

An aerial photograph of a tropical beach. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, with white foam from waves crashing onto the shore. Several large, dark, mossy rocks are scattered in the shallow water. People are seen swimming and wading in the water. On the sandy beach, which is a light tan color, several people are sunbathing. Some are lying on towels or blankets, while others are standing. A few beach umbrellas are visible, including one with blue and white stripes. The overall scene is a lively and scenic depiction of a tropical vacation spot.

Inside Out

2025

Dusk
Samantha Ekanayake
Painting



Tides of Leisure
Julia Sorkin
Photography (front cover)

Meet me at the cafe?
Emma Tam
Photography (back cover)

Inside Out

Jefferson Literary/Arts Journal 2025

Chief Editors: Connor Crutchfield and Blake Weil
Artistic Directors: Roselind Ni and Lauren Kelsey
Literary Directors: Nancy Dinh and Joyce Bian

Editors:

Connor Crutchfield
Roselind Ni
Lauren Kelsey
Nancy Dinh
Blake Weil
Jessica O'Keeffe
Emma Tam
Humaal Khan
Selin Isguven Billmyer
Muskaan Uppal
Joseph Kelly
Julia Logan
Sam Schepps
Parker Davis
Daniel Bigley
TraMi Nguyen
Jack Rifkin
Diana Rios

Ajay Garg
Anish Basavalingiah
Peter Haugen
Justin Do
Hannah Clarke
Ayra Khan
Jenny Chan
Allison Chang
Benedicta Olonilua
Lily Zekavat
Drake Kienzle
Kristi Haag
Jaime Tsao
Chenab Khakh
Matthew Kraft
Joshua Kim
Julia Liu
Joyce Bian

Content Warning: This magazine includes some written pieces with possibly sensitive subject matter. If anyone is experiencing difficulty with issues that you feel are hard to manage, consider using the following resources:

Student Counseling Center (SCC): 215-955-HELP (4357)
National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255 (available 24 hours a day)
Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis counseling

Foreword

Welcome to the 2025 issue of *Inside Out*!

Inside Out is the literary and arts journal of the Jefferson student body. As such, it gives voice to our scholars as they migrate through their educational experience at our University. The creativity and vision of our students is featured within the pages of this book. Showcased is student work that was created in the intervals between classes and notebooks, dorm rooms and city streets. Please enjoy this issue of *Inside Out*, as our students offer a unique view of their world using images, colors, words, and light.

Charles A. Pohl, MD

Senior Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Thomas Jefferson University

Executive Director for Jefferson Japan Center, Thomas Jefferson University

Vice Dean for Student Affairs & Career Counseling and Professor of Pediatrics,

Sidney Kimmel Medical College

Letter from the Editors

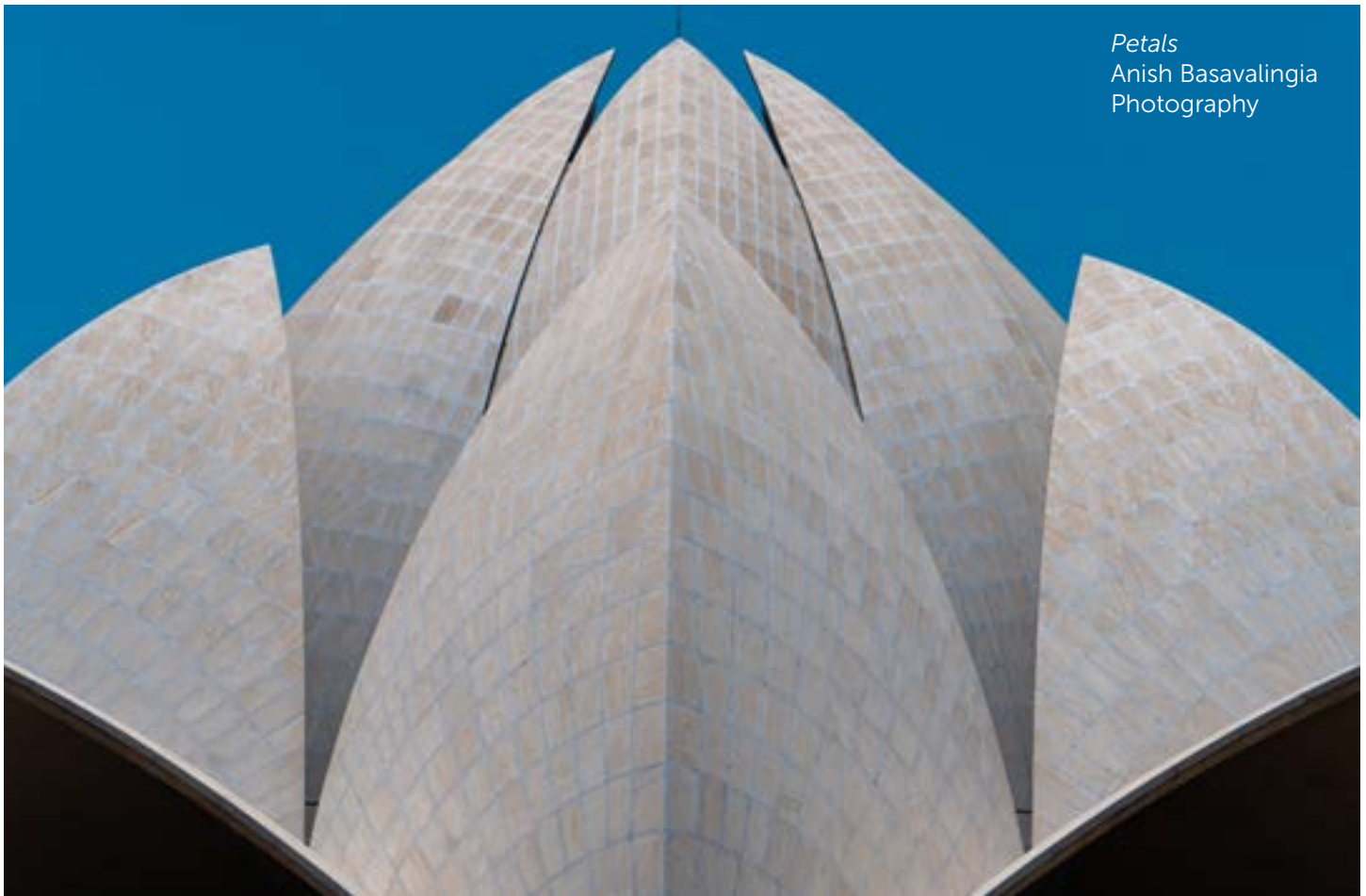
We, at the editorial team, are proud to present to you the 2025 edition of *Inside Out*. For years, we have deeply admired one of the greatest strengths of the Jefferson community: its unwavering ability to persevere. Sometimes, that perseverance means confronting the harsh realities of our mortality, whether within the hospital walls or on foreign lands. Other times, it means taking the time to notice the everyday beauty in the streetlights we pass on our way to work or stepping into an empty stairwell to meditate until our racing pulse finally calms. And at times, it's simply finding the strength to imagine the beginning of a new chapter in the ever-changing cycle of pain and tranquility.

Within these pages, our contributors have shouted, whispered, and declared that perseverance is about standing still as chaos swirls around us, walking when everything else has stilled, and taking a step back to prepare for a new tomorrow. With this in mind, it is our honor to hold this mirror to reflect your experiences. To all of our contributors, thank you for sharing your beauty, your vulnerabilities, and your courage. To our readers, thank you for your support and empathy, without which we could not embark on this journey. We hope you all enjoy.

Connor Crutchfield and Blake Weil
Chief Editors

Nancy Dinh and Joyce Bian
Literary Directors

Roselind Ni and Lauren Kelsey
Art Directors



Petals
Anish Basavalingia
Photography

Submission Information

Inside Out is a presentation of artwork, photography, short stories, poems and essays that is published annually. All full-time and part-time Jefferson students are welcome to submit work and to apply to serve on the magazine's editorial board. Submissions may be submitted to jefferson.submittable.com.

Photographic submissions should be saved as a .jpeg file using the highest resolution possible. Artwork should be photographed from a direct angle, without glare or visible background, and saved in the same manner as photographs. Artists who submit non-photographic material will be given the opportunity to have their accepted pieces professionally photographed by a Jefferson photographer to assure the best presentation in the printed magazine. Manuscripts (prose, poetry, translations, short plays, etc.) should be submitted in a Word-compatible document, and saved under the name of the piece (or "untitled," if applicable).

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously; not all submissions will be printed. Please note that entries will be judged as submitted; *Inside Out* will not crop, sharpen, or otherwise adjust an improperly-saved graphic submission.

All submissions must include:

- Author's or artist's name
- Email address and local phone number
- College, department or undergraduate program and year in school
- Genre/medium and title of each submission

View the online version of *Inside Out* at: Jefferson.edu/InsideOut



Contents

Tides of Leisure Julia Sorkin	Front Cover	Streaks of Lightning in a Purple Midnight (Sparse Labelling of Cortical Neurons) Siddharth Karthikeyan	19
Dusk Samantha Ekanayake	Inside Front Cover	The Tentacled Beast Within (Depth-coded Cortical Neuron) Siddharth Karthikeyan	20
Petals Anish Basavalingia	3	Sea of Synapses (Synaptic Labelling of Cortical Neuron) Siddharth Karthikeyan	20
Shadows Matthew Kraft	4	Cancer Patient Nilanjan Haldar	21
A Desert Reverie Isabella Giglio	7	The Flying Carousel Damian Kulikowski	22-23
Whispers of Stone and Sky Julia Sorkin	8-9	Inferno's Reflection Isabella Giglio	24
The Louvre Ajay Garg	10-11	Loan Embers Allison Chang	24-25
Ghost of Gamla Stan Brock Jenkins	12	Shadow and silhouette Ha My Luu	25
Awe Sonali Persaud	13	Lighthouse Samantha Ekanayake	26
Mary Matthew Kraft	14	Prismatic Pursuits Vincent Tse	26
The Arts Katharyn Kemether	14	Embrace of passion Supriya Chouta	27
Eyes That Meet (part 1) Jessica O'Keeffe	15	Midnight and Her Blankets Amanda Crausman	28
Eyes That Meet (part 2) Jessica O'Keeffe	15	Chaos Ajay Garg	29
Standing Proud Rachel Cheetham-Richard	16	Ascend Drake Kienzle	30
Bliss Jillian Maier	17	SAUDADE Amala Shaju	31-32
Skiping Emily Hashem	17		
A Tree in Waipi'o Valley, Hawaii Damian Kulikowski	18		

Endure Drake Kienzle	33
Cool Kids of the Andes Annie Ho	34
House Of Refuge Ajay Garg	35
Together Jillian Maier	36
Beach Boy Matthew Kraft	37
The Beach Emily Hashem	37
Untitled Parker Davis	38
Moving for Me Katharyn Kemether	39
Inner Turmoil Ajay Garg	40
Translucence Sam Schepps	41
Branching Out Julia Baran	42
A Grounding Exercise that may Help (eventually) Yifan Mo	42
Untitled Parker Davis	43
the End Leah Prischak	44
Nevermore Yifan Mo	45
Mediterraneo Dominic Finan	46
As the Sun Rises Ayra Khan	47
Odyssey Anish Basavalingiah	48-49
Distant Ripples Isabella Giglio	50-51

Just Keep Paddling Emma Tam	52
Salutations, Seafaring Supercell! Vincent Tse	53
November, 2024 Ben Seltzer	53
Where Rivers Dance Isabella Giglio	54-55
A Dream about the Wild West Yifan Mo	56-57
The Seamkeeper's Smile Brock Jenkins	58-59
Unexpected Showers Emma Tam	60
Two Feet Apart Zuhair Al-Bahrani	61-62
Reflections of Serenity Annie Ho	62
Arch in Sky Madison Rose Notarianni	63
2020 or 2025? Parker Davis	64-65
Guayaba Emily Hashem	66
Fruit vendor Alessandra Baldari	67
Downhill Ayra Khan	67
Innocence Victoria Anderson	68
The Beauty and Beast of Mortality Haleema Siddiqui	69-70
Untitled Parker Davis	70
Hidden Worlds Jacob Schwell	71

Early Bird Makala Wang	71	World's End Katharyn Kemether	82
the Scar Leah Prischak	72	The Road Less Traveled Annie Ho	83
Eyes on the Prize Emma Tam	73	The Colors of Fall Chilton Chun	83
you, who i cannot forget Allison Chang	74	Spring in Bloom Huelena Nguyen	84
Perpetual Drake Kienzle	75	To Care MaryElena Sumerau	85-86
Hard Worker Chilton Chun	76	Guitarist Alessandra Baldari	87
Winter Janna Bobotsis	77	Night Walk Rachel Cheetham-Richard	88
Today Sonali Persaud	78	Series Finale Blake Weil	89
Of Butterflies and Bees Jillian Maier	79	Skyline Laura Uricoechea Stoker	90-91
The Dam Andrew Rosario	80-81	Meet me at the cafe? Emma Tam	Back Cover



A Desert Reverie
Isabella Giglio
Photography



Whispers of Stone and Sky
Julia Sorkin
Photography







The Louvre
Ajay Garg
Photography



Ghost of Gamla Stan
Brock Jenkins
Photography

Awe

Sonali Persaud

Scant wisps of clouds scatter softly in the light
Enveloping the moon in a delicate halo

I watch as the clouds move onto their path
Leaving the brilliant sphere afloat

Counting the circular craters, one by one
I see one, fairly large, on the left

Theres two, three, right next to it
I see the rugged edges, the varied depths

My vision transports me, I can almost feel
Moonrock, gravel, sand, beneath my feet

Closing my eyes, deep inhales
I feel the atmosphere change

Grounded by gravity no more, I float
Tied to the tides and extraterrestrial light



The Arts

Katharyn Kemether

I feel that if you choose the arts
There is no room for mediocrity
You are Great
or
you are nothing.

I feel that I may have missed the cutoff
For daring to try to be brave
To choose the arts
The creative passionate fire that engulfs you
I can't believe I ever snuffed it out
I miss its warmth.



Eyes That Meet
Jessica O'Keeffe
Photography

Eyes That Meet

Jessica O'Keeffe

Beneath the trees, the park comes alive,
A stage unfolds, where the performers thrive.
The crowd is captured, spirits ignite,
By glowing screens or the enchanting sight.

But on the bench, a quiet pair,
Exchange a gaze beyond compare.
A boy, a dog, the space between,
A tender calm, an unseen serene.



Standing Proud
Rachel Cheetham-Richard
Photography



Bliss
Jillian Maier
Photography

Skipping

Emily Hashem

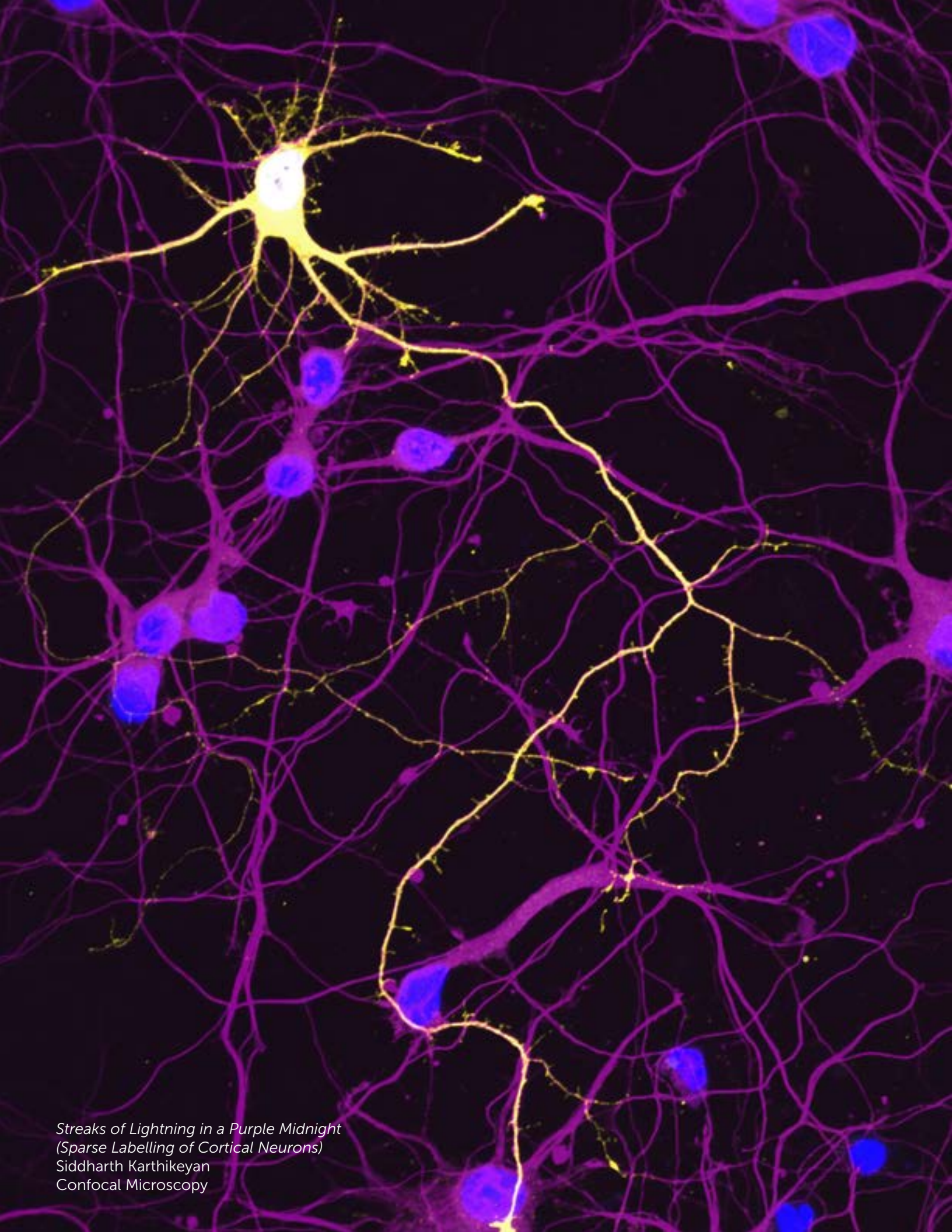
Pass something by enough times and I will be curious,
though daily routes outstrip their words in cars, planes, or trains;
All about New Haven from the window
and my unwarranted stories.

One of the American cities that explode like bombs in foreign imaginations
For intention does not make a paper plane take off
—just the clumsy pursing of a page—
And human hope does not make a paper plane fly
Even though every one was meant to.

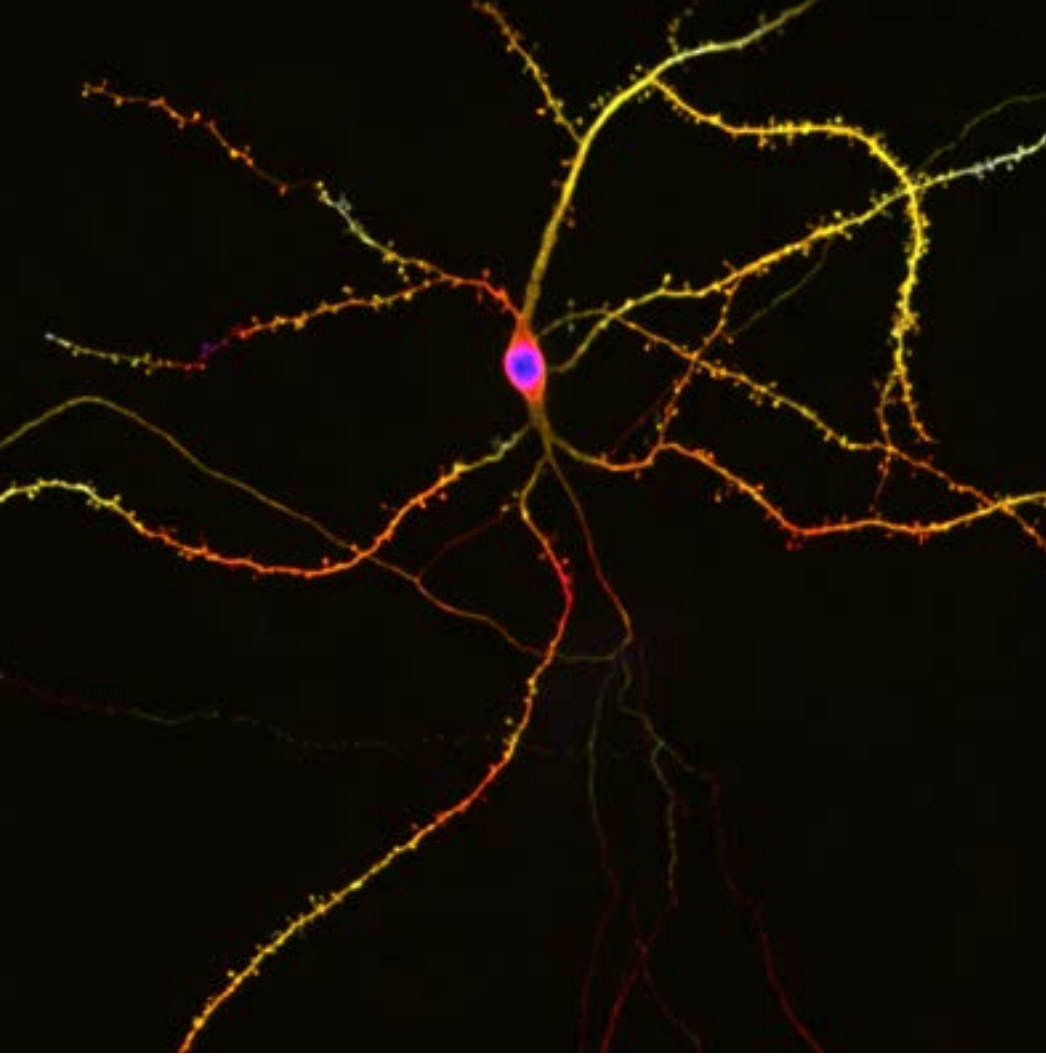
New Haven may be a concentrated city that ruptures at my touch
A world designed to grow forever
Despite the confines of borders and lifespans and coastlines
And the length of my nap on the train.



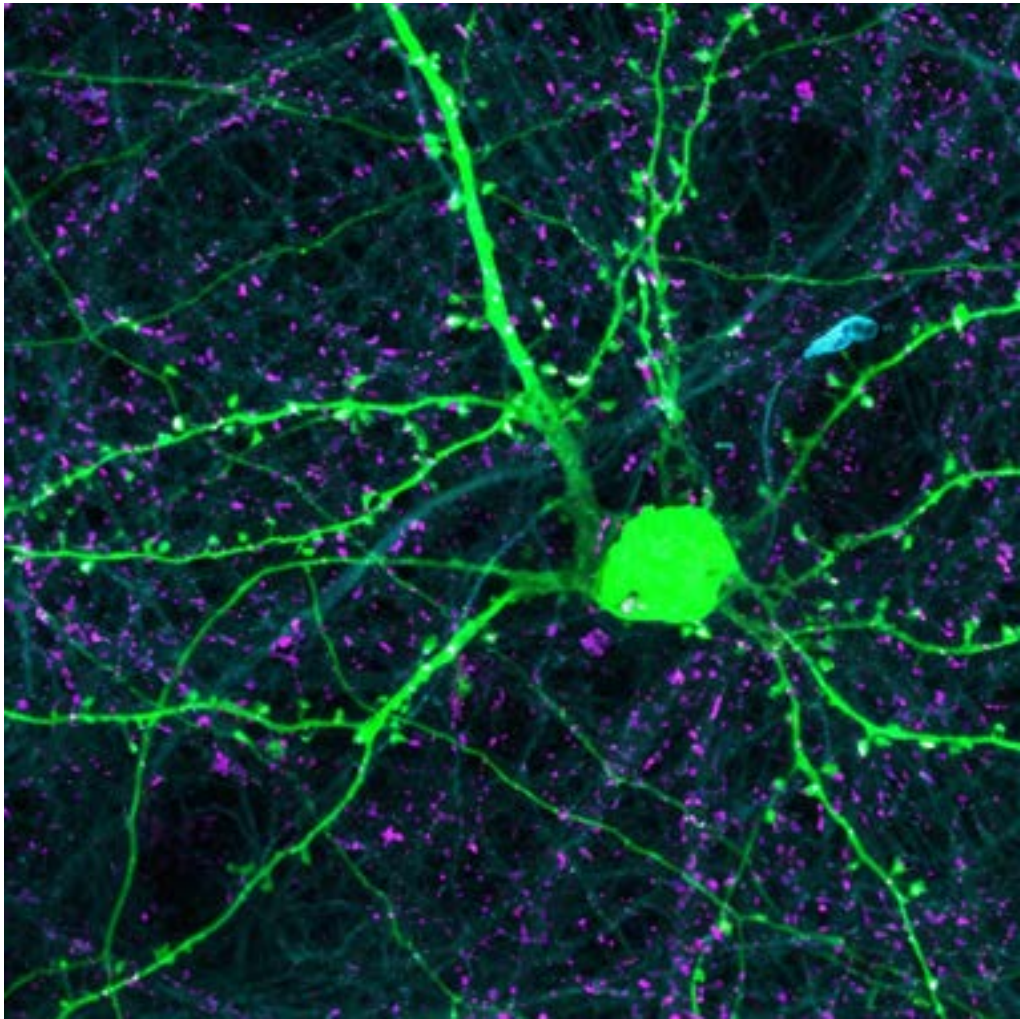
A Tree in Waipi'o Valley, Hawaii
Damian Kulikowski
Photography



Streaks of Lightning in a Purple Midnight
(Sparse Labelling of Cortical Neurons)
Siddharth Karthikeyan
Confocal Microscopy



The Tentacled Beast Within
(Depth-coded Cortical Neuron)
Siddharth Karthikeyan
Confocal Microscopy



Sea of Synapses
(Synaptic Labelling of Cortical Neuron)
Siddharth Karthikeyan
Confocal Microscopy

Cancer Patient

Nilanjan Haldar

You became a soldier
In a war you never wanted
But here it is
Deep in your homeland

A rebellion of the body
Within the body
Driving you to drink poisons
That are acrid and vile

You weaken your flesh
While testing your spirit
Finding the will
To keep hurting your will
Driving out evil,
Damaging the good

And even when all seems won
You don't rest easy
Anxious and awake
Waiting for your enemy
To return from the unseen
Knowing no peace in this peace
Where victory cannot be promised


And if it returns
You will try the unknown
Because from nobility and desperation
Is true heroism born

And even if you fall
And your enemy falls with you
You die in your heart knowing
Your brother may live
To hug your children
And leave them your love

The Flying Carousel
Damian Kulikowski
Photography







Inferno's Reflection
Isabella Giglio
Photography

Loan Embers

Allison Chang

Once upon a time, there was a mountain.
For ages many called home that mountain.
The polished petals of purple nightshade.
The rippling river where the treefrogs played.
There were seeds which flowed out of that fountain.

Once upon a time, there was a young boy.
For him the mountain was a whole new world.
The serene slither of the rattlesnake.
The fervent finches followed in his wake.
There at home his friends and he laughed with joy.

Once upon a time, there was a young man.
For him the world was soon a timeless train.
The patent pressure to perform in school.
The distant mountain he believed most cruel.
There were brewing storms he never outran.

Shadow and silhouette
Ha My Luu
Photography

Once upon a time, there was a harsh wind.
For even trains don't depart from chaos.
The howling man had begged to enter home.
The toppled palms of time were free to roam.
There was a mountain against which he sinned.

Once upon a time, there was a vast flare.
For chaos shall reign among mountain wounds.
The toxic smoke that chokes the rattling snake.
The purple nightshade molten with heartache.
There, he's ensnared by infernal affairs.

Once upon a time, there were but embers.
For wounds unhealed must be concealed by age.
The ashen journal with his name vanished.
The mountain friends of his youth were banished.
There, his lone embers we can't remember.

Once upon a time, but now there's no time.

*Inspired by the January 2025 Eaton Fire in
Southern California**





Lighthouse
Samantha Ekanayake
Watercolor



Prismatic Pursuits
Vincent Tse
Watercolor



Embrace of passion
Supriya Chouta
Acrylic paint



Midnight and Her Blankets
Amanda Crausman
Gouache on paper





Ascend
Drake Kienzle
Photography

SAUDADE

Amala Shaju

I fear to dwell in this world,
A world adrift in vagueness' helm.

I watch as people fade away,
Into quietus' cold, eternal sway.

On one side, grief for the lost,
On the other, revelry at any cost.
Nothing makes any sense now.
Each breath is hollow, each step unsure,
Darkness swallows even dreams.

At first, it was the old man
Who shared his tales of fairylands
And timeless trails.
Then the drifters came, whose smiles I knew,
Amidst this chaos, life withdrew.
Next, the teachers, wise, with knowledge vast,
And imminent, my friends were gone
Stealing my childhood with them.

Finally, Azrael touched my kin,
A piece of blood within.
Nothing held me back till now,
But this- it's torn my heart somehow.
Death whispers the truth that we don't wanna face
Even its shadows linger slowly
But its meaning blooms through hearts bemoan
When it stretches forth to claim the known.

This grief, it petrifies my soul,
Its weight a dark and endless toll.
In the loss, we see what life conceals
A fragile thread of time and space.
Now, the fear of losing those I hold,
Consumes me like a shadow cold

This takes me to the brink of the truth,
A path far from my fleeting youth.
We are all ephemeral things,
Like dew that fades as sunrise sings.
Yet, I resist the bitter fate,
I cannot bear to see them dissipate.

I cannot live amidst their loss,
Their absence is like an albatross.
Oh, God! I feel saudade's sting,
Please take me back to where memories cling.

I want to see their faces again,
Before I'm bound to life's refrain.
Take me now or let me flee,
From the pain that binds eternity.



Endure
Drake Kienzle
Photography



Cool Kids of the Andes
Annie Ho
Photography

House Of Refuge
Ajay Garg
Photography





Together
Jillian Maier
Photography



The Beach

Emily Hashem

Beach Boy
Matthew Kraft
Photography

This beach has become summer
because it is the first memory left.
I find a child on his haunches, heels
in the sand and hips
resting low —a lost mobility—
digging for mole crabs

Since I saw my first opera, any performance that followed was just a comparison.
Like when I saw my first real night sky and realized
that there were layers to it;
that the rings of stars reached back
like rows of teeth.
The house goes dark, and I lean back to gaze...

Either way, things are bright these days
and I'm much less tolerant of squinting;
If I tried to squat down in the sand,
it would take me forever to get back up,
and there are sins
that I would not have committed before.

I find a child squatting, dozens of caught fish twitching
in the clear bucket behind him,
its weight oppressing the sand.
He digs for mole crabs
and his disillusionment shimmers
when he pulls out a crushed can instead

I must have spoiled his luck.



Untitled
Parker Davis
Photography

Moving for Me

Katharyn Kemether

dawn
september
twenty-seventh
wednesday
morning
crisp
air
meets the warmth
of my breath and swirls out of my mouth
as condensation like smoke seeping from a dragon
I make my way up Walnut with a hasty pace, as I do
every day however, today's different from before, today I
rise before the morning's sun, and I do something much more
lively than sitting in a dim lecture hall, furiously scribbling
my lecture notes and important quotes to help me later on
when I sit over my screen of illuminating toxic blue. mental glue.
No because today I have decided to take one hour for me in exchange for the
Six that I give to my craft, what a slave the studying of medicine has made me.
I arrive to see my friends stretching and rolling out their purple yoga mats
A smile creeps up on my face, morning sun sweeps across the sky
As I sit down and cross my legs I feel proud that I woke up early today despite the protest of
my sheets and the siren-like enticement of remaining in bed and falling back asleep
My muscles thank me through each of the guided motions I move between
And my mind falls into a state of rest and rejuvenation where I find that
I am very grateful that I decided to take this time for myself



Inner Turmoil
Ajay Garg
Photography

Translucence

Sam Schepps

He is invisible. Wherever he goes, whomever he meets, in whatever he does. He is as vapor, extant without existence, presence without essence. They speak about him, to him, through him, everywhere he goes as though he is nowhere at all. They pass him by, trip over him, fall practically right into his lap. They pay no mind.

Eventually, he starts to agree. He is translucent. He goes out of his way to be out of the way. Everyone forgets him, and so does he.

Everyone, that is, but you.



Branching Out
Julia Baran
Photography

A Grounding Exercise that may Help (eventually)

Yifan Mo

May you rest in your struggles
May you open your eyes when you close them
May you feel
Feel the croissant buttery richness of the air
Feel the touch of skin on skin

May you, in your innocence
Let it be and let it go
Without fail.



Untitled
Parker Davis
Photography

the End

Leah Prischak

I woke up to silence.

A silence that tastes stale, stifled--like the words you want to say but never do.

Something is not right.

My father's chair, empty. I'm not greeted with the familiar presence of my parents' ritualistic morning coffee. The burning, acrid smell; so soothing to my soul.

No, rather, my phone has 3 small messages beckoning me to read.

1 missed call from Grandpa, 2:13 am

2 text message from Mother; 5:20 am

come to the hospital

and then

grandpa is not doing well

The rich smell of coffee replaced with the stinging, sterile smell of alcohol and despair.

Intensive care unit;

disturbingly accurate words.

There, I see the man I always saw as an indomitable machine made of soldered steel, reduced to a frail gray body; kept alive only by the mechanical whirl of a ventilator.

So grossly visceral we are when we die.

The person I saw there was not my grandfather (he had surely left that sorry piece of flesh behind hours ago) but the dying vessel that carried him through life.

Nevermore
Yifan Mo
Photography





As the Sun Rises

Ayra Khan

Before the sun rises, the boardwalk is empty.
I alternate between slow and fast strides, debating whether or not I should fear
the dark. In the silence there is the most noise—
the ocean against the sand, my shoes against the wood, and
the thoughts reverberating through the throes of my mind.

With each second, a minute goes by.
A ray of sunlight peaks through the clouds searching
for me. I wish in my heart it won't find me as much as I wish
it will. It doesn't, and I'm left in a limbo as I run
faster before the sun rises.

A few people have joined me by now,
A baby held by mother
A group of teenagers huddled together
A man and his dog still further
An elderly couple who gaze at each other
and me, as I run past them, eyes fixed ahead.

Sometimes I wonder
if I run to
or if I run from.

Tired, I stop and bend to retie my shoelaces.
Excited mumbling begins behind me right
on time. I count slowly my one, two, three, tying and re-tying.
With each second, a minute goes by
before I turn to face the sun.

So, I stare at the sun as it stares at me.
The boardwalk empties once again as people retreat
into their cars to marvel at a moment.
With each minute, a second goes by.
And yet, I have stayed the same.

Tomorrow, I will watch the sun rise.
I look down at my shoelaces as if confirming
as I turn to run again.

Sometimes I wonder
if I run to
or what I run from.









Just Keep Paddling
Emma Tam
Photography



Salutations, Seafaring Supercell!
Vincent Tse
Photography (December 28, 2024)

November, 2024

Ben Seltzer

The rain on my window pane shining like diamonds- it's been so long since we had a good storm.
Come over baby, know I'm waiting for you-I'll keep it hid, I'll keep us warm.

The stars in the sky iridescent as always- but baby your heaven ain't on my accord
The tears in your eyes all climb by the morning- I'll keep it hid, I'll keep us warm.

I hear the refrain of a butterfly keeper; let it fly let it fly let it fall to the floor
I try to restrain every call to the ether. I'll keep it hid, I'll keep us warm.

Silence & solitude are my religion, shame I can't name any prayers anymore. Grab all the
apples & I'll get the heater- I'll keep it hid, I'll keep us warm.

I figured the first time would form a conclusion, I figured the last wouldn't ever report. I
figured your eyes wouldn't stick in my teeth but chew as I might I still can't hit the core.

So where are we? Is it settled? And why? So much constant conversation, somehow still can't decide.
Is it you? Or has it always been me. Suppose I'll keep it hid. Guess we'll have to see...

Where Rivers Dance
Isabella Giglio
Photography







A Dream About the Wild West
Yifan Mo
Photography



The Seamkeeper's Smile

Brock Jenkins

In a sugar-spun town beneath pastel-blue skies,
Fragile dolls lie scattered with still, glassy eyes.

No one can fathom who battered them so,
For what threat are dolls that just dance to and fro?

A doctor of thread kneels low on the floor,
Cradling each tiny form, cursing the gore.

He wonders aloud why violence found them,
The innocent bound in a soft, gentle hem.

From the threads of his chest, he unravels his heart,
Each crimson strand binding healing to scars.

He binds broken limbs. He longs to restore their grace.

Even as the thread loosens on his face.

Too many dolls, too little thread to spare—
He must choose who to save, this burden unfair.

Some fade unheeded, their eyes closing fast,
While he prays for the ones whose hope still might last.

Drained of their spirit, he stitches their wounds,
Burying his sorrow in the work he must do.

But as the night wanes, his last spool unwinds—
He stands in the dawn with no one to bind.

And all that remains on the doctor's worn face
Is the crooked, false smile he stitched into place.



Unexpected Showers
Emma Tam
Photography

Two Feet Apart

Zuhair Al-Bahrani

Patch Adams once said, "You treat a disease, you win, you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you, you'll win, no matter what the outcome".

As the healthcare landscape continues to diversify, establishing mutual trust between healthcare professionals and patients proves a formidable challenge. Whether the result of historical injustices or other forms of discrimination within medicine, patients from marginalized communities often harbor a deep-seated sense of distrust towards physicians. Compounded by a variety of socioeconomic factors, effective communication between patient and physician becomes scarce. The result: poor treatment adherence and health outcomes.

From a young age, I was fascinated by the field of psychiatry. The ability to treat disorders originating from the enigmatic organ that is the brain, captivated me. Requiring a blend of empathy and scientific expertise, mental-health professionals have the profound opportunity to treat what often seems untreatable. Now in my 3rd year of medical school, I could only hope to contain my excitement as I walked into the Belmont Behavioral Hospital for the first day of my psychiatry clerkship. With the wise words of Patch Adams echoing in my mind, I ascended the stairwell to the fourth floor and introduced myself to the team. With no more than a pat on the back and a "Good luck," I was whisked away to see my first patient, a young girl admitted for homicidal and suicidal intent. Standing at just under 5 feet tall, she wasn't physically imposing yet the trauma she had faced cast a shadow over her delicate frame that was palpable. While introducing myself, I was drawn to her eyes. Dried up tears lined her eyelashes. Eyebrows furrowed. Gaze wandering all across the room, never seeming to meet mine. Her demeanor exuded a mixture of fear and guardedness. We stood two feet apart, yet there was a tangible distance between us that seemed to stretch endlessly.

Every day for the next six weeks, I would begin my shift by attending morning report then checking on my patient. Attempts to speak about her childhood or history of depression proved futile. The lack of progress was becoming disheartening. How do I treat mental health issues if the patient won't talk to me? Nearing the final two weeks of my clerkship, I began to adopt a different approach. Rather than probing for a psychiatric history, I went looking for a list of favorite movies. Dream cars. Pet names. And suddenly, something changed. While discussing her love for art, I caught a glimpse of the unimaginable. A fleeting moment of joy as her lips parted, revealing a hint of her teeth. For the first time, she had smiled at me. Raised by a single mother alongside eight siblings, in a home meant for no more than three, this 14-year-old girl had endured adversities no child should face. Beaten, yelled at, and assaulted, yet here she was smiling while showing me her sketch of Batman. We spent the next ten mornings discussing her dreams of becoming an art teacher and visiting art museums across the world. To my displeasure, she constantly poked fun at me for my limited artistic ability. Humbled, I would change the subject. With not so much as an invitation, she began telling me about her phone calls with her mother. Detailing her sincere apologies for threatening her mother and exchanging obscenities. By the end of the week and after fourteen weeks of admission, this patient agreed to try oral medication. Once an enraged teen who refused treatment and engaged in physical altercations with other patients, was now coloring while asking me about the efficacy of antidepressants.

As I ascended the stairs to the fourth floor for my final shift, I felt a sense of unease. I had thoroughly enjoyed this clerkship and was reluctant to see it end. Taking my first steps out of the stairwell, I was greeted with a hug on the leg and a coloring book. The glowing smile and wide eyes bore no resemblance to the girl I met six weeks ago. After hours of coloring, I gave sign-out to the incoming team and was dismissed home.

Two days later, I received an email from my attending physician. After fifteen weeks at the Belmont Behavioral Hospital, my patient had been discharged home. While packing her belongings, she had asked my attending to see me, pleading to share a final drawing with me. Now home in southern Maryland, I was over a hundred miles away. Yet, there was a tangible bond between us. A newfound familiarity. A trust only achieved by treating a person, rather than the disease. A closeness we hadn't shared before. Even when meeting for the first time, standing face to face. Two feet apart.

Reflections of Serenity

Annie Ho

Photography





Arch in Sky
Madison Rose Notarianni
Photography

**THE SYSTEM
ISN'T BROKEN
INCREMENTAL CHANGE IS
IT WAS
NOT WORKING
BUILT
THIS WAY**

**NO
JUSTICE
NO
RACE**



2020 or 2025?
Parker Davis
Photography

Guayaba

Emily Hashem

I was found in the kitchen
Of course,
Expecting my fruit and washing my jewels
in that kitchen sink,
my eyes trained to love the shiny things
And to equate this labor with the wealth of stones.
Most birds collect seeds,
but we magpies, nesting in grudges,
We live to steal

The first time I ever begged
Or rather wanted, with no one to beg to,
I wanted to be distilled to nothing
to be ephemeral,
to stain the mind,
to live forever
There, I caught the scent of guava
An aspirational purchase, because I had to have

They sat on the counter, casting a wide net of searing scent:
The first time I ever asked to starve,
to live life through eyes only,
and through two little holes where the musk assaults me
Smashed to a pulp and eating only seeds,
Everything that's sour is sweet, sweet, sweet
A mouth full of marbles
the rumored guava
Throat provoking but utterly occupying the tongue.

To disappear into nothing
to dissolve into everything
to look upwards and be taken
to inhale and let the air break me
open, to be scrubbed into nothing
as if never touched, as if never eaten off of and never dug up,
to take just the scent and the flavor
That organ shriveled up so it forgets how to want
To become the buzz of draining blood
To float up above the neck and hover
To be me
All muscle without empty parts
lithe and hollow
All brain with eyes only to look down the tunnel
to suck it all closer
all chest and breathing,
I've made it this far, so I can just keep moving,
And sustain off of the idea of what things could be.



*Fruit vendor
Alessandra Baldari
Photography*

Downhill

Ayra Khan

I see a boy with a yo-yo
as it goes up and down
a concentrated face
adorned with a frown

he loses his focus
it slips, the string unravels
knotting as it rolls
down the hill it travels

he searches but won't find it
for what he's searching for is already gone
beneath the leaves, behind the trees
the sound of a broken toy has never been strong

The boy comes back
with a *red* yo-yo this time
and he'll lose it again
not knowing his crime



Innocence
Victoria Anderson
Photography

The Beauty and Beast of Mortality

Haleema Siddiqui

I pinch lightly on the back of my hand, testing the elasticity of my skin in a clinical assessment of turgor. The smoothness rebounds effortlessly, a quiet testament to youth.

"That's not fair," Dr. Macnett chuckles, glancing at the tented fold of skin that lingers on his own hand. His smile lines deepen, carving traces of years gone by. A consequence of aging, an irreversible evidence of time. My own smile falters. I wonder if he ever thinks about the time he was a student rather than the teacher. I wonder if he ever looks at his pupils and sees ghosts of himself.

My skin is soft, elastic—brimming with life and untapped potential. It carries the legacy of my Nanijaan, my grandmother. I only knew her skin as a map of wisdom, its wrinkles etched with a lifetime of laughter, sorrow, and untold memories. My own blood, yet so much about her remains unknown to me. No matter how tightly we cling to stories and moments, so much slips through our grasp, destined to be forgotten.

I was just a chapter in her long life, but what a gift to be a part of it, even through the pain. To witness her transformation—from sharp and fervent to a fragile echo of the woman she once was—was to confront the unflinching reality of aging, and ultimately, advanced Alzheimer's disease. *The circle of life*. A phrase so clean, so resigned, it betrays nothing of the raw truth it carries. We come into this world with nothing, and we leave behind everything we gathered.

I feel bitterly grateful for the chance to lose. Loss means I once had something worth holding, worth cherishing. It means I had the opportunity to give. To give back what I was blessed to receive and, perhaps, to offer more. I can only hope to balance the scale one day, though I know it's impossible. I have been given so much.

Mortality, I've realized, is a double-edged paradox. It gives us the chance to grow—to build knowledge, to foster love, to seek truth and meaning. But it is also a constant thief, forcing us to endure loss in equal measure. Like the sun and the moon, like life and death, the beauty of living demands its shadow.

This duality—the beauty and the beast of being mortal—is something I have wrestled with endlessly. It is a concept not just to live with but to practice. As physicians, we stand at the precipice of this truth every day. Mortality shapes our work, our purpose, and our interactions with patients. We witness life's fragility and resilience in tandem—the first breath of a newborn and the last exhale of a life lived. We celebrate lives saved, but we also carry the weight of losses.

To truly complete their mission, a physician must embrace this paradox. The beauty of being mortal reminds us to connect—to listen deeply, to honor and respect each human we have the privilege to treat. The beast reminds us that ultimately, no medication, no procedure, no act of heroism can stop the inevitable. It is not our job to erase mortality but to make space for dignity, comfort, and meaning within it.

My research panelist spoke of Alzheimer's disease. His words dragged me back—back to sudoku puzzles with my *Nanijaan*, to preparing fish sticks and juice in the quiet of our kitchen. To flashes of Mama blending *naan* and *salan*. She can't eat solid foods anymore. Could* not.

"You speak Arabic, right?" a friend asks, staring at the menu in a Lebanese restaurant. Another flash: my *Dadijaan*, her voice gentle, teaching me how to read the Quran. Patience. Discipline. Devotion. Simple truths wrapped in an intimacy I can no longer grasp. "Both of my grandmothers live with me," I used to say, a comfort and pride I thought would last forever. But nothing does.

My siblings grow up. My parents grow older. My time at home becomes ever more precious, more finite. Each visit heals me and simultaneously breaks my heart—an exquisite ache born from knowing that everything, everyone, is subject to the fragility of humanity. My childhood home is now simply a place I visit that once was all I knew. It stands as a relic of my past with memories in every corner. A quiet reminder of time passing, and a tribute to all that was lived, lost, and learned within these walls.

This is the beauty and the curse of being mortal: the delicate balance between joy and grief, between holding on and letting go. It is a truth that humbles me, a truth that gives my path as a physician its depth and purpose. To navigate through this paradox is the greatest privilege. It reminds me that even in loss, there is love. Even in endings, there is meaning. And even in mortality, there is something eternal.



Untitled
Parker Davis
Photography



Hidden Worlds
Jacob Schwell
Photography



Early Bird
Makala Wang
Photography

the Scar

Leah Prischak

A parting line in the middle of his chest;
bubbling with the fleshy pink of hypertrophy.
The imperfection of tissue,
fighting to pull itself together
after being torn apart by the uninterested blade.

His scar dances
with the erythematous border,
as he once did with death.
The scar is loud and proud,
irregular and rare;
flaunting the success of its vindication.

The valiant victory
against all odds.

The blatant reminder of his dance persists,
year after year,
through every battle fought and won,
until he didn't.

As his skin lost its warmth,
his body lost his soul,
that scar remained just so—
holding together
the memory of a man
who could not be broken.



Eyes on the Prize
Emma Tam
Charcoal Drawing

you, who i cannot forget

Allison Chang

*I had never shadowed before did not know
what to expect it was a tragic case the doctor said
your face is like paper delicate and fragile when
they explain you are no longer eligible for*

*Just 30 years old with so much to live for
I saw you gripping your wife's hand tight
chemotherapy your last hope to fend
off greedy cells rapidly dividing sapping*

*The doctor cried when she broke the news cracked
my heart right open as we watched you grapple
away your energy your blood your time your
stony determination to do anything everything*

*with the unbelievable reality hot saltiness saturating
the brim of my mask blurring your hunched form
melting away into tears into clutching your wife
shiny new wedding bands glinting aching*

*Everyone is reaching for tissues now doctors
nurses family the torrent of grief heavy upon
chest wrenching between the thin flimsy
bed sheets crumpled in the arms of your*

*us with nothing to say there
is a momentary fragile lull-
love for there is never enough time as
the shock weighs down you still feel as if*

*And then the doctor is moving along proposing
a plan for hospice to discharge you today
you cannot believe what is happening yet
you go through the motions arrange*

*It is time for us to step out
of the room we have done our part
for adjustments sign off the papers leave
behind worn blue hospital gown*

*I go to the bathroom to cry once more
take in a deep breath steady myself*

*and head home
and head home*



Perpetual
Drake Kienzle
Photography



Hard Worker
Chilton Chun
Photography

Winter

Janna Bobotsis

The quietness and stillness of winter,
Everything wrapped in a blanket of snow,
Sleeping.

Snowflakes fall in the black of night,
Illuminated only by the light of a full moon.

They dance with each other,
As they gently drift down.

Everything is still,
Everything is silent.

For now, everything is perfect.

Today

Sonali Persaud

O'er frothy turbulent waves enveloping the cove, I gaze
Above at the sliver of half-crescent moon that pulls the tide

Trembling hands plunging a wispy butterfly needle into
The lustrous blue ridge of the patient's distended basilic vein

The lioness weaves under the brush, tendinous sinews in her back arching
Swiftly sinking pointed canines into the unsuspecting fowl's jugular

Hurried footsteps follow as bleating alarms envelop the hall
One hand over another, pressing the sternum posteriorly with steady beats

Droplets from rain showers slither silently down plant leaves
Sinking deep into branching roots, nourishing green chlorophyll-laden stems

Lips press tightly around the hollowed spirometer to inhale a crackling breath
Air turbulently entering lungs, following divaricate bronchi to meet sacs of alveoli

In the cavernous darkness lie pointed mineral deposits clinging to the ceiling
Slowly coalescing to reveal intricate limestone stalactites enveloped in water

Steady hands pull the stoic metallic retractor backward, allowing for
The bovie's hissing certainty, clearing away disruptive fascia

Billowing clouds part ways, allowing the sun to cast
Warm light onto scattered morsels of floating, immobilized dust

A handheld probe with warm jelly swirls atop a pregnant belly
As a miniscule pixelated figure appears on the black and white screen

Bumblebees hum in cacophonous symphony, flitting amongst the
Dew laden flower petals, harnessing fresh nectar and pollen

The couple's fingers intertwine tightly as they tense to hear
The results they are greatly expecting

And still, the sliver of the moon controls the tides.

Of Butterflies and Bees
Jillian Maier
Photography



The Dam

Andrew Rosario

The horde
deep blue warriors
clawing and clamoring
atop each other
in waves

Joined the night before
by their comrades—
paratroopers—
descending in
with the roar of drums and cymbals

The army was all aswirl
(The commanders said they would attack at noon)
The horses were saddled
mouths foaming
white manes flowing in the growing light

They were anxious
to finally topple the steep walls—
those ancient venerable walls
at this point long overgrown
with moss and vine
stone cracked and flaking

For centuries the dam had stood
the lone buffer
between civilization and chaos
There were marks, yes
gouges where the army's desperate hands
had sought to loosen the bricks
But the wall held back—
as always—
the rushing advancing blood-crazed flood

But this time
it gives way
The horde, freed of its cage
surges outward
from the ruined
collapsed dam

The wall had surrendered
obliteration—
liberation—
freed of its Atlas-duty
but destroyed:
like a soldier
home at last
in a box

World's End

Katharyn Kemether

Sunday's Light shines through the thin cotton curtains
Birds chirp and chitter amongst themselves outside
Unaware their banter greets me as the new day
Each week I feel Sunday as the juxtaposition between Last and Next

How to wrap the last six days in a neat little bow
While welcome in the next six as a mother does her own?

Morning Meeting has become a staple of the Day of Sun
Where strangers gather to sit in silence
And let their individual flames flicker and glisten and shine outwards as one

The light of many candles shining together will always surpass that of one

As a meeting novice, my mind engages in a mating ritual with mindfulness
I have yet to win her over
Brandish her as a weapon in my arsenal and at my disposal
In the adventure of life

And so, the dance begins
Thinking of Last
Pondering the Next
Turning over conversations as if they were a smooth stone in my hand
That I was trying to find roughness in
Ways I was good
Ways I was not
My mind begins to wear itself out, much like a child on a playground

I catch eyes with mindfulness
How she always looks so serene
Unmistakably beautiful, with her effortless gleam

Through her I begin to see a clearing
Between a river and its trees

My heart can slow from its racing pace
My breathing can become deep
Because it is here
At World's End
That I begin my week



The Road Less Traveled
Annie Ho
Photography



The Colors of Fall
Chilton Chun
Photography



Spring in Bloom
Huelena Nguyen
Photography

To Care

MaryElena Sumerau

"Warning: the patient whose chart you are requesting to open is deceased. Do you want to proceed?"

She was too young, too healthy. She had a disease people don't usually die from. She'd squeezed my fingers and told me she'd see me in a few days, joking that the weekend medicine team couldn't possibly be as charming as my teaching team and so she'd look forward to seeing me first thing Monday morning.

I'd pulled on my horse-printed socks just for her that morning. Her stories of decades on the racetracks, of all the champions she'd photographed crossing finish lines across the country, kept her breath steady as the paralysis crept up her spine. I'd shared my own stories of trail horses and retired racehorses alike as I crouched under the sterile sheet with her, trying to keep her calm as my resident slid the central line catheter into her neck. Her spitfire spirit filled every corner of that hospital room, even as we slid the 20 guage needle into her spine.

I got to know her daughters, leading update meetings over speakerphones and across hospital rooms as we coordinated how to get them to their mom.

I heard the break in her daughter's voice as she told me that her mom was only a few weeks sober, grief fracturing through the pride in her words.

I held the phone up as she rolled her eyes, reassuring the man she described to me as "the lesson she couldn't learn" that she would be okay without his company in the hospital.

I grasped her outstretched fingers when she told me she wasn't ready to die but she didn't want to live if it meant months of breathing tubes.

I came running when nurses said she was calling for me by name, asking that I simply brush back her hair and wipe her tears when she could no longer lift her hands herself.

She wasn't supposed to die.

She was supposed to keep improving on the treatment and then grumble her way through months of physical therapy as she regained her strength. She was supposed to be back on the racetrack in a few months, crouching with her camera to capture the photo-finish shot.

She was supposed to keep healing as I took my weekend away from the hospital to rest. She was never far from me still – in the embrace I shared with my mom, in the time spent with my own four-legged companions.

But she died anyway.

I know how she died; I read about it in her chart that morning. I read about it all alone, sitting at a computer in that crowded resident workroom.

What happened? Did we miss something? What did I – the medical student who spent the most time interviewing her and gathering a detailed history – miss? Could we have done more? Did she suffer? Was her daughter with her as she died?

And why was I learning about it for the first time over a long-forgotten breakfast sandwich in the resident lounge?

My supervising doctors praised my empathy as they watched me care for her, told me my soft heart and deep connections would make me a powerful physician. My strength was my ability to care. But my care did little good as I sat there alone reading about her death. My care sank in my stomach as I read about each and every step of how she died, it expanded deep in my chest to push breath out of my lungs and squeeze silent tears down my cheeks. What good was it to care if I couldn't do enough, if we couldn't do enough to save her?

And how would I make more space to care for new patients that day, when this care already took up all the space I had?

A stranger I'd never seen before peered over my shoulder as I scrolled through her chart, slurping his morning coffee in my ear. "I heard about that, a horrible case."

He was gone by the time I'd turned around to ask him what he'd heard, who I could talk to, or even his name.

So with a glance at the clock, I closed her chart and tucked away my care to start on my new patients for the day.



Guitarist
Alessandra Baldari
Film photography



Night Walk
Rachel Cheetham-Richard
Photography

Series Finale

Blake Weil

Hey, come up to the attic with me, look what I found
It's Poseidon, see? He looks just how he used to when we were kids
He still has his trident, with only the tiniest dings and scratches

This box has the whole gang, all twelve, articulated and posable
Their entourage, their accessories, their playsets (both Olympus and Hades)
Outfits from all the big crossovers, Titanomachy onwards

Didn't it feel like it would never end? Too many stories to count
I remember I came crying to your room when they announced The Odyssey, though, shouting
"But it can't end! Where will they go?", the friends that kept us company those cold, scary nights

But you cried too, didn't you? When Penelope threw her arms around Odysseus
As Zeus threw Ganymede to the stars, knowing the curtain was imminent
Cast in montage looking on with a smile, full orchestra, big sepia "The End" fading into view

It makes me a bit dizzy to look at all of this. Could be the dust, could be
Our everything, now neat in boxes, on the curio shelf, years
Gone without thinking when a day without seemed unimaginable

I wouldn't go back, and I know you wouldn't either
Today I learned the heart's secret labyrinths, you taught a seed to grow in the desert
We fought so courageously, we became the heroes we could only marvel at

So young, I couldn't understand a good story never goes anywhere
It goes into syndication, it goes onto box set, it's on the cloud and they'll never erase every copy
I'll tell it to my kids as a half forgotten bedtime story when I don't have time for a library run

I know sometimes we say we're up here to analyze them
Asking what a show like that did to our minds as kids, asking what the writers were thinking
Tonight, though, is it okay if we just take them out and play?

I can speak for Dionysus, and you can sing for Apollo
We'll tell the story one more time, even do the voices
If anyone asks, we'll call it reruns

Skyline
Laura Uricoechea Stoker
Photography





Contributors

Alessandra Baldari, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Ajay Garg, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Allison Chang, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Amala Shaju, College of Life Sciences (JCLS), 2025
Amanda Crausman, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Andrew Rosario, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Anish Basavalingiah, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Annie Ho, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Ayra Khan, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Ben Seltzer, College of Life Sciences (JCLS), 2025
Blake Weil, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Brock Jenkins, College of Life Sciences (JCLS), 2025
Chilton Chun, College of Population Health (JCPH), 2027
Damian Kulikowski, College of Nursing (JCN), 2027
Dominic Finan, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Drake Kienzle, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Emily Hashem, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Emma Tam, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Ha My Luu, College of Pharmacy (JCP), 2028
Haleema Siddiqui, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Huelena Nguyen, College of Pharmacy (JCP), 2025
Isabella Giglio, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Jacob Schwell, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Janna Bobotsis, College of Health Professions (JCHP), 2025
Jessica O'Keeffe, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Jillian Maier, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Julia Baran, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Julia Sorkin, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Katharyn Kemether, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Laura Uricoechea Stoker, College of Population Health (JCPH), 2025
Leah Prischak, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Madison Rose Notarianni, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Makala Wang, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2025
MaryElena Sumerau, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Matthew Kraft, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Nilanjan Haldar, TJUH Radiation Oncology Resident, 2026
Parker Davis, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Rachel Cheetham-Richard, College of Nursing (JCN), 2025
Samantha Ekanayake, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Samantha Simons, College of Nursing (JCN), 2026
Samuel Schepps, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2026
Siddharth Karthikeyan, College of Life Sciences (JCLS), 2028
Sonali Persaud, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Supriya Chouta, College of Pharmacy (JCP), 2025
Victoria Anderson, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2025
Vincent Tse, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2027
Yifan Mo, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2028
Zuhair Al-Bahrani, Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), 2025

Acknowledgments

Inside Out appreciates the kind support of the following:

Kirsten Bowen
Humanities Program Coordinator, Office of Student Affairs

Charles A. Pohl, MD
Senior Vice Provost for Student Affairs
Executive Director for Jefferson Japan Center, Thomas Jefferson University
Vice Dean for Student Affairs & Career Counseling and Professor of Pediatrics, Sidney Kimmel Medical College

Susan Aldridge, PhD
President, Thomas Jefferson University

Said Ibrahim, MD, MBA, MPH
Anthony F. and Gertrude DePalma Dean of Sidney Kimmel Medical College

Megan Voeller
Director of Humanities, Office of Student Affairs



Front Cover: *Tides of Leisure*, Julia Sorkin, Photography

Back Cover: *Meet me at the cafe?*, Emma Tam, Photography

登波咖啡

