

Seventh Edition | Spring 2025



McGill

Faculty of  
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Health Sciences

# MOMENTS





## **Moments Magazine**

Seventh Edition

Spring 2025

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**Initiative** by McGill Humanities and Arts in Medicine (McHAM)  
in collaboration with the McGill University Faculty of Medicine  
and Health Sciences



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# LETTER TO THE READER

Dear reader,

We thank you for your devotion to our publication, and are thrilled to present to you the seventh edition of Moments Magazine. It is with great pleasure that we share with you the incredible artwork and literary pieces we have collected this year from students across the health science faculties. We continue to be blown away by the talent and insight McGill students have to offer.

The arts and humanities offer a space for expression and refuge to many of our students during both joyous and difficult times. We pride ourselves on contributing to providing an outlet for students to express themselves amidst the challenges we continue to face as a society.

We have yet again decided to leave the theme open this year, allowing our artists and writers to create, with the only limit being their own wondrous imaginations. We hope that you enjoy our diverse collection of artwork and literature.

Sincerely,

The Moments Magazine Team  
McGill Humanities and Arts in Medicine (McHAM)



# ARTISTS SHOWCASED

- In order of appearance -

Emma Rodriguez  
Djalica Diallo  
Gabrielle Beaudry  
Lilly Groszman  
Elissa Colucci  
Naomie Conde  
Tamila Varyvoda  
Tasha Amin  
Freddie Seo  
Isabella Comtois Bona  
Anna Shakhgildian  
Lesly Joyce Nkuindja  
Joyce Li  
Sofia Lizza  
Julianne Cairns



# DEAN OF MEDICINE'S PRIZE FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

## **First Prize Winner**

*Takotsubo*, by Gabrielle Beaudry

## **Second Prize Winner**

*White matter constellation*, by Joyce Li

## **Third Prize Winner**

*24 hours*, by Anna Shakhgildian

## **Honourable Mention**

*Soft Light*, by Elissa Colucci

*Frosted Reflections*, by Lily Groszman

Thank you, artists and writers, for your submissions



Tranquil  
EMMA RODRIGUEZ, 1/5  
Charcoal drawing, 60x55cm



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Emma Rodriguez  
Medicine, Third Year



Parisian Night  
EMMA RODRIGUEZ, 2/5  
Charcoal drawing, 60x55cm



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Emma Rodriguez  
Medicine, Third Year



Pondering  
EMMA RODRIGUEZ, 3/5  
Charcoal drawing, 60x55cm



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Emma Rodriguez  
Medicine, Third Year



A Mediterranean Dream  
**EMMA RODRIGUEZ, 4/5**  
Charcoal drawing, 60x55cm



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Emma Rodriguez  
Medicine, Third Year



Rural Sunset  
**EMMA RODRIGUEZ, 5/5**  
Charcoal drawing, 60x55cm



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*Emma Rodriguez*  
*Medicine, Third Year*



*Painting has become a recent creative outlet that brings balance to my life, offering me a sense of tranquility. I'm especially drawn to nature scenes—their depth, movement, and quiet resilience reflect the calmness I find both in art and the outdoors. There's something meditative about capturing the soft sunset or the stillness of a landscape, allowing me to slow down and appreciate the details that often go unnoticed. This practice also mirrors aspects of the qualities I strive for as a physician—both require patience, close observation, and an appreciation for the bigger picture. This process fuels my creativity while strengthening my ability to approach medicine with patience, perspective, and a deep appreciation for the world around me.*

Emma Rodriguez  
Medicine, Third Year

# The Body as a Vessel: Pain, Presence, and the Human Connection

DJALICA DIALLO

Written text

I like to imagine that my existence—my own verb "to be"—is defined solely by the spirit my body houses, as if this body were nothing more than a vessel, devoid of philosophical significance. I dream of a human soul freed from the physical world, unbound by its barriers, transcending the laws that govern our universe. I dream that the soul is untouched by the suffering of the material realm—the one we can caress just as easily as we can wound. I love to dream. I adore it! I close my eyes, and who am I? The most beautiful of stars—the one that cradles the secrets of space. I squeeze my eyelids shut even tighter, and there I am, in a realm where my soul is unshackled from the frailty of its form, where it shines like a burning star.

But reality does not care for dreams. Soon, my old companion returns to pull me back—pain. Constant, obsessive, piercing. I close my eyes again, but this time, my dreams have fled. Little by little, my body's very sensitivity becomes unbearable. I am enslaved by its whims, trapped by its weakness. My body becomes my poison, the tomb of my soul. And just as the wound threatens to consume me, a hand reaches out. A few words, a gaze filled with humanity—and this time, it is pain that vanishes.

Suddenly, the dream I once embraced feels isolating. I realize—our materiality, however disappointing, is what allows us to engage with the world. The body is our anchor to existence, granting us the ability to step outside ourselves and into connection with others. Without it, I would be condemned to the solitude of my own mind, unable to understand or be understood. I would be invisible. I would be blind.

The wounds that hinder us, the suffering that ravages us, are painful but honest reminders that we belong to the world—and that our bodies are our only windows into it. Through them, we open ourselves to other realities, to the presence of others. It is through the body that each moment unfolds as an intimate dance with the world.



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*It was only when I began working in hospitals that I was truly struck by the fragility of the human form, by the suffering woven into its very fabric. Illness does not simply take hold of the body—it unravels it, reshaping identity, dignity, and the perception of time itself. In witnessing this, I also came to understand that medicine is not only about curing but about alleviating. Sometimes, healing begins with presence. A touch on the shoulder, a moment of stillness, the simple act of listening—these gestures have the power to lift a patient from the depths of pain, if only for a moment.*

*It was through these moments that I began to reflect on the profound tension between the body and the soul—the way pain can imprison, yet also connect us. This realization led me to write this piece, an exploration of the body as both a vessel of suffering and the only bridge we have to one another, to existence itself.*

*Djalica Diallo  
Medicine, Third Year*

TAKOTSUBO  
GABRIELLE BEAUDRY  
Written text

Notre mémoire nous joue des tours—tissant des souvenirs effacés, amplifiés, quelques mirages, jusqu'à façonner ce que nous tenons pour vrai. Une courtepoinTE cognitive pour préserver une fragile homéostasie. La mienne n'échappe pas à la règle.

La médecine m'est toujours apparue comme une évidence, mais j'ai tardé à m'y engager, consciente qu'elle est une autoroute aux rares échappatoires. Devenir un bon médecin exige une certaine perte de soi pour parfaire un art scientifique, un langage universel qui lie les soignants. C'est avec cette lucidité que j'ai commencé ma formation, à la mi-vingtaine, de retour dans ma ville natale après des années d'exil britannique. Je m'étais pourtant juré de préserver ce qui faisait de moi une personne unique, convaincue que cela me rendrait plus humaine, meilleure pour mes patients. L'écriture, la musique de mon père, les heures volées entre les rayons du *Blackwell's*, les détours imprévus dans les parcs nationaux du Québec, les dîners qui s'étirent sur une terrasse tiède, jusqu'à ce que la nuit tombe sans prévenir. Les soirées d'été à Montréal, *BIXI* sous les pieds, la ville comme une illusion partagée.

La vérité, c'est que ces versions de moi-même s'étaient déjà évanouies, et qu'elles ne reviendraient jamais. Rares sont ceux qui échappent à cette inéluctable transformation médicale.

Stage de chirurgie générale. La marche de l'empereur précède l'aube. Chacun connaît son rôle, une hiérarchie tacite, minutieusement orchestrée. Les résidents avancent d'un pas pressé, dictant le plan d'intervention d'une voix assurée. Une litanie d'acronymes: AVSS, NPO, PT/OT. Les externes suivent, poussant le chariot de dossiers, transcrivant à la volée. Signes vitaux, labos, imagerie. La lumière frappe les paupières closes du patient encore engourdi. Toujours les mêmes questions: douleur abdominale, nausées, vomissements, gaz, selles? Puis, déjà repartis. Le cortège file, prêt à livrer son rapport au patron.



*Pectus excavatum*. Je l'ai su en me réveillant à ses côtés, un dimanche matin enneigé, quand la lumière frappait ses longues jambes dépassant du lit. Mon diagnostic différentiel s'est réduit à un, comme une évidence. Une perle clinique de plus, après sa mâchoire qui s'était disloquée à la première gorgée d'IPA dans un pub où tout respirait le génie mécanique. Il avait simplement haussé les épaules: *this happens all the time*.

C'est là que j'ai compris que la médecine avait infiltré ma vie personnelle. J'étais clinicienne, que je le veuille ou non.

Une escapade d'été. Le lac s'embrase au coucher du soleil—une lithographie d'un instant condamné. Le kayak tourne en rond, l'ingénieur ajuste ses calculs. Je ris, jusqu'à la brûlure des abdominaux, jusqu'au feu du soleil sur mes joues. Solution expérimentale: inverser les places, mettre le poids lourd à l'arrière. Je me glisse entre ses jambes, frôlant le chavirement. Jeu de chaise musicale, puis la prise de conscience: la dérive n'est pas dans l'eau. Rires éclatants, jusqu'aux larmes. Pagayer pour rejoindre le rivage avant la nuit. Deux loutres d'eau douce. S'endormir blottie, dans une heureuse nostalgie, avec la certitude sourde que tout cela touche déjà à sa fin.

Stage de psychiatrie. Il part pour l'Écosse un samedi d'été indien, ses sacs remplis de cordes et de mousquetons. Aller-retour dans les escaliers du Mile End, un dernier baiser, ses *Converses* enfilées péniblement. Puis, de nouveau, l'escalier, serpent et échelle. Un câlin maladroit; lui trop grand, moi trop petite, comme si la distance n'était plus qu'une question de centimètres. Le vacarme des possibles<sup>1</sup> se transforme en silence dans mon appartement. Cruelle ironie—une seule absence, et l'univers perd son écho.

Stage de médecine familiale. Je cours, plus vite, plus loin, pour combler cette absence. Vaudreuil, Val d'Or: l'isolement devient une évidence. Les mois s'effacent. Peut-être est-ce mieux ainsi.

Stage de médecine interne. Le quotidien m'engloutit. 2024 s'éteint doucement. Je m'accroche à l'idée de quelques jours de congé, d'un Noël qui sent la tourtière, la dinde, les bûches familiales. La liste de patients s'allonge, chaque jour un peu plus. Tous plus malades, une pyramide de comorbidités qui menace de s'effondrer.

Mme S., 85 ans, sclérodémie sévère, terminale. Chaque jour, elle se rapproche du silence. Les mêmes questions: douleur, nausée, constipation? La sonde de gastrostomie posée, mais sans effet. Son mari, élégant et d'une autre époque, ses enfants dispersés d'un océan à l'autre, ses nombreux petits-enfants. Ce matin où elle me demande d'humidifier sa bouche. Je brosse ses cheveux, applique de la vaseline sur ses lèvres, de la crème sur ses mains. Le silence, presque réconfortant. Il nous enveloppe, insaisissable. Une forme de reconnaissance qui échappe aux mots.

Les soins palliatifs. Une expertise, certes, mais aussi l'art incertain d'accompagner ce qui demeure et d'accueillir ce qui s'éteint. Ici, la médecine ne se résume plus aux protocoles ni aux diagnostics, mais se déploie dans les gestes, les silences, la présence. Une humanité en mouvement, imprégnée des traces de ces versions de moi qui se sont érodées avec le temps.

Le lendemain, elle demande une sonde urinaire. Une prémonition m'empare.

Mme S. meurt dans la nuit, son mari à ses côtés. Le matin suivant, son nom ne figure plus sur la liste des patients. Qui aurait cru qu'on pouvait sentir la mort se faufiler dans une salle de conférence, sans faire de bruit, pour ne plus jamais en ressortir? Au son du claquement de la porte, je pleure. Pas pour moi, mais pour elle, pour ce qu'elle m'a donné. Parce qu'en fin de compte, c'est elle qui m'a appris à soigner.

Un désir m'envahit: être ici et ailleurs, entre Montréal et Glasgow, entre la médecine et cette vie d'avant. Mais la réalité me rattrape. Je reprends ma tournée des patients, et je sais, au fond de moi, que rien ne sera plus comme autrefois. Qui sait, ai-je fabulé tout ce que je crois avoir perdu?

Une seule façon de le savoir.



Je me ronge les ongles entre deux gorgées d'IPA, attablée dans un pub d'Édimbourg. Puis sa silhouette, titanesque, noyée dans l'embrasure, brouillée par la pluie. Un instant suspendu—son regard smaragdin accroche le mien.

Soudain, tout recommence.

<sup>1</sup>Expression empruntée à Valérie Chevalier, du titre de son roman éponyme

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*Réflexions, sans doute trop intimes, sur la femme que j'étais, celle que je suis, la clinicienne en devenir. Instants suspendus, rythmés par les saisons, les rotations—cette troisième année de médecine qui file, presque imperceptible. Photos argentiques, vestiges d'un autre temps. Ceux qui étaient là, et qui ne le sont plus. Romances anciennes, nuits sans fin où l'on se perd dans l'inertie des gardes. Les couloirs déserts du MGH, tracés par la lueur phosphorescente des machines distributrices, et ces choix, lointains, irréversibles. Montréal ou ailleurs, ici ou là-bas, de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique. Les souvenirs s'effritent, des vies qui ne se vivront pas. Chemins oubliés, bifurcations sans retour. Enfiler le sarrau, porter le stéthoscope, mais sans jamais déposer la plume. Vestiges, déjà, de ma jeunesse.*

Gabrielle Beaudry  
Medicine, Third Year

Crimson Harvest  
**LILLY GROSZMAN, 1/5**  
Acrylic on canvas



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*Lilly Groszman*  
*Medicine, Fourth Year*



Frosted Reflections  
LILLY GROSZMAN, 2/5  
Acrylic on canvas



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Lilly Groszman  
Medicine, Fourth Year



Tilted Perspectives  
**LILLY GROSZMAN, 3/5**  
Acrylic on paper



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Lilly Groszman  
Medicine, Fourth Year



Whispering Birches  
**LILLY GROSZMAN, 4/5**  
Acrylic on canvas



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Lilly Groszman  
Medicine, Fourth Year



The Quiet Pour  
**LILLY GROSZMAN, 5/5**  
Pencil on paper



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*Lilly Groszman*  
*Medicine, Fourth Year*



# Birds of Paradise

ELISSA COLUCCI (1/3)

Colored pencil, watercolor, and ink on velum.



*The goal of this piece was to relinquish control of the subject matter. The piece was created by first placing a sheet of velum on a television. Then, I drew lines associated with the images on the screen for 1 minute. After doing so, I was inspired to use the existing lines to create my art. All the original lines are included and incorporated within the final piece. The organic and lively nature of the lines lent itself well to a natural subject; colorful birds each with a unique personality, among a lush forest backdrop. I hope viewers enjoy the surreal feel of this piece, and I invite all to find their own shapes and figures within the art!*

Elissa Colucci  
Medicine, Second Year



Weekly Laundry  
**ELISSA COLUCCI (2/3)**  
Colored pencil and watercolor on paper.



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*Still life drawing showcasing the beauty in everyday objects and items we don't typically label as "beautiful". It is an invitation to pause and re-examine what we consider as mundane and unexciting.*

*Elissa Colucci  
Medicine, Second Year*



Soft light  
**ELISSA COLUCCI (3/3)**  
Hand developed film photography.



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*Description: Exploring the interplay between light, contrast, and emotion through still life photography. My goal was to evoke emotion and encourage storytelling despite a non-living subject. I hope viewers are inspired to come up with their own story behind the photo.*

*Elissa Colucci  
Medicine, Second Year*

Eternal Questions  
NAOMIE CONDÉ  
Written text

*Eternal Questions*

Being immortal.

Living indefinitely.

What is the point of such existence?

If our tireless hearts kept pumping forever  
The warm fluid flowing through our ageless pipes,  
Would life still have meaning?

Doesn't life's fragile value  
Depend on the awareness  
That we all have an inevitable expiry date?  
Not just any date... an unknown one.

If life were endlessly prolonged,  
Would we strive to use our time wisely?  
Would Life and Time, defined by their limits,  
Remain concepts, in a world where living meant eternity?

*Does life's essence depend on death's existence?*  
Perhaps death is a gift within its curse.



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*Fusing the arts of thinking -philosophy- and writing -poetry- has always been a passion. This philosophical reflection explores the value of endings. It is inspired by my clerkship experiences and the book Being Mortal by Atul Gawande. I once saw death as inherently unfair, and while unjust circumstances surround it, I now recognize that mortality gives life meaning.*

*As future doctors, we will continue to care for those facing death. Doctors are often seen as problem-solvers, dedicated to fixing issues and optimizing patients' health: "We reduce the blood pressure here, beat back the osteoporosis there, control this disease, track that one, replace a failed joint, valve, piston, watch the central processing unit gradually give out." (Gawande, 2014) These interventions are fundamental to our work, yet palliative care plays an essential role for patients whose risks outweigh the benefits of aggressive treatment, compromising quality of life. We sometimes treat death as something to defeat rather than accept. "What geriatricians do [...] requires each of us to contemplate the unfixables in our life, the decline we will unavoidably face [...]. When the prevailing fantasy is that we can be ageless, the geriatrician's uncomfortable demand is that we accept we are not." (Gawande, 2014)*

*Overall, this poem represents my reflections on a world without death, challenging the notion of immortality. If life had no opposing force, would it hold meaning at all? Perhaps living, by definition, depends on the certainty of an ending.*

*References: Gawande, A. (2014). Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end. Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company.*

*Naomie Condé  
Medicine, Third Year*

Looking Back  
TAMILA VARYVODA  
Acrylic on canvas



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*I made the preliminary sketch for this painting almost five years ago, during a time when we were all confined to our homes due to the pandemic. Doubt was in the air – no one knew what the future held, good or bad, or when our normal lives would resume. Some of us, aspiring doctors, wondered whether our dreams would ever become a reality. Painting Looking Back was my escape – a way to process uncertainty and hold on to hope.*

*Today, as a new medical student, I look back on those uncertain times with nostalgia and thank my past self for developing the habit of looking back – whether that be at my selfless family members, the dedicated medical students who came before me or Johannes Vermeer, the master behind the timeless Girl with a Pearl Earring.*

Tamila Varyvoda  
Medicine, Med-P



“unfinished”  
TASHA AMIN  
Written text and digital art



we're taught that muscles atrophy when left unused,  
and hearts weaken if not strained.  
but what of the self?  
what of the soul?  
i've spent hours learning how to hold a hand;  
to ask the right questions;  
make someone feel seen;  
but when my mother calls, i let it ring.  
when friends drop by, i craft excuses,  
like origami—delicate and hollow.  
i've become present in absence;  
an artist of vacancy.

\*

this is the part where i should say  
“it will all be worth it.”  
but what if it isn't?  
what if the sleepless nights and empty stares,  
the missed birthdays and unanswered texts,  
the hours spent learning how bodies break,  
and how to fix them,  
never make me feel whole?  
what if it's all pain for nothing?

\*

words don't come as easily now.  
essays replaced by research proposals;  
poems by cover letters.  
and just as poems tend to be left  
undusted and unread,  
so will the letters.  
i cannot write fear, doubt, depletion,  
only drive, passion, perseverance.  
so i sanitize my struggle,  
cauterize my pain,  
reshape my grief into proof of resilience.  
rethink, reword, rehearse.  
until I am sterile enough to be enough.  
but, how can i tell you who i am  
when i am as foreign to myself as i am to you?  
i never knew my existence could become just another  
page.

\*

somewhere along the way,  
i became a sum of  
what i could do,  
not who i was.  
and maybe that is the price of this life—  
to give so much of yourself  
there's nothing left to keep.  
or maybe,  
i've been bleeding for so long,  
i've forgotten how to stop,  
forgotten who i'd be if i healed.  
we've learned that bleeding can be both symptom and  
cure.

maybe i bleed on paper  
because ink doesn't ask for anything in return,  
because paper holds secrets like skin holds  
scars—  
silently, permanently.  
each word a small wound,  
each period a drop of blood.  
i bleed footnotes and references,  
statistics and significance.  
i bleed in times new roman,  
double-spaced, 12-point font.  
i bleed in perfect AMA format,  
because even my wounds must be properly  
cited.  
so if i must bleed,  
let it be here.  
let it be words.  
let it be something beautiful,  
(even if beauty wasn't my intent).  
let it be proof that even in breaking,  
we create.

\*

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*i met a friend for coffee one morning. between the not-so-small talk, we sat in a quiet pause—just long enough for me to realize that, while he spoke about his writing, i couldn't talk about mine.*

*i realized i had forgotten how to write just for the sake of writing. somewhere along the constant pursuit of achievement, i lost the simple joy of expression—where writing was a release, not a requirement.*

*i started writing unfinished at a time when i felt like i was carving pieces of myself away to fit into something unfamiliar. i felt like a stranger in my own skin.*

*it's easy to let go of things—time, hobbies, relationships—because it feels like the inevitable cost of studying medicine. but what if i give so much that there is nothing left? what if the parts i carve away never grow back?*

*unfinished explores the tension between purpose and depletion. it confronts the growing distance between who i am and who i'm expected to be. we're conditioned to turn struggles into lessons, find takeaways in every hardship.*

*but sometimes things are just hard. sometimes, you're just tired.*

*i tried to force unfinished into completion, into something that showed growth or healing or transformation. but truthfully, i haven't reached a resolution, so neither will the poem.*

Tasha Amin  
Medicine, First Year



The Orchard  
**FREDDIE SEO**  
Written text / Song (QR code)



**Poem, verse 1    Verse 1**

Un jour, j'écrivais sous l'un des arbres du verger  
*(One day, I was writing under one of the trees in  
the orchard)*

Ça faisait un moment que je n'avais rien écrit  
*(It had been a while since I wrote something)*

Je me suis trouvé un coin où les statues ne  
rôdaient pas  
*(I found myself a corner where the statues weren't  
lurking)*

J'ai tenu mon stylo pendant des heures sans  
qu'aucune pensée ne me vienne à l'esprit,  
presque comme si j'avais oublié comment  
écrire  
*(I was holding my pen for hours without a thought  
in my mind, almost as if I had forgotten how to  
write)*

Tout d'un coup, une pomme est tombée de  
l'arbre sous lequel j'étais assis et m'a frappé la  
tête...  
*(Suddenly, an apple fell from the tree I was sitting  
under and hit my head...)*

I enrolled myself as a healer in the church of brick  
and mortar

I count the end of the quarter  
Momma sings the choir sings

They open the gates to the orchard  
I take one look inside, my vision distorted  
Tall statues march in unison donning white cloaks  
Am I in awe or in horror?

As I step past the gates, I observe  
I mimic the marches so as not to provoke disorder  
Memories flood my brain

It's been 30 years since my parents had crossed the  
border

And since I was born  
They solemnly swore to never fall short of being  
my biggest supporters

Losing one wreaks nothing but pain  
When momma lost hers, life wasn't the same  
When daddy lost his, for days it was nothing but  
rain

The god of the seas and the storms  
The god of the earth and the embers  
Give space for the statues to thrive

And nourish all those who surrender  
To the orchard

**Refrain**

*In the orchard grows knowledge  
In the orchard grows power*

### Poem, verse 2

Così diedi un morso alla mela che era appena  
caduta dall'albero  
*(So I took a bite of the apple that had fallen from the  
tree)*

Notai che il sapore era diverso da qualsiasi cosa  
avessi mai assaggiato prima  
*(I noticed that the taste was unlike anything I ever had  
before)*

Non abbiamo mele come queste da dove vengo io  
*(We don't get apples like these where I come from)*

Era dolce, croccante, succosa, leggermente aspra,  
ma non abbastanza da farmi arricciare le labbra  
*(It was sweet, crisp, juicy, also slightly tart, but not  
enough to make your lips pucker)*

Quando finii la mela, esaminai il torsolo ancora  
intatto  
*(As I finished the apple, I examined the uneaten core)*

Mi resi conto che ciò che avevo mangiato non era  
una mela. Finalmente capii  
*(I realized that what I had eaten was not an apple. I  
finally understood)*

### Verse 2

As a child I could see the eyes  
On me as voices of my mother tongue tore apart  
and shattered the skies  
As a child I could hear the cries  
Of laughter as the one I once loved looked upon  
my eyes  
As a child I could sense the disgust  
An internalized hatred for everything we prized  
Like everything we ate the table  
Like every word that was spoken  
Like everything story, superstition, token  
I hated all the labels  
As a child I could even touch  
The scars I left behind when hatred wasn't enough  
But now  
As an adult I despise  
My temptation for the apple  
My statue-like disguise  
Like have you ever sabotaged yourself  
In the pursuit of approval, affection or wealth?  
They handed me a stethoscope and said 'listen'  
I'll let you retrieve the part of you that's been  
missing  
I take a deep breathe and think  
To the apple that had me reminiscing

### Refrain

*In the orchard grows knowledge  
In the orchard grows power  
In the orchard, if you don't speak the language  
You are silenced  
In the orchard, the soil from the which the apple grows is forgotten  
But worry not  
Breathe*



### Poem, verse 3

Corrí hacia una de las estatuas y le pregunté, señalando la manzana que acababa de comer: « ¿Sabes qué es esto? ». « Una manzana », respondió la estatua.

*(I ran to one of the statues and asked them, pointing to the apple I had just eaten, "Do you know what this is?". "An apple", the statue replied)*

Pregunté una vez más, esperando que la estatua entendiera: « No, pero ¿sabes qué es realmente? ». « Una manzana », repitió la estatua

*(I asked once more, hoping the statue would understand, "No, but do you know what this really is?". "An apple", said the statue once more)*

Corrí por todo el huerto haciendo la misma pregunta, pero solo recibí la misma respuesta

*(I ran around the entire orchard, asking the same question, only to receive the same response)*

Agotado por mis esfuerzos, decidí irme a dormir

*(Exhausted from my efforts, I decided to go to sleep)*

Cuando me desperté a la mañana siguiente, estaba fuera del huerto

*(When I woke up the next morning, I was outside the orchard)*

### Outro

*(A message from my parents)*

---

Freddie Seo  
Medicine, First Year

Chrysanthemum  
ISABELLA COMTOIS BONA, 1/4  
Written words

At the crack of dawn  
At the light dimming through the curtain  
I crack my eyes open  
And gaze at you in awe

I gaze at your hair, curled around your ears  
At your eyes, creased by laugh scars  
At your nose, painted by freckle stars

And, I dare,  
A peer at your lips,  
For when, from water, you sip  
And from which, words you let slip  
A tingle, a twitch, a switch  
I wish to dare more than a stare.

*"Oh, summer child,"*  
Golden locks dripping under the midday sun,  
Petals of a blooming, flowering chrysanthemum;  
Rays from your gleaming, flaming soul,  
Golden heart blossoming under your glow.

And, I spare  
A touch upon your arm,  
Light fingertips, for a glimpse in time, share  
The skin from which beads of sweat slide  
And lust, forbidden for a blink in time, guide  
The trace of the sun and stars, warm.  
Tickled, you flinch when I press  
Ashamed, I wish I could spare more than a caress

*"Oh, friend,"*  
When you gaze,  
At my auburn strands,  
Embers to your blond mane.  
When you dare,  
My silver eyes, ashes,  
Coal sparkling on fire your blue glaze.

And when you spare,  
Hushes for my hardened heart  
Hues for my worn soul  
I soften under your stare  
And I thaw from your touch.

*"Oh, brother,"*  
At the dead of night  
I close my eyes  
And imagine you in my sight

*Oh, lover*  
I desire to declare.  
I dream to scream,  
At the top of my lungs,  
An unrequited love song;  
At the tip of my tongue,  
An unspoken feeling left hung

---

A few words meant to bring you softness, sweetness, even if  
bitter. Dedicated to all you've ever loved, and all who have ever  
loved you... even if not at the right time.

*Isabella Comtois Bona  
Medicine, Second Year*



# Rinse and Repeat

## ISABELLA COMTOIS BONA, 2/4

Written words

Tend to me,	I may be broken,	Singing, your lullaby
Tame my turmoil, trail my ache	I may be crippled,	Singing, your cry
Tempt me	But can I be cradled?	To the saint, despairing
Trace me, tender on my flesh	Don't mind the chain	To the sinner, dreaming
Tell me your tale	Don't mind the chops, the chips	Singing, stilling, blessing and repeating
Taint me, tender is your flesh	The dissection, the carving,	
Under which I tarnish, I stale	The rips and slips	I may have been burning alive
A sunflower stalk tilting, in	Stretches of distended scars	I may have been breathing to survive
defeat	dragged	Being in your presence,
Torn, stained	That I cleave, drain, rinse and	Bathing in your existence,
Rinse and repeat	repeat	My descent, dampened,
		My anger, alleviated,
Latch onto me	Glove your hand	I, your bliss
You, leech	Guard it, guide it, to the very end	You, my abyss
Your hand, hauling as I howl	Map my marks, my scars, my stars	
Your lips, looping as I lose	Bandage my bruises, my blows, my	And from your absence
Your fingers, fossa, fissures in my	beats	And from your silence
figure	Board of the bubbles of burnt bark	Air shunts my boiling blood
We ram, we retch	Brushes, blossoms across my back	Cotton swamps my mind in a cloud
I, recoil	Prescribe the pills to patch my	
You, roar	psyche	And you know, I lied,
Hurt, leave, rinse and repeat.	Guard me, with all your might	To be where I know you lie
	Scratch, sign, rinse and repeat	And now, we rest
Let me	Why do I plead and pray?	The torch, the torment, the tempest,
As I am pushed,	Why was I born to beg?	passed
Over the ledge, over the edge	Catch my breath	The vicious, the vilest, parted
Let me weight less,	Coat my health	
As I am plunged	With your words	Friends, brothers,
Into the air, into the lair	Soft and soothing	Family, lovers
Let me, weightless	But, sharp swords	Rinsed, again and until it's over
As I am shattered		Repeated, again and for ever after.
Let me be		
Pained, wounded, rinsed and		
repeated		

---

In "Rinse and Repeat", walk in the shoes of someone – a man, a woman, patient, friend, lambda, anyone or anything you need to read about at this moment. Cross their path shining under hope and disappointment and the weaves of trust and toxic sentiments. Maybe, even, find your place in it; are you the savior, the doctor, the active healer behind a mask and gloves... or, are you simply riding the waves of their life as they are?

*Isabella Comtois Bona*  
*Medicine, Second Year*

A dune  
ISABELLA COMTOIS BONA, 3/4  
Digital Arts



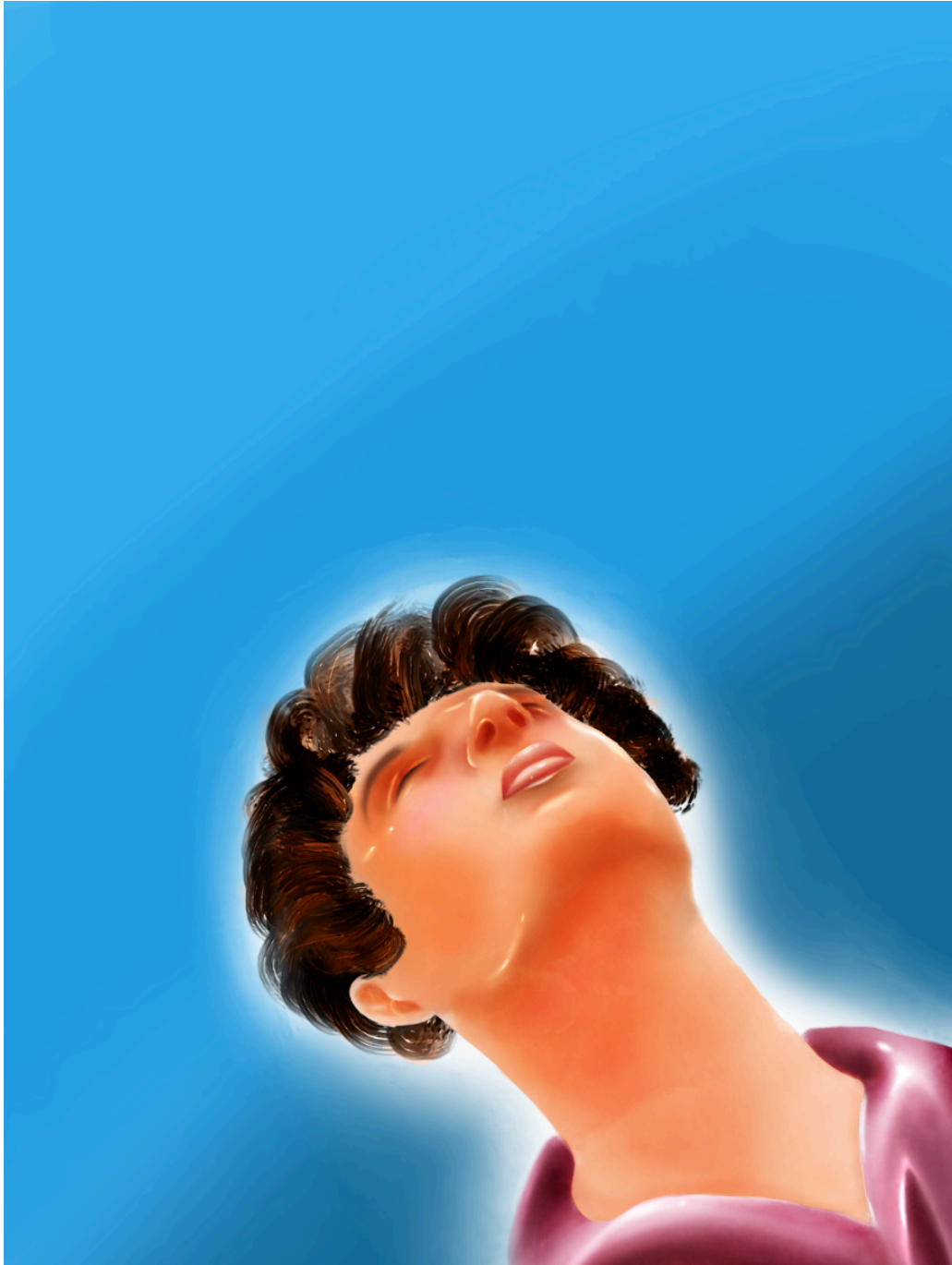
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Inspired by the scorching sand, the spices, the riches, and the strength of the desert.  
(...and the visuals of Dune, 2021)

*Isabella Comtois Bona*  
*Medicine, Second Year*



Softly spoken  
**ISABELLA COMTOIS BONA, 4/4**  
Digital Arts



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Inhale, extend your neck back and let the sun brush on you like a soft summer paint,  
as if you were somewhere in Northern Italy (or in *Call me by your name*, 2017).

*Isabella Comtois Bona*  
*Medicine, Second Year*

24 hours  
**ANNA SHAKHGILDIAN**  
Digital Arts





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*There are 24 hours in a day. 24 hours to do everything we need to do—eat, sleep, exercise... and drink enough water (I tend to forget that one). Since starting medical school, those 24 hours feel shorter, or maybe just more packed. Most days, I find myself studying, attending lecture, taking notes, and then studying some more (while trying to remember to eat something in between). Rinse and repeat.*

*I love what I do. I love medicine. But I also love art. I've been drawing silly comics since I could hold a pencil, and I still do.*

*People often say medical school requires sacrifice. I understand why they think that, but I believe it's more about balance—holding on to the things that ground us. This drawing represents that feeling of being overwhelmed by endless information, like it's being thrown at us from all directions. But even in the chaos, it is important to cling on to the things that keep us steady. We have 24 hours, and it's up to us how we spend them. Some days we choose to study. Other days we choose to get more sleep. And sometimes I choose to draw a page for my comic. Balance. 24 hours.*

Anna Shakhgildian  
Medicine, First Year

# Union of science and community

LESLY JOYCE NKUINDJA

Written text

*I often think about the beauty of this world,  
Comment tout se complète, s'imbrique et s'enchaîne,  
Comment chaque oiseau connaît sa place lors de la volée,  
Comment chaque enzyme connaît son rôle à jouer.  
On ne peut vivre d'une chose sans son élément complémentaire...  
And that's the way I think about science and community knowledge.*

*Telle une grande mosaïque colorée,  
Où chaque morceau a sa valeur ajoutée,  
Communities around the world have a lot to offer.  
Just like science, community knowledge is a cornerstone in healthcare.  
And both of these cornerstones combined can create sparkles!*

*Sparkles of joy,  
Sparkles of safety,  
Sparkles of fulfilled hearts.  
Let's light it up!  
Let's find ways to take care of the people through a lens of compassion.  
Maybe by sitting down, listening, and appreciating what they have to offer.  
Let's refine our approach to healthcare: with the people, for the people.  
Patients at heart, science and community hand in hand.*

---

*This written piece highlights the sparkling combination of science and community knowledge: two cornerstones of healthcare, tel deux éléments uniques et complémentaires. It serves as a reminder of the beauty and strength found in the diversity of community knowledge, sometimes forgotten or overlooked. I also call on us, as healthcare professionals, to revisit our practices by including community knowledge in our core values, to better serve and represent the population. I dream of a world where people from all communities feel seen, heard and empowered to take autonomy on their health. Until we make this dream a reality, I leave this piece with you. With Joy!*

Lesly Joyce Nkuindja  
Medicine, First Year



# White matter constellation

JOYCE LI

Written text



---

*Every person is a mini-universe, harbouring a unique splice of the world as they see it, within themselves.  
And just like our galaxy, the mind, in its endless complexity, still holds so many secrets left for us to  
discover.*

*This piece was inspired by my first experience seeing a brain MRI of a patient with MS. The distinct  
distribution of lesions (which the neurologist kindly explained to me), the underlying pattern—it made me  
think of how astrologists looked at stars in the sky. Drawing abstract connections to anchor themselves in  
something larger, to find direction and diagnoses, to synthesize nature into something that we could  
comprehend.*

*With this piece, I wanted to pay homage to how neurological diseases, particularly white matter diseases  
like MS, could overturn someone's entire universe and change their whole identity.*

Joyce Li  
Medicine, Third Year

Safe to Fly  
**SOFIA LIZZA**  
Written text / Song (QR code)



*It came so quick  
I don't remember it all  
I was here and there  
Doing this and that  
I met him, her, and them  
And even myself  
A self from the outside that I didn't recognize  
But I know that I fought  
And I know that He tried  
To find a way  
To give me more time  
But it's getting harder to breathe  
And I'm not getting any better  
My joy is knowing that I'm safe  
But I know that it may be my time  
My time to fly high in the sky  
My time to say goodbye  
My time to say goodbye  
My time to say goodbye  
My time to say goodbye*



---

I wrote this song following the palliative care visit we completed during first year where my Osler Fellow colleagues and I had the opportunity to meet Jane, a 49-year-old woman diagnosed with a submandibular tumor that had metastasized to her lungs.

When we entered the room, Jane was sitting on her bed, facing the window and on her phone. She was wearing a hospital gown, fuzzy socks, and a rosary around her neck. Much of our time was spent listening to Jane's experience living with her illness with the palliative care physician guiding the conversation. Jane spoke slowly and explained that she's been very tired. She said that she doesn't quite remember everything that has happened to her, referring to things as "a blur." When I asked if anything brings her joy in this moment, despite being in the hospital, Jane responded that she is glad that she feels safe at the hospital. She knows that she has care available to her and that should anything go wrong, she is in the right place.

I decided to write a song on the piano about this encounter which I've titled, "Safe to Fly." In this song I've attempted to keep the melody simple and soft to reflect the sensitive nature of the palliative care visit. Although I don't know the entirety of Jane's case nor the extent of how she feels, I've tried to capture what I think Jane may feel from our one visit with her. She explained that she's met many people but that some things remain a blur to her which is captured in the following lyrics:

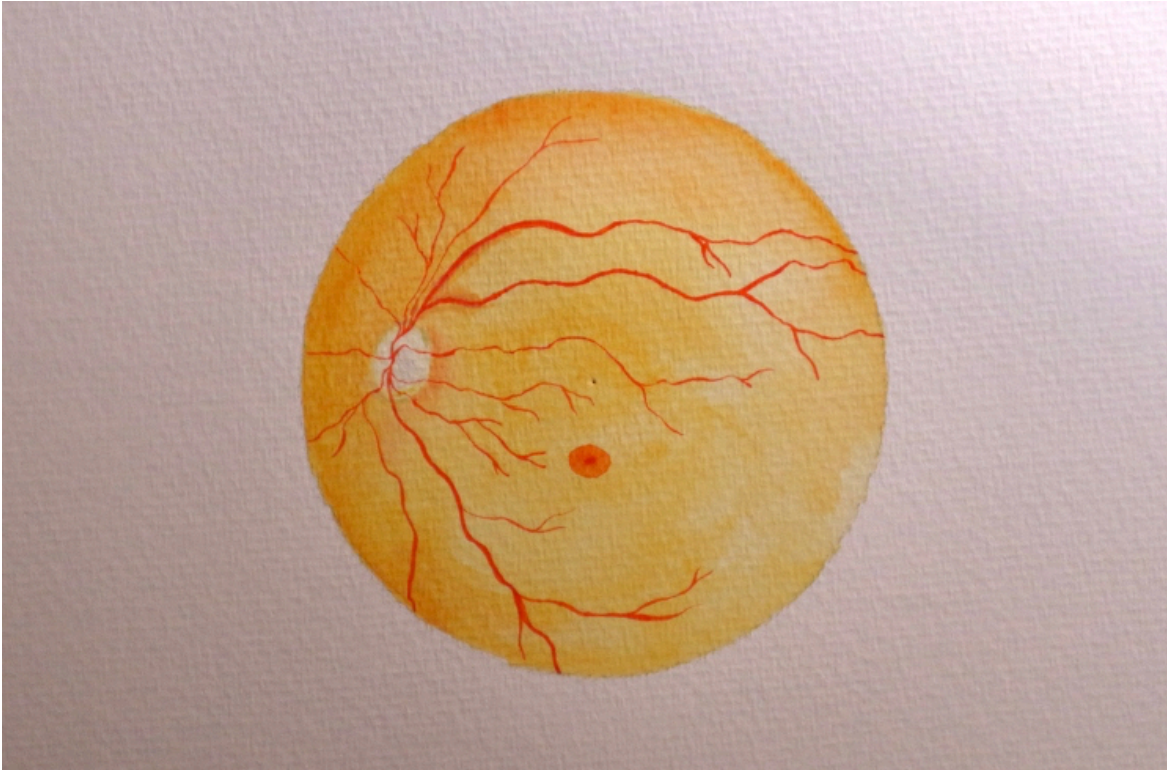
*I met him, her, and them  
And even myself  
A self from the outside that I didn't recognize*

I also tried to convey how I think Jane has a strong sense of self and a close relationship with her faith. "But I know that I've fought" demonstrates Jane's resilience throughout her illness. "And I know that He tried" has a double meaning. I've capitalized the "h" in "He" to convey Jane's relationship with God, but "He" could also relate to her relationship with the male palliative care physician treating her. I also thought it was important to include "My joy is knowing that I'm safe," as this underlines what Jane finds to be important in her life right now. In the coda, I've decided to leave the reflection of Jane's prognosis a bit ambiguous. We don't know how things will progress and she does not know as well, but she is aware "that it may be my time."

This clinical encounter was indeed self-reflective and emotional. Jane will remain in my thoughts. I am thinking about her and will keep this clinical encounter as a key reminder to listen to our patients, at their pace, and with their values in mind.

Sofia Lizza  
Medicine, Second Year

Fundoscopy Paintings  
**JULIANNE CAIRNS**  
Painting











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1. *Central Retinal Artery Occlusion. Inspired by the clinical insights and imagery from “Central Retinal Artery Occlusion” (Chapter by Sohan Singh Hayreh, pp. 239–305) in Ocular Vascular Occlusive Disorders (Springer, 2014).*
  2. *Proliferative diabetic retinopathy. Inspired by a retinal image (Jessica Galvan, MD), shared by Northern Light Eye Centre via Instagram, with credit to @retinography and @international\_ophthalmology; demonstrating fibrovascular proliferation, foveal traction, subhyaloid hemorrhage, vitreous hemorrhage, and neovascularization.*
  3. *Punctate Inner Choroidopathy. This piece was inspired by a color fundus photograph (Figure 3A) originally published in Pachydaki SI et al., Journal of Ophthalmic Inflammation and Infection (2011), courtesy of Dr. Narsing Rao, via EyeWiki (American Academy of Ophthalmology).”*
  4. *Best Disease. Inspired by a color fundus photograph of Best disease, courtesy of the Medical College of Wisconsin, Advanced Ocular Imaging Program (Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences).*
  5. *Healthy retina. This piece draws on the intricate anatomy of the human retina, the light-sensitive tissue that transforms photons into vision.*

Julianne Cairns  
Medicine, Third Year



Thank you to all of our artists and writers.

**And, we thank you, reader, for your dedication to the Moments Magazine.**



Faculty of  
Medicine and  
Health Sciences

