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Letter from the Editors
Alexandra Ogorodnikova & Maria Kon
Editors-in-Chief, on behalf of the Ad Libitum team

For our ninth year, we are proud to present the revamped Ad Libitum, a student-run magazine which brings together creativity in all of its forms—by and for the Einstein students, faculty, staff and other community members. Unfortunately, we can not include all submissions as we always receive far more pieces that we can accommodate in a single issue. Please check out our website einstein.yu.edu/adlibitum for various works that we could not include in this issue!

We would like to thank the special people who made this project possible: Dean Grayson, Martin Penn, Dean Kuperman, Dean Spiegel, Dean Baumb, Dean Katz, the Office of Educational Affairs, Lorene Tapellini and the Graphic Arts Center, Karen Gardner and the Communications and Public Affairs Office, the Graduate Office, and the Student Council. We are grateful for the financial assistance, publicity, magazine production, and continued support and enthusiasm.

Last but not least, we want to thank the artists for yet again inspiring us with their incredible work. We hope this year’s issue inspires you as well.

Letter from the Dean
Martha S. Grayson, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

It is truly an honor to write a foreword to the annual edition of Ad Libitum. Since my arrival at Einstein just over a year ago, I have been impressed with the talented and dedicated members of our community who contribute greatly to the science and practice of medicine. Created nine years ago with the support and encouragement of my predecessor, Dr. Albert Kuperman, Ad Libitum showcases the wide range of literary and artistic talents of our special community. The photography and artwork are breathtaking and demonstrate the creativity and keen observational skills of their authors. The poetry and literature are transforming and explore a wide range of personal, social and ethical issues. I congratulate the editors on their terrific production, and I thank all of the talented members of our Einstein community who contributed to this truly inspiring magazine.
They wove the sails and cut the pine,
Fragrance expectorated by the light of the sun.

In the park we find ’em,
Players of the new games,
Beneath the light, softly plastered against the hill,
The city just floats upon the slender cilia
Of their suspirations, the denizens hanging
On rope ladders of tweed and calico,
Clambering to the quietude of assignation
In the tufts of dried grass bellow.

The fix is in. We knew it.
But it didn’t matter to them anyway –
The couriers and baristas of the great glass castle
Downtown. Just hold your head in the pollinated air
Streamers of warmth coming up from the valley,
Swift as vapors overhead, it cuts up through the hills,
Where the pansies lie thick as thieves around the naked ivory of toes
Reaching out from tattered woolens
Around the campfire, a pot of golden oats, candied violets
A boiling broth of mallow root to boot.

We mounted our bikes and the great sail
Stitched of car lot banners and hospital sheets
Lufted and the cracked its brawny shoulders in the flames of the sun.
We were off.

From one nauseating pile of nasturtiums to the next,
Gathering what provisions we can, spun lint, bits of wire,
From the kidnappings, the ambushes, the robberies
The little birds perpetrate on their long penetration through the night.

Xelaju
by Stephen James Lowery
MD Student III
Incomprehensible
by Doris Farahnik
Ferkauf Student II

Papers dangling in my mind
Oozing from my brain
These highlighted terms
And underlined phrases
Prancing on the tip of my tongue.

Just
On the tip of my tongue.

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On the tip of my tongue.
Too often in this world of information—at-your-fingertips we make ourselves into experts by reading, by watching; we forget that sometimes, some places can only be learned, experienced by being. Before we ever step foot off a plane, we think we’re ready, and often times are, and it’s sad, really. The world has become so small that the unknown has been replaced before we even see it. Sometimes though, there are places in the world that are still shrouded, still known more through legend and lore than ever actually being seen. And when you find one of these places, treasure it, for it is a rare and beautiful thing to behold. This is a letter I wrote home from just such a place.

You land at the airport in Ulaanbaatar, expecting a dirt runway with fleeing sheep and startled cattle. Instead the 737 touches down smoothly and taxies without a bump to one of several gates. You walk off the plane to that first deep breath of new air with novel smells sending the mind reel—flooded by the shapes and contours catching the sun with their reflective skins. Cars flood the streets spewing their black diesel exhaust, but they drive in the shadows of electric buses using a grid of power-lines to propel themselves smog free throughout the city. The State Department Store (the main department store in the city) has a carnival out front with silly spin rides in dingy pig and frog carts running on an old, rusted track. It’s easy to miss the solar power collectors and super-modern wind turbines supplying the much-needed energy. And all through this a constant stream of people, slipping non-descript between hints of the old world and in-ignorable splashes of the new.

UB isn’t what you were told to expect; neither is Mongolia for that matter—but then again, it never is.

I like to think of myself as pretty open-minded when I travel; I eat local foods no matter what organ it comes from (and of what animal that organ comes out of), take part in local customs (no matter how distasteful), and a dash of the barbaric looking, heavily muscled Mongolian flag-bearer comes in wearing only the traditional wrestling garb (think Olympic swimmer, then subtract the clothing by 90%). He was the only Olympian carrying the flag in one outstretched arm the entire lap, unwavering with a look of sheer ease in a task that not only of the other elitist of the elite athletes from around the world would even attempt. Every other country’s flag-bearer had a brace around their waist in which they could carry the flag, so their arm served merely to keep it from tipping over.

In the end though, through what little there is to read and watch, Mongolia became a country populated by the imagination, full of images and stories one cannot remember the origins of, only that they’re sure they’ve heard from someone who surely knows. Stories about guns and riders and beasts of men like Chinggis Khan—toppers of China riding in like nightmares on horses, shooting fire and reigning terror. The mind sees no electricity, no stores, it fills gaps with intense warriors and horseback romanticism—an “old west” meets “far east” with a bit of “roman gladiator” mixed in (which at times really isn’t far from the truth). It’s a fantasy world populated with grandiose visions of expansive outdoors occupied by fearless towers of masculinity, a people worthy of having a Great Wall keep it from tipping over.

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were merely playthings, devoid of a truth I knew was lacking. I had expectations, it was an impossibility to not—but it is good to know there are still places that can surprise—places that don’t meet expectations, don’t exceed them, rather make you reevaluate them. Make you take a moment to check what you think you know, and smile at yourself for your own ignorance. When I travel, I live for places like this.

Mongolia is as mysterious as you’ve heard, a place rugged and modern, still filled with nomads, but also with a city happily embracing a future they’ve always been confident they would have.

So it’s fantastic here, but a place of spotty Internet and amazing stories (you try writing a story home when the keyboard is in Cyrillic!). Hopefully the next one will come soon, I’ll preview it by saying if you’ve thought my stories of travel in China seemed difficult, you ain’t heard nothing yet.

Love hearing from all of you,
Oren

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Down at Rhinelander
After a Huge Storm
Aihua Zheng, PhD
Research Fellow
Photograph

Brooklyn Bridge
Kevin Lau
Research Technician
Photograph
Friendships spun to songs supreme,
Evening’s embrace flows to morning’s dream.
Mind strains to hold, keep fast,
The sighs and laughs of exultation past.
While poison pares the onion back,
Till joy is joyless, and all is black.
Without film a camera flashes;
The fire’s heat leaves only ashes.
The moment’s king,
A foolish thing.
When time a cunning trap has laid,
Each night’s glory till dawn will fade.

Blackout
by Maxwell Weidmann
MSTP Student I
The Fall
by Karen Gardner
Associate Director, Internal and Web Communications

It was either suicide or a leap of faith.
The leaf, old, and color fading to a pale shadow of its former vividness, loosed its grip of the bough.

A despondent drifter stepping from a ledge, where, for a moment, Gravity led the downward plunge.

But then a breeze gently cupped the leaper in its unseen hand, carrying it aloft on an invisible wave that crashed toward shore. When the wind lost its sail, the leaf would dip and spiral down again only to be lifted, as if attached to transparent strings, when nimbus currents stirred anew.

Finally, it fluttered beyond Its protective wafture, landing softly among brethren who had already taken the Fall.
Ghengis
Travis Jarell
Lab Technician
Acrylic on Velvet

Arch
Brandon Milholland
PhD Student I
Photograph
at a train station
by Bret W.A. Negro
MD Student III

at a train station
sounds of war
grow ever nearer
the crowd vibrates
shoving, shouting, laughing, pouting
grabbing, pulling, running, mulling
kissing, biting, loving, fighting
smelling, tasting, using, wasting
praying, mending, beginning, ending
thinking, crying, playing, trying
to drown out
all that ticking
such a slow burn
for so little time

seven birds appear
against the sky
the crowd quiets
arrows rain down
there is blood
on the cars and on the tracks
on our feet and on our backs
on our faces, on our necks
on the children at our breasts
red-wiped grass-blades, clot-fed fields
dripping boulders, broken wheels
frozen ice-blood, red-stained sands
bear witness to our soiled hands
bloody waters, bloody earth
bloody death and bloody birth

all is calm there now
the train is gone
the tracks are wrecked
one by one
the lights go on
emerging from the blackest night
the sun comes out and spills its light
the ashes sink, the waters churn
the saplings stretch, the fires burn
the monsters sleep and peace awakes
our tragic circle, our funny fate
begins again what ended yet
we all line up to place our bets

Osprey Flying with Fish, Gujrat, India
Jayanta Roy-Chowdhury, Professor, Department of Genetics
Photograph

Native American Face
Francisco Lázaro-Díéuez
Research Fellow
Department of Developmental and Molecular Biology
Oil on Canvas

Right
Encapsulation
(Bronx, NY)
David Wallach
Manager of IRB
Photograph
You want a baby.

You want to have your stomach full and round and smooth and hold it and feel little kicks and you want your ankles fat. You want to throw up in the mornings because then Shelley, your roommate, will make you hot mint tea and sit with you and talk about how to decorate the baby’s room when it arrives. You want to push the baby out after nine months and you want to hold it before the doctors even clean it.

One day you wake up and Shelley helps you into your wheelchair because it’s quite urgent that you talk to Nurse Ross. She’s the kindest one at the Rosehill Home for Seniors.

“Nurse,” you say when you see her down the hall walking out of one of the men’s rooms. You motion with two fingers for her to come closer and when she does, you bring your voice to a raspy whisper. “I’m late.”

“Oh yeah? Where do you gotta be, Mrs. Harlow?” she responds.

“Darling,” you say, “I have told you one-hundred-one times not to call me Mrs. anything. Call me Katherine.”

“Katherine,” she says, sighing but still smiling.

“Nurse, I’m late,” you say again, and when she narrows her eyes a little, you throw your hands up and let them land on your lap. “My period. I’m a week late.”

“Your family is here,” the boy says.

“Worry? I’m not worrying! This might be it,” she says.

She grabs the back of your chair and pushes you down the hall. You’re wheeled into a room with five round tables covered with laminated yellow cloths. The thick smell of fried oil warns you that today your plate will be covered in bacon, browned eggs and homefries. As the nurse arranges your chair at the table, you turn your face to her.

“I’m feeling a little queasy,” you say.

“You haven’t eaten yet, dear. You’ll feel better once you get a bit of food in your stomach.”

She walks away and you smile to yourself. Morning sickness. One of the nurses sets a hand on his shoulder after crossing the parlor to the family.

“Hi John. How have you been?” she asks.

“She is. She remembers those times now won’t kill it like last time.”

“Mom, how are you doing?” he asks.

“She is. She remembers those times.”

“It’s me mom. It’s Katie,” the woman replies, tilting your head in the direction of the large woman to his left.

“I’m great, but who’s this with you?” you reply, turning to the man and the woman, and turning to the man.

“Yeah, what’s—”

“Doctor, it’s okay, I can handle it this morning,” you say.

“Doctor, now is not a good time. I’m visiting my family.”

“John,” you say, holding your hand out to his, palm down, fingers elegantly on display.

When he holds it but does not kiss it you frown and he squeezes your fingers a bit tighter.

“Mom, you have your checkup today, remember?” you say.

“Yeah, what’s—”

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“Doctor, it’s okay, I can handle it this morning,” you say.

“The baby will live. My stomach feels heavy and the inside of your chest burns a little. Halfway across the parlor, a boy approaches you. Embroidered on his right breast-pocket is the word “VOLUNTEER” in purple thread that is fraying at the corners.

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This could be it. My gosh, I could be having a baby!”

The nurse nods. “Let’s go to the dining room. We’ll get you some breakfast.”

You nod, but quickly turn back to look back to the man.

“I have news. Great news,” you tell him, smiling a little, despite the stabbing feeling in your stomach.

“Yeah, what’s—”

But the man is cut off as Nurse Ross places a hand on his shoulder after crossing the parlor to the family.

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woman says. “Since I was the first born after eight years of miscarriages, she considered me a miracle.” The woman’s eyes are pink and lines trace her forehead above her brow. “I was also the first she forgot as her illness got worse.”

The doctor looks away from the woman as he says, “it’s a terrible disease; it affects our patients in ways we can’t fully understand.”

“It didn’t help that I stopped visiting after that,” the woman responds. “That I stopped visiting when the office got busy.”

The doctor sighs and motions for the man and the woman to move closer to the desk you’re behind. They walk behind the desk and stop only a foot or so away from the doctor. Immediately, the man starts whispering and although you can’t hear what he is telling the doctor, his eyes look sharp and his chin quivers slightly every few seconds. You begin to worry. You want a baby. You want this baby and this scene seems all too familiar.

“Would you all stop this behavior please?” you say.

The three of them turn to you suddenly, as if just realizing you were sitting there. The two men sigh in unison and the woman casts her gaze to the side, staring hard at a spider crawling on the wall near her. The doctor looks at the blond man for a moment before speaking.

“Mrs. Harlow, Katherine,” he says, “You’re not having a baby. I’m sorry. The nausea you’ve been experiencing is a side effect of the medication you take each night for the dementia. The only thing is, as we told you before, it’s a trial study and it’s not making you any better. The labs we ran last week show that you’re only getting worse.”

You look up at the doctor, and then the man, and finally the woman. You gaze at her face for a moment and she turns to you for the first time. Finally, she speaks.

“There’s nothing they can do to help you, mama. We don’t want you to feel sick anymore, so we’re going to take you off the medicine.”

She looks at the man and he puts his arm around her, squeezing her far shoulder between his palm and fingers. The doctor reaches under his desk and pulls out a stack of papers. “To the man, he hands a pamphlet that reads Family Guide to Palliative Care.

“Hold on, hold on,” you finally say as the woman grabs your wheelchair and begins to push you out of the clinic.

“Yeah, mama?” she says, but she keeps pushing.

“You all needn’t worry so much,” you say. “I know it seems like all the other times, but I’m going to have this baby. I really am. I can feel it.”

The woman continues pushing you out of the clinic and you hear the sound of sniffling behind you. You go to sleep early that night, before even the sun goes down. Light leaks through cracks in the blinds above your bed, and you watch the particles of dust float through the layers of light above you before your eyelids lower and block it out.

You wake eventually to the sound of voices and it takes a few moments before you realize how many people are standing beside your bed. You look down at your hand to see a wide blond woman grasping it tightly and you look directly above you to see the face of a tall blond man gazping down at you. Another man, with long black hair tied tight behind his head with a rubber-band, quickly moves across the surface of your chest a cold metal object attached to tubes that go to his ears.

“Katie, Katie, Katie.”

As the man with black hair speaks you realize who he is.

“Doctor!” you say, grabbing his arm with your free hand. You realize suddenly exactly what is happening and pull your other hand free from the blond woman and place it on the lower side of your belly. You smile.

“Doctor,” you say again, much more quietly. “It’s happening, I’m having her. It’s a girl. I know it—”

But you stop speaking because you suddenly feel a burning somewhere under your breasts and you can’t make words anymore. You can’t move or feel anything except for the burning and you watch as the shiny metal piece moves across you again, under the doctor’s hand. You hear voices but you can’t understand what they are saying.

You know that soon she’ll come out of you and you’ll stop hurting and the voices will be clearer. You try to push a little but you can’t feel the lower part of your body enough to know if your muscles are tightening or not.

After a while, you hear another sound. It is farther away than the voices, but the sobs get louder and louder.

Slowly, the noise around you begins to fade and you know it’s almost over. She’s almost out. And you can finally hear, very softly, a name being repeated over and over in the distance.

“Katie, Katie, Katie.”

And then even the name is gone and the burning in your chest is gone. And before everything else disappears, you realize that you know what to name her.

Katie.
Sonnet 315: Laurel Poisoning
by Daniel Scott
PhD Student

The outlook wasn’t brilliant, said the vet
An ornamental shrub had taken him
The bitter taste remained lest we forget
That poison murders those we love with vim

I wanted satisfaction, nay, an end
to trial by prularasin for he
But fate has other motives for her trends
To take all happiness away from me

But how much longer does this toll on us
while cruelty takes my only joy away
It came with neither terror, hate nor fuss
But no one ever sees eternal days

Yet in these thoughts alone and terrified
It is my friend, my love, who went and died
Symptoms
by Chris Hawk
MD Student IV

Nausea, headache, cough
honestly I felt fine until
they told me I was sick
I still feel fine
so what if I don’t set the record
better to lie six-feet under than
in my own filth
cornered in some

nursing home
No sir-
for my last and final act
I’m gonna choose a
songofmyselfbuckinblueskywonderful-
worldimaginemywaykissmyfatladysinging-
kindalife
such as it is
Somewhere in Brooklyn
Kevin Lau
Research Technician
Photograph
This is my advice to a wife whose husband is home, on medical disability.

I wanted to leave some advice with a friend’s wife before I went on vacation, but didn’t have the opportunity. Now that I am back, I hope it is not too late. He has already been home for eight-weeks.

Girl, get that man a hobby! Just a little something that will keep his idle hands busy. Maybe, model airplanes. Little things that he can build, for all of the ladies in his life (you, his mom and sisters) and, perhaps, one to bring back to his office upon recuperation. There is an addiction lurking out there. It is subtle, at first, and then it slowly builds. No, it is not the pain medication; and it is far more insidious. It starts innocently enough.

It usually rears its head around 6 or 7 AM. When you are most vulnerable because you have just arisen and your mind is clear and the house is quiet. As you arise, you hear a thud as it falls to the floor, that all-powerful conduit to mind-numbing ecstasy, the remote control. As you bend to retrieve it, you realize that it has not only turned on the television but it has taken you someplace you have never been before. Cloud nine. Yes, that evil, possessed small but mighty obelisk, with the redeye, has you looking at programming that you are unfamiliar with. You try to look away, but what you see and hear is too compelling. There are people, there are letters Q-V-C and there are prices. Someone named David is in the kitchen. Pots are steaming. The food is being beautifully plated. Wolfgang Puck is premiering his new cookware on QVC. He makes it look so easy, and he tells you, you can cook like this, too. Your mouth is watering and all of your favorite foods are on display. And, you begin to believe. Yes, with those pots and pans, I know I will cook as well as Wolfgang, besides he is giving me the recipes with the cookware. I might even be able to start my own restaurant, so this is a good investment. If only I weren’t on disability because they are so expensive. But, you hear the magical words, flex pay. Flex pay means payments can be extended over 4 or 5 months. Doable on a disability check. You have to hurry, the sale only lasts 10 minutes more. You call the number on the screen and give the operator all the pertinent info. So easy. The pots are on the way.

Before the phone is nestled safely back in its cradle and you head to the door for the newspaper, David appears on the screen, again. You stop. Is there a problem with the pots; why is David back on the air? This time he is hawking Omaha Steaks. He is cooking two in one of Wolfgang’s (your) pans. Eight steaks for $40.00. (Flex pay for five-months). Me likey flex pay. You dial the number at the bottom of the screen, it is unique to the item that you are ordering. A female voice answers, Hello Dan. You are taken aback. How? Who? (Because, once you order, you become their bitch). The voice asks you if you want to use the same credit card and shipping address as your last order? The voice is not human but seems to know all about you. That was a little creepy, but the steaks are on the way. You sit on the edge of the bed wondering what will be on sale next. Hand
To make a long story short, if your husband becomes addicted to shopping on TV, you will have endless deliveries; deliverymen will call you by your first name when they see you on the street. And, with all the food, especially desserts that you’ll be receiving on auto-ship, there will be no need to leave home.

I, personally, must continue to fight this addiction. There are unopened cartons containing cookware, a computer, sheets, Christmas decorations, et al, in my home from my disability, last year. Everything but exercise equipment, of course. For some reason, Tony Little wasn’t as convincing as Wolfgang in selling his wares although I did order a Kymara Body Shaper, but I looked like a can of biscuits in it.

In conclusion, model airplanes are the way to go. This hobby will keep him busy.

Now your appetite is whetted, what other treasures are available? Then, you discover that there are other channels HSN, SHOP-NBC, all shopping, all the time. And, there are infomercials, too. In fact, there is one featuring a styling tool called an Instyler and for just $14.99 for a 30 day trial, you get two, one for each of you, with a styling comb and styling products. When they arrive, the actual price, if you decide to keep them is around $175.00. Oh, these Instylers are definitely going back, in thirty days. You’ll each try one, first on yourself, then each other. Well, it really does dry the hair nicely. Since you are both working at home, you’ll have plenty of time to experiment with straight styles and poufs. All you’ll need is a bowl, some scissors and the Instyler. This can save a lot of money, when on disability.

Electronic shows are always the most mesmerizing. The most fascinating items are the large screen televisions. Plasmas, LCDs, LEDs, and DLPs. Some even have 3-D viewing. And, no matter how large your present television screen is, you become convinced that you need the 85” screen. On flex pay! No more going to the movies, besides there are a couple of DVD hook-ups, on the job. More disability money saved.

Electronic shows are always the most mesmerizing. The most fascinating items are the large screen televisions. Plasmas, LCDs, LEDs, and DLPs. Some even have 3-D viewing. And, no matter how large your present television screen is, you become convinced that you need the 85” screen. On flex pay! No more going to the movies, besides there are a couple of DVD hook-ups, on the job. More disability money saved.

To make a long story short, if your husband becomes addicted to shopping on TV, you will have endless deliveries; deliverymen will call you by your first name when they see you on the street. And, with all the food, especially desserts that you’ll be receiving on auto-ship, there will be no need to leave home.

I, personally, must continue to fight this addiction. There are unopened cartons containing cookware, a computer, sheets, Christmas decorations, et al, in my home from my disability, last year. Everything but exercise equipment, of course. For some reason, Tony Little wasn’t as convincing as Wolfgang in selling his wares although I did order a Kymara Body Shaper, but I looked like a can of biscuits in it.

In conclusion, model airplanes are the way to go. This hobby will keep him busy.

I know a dutiful wife feels obligated to stay by her husband’s side and nurse him back to health, but do try to get out. I know he can now do your hair with the Instyler, however, do try to go out for professional pedicures and manicures.

Take heart in knowing that he is mending nicely and will soon be back to work.
After the taxidermy peacocks with wax and velvet flowers
The red medal spaghetti chain wave crashed to the sound

White papered trees in a brick forest swamp
Glass tile with a face of three, green, and grinning at me

Sitting up against a wall
Not so inanimate blades and roots
I couldn’t claim the space
No communication

Catatonic and searching for sanctuary
At last, solace on the hill
And the bridge cloud vista melded it all together

As the space ship glides across the tracks
Dunking commences

The blueberries make it complete
Watch and marvel as he learns how to eat
Banana bread swimming in a pocket

Nah, I liked it in the sun
Light
Leonid Tarassishin
Research Associate
Department of Pathology
Photograph

Colors of Water
Mohsin Chowdhury
MD Student I
Photograph
Therapy with Your Son’s Arch Nemesis
by John Phair
MD Student I

It was with a dull squeak and thud that the therapist leaned forward on his chair and placed his hands on the desk. Ronald Kirkman looked up, nervously. His entire back and legs were covered in nervous sweat. He did not know where to begin as he stumbled through his own mind searching for a starting point.

The therapist, peering down from his circular glasses perched on his sharp nose, began, “Mr. Kirkman…”

“Ron is okay,” Ron squeaked.

“Okay, Ron” the therapist continued, “you came here to speak with me, recommended by your friend, Mary Larson, (may the rest in peace) but you need to tell me what we are dealing with here.”

Ronald exhaled loudly and placed his palms on the desk in front of him. He looked up with a half intimidated gaze.

“Oh, but there is that doctor-patient confidentiality clause, right? I mean, this is... not my information to share but…” Ronald started to lean back into his seat again, “I need to know what to do.”

“Ron, your secrets are safe with me. Now just start at the beginning,” the therapist grinned, revealing crooked sharp teeth.

“Okay, okay,” he breathed and then whispered, “I think my son is a superhero.” The therapist’s eyes widened with excitement for a mere second and then as if pantomiming, he put his hand to his ear, “I’m sorry, Mr. Kirkman, I can’t hear you. You’ll have to speak up.”

Ron nervously brushed his hand through his hair and stroked his short beard awkwardly with his other hand. He whispered something reassuring to himself and looked towards the upper corner of the therapist’s office. The entire room was filled with African tribal masks and framed degrees. The back had two towering bookcases. The books, mostly large medical and psychiatric texts, were arranged in height order. The studious aspects of the room combined with the dim lighting and horrifying wooden masks gave the room an antiquated yet dark feel.

“My son, Mark, the last few months, he’s… been different and…”

“And you think he is a what?” the therapist bated.

“A superhero…” Ron stammered, “but I’m not crazy!”

“Do go on, Ron.” His eyes keenly gazing at Ron’s mouth as he spoke.

“He’s been acting weird for the past few months… my son, I mean. He’s out all night and his grades are falling. At first, I thought it was drugs or something. After his mom died, I had a hard time... you know, talking to him and... I figured I was reaping what I sowed. We haven’t connected in a while... we just, do our own separate things. But I noticed… and recently— every morning, he’d barely be able to wake up and he’d have bags under his eyes. And then two weeks ago, he woke up with a black eye.”

“Mr. Kirkman,” the therapist spoke directly to Ronald, “these behaviors are not indicative of your son being a…”

“Superhero,” Ronald muttered.

“Ron. I know that you have heard I used to be the premier psychiatrist for superheroes, fifteen years ago, however, we all know that era is well passed. Furthermore, if this is some joke…”

“No, no, please, let me just… tell you the rest. I really need… help, need to know what to do,” he cried as he said these words.

“It’s obvious that you are in pain, Ron, I apologize, please continue,” the therapist frowned.

“He had never been in a fight before, never been violent in the slightest. And now, it seemed to me that he was doing drugs and fighting. I called up the school and talked to his teachers. They said that he was missing classes but that he didn’t have any violent or strange behavior. But, this is my son! I may have been distant, because Sarah is gone… but I didn’t want him getting hurt.” He breathed in deeply and wiped away the tears sliding down his rough face.

“When I talked to Mark,” Ron continued. “Mark Kirkman,” the therapist whispered to himself. He smiled as he wrote, black ink cursively connected: “Kill Mark Kirkman.”

“What are you writing?” Ron peered nervously over the therapist’s desk.

“Please do continue, Ron, I was just making a quick note. As you were saying…”

“It continued…” Ron started again, “he bruises and the cuts. One day, his arm would be covered in bandages; another day, he would limp. These injuries… they never seemed to last long. But as soon as he healed, there would be another cut, another black eye… And when I asked him, he would say he fell down the stairs or that he was clumsy. But my boy, he was never clumsy. His mother… Sarah, she always made him do those girly sports, gymnastics, ice skating... the boy was good on his feet. I knew he was lying. But I was lost myself, I’m still lost without her.”

“Your wife... How did she die?” the therapist seemed to hiss from behind his oak desk.

“She was murdered.”

“I’m sorry for your loss,” the therapist said as he looked down at his yellow notepad, with those words written. “Murder is always a topic,” the therapist enunciated, “that always affects me deeply.” The therapist leaned forward with curiosity, “may I ask...” he licked his lips, “how she was murdered?”

Ron looked up, off put, and stuttered, “it was a mugging... I really don’t want to talk about it though.” Tears began to stream down his face again.

“Of course. I apologize, please continue, tell me more about... Mark.” He smiled weakly.

“Right... okay… last week, when midtown was attacked by that thing,” Ron said, with disgust.

“Ah, The Necromancer, quite the villain. He almost had the entire city under his mind control,” the therapist chuckled.

Ron looked up suspiciously, “You say that almost as if you admire him...”

“Of course not, Mr. Kirkman, but it is rare, in this day and age, that a super villain comes that close to taking over the city. But, go on, as you were saying.”

“Right...” Ronald started, “That beast, the... Necro...maner, with the power to control minds. He just started attacking and hurting those innocent people. Causing people to hurt each other... All those fires and deaths...” Ronald looked distant, “and then! I see on the news that some boy in a sweatshirt and domino mask is fighting him. And the kid is doing a really good job, fighting him into...
How’s work? And then we heard on the radio about a hospital burning down. He barely even looked at me as he ran out the door and yelled back, “Gotta run, pops, school work! Talk to you later.”

The therapist leaned forward, making a dome with his fingers, and looking over it, he said, “So what makes you think he’s some type of hero?”

Ronald looked up and bit his lip. He pulled up his brief case, opened it, and pulled out what looked like a black mask.

“I found this and the rest of the costume… this morning.”

The therapist licked his lips and reached forward to grab the mask. Once in his hands, he stared at it, feeling the edges intimately with his fingers.

“So this is it. His real face,” the therapist muttered.

“Excuse me?” Ronald leaned forward and took the mask from his hands.

Caught off guard and almost frightened, the therapist looked up, “Oh, I just was amazed that this is your son’s costume.”

Ronald sighed, “Yea, this is what my son wears out. I’m kind of proud of him, but… well, you always think that those guys fighting crime, that they are our age, adults - that they don’t have people worrying about them back home. But, my son, he’s fifteen years old. He’s supposed to be playing sports and talking to girls… and instead he’s fighting crime and beating up Necro-prancer.”

“Necromancer,” the therapist winced and blurted.

“Doc, listen, I don’t know what to do.”

Ronald walked out of the office. The therapist leaned back in his chair, with a look of disappointment. The walls.

“Mr. Kirkman,” the therapist said, looking directly into Ronald’s eyes, and speaking as if in a trance, “find out your son’s powers, find out his weaknesses- only then can you understand him.”

“You’re you’re right,” Ronald stammered, “I should see what he can really do. I should care for him and the only way would be to know what can hurt him.”

As Ronald said these words, it seemed like he too was in a trance and that the words and thoughts were being pushed into his head.

“Right… and when you know these things, we can talk more about your boy. Perhaps after our next session, he can come in for a special talk… just me and him? Maybe I’ll be able to talk some sense into him—see that he doesn’t get himself killed.”

The therapist smiled as he concluded the sentence.

“Dr… R…,” Ronald stumbled.

“Dr. Romancar, but you can call me Nick,” he smiled his ghastly teeth.

“Nick, I don’t know how I can ever thank you. Just talking about this, getting it off my chest, it’s made me feel so much better. I just want the best for my boy and you’ve made me realize… maybe with your help, I’ll be able to help him.”

“Oh. We will definitely be doing a number on your son, Ron, you have my word,” he said.

“Thank you again,” Ronald said as he shook the therapist’s cold hands. He looked around the room once more and wondered why there were so many tribal masks and traditional spears mounted on the walls.

“Mr. Kirkman, your bag.”

Distracted, Ronald looked back. “Oh, of course, I’ll be seeing you, Nick. Thanks again.”

Ronald walked out of the office. The therapist leaned back in his chair, with a smile.

“Hmm, well it must be someone’s lucky day.” He said to himself as he looked down at his yellow pad of paper, “A city, no longer filled with heroes. And my only obstacle to controlling it is a fifteen year old boy. I guess we’ll be seeing each other again soon… Mark.”
Cyclamen
Ruth Bryan
Assistant Professor,
Department of Nuclear Medicine
Watercolor

Wave Hill Cactus
Alena Janda
MSTP Student IV
Photograph

Cuba Orchids
Anthony Dennis
MD Student III
Photograph
Faces in the Crowd
by Aurelia Minuti
Principal Associate, The D. Samuel Gottesman Library

Riding the train to the city
I look at the people
With tired faces
And wandering looks.
They sit on the crowded benches
Sardines in an airless can,
Careful to stare into nothingness
Or slowly doze off.
Trying not to be obvious
I study and feel studied:
I watch the blond girl texting
While the guy next to her
Furtively admires her cleavage.
I sneak an envious glance
At the pair of Hispanic teens
Kissing and cuddling in the corner,
And I silently curse
The little brat who keeps dangling
From the bar in front of me,
Like a pendulum,
Then steps on my new leather boots.
I try to read along
With the woman sitting beside me,
But she throws me an indignant look
And closes her “Passionate Embrace.”
I look around for a while
Wishing I’d taken something to read
But my regret is short-lived:
I’ve arrived.
Who is the dreamer of the dream?
It is the steed that wins the race
Despite the reins of fear in place
Beating past the winds of doubt

Where is the dreamer meant to be?
It is the sheer uncertainty that
Brings about a cloud of dread

When do the dreamer’s eyes
Surmise that they will reach the summit?
A peak
So high
Disappearing towards the heavens
It could take years

Forging ahead
Yet
Looking back over the shoulder
Slips and stumbles come to mind

Upward still
Proud of one’s gains
Knowing one will be
Fulfilled
When finally making it
A top

Never needing to
Reach outwardly for that same feeling

But
Then again,
Perhaps the summit is just another beginning...
I remember the smell as it burned my nostrils, stifling back warm tears beneath glass eyes,
A putrid fragrance of flesh that reminded me of shop class, soldering irons, and road kill.
Her face was dark green, like the bottom of a lake; the blood had sunk and soiled and stunk.
All semblance of humanity was hidden behind the swollen mask.
And the smell.
It reached back into my throat, fist down. It never retreated.
It only got worse, as I fought back the urge to gag,
Even though I felt my stomach right behind my throat...
It only got worse, as they dug deeper into the cavities, hollowing a canoe from human.
I remember the darkness and thickness of the thread they sewed her up with,
Using the fat needle on her swollen yet empty husk,
Her green Raggedy Anne face bobbing up and down with each turn of the needle.
And after, the jagged black line that held that vessel together; holding the charade.
And inside, the jumble of meats, flesh, in a clear Hefty plastic bag; tied tight.
Except for those slivers of organs, that the examiners saved,
Remains that are tightly secure in Tupperware.
Behold your Easy, Emerald Laughter
by Lanny Smith
Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine

For Megan Charlop, MSW (1953-2010)

“I have one last impression that has stayed with me as I journeyed home, the many
times I heard the word “love” throughout the week. Love as an essential ingredient
in psychological therapy and health care and love as a critical factor when developing
social services for children, adolescents and troubled families. Since the early days of the
revolution, I was familiar with a popular Che poster that reads, “at the risk of sounding
ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.” But it
is one thing to read an old poster and quite another to actually hear and feel the word used
by highly educated people to describe an ingredient fundamental to their success.”

Megan Charlop, MSW, describing her 2005 visit to Cuba.

Behold your easy, emerald laughter
Tart like tamarind, effective.

A South Bronx seventies slumlord with dragon-breath
Quivers murderous as tenants with you meet to demand justice,
Organizing amidst threats and violence for homes held dear,
Your legal victory death-doubt-tinged, you persevered.

Behold your easy, emerald laughter
Tart like tamarind, effective.

Your family-home oasis, with date-palms and sweet water,
A safe-place was for all neighborhood boys and girls.
Those joyful, disconsolate, shattered or whole:
Embracing their fire you inspired focus, confidence and hope.

Behold your easy, emerald laughter,
Tart like tamarind, effective.

Spiritually your life confronted plagues,
Sought among Bronx River’s red bulrushes
Baby-baskets left to watchful floating,
Minded dry bones, lead-free, waiting to rise again,
And gently inspired action, action, action with us all!

Behold your easy, emerald laughter,
Tart like tamarind, effective.

A sixteen-year-old, pregnant, found counsel
In school-health, her little brother’s teeth
bite now, their
Undocumented father welcomed as if his presence were
American as apple pie! Plans to hook
organic farming
To school nutrition grew

Behold your easy, emerald laughter,
Tart like tamarind, effective.

Every day you biked to work with the same
message: make your lives
Matter! Show with example! Act for change
and act with love!
No excuses take for sloth, for cowardice, for
comfort while injustice slithers!

Together create,
Victories celebrate,
Analyze those setbacks while making music
in the Bronx!

Behold your easy, emerald laughter,
Tart like tamarind, effective.

You watch nearby as we recycle,
And you motivate laughter,
Plant with you new seeds and nurture
deeply-rooted trees—
The fruits of these our children will share as
they

Behold our easy, emerald laughter,
Tart like tamarind, effective.
a French restaurant
Grandpa’s golden band

I felt unusually
short of things to say

and held my breath
waiting

for her quietly sobbing
yes

she was
needless to say
surprised

I was

we are

it will be
a moment I
could never explain
and never forget
Friendship is a growing thing
A smooth and easy flowing thing,
For only with a true friend
Can you truly be yourself.

Friendship is a flowing thing
A Happy-just-knowing thing
That someone dares to understand
And that is our true wealth.

Friendship is a twofold thing
There’s two of us remembering
The joys that have been doubled
And the sorrows cut in half.

Friendship is a daring thing
For faults are very glaring things.
And friendship looks the other way
And never, ever laughs.

Friendship has the great potential
Perfection in friends is not essential,
Yet friendship is the highest degree
Of perfection in our society.

For friendship is a flourishing
And if it’s good, so nourishing.
Amid this world of doubtful things
Friendship thrives on loyalty.

Friendship is the gentle things
That sees us through unsettled things.
The caring, sharing of little things
That makes us feel secure.

Friendship is the perfect balance
In that we have room for allowance.
We abuse, neglect and tolerate
And yet friendship endures.

Friendship truly does reveal
What simply cannot be concealed.
Our dreams, our fears, our sorrows
The searching’s of the heart.

Friendship is the gift we treasure
Which goes beyond all earthly measure.
The wealth we share remains with us
Even when we part.

Friendship is the kindest thing,
A friend is so encouraging.
You need be only what you are
No better or no worse.

Friendship’s flower truly unfolds
After countless showers untold,
And grows and blossoms every day
Never to be severed.

Letting Go
by Connieann DelVecchio
Administrative Assistant, Department of Epidemiology

Some think that letting go of anger just colors them weak
It’s those who fear going on
Some let pain and frustration consume their soul
It’s those who reject moving on
Some think that letting go of sadness can only render their future more bleak
It’s those who cannot find the drive to go on

I think letting go suggests strength of character
It’s the mighty who always survive
I think letting go makes your heart more forgiving
It’s those who embrace moving on
I think letting go defeats a bleak future
It’s the contented who truly survive

So let go of sadness, anger and pain
Fill your heart with love and start living again
We have machines that move atoms. We rearrange the atoms, circulate the atoms, exchange the atoms, put Humpty Dumpty back together, but why won’t Humpty talk? Why can’t he sit up on the wall like he used to? He is slumped over, developing contractures and he has lost his corneal reflex.

It may be that this flesh is atoms and God-breath (I do not understand this mystery), but I checked the formulary and called all the local pharmacies: we do not have any ready supply of God-breath. I’m not sure if I’d even know how to dose it—by weight? According to renal function? Does it have a half-life?

Does it cure Half-Life?

Are you, now, Atom, Molecule, Cell, Tissue, Organ, Organ-ism— are you all made to be a breathing thing without God-breath? Have we done this?

Days go by, weeks perhaps, and still our machine breathes you. Mr. Dumpty, you cannot cough, and the machine cannot cough for you, and you have pneumonia now. And pressure ulcers. And we put ointment on your dry eyes and lips and we take your blood a little bit every day and now you have turned yellow as though your yolk were inside out.

Is the God-breath in you? Have you hidden it? Can you hear me, Mr. Dumpty? I am squeezing your hand. Can you feel me squeeze your hand, Mr. Dumpty? Mrs. Dumpty remembers you. Do you remember her? Do you remember? Can you remember without God-breath?

I might not have known what it is to wish someone death were it not for you.

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All the King’s Doctors
by Sarah Lee Schroeder
MD Student IV

big work
by Anna Pace
MD Student II

---

these small hands
tired and worn
balance a soft touch
with a firm grip
create a rhythmic melody
tap, tap
buzz
swish
circles and lines
a clenched fist
flexed wrist
spread fingers wide
and a snap

days clasping hands
offer consolation
a silent reassurance
a sense of urgency
with a push and a pull
an open and a close
clarity

days small hands
dexterous, yet unassuming
days small hands
with big work
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Passing Along Wisdom
Rohini Sandesara
Research Technician
Photograph
Einstein’s Fourth Annual
Ad Libitum Literary & Art Night
by Brett Wolfson-Stofko

On December 15, 2010, Ad Libitum hosted its fourth annual Literary & Art Night. The Lubin Dining Hall was packed with a variety of artwork contributed by students, fellows, professors, and administrators. The Einstein Jazz Ensemble set the mood with tunes from jazz giants such as John Coltrane and Herbie Hancock plus some original compositions written by the band members.

The room was filled with the works of 55 artists, and over 200 art enthusiasts circulated throughout the evening. A vast assortment of media was utilized, including charcoal and oils. A wide variety of photographs were presented composed of scenes from around the world.

Halfway through the show, the lights were dimmed and the audience was seated for the prose and poetry readings. A mix of traditional verse and spoken word kept everyone on their toes. Pieces addressed topics of personal loss, trauma on the wards, and pleas for social justice. For some, this was their first public reading. These novices presented their work with such confidence that they were indistinguishable from the hardened veterans.

As the Jazz Ensemble continued to jam, and the wine ran low, the evening came to a close. Many artists took the opportunity to contribute their pieces to the Forchheimer display in hopes of broadening their audience and inspiring a new wave of creativity at Einstein.

The Ad Libitum team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the artists who contributed to the Literary & Art Night—without these individuals, this event would not have been possible. We would also like to thank Dean Grayson, Martin Penn, Karen Gardner, Carolyn Owens and the Graduate Office, Peter Dama and the Graphic Arts Center, Jim Cohen and Lubin Cafeteria, Office of Student Activities, and the Student Council for their continuing support and dedication. And, of course, a big thanks to all Ad Libitum team members who put this event together. We look forward to continuing this Einstein tradition this coming winter.