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# CELL & SOUL

AMC CREATIVE  
MAGAZINE



"Reflections on a Med  
Student's Journey" by  
Sydney Kehoe - Page 2





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# What is CELL & SOUL MAGAZINE?

"I don't know if you want to publish this... **it's kind of weird.**"

"You're not weird. **I collect snails.**"

This conversation between a classmate and I sums up the purpose of CELL & SOUL Magazine in a nutshell: **we all have something that makes us unique.** I had no idea how true that statement was until we began to collect submissions from the Albany Med community. Really, no two submissions were alike, and I was constantly astounded by the variety of passions and skills that thrive here. **CELL & SOUL Magazine is a celebration of that inner drive to create and be seen.** It's a collection of everything that makes us unique. And it's my hope that by sharing what makes us different, **we can all grow a little closer.**

Please enjoy the first edition of CELL & SOUL Magazine.

Best regards,  
Alex Foyt





# Reflections on a Med Student's Journey by Sydney Kehoe

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My name is Sydney Kehoe and I'm a second-year student at AMC. Starting medical school really helped me get back into painting or using Procreate to explore my experiences in medicine through my art. In this piece I wanted to depict the different roles I've had in my life on my way to pursuing a career in medicine from teammate, to student, to researcher.

I've experienced a lot of uncertainty and self-doubt in my time here but reflecting on how I've gotten to this point has helped remind me that I deserve to be here and that I will continue to work hard to achieve my goals.



# Clouds by John Chen

I stare up at the sky

My eyes meet a nimbostratus and it greets me

Well, greet may be a strong word

There's something like a language gap there

It's close enough where I can make out the wisps and curls that give it shape

It's far enough that I have no granular understanding of how it works and where it goes

On superficial glance it appears I can outrun it all

On deeper consideration I know that it will leave me behind as I inevitably trip and fall

I am acutely reminded that I am a cloud person

60% of my body is composed of the same moisture that the cloud is

But when I forget I am a cloud person that percentage wavers

My cloud parents told me we precipitated to the land to make it fertile

I'm guessing precipitate would be happy wherever it feeds life

Now I'm ashamed to talk about my cloud status to land people

The clouds and the land antagonize each other

And need each other as foils do

Land people have told me that I am not a cloud person

I've learned that farce is still farce despite wanting it to be truth

I'm left with two poor choices

I can denigrate my status as a cloud person with sheer calculated or learned mindlessness and have the clouds look down at me in disgust

Or I can try to prove that I am one with the cloud by jumping through it

But it's illegal to jump through a cloud

The clouds I jump through may not appreciate it

But for the most part I think the cloud will be untouched

It is just the land people who would abhor me flying high and parting the clouds for the sun to shine down and to give other land people reason to look up in the sky.






# ***ARTISTIC MANIPULATION OF DIFFUSION TENSOR IMAGING***

by Samuel Perlman





Learning how to make 3d digital art over the past few years has been a fun distraction from work and school. Starting med school has given me the inspiration to combine the interesting science I'm learning about with my creative interests!





*Moments by Manas Sharma*

*They slip away  
as I do  
sometimes at night  
when hungry.*

*They are unexpectedly quick,  
as I am  
despite my checkered footwork  
and lumbering gait.*

*The sound of my hands  
clapping together at a football game  
resembles the sound of the fridge opening.*

*The feeling as I take my ski mask off  
and an icy chill breezes past me,  
a semblance of the frigid air  
I am exposed to*

*I smell a jumble of scents,  
some delectable, some rotting,  
reminding me of the odor  
from the school cafeteria after lunch*

*The crunch of the leaves  
as I saunter across the driveway  
similar to the crunch of the cool apple  
I bite into*

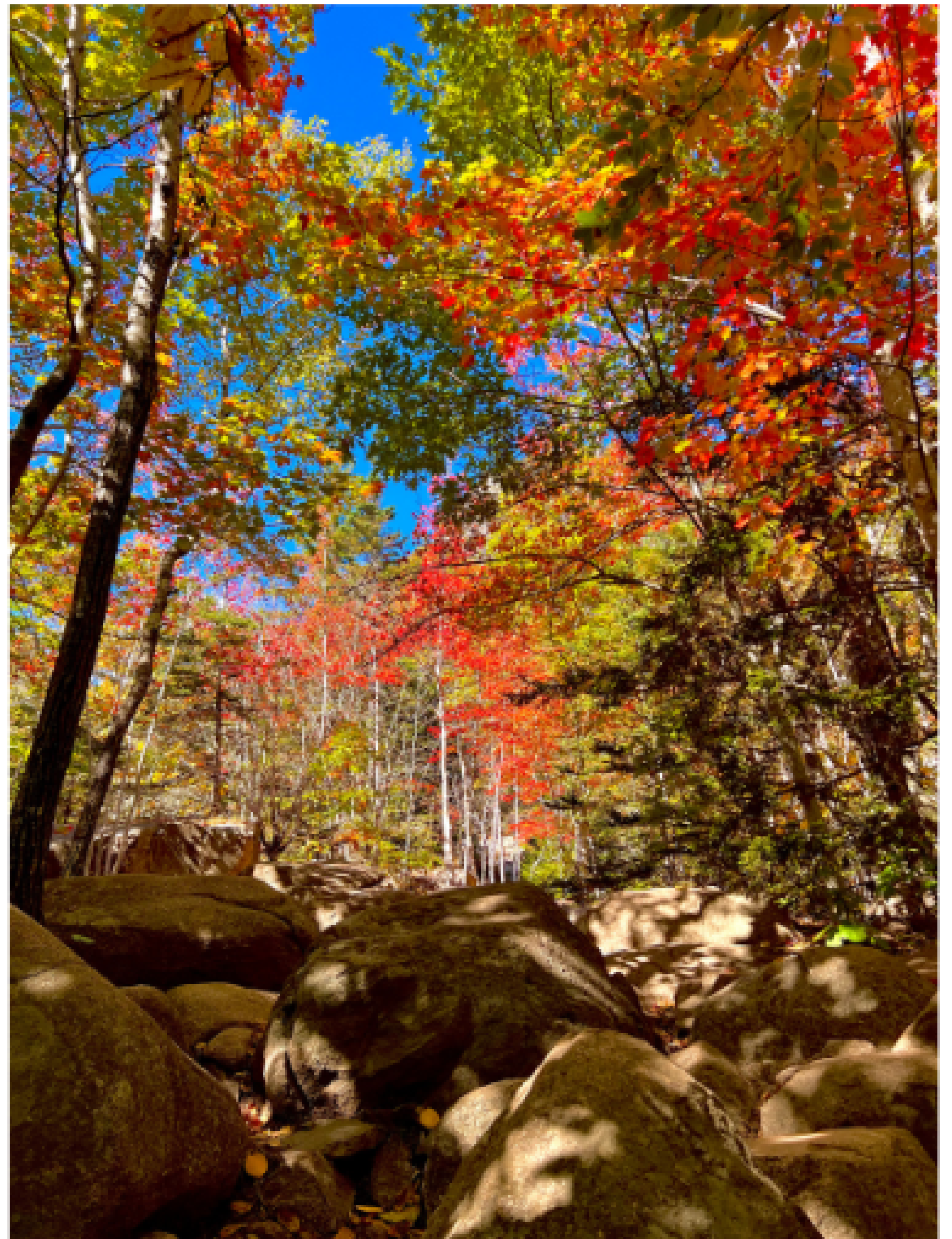
*And yet,  
for fear of my parent's door opening,  
I run swiftly back into my room,  
as those moments ran from me*

*I do not go to football games.  
I do not get my school lunches  
I am all grown up now  
I live in the tundra  
and in an apartment*

*And I still miss it all,  
every last moment.*



*Manas Sharma is a MS3 from Phoenix, AZ who is very interested in poetry and writing. He is very interested in psychiatry and the mental toll that medical school/medical education can take on the mind of the student doctors and hopes that point comes across in this poem. He began writing poetry in his junior year of high school as part of a school project and found it therapeutic to write and channel his energy through poetry and writing. He is a big fan of the Los Angeles Lakers and also writes freelance for The Lead, a news site covering the NBA in his free time*



*\*Photo by Laura Ramirez*



# Invisible Wounds and the Voices through the Phone: A Poem on Schizophrenia by Ashna Gupta



His mind is sick but his heart is good

Said the parents of the young man  
seated at my feet

Knees nuzzled under his chin

His eyes squeezed shut

His hands pressed firmly against his  
temples

As if he could expel the demons he feels  
lurking within, through sheer force of  
will

The pressure building in his skull

Distant voices screaming in his mind,  
all desperate to climb to the surface

His mind wanders in the darkness

Away from his loved ones who are eager  
to speak to their son

Imposters, he mutters

They aren't my parents; the taunting  
voices live on the other end of the  
phone

The evil ones are waiting for me to fall  
for their trap

They're going to kill me

They aren't who they say they are

He is also not who he says he is, the  
parents explain to me later

He is drowning in a sea of whispers, a  
battle he believes he must brave alone

His family is oceans away from him

And he keeps drifting further away from  
himself

Sinking further and further under the  
tides

Please heal his spirit and bring him  
back to us, they beg

But I fear he is far away from home

Both his mind, and his body

The words of support from the other  
end of the phone remain unanswered

The long cord dangling down the wall

The phone scraping the floor as it  
swings back and forth

Like nails on a chalkboard

The dial tone fills the hallway

He looks back up at me and frowns

How can he listen to the voices on the  
phone, when he cannot even hold onto  
his own voice?

I firmly press the phone into its place  
on the wall

He immediately relaxes his shoulders  
and removes his hands from his ears

The tension abandons his body

His face lights up as he stands and  
smiles at me

Thanks for getting rid of those voices  
on the phone, it's better now

I smile hesitantly back at him, but he  
turns to walk away before I can respond

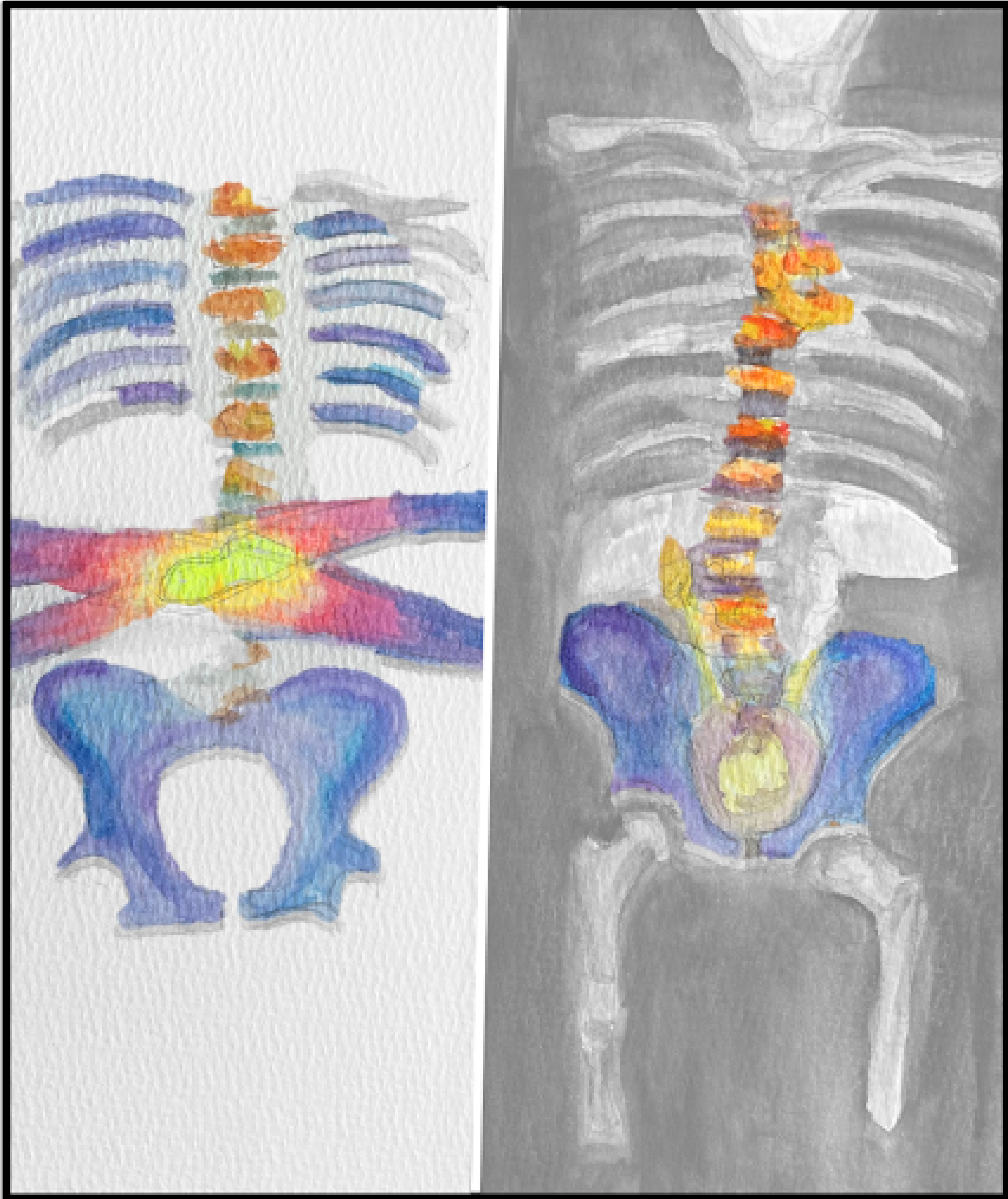
This is only the beginning of your story,  
my friend

Ashna from a small town in upstate NY  
called Massena, but Albany has been her  
home for the past 8 years. She is  
passionate about advocating for  
underserved communities, immigrant and  
refugee health, and LGBTQ+ inclusive  
care. In her free time, she enjoys singing  
karaoke and learning new styles of dance.  
She is excited to pursue a career in child  
and adolescent psychiatry, and her poem  
is inspired by a patient experience she  
had on the inpatient psychiatric unit.



# Contour and Contrast

by Rachel Eisenberg



Rachel is a fourth year medical student pursuing radiation oncology. Her art stems from inspiration of what she has seen throughout medical school, spanning wide media and formats. She has been enjoyed attending Humanities in Medicine events since its inception and had the pleasure of being on the executive board her second year.





## Micro-Organisms by Christian Kostowniak, PGY-2

As a long-time lover of science fiction, I had a burgeoning desire to create within those universes. Fortunately, miniature model kits exist for most settings of fiction and history that anyone could imagine. Started in Medical school, Painting said miniatures is a hobby I had long postponed for fear of ridicule for being “too nerdy”.

“How far can I go?” is the thought that proceeds every first brushstroke of properly thinned and paint over a newly built miniature. After over one hundred repeats, it is now meditative. Whenever I am working on a miniature, I have a vision of the completed product that strikes quickly and persists. The drive to use all the tools at my disposal to fulfil this vision overpowers any hesitancy I have of bringing my idea to life, and has improved my confidence in my capabilities with the paintbrush and in life. Each new model produces unique artistic obstacles that I must become increasingly creative to solve. Although arguably little more than an advanced coloring book, it has remained a tether to mindfulness that I am unwilling to release.

I have changed tremendously in the years since starting miniature painting. I can see the change reflected in my collection. The change in my painting skills is apparent, and the objective change in myself is woven into the memories of each project as it was completed. Residency has made me more callous, distant, and tired. It has also made me more confident, passionate, and curious.

Painting miniatures helps me mitigate the former and grow the latter.

I am eager to see what memories I paint into the future.





*Spring in Netherlands, Keukenhof Garden*





# *Sunrise, Madeira*

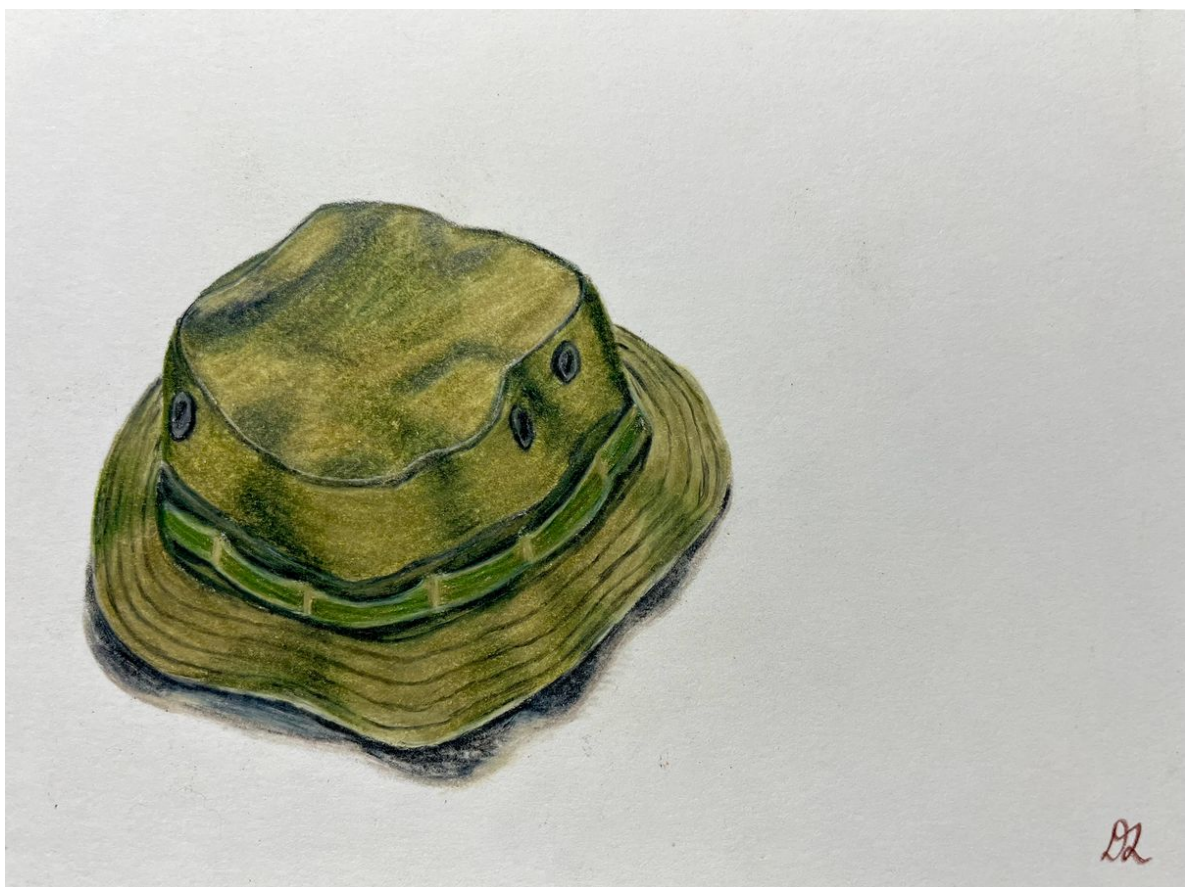
*Laura is an MS2 and an editor for Cell & Soul. She loves to travel and take photos in her spare time.*

# *Sunset, Venice 11*





Winter's Day



I rarely gave art much thought until, when struggling with burnout as a junior attending several years ago, I suddenly picked up watercolors. Since then, I have learned to use various media to express myself, including watercolor, colored pencils and pastels. I have no formal training, and most of my work is stored away in my basement, though I have sold one painting at an art show. I am delighted to be able to share my work with the Albany Med community.

The Empty Hat

**by Deborah Light, MD**





Our Grief is Not a Cry  
for War 2023

Below the SURFACE  
2024

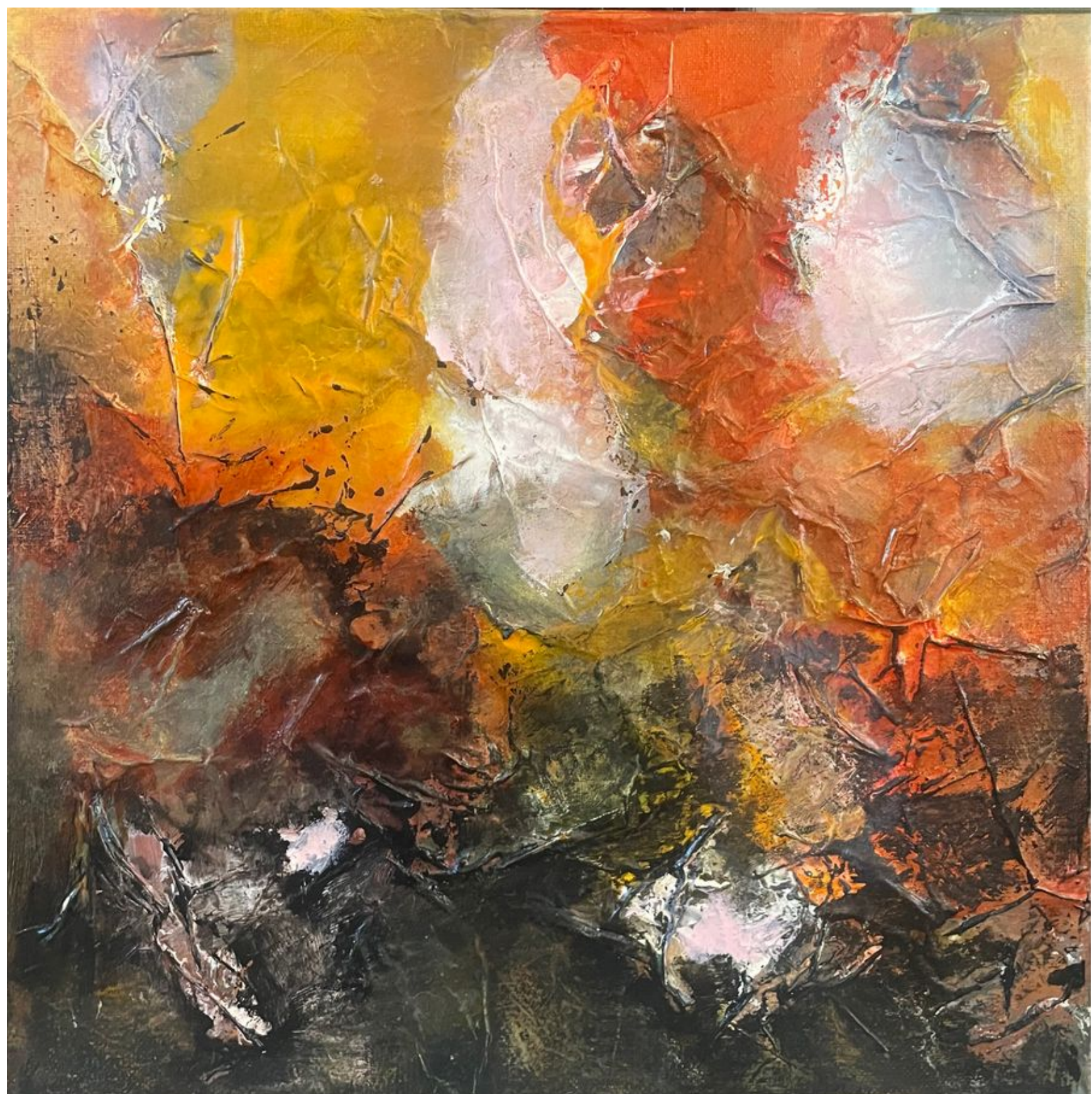
DENDRITE 2019

WISH 2024



**BY MEGAN  
GERBER, MD**

Megan Gerber is an academic general internist and Professor of Medicine at Albany Medical College. A painter since childhood, she has most recently studied with Paola Paige, MFA of Studios without Walls and Tufts/School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and at the Woodstock School of Art. Gerber is an abstract painter whose work focuses on “emotional landscapes” as well as mixed media collage, her visual work has been published in *Intima: A journal of Narrative Medicine*, *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, *Pulsevoices.org*, and *Closler.org*. Dr. Gerber is currently enrolled in the Columbia University Certificate of Professional Achievement Program in Narrative Medicine.







# A fun day at the lab! by **KAVYA NAIR**

I'm a graduate student at AMC, and I drew this picture of me and my fellow lab mates at the Barroso Lab. We research breast cancer and get to take cool images! I've been learning a lot about iron metabolism and cell death, and I really appreciate bouncing ideas and getting so many different perspectives about my work from my coworkers and classmates. I also deeply value all the silly moments we have together, which helps reboot my brain frying from all the intellectual talk. We're all pushing each other to be better, like how iron sharpens iron 😊 .



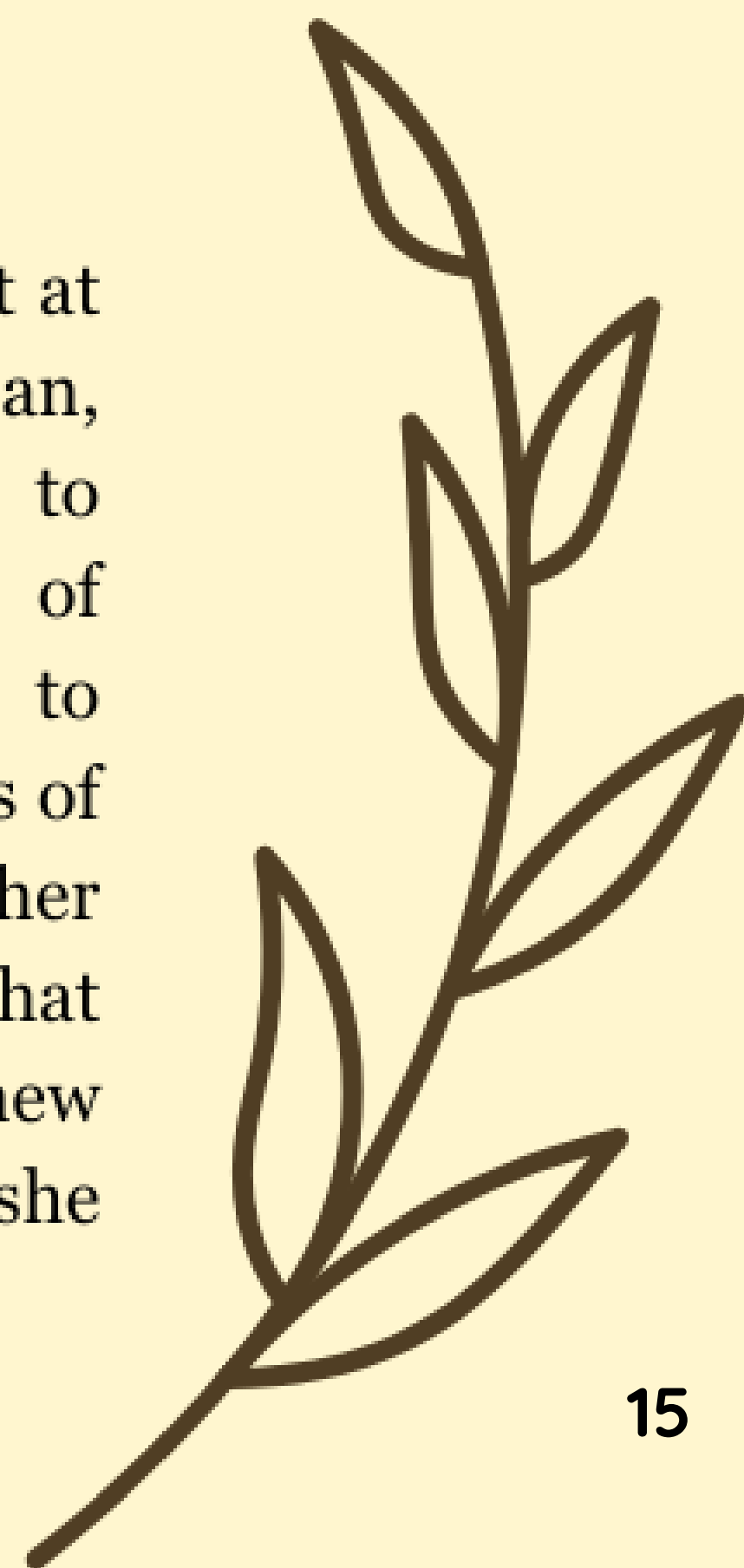
## **Illness narrative by Junyi (Julie) Liu**

My grandmother lived on a farm her entire life, a lifestyle that kept her constantly active and connected to the land. She was diagnosed with diabetes when she was young, but, like many of her generation, she did not pursue formal treatment. Managing the disease was a challenge, but she continued to work the farm, believing that her strength and willpower could keep her going.

When she was 75 years old, while picking vegetables in the field, she fell. At first, she thought it was just a bruise, but a few weeks later, an ulcer developed on her foot. As time passed, the ulcer worsened, growing larger and causing her significant pain, to the point where she could no longer walk. My father invited her to stay with us in the city, where we could ensure she received the medical care she needed.

Though the ulcer was eventually treated, the late intervention and her untreated diabetes had already caused further complications, leaving her weaker and in worse health than before. Five years later, after battling various comorbidities, she passed away on the farm, the place she had always called home.

Junyi (Julie) Liu is a second-year medical student at Albany Medical College. Originally from Wuhan, China, she moved to Maryland alone at age 14 to pursue her education. Her early journey of independence and self-discovery continue to influence her writings, which often explore themes of resilience and cultural identity. Outside of her studies, Julie enjoys hiking and skiing, activities that allow her to connect with nature and explore new facets of herself. Through her creative work, she hopes to bridge the gap between art and medicine.





# NO WALK IN THE PARK

*By Robert Chapman*

It was a challenging morning in inpatient psychiatry, mostly because of the way things were going with the patient at the end of the hall. When we entered her room during rounds, the elderly woman was loudly self-dialoguing. She had been admitted overnight following an incident with the police. From the moment she saw our team, she was combative and verbally aggressive. With rage-filled eyes, she delivered a profanity-laced beratement asserting that we couldn't do anything to help her. The food that the staff had brought her for breakfast was scattered all over the floor and the wall, having apparently been thrown forcefully across the room. Our questions were met with responses of "wouldn't you like to know", "none of your business", or worse. After a few minutes, we gave up. Her irate cries of accostment continued to echo through the halls as we walked away, a taunting reminder of our failure to connect.

A few hours later I begrudgingly took the long walk down the hall once more, this time holding a stack of discharge paperwork. We had determined that the patient didn't pose any immediate threat to herself or those around her. As long as she didn't want any treatment, there was no reason for her to remain in the hospital. As I approached her room, I again heard her talking to herself and laughing in a manner that was deeply unsettling. Anxious, I sheepishly knocked on her door, mentally preparing myself to endure further hostility. Initially, she wanted nothing to do with me. She hurled more insults in my direction in a disdainful attempt to cast me away. Her temperament shifted noticeably when I told her I wanted to help her leave. She reluctantly grew more cooperative. Together, we began working through a "safety plan," a series of personal questions designed to help patients formulate a plan to avoid or mitigate situations detrimental to their mental health after discharge. To my surprise, rather than simply going through the motions and providing bare-minimum responses, the patient slowly began to open up. I learned a lot in the moments that followed.

The patient had no living friends or family. After I discovered that the voices she heard were those of her deceased loved ones, I started to understand why she so adamantly refused treatment. When we reached the question concerning "triggers," she disclosed that years earlier she had been raped by a man in uniform. The story I'd heard about her altercation with two police officers just before her admission suddenly made a lot more sense. Her words were illuminating, and none more so than her answer to the last question, "what are the most important things to you that make life worth living?" After a brief period of silent reflection, the patient responded by weaving a narrative of her penchant for taking long walks in the park, sitting on a bench, and marveling at life in its various forms circulating around her. She reminisced on sitting there for hours watching birds landing in trees, people walking dogs, children playing games. "Life is important," she told me, citing the beauty of life itself as reason enough to soldier on. With that, out of a sea of shit and despair a smile fought its way to her face. How difficult it must have been for her to conjure that smile. And yet it was effortless, inevitable. A testament to the resilience of the human spirit. A portrait of sanguinity overcoming heartbreak.

The passion in the patient's voice was striking as she so eloquently articulated a *joie de vivre* that both shocked and elated me. Just a few hours earlier, I would've thought the uplifting, radiant sentiments that now filled the room to be impossible. Her energy was contagious, and I was lifted by her words. Her touching story led me to deviate from my frivolous efforts of emulating what I perceived to be the qualities of an experienced physician: calculated, even-keeled, unbothered. I'd been walking monotonously through the rut of my own daily struggles with my head down, and it was as if this patient had grabbed me and shaken me to snap me out of it. Freed of my apprehension, I allowed myself to engage in the emotion of the moment. I was no longer a spectator to the patient's emotional experience, but an active participant.



# NO WALK IN THE PARK

*by Robert Chapman*

My sorrow in her circumstances and my inspiration from her almost blissful resolve were unconcealed. I think she could read the impact of her words on my face. Seeing the emotion that her story invoked appeared to assuage the patient's sense of helplessness. She seemed reinvigorated by the sense that she'd made a meaningful, palpable impact on someone. Her eyes softened as her fury dissolved. In its place stood a connection seeded by mutual vulnerability.

A poignant story from a special patient forced me to confront my emotional detachment. In medicine, detachment is ubiquitous as a self-preserving coping mechanism. Drowning in the insecurities of my clinical training, I had romanticized the idea of detachment as I scrambled to adopt the demeanors of the people around me who appeared to have it all figured out. But how did my misguided efforts to appear stoic and professional shape my interactions? How many opportunities did I miss to form deeper connections with other patients who desperately needed them? I became determined not to allow emotional absence to undermine my relationships with patients moving forward. The patient at the end of the hall gracefully held a mirror to my foolish misconception of emotional investment as amateur. I'm grateful for the catalyst that sent me grappling with my own humanity, ultimately electing to embrace it rather than dismiss it as weakness.

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I'm a current MS4 and I started at AMC in 2021. I grew up locally in Niskayuna, and I graduated from Hamilton College in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in neuroscience. Prior to starting medical school, I spent one year working in Boston as a clinical research coordinator, and one year working locally as a scribe at OrthoNY.





## ***Cove along the Rota Vicentina, Portugal by Evan Adelstein, MD***

I am a cardiac electrophysiologist at Albany Medical Center with the University group. I have been in Albany for over 6 years, previously living and working in Pittsburgh, where I trained. I have been oil painting intermittently since college after taking an introductory painting class freshman year. I am self-taught otherwise and prefer landscape painting with the occasional cityscape, all from photographs I have taken during my travels. This painting is from a photograph I took while hiking along the Rota Vicentina in Portugal along the Atlantic coast.



## *Rose Lips by Zhi Wu, 2d Lt*

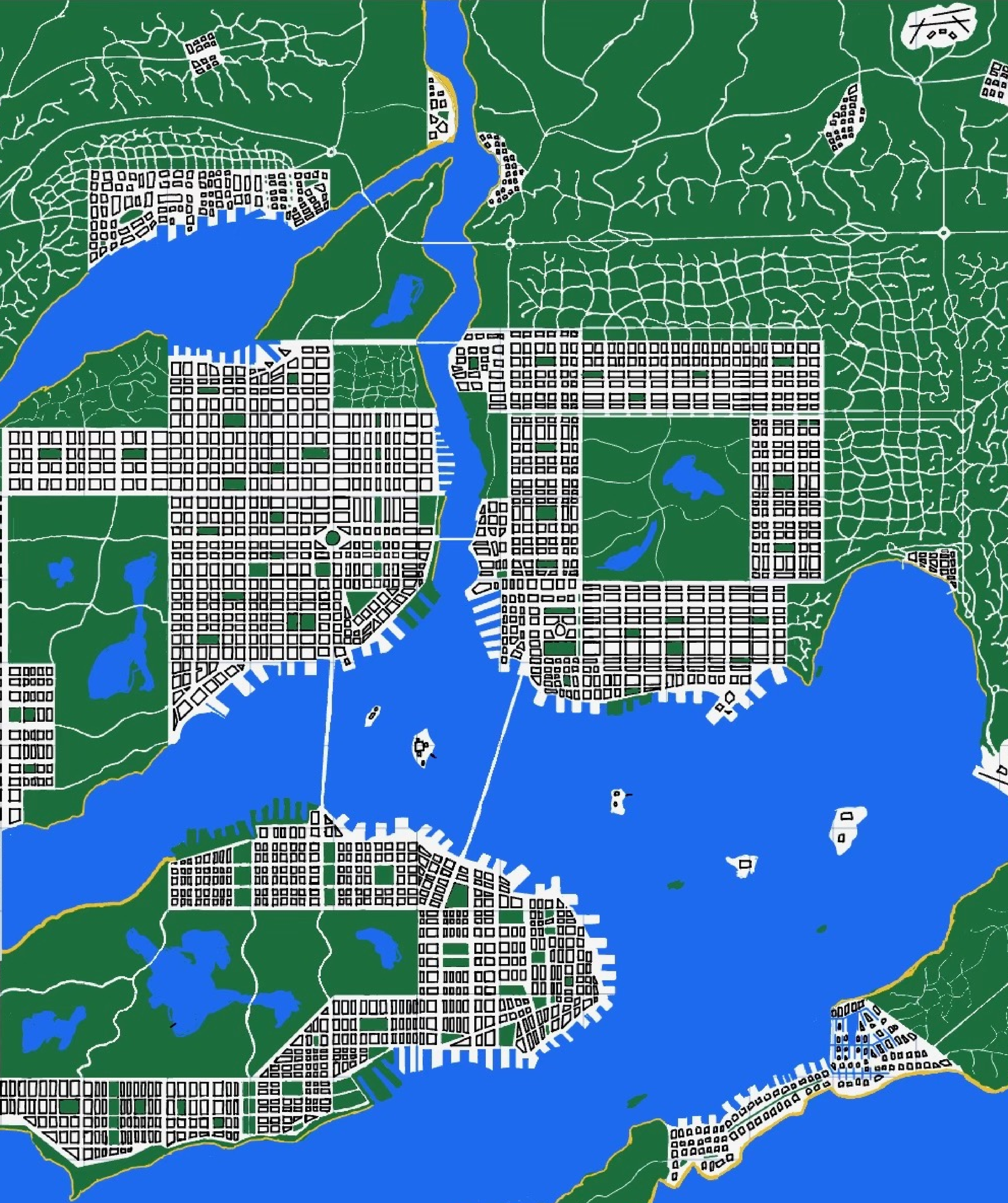
*We often recall the heat of summer.  
The passion and promise of youth together.  
We often forget the warmth of winter  
The solace we found under the cover  
At night, blossoms in the cold fully bloom.  
Not of tree nor flower,  
But that which reaches beyond the gloom.  
It takes me further from the uncouth.  
I lie in wait to see that smile again,  
Year to year after our story began.*



*I started writing at first to better my vocabulary and literacy as English is my third learned language. It later became a therapeutic outlet to articulate my thoughts more colorfully; a contrast to who I am, a person that tends to think systematically. I write this piece in remembrance that although days are soon to be shorter, time spent together with loved ones is still as sweet as before.*



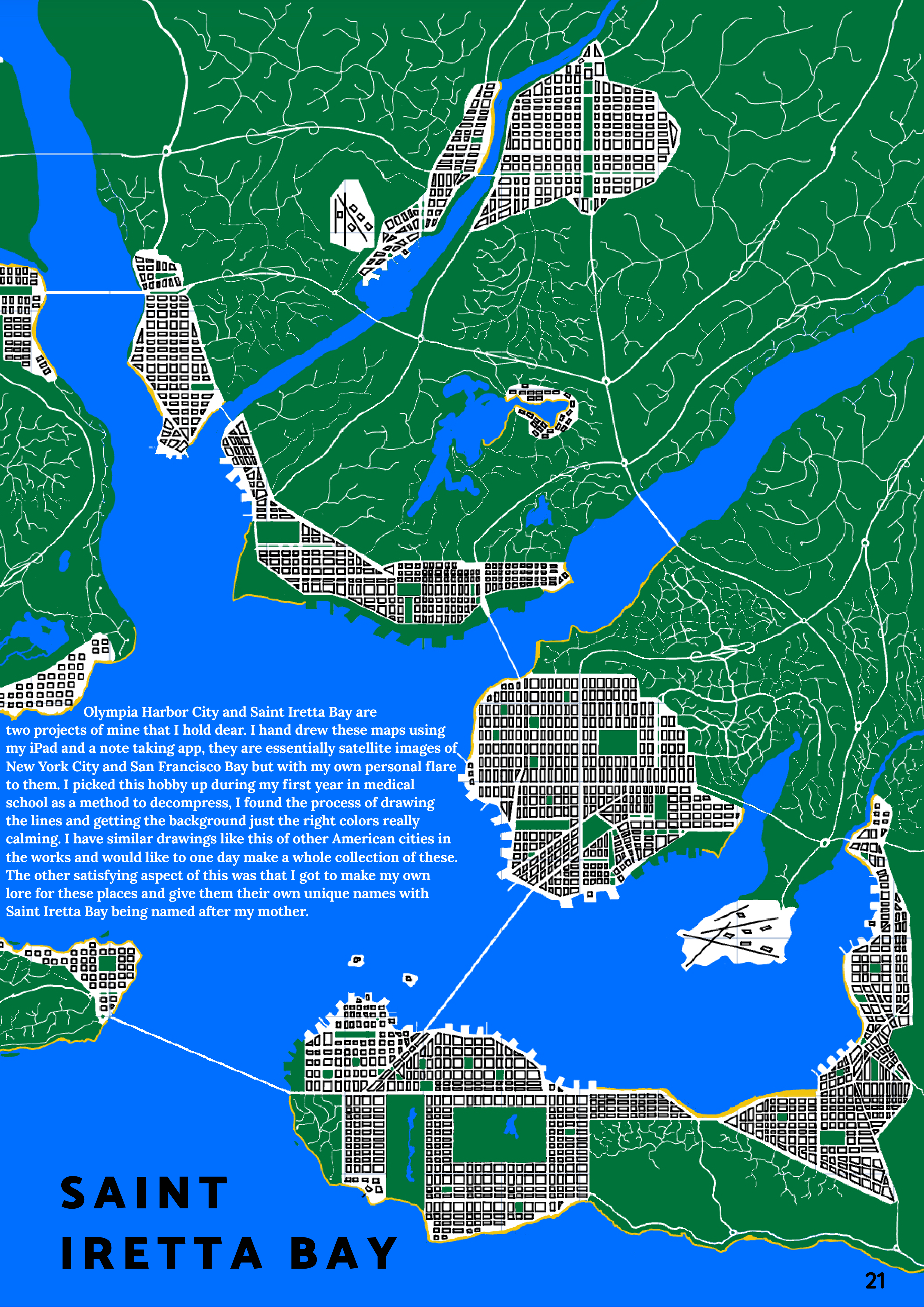




**BY MARVEN  
BERLUS**

**OLYMPIA  
HARBOR**

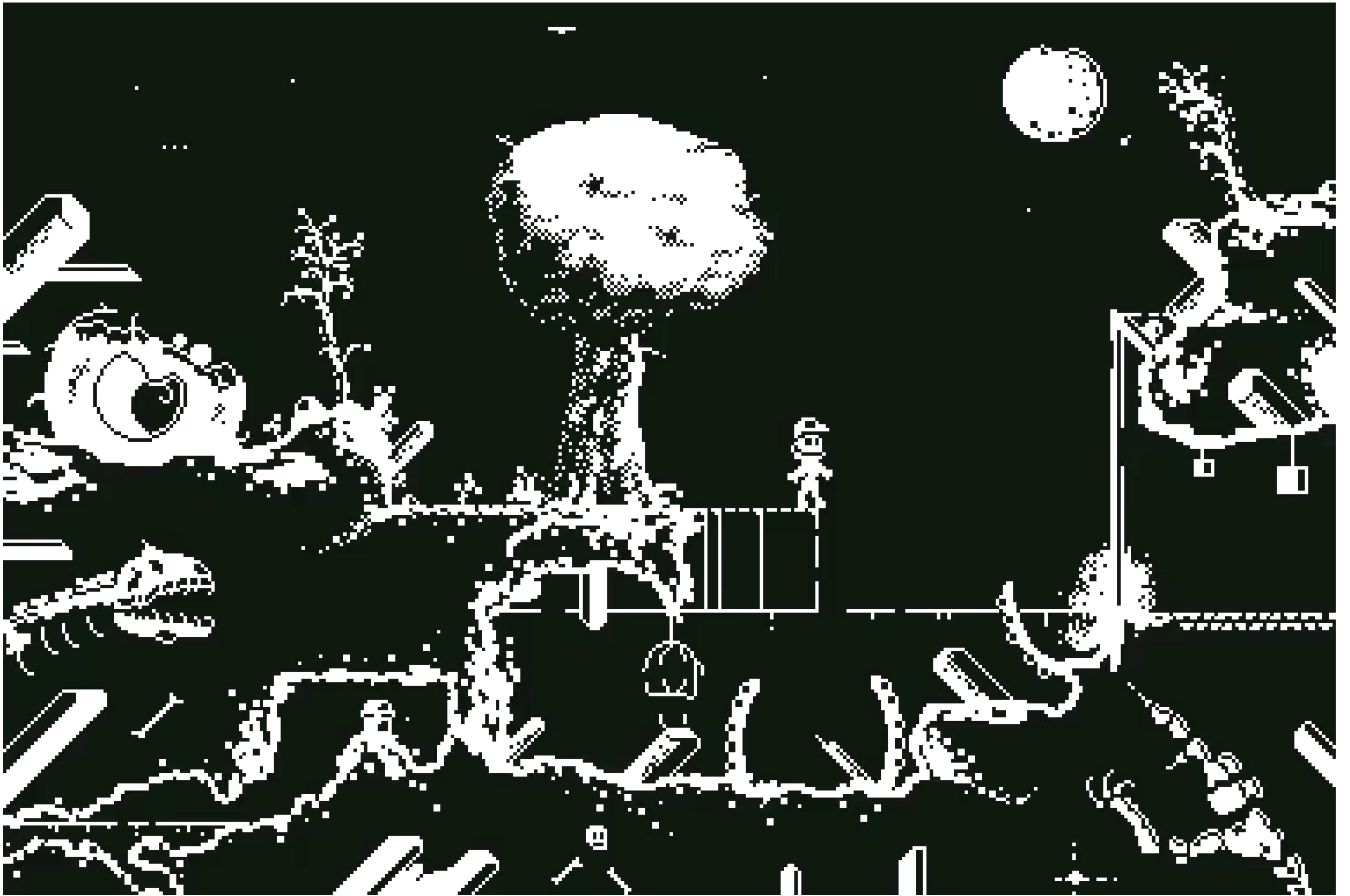




Olympia Harbor City and Saint Iretta Bay are two projects of mine that I hold dear. I hand drew these maps using my iPad and a note taking app, they are essentially satellite images of New York City and San Francisco Bay but with my own personal flare to them. I picked this hobby up during my first year in medical school as a method to decompress, I found the process of drawing the lines and getting the background just the right colors really calming. I have similar drawings like this of other American cities in the works and would like to one day make a whole collection of these. The other satisfying aspect of this was that I got to make my own lore for these places and give them their own unique names with Saint Iretta Bay being named after my mother.

# SAINT IRETTA BAY





## Starfall

I ripped my high school yearbook quote from the grandfather of all indie games: CaveStory. It says, "There remains a very delicate balance in this world... Between those who create and those who will experience the creations of others." I think the urge to create is common to everyone, however, it takes courage to act on the urge and share your work with the world.

On this page you'll find some of my pixel art. On the other side I left the opening paragraph to a novel I'm writing called Heartport. Heartport is about the wonder and dread of big cities, the sacrifices that dreams demand, and the struggle to define yourself after college. The story contains some mature language and themes so I'm still deciding how to adapt it for the magazine, but you may see more of it in future issues.



## Telekinetic





# HEARTPORT

"Beyond the ledge where they sat and under a thin sheet of haze lay a shifting and shimmering expanse of lights. Heartport's skyline pierced through as twisting spires of metal and glass; the towers loomed above their perch like the necks of unfathomable eldritch gods. Sue's head was light and her glass held only ice and the lipstick smeared remnants of a Tajín-salt rim."



# RUN INTERNS, RUN BY OMAR ALI

---

Run interns, run...  
It starts every year,  
In March when new faces appear,

Delighted and excited, as we're promptly invited,  
Arriving in July while having our Olympic flame ignited,

Following the footsteps of our predecessors,  
Carrying anxiety, worry, and many other stressors,

We stumble everywhere, all the time,  
Thinking our tiny mistakes are overly sublime,

Run interns, run,  
This is going to be so much fun,

Even ordering a Tylenol became an epic quest,  
As critical values rained upon us without rest,

Is it okay to order a few tabs?  
Or will the liver take too many jabs?

Then we receive a call to admit a new patient,  
Who apparently is a little bit too impatient,

Saying he's no longer happy with our care,  
And wants a refund for the bus fare,

We urge him to stay and tell us his code status,  
Yet he runs away with his IVF apparatus,

I am an internal medicine resident at AMC. I began writing back in high school. I usually write essays, short stories, and poems in both Arabic and English. Writing for me is a tool of self-expression, a way to connect with others through shared experiences, and sometimes just to bring smiles to others. My favorite authors are George Orwell, Dostoevsky, and khaled Hosseini.

Screaming in the distance that he was healed,  
And thus "admit to medicine" was sealed..

Run interns, run,  
It's always all or none,

However, a consult to cardiology is needed,  
As a patient's heart almost got stampeded,

We call with a shaky voice,  
As we have no other choice,

Run interns, run,  
Without you, nothing gets done,

Writing a million note per day,  
Keeping electrolytes at bay,

Obtaining lost records of ancient times,  
While calculating iron in rusty dimes,

Calling a patient family for their medications,  
To finally write it down via dictation,

Run interns, run,  
As this journey's just begun...





**Frankenstrat sample in Acrylic on canvas**

**Mini Hematology Lab**

**Fresh flowers consisting of lilies, roses, carnations, daisies, sunflowers and assorted greens.**

*by Dawn Carolus*

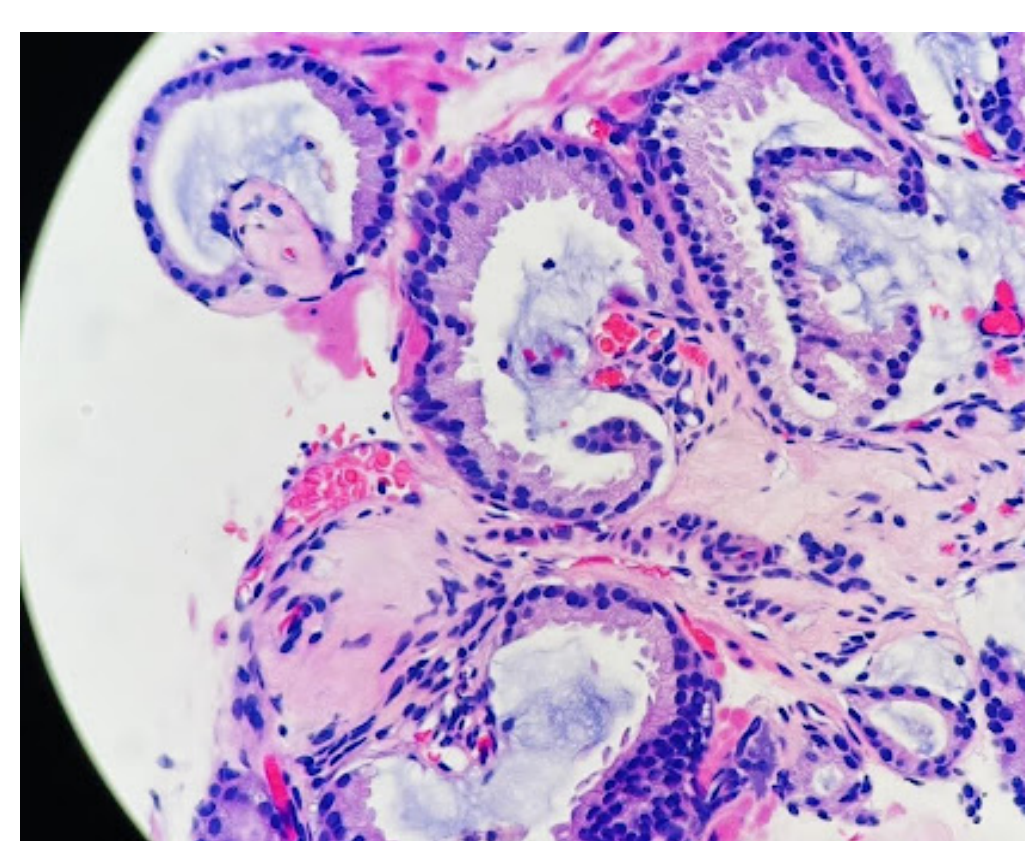
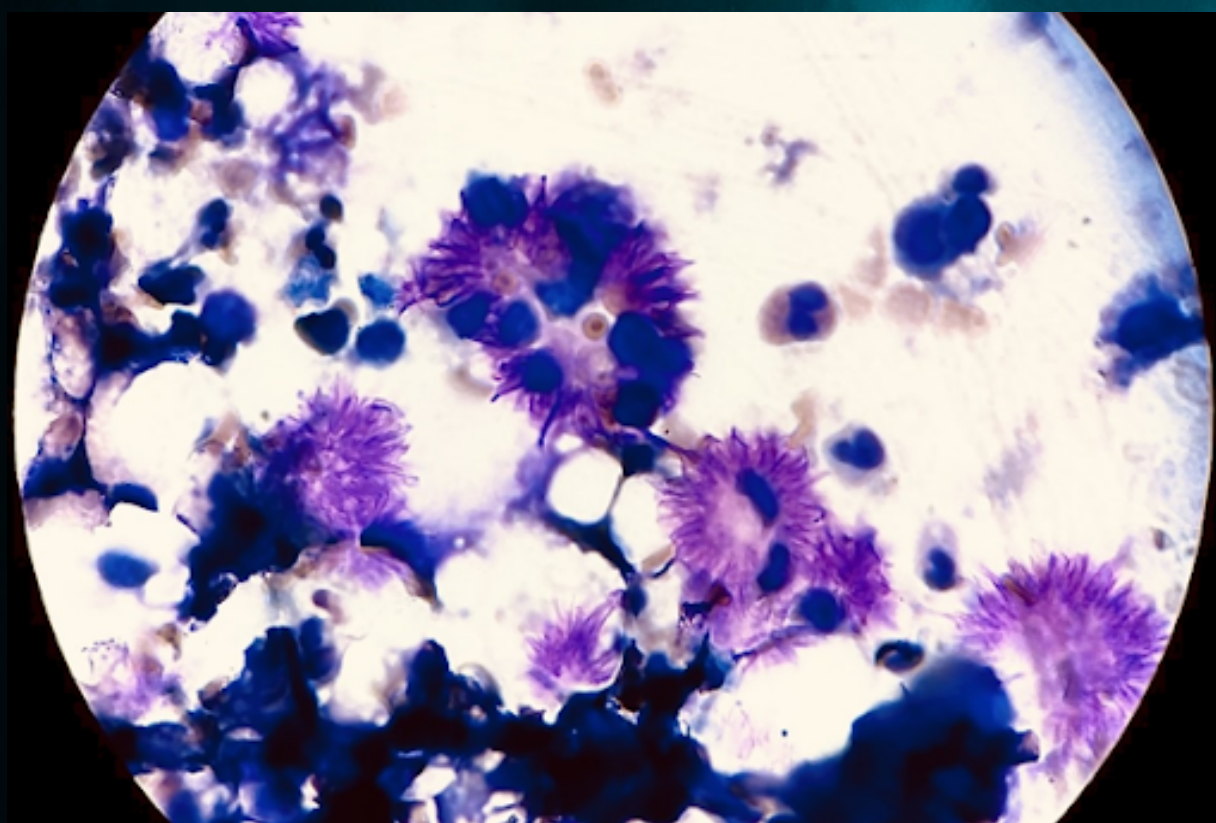
*I am a licensed Clinical Laboratory Technologist, 35 year employee of Albany Medical Center. I use art as a stress reliever and a way to express myself. I can lose myself for hours and lose track of time doing a project.*





# Palisading Petals by Ridwan Khan

My name is Ridwan Khan, and I am a 4th year medical student at Albany Medical College. I was born and raised in New Jersey as a first-generation immigrant in an Asian American household, which nurtured my artistic tendencies early on. I was attracted to photography at a young age, encouraged to explore by my technology-savvy father and my mother who was raised in the cultural capital of her home nation. Capturing a moment through the lens has been both a means of creative expression as well as purposeful healing. As an aspiring pathologist, I present to you a mélange of floral and histologic photos that hopefully bring a moment of calm amidst the bustle of being part of healthcare.





## MEET YOUR EDITORS!

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Hey there! My name is Alex Foyt, and I am a second year medical student at AMC. I love to write, spend time outdoors, and yes, collect snails. They're giant sulawesi rabbit snails and they're actually really cool! Anyways, I was blown away by the many amazing creations folks submitted, and I'm incredibly excited to release this magazine. It's a celebration of our little community here at AMC and I look forward to working on future issues.

Hi, my name is Laura Ramirez, and I am a second year student at Albany Medical College. I love travel, photography, design and media arts, and skiing. I was really amazed by the quality and variety of talent here at AMC, and I look forward to working on this magazine into the future. I can't wait to see what it becomes!







*Rigid and Passing as the  
Passing of the Clouds*

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*by Tarick Ahmad*