

HEAL

Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature



REGALO
Ashley Kreher, MD
Class of 2019

Summer

•

2020



COVID EDITION

This issue includes work focused on and inspired by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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HEAL is a place for medical students to share their growth and development, for faculty and staff to impart their knowledge gained from experience, and for members of the community to express how health and healing have impacted their lives.

We hope this work increases your appreciation for the art of medicine.

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Am I Essential?

Matt Casarico, Class of 2021

Am I essential?

A med student waiting for change,
inundated with facts and figures.

Am I just in the way?

Missed the boat,

I'm a few years too late—

to sit and wonder what will happen,
is that my fate?

I hear tales of the frontlines—a soldier's march,
recycled bullets for an unknown foe.

The cause is dire, the threat is large.

When will be my turn to go?

And if I go, and my breath leaves me,
will I be a hero for the daytime TV?

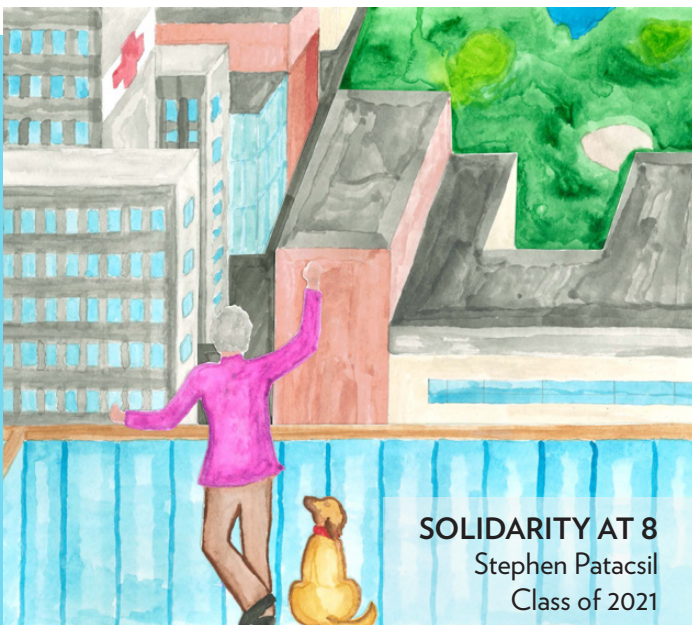
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Am I essential?

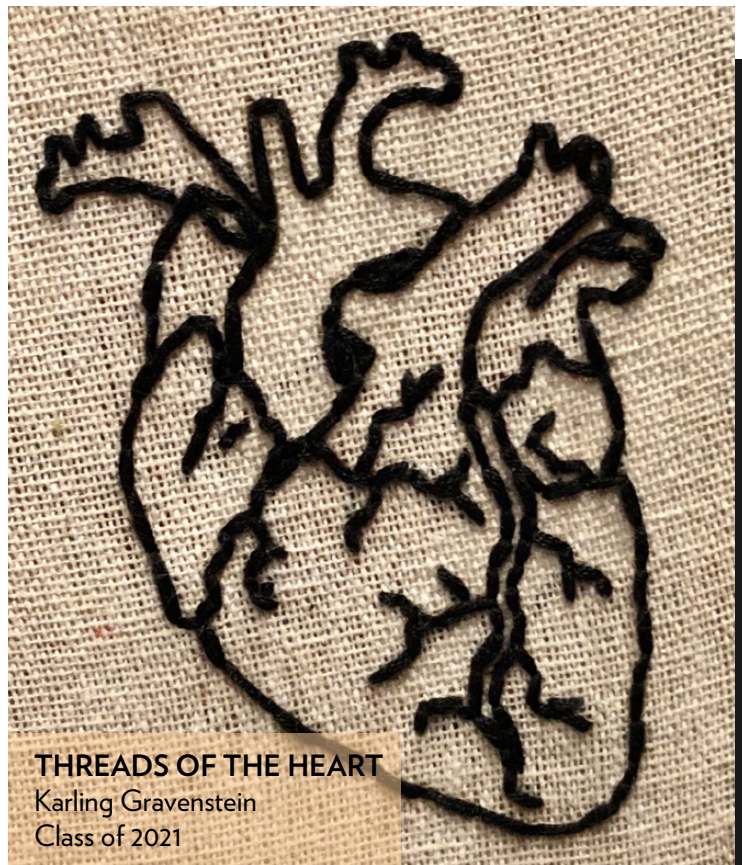
Cleaning aisles and carts,
stocking meats on shelves—
the comfort my work imparts
to a beast that hordes
and squirrels away.

Fortifying for an endless winter.

Will I be okay?



SOLIDARITY AT 8
Stephen Patacsil
Class of 2021



THREADS OF THE HEART

Karling Gravenstein
Class of 2021

It touches everything once, thrice over.

I sanitize all that I see.

An itch in my throat, will I be covered?

I can't afford a trip to the ED.

I gasp for air; a sea of masks and shifting eyes.

Am I essential? Is it just a lie?

•

I am essential.

The first and last defense.

Ordained with gown and mask,

I move with great intent.

Her sats are dropping! We need to act!

I fumble for my blade.

I drop a tube, a two-way tract,
so her lungs may oxygenate.

But as I think about what happened,
evil horrors fill my brain.

I wore the same mask yesterday.

Tomorrow, the same again.

Was I exposed? Was it worth it? Will this virus end my life?

Am I even essential, or just a sacrifice?

Beautiful Last Breath

Jessica Gonzalez, Class of 2021

"I should have stayed in New York; I should have never moved to Florida. I had a home there. I grew up there. The trees change colors. There are hills, nothing like this flat waste. I could have gotten a beautiful last breath."

That was the last day I saw Mr. Lambini. He was in a terminal condition. His lungs were giving out on him. He presented to the hospital from an assisted living facility with a COPD exacerbation complicated by pneumonia; he developed cor pulmonale. He had been in and out of the hospital for the last few months.

The first time I saw him was the first day of my internal medicine clerkship. He was not one of the patients assigned to me. My attending took me into his room after we rounded on my patients. Without any background information on him, I entered. He is one of those people who have a sarcastic, dark humor. He denied pain, SOB, etc; he had no complaints besides the terrible food and the miserly portions they give. Based on his demeanor, my clinical suspicion that he had a terminal illness was low. Then, my attending asked me to perform a lung exam. Breath sounds were decreased bilaterally and prominent crackles could be auscultated throughout his lungs; they were the worst lungs I had ever heard. Yet, he had no complaints.

The days following, I went to visit him every single day. I remarked that he always made me laugh which made him snicker. Throughout his hospitalization, no one else came to visit him. I sat down with him on his last day and he reminisced with me, sharing his travels and regrets. He had accepted his condition. I witnessed the subtle pain in his demeanor; I saw the last glances of a dying man. I empathized with him. I felt a quiet restlessness, a fear. I thought, "How anticlimactic to die slowly and alone after a life full of adventure. For it to all to end sitting in a hospital bed with a window that overlooks a parking garage."

During his hospitalization, the news kept playing the development of a novel respiratory virus. COVID-19 was causing mass casualties in Italy where Mr. Lambini's

grandparents where from and it was overtaking New York, his home state. This was not my first time interacting with a dying patient or being unable to do more for one. Each one hits you differently; it does not get easier, your thoughts just start to drift in other directions, like providing them comfort in their last moments versus dwelling on the disillusionment of impotence. How many more like him will we see succumb with this virus roaming around? The prediction is 200,000 people will die. How can we as healthcare workers overcome this? Despite having chosen this career to save lives, it is essential to realize that sometimes it is best to simply do no harm. *Primum, non nocere*. Eventually, you accept the painful defeat of helplessness. And you begin to see life in a different way, giving more value to the vivid colorful moments. Because you have seen the monotonous endings of grays.



PEACE AMIDST THE CHAOS

Shellon Baugh
Class of 2023

A MEDICAL STUDENT'S THOUGHTS IN A DAY OF THE PANDEMIC

Sonia Koul, Class of 2021

9:00 AM

New day. Maybe today I will be productive. Ok, let's make a schedule and stick to it. But first, let me check my emails. Oh, good, Zoom meeting today. Guess we'll finally find out if we get to continue our core curriculum.

10:00 AM

Shoot! I'm still in bed scrolling through Facebook. I'm so proud of my friends on the frontline. I wish I could be out there helping. I feel so useless. What? Protests against the quarantine? What are people yelling at these nurses? How can they? I feel undervalued. Unappreciated. Is this what the country really feels towards those who continue to sacrifice their lives every day? What's the point of studying right now?

11:00 AM

Alright, I'm up. I'm sitting at my desk. I typed in OnlineMedEd. I will get some studying done today. Step 2 is around the corner. First, let me refresh my emails. Oh no. Update? All Prometric sites are canceled throughout May? I need a new date. Will I even find any? I'm exhausted already.

12:00 PM

It's Noon?! I guess I'll eat lunch. Let me scroll through Facebook. More protests? Governments are trying to open back up? It's not time! Things are only going to get worse this winter? Will I even graduate on time? Can I take CS on time? Will I get refunded on any of my externship applications?

1:00 PM

Attempt number two. I'll watch an OME video even if it's the last thing I do. Ok, two down, two more to go. Why won't my phone stop buzzing? Wait, they AREN'T canceling USMLE tests at Prometric? But I already changed my date! Why didn't they say this earlier?

3:00 PM

It's been two hours? I've been on my phone updating family and peers. Today was supposed to be productive. What am I doing? I'm going outside for a run.

5:00 PM

I have no motivation to learn. Every time I build myself back up again I get a notification in the news and I have to start at square one. Maybe I should just disconnect from social media. It's getting really hard to stay positive...

6:00 PM

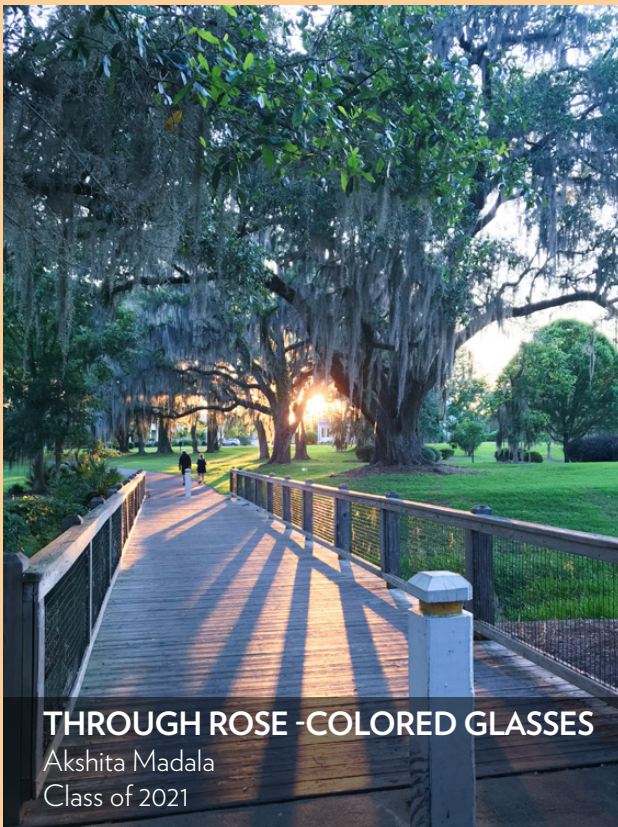
It's never too late to start studying again. Attempt number three! Third time's a charm. Let's just start with something simple. Anki. Do that for an hour then I can tackle UWorld.

7:00 PM

It's 7 PM already? Where has the day gone? I've done 100 Anki cards. That's all I've really accomplished today. I'm ashamed. My friends and family are out there working hard and I can't even be productive for more than an hour.

9:00 PM

Well 9 is close to 10. And that's a reasonable hour to go to bed. I guess I'll try again tomorrow. But that's what I said yesterday. I guess all I can do is try...



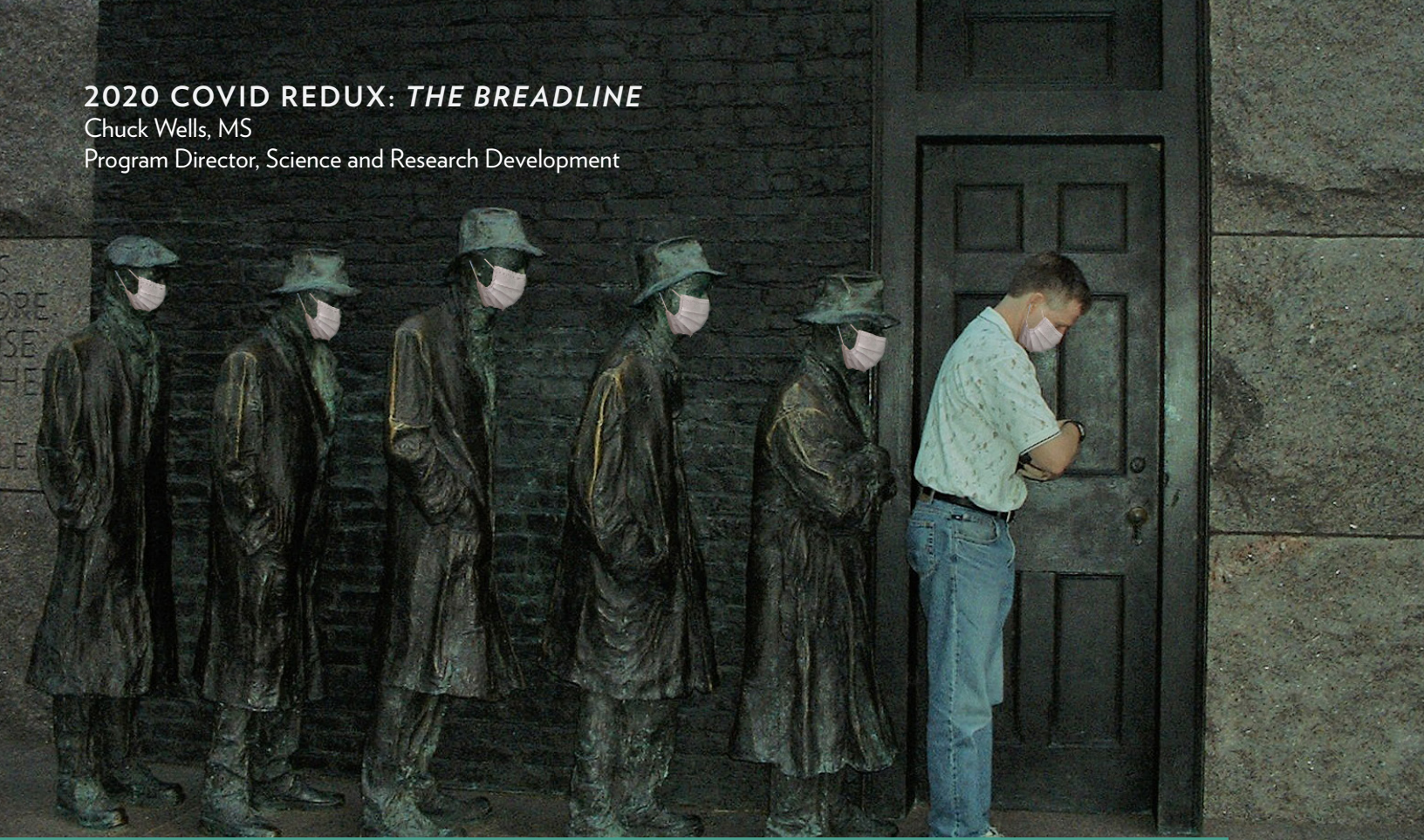
THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

Akshita Madala
Class of 2021

2020 COVID REDUX: *THE BREADLINE*

Chuck Wells, MS

Program Director, Science and Research Development



INJUSTICE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Nathaniel Huhta, Class of 2023

*Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible
— even if you're choking on it — until you let the sun in.*

—**Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**

Eyes forward, an inescapable future
dances on the horizon, shaking loose the dust
plastered across the unseen ties that connect us—
but we don't know that yet.

How long have we been this way? Seconds? Years?
I can't remember.

A thin veil develops over my face.

Without consent, my eyes slam shut.

Lurched into darkness.
Paralyzed, but processing, planning
for something, anything to happen.
My eyes dart around my inky field of vision.
How long will I see this way? Seconds? Years?
I can't know.

Empathetic neighbors reach out and claw the covering
from my face.

With joy, my eyes creep open.

Dust thrown in mid-air
drifts down toward shaken earth,
surroundings unknown to me buried
ten thousand leagues deep.
How long can we survive this way? Seconds? Years?
I can't foresee
but

I know I have never seen so clearly.

Star Children: A Sonnet for the Pandemic

Samantha Buckley, MA
Program Specialist, Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences

In musty leaves the setting sun takes hold,
And brings to life the spring we keep at bay;
When fortune's wrong to ply a sea of gold
And respite ceases with the break of day.

We keep to houses filled with fear and spite,
And do not see the season's hue of green:
All brilliance in the turning of the light,
That comes of what has lived, and always been.

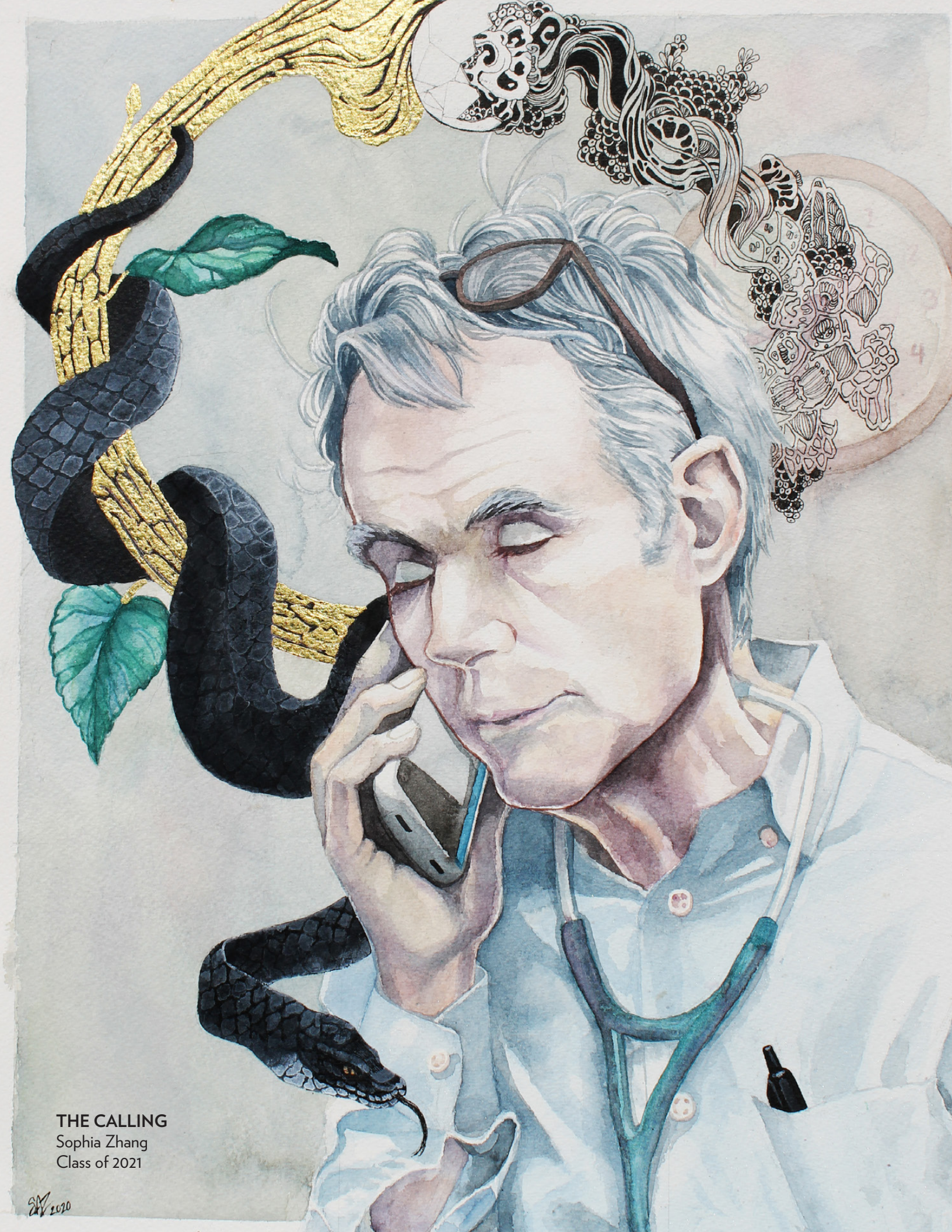
The sun burns ever, turning in its sphere,
Though time will bring its end beyond our life;
And what we see as dark and lonely here
Is as nothing before the cosmic strife:

For lo, we are as children to the stars
And knowing time's grandeur, we spring our bars.



CROCHETING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Tyra Brune
Class of 2021



THE CALLING
Sophia Zhang
Class of 2021

SV 2020

CONTAGION

Michelle Nguyen, Class of 2021

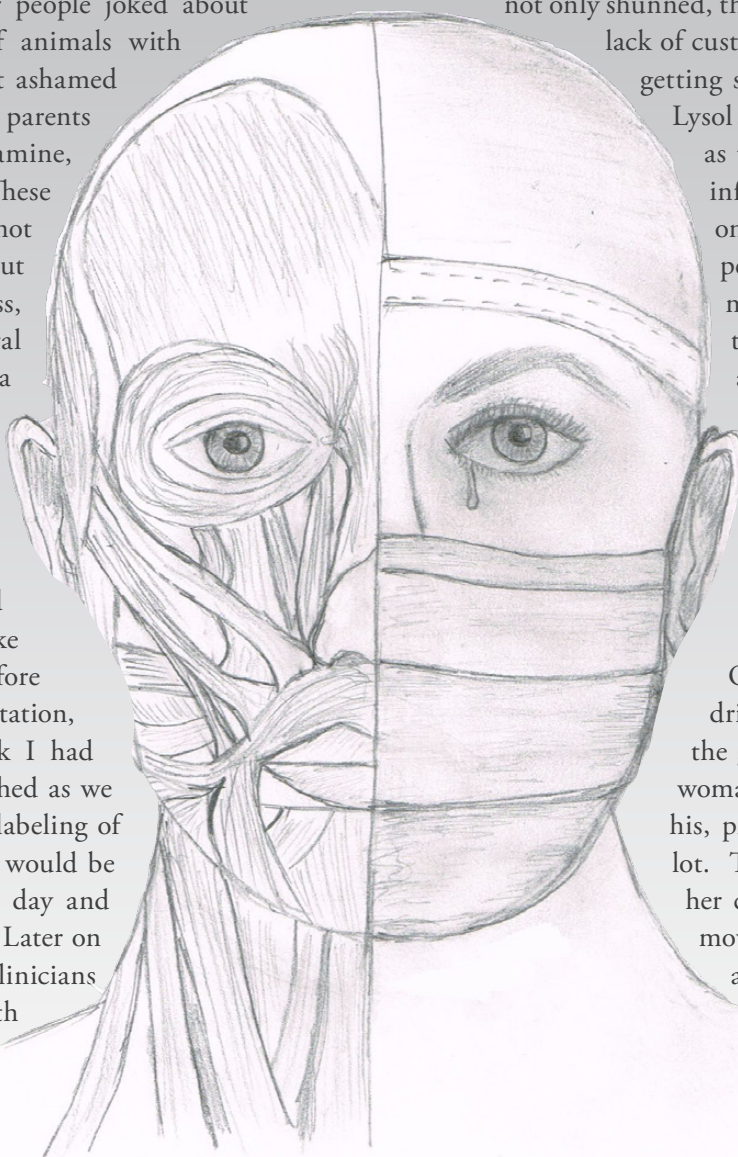
My parents immigrated to the United States to seek political asylum after the Vietnam War. My brother and I were born and raised in San Jose, California. Growing up Vietnamese-American, I felt displaced from either world. I never spoke Vietnamese outside of my home, embarrassed that I did not know as much as my Vietnamese friends or that I would not blend in with my American friends. I tried to laugh as my friends slanted their eyes in pictures to make funny faces. I shrugged it off whenever people joked about Asians eating a myriad of animals with disgust in their voice. I felt ashamed and conflicted knowing my parents grew up in times of war and famine, going days without eating. These “strange” cuisines were not only a part of survival, but also a way of life. Nonetheless, I grew resentful of my cultural background as it served as a constant reminder that I could never be American enough.

At the beginning of the pandemic, my mother would joke about how I should take my allergy medication before going into my clinical rotation, fearing people would think I had the “China virus.” We laughed as we mocked President Trump’s labeling of the virus, thinking nobody would be ignorant enough in today’s day and age to actually believe him. Later on that week, I overheard the clinicians and patients I worked with using the same term to discuss their

suspensions of bioterrorism, saying that they would rather die from the virus than receive a vaccine made from China. With each week that passed, I found myself having to suppress those feelings of shame by association more often. One of my best friends posted a meme, insinuating that it would have been better to shoot and kill the first Asian person to eat a bat to prevent the pandemic. I’ve seen several videos circulating online where Asian American communities were not only shunned, their businesses suffering from the

lack of customers, but also where they were getting sprayed down by strangers with Lysol and yelled at to get off the subway as though they were the vectors of infection. They were getting spit on, coughed on and assaulted as people questioned why they wore masks and chastised them when they did not. In some places around the world, restaurants started to post signs refusing to serve Chinese customers. Still, it hadn’t sunk in. These incidents, while awful, happened to someone else somewhere else.

On March 31st, my brother was driving out of the parking lot of the grocery store when a Caucasian woman raced her car out in front of his, preventing him from exiting the lot. Then she aggressively reversed her car. Fortunately, he was able to move his car in time to prevent an accident. The woman got out of her car and began yelling expletives



WHAT LIES BENEATH

Anmol Patel
Class of 2021

and racial slurs. To avoid further conflict, he tried to drive through another exit in the parking lot; she raced to block him off at every point. After several attempts, he was finally able to leave. She pursued him, switching lanes aggressively to catch up with him, narrowly escaping collision with nearby vehicles. He spent the next hour driving around town until he was finally able to lose her and come back home safely. It was his 28th birthday that day. I finally realized that we had much more to fear than just the virus; we had to be wary about the people in the community, what they thought of us, and what they were capable of doing.

The very next day the *Huffington Post* published a story about an Asian-American family getting stabbed while shopping at Sam's Club. The suspect admitted to police that "he stabbed the family because he thought the family was Chinese, and infecting people with the coronavirus." Federal law enforcement officials began warning of the surge in hate crimes against Asian American communities as more than 1,000 incidents were reported within the first two weeks of April.

"We were forced to confront the fact that our appearances could put us in a dangerous situation."

With the escalation of attacks on the Asian-American community, my family and I found ourselves asking questions that never even crossed our minds before. We were forced to confront the fact that our appearances could put us in a dangerous situation. Should we wear sunglasses to obscure our features further? Is it safer to go to Asian supermarkets than mainstream grocery stores, or will these become easier targets to attack? Is a mask worth wearing if it instigates people by giving them the impression that we are infected?

In the war against a virus that does not discriminate, we find ourselves fighting another war against the people who do. Unlike us, the virus is fortunate that it cannot be seen by the naked eye. It is the ultimate stealthy assassin, one that can infect and kill entire communities without consequence

or blame. Like petulant toddlers in a game of hide and seek, society cannot accept that its ultimate enemy is invisible; it wants a face, a body, and a name to blame.

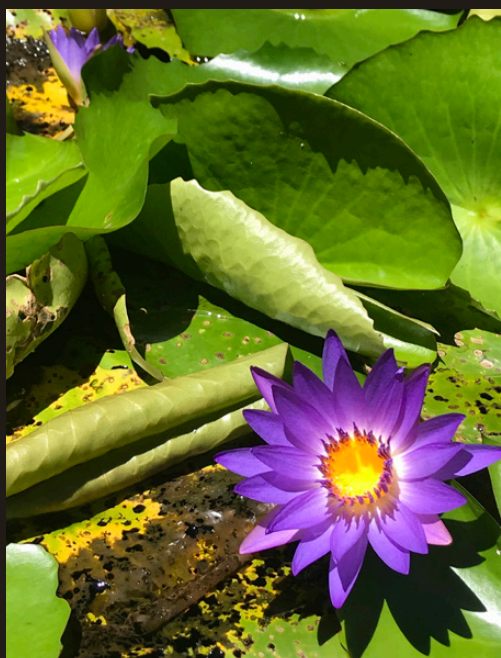
With the immense amount of fear in the present and no clear endpoint for the future, stereotypes give people an answer, no matter how inaccurate or damaging. They give them a sense of control in a time of chaos and uncertainty that is further emboldened by a the mob mentality. The stereotype of "yellow peril" has always existed, but it is now bolstered through language and propaganda as our political leaders proudly tout the term "China virus" and the media constantly depicts China as the source of the world's problems. As the boundaries of fact and fiction are blurred through misinformation that normalizes these stereotypes, our sense of humanity and compassion for each other degrades. The coronavirus is no longer the story of an epidemic from zoonotic infection. It is a story of infection that, in its most benign form, is inherent to the inferiority of Asian culture reflected by the consumption of strange, dirty cuisines or, in the most malignant form, is proof of bioterrorism. As a result, Asian Americans are not only forced to protect ourselves against the virus, but also the xenophobic tendencies that have infected the people we used to know. We are punished by society for things we have no control over and compelled to apologize for their baseless assumptions about us as people. We are no longer perceived as equal human beings, much less Americans, but rather as foreigners in our own country where being foreign elicits fear, malice, and disgust. By virtue of our existence, we are the contagion.

Author's note: Being Asian American has given me certain privileges that other minority groups do not have. While my family and I have had our own experiences with discrimination, this pales in comparison to the systemic racism endured by the Black community. I am fortunate that I can run in my neighborhood without fear of getting lynched. I have never been afraid of a traffic stop potentially ending my life. Up until recent events, nobody has ever treated me like I was a threat to their safety. Unfortunately, this is a reality for many Americans and has been for generations. Although I wrote this piece as a way to share some of my experience with racism from the Asian-American perspective, I do not want it to detract from the main message:

Black Lives Matter.



UNFOLDING
Paula Kreutzer
Class of 2021



HIDDEN LILY
Paula Kreutzer
Class of 2021

Calm

By Kevin Reyes, Class of 2021

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have suffered and questioned when things will go back to normal. I composed this song to remind everyone to stay calm and keep moving forward.

Click [here](#) to listen!

Things We Lost This Winter

Alexandra “Xan” C.H. Nowakowski, PhD, MPH

Department of Geriatrics / Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine

People say grief
comes in stages, as if loss
were an eternal childhood
of peeling oranges.
My hands became practiced
with the delicate laces
of surgical masks, the slick
foam of disinfectant,
the tacky perimeters
of nitrile gloves.

Cystic fibrosis means
always being prepared
for implausible scenarios—
and fear looming like long swabs
inside the throat.

My wife does better
at ignoring apprehension, finds
eternal whimsy
in little motor tasks.
She fiddles with her headphones—
a long-ago gift from my mother,
who I suppose these days
is hers as well.
She spreads their moving pieces out
onto our coffee table,
delighting at their flatness.

Author's note: This poem describes the loss of opportunity for social contact outside the home as COVID-19 began to spread in Florida—something that has caused grief for many in our community. For people with a history of trauma, like so many we serve at FSU COM, this grief has many layers. Trauma can also come from many sources, including both abusive home environments and chronic health conditions. I explore my own relationship to the grief of a narrowed social world through the lens of past losses my wife and I have coped with in healing from our respective experiences of abuse and chronicity.

Look what I did, she says
beaming brightly
at the smile cracking my path
to the center of myself.
These little moments
are everything to us now.

Not hiding so much
as biding time inside a home
where fear gets left
upon the stoop.
Trauma peaks, declines
and then returns to do its worst.
Our deepest wounds
left scars we could not touch.

My Drive Home

Collin Tully, MD, Class of 2013

I am a general surgeon
By no means is my life routine
But I still have them

On my drive home I call my wife
I call a fellow surgeon and talk about the day
I call my mom

I tell my wife I'm on the way and she starts dinner
I talk about cases of the day and ones to come up,
talk about plans/options
I have to tell my mom I still love my job and my life,
mothers always worry

There is a global pandemic
There has been a change in our conversations

I call my wife and tell her I'm on my way
to get fitted for a reusable N95 mask with changeable
filters,
she has Lysol ready for my shoes at home,
my dedicated room has a child lock on it

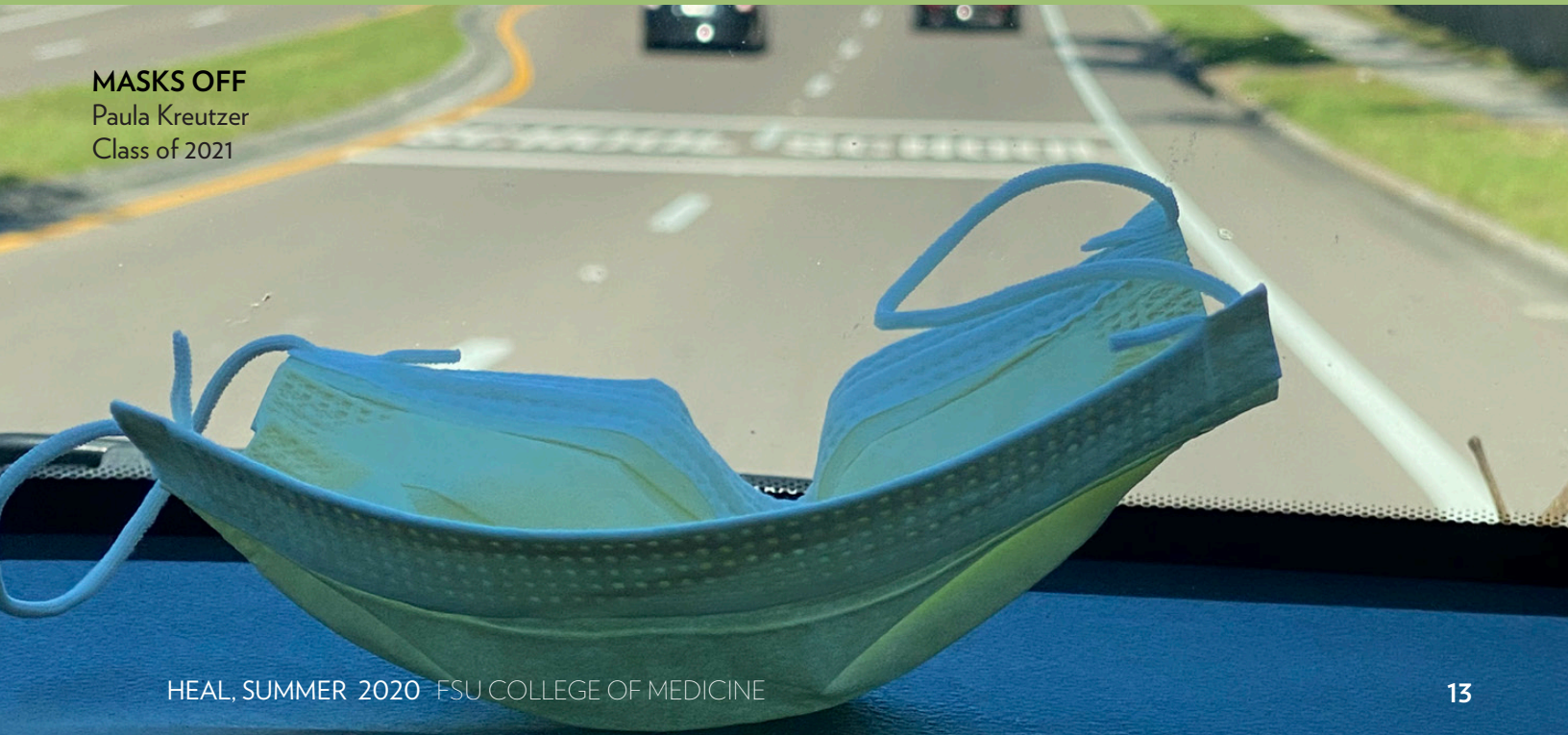
My fellow surgeon and I talk about what classifies an
urgent case
My mom asks if I'm wearing a mask at all times

I go to work expecting exposures,
I do trach/pegs in the ICU
that I normally do in the OR

I call my wife, she cried at the grocery store, she worries
appropriately
My fellow surgeon's hospital is canceling all elective
cases, appropriately
My mom asks about COVID cases in our hospital,
appropriately

I am scared, scared for my life, for my wife's life, for my
daughter's life
but I go to work and on my way home
I call the same three people I always have

MASKS OFF
Paula Kreutzer
Class of 2021



The Masks We Wear

Shellon Baugh, Class of 2023

Some masks are red as crimson,
Some are white as snow,
Some are for protection,
Some are just for show.

The surgeon's mask can cover
From nasal bridge to jaw.
One-sided is the Phantom's mask
To cover up his flaw.

A nail technician uses a mask
To limit the acetone fumes.
The masks at masquerade balls
Are part of the costume.

Some masks we wear for COVID
Are not the best, we know.
Some people bought their masks online,
Some people learned to sew.

No matter where we got the mask
One thing we all do share:
A desire to protect each other,
Starting with the masks we wear.

HALYARD N99
Paula Kreutzer
Class of 2021

CALDERONMEDICINE.COM

AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR COVID-19

Alston Calderon, PA Class of 2020

On Creating an Educational Website:

In October 2018, when I first started Physician Assistant School at FSU College of Medicine, I had an idea about a website that would revolve around patient education. During my didactic year, I worked on it as a side project but wasn't sure when it would be ready to launch. COVID-19 made it clear that time was now. In March 2020, my Family Medicine Clerkship was suspended due to the pandemic. Virtual learning took precedence and my Geriatric Clerkship began online. One of my first assignments was identifying and recording one lifelong learning goal. I chose, "Counseling and educating geriatric patients and their family members." As part of my goal description, I wrote, "I would like to improve my skills in counseling patients and their families in regard to their current and future treatment plans. I believe that educating patients and their family members on their loved one's disease/condition improves patient care and health outcomes."

After I turned in the assignment, information about COVID-19 became denser and more confusing as the quarantine took effect. Ever since the pandemic first emerged in Wuhan, China, I have been trying to stay up to date with data. Even with a medical background, it was still a challenge. People were overwhelmed with information from every source imaginable. I began to think about others who did not have a background in medicine and what frustrations they must have felt. That's when my website idea and lifelong learning goal converged. I wanted the website to help others navigate through the vast sea of information. To do that, I collected all of the COVID-19 information, organized and streamlined it for a more user-friendly experience, all on a single web page. Below is a copy of my reflection for the Lifelong Learning Goal assignment that I completed on April 24th:

It was challenging to improve my counseling with patients and their families due to the current conditions around COVID-19, but I found an alternative way to get vital resources out to future patients. I set up a website where patients can log into and access reliable resources from their home or on their smartphone. Patients will be able to educate themselves on a variety of topics, diseases, and illnesses. If addressing questions and concerns during the visit was not enough with my patients, this website could act as a bridge to the knowledge they craved. I firmly believe that educating patients is as important as the medication we prescribe them or the disease process itself. The website will grow along with me throughout my medical career, and the information will be updated and available for everyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Knowledge and guidance should be provided to every patient, every visit, and that's the motto in which I plan on practicing medicine.

I have received responses from within the U.S. and other countries in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa and Canada thanking me for organizing "all of that information from the news." Others have asked me how I learned to build a website. I told them that I Googled it and then let my imagination run wild. The beauty of this era is that it's unlike any other. The amount of information at our disposal is truly incredible.

Recently, someone asked me why I was taking on such a project. Without any hesitation, I said, "Because I need to. I need to serve. It's just part of my DNA." I genuinely love translating raw data into information, for it to become usable knowledge on the path to wisdom. I'm pleased that sharing that knowledge with others fills the void in these uncertain times. People around the world using their minds and hearts for the love of others, that's what is going to get us through these difficult days. Everyone can do something, and all those somethings add up. Everyone can make an impact.

Click the title above to visit the website.

A THOUSAND MASKS

Hannah Morgan
Class of 2023

