

Ad Libitum

a literary and art journal of Albert Einstein College of Medicine



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In Love, On Fire

David Thompson, MS II

The first patient to arrive at the trauma bay was Ricardo. Over 90% of his body was burned. His clothes were in tatters, and the epidermal layer of his skin was literally hanging off his body. He had no hair on his head, eyebrows, chest, legs, or genitalia. He looked like a stocky, muscular, slightly overweight man, but I could not tell whether this was his normal stature or simply swelling from the burns. He came in screaming, "AAAAAHHHHHHH!!!! I'M HOT AND I'M COLD!!!! I'M HOT AND I'M COLD!!!"

His whole body was in shock. He was shaking uncontrollably, but he couldn't really move due to the pain. We immediately began removing his clothes and assessing his burns.

Ricardo's arms were fully covered with tattoos, but the ink now appeared to be on the *outside* layer of his skin. His look was paradoxical – the combination of his swelling, bald head and his fresh-looking tattoos made him look tough and hardened. However, this man was in more pain and in a more vulnerable position than most of us will ever know.

While we were working on Ricardo, his girlfriend was brought in. She looked even worse than he did. Ricardo looked over and screamed, "OH NO! THAT'S MY GIRLFRIEND! OH NO!!" I immediately rushed around to close the curtain to separate the two of them.

His girlfriend was named Marissa. She looked even worse. Her body was entirely burned. She had a patch of thin hair left on her head, but her hairline was scorched and charred. It was not like these patients had touched a fire or some hot substance; it was like they had been *on* fire themselves.

Marissa's body was spider-web-streaked with black char lines where the flames had burned through the different layers of her skin. The smell was the worst I've ever smelled, both awful and haunting. It was my job to remove her shoes, which were melted onto her feet. I wrenched them loose from layers of burned flesh. I then used tiny scissors to trim off dangling scraps of skin from her legs.

It was of critical importance to secure an airway and intravenous line for each of these patients. I assisted in holding Marissa's leg down while a resident placed a central line in her femoral vein. Marissa screamed a high-pitched wail as the resident fished with the needle to locate her vein. Her responsiveness to pain was viewed positively by the trauma staff.

Since both patients' respiratory muscles were clenched and swollen, the residents decided to inject succinylcholine, which would paralyze the patients and make their muscles flaccid. The scary part of this procedure is that the patients cannot breathe for themselves any longer. You've got to get the intubation right, or the patient will suffer from lack of oxygen and could die. Miraculously, the residents got it right on both patients, on the first try. The ER team had done its

job – they had ensured that these patients would stay alive, at least for the moment.

These patients haunted me in the following days. I had trouble falling asleep. I still have images of Marissa being wheeled in, shaking, spider-web-streaked with char lines. I kept thinking, "I can't believe this happened. I can't believe this is happening." I could not help but identify with them. They were 20 and 22 years old, and had been trapped together in the basement of a burning building. Now they were permanently disfigured, in great pain, and might even have died by now.

I continue to think about what we did for them – we kept them alive. It seemed heroic and exciting at the time, but I have to wonder about the value of it. What will be their quality of life? Will they be able to re-join society in a meaningful way? Will they still love each other? The thought that I end up with is that I suppose it is not up to us to try to anticipate how they will deal with their loss. Perhaps they will transcend their situation and emerge in some way positively transformed. Maybe they will commit suicide. Maybe they will die despite our care. But that is not our job. We owe them the opportunity to make their own choices, to have a future, to decide how they will deal with their circumstances.

I went to visit Marissa in the Burn Unit the following Monday. Despite looking better in the ER, Ricardo was now in worse shape; at that moment he was in the operating room having a fasciotomy to relieve pressure from the swelling in his body. Marissa was covered in bandages, except for a small portion of skin around her mouth. Her eyes were covered with patches, and she was sedated. She'd had a procedure to graft artificial skin over burns on her abdomen. The nurse lifted up the sheet – it looked like her abdominal cavity was open to the outside world: disgusting.

The nurse left me alone with her.

I hesitated and then spoke, "Hello, Marissa. I don't think you'd remember me. My name's David and I'm a medical student. I was working in the Emergency Room when you arrived. I took off your shoes. I came here today because I was worried about you. We were really scared when you came in, and I couldn't stop thinking about how you might be doing now. I'm glad that you're here. I know that this is really hard, and I can't imagine what you might feel like now. I know this is an incredibly difficult time, and I'm sorry this happened to you. I just wanted to let you know I was worried about you, and that there are people here who care about you. I'm going to leave now, but I hope I can come back to see you sometime soon. Hold on, and I hope that you keep getting better and better."

Postscript: Marissa died the morning this paper was written. Ricardo was still alive but in severe organ failure.





Respite

Michelle Riley, Department of Neuroscience.
Oil on Canvas. 18 x 24



Untitled

Kremena Star, MSTPIII

Sweet sorrow,
like sap from a wounded tree,
dripping in my soul:
I like the nothingness at dusk.

Holding on

Kremena Star,
MSTP III

Waiting
Is like
A broom
That sweeps
Hopes
Under the table
Under the bed
In the dark
And humid
Kitchen corner

Dreams
Are waiting
To be born
Among
The crumbs
On the floor

I finish
My chocolate
Salty
From tears
And smile
To the shadows
Dancing
Inside my head



Leaves

Tina Chen, MS II

Good Intentions

Annie Li, MS II

Do you sometimes wonder where your good intentions are, or if people see them when you express them in ways that reap self-gratitude?

“Mine comes from my heart,” I can assure you.

It feels so right, a flow of elation as though the world has kissed the toes of my foot because I’ve been blessed with the desire to give. I can smell it in the air, in the breeze that touches my face.....my good intentions, packaged in the words and deeds of my life, offered to those who I felt deserved it most.

Then the day comes when I realize that good intentions can be taken for granted, how one slip of a word can explode and belch out my last restraint to violence. I fight, yell, and hurt everything that stood in my way because I thought that somewhere after all this, those good intentions would still be there, unaltered, nicely kept in the hearts I thought had deserved it most.

But I fight with no avail, because I have exposed myself to bare nakedness. The cause is not worth fighting for anymore. The world keeps on turning and the fire keeps on burning. People, including those I had respected with the highest regards, look the other way and keep on marching. They go about their own lives while I am left seeking for one last drop of empathy from them.

In heated temper, I blame myself, “Who told you to be so sacrificing for others? Didn’t anyone tell you that there are savages out there?”

And slowly I retreat, wounded from lost faith till at last I am alone, naked and tremulous. I look inside myself, and ask, “What have I done?”

“Nothing,” as the pale whisper came to my shoulder and echoed.... “you had seen the best in everything and believed in the best of everything. You understood the meaning of compassion and challenged its antagonist. You lived by your heart and listened to your intuition. You shared with others your greatest virtue. The fight was painful, but now that it is over, you have found something better than what you knew or had before.”

Boy in Uniform, Mexico
Melody Ng, MS II



Preguntas Para Vita
Asaf Shor, MS II

I see you hovering there, above the steps,
in limbo between salvation and damnation.

You are serving a sentence born of youth,
your cellmates-

The smile on your face and the son in your
arms;
are they one and the same?

How is it that you laugh so?
Is it because all else is forbidden?

The laugh sustains,
echoing up a forlorn well.

Not unlike the frijoles and huevos on my plate,
and the seeds in yours.

My plate! Therein lies the answer!
There is more than enough on it to go around.

In return for the laugh, I will take you home,
stuffed in the mochila with the typicas.

Bring you home, nested in my hands,
As if I found you on the forest floor.

Rehabilitated for survival in the wild-
(for) I know you remember the color of the sky.

But can I unclip your wings?
Do you remember how to soar?
And would you dare to, a Quetzal among
California Condors?

**An open letter to the funeral home down the
street**

Dear funeral home,

Recently I noticed the sign in your window that reads, "We support our troops." If you were any other kind of business I might commend your patriotic spirit, but as you are in the death business, I feel your statement of support for military action represents a serious conflict of interest. War and its aftermath tend to bring about deaths in great numbers, so I am uncertain whether your sentiment is one of prayer and hope or one of vicious bloodlust and greed. I therefore request that you either not display your sign or change it to read, "We support our troops not dying."

Sincerely,
Jules Lipoff, MS I

Summer
Tina Chen, MS II



Sunday

Willard Kasoff, MS IV

We got mauled this afternoon. Coach
flew into a rage. *Touchdown, Pittsburgh.*
They left holes in us, lancing our skulls
like Phineas Gage. Afterwards, my first wife
touched down in the lull of a raging storm.

Pittsburgh.

A city tamping explosives into wells,
like Phineas Gage. I met my first wife
on a radio tower, crazy thing.

The city stores explosives, and is built of them.
My second wife and I live in a munitions depot, next to
the radio tower. Crazy things we dream of:
rain in the powder crates, forcing us
(here in the munitions depot, next to each other)
to pass the time making love, for lack of war.

Flooding, and rain in the powder crates—
it's an image that keeps us warm, truthful or not.

The time we've spent making love, for lack of war,
has brought back memories we'd forgotten we had:
Warmth and despair crowd like satellites
in the August night.

The great man's memories shifted and rearranged
like temporary constellations
in the August night; his newfound fear of breathing
stared him down in his dreams.

Dreams suggest themselves like constellations, falling
like pikes to maul us. Coach's last divorce
left him shaken. Dreams stir us, and stare us down.
Their accidents leave holes in us, after the powder ignites.



Autumn

Tarun K. Dam, Instructor
Department of Molecular Pharmacology

When it Rains

Marshall Fleurant, MS II

You ever stand in the rain,
Especially on a hot summers day,
And feel the rain drops drip from the top of your
head,
Straight down till it soaks into the seams of your
socks,
Do you remember pressing your foot down into your
soggy shoe,
And feel bubbles flow between your toes,
And you just couldn't resist that puddle,
That giant, deep, dark brown, muddy puddle,
You just had to raise your knee high....
Then stomp down on that puddle with a force equal
to that of Thor's lightning bolt,
You just had to do it,
Just had to,
You just couldn't waste a good puddle,
You just couldn't stay indoors,
Had too....just had to play in the rain...
My mother used to tell me the rain was God's tears,
The rain cooled you,
It played with you, watered you,
It surrounded you...fully,
It fed the trees, and filled the oceans,
You knew you were going to get wet...
You knew you were going to get sick...
You knew your mom was going to yell at you...
And that you were going to track muddy stains all
over the floor...
Your going to get punished...
And it served you right.
You ruined your clothes,



Got yourself sick,
Messed up your hair,
Dirtied the house,
And you rejoiced in God's tears.
And you also knew.....
That you couldn't wait till the next rain shower.

Solace,
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 36
Michelle Riley



Sunset at Cubera Island
Weiqing Wang
Department of Molecular Pharmacology

Tribute

Souvik Sarkar, MD
Graduate Student,
Developmental and Molecular Biology

The wind is still
Breath is cold
The sun sets
Birds are quiet
Time stops

In the silent dusk my mind races
through times we had and love you gave
and words that I wanted to say
and never said
Thoughts that will stay forever
....my tribute to you, dear father...

Rest in Peace

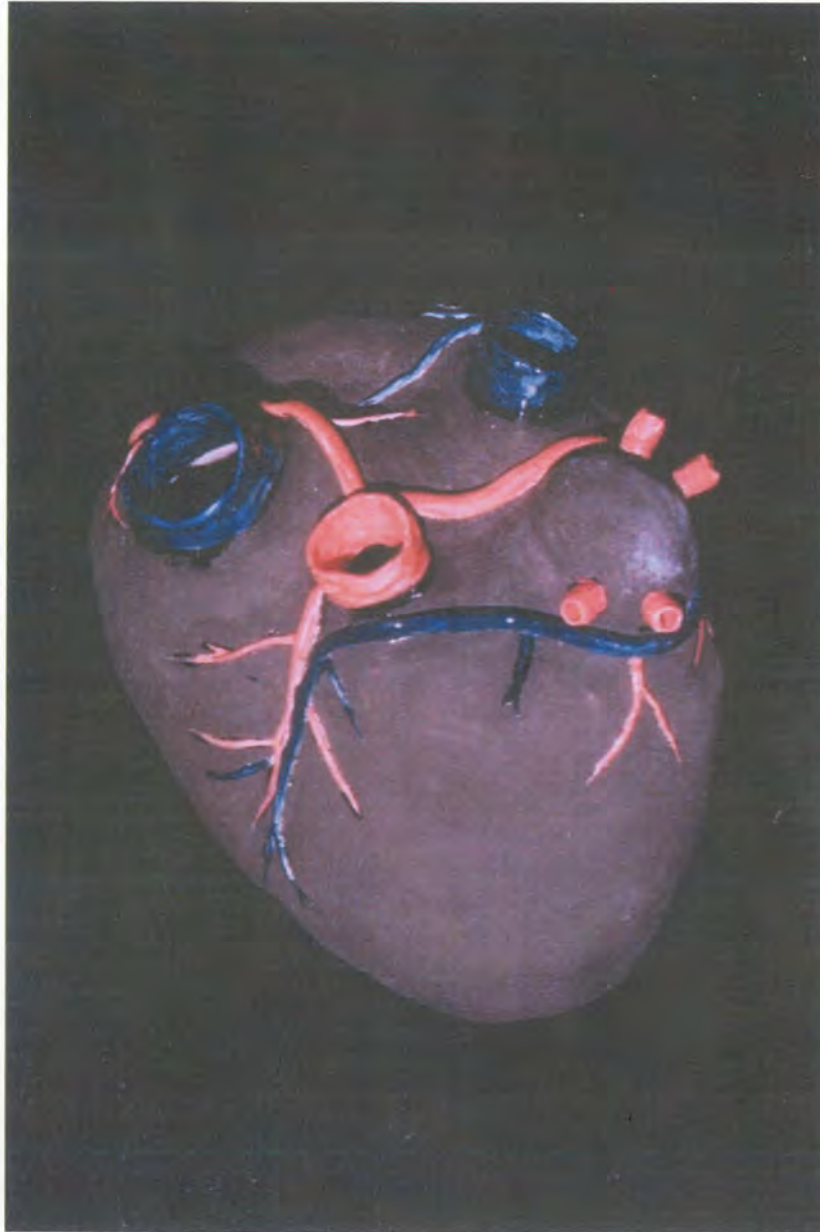
Daniel Fein, MS II

I've seen them on roads throughout America, and I'm sure you have too. They're found tacked up on trees, leaning against bushes or just resting peacefully on the ground. Placed on narrow curvy roads, guardrails, near embankments, bridges, tunnels and exit ramps, they mark the frailty of life in our highly technological world; the sad reality of one of the most important inventions in the history of man. Flowers, ribbons, pictures and crosses, especially crosses, mark sites where one, or perhaps several lives have been snuffed out. Most of the victims died instantly – nothing like a head on collision with a two hundred year old tree to do you in for good. Gone, just like that, and in their stead a cheap memorial that lasts until the next rain or until some lonely deer runs by and knocks it over.

I never really thought about these memorials until about two fifty this morning when I saw It on my way home from a long weekend with my friends. There are no words that can accurately describe the feeling of revulsion that flowed through my body when I first caught sight of the hunched over figure sulking along the side of the Palisades Parkway.

The headlights of my Taurus shined upon the body of an unlucky squirrel. I veered slightly to the right and they happened to fall upon one of those metallic markers lining the road. I wasn't sure what I saw at first, and to be perfectly honest, I don't think I want to know. But someone, or something, was there. It appeared to be dressed in a long black cloak – but this was no ordinary black – it was inky, fluid, as if it were alive. It hung to the floor, but yet

didn't seem to touch the ground. Pale white hands stuck out from the sleeves and lugged a large burlap sack behind It. I turned my head to watch It as I sped by, and, I swear, the bag seemed to move. I caught a glimpse of a piece of wood sticking out, but that's all.



The Final Pulse

Clay, 12x10x11

Mihail Rivlin, MS I

I picked up my cell phone and contemplated calling the police. Surely, there was something wrong with walking along the side of a major highway at three o'clock in the morning. I pressed '9' – the cell phone's direct link to 911, but hesitated before pressing 'send.' What were the odds that the cops would actually be able to find this guy? And what if it was just my imagination? It had been a long weekend, I had drunk a lot and I would be lying if I said I wasn't exhausted.

I exhaled deeply and shook my head from side to side recalling the previous few days – just me and my buddies hunting, drinking, playing cards, watching sports and retelling stories of our college days. It really is a shame that we are all grown up and our schedules only permit us to get together once a year. I settled back in the seat, focused on the road and let my mind wander back upstate.

I sat blissfully for a good five minutes before It caught my eye again. I glanced at the speedometer and saw the needle hover around 70. *No fucking way!* I lurched

forward in my seat, blinked rapidly, rubbed my eyes and glanced out the far right hand side of the windshield to make sure I wasn't seeing things.

What I saw would remain with me the rest of my life. That pale hand, those long bony fingers. I flipped the lever on the left hand side of my steering wheel forward, turning on my

brights, further illuminating the road in front of me, and the figure far ahead on my right.

There's no possible way it could have been anyone else. Although I hadn't seen It's face, there was no mistaking the robe; that skulking, slinking, trembling loamy pelt. And there was no mistaking the two things in It's hands, even from this distance.

I glanced back at the road, relieved that there were no cars in front of me, before turning my full attention to the mortifying spectacle on my right. My mind was racing as I tried to process what I was seeing. The light from the moon glistened on the ivory fingers as they held up the giant cross against a tree. The sack was open on the ground, and I could easily see that it was full of crosses of all different sizes.

The strangest part is that the figure seemed to be the same distance from me as when I had first seen it. He wasn't getting any larger; he just stayed in the corner of the windshield. I leaned over a bit and squinted to get a better view. And then it began.

I jumped back in my seat as the hammer hit the nail on the cross. The harsh sound rung in my ears and echoed throughout my head. There is no possible way I could have heard that. None. Yet every time I saw It's arm swing forward a loud "BOOM" exploded in my head.

My eyes closed instinctively, as if to protect myself from the sound, and then suddenly, unfortunately, my vision cleared. The tree became clear, the cross became clear, It became clear and the movements of the robe became clear. Snakes. The robe looked as if it were teeming with snakes.

But I didn't care about that. The cross is what caught my attention; actually, the name on the cross. Roosevelt Dirge. There is no way there is anyone else in the world with a name like that. Only my mother would name her only child using a dead president's last name.

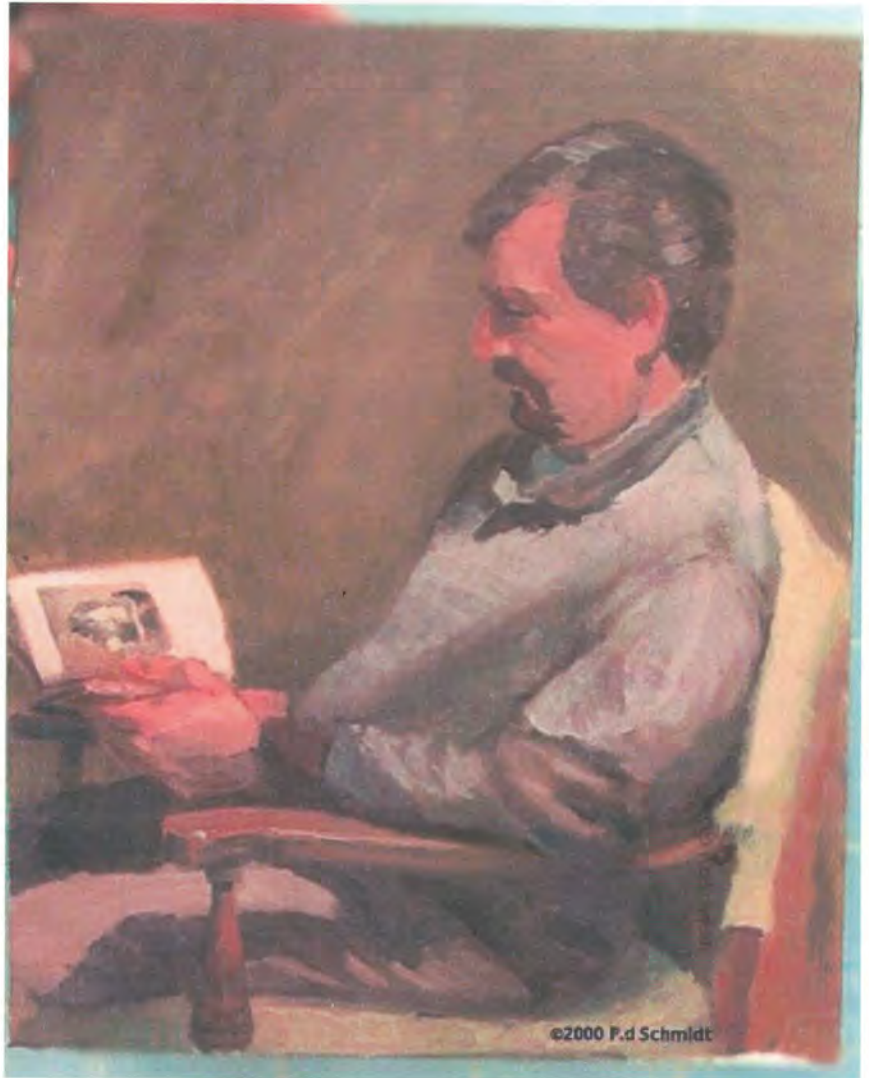
I blinked and rubbed my eyes, but the name stayed the same. It wasn't just written on the cross. It was etched into the cross, and it looked red, like blood. My heart started pounding in my chest and a lump formed in my throat. I knew what was coming next but my mind wouldn't accept it.



The robe's writhing slowed as It began to turn It's head. I looked into the deep black pits that could barely be described as eyes and knew that I had seen straight into hell. There was no muscle, hair, skin or any semblance of a face. Just bone, and those awful pits where eyes should have been. I felt myself sinking and struggled for any hold onto sanity. But it was too late.

I looked back at the road just in time to see the deer in front of my car. I swerved to the right to avoid it, and my car skidded off the road. I slammed on the breaks, sending the rear of the car spinning to the right until it careened into a tree. I bounced around like a doll despite the fact that I had my seatbelt on, hitting my head on the steering wheel and roof, momentarily losing consciousness.

My body was sharply jerked to the right as the front of the car careened into another tree. The seatbelt sliced into my skin and left a deep welt, but that wouldn't matter. I think I could accurately pinpoint the moment that the branch crashed through the windshield and pierced my neck. Gurgling sounds escaped my mouth, and bubbles formed at the new opening to my windpipe as I gasped for air. Blood spurted from my neck, draining my life ever so slowly. My eyes began to close, but not until I managed to see the tree I crashed into, and the plain wooden cross nailed to the trunk.





Genesis

Clay 10 x 6 x 6

Mihail Rivlin

The Faceless Woman

Dan Cousin, MS I

For many years
She taught me how to dance
In my sleep

Never did I see her face
Then I'd awake
It was just a dream

I became tired of wishing
She'd remain as reality
So one day
I stopped putting faith
In a fading fantasy

Then last night
Yours became the face
Of the woman in my dreams

I opened my eyes and she was you

Could not tell
If I was awake
Or if it was just a dream
'till you opened your eyes too

...then I knew you were true

Every time
You look at me
I tremble at the knees

Such beautiful eyes
You should never let them close
Not even when you sleep

Felt like I knew you for a lifetime
when I met you
And if my dreams came true
I hoped that they'd include you.

Then last night
Yours became the face
Of the woman in my dreams
I opened my eyes and she was you

Could not tell
If I was awake
Or if it was just a dream
'till you opened your eyes too

...then I knew you were true

On the Subject of Racism

Noe' Romo, MSI

Running Physician Poet

On the subject of racism
I find that most
choose not to acknowledge
its existence
choosing instead
to live
in an ignorant bliss
making believe
racism
no longer exists.
For example,
just last week
I had a poetry reading
to expose
such truths
& the only people that showed
up
were those
like me
who already knew
the truth
or wanted to know
but even then
not all of them
showed
but I'm grateful
for all those
that did.
But those
that should have come
those that thought it was funny
to change
the ECHO clinic sign
on 1945
16th floor
that said:
"70% of Bronx residents have no health
insurance,
what are you going to do about it?"
to saying:
"70% of Bronx residents have no job,
Why?
Because they're lazy."
Those
never showed
choosing instead
to party the night away
making believe
everything
was Ok.

On the subject of racism
I find
that most
choose not to say
anything.
And when one does
choose to speak
on the matter
one is viewed
as being pessimistic
and is labeled an "angry minority"
and is subsequently
chastised from the group
well,
if that's what it takes
that's what I'll do
I refuse to
not speak
I will deliver my message
regardless of the situation
it's up to you
whether you choose
to hear it
but I will deliver it
nonetheless.
I will continue to
Speak up
when I believe
it's wrong
to treat an elderly woman
of African origin
as if she's a spectacle
and expose her
rheumatoid arthritis deformities
while she cries
to a class
as if she's some type
of wild beast
and I will continue to question
if people's mouths would remain shut
if that would have been
an elderly white or Jewish woman instead?
If that would have been so
the whole class would have been
in an uproar
and I would have too
you see
I know that unfortunately
oppression
has no color

I identify
with the struggle of others
why can't others
identify with my own?
I too pray
for the deceased lives of the
Holocaust
I too pray for the abolition
of the historical and continued hatred
of the Jewish people
and of all others
throughout the world
regardless of color
why can't people
do the same for me?
They got their reparations
I never got mine
they got their apology
for genocide
nobody ever apologized to me
for 600 years
of mass genocide & continued slavery
why can't others
identify with me?
How quick
people are to forget
their struggle
when their own is over
and they see others
suffer.
All I ask
is that
you be willing
to listen
to what I have to say
so that we may be
able to prevent
another mass genocide event.
Realize
that the struggle of others
is your own
so before
you brush somebody off
by simply thinking
they're an "angry minority"
listen
to what they have to say
and you just may
identify their struggle
with your own.

Untitled, Oil Canvas, 24 x 20, 2002

Dmitriy Kedrin, MSTP II



tell me that today, there was more hope than fear,
and tomorrow I wouldn't rather be anywhere but here,
and when I turn to you, you will always be near,
so you can end the darkness with your light.

tell me that today, in reality,
there was a lot more good I just didn't see.
tell me I'll always believe what I tell you to tell me,
and you will always lie to me out of love.

Tell Me
Dan Cousin

tell me that today more people laughed than cried,
and more children were born than died.
tell me I won't go crazy if you were not at my side
and the world won't get dizzy from spinning round.

tell me that today more love was found than lost,
and the sacrifices were worth the cost.
tell me I can give my all and never exhaust,
and I'm not gonna fall if I look down.

if I don't go to sleep, will I ever have to wake?
if I ignore it all, will it all disappear?
if I don't hear the fall, did it really make a sound?
if I grew wings, could I fly away?



Untitled, mixed media, 24 x 18

Dmitriy Kedrin



Lavender, Ann Ming Yeh, MS II

Asura

Tara Vijayan, MS II

what a docile child she was, Usha Auntie would remark splendidly
with THIS child, I would NEVER have to worry about my china, my franklin mints, my swarovskis.

not with this child.

only

from time to time, the asura within unfurls, wrath unleashed to few:
mother, sister,....and you.

you have seen the water form of this demon-goddess: face crumpled, nostrils flicker, forehead hot, eyes red, burning burning burning
large and bright, enormous pools well in the deep fissures beneath lashes thick before KERPLUNK! a (w)hole anthill murdered by my
toxic saline.

i long to throw a tantrum but are you there to receive?

Something from the Past, Stares

Arun Kumar Lakshmiathy, BVSc, MS,
Research Associate,
Department of Urology

I have just boarded this train which is about to take me to this hill station, in which I was interested once but not anymore. But the prospects of meeting some woman, whom I acquainted with over the cyberscape, must have created some hormonal havoc I presume hence this run away rendezvous. Train journeys are long tedious trips when you have no one to accompany; books and music help but only to a small extent. Not when those abstract thoughts take over to bring out the melancholic stupor in you, at the very moment a hundred cello lead by tender notes of piano reverberate. I am squirming in my seat to the very discomfort of my disposition, oh! damn it. I do not want indulge in it but it wants to happen again, looks like My co-passenger a woman in her twenties wants to know what it is. Looks like she might have some sensory proboscis hanging out of her system searching for the right sockets in me to plug, she is the catalyst for sure. Looks like I will opt for a prude virtuous mask not the lascivious one not on this day, why, not too sure maybe the good timbre of the violins set the tone and so did the dull gray sky outside. I peep out see the pasture, train has picked up momentum and so have the chambers in my head. Harmonies have already been issued to the players, and suddenly I shed some apprehension. Like a musician who wants to fine tune the notations before the crescendo, start to look at the person in front of me my eyes wouldn't meet hers I muster all that I have to do just that. What I saw was a stunning astonishment of synchronous intent, intent to pry open each other. I say let me volunteer first, there is a jolt, she says yes. I get ready amidst the disturbing sounds of the accelerating greasy engines of the locomotive, only my thoughts surge back to spell out that perfect tale she may like. At that moment I gave a damn for rave reviews, I wanted to be "deliberately slow"-like they say-those movie aficionados so did she do it for me for us as long as this would last was the motif.

It was one of my birthdays I think when I was in this school. The most sensitive man that my father was asks what I need on my re-registration day. I indulge in some thought, a very conscious one, I ask for a camera, he is taken aback, I spell a model's name "click 4"; he is amused, I persist, he purchases it. The D-day arrives I open the wrapped box my hands fondle the new camera. Dad instructs me on the nuances of the camera, it reads B&W— I am familiar of those abbreviations. I load the film and I am ready to shoot and look for a model, mom says she is the one will want no signing bonus.

Click 1: my mom in a somber mood. Rotate the knob of the wheel to which the film is anchored for the next exposure I survey the nature. I wanted to become this cinematographer who was very famous then. I wanted to cry out aloud "I am here to stay". I go for a stroll by the fields of my village; I am overwhelmed with this new piece of image capturing equipment that I possess. It's time to go to my hostel an academic campus faraway from where my family resides.

Click 2: departure scene, my mom lachrymose, dad dolorous. Only person who converses with me of some coherence was my tiny brother. He has just reminded my parents for the umpteenth time the hidden camera in the bag. I garner enough courage to take the

camera out and price a picture of my family, I didn't want to part. The rough dusty roads tread those tires, a cause for concern for both motor propeller and me. Safely land in my school and look for my friend Shiny to unravel the new found in my hands. I find her she marvels at it and asks when she can pose for me, I say very soon.

Click 3: me and Shiny reach this pretty isolated park, we feel. I look at her very intensely, she looks very bright...My mind is preoccupied with dull shades of gray. My heart races for it's very uncommon to be doing what we, me and shiny, wanted to do. She says she can tone it down...she washes her face down goes the sheen off shiny, me thinks. I get ready and ask her not to smile for I would like to keep this very moody, Shiny says I am becoming pretentious, try eclectic. Pictures were taken of Shiny enacting every emotion she can exhaust. I go about recording them in a frenzy, I think she is a work of art herself...a resounding toll of the distant church bell reminds of the watch around our wrists. It's easier said than done, Oh! What can I say, Shiny didn't want to let me go, she said there is still more to come? I promised sometime in the next few days. Various ideas were contemplated on our way back, the one that tops was mine, that went like " Shiny let me feast on this face in the dark when you have only a candle up to your face for light." Shiny felt not that enthused. I rolled the knob that anchored the film to my camera.



Lace
Peter Schmidt
Department of Computer Based Education

Click 4: as a ravage of time rolls by, all one is left behind is with vague imageries. You have them stored to have a fleeting glimpse none too lasting or very permanent. For I don't have the heart to recall that moment when the film developer explained that I lost every image of Shiny for I haven't shifted the knob at the end of each picture that were exposed or should I add over exposed in haste. I cursed my image machine...a moment of intense passion overlaid furiously only to go unexposed. I didn't want to expose this to Shiny and so went our love for each other. For I was dumbfounded when Shiny wanted her pictures...she said she knew

better company to keep from then on, I didn't. The reality of the present world awoke me to the slowing momentum of the carriage, its harmonies have reached a low ebb and so have the perceptions of the girl in front of me. I am getting ready to over haul myself out to the dismay of my fellow member in that carriage, when she was just about ready to prepare me for her tale. Destination has arrived I have to go in search of my rendezvous... my new odyssey has thus commenced but only I wish to expose my passion this time, pause and ponder sans promiscuity.



Cry Me

William O'Brien, MSI

Projector

Arun Kumar Laksmipathy

It was summer again and grandmother had just come up with this idea to let me be part of her large scheme of things. Simply put, she let me accompany her to her sister's. The trip was as good as her stories she narrated, the good raconteur that she had always been, and the grub that she fed. Upon receiving us, her sister grew enthusiastic as she incessantly showered us with love; saccharine, bordering on mawkishness. On the third day, I was a little bored as I wasn't well versed with their colloquy and was eagerly awaiting Jesse's arrival. Jesse was my cousin and it's her wont to spend a good part of her summers at her granny's house. She is a 10th grader and a little older than I, but that never hindered the mutual interest in films.

The little money that we possessed in our hands were an endangered commodity for us, as currency was a hard find. We took the money and bought some edited films of a very old movie. We couldn't conceal the delight upon seeing the tomboy actor and her favorite woman in that piece of crap film, more so with Jesse. Jesse paused for a moment and gave me a serious stare appearing to have her thinking cap on. As I gazed back at her, I could sense a halo around her head, witnessing an enlightening. She said, "No more theater visits." My heart sank as she replied, "how about we project movies in our own house?" I knew this idea was of monstrous proportion compared to any other idea that had ever germinated out of anyone's head and from that moment on, Jesse became my messiah of motion pictures. To materialize our ideas, we had discreet discussions and both our grandmothers and sisters grew a little wary of our whispers and secrecy. Fortunately, they just brushed them off as waves of optimistic hope.

Lunch that day was a little heavy, leaving me crashing in my bedroom post-prandially. Just before I could settle into a real slumber, I was shook by Jesse, who was standing a little too close when she bent over to check whether I was still breathing. When she led me downstairs to the basement below, I had no idea that it would lead to our first home theater; rather deprived of sonic furnishment. What I saw was truly spell-binding, she had the film illuminated on the wall with the images flickering as they would at a theater. The actor was staring at us up close and so was the leading lady. Thank god the actors never invaded our privacy. Jesse went over to the projector, then held what looked like a burned out 100 watt light bulb. She then skillfully drilled out the top, leaving holes on either side of the silver head of the bulb, exactly where the ridges and grooves traverse. Emptying the innards, she poured water into the bulb and tied a piece of twine to suspend the bulb inside a cardboard box; one that accompanies you at a very symbiotic level every time you move things around. The twine exited the holes, which then could be fastened comfortably on top of its roof. Then she made two rectangular carve outs on the box opposing each other, one the size of the film and the other, on the opposite wall, much larger. Now, when the larger carve-out transmitted the light from the mirror which came from the bulb which illuminated the film, a spectrally, enthralling, magnified image was projected.

With every penny that we could lay our hands on, we went on a crap-film buying spree. Stills of every hue of emotions one could envision were illuminated during those early days of my motion picture madness. Celluloid skirmishes aside, what stands out to this day is the bond, a cord of communion, along with a "tugging" at stray emotions that were true to large families. Those days of mirth and jocular laughs are hard to find these days. Grand-moms and grand-dads are safely stashed away in remote shelters. Homes with private cameras and perimeter secured ghost-house ghettos that snore and wake up in our presence and our absence. An odyssey into the Old World of simple sciences is looked down with every cynicism that cries from rituals held out by conmen serving on communities. Every foray into art and expression is hands out an opinionated judgement that the creation of the kindred could prove too lewd if not loud..."lascivious low lives eh? I rate it two thumbs up, only off my foot!" A few ecclesiastic, affluent lots embracing thoughts and ways, pushing society into a self imposed hypnosis that culminates in a life filled with cadavers and worshipping designer labels. Will the yesterday's worst denim ever get its due? Sardonic self-assertions and vitriolic verbal assaults aside, as a society all we have achieved is lent to trivial statistics of a list of ever growing typecasts and stereotypes. Worst of all, these very typecasts, a list that includes me and you, conduct an orgy once in a while to nominate self-professed gurus, gurus of worldly knowledge that lead to projections about the future. Projections of blockbuster balance sheets, only for the balance/poise to be abandoned for an ephemeral and quixotic illumination that tatters illusion-less.



Flowers
Tarun K. Dam

