last few years, I was really fortunate to have cameos a couple of times! The feeling of going backstage with all these excited, young people around me... just having a little taste of that again was wonderful. It's just got a very special place in my heart.



Rachel Currie, 2T3
Cast (1st & 2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

The feeling of having people around you working in-person and practicing the dances, you don't really think about it as much, but it was such a core part to that season in first year, that fall and winter time. Now, when I'm walking outside late at night, it feels like I'm walking home from rehearsal. It was the thing that kept time, the thing that kept me on track, and the thing that genuinely got me through all of second semester. In first year, I remember just being backstage...I was just sitting there watching everybody and just feeling so awed by everything. There's nothing like that moment.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Honestly, as cheesy as it sounds, Daffy is family. And beyond just the people that you work with immediately, it's incredible to think about how long it's been around; hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people have done this before you. It's this community that you're working with to put together something that you eventually get to share with people that you care about. There's something so lovely about talking to your non-medicine friends and family about these people that you spend so much time with every week and then finally get to show them the performance and be like, "Look, these are my friends. Aren't they amazing?"

Julia Dmytryshyn, 2T2
Cast (1st year), Co-Director (2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

You meet so many people through Daffy, so what was most memorable was being able to make some nice friendships in first year. Then in second year, Daffy just became even more special to me. Brendan [Kelly] and I [as co-directors] really felt like we wanted to make it our own. Because I had such a good Daffy experience in first year, I made it my mission to try to make it as good an experience for other people as it was for me.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Daffy was significant in the fact that it was within medicine. It showed me that 1) it's possible to do medicine and do musical theater at the same time, and 2) there are a lot of connections between acting in musical theater and practicing medicine. I think that the skill of acting and character development has really translated into the way I practice medicine and how I relate to patients; you might not necessarily agree with what a patient wants to do, but it's all about putting yourself in that patient's shoes and being able to step outside yourself.



Present

Aleksandra Uzelac, 2T4

Assistant Director (1st year),
Director (2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

Something that was really, really nice was the ability for some of us to watch Daffy together during orientation week. It was really memorable to see it all come together on a big screen for the first time, and to be around other members of Daffy—from people who worked behind the scenes, to the band, dance team, and cast. It was just really special to have that moment, even if it looked a little bit different that [pandemic] year compared to prior years.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Everyone is here because we either enjoy it, we want to try something new, or we want to meet other people. The most special thing for everyone is that they can all take something away from it. Some people join because they love musical theater and they don't want to give that passion up in medical school, and there are others who've never done [musical theatre] before and want to do something outside of their comfort zone. So I think what makes Daffy really cool is that it brings a lot of different types of people together.

Maya Biderman, 2T4

Cast (1st & 2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

I think the most memorable part of last year was doing our first full run-through. All of a sudden, we went from being alone in our bedrooms to



From left to right: Aleksandra Uzelac, Maya Biderman, Nicole Mfoafo-M'Carthy, Eliot Winkler.

putting on a full production with other people who had invested so much of their time and energy into it. It was like all these moving pieces coming together, and it was really flooring. It was so special to just see that combination of everybody's work.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Daffy, to me, has been an incredible community of support, where people who are passionate about things—including medicine, but also art and expression—have decided to make each other a priority. It's been this wonderful journey

that sort of parallels the journey through medicine: Daffy is a community of people that you can check in with, a couple times a week, throughout the year, and that accountability to each other helps see you through the harder parts of this journey.

Nicole Mfoafo-M'Carthy, 2T4

Writer (2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

I think that the translation of ideas in your head to paper, and then to a set and then, eventually, to a whole play makes the entire process quite

memorable. But specifically, the generation of music when my co-writer Amna and I, along with the producers and director, sit together and discuss songwriting has been incredibly memorable.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

Daffy is a family; we engage with each other and support each other and give each other the leniency that we deserve. Additionally, we're mindful that we're all medical students and life still goes on. Therefore, I think that for me, Daffy—the Daffy family and Daffy in general—exemplifies the idea of coming as you are in your full honesty and your full grace and knowing that people are going to love it, and that they're going to help you through it as well.

Eliot Winkler, 2T4

Cast (1st & 2nd year)

Q: Most memorable part of being involved in Daffy?

My favorite part of Daffy is getting to meet everyone and to be able to put on a show with people who have the same interests and want to create something, especially in the pandemic. What's been really memorable already about this year is that we're in-person for rehearsals, which has changed everything. It's so nice to all sing together at the same time. And then for dance too. It's amazing to see the dance team dance all together, and not on Zoom. Everyone is just so talented.

Q: What does Daffy mean to you?

With Daffy, you have the opportunity to show off your creative side, which doesn't necessarily always get used in medicine, and to work together to create a beautiful piece that's larger than us. Daffy pulls us all together from all of the different academies to work together to create these new relationships on stage which then translate into relationships offstage that I've continued; some of my closest friends are from Daffy.

Future

Q: Where do you see Daffy in the future?



"Wider audience"



"Original stories"



"Reflection of the times"



"To continue"



"Expanding"



"Growth"



"Endless possibilities"



"Different mediums"



"Mainstream"



"Storylines beyond medicine"



Playlist

abc's and winter freeze

Calandra Li
2T3 MAM



*When I hear this playlist, I see the colours of the winter.
I feel the frigid air enter my lungs and I smell the balsam fir.*

*I see you walking along a path, the snow silencing your
steps and your mind. I hope you tread boldly on your
journey, not yet defined.*

- 1. Alpine Green – Jolé
- 2. Blink Twice – Joy Oladokun
- 3. Caesar – The Oh Hellos
- 4. Dandelion Wine – Gregory Alan Isakov
- 5. Early In The Morning, I'll Come Calling
– James Vincent McMorrow
- 6. Feeling You – Harrison Storm
- 7. GPS (w/Felly) – Ethan Tasch, Felly
- 8. Homegrown – Haux
- 9. “In the Garden” circa 1912 – Mirours
- 10. Jimmy, He Whispers – Manchester Orchestra
- 11. Kilimanjaro (Acoustic) – Beta Radio
- 12. Line Of Fire – José González
- 13. Maine – Noah Kahan

- 14. Next to You – John Vincent III
- 15. Ontario – Novo Amor, Ed Tullett, Lowswimmer
- 16. Portland, Maine – Donovan Woods
- 17. Quiver – Lonas
- 18. Run to You – Ocie Elliott
- 19. Same Mistake – POP ETC
- 20. Thinking Of Japan – Roo Panes
- 21. Untitled #2 – John Vincent III
- 22. Vedauwoo – Lowland Hum
- 23. Who Hung the Moon – Jamestown Revival
- 24. X – Majik
- 25. YaYaYa – RY X
- 26. Zombies – Ethan Tasch



Recipe

Easy Peasy Four-Ingredient Coconut Macaroons

Michelle Lim
2T4 PB

INGREDIENTS

Makes: 16 macaroons

2 ¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut (see note)

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

1/8 tsp salt

½ 300-mL can sweetened condensed milk (equates to ~190g)

Note: If you have a particularly sweet tooth, you can use sweetened shredded coconut.

*Tip:
You can also dip the bottom of these macaroons in some chocolate ganache for an extra decadent treat.*

STEPS

1. In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients except the sweetened condensed milk until well combined.
2. Stir in the sweetened condensed milk until the batter is moist.
3. Using a small cookie scoop or a tablespoon, scoop batter into balls and place onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.
4. Bake at 350 °F for 13 minutes. Broil for 2 minutes or until golden brown.





04

Performance Arts

“Scars” - A Patient’s Perspective

Rebecca Wang
2T3 MAM

Watch the musical performance



Artist’s Statement:

"Scars" is an original song that I wrote and recorded as my Humanism in Surgery project for the core surgery rotation.

The song is from the perspective of a patient, with the lyrics based on what various patients shared with us during our Humanism in Surgery course. There were common themes of feeling lonely/ forgotten during lengthy hospital admissions for treatment, feeling dehumanized when seen as simply a disease/case, and reflecting on the lasting impact their health journey has made on their lives & identities—both seen & unseen.

To me, the key takeaway is that we, as healthcare providers, can significantly transform an individual's experience by caring for them as a whole person instead of just treating them as a pathology, which is what I hoped to highlight in "Scars".



Each day blurs into the next
And I’m still here, feeling like I’m all alone
When will I be seen and heard
As more than flesh and bone

Though many people come through my door
It feels like all I am is a chore
All I want is someone to notice how I’m lonely
Just surviving every day wholly

To you I might just be a case
Another box to tick off on your list
But please remember this is my life
And I grieve for all I’ve missed

Though it may seem I’ve got it together
This journey’s scars will last forever
It takes all I have to keep going every day and
Sometimes even still I’m not okay

It might sound like a cliché
But small things do add up
So never underestimate
The power of a smile
Your care carries me through
Some of the worst parts of my life
So thank you for taking the time to listen to my strife

Though it may seem I’ve got it together
This journey’s scars will last forever
The difference that it makes when you notice my despair
Makes healing less wearisome to bear



Hold On



Judy Kim
2T4 PB & Jinny Kim
2T5 MAM



Watch the dance
performance

Artist’s Statement:

Dancing has strengthened the special bond we share as three sisters (including our youngest, Sunny). It’s provided each of us our own unique form of self-expression, which has done wonders for our self-confidence. From filming dance videos in our basement to performing in front of audiences throughout high school and university, it feels meaningful to be able to share this piece with our current community. The song we chose was ‘Hold On’ by Justin Bieber, as we remind ourselves that we are not alone and will support each other in times of need. We present our original choreographed dance, filmed in our (upgraded) basement.



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- Aleksandra Uzelac
- Maya Biderman
- Nicole Mfoafo-M’Carthy
- Eliot Winkler

Faculty & Alumni

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- Dr. Hosanna Au
- Dr. Lori Albert

I see you walking along a path,
the snow silencing your steps and your mind.
I hope you tread boldly on your journey,
not yet defined.