LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

It is our great pleasure to present to you the 13th Edition of Einstein’s very own art and literary magazine, Ad Libitum. We hope you enjoy this year’s collection of visual and written works as much as we do. We were excited by the many impressive submissions generated by members of the Einstein community, including faculty, staff, students, and the extended Einstein network.

The goal of the Ad Libitum Art and Literary magazine is to provide a platform by which anyone within our Einstein community can share their creativity through their medium of choice; from photographs, paintings, and drawings, to poetry, prose, and musical lyrics. We hope the artwork within this magazine serves as a reminder that our educational environment fosters not just the art of medicine and innovative science, but also a creative approach to everyday life. We hope each edition of this magazine encourages its readers to appreciate and express their own individual creativity, and inspires individuals to explore new ways to channel their many skills.

We would like to thank the Einstein administration for their continued support of our efforts, especially Deans Grayson, Kuperman, Spiegel, Burns, Katz, Baum, and Freedman. We thank Martin Penn and the Office of Education Affairs for their instrumental help in the production of this magazine. We thank Karen Gardner and the Department of Communication and Public Affairs, the Graduate Office, the Student Council for both the medical and graduate schools, and our staff. For those staff members graduating this year, we thank them for their many years of service and contribution to the magazine and wish them luck in their future endeavors. Lastly, we would like to thank the participating artists within the Einstein Community, without whom this publication would not be possible.

Lauren C. Boudewyn & Julia C. Frei, Editors-in-Chief

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

I always look forward to receiving my annual copy of Ad Libitum, as this incredible publication showcases the artistic and literary talents of many members of our Einstein community—our students, our faculty and our staff. This edition carries on this fine tradition. As you peruse this magazine, you will read some exceedingly well-written articles that cover a wide range of medical, scientific, social, and ethical issues. You will also be struck by the stunning photography and artwork. In addition to thanking all of our talented contributors, I especially want to thank the Ad Libitum editors and staff who have spent countless hours putting together this inspiring magazine for our community.

Martha S. Grayson, M.D., Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education
I was excited to enter the Frick Collection to see the masterpieces the Dutch have offered the world! As I entered the museum, I looked ahead and there she was—looking quietly and steadily at all of us, across the winter gardens—"The girl with the pearl earring," occupying the focus and attention of digitized human beings. Admiring Vermeer’s work, I walked into the adjoining hall. I was astonished to see the lively portrait by Halls depicting a 19-year-old Dutch bride, wearing an intricately designed golden gown. I wondered how the golden oil

“It’s cold," I said, standing in the queue across the vast, dark expanse of Central Park.

“We should have a cup of coffee,” my husband replied.

Before I could say anything, he was on his way to get one for us both.

After a while, he came back with a brown bag and two cappuccinos!

Enjoying the froth, warmth and the subtle flavor of cinnamon in my cappuccino, I was excited to enter the Frick Collection to see the masterpieces the Dutch have offered the world!

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Vanitas Still Life: Memento mori
by Priti L. Mishall

The following prose was inspired by the above still life entitled Vanitas Still Life, painted by Pieter Claesz in 1630 and now viewable at The Frick Collection in New York City.
Crossing a few famous paintings, Claesz’s “Vanitas Still Life” caught my eyes. Seeing an Anatomist’s depiction of a human skull in the composition startled me. Very closely, I looked at the different elements in the painting: the deep eye sockets, the broken tooth of the rigid human skull, sitting with an awe of superiority on the book with its ragged, torn pages. I wondered about the infinite knowledge grasped by the deep, convoluted sulci and gyri of his brain, all wrapped under the bony skullcap. The upside down, empty wine glass depicts the celebrations of life with all its virtues and vices. The blue ribbon with a small key hanging at the end of table, inciting him to open the Pandora of life: to get enthralled by the beautiful colors of sunrise, to sway in the fields of blooming flowers, to wonder where the birds are flocking together. But with the golden timepiece ticking beside him, can he manage the bliss of just being still for a moment? This mystery and unpredictability is what makes life interesting. Climbing the ladder, juggling the difficulties, fulfilling all dreams and desires before the lamp is extinguished, leaving the snuffed smoke in the air!

On our way back home, I marveled, how did the painting talk to me? I was absolutely astonished how a person in the twenty-first century can still relate to the still life composition of a 400-year-old painting. I thought about how I am an evolved species, possessing all the worldly materials that make all aspects of my life easier!

Claesz’s “Vanitas Still Life” emotionally molded me in the deep, unfathomable world where I am always puzzled by the question “What is the gist of my life?” Yes, it is the brevity.
Snow-capped Genius
Marianna Atiya
Photograph
Haikus from the Academia
by Menachem Hanani

1. Publish or…?
Professor Smith-Jones
published and published, but he
perished anyway

2. The building
The Nano building
is the tallest on campus,
but not for too long

3. Open space
We have an open
space lab, but we communicate
via the email

4. The Harvard yard
The paths of Harvard
Yard, trodden by cows, now
everybody follows

5. The library
We are not burning
unwanted books. Now we send
them to be shredded

6. Reproducibility
My experiment worked.
I tried to reproduce it.
A bad idea.

7. The badge
Who am I? That’s an
important question. Well, I
guess I’ll check my badge

8. The presentation
The time of my talk
Is over? I have sixty
more slides to show you
Since I could remember I loved to sit with my grandmother at her vanity and watch her brush her long hair. My grandmother told me she grew her hair down the length of her back for her wedding day.

My grandfather was a plumber and my grandmother said he made a lucrative living, but no one would have known it. I didn't know what she meant by that at the time.

Whenever my grandfather was mentioned in conversation, my grandmother always made a point to say, “He’s dead.”

Every morning my grandmother woke at seven am. I never understood why she woke as early as she did because she didn’t work. After she dressed she put the kettle on the stove to boil. The kettle whistled for three minutes with its high pitched screeching.

My grandmother would say, “I like my tea hot, Bella.” My name isn’t Bella, but that’s what she’s called me since the day I was born.

One morning, she awoke earlier than usual and dressed in a navy blue skirt, white blouse, and black shoes—she looked like my teacher—and then she laid out a similar outfit for me to wear.

“Where are we going Grandmother?” I asked.

She flashed a smile and asked me if I wanted toast.

I said yes, and then I sat down at the kitchen table. She set the kettle to boil and I braced myself by placing my fingers in my ears. She dropped two slices of bread into the toaster and then began to take the clean dishes out of the drain board. She stacked them in the cabinet overhead. She didn’t say a word. I noticed she placed her hair high on her head in a bun.

The tea pot bubbled and hissed, screeching louder and louder. I pressed my fingers deeper into my ears as I watched her take the silverware out of the drain board and gingerly place the forks, spoons, and knives in the kitchen draw. The kitchen began to feel hot and then finally, she removed the kettle from the burner and poured the steaming water into a mug. A sharp smell wafted past my nostrils as I took my fingers out of my ears. Gray smoke emerged from the toaster forming a wide circle on the ceiling.

“Grandmother!” I squealed. “The toast is burning!”

She looked at the toaster just as the hot water she was pouring toppled over the rim of the mug and flowed like a river across the kitchen table. I watched her scurry to the toaster and flick the button. Blackened bread popped up blistering with smoke. She scampered for a dish towel and mopped up the water trickling off the side of the table. Then she placed the tea kettle on the stove.

In what seemed to be seconds later I was climbing on a bus with my grandmother. The bus ride was long and uncomfortably hot. When I rose from the seat my skirt stuck to the back of my thighs. She dragged me by the hand so my short legs kept time with her hastened pace.

We walked into a tall building with high
ceilings and though the air smelled musty it felt cool. After we climbed a million stone steps my grandmother pushed open a wooden door.

A man dressed in a black robe sat at a table positioned on a high platform in a large room filled with wooden benches. I slid into the first row while my grandmother approached the black-robed man. My eyes scanned across the vast room with its empty benches until my gaze locked on a man standing beside a police officer. I noticed his eyes were the same color blue as mine.

My grandmother always said I was the only one in the family who had eyes the color of the sky. When the man smiled at me, his face glowed just as my grandmother’s did when she smiled at me and I felt a warm tug on my heart.

But before the warm sensation could fill my insides, my grandmother pulled me to my feet. Again, she dragged me by the hand and we sprinted toward the door and down the stone steps.

Outside my eyes adjusted to the glaring sunlight and I looked up at my grandmother; she was crying.

“That was my grandpa.” I said.

She swiped at her tears. “Yes it was, my dearest Bella.” She whispered.

“I thought grandpa was dead.”

“He is to me,” my grandmother said.

I didn’t know what she meant by that at the time.
Crux
by Winifred King

“Do I consume the fruit?
Do I have strength enough in my bite not to lose
My teeth to the flesh?”
He asks,
As if being seen, gumming, toothless,
Juices glistening on his lips
Is cause for shame.

“Will eating the fruit buy safe passage?
Can I leave if I eat
what you’ve offered?”
She asks,
Because
She does what she needs to survive.

Or so it’s said.
Perhaps the sweetness of eating
Is not a sin.
Still,

The thought of Demeter’s daughter
Reclining, licking her lips,
Satiated,
Makes us shift,
Uneasy.

Simpler to assume
She has no choice
But to eat.

Easier still to mock him for his vanity
And his worrying like a woman.
Sometimes I’m happy.
Sometimes I’m not.
Sometimes I’m giving.
And, sometimes that’s all I’ve got.
Flying high above the sky.

What is my purpose…
Please give it to me.
I promise to honor
And act faithfully.
Be worthy, of all that you’ve got.
All of your love;
You brought me to the Face of God.

Oooh, Oooh
Oooh, Oooh

Give me a reason.
Give me a song.
Give me a way to
Keep my life growing strong…
Flying high above the sky.

What is my purpose…
Please give it to me.
I promise to honor
And act faithfully.
Be worthy, of all that you’ve brought.
All of your love
You brought me to the Face of God.
You brought me to the Face of God.
You brought me to the Face…

There’s a Reason
(We all keep making love)
There’s a Reason
(We all keep giving love)
There’s a Reason
(We all keep making love)
There’s a Reason
(We all keep giving love)
There’s a Reason...
There’s a Reason...
There’s a Reason... (fades out)
Father and son. Somewhere in Mongolia - the land of horse-riders.

Dulguun Amgalan
Photograph
ABOVE
Better in real life.
DJ Apakama
Digital Edit

OPPOSITE
Albert
Kamala Spencer
Graphite on Rough
Bristol
Fury
Catherine Vilcheze
Photograph
Express yourself
Shantha Bethusamy
Canvas Paint
Lake Minnewanka, Banff National Park, Canada
Manasi Shah
Charcoal Sketch
The Autumn Road
by Alana Lewis

The cool, brisk wind signals the arrival of autumn. The warm autumn sun kisses the skin in such a way that the sharpness of the wind melts away. The trees, the giants that they are, create massive shadows on the forest floor. The warm, slightly moist earth depresses with every step. From the corner of my eye, I spot an inlaid stone pathway, something I have never noticed before on my many walks. The stone looks weathered with age, almost like it will crumble with any additional weight. On either side of the aforementioned pathway lay a long row of seemingly never-ending trees. These trees were much taller and formed a tall arch overhead, almost protective from the sun and wind. The bark is rough, withstanding any insults from the environment and so thick that my arms wouldn’t fully surround the girth. The trees looked strong, healthy, well grounded. Each tree had a full thick head of green leaves that would gently sway with each caress of the wind. Walking through the pathway, my nose was assuaged by the scent of the warm foliage. This was something new, something exciting. The pathway seemed to pull me deeper and deeper into its realm.

Walking forward, the dark greenery started to turn into light greens and lemony yellows. Further down the pathway, I peeked vibrant oranges, ravishing reds, deep purples and, curiously, some ruby pinks. There were even some dancing rays of sunshine flickering through the leaves, giving the pathway an otherworldly, ethereal feel. With renewed vigor, I excitedly went forward, letting down my guard to experience the beguiling sights, smells and feelings that lay dormant within the deepest part of myself. It was freeing. The gentle wind fell the leaves, adding rhythm and song to the path and littering the area with its colorful confetti. It was exciting yet calming. The ground between the inlaid stone was dryer yet soft. The more I went forward, the thicker the ground became with fallen leaves. Deep with pensivity, I thought about the future of this path and where it would lead me, quietly embracing all aspects.

A frosty chill in the air caused me to quickly look up. The trees started to look barren, the leaves that once adorned their branches were all but gone. The gnarled branches stuck out every which way. The bright light breaking through the once thick foliage, illuminated every flaw of the once vibrant forest. The ground was now hard and brittle, the bark on the trees deeply cracked and peeling away. Melancholy weaved through every aperture like day slowly turning into night. I turned around, looking back at where I came from, yearning for a second chance. Looking forward, I see the forest where I began. I have come to the end of this journey; the stone pathway has ended.
Chipmunk
Ziyi Song
Photograph
Goat
Marcelo Chacon
Photograph
Snail
Hillary Guzik
Photograph
WAKE
by Richard Resto

I awoke this morning greeted by the sun which found its way into my bed
But I wasn’t alone, for where the light had shone warmed the side of her head
My arm was her blanket
As she lay there ever so snug, not moving an inch
Was it me?
Or the sun that kept her warm as I watched her in awe
She sensed that...so my arm she decided to pinch
Our eyes locked in love
As our hearts bled bliss, each kiss felt destined to be true
We spoke so much without saying a word
My wife...this has to be you
I began to leave the bed, I'll be back in a moment I said peeling the sheets away
Her hands gently upon my back
Yearning for me to stay
I turn to kiss her lips gently, only for an instant
Then placing my feet on the cold floor
Suddenly something felt different
The sun fell dim and the room decayed grey as I rose to my feet in confusion
Turning around, my wife now in the distance
She seemed almost an illusion
She was broken, frantic, screaming for me as I fought to stay by her side
It was torture for me as she drifted away
Watching her weep, watching her cry
How could this happen?
My world is torn asunder
I must be dreaming
This cannot last for long…
I could not bear it as I closed my eyes
But when I opened...she was gone
Where did it go?
Here where the sun once shone and the presence of love had no bounds
Darkness has found its way unto me
But in it
A small ray of light was found
In the light came the sound of a voice speaking to another
That voice was my mother
Along with my brother, and a doctor looking down
Standing there in the dark peering through the light watching my mother cry
My brother holding her tightly as the doctor explained how my wife came to die
I gasped for air
Feeling my heart break down, fading, falling deeper into the dark
Until a burst of lightning crashed
And I passed out from the spark…
I awoke this morning greeted by the sun which found its way into my bed
Only this time I was alone and where the light had shone...shined on my life instead.
Bicycle in Brownfield Bog
Carl Schildkraut
Photograph
PREVIOUS SPREAD

The Arch
Hillary Guzik
Photograph

RIGHT

Aqueduct
Ruth Bryan
Mixed Media
The Anatomist
by Moshe Sadofsky

February 25, 2015, on the final Anatomy class taught by Dr. Todd Olson.

To Deal with Death each Day;
Describe, Detail, Detach.

The horror is a mirror.
He reflects
life as a wheel,

and rides the carousel-horse
with dignity, and sense, and style.
ABOVE
JEAN’-ERA- (N)ATION
Siva Chavadi
Photograph

OPPOSITE
Lost in Mac
Robert Karr
Photograph
“Did you hear that Spock died?”
The ballad of Bilbo loops, jubilant,
A broad grin alighting his sing-song face,
Softening the piercing eyes and visage, gaunt.

A method actor of the old guard;
Invisible behind Vulcan ears;
An unwavering compass for the Trekkers;
Steady in science blue to cool Kirk’s fire.

Alas, the Vulcan challenged the man little.
The alien half was always predictable.
The other, human, peeked through.
Friendship when it mattered most:
Hard-earned, vulnerable, preciously rare,
Surviving the needle-eye of death, immortal.

“I have been, and always shall be, your friend.”

When the camera was capped,
The man was ever home returning.
Earth-bound to wife and child,
Who emerged from the starship’s shroud?

Beyond the satire there lived Leonard,
Wholly mortal, but mind-melded to the fiction.
Method overpowering its maker,
Blurring creation and creator, but stronger as one.
Loose from the mortal coil, they are reunited
In that multiverse of their multitudes: Imagination.
the sky
Joanna Ruszkiewicz
Photograph
Ladies from Estonia
Maria Marzan
Photograph
Top parking
Catherine Vilcheze
Photograph
The Passage
by Seema Gupta

Dunes of sand as far as the eye can see
Lie below the scorching bright sun
Accepting defeat, I fall to my knees
This arid place not fit for man nor beast.

I am a vulture desperately looking around,
A hint of green catches my eye
I stumble towards it, half dead
A sip of cool water revives me.

I get up to continue my journey
Gathering all my strength, but
I look back, and see only sand behind me
And when I look ahead, an endless expanse of sand stares back at me.

I focus and look forward one final time
I see an island with a wonderful pond
Lots of trees and lots of vine
Now I am flying to collect this gold.

I reach there, no it is still further away
I keep moving on
Thinking, how can it go away?
I am an eagle determined to catch my prey.

Now when I look ahead
I see black, I see red
No brown, no sand, no mirage
I am a phoenix rising from the dead.

I understand, I had a goal
A false goal? So what...
My attempts were true
My efforts were true.
True, I defeated the desert of vast sand!
When I was a small boy I loved stories very much. I used to compel my dad to read to me the Panchatantra¹ stories over and over again. I loved the story called “The three fishes”. The moral of this story is very similar to the ancient Greek fable ‘the ant and the grass hopper’, that is: “those who are intelligent and cautious about the future, think and plan. Only they will survive and others will perish.” But practical life is far from these morals, where cowards are rewarded, faithful convicted, dissolute enjoy life and the thoughtful fall into its traps. I had a very special friend, senior by three years, who was very peculiar and reticent. I rarely saw him talking to women. Though we were intimate, women or sex never came in our talks. I thought he was either jilted or a ‘Women Hater’. His room in the hostel was a real mess, a jumble of papers and a jungle of books. Cobwebs spread across the ceiling and windows. Since he was a myopic but never wore spectacles inside his cell, the surroundings worried him little! A few landscapes and portraits of some unknown scientists adorned the walls. As far as I knew he was an atheist but a copy of the ‘GITA’²—a Hindu religious book always reclined on his shelf with medical books.

One night, the night before my university finals, he phoned me and asked to call upon him. I reached his hostel and before his room I stood. The door was ajar, but since I knew his hate for clothes, I was hesitant to enter. He was sitting on his chair. I saw thoughts plough his forehead deep. Suddenly words rolled down from his lips: “I want to say something, quite personal; my mom wants me to get married. I didn’t feel it’s the time but you know she is very persistent.”

“I don’t like an ‘arranged marriage’. It doesn’t give enough time to assess your potential partner. It’s gambling, it’s experimenting with two lives! We can’t appraise a person; one’s beauty perhaps, but not one’s quality of mind,” he said.

“Of course brother, then why can’t you select one known to us, perhaps from the campus?”

“No! I find no good match here, even if I find one, the establishment of a relation is time consuming and may be painful too. No one can cut open his mind and show it to another person. You know I have little time to spend”

“Again here I would love just seeing them—the beautiful girls! What diversity! But I don’t like to talk to them!”

“Ha! I guess you had some bad experience!” I laughed at.

He didn’t care my question but paused for a moment and continued.

“…because I want to continue loving them; worshipping them!”

“Once they open their mouth I fear I will lose all impression about them…this has happened several times and now I have no time for further experiments! One should never go near the moon to enjoy its beauty.”

“Then, what’s yo’ plan?”

“An ‘ad’ in the newspaper and internet. It will reach millions across the country. You know mathematically the probability for an optimal...

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¹ Panchatantra: An ancient Indian collection of fables, short stories, and moral maxims.
² GITA: The Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu scripture that is part of the Mahabharata.
combination increases”.

“Yes! A good idea”, I urged him to continue.

Giving me a naïve smile, in a lowered voice he continued: “A person like me who wishes a single stable marriage should be very cautious in selection”.

I looked at the wall clock. The long hand had drawn yet another complete circle and was enjoying the acme he reached with his short slow wife who stood against him concealing her face in his shade in the knowledge of his inevitable fall. It reminded me the next day’s exam. I asked him no more questions and after giving some empty remarks I returned to my place. The very next month I flew to U.K. to live with my uncle where I continued my studies for another five years, after which I returned.

Few years after my return from UK I got married. Of course, an ‘arranged’, conventional one. Though I was very much impressed by my friend’s ideas, they left me in the course of time. To be frank, I was not so bold or sincere as my friend. I never thought or dreamed like him. I never had such extensive plans or ideas about my bride. So my selection was on conventional grounds. We had two kids and together enjoyed a very happy life. Several years later I went to attend a seminar at our medical school. After the programme I was free and I planned to meet an old friend working there. On the way to his chamber on the ‘veranda’ I saw a man with a grey beard, head bent with the weight of his thoughts. He was pushing a wheel chair on which I found an emaciated woman. His eyes contained unfathomable grief. He looked very familiar. Yes! I recognized him. My old friend, my special friend! I greeted him and embraced him. “How do you do?” I asked.

The answer was a long sigh. Though my friend was in his early forties, his grief had added some twenty years to his looks. I felt sorry for him. I prompted him to open his bag of miseries. Few months after I left for UK, my friend published his ad in all leading newspapers and he was baffled to see thousands of responses which filled his mailbox. He finally selected one in which he found some difference. He married her. But soon her behavior changed; he felt something very strange. Her behavior became more abnormal as the days passed and soon she was diagnosed with an unusual neurodegenerative disease. She developed weakness of her lower limbs and became confined to wheel chair. Seeing my friend sinking again into his thoughts, I asked, “Couldn’t you get a divorce?” The answer was a firm NO! “You are wasting your life,” I said.

“I don’t know. But ‘am alive, my wife too. And it’s my duty to care for her as longs as she is alive……………..man proposes and God disposes. It is my fate!”

“Am doing my duty without anticipating its fruits”, he added.

A recondite smile spread along his lips. I recognized the red book in his pocket, a small copy of the “GITA”

“Miseries of life can change an atheist to a believer as miseries erode one’s thinking capacity.”

Foot notes:
1 Panchatantra: a collection of fables or educative stories
2 The Gita: A Hindu text
3 Chettan: elder brother in Malayalam
4 AIIMS: a leading teaching hospital and research institute in India
5 “doing my duty without anticipating its fruits”: A teaching from “The Gita”: “Do your duties without thinking about the fruits”
“Turning Wheels”
Life goes on.
Bindi Patel
Experimenting with
Pigment Sticks:
Painting
Coffee Ceremony, Ethiopia
William Burton
Photograph
my hand will brush away the sunlight
and shade the sky with blue paint
     in a soft arc, leaving
the infinite cracks to work
     the stars shining, some not placed
glow in the palm of our hands, opening
like leopards’ faces, the night sky
     unchanging, flickering
the close staring face brightened by the light
Keeping it together (Arbol Piedre, Bolivia)
Ryan Arams
Photograph
Las Vegas Living
Room
Mirna Jaber
Oil on Canvas
Reproduction
Ave y Pez
Adriana Nieto
Oil Pastel, Color
Pencil & Magic
Marker
Nature’s Warning
Akiva Dym
Photograph

Adirondacks in Fall
Ryan Arams
Photograph
In the curve of the cove the wind whistles shrilly, spraying powdery snow in a frigid mist.

Heads tucked under wings, a dozen ducks and geese muster the stony resolve to fend off the wintry torrent.

They huddle amid a solid ridge of frosty waves that hint at the undercurrent of the Sound.

Hunkering down in the gray haze, their dark masses cluster together to withstand the harsh elements.

The inlet offers haven, its muddy bottom a thick blanket in which to sink webbed toes.

From the warmth of my car I see them assembled like rocks arranged along the shoreline. Their mini Stonehenge inspires faith in the approach of Spring.
ABOVE
Parque Nacional Cajas, Ecuador (1)
Steven Girdler
Photograph

OPPOSITE
Ariel
Ruth Howe
Watercolor
El arte de volar.
DJ Apakama
*Digital Edit*

*Iberian Bear crossing a stream,*
Arth Goldau, Switzerland
Jayanta Roy-Chowdhury
*Photograph*
A pair of yellow socks
This is the apparent natural color.

There is a gunshot wound
There is a gunshot wound
There is a gunshot wound

There is a gunshot entrance wound of the central forehead [right between the eyes]
There is a gunshot wound... this bullet has been traced... to rest within the soft... space.
There is an exit wound.

There are no injuries of the tongue.

The heart weighs [heavily]... the cut surface is a pale reddish brown color.
   [This is] not remarkable.
The bone marrow is normal.
   [This is] not remarkable.

The previously described... are submitted... as evidence.

11/25/2014
All excerpts are taken from the post mortem examination (autopsy) report of Michael Brown performed on August 10th, 2013.
Egyptian Reliefs
Josephine Costa
Photograph
Parque Nacional Cajas, Ecuador (2)
Steven Girdler
Photograph
ABOVE
Pond // Technicolor
Livy Low
Photograph

PREVIOUS SPREAD
LET’S CROSSOVER
Judy Wan Miyashiro
Photograph
Old Fish
by Daniel Riggins

A frail, sickly man lies
in bed with a tabby cat resting
at his feet. For the moment
they are alone.

The nurse has retired
to his computer. The family
has said their goodbyes.
Life slowly tiptoes out the door.
Staring at his tabby, the man ponders
its nine lives and his memory
creeps back to a cold morning--
several years ago--
when his kitten fell from a tree.

He thinks of how the kitten rose
and shook its head
after a few breathless moments
of stillness.

For the moment they are alone.
The man asks the tabby in a flat whisper,
“What’s she like?
Death, I mean.”

The tabby peers at him
with unblinking green eyes.

It slowly responds,
“She smells like old fish.”

The man sighs.
Sits back. Closes his eyes.
Maybe he’s fallen asleep,
but a dry hand seems to rub
his shoulder and he breathes in
a familiar aminic stench.

A smile lilts
the corners of his cheeks.
Nyong River at Ebogo, Cameroun centrale
Nick Baker
Photograph
You used to look out the window and speak to the sea,

*Everyone we love reincarnates in this valley
scattered as palms when they leave us.*

Beside the highway that leads us back to the homes
we were not born in, I wake in the late summer,
restless, lie dormant among the crushed
olive trees and black dogs searching
along thirsty streams. This, the state
where you gave up on long hair and believed in fidelity.
I sweat through my faithless shirt, forgive myself
of my duty to be ready for tragedy.

On the rims of Californias, you hunted the shadows
of coyotes, and I followed the blood of fallen dates.
We would wake in the unbearable heat of each other.
But, this morning, I am watching the last wildfires burn
thick smoke over the sun. The waters are writhing
fruitlessly in ash. Oceans, swallow this coast
until no one we once loved is left.
Nature’s Beauty
Loyda Cruz
Photograph
Waiting
Nan Wong
Photograph
Diamond Head, Hawaii
Carolyn Nye
Photograph
Christopher ran down the hallway and was already at his bedroom by the time he heard the swoosh-thump-click of the front door closing behind him. (Telescope, telescope, telescope, telescope.) The chant had carried him out of the third grade classroom, down the six flights of stairs (jump the last step) through the heavy black doors, up four blocks (look both ways) across Columbus, right on 90th, down the block (don't talk to strangers) left on CPW, into the building (hi to Vincent), up in the elevator, and through the door. He threw his coat on the bed, dragged the chair over to the big corner window and sat behind his Orion Observer 60mm Altazimuth.

Eye pressed to the scope, he made the rounds: east, over the park, runners around the reservoir, down past the toilet bowl museum to the Cosmopolitan museum. Sweep up towards top of the park, past the hospital, across 110th. Stop at the new building with the big glass windows. Christopher checked on Wrinkly-Man watching PBS and Girl-Baby sleeping in the white crib. He scanned over empty rooms, comfy couches, flat-screen TVs, Xboxes, PlayStations, Wiis. In one kitchen, he saw Sneaker-Girl sitting at the table. Sneaker-Girl's-Mom was standing at the sink, smushing something between her hands. Christopher watched. (His first two-people-in-a-room this week!) Sneaker-Girl's-Mom was talking. Her lips moved a lot, her forehead was scrunched up like Dad's when he told Christopher not to chew with his mouth open. Sneaker-Girl didn't look at her mom. She looked down at the table and squinted her eyes. (Sneaker-Girl's-Mom wouldn't let her watch TV? Sneaker-Girl's-Mom said no dessert?) Sneaker-Girl's-Mom couldn't see her anymore. Sneaker-Girl got up and kicked her favorite sneakers. She walked away from table and now Christopher saw no one. He waited. Sneaker-Girl reappeared in the window next to the kitchen one, where the light was on. Sometimes Christopher saw Braid-Girl lying on the bed with Sneaker-Girl. But today she was all alone. She lay on the bed with the pink squiggly blanket. Then she switched the light off and Christopher couldn't see anything at all.

He swung the telescope away, back towards the bottom of the park. It was twilight. The sun was on its way down (was it going down or just around?) but no one knew that yet so there were no lights on and Christopher could barely see anyone. Instead he looked at the buildings. He always looked first for the X building, where Dad worked. He could only see the edge of the X's. X marks the spot Dad told him. (Was there treasure under all the X's or did you have to know which one?) Maybe he would ask Dad next time it was Dad-Chris Time. (Or maybe not.)

He rushed past the tall, tall buildings. Those ones sometimes gave him the uh-oh feeling, like if he looked too long they would come crashing down on him and there would be metal and dirt and darkness everywhere (don't think about that) and Mom would be gone (Mom will always be here) and when he screamed as loud as he could no one could hear. Christopher closed his eyes and counted to twenty-nine. On the twenty-ninth floor he was safe, indivisible.

Christopher took his eye from the telescope. He wouldn't be able to see anyone until it was more night time and people turned their lights
The room was almost dark so he turned on the blue lamp and the white lamp. He watched the overhead light as he turned the switch (light travels faster than anything).

“Chris-O, dinner is ready. Wash your hands please.” (Why Chris-O? O comes after T. Why not Christ-O?) That was Amy. Amy took care of Christopher when Mom and Dad were busy-busy. (Who took care of Amy when her Mom and Dad were busy?) Amy knew that he liked planets and stars and space but he didn’t like washing his hands.

Christopher walked to the bathroom and turned the faucet on. He pumped the foamy soap into the sink and watched the bubbles climb on top of each other, all of them trying to get to the top (everyone is a winner even if they aren’t first). He counted to twenty-nine and turned the water off. When he appeared in the kitchen, he saw Amy had made dinner and it was on the counter. Amy had curly, curly brown hair (if you pulled on all the pieces of hair at the same time would they stay straight?) and always wore sweaters that were soft.

Amy asked if he had washed his hands for real. Christopher shook his head (lying is for bad kids only). Amy said good job for telling the truth now please go wash your hands. After he washed his hands, he clambered up onto the white stool and studied his plate. There was a sweet potato and some chicken nuggets and broccoli. (Could you use those giant strainers to pan for chicken nuggets?) Chris counted eight pieces of broccoli and nine chicken nuggets. (That wasn’t right.) He moved the sweet potato to the middle and surrounded it with a ring of seven chicken nuggets alternating with seven pieces of broccoli. He ate the extras. Amy asked if he had washed his hands for real. Christopher shook his head (always say please and thank you). Christopher told her that the sweet potato was Neptune and the broccoli and the chicken nuggets were the fourteen moons. Amy said that was nice but eat the food before it gets cold or there won’t be enough time for TV Time (if we start now, there will always be enough of time). Christopher told Amy the name of each moon before he ate it. Naiad. Thalassa. Despina. Galatea. Larissa. S/2004 N 1 (that one was so new, its name was only numbers). Proteus. Triton. Nereid. He forgot the tenth one but couldn’t go check the right answer (during Dinner Time we sit at the table until we are finished eating). Sao. Laomedea. Psamathe. Neso.

Amy cleaned the dishes with the dish soap that smelled like the inside of taxicabs. (Did cab drivers have to have the green tree hanging on the mirror?) Christopher folded the unused napkin into a rectangle. He had to stand on the step stool to put it back in the napkin holder. Then he waited for Amy to get him the ingredients for Cookie Mush. She poured him a glass of milk and got out two chocolate chip cookies. Christopher broke the cookies in half and put them in the milk. Then he took a spoon and smashed the cookies up. (Eating Cookie Mush at other people’s houses is impolite. 9-year-olds shouldn’t play with their food.) He could only do that when Amy was here.

Amy and Christopher went into the living room to watch the Discovery Channel. He liked Man vs. Wild because he got to see British Man try to figure out how to live in all these crazy places. Christopher thought that they should do an episode about living in the subway tunnels. (Could he fry rats on the Third Rail?) For some of the time he looked at the TV and British Man doing the thing where his eyeballs got huge (eyeballs really stay the same size) and his eyebrows went up almost into his hair. For the other part of the time he watched Amy. She was making the look Mom makes when Christopher tells one of his Planet Facts. (Like trying to hear him but only listening to her own voice instead.)

“Hey you,” Christopher opened his eyes sleepily to the sound of the voice. Man vs. Wild had finished and some other show had started, “It’s bedtime.”

“Where’s Mom?”

“Mom and Dad are at the Hearst Corporation
cocktail party, remember?” Christopher saw his parents standing in a giant black car with the extra back part (the kind that took Grandma to the cemetery) holding drinks with those paper umbrellas.

“When are they coming home?”

“I don’t know Chris-O, but I’m sure they will come in and kiss you goodnight when they get back. Go wash up and get in PJs.”

He stumbled to the bathroom and brushed his teeth. (Can you brush hair with a tooth brush?) When he got to his room, Amy had already pulled back his covers and turned the nightlight on (light means more shadow but less dark). He sleepily pulled on the white t-shirt with blue writing and the white and blue flannel pants (pajamas have to match) and slid into bed. Amy sat on the edge.

“Goodnight Chris-O. Sweet dreams. Sleep tight.” He wiggled and turned under the covers until the blanket was wrapped around him, held at one end by Amy’s weight and the other by his own. (Snug as a pug in a hug.) He closed his eyes. Eventually he felt Amy get up and leave the room. Shadows chased away the lingering sleepiness. He could get up and go into the living room (bedroom door closed means Bedtime) or he could just stay here, in his room. He threw off the covers and walked quietly over to the telescope. The moon was creeping up the sky. Christopher directed the scope towards Sneaker-Girl’s windows. Lights were on again. Sneaker-Girl was still lying on her bed (She didn’t have dinner? Wasn’t she hungry? How bad she peed?) Sneaker-Girl’s-Mom was in the window next door, sitting at the kitchen table. Her hands were holding up her head like otherwise it would fall down on the table. (Her head is heavier than other people’s heads?) Neither of them moved. He counted to twenty-nine once and then again. Sneaker-Girl reached over to the lamp next to her bed and turned it off. In the kitchen, Sneaker-Girl’s-Mom stood up and flicked the light switch. Both rooms were dark.

Swoosh-thump-click. Mom and Dad were home. Soon Mom would come in and kiss his head and then he could go to sleep.

“How was he tonight, Amy?” Mom asked.

“Good, good. The usual. He’s a smart kid, you know? Knows everything about the planets and their moons.”

“Sometimes I think he spends a little too much time learning all those names and he can’t even tell me the names of the kids in his class. He’s asleep now?”

“He is, but he wants you to go in and kiss him goodnight.” He heard the click-clack of Mom’s shoes moving towards his room.

“Oh come on, Laurie. Don’t baby him. That’s why he still sleeps with the damn nightlight on.” Dad sounded mad. (He wasn’t a baby. In Total Dark you couldn’t see the poster on the wall with all the planets and their distances from the Sun and you might trip on your way to the bathroom.) The click-clack was moving away. Mom wasn’t coming in. Christopher opened his eyes and sat up. Shadows chased away the lingering sleepiness. He could get up and go into the living room (bedroom door closed means Bedtime) or he could just stay here, in his room. He threw off the covers and walked quietly over to the telescope. The moon was creeping up the sky. Christopher directed the scope towards Sneaker-Girl’s windows. Lights were on again. Sneaker-Girl was still lying on her bed (She didn’t have dinner? Wasn’t she hungry? How bad she peed?) Sneaker-Girl’s-Mom was in the window next door, sitting at the kitchen table. Her hands were holding up her head like otherwise it would fall down on the table. (Her head is heavier than other people’s heads?) Neither of them moved. He counted to twenty-nine once and then again. Sneaker-Girl reached over to the lamp next to her bed and turned it off. In the kitchen, Sneaker-Girl’s-Mom stood up and flicked the light switch. Both rooms were dark.
Indian Rollers in courtship flight
Namita Roy-Chowdhury
Photograph
Shopping for the Sukkot holiday
Menachem Hanani
*Photograph*

Winter in Bronx
Leonid Tarassishin
*Photograph*
Splashes of colours  
- evening sky view from Price Building
Susmita Bagchi
Photograph
The Match
by Hadas Reich

A fork in the path
A cross in the road,
I must make a decision
Before I unload.

Two unknown doors
Lie up ahead
I cringe and I cower,
I wince and I dread.

Which door should I open?
Which door should I close?
I weigh all the cons
Against all the pros.

I research and think
And ask for advice,
Consider the profit,
Consider the price.

When there’s so much to gain
And so much to lose,
If both doors seem equal
Then how do I choose?

A flip of the coin?
A roll of the dice?
I start to go left,
And then I go right.

The road up ahead
Is unclear and obscured,
But my choice has been made,
My answer assured.

No second-guessing,
And no backward glances:
All we can do
Is increase our chances.
RIGHT
Surfing in the sonic highway
Arijit Bhowmick
Photograph

PREVIOUS SPREAD
Sun, Sails, and Seagulls
Bassem Khalil
Photograph
Snow Waters
Alana Lewis
Photograph
Medical students are always busy, occupied with never-ending lectures, long days at the hospital or just hours and hours of studying. This leaves little time for much else. It can be quite challenging to find the time to cook a healthy meal, let alone one in a timely fashion. However, cooking has the incentive of providing a healthier diet. It is also more cost-effective than constantly ordering food or eating out from fast food restaurants.

This is a recipe for a healthy West African meal that fits the busy lifestyle of a medical student. It features an appetizer common in Ghana, and an entrée typical of West African cuisine.

The appetizer, Kelewele, is a mildly spicy plantain based dish that is also a favorite nighttime snack. In Ghana, it is common to see children gathered around a bonfire, munching on Kelewele and listening to stories from an adult.

The entrée features a very colorful sauce. It introduces the basis of a style of cooking in Ghana – tomato based sauces. In West Africa, tomato-based sauces are often served with rice, yam or potato. This recipe features a tomato-vegetable sauce and shrimp, served with rice. The shrimp can be substituted with any fish or meat of choice.

**Kelewele – Appetizer (spicy)**

**Ingredients**
- 3 fingers of ripe plantains
- Ginger
- Cloves
- Anise seeds
- 1 and half pieces of hot red pepper
- ½ a medium onion
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- Fresh Peanuts
- 1 cup of vegetable oil

**Directions**
1. Preheat an oven to 250-300 degrees.
2. Put peanuts onto a baking pan and into the oven.
3. Check on the peanuts every 3 minutes to make sure they don’t burn. When the peanuts are fully roasted (begins to turn dark) remove from oven and pour onto a plate.
4. Cut the ripe plantains into small cubes 1cmx1cm and place into a bowl.
5. Blend 1x1 inch piece of ginger, 5 pieces of cloves, 1.5 hot red peppers, onion, 1 tea-
spoon of anise seeds and a quarter cup of water together until evenly mixed.
6. Pour the blended spices over the cut plantains and mix. Let stand for about 90 seconds.
7. Heat up the oil in a deep pan or small pot.
8. Transfer the plantains into sizzling hot oil and stir occasionally
9. When the plantains are golden brown, transfer them to a sieve to drain the oil for about 2 minutes
10. Transfer the kelewele from the sieve to a plate
11. Serve the kelewele with the roasted peanuts

Recipe for Shrimp Gravy with white rice – Main Entree

Ingredients
½ medium sized onion
Piece of ginger the size of a quarter
⅛ cup of oil (olive or vegetable)
1 head of garlic
Hot Red pepper
½ medium sized green and yellow pepper, each
½ lb of shrimp
2 tablespoons of parsley flakes
3 medium sized tomatoes
4 cups of rice

Directions
1. Chop up the onions into approximately 8mmx8mm sized cubes.
2. Chop up the tomatoes into approximately 15mmx15mm sized cubes.
3. Chop the garlic, ginger and hot red pepper into fine pieces.
4. Chop the green and yellow peppers into 8mmx8mm sized cubes.
5. Peel the shrimp.
6. Add the rice and 7 cups of water to a pot and cook over medium heat.
7. Warm the oil over medium heat.
8. Transfer the diced onions into the oil and stir until the onions just begin to brown (approximately 90 seconds).
9. Add the ginger and garlic, and stir for about 30 seconds.
10. Add the chopped hot red pepper and stir for 30 seconds.
11. Add the parsley flakes and stir for 15 seconds.
12. Add the chopped up tomatoes and slightly increase the heat.
13. Continue to stir until no large chunks/pieces of tomatoes are visible (about 12 minutes).
14. Add the green and yellow peppers and stir for about 2 minutes.
15. Add the shrimps and continue to stir.
16. Add about 1/3 tablespoonful of salt and continue to stir for about 5 minutes.
17. Remove from heat. Serve the shrimp with rice. Enjoy!
Lake in Colorado
Mengyan Li
Photograph

Flora
Jesse Berman
Photograph
Days begone but memories through the windows of 1975, Rhinelander, 4A making life
Sanal Madhusudana
Girija
Photograph

San Marcos Fort
Marisol Figueroa
Photograph
An Ode to Migraines
by Derek Wu

Straight ahead, a black circle
Slowly enlarging
Carving a hole in what I see

Flashing lights, ominous broken geometry
What are those black lines that I see
Noises, banging cacophony
A medley of terrible omen

There it is
A familiar torment
A price I pay for the late night glass of Merlot
Oh dear ol’friend, we meet again
The usual, the sadistic,

Awoken,
You quickly intensify, escalate
Throbbing, spastic, and unilaterally annoying

A tango of inflammation and calcitonin gene related peptides
Oh my dear head,
Why aren’t you on my side?

Tell me now, this time
How long will it be
Four hours or three days?
I should have known better
Because next time
I will get some propranolol
For this pain so persistent and so dull
Mountain Top
Nan Wang
Photograph

Museum Lights
Pamela Stanley
Photograph
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Einstein’s Eighth Ad Libitum Art & Literary Night
by Julia C. Frei

As in previous years, the 8th annual Art and Literary Night was held on December 10, 2014 in Lubin Dining Hall. Students, faculty, staff, and their families came out to support Einstein community artists and their works of art while enjoying soft notes of jazz music. Last year started the beginning of a new tradition for Ad Libitum in that Einstein’s a capella group, the Lymph Notes, gave a wonderful concert to a captivated audience. In keeping with that tradition, the Lymph Notes joined us again for another fun night of art, literature, and song.

Ad Libitum held an art auction to again raise money for our scholarship fund for the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC). This scholarship is utilized to subsidize the cost of BRAC art classes and materials for promising young art students from the Bronx. Despite receiving a light dusting of snow during the event, this year we were able to raise a total of $235 for the scholarship through the art auction, as well as through generous donations and contributions from attendees.

The Ad Libitum team would like to thank all the artists, writers, and poets who submitted their work – without you none of this would be possible. We would also like to thank Dr. Kuperman, Dr. Martha Grayson, Dr. Stephen Baum, Martin Penn, Karen Gardner, the Graduate Office, Peter Dama, Donna Bruno, and the Graphics Arts Department, Jim Cohen of Lubin Dining Services, the Student Council, the Engineering Department, the Housekeeping staff, and Gail Nathans from BRAC.

Thanks to everyone for making this year’s Art and Literary Night a success! We are already looking forward to the next one.