



SCOPE

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FRONT COVER: *Tungsten Thoughts*

Like tungsten, one of Earth's densest materials, the diagnosis of disease can be a heavy burden both physically and psychologically for patients and family members. Reality can become shifted and unstable. The uncertainty of outcomes can be like a blanket of darkness. The long exposure used to capture the photo reflects vacillation amidst overwhelming information. However, the subject, in holding their tungsten thoughts, pierces the surrounding darkness, acting as a beacon of light for those with similar stories. In the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed over 6 million lives worldwide with so many families feeling the weight of loss. Though we continue to slowly recover with the development of vaccines, many sectors, and especially healthcare, were brought to the brink with little to no safety net. The stories of the frontline workers and hardest hit populations are represented in the strong and warm light that reminds us to heed lessons from the hardships and illuminates the way towards a more hopeful future.

Photograph by Nicholas Nguyen

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NOTE FROM THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Dear Reader,

We are so incredibly excited to bring you the newest edition of Scope. As we looked back on our path to medicine, our journey as students, and the complexities of the changed world that we live in to create this edition, one theme stood out: hope.

Over the past few years, throughout each individual's multitude of experiences, one can still find similar themes. At times we saw medical students turn into advocates for their loved ones; as they were learning about the science of medicine, they quickly had to understand the art of caretaking. Doctors became patients and had to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system from the other side. Patients, professionals, and governments alike have come face to face with the racism embedded in our society, within the realm of healthcare and outside. The use of the word "unprecedented" increased exponentially.

Yet, the world keeps turning. The feeling of inadequacy as a student of medicine continues, the hectic bustle of the interns and residents persists, and the responsibility of being a physician can still feel overwhelming at times. Our aspiration with this volume was to capture a glimpse of the humanity of medicine, as expressed through art, poetry, and prose. Our goal was to create a journal in which each and every individual can connect to the emotions of at least one piece. Our responsibility was to bring to light the issues that students, residents, and physicians contend with on a daily basis. Our obligation is to act on these problems, these injustices.

This issue tells a story. It begins with a student; one who is beginning to contend with the complexities of choosing medicine, both personal and professional. She contends with the gaps within our infrastructure, the inequities, through the lens of medicine. He then has to come face to face with loss of loved ones and of patients, all the while holding onto faith—in humanity, in medicine, in himself. Finally, she reflects on her journey, understanding that hope is fundamental.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this issue, and find a connection, discover a new perspective, and have the chance to reflect!



Vatsala Mundra

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Vivian Nguyen

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ONOMATOPOEIA (THIS ONE'S BETTER OUT LOUD)

Adelaide Kwon

CLACK the keys of your computer in the corner of the clinic
Clutch your cup of coffee closer, craft your notes and pick the codes
CLOP down coral-colored corridors to Kevin in room Camel
Catch the mid systolic click and then convey what it forebodes

THUMP the guardrails down the bed then roll the patient to the table
Thrust the tube into the throat then watch as the surgeons begin
THUDS the irregular heartbeat throbbing through thin layers of clothing
Think of arrhythmias this might be then fill the med team in

WHINES the wheezing of the patient who's whistling worse than yesterday
Work out why the x-ray shows there's wispy white in his left lung
WHIRS the whirling blood whooshing where there's a new carotid bruit
Wheel the patient to get imaging when it's in one so young

MOANS the mother with the midwife still in labor in the morning
Make her medicine more potent so her misery is mild
MUNCH your meal of macaroni in the middle of the breakroom
Mind the time, mull over charts, make sure those meds are reconciled

TICK the slides onto the stage and take your next tray to the table
Type the path report to tell the patient this tumor grows slow
TAP your badge to this door's scanner, twirl those turquoise curtains open
Touch this patient's heart today and touch the next one's tomorrow

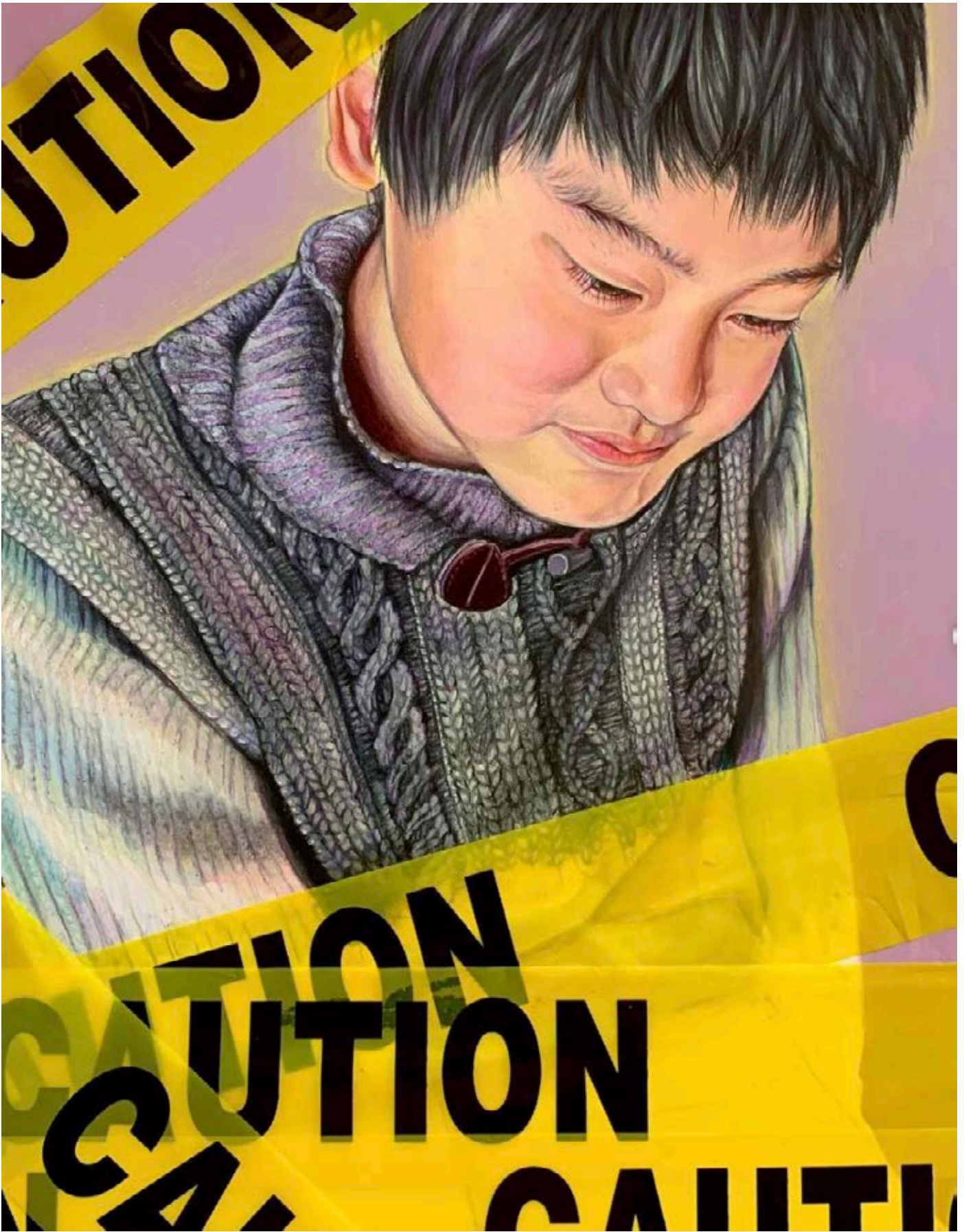


There is an invaluable nature of the physician's hands in the healing process. Whether it's an initial handshake introduction or holding a patient's hand through a difficult conversation, there is a special connection transmitted through the hands of the provider, often providing empathy, compassion, and comfort.

Hiren Patel

HELPING HANDS







CAUTION

Ashley Tsang

These pieces were made during quarantine. I was inspired by the racist remarks my friends received for being Asian-American during a period where anti-Asian sentiment was high. These pieces are meant to show another side to the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic.



AMHARIC

Rachel Manuel

Foreign to my tongue
Language line thirty-one
For a woman oh so young

Eyes wide, deep pools of gray
Tears fell harder down her face
She held tightly to her Faith

My hand found hers and I kneeled
Unspoken words we could feel
Silence and presence needed to heal

It lurked for over a year
And now her eyes- full of fear
The cancer's ugly head reared

Hard not to miss
Breast cancer's poison kiss
Laden with metastasis

We stayed with her, time well spent
Until the questions did relent
Then waited for her full consent

Mammography
Biopsy
Bated breath for therapy

A burden on her shoulders hung
But understanding slowly dawned
And when all was finally said and done

She lifted up her eyes
And with gratitude replied:
"Thank you for being so kind."



PSYCHEDELIC CYANOSIS

Shannon Teaw

This is a mixed media piece highlighting the journey to finding joy amidst pain.

THE BOY NAMED AFTER NATURE AND THE DODGED KISS

Eliza Neal

I once went out on a date with a boy whose parents named all their children after items found in nature.

Blossom, Stone, Amber, Sage.

Our first date was simple, full of conversational fodder predictable of two strangers. While our discussion created no immediate interest, the dessert we shared was simply delightful. A warm skillet cookie paired with vanilla ice cream coated my memory of that rainy evening in a rosy hue. A saccharine-sweet vision that coaxed me to say yes when he asked for a second date.

Suddenly, a second date turned into a third. I was sitting in the passenger seat of his car, preparing to introduce him to my best friend.

Suddenly, this nature boy reached his arm across the seats, grabbed the back of my head with his hand, and pulled my face close to his.

Suddenly, I decided that three dates were not going to turn into four.

Instead of turning my face towards his, I froze, and let him kiss me on the cheek. We exited the car with flushed faces and an unspoken promise to never speak again.

I got loads of laughs as I self-deprecatingly told the story of the nature boy and the dodged kiss. It made my friends giggle.

It made my mom scoff as she boarded a twelve-hour flight back home.

It made my aunt go into hysterics as I shared it with her in the ICU waiting room. But I don't know how it made my grandma feel.

Just as suddenly as that would-be kiss, my grandma woke up weeks after my date unable to move the left side of her body. She was rushed to the hospital, but this stroke was fiercer than her others. While my mom flew in to be by her mom's side, I drove down so I could be beside them both.

The ICU was sterile and cold with heavy air that weighed me down upon entry. I felt incredibly out of place walking into that unit, yet, as soon as I came to my grandma's door, I immediately began laughing. Despite the 8,000 miles of distance and distraction that had preceded our meeting, my mom and I had unintentionally packed and worn the same shirt that day. Wearing the same shirt and looking at the same MRI, we spoke to my grandma's doctor and made the same realization. Where one side of grandma's brain was bright, white, full of life, the other was completely dark.

It is impossible to imagine half of Charlotte. My eccentric, spunky, drama teacher grandma was not a half soul, rather she burst with energy. She was DramaMama, Cokeville's Citizen of the Year, and "Fiona" the hook-nosed, bright green witch that scared children (and adults) every Halloween. The ventilated, distant person who laid in that bed was nearly unrecognizable to me, but somehow, I was not unrecognizable to her. As soon as I walked into my grandma's room, she opened her eyes and began to stir.

As I tentatively moved towards her, I felt shell-shocked. I grabbed her hand, not knowing what else to do. Tenderly though, my mother had to remind me to hold the opposite hand, as her right side could no longer perceive touch. I was heartbroken about this new reality and was left at a complete loss for words. Suddenly though, my mom made an unbelievable announcement. She told my grandma that I had a funny story to share about a boy named after nature and a dodged kiss.

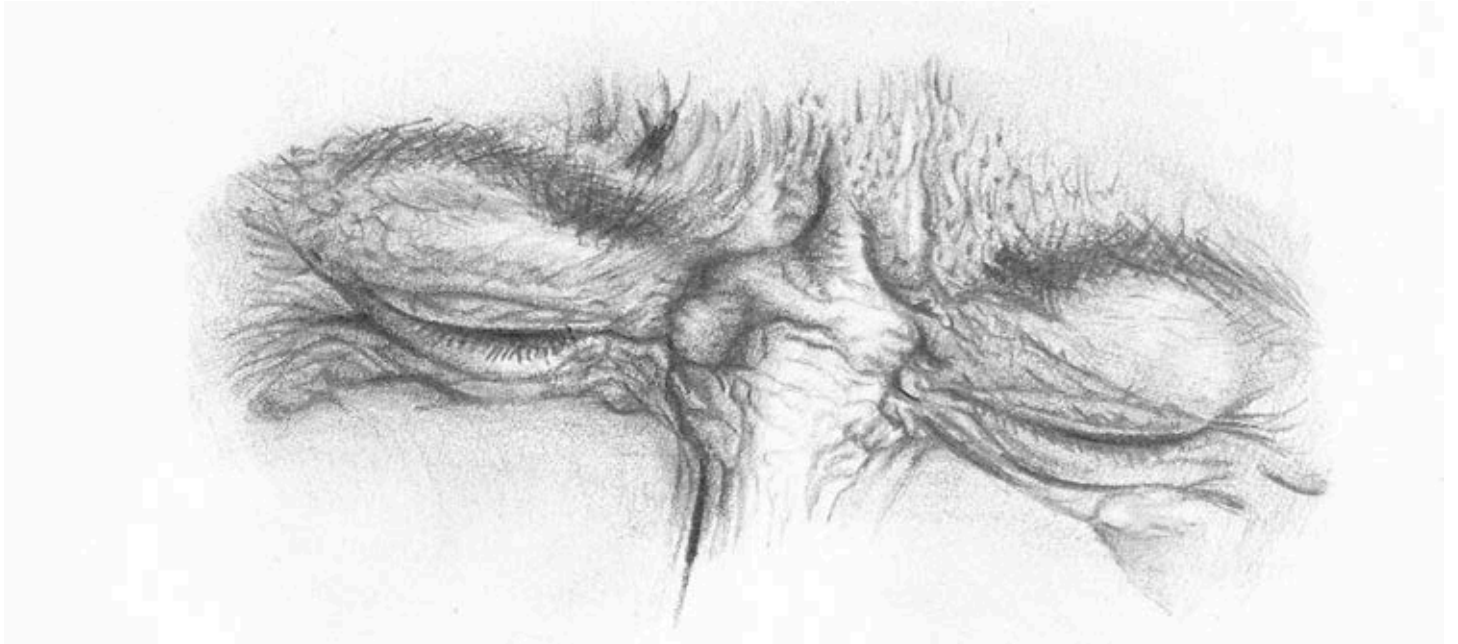
I wanted to reject this conversational nudge. Was this the appropriate thing to say before saying the inevitable? Despite my disbelief, I began my story. As I did, my mom got up and left. My aunt quickly followed. It was just me.

I felt so silly standing by myself, sharing the superfluous details of my date. My face flushed when the nurse walked in halfway through, as I described the sweet treat that had swept me off my feet. By the time I had completed my tale, I was alone again, and grandma had returned to her sedated daze. Where I had expected to hear her laughter, all that was left were the sounds of rhythmic monitors and my silence. It felt like my words had simply filled the air.

Grandma never stirred again after my visit. My eyes may have been the last she recognized and my hands the last she ever felt. Likewise, my story of the nature boy and the dodged kiss may have been the last words to fill her ears before her brain and body departed from this life.

Perhaps it seems sad that those may have been her departing thoughts. Perhaps they seem frivolous. Personally, I've come to cherish the idea. As I have reflected on this visit, I've come to realize that the simple silliness of life is what makes it tender and human and perfect. I don't think my grandma would have wanted to leave hearing solemn words of praise, legacy, or accomplishment, for she lived a life opposite of this monotony. Rather, I like to believe that her carefree, exuberant, and clever personality left this world chuckling at the spunk of her admittedly absurd granddaughter, the boy named after nature, and the dodged kiss.





MIGRAINE

graphite on paper

Haldo Treviño II

SILVER

Molly Schlamp

You are edges fallen apart,
unfaded by the years
but all translucent.

You are flesh protected by frame,
drained and missing beneath the surface
but more vivid for it.

You are silver caught in my eye,
hidden near the bottom
but scattered with light.

As change looks younger, you are shifting
to fit a new puzzle. I look forward
to the mystery.

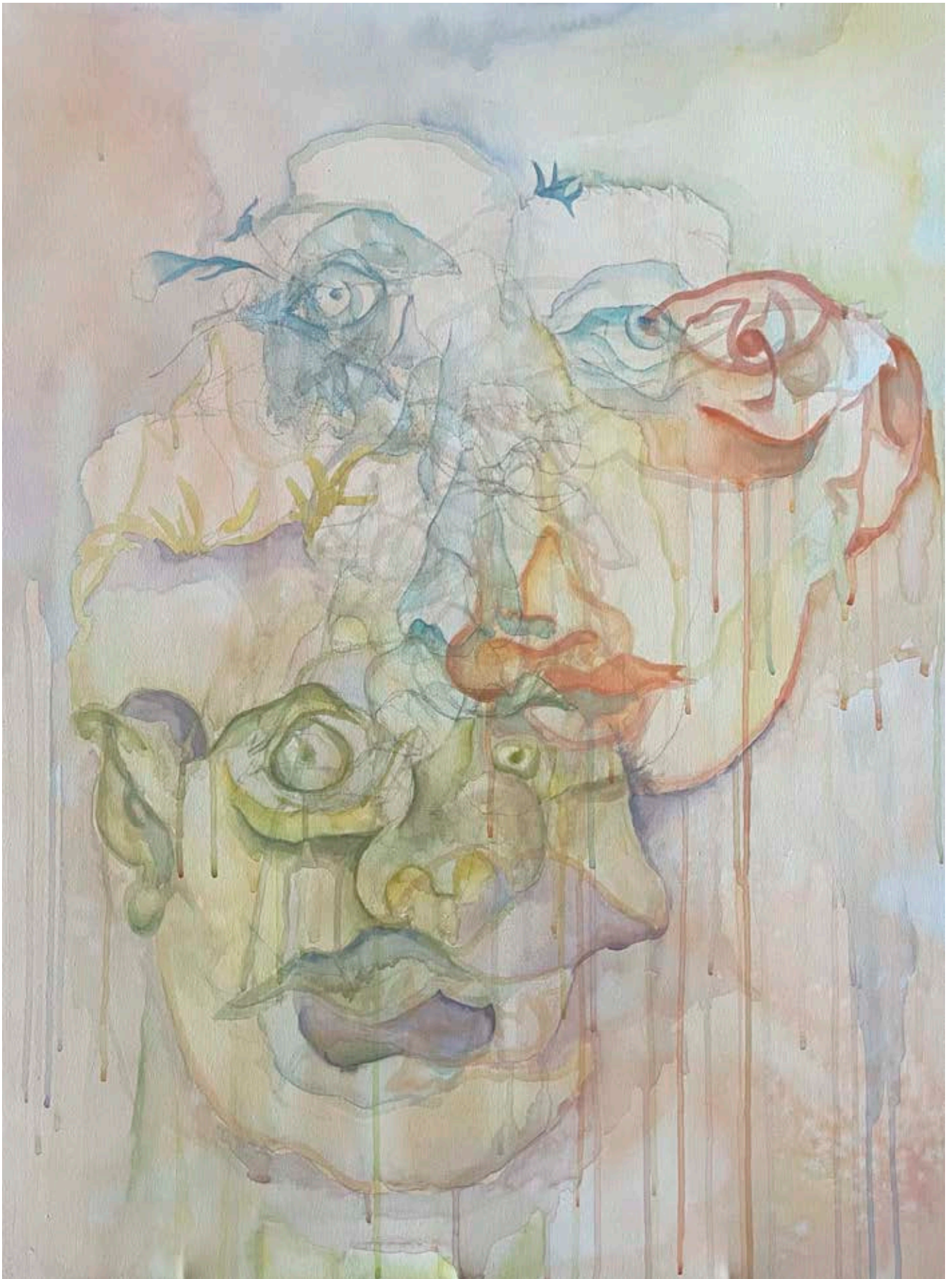
SUNSET

Aaron Hong

Through these past few years, COVID has forced us to be isolated and alone within our own personal spaces. This can have quite a negative impact on mental health, like it did for me. I took this picture as a memory when I decided to spontaneously travel to the middle of nowhere, and was surprised by this beautiful sunset. Although it only lasted less than 10 minutes, it was easily one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen.







AVERAGE

Anonymous

Sometimes I wish I wasn't so average,
Ordinary, run-of-the-mill.
Glancing at the sea of talent around me,
Waves of doubt crash and consume me still.

When comparing myself to the best
"Of the best." I forget that part.
We've climbed mountains and toppled giants!
We've got the mind, the courage, the heart.

Sometimes I wish I wasn't so average,
I don't have that rare hobby, that trophy, that feat.
When we're asked, "What's your interesting fact?"
Inwardly I laugh and look at my feet.

When we look at the challenges we've faced,
How easy it is to forget!
Our journey began long before we got here –
And y'all, the best is before us yet.

Sometimes I wish I wasn't so average,
A standard deviation seems so far away.
49th or 50th percentile –
60% on UWorld seems here to stay.

So the next time those thoughts creep in,
When those pressures make it hard to stand tall,
Maybe we'll finally tell ourselves – Hey you!
You are not so average after all.

But what does it mean to be average?
Who am I comparing myself to?
That same sea of talent around me,
I am a part of! I belong here too.

SELF-PORTRAIT

oil paint on canvas

Abhinav Thummala

This piece reflects on my perception of myself; it is composed of 5 superimposed blind contour drawings.



THE MASK OF MEDICINE

Graphic design, created on Adobe Illustrator

Abhinav Thummala

The Mask of Medicine: In healthcare, students and providers often wear a mask of their profession that obscures the person underneath. In both clinical and personal settings, the importance of clinical decisions, research interests, and professional achievements continues to swell until these factors occupy an overgrown portion of our self-image. Who we are becomes inextricably tied to what we do for work. At a time when 44% of physicians feel at least one symptom of burnout, the push to tie one's worth and identity to their career continues to prevent a sustainably rich life outside of the hospital. This piece addresses this issue through a worn teddy bear wearing a radiologic mask; we see a commitment to one's work and what is lost in the process.

LANUGO

Steven Duncan

A baby's cheeks
are pink at first blush,
a starburst.

Toothless gums gleam
a warm, drooly grin
at every beginning.

Born a fuzzy fruit,
the womb is plucked
to woven basket.

Watch as time
shaves away the outer
coat. See how the world

can smooth,
how soon our children must
shed their softness.

HEMOSTASIS

our rubbery hands touch
clotted cloth, soaked red
from deepening wounds.

we hold down tight
the loosened lid
of a shaken soda bottle.

squeeze and count
the number of sponges.
the seconds on the clock.

pressure, pulse. we fight against
water with electric burn, fingers
plugging Amsterdam.

this is a race run standing still.
the patient is the only one
breathing steady.

MORIBUNDUS

"The death of a beloved is an amputation." – C. S. Lewis

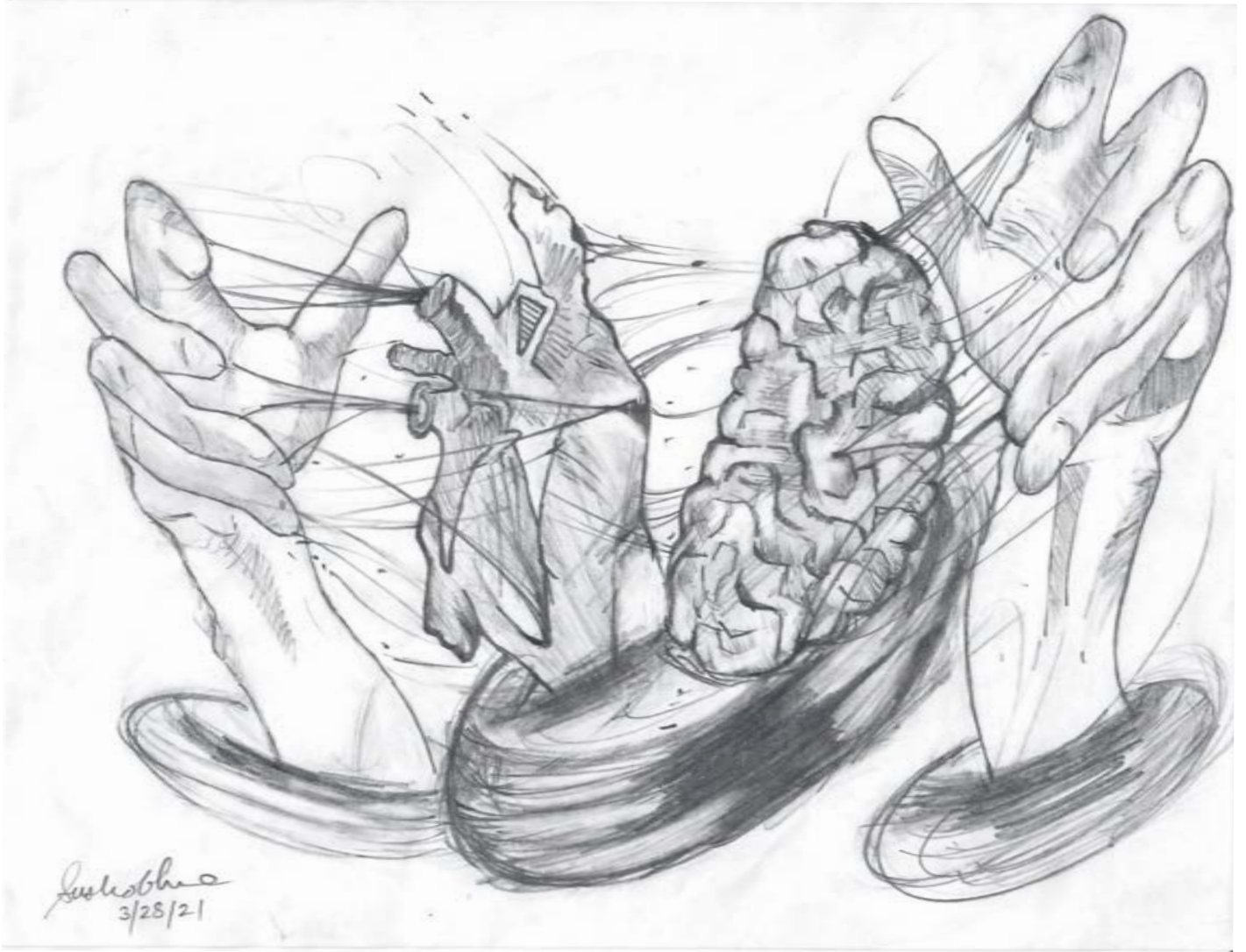
There is a moment just before
the light goes off, or descends
or takes another refulgent form

when it flickers.

The flutter between staying
and wanting to go, sacred lingering
to choose what is not a choice

a precipice in time.

To reverence the close,
we cannot help but hold our breath
and look on through the leaving.



THE ETERNAL DILEMMA

Sushobhna Batra

Every hypothesis, every experiment, every paper published, and every grant written in science involves constant decision making. Most of it is carefully thought through but then there are also the impulsive moments. While science is synonymous to logical thinking driven by the brain, sometimes, it's that gut feeling dictated by the heart that leads to serendipitous but marvelous discoveries. There is a constant tug of war- The Eternal Dilemma- between listening to the heart and the brain that goes on in the background as one makes decisions in science, in lab, and really just in life, every step of the way. I have merely tried to make that thought tangible on a piece of paper.



FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND

Aaron Hong

Medicine has always been built upon the knowledge of those of who came before us. In this photo, I thought about how many of us are following in the footsteps of our mentors and role models. And just like footsteps in the sand, although in the future the footsteps can fade, their impact and memories will always persist in one form or another.

STANDING BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Anonymous

“Is everything alright with Uncle Steven? He looked a little off at Thanksgiving.” I asked my mom this from the passenger seat of the car as we drove to run some errands. Maybe it was my newly skeptical eyes as a first semester medical student, but he seemed bloated around his neck, even under a turtleneck. Malt Lymphoma, Sjogren’s Syndrome, Cushing Syndrome. Ever worse differential diagnoses ran through my mind, highly confident her answer would be the more benign solution of “presumed seasonal weight gain.”

“Actually...” her voice petered off, “not really.” EBV infection. Toxoplasmosis. The intellectual exercise continued while I listened to the fractured History of Present Illness my mom delivered. What started with some unexpected weight fluctuations beginning in October had grown over the last month to include variable mood swings and diffuse low back pain. While not an Olympic athlete, Uncle Steven had been relatively fit with no remarkable medical history.

“They think it’s something with his kidneys.” My mind drew a blank. I thought back to only a few weeks earlier when I saw the kidneys in anatomy for the first time. Tucked in the retroperitoneal space, wearing an adrenal gland cap, and cloaked in protective fat, it seemed weird to think about my uncle’s kidney’s not working, despite all the time I was spending studying disease. With my little knowledge of how the kidneys work, it made sense, at least superficially, that low back pain and weight changes could be a result of renal dysfunction.

I went back to school after Thanksgiving break and put Uncle Steven’s kidneys on the backburner while studying for a course on immunology and infectious diseases. The course ended and I went home. I learned that Uncle Steven was not doing well. He couldn’t go to work. The pain in his back had gotten so bad that he could barely get out of bed. I would hear fragmented reports about how he felt and what they thought was wrong, but I found myself getting frustrated by the telephone-like game of hearing the latest updates. On New Year’s Eve, the pain got so bad that my aunt decided he needed to go to the hospital, so he was admitted.

In the peak of the Omicron surge, things moved slowly at the hospital. A little more than a week later, on January 9, a diagnosis was reached: adrenal cortical carcinoma. The few neoplasia lectures I had attended did not prepare me for this ominous string of words. After a quick Google search, I saw that not only was this an exceedingly rare cancer, but it almost exclusively occurred in younger children and females. This was a 60-year-old man. I thought about the small bundle of tissue resting insidiously on top of his kidney. The statistics were not encouraging, but I talked to my Mom I and tried to reassure her that unknown doesn’t always equal bad. His cancer seemed aggressive, and while that’s scary, sometimes it means that it’s more receptive to treatment.

At orientation on the first day of medical school, one of the Deans said, “Whether you realize it or not, people will start to see you as doctors. That means that for many of you, you’ll get uncomfortable texts from friends and family asking if their bumps or lumps need to be looked at.” Most of us in the audience chuckled. Here I was, not six months later, helping my parents research clinical trials and treatment options, and talking to siblings and cousins to help make sense of everything. Whatever fraction of an MD I was felt woefully inadequate. Part of me was proud to feel helpful, but an equally big part wished for my former naivete.

I spoke with a distant cousin who is a Nephrologist and had been helping my uncle’s case. One-on-one, he told me plainly that the mass was roughly 8x10cm on his right side, with hematogenous metastases to his kidneys, liver, lungs, and bone. Whatever the treatment plan would be, it would most optimistically get him to his daughter’s wedding in June. Given its progression, surgery wasn’t an option, so his doctors decided to start chemotherapy in hope of reigning the disease in. He started treatment two days later, but within a few days he showed signs of multisystem organ failure.

On February 8, he passed away— one month after being diagnosed.

I don't know what insights to disease or sickness I can add. I'm hardly the first person to write about a personal connection to illness, and certainly not the first medical student. While this situation is not unique, it has made me feel connected to other people with similar experiences and the profession more broadly. Reflecting on change can sometimes highlight the unremarkable steps that lead you from one place to the next. In the case of the last few months, with each unwilling step, I found myself further on the wrong side of the metaphorical

curtain. Not yet at the bedside, but privy to knowledge and information that patients may not even understand about themselves.

Whether I like it or not, this is where I am and it's where I belong. It will be a while before I can fully process what happened on both a personal and medical level. I'm grateful to the people who helped take care of my Uncle Steven, and as I inch closer to becoming a doctor, I carry with me the respect for what it means to be behind the curtain.

ENCHANTMENT

Cecilia Zhou

“But you look so healthy.”

“You’ll bounce right back.”

“You seemed okay last time.”

Illness is often invisible. This photo, with the glassy smooth surface of the lake hiding the dark canyons underneath, illustrates how people living with chronic illness may be able to superficially appear “normal” to those around them even when their day-to-day activities are wrought with pain.



BY YOUR SIDE

Andrew Aboujaoude

What if it's your last Friday, upon this very Earth
What would you remember or what would you so do
Would you be with family, the ones you've loved since birth
Would you feel your memory, your actions were so true

Or would you rise like David, gallantly fighting it on
Or would you rest peacefully, feeling much closer to God
Whatever you do, I'll be here for you so thus I shall not run
The family prayers give great power to our doctor squad

In final days, I saw those eyes, the way that they held pains
This morning, I saw a flicker of light, from your soul that emanates?
Oh it's Friday! the week's end! a visit from the husband who remains!
The finalbucket list item to check, the last of a beautiful lifetime of dates



JOY OF A NEW BEGINNING

Varun Sadaphal

Watching fireworks go off provide a much needed break from, at times, stressful times as a graduate/medical student. It inspires to look forward for new things to come in life.



MARIPOSA

Robert Treviño Jr

A poem inspired by a mariposa I met on the way to one of my final medical school exams. The recording of my winged friend includes a backdrop of one the first lo-fi beats I created inspired by the countless hours studying to the same type of music. A personal reminder to pay attention to the flowers when I get the opportunity.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Andrew Aboujaoude is a fourth year medical student at the University of Texas Southwestern who aspires to be an Air Force Anesthesiologist, one day serving his country and his surrounding community. Currently, he serves as the President and Founder of Hearts for the Homeless International, President of Armed Forces Landing Zone, and Community Outreach Officer for Alpha Omega Alpha. Over the past few years, Andrew has been selected as a UCF 30 Under 30 Alumni, Clinton Global Initiative University Alumni Honor Roll, and Junior Alpha Omega Alpha at UT Southwestern.

Sushobhna Batra

Sushobhna is a 6th year Immunology PhD candidate in Dr. Marc Diamond's lab. Besides a love for science and medicine, she enjoys sketching, nephology (NOT nephrology), and stand-up comedy.

Steven Duncan

Steven Duncan is a fourth-year student at UT Southwestern. Creative writing has been a meaningful way for him to process experiences in medical training. Steven's poetry has been published by Mojave River Review, Thimble, Sin Fronteras, Gleam, Mad Swirl, and others. For more, visit www.stevenduncan.net.

Aaron Hong

Aaron is currently a third year medical student. When he is not in the hospital or studying in the library, he likes to travel to the middle of nowhere and appreciate the beauty of sites often overlooked.

Adelaide Kwon

Adelaide is a fourth-year medical student and previous SCOPE editor. She loves reading, writing, and listening to music. She is fascinated by the subtleties and nuances of language—the way that slight variations in order or word choice can have such a profound impact on meaning.

Rachel Manuel

Rachel Manuel is a 4th year medical student who will begin a residency in Family Medicine in 2022. In addition to poetry and sketching, Rachel enjoys spending time with her sister, singing, and songwriting.

Eliza Neal

Eliza is a first year medical student, baker, outdoors enthusiast, and the best unsolicited tour guide at any art museum.

Nicholas Nguyen

Nicholas is a first year graduate student with an interest in the heart. His hobbies include painting, reading, and photography. He is inspired by film, art, and unanswerable questions.

Hiren Patel

Hiren uses photography to document his experiences and his emotions in his daily life and while visiting different places. He enjoys seeking out unique experiences and spontaneous solo travel in his free time.

Varun Sadaphal

Varun is a fifth year PhD student in the biomedical engineering program at UTSW. He got into photography a few years ago. It has grown into a hobby which is close to his heart and has become a form of expression for him. He carries his camera setup almost everywhere he goes.

Molly Schlamp

Molly is a second year medical student beginning to navigate clinical rotations while witnessing and connecting to the human condition in ways more intimate than ever before. Molly believes wordsmanship is a craft and skill of indescribable value to humans, especially those who care for others. Yet, while Molly spends a lot of time thinking about the “right” words, she’s found that oftentimes, the best words are the ones that that require the least crafting.

Shannon Teaw

Shannon is a first-year medical student who enjoys painting, pottery, going on walks and enjoying nature.

Abhinav Thummala

Abhinav Reddy Thummala is a third-year medical student at UT Southwestern Medical School. He graduated with a B.A. in biology from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Haldo Treviño II

Haldo Treviño II is from the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, completed his B.S. at Johns Hopkins University and is the first in his family to attend medical school.

Robert Treviño Jr.

Robert Treviño Jr. is a third year medical student that has found incredible ways to procrastinate over the years. Mariposa was created as a kindness to himself as he began to find ways to prevent burn out in times of stress.

Ashley Tsang

Ashley is a first year medical student who loves art, food, and longboarding

Cecilia Zhou

Cecilia Zhou is a fourth year medical student at UTSW. In her spare time, she loves to explore national parks, eat s’mores by the campfire, practice yoga, and read Stephen King.