

SPRING 2023



ETHER ARTS

LITERARY AND
VISUAL ARTS
MAGAZINE

THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE

ROTH
PRODUCE

ROTH
PRODUCE



E C
PROVISIONS & PROVISIONS

FRENCH CRUST
LUNCH BRUNCH BAR

LEAF
FURNITURE



es
ED
NS



life at the market

Hajera Afreen

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Award for Best Photography

STAFF

CO EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Chloe Amsterdam
Dania Dallal
Lily Kreber
Ayush Peddireddi

EDITORS

Elizabeth Abrams	Jodie Makara
Miriam Alghothani	Ladan Navari
Mehak Chawla	Lahari Ramagiri
Annie Chen	Kavita Ramnath
Anjali Fernandes	Cameron Rodriguez
Madeline Fuller	Justine Schneider
Emily Fortman	Kat Schoettinger
Bhageerathi Ganesan	Abbey Tan
Goutam Gutta	Arti Vaishnav
Jacob Lesinski	Gavin Wu

ADVISORS

Anna Soter, PhD
Linda Stone, MD

COVER ART

Red Thread of Fate,
Juhi Katta

DESIGN

Dania Dallal

MISSION STATEMENT

Ether Arts is the literary and visual arts magazine of The Ohio State University's College of Medicine. We are committed to the publication of artistic works by Ohio State medical students and alumni, as well as students and staff outside of the College of Medicine. We seek to demonstrate the artistic discussion within the community, allowing the exploration of what it means to be a medical professional and what it means to be a patient, blurring preconceived notions of what it means to be either.

CONTACT

The Ohio State University College of Medicine
Humanism in Medicine Initiative
203 Meiling Hall
Columbus OH 43201

SPECIAL THANKS

Carol R. Bradford, MD
Sheryl Pfeil, MD
Ron Shaull
Michael Horgan
Michele McLaughlin
Medical Alumni Society
Medicine and the Arts

CONTENTS

PREFACE

- 4 | Ether Arts Staff
- 6 | Letter from the Editors
- 7 | Foreword from the Dean

PROSE

- 12 | The Dance: A love story overheard at the Brain and Spine Hospital | Arti Vaishnav
- 18 | Through the Looking-Glass: Reflections from a First-Year Medical Student | Lin Abigail Tan
- 22 | UWorld Question 32 | Anjali Fernandes
- 40 | April 2020 | Alissa Deal

VISUALS

- 3 | Life at the Market | Hajera Afreen
- 5 | Layered Vase | Justine Schneider
- 6 | Butterflies, Fish, Horse at Sunset | Roshini Sarah Abraham, PhD
- 7 | Faces of OSUCOM | Jodie Makara
- 9 | Garden | Justine Schneider
- 11 | Women in Business | Sabrina Catalano
- 13 | To the Stars | Lin Abigail Tan
- 15 | Gascoigne Bluff | Kayley Irwin
- 16 | Morman Row, Jackson Wyoming | Richard Orlando, MD
- 19 | Luna | Justine Schneider
- 21 | Whirlpool | Lahari Ramagiri
- 23 | Vie | Daniel Abul-Khoudoud
- 25 | Stillness | Juhi Katta
- 26 | Pieta | Gavisha Waidyaratne, MD
- 29 | Colors Before Commute | Cassandra Pasadyn
- 30 | Bury Me in Lake Como | Kateri Schoettinger
- 31 | The Swing | Andrew Phillips
- 33 | Fresh Powder | Kateri Schoettinger
- 35 | Life in Riomaggiore | Kateri Schoettinger
- 36 | Ripple Effect | Caroline Lehman
- 38 | Still Processing: Community Pandemic Memories | Elizabeth Abrams
- 40 | Little St. Simon's Island Marsh | Kayley Irwin
- 41 | LSSI Boardwalk | Kayley Irwin
- 43 | Sunset Sails | Justine Schneider
- 44 | C. diff Associated Pseudomembranous Colitis | Christopher Rutter
- 46 | ducklings | Olivia Shao
- 47 | Bee on a Bachelor's Button | Caroline Lehman
- 49 | Midnight, Lisbon | Richard Orlando, MD
- 51 | Let me drive da boat | Kateri Schoettinger

POETRY

- 9 | baba (father) | Gavin Wu
- 10 | Kimchi | Chloe Amsterdam
- 14 | the day stops for no one | Hafza Inshaar
- 16 | the fragility of memory | Hafza Inshaar
- 17 | Salt | Madeline Fuller
- 19 | sunkissed | Chioma Aneke
- 20 | Today's accomplishments, a listing. | Jessica Rutsky Privette, MD
- 24 | 11:05 | Jacob Lesinski
- 25 | Cold Flames | Grace Hoboyan
- 27 | Ice Age | Lahari Ramagiri
- 28 | Summer Days | Hajera Afreen
- 30 | The Rainbow | Anjali Fernandes
- 31 | Student Shadow | Lin Abigail Tan
- 32 | The Practice of Medicine | Grace Hoboyan
- 34 | Under Deconstruction | Lahari Ramagiri
- 36 | Peanuts | Olivia Gevedon
- 37 | Kintsugi | Chloe Amsterdam
- 39 | Rough Palms | Lahari Ramagiri
- 42 | Out of Egypt, Into the Unknown | Jacob Lesinski
- 43 | Beyond the Veil | Ayush Peddireddi
- 45 | Time Travel | Kavita Ramnath
- 46 | Ephemeral | Caroline Lehman
- 47 | If Ever A Child | Julie Niedermier, MD
- 48 | The Word of God | Jodie Makara
- 50 | Skies | Antoinette Pusatteri, MD



Layered Vase
Justine Schneider
OSUCOM Class of 2024

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

We proudly present you with this year's edition of Ether Arts, the literary and visual arts magazine of The Ohio State University College of Medicine. Inside you will find 58 works spanning the genres of poetry, prose, pottery, photography, and paintings, all created by our our own students, residents, faculty, staff, and alumni. The creation of this work could not have been possible without the wisdom and and vision given by Dr. Anna Soter, Dr. Linda Stone, Mr. Mike Horgan, and Mr. Ron Shaull, and we thank them sincerely for their guidance. We would also like to thank Dr. Carol Bradford for writing this year's forward, and to Medicine and the Arts and the Medical Alumni Society for their generosity and continuing support of this endeavor. Finally, a heartfelt thanks goes out to the all of our contributing artists, writers, and editors, who invested considerable time into showcasing the breadth and beauty of their creative talents.

From the melancholic ("Salt", "The Dance") to the introspective ("Kimchi", "Under Deconstruction"), to the global ("Out of Egypt, Into the Unknown", "Midnight, Lisbon"), the varied experiences and unabashed honesty of our creators is mirrored in the vast diversity of their work.

At times, medicine can be conflated with merely that of its underlying science - the disease, the pathophysiology, and corresponding treatment necessary to help patients recover and maintain their health. While a mastery of the aforementioned is indeed essential, such a narrow definition belies its true depth. Our field is inextricably linked with life itself, and as such can span the full range of human emotions. Our learners and practitioners are correspondingly empathetic, curious, and thoughtful, and these characteristics permeate throughout each and every piece. We thank you again for your interest and hope you enjoy this years' edition.

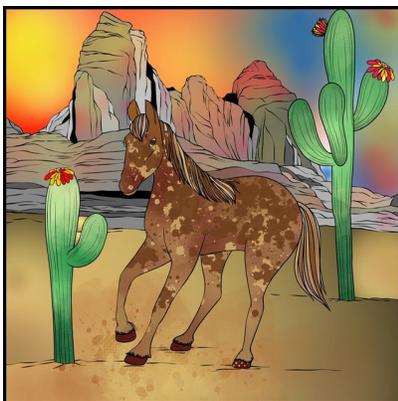
Sincerely,

Chloe Amsterdam, Dania Dallal, Lily Kreber, Ayush Peddireddi
Co Editors-In-Chief

Horse at Sunset, Fish, Butterflies

Roshini Sarah Abraham, PhD

OSU Faculty



FOREWORD FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to the 2023 – 2024 College of Medicine Ether Arts magazine.

I am honored to provide a foreword once again for the annual publication of Ether Arts. The poems, prose and artwork in this edition are created by medical students, faculty and health care professionals within The Ohio State University College of Medicine and Wexner Medical Center. The pieces demonstrate creativity and talent and offer a glimpse into not only who these artists are outside of medicine and health care but also the dedication and selflessness they bring to their profession.

This body of work illustrates the self-awareness and empathy of a diverse group of creators. Through this year's collection, I can see and feel the sharp attention to defining and interpreting the self and others and the human emotions that we all share. Deeply poignant and, at times, deeply personal, they reflect the experiences of the individual artists. It takes great courage and strength to share one's soul with others through creative expression. These efforts bring about new understanding and insight into us, and one another.

Released annually, this magazine supports the idea that creating and engaging art can sharpen listening and analytical skills and refine the artistic side of medicine. It promotes a compassionate approach to all that we do: research, patient care, teaching and learning.

Through this year's collection, the artists share glimpses into both their outer and inner world, allowing us to bear witness and even delight in this very sacred space. They remind us of the humanity of living and sharing an examined life as a health care professional, a learner, a patient and a human being. These reflective pieces explore mental health and wellness, the art of medicine, and what it means to live and express personal identity within the health sciences profession.

I want to acknowledge all the time, thought and care that went into the reading, consideration and editing of each submission. The reviewers and editors go to great lengths to offer constructive feedback to each artist, regardless of whether the work is included in the final publication. This is truly a labor of love.

It is my hope that these works stir you to a deeper expression of your own truth, your own passion and your own experience of navigating the evolving world of medicine in an ever-changing world.

Congratulations to our talented students who crafted this outstanding edition of Ether Arts. I hope you will enjoy this diverse collection of voices and our celebration of the importance of art in medicine at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Sincerely,

Carol R. Bradford, MD, MS, FACS
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice President for Health Sciences, Wexner Medical Center
Leslie H. and Abigail S. Wexner Dean's Chair in Medicine
Professor of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery

Faces of OSUCOM
Jodie Makara
OSUCOM Class of 2024



baba (father)

Gavin Wu

OSUCOM Class of 2025

i look up to my father
like I do the stars in the night sky –
Strong, bright, always shining
Knowing he is something I'll never reach.

How do you do it?
The way you smiled as you waved goodbye every morning
And how you came back to us smiling every night
The way your apron hugs smelled like the restaurant
And how your shoulders slumped when you thought we were asleep.
All the places you treated us to every weekend –
McDonald's, Burger King, and birthdays at the buffet
And how you drove us home every evening
Blinking away sleep.

Baba,
I am still the little boy who looks at you in wonder
I am still the child at the buffet
I am still waiting for you to come home at the window
And I will be there waiting while you are away.
But when the day comes and you are older
Will you let me take the wheel?
Will you let me drive you to your favorite restaurants
Will you wait for me like I did for you?
I want you to feel safe in my arms
the same way I felt safe in yours
Because every day I'm trying to reach for
the father that has always been in front of me
And the person I want to become.



Garden

Justine Schneider

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Kimchi

Chloe Amsterdam

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Honorable Mention, Poetry

Kimchi is like life.
Fresh harvested, sprightly and crisp
Soaked gently, caressed like
A newborn.
It grows salty, soaking in tears, crying to be taken
From the bath.
Wilted and wrinkly, wrung dry, kimchi
Has grown up just a bit.

Kimchi is like my life.
Red paste, concoction of spice—deep, sweet, savory, heat-painted on
The outer façade shading the crunchy, slightly wilted, leaves
Beneath.
Home smelling of garlic. Handled a little
Less gently, left to lie with its thoughts as it soaks in endless
Streams of knowledge.

Kimchi is like our lives.
We grow together in 응기 (onggi), buried in our naïve environment, blocking out any
Air any thoughts from the outside. We hug and stay close and
Huddle for warmth.
For growth.
We listen to each other's stories, change, the stories we share
Ferment. Age alongside us. We emerge a little
Sour, a little limp, a little
Wrinkled, but full of life.



Women in Business

Sabrina Catalano

OSUCOM Class of 2026

Award for Best Illustration

The Dance: A love story overheard at the Brain and Spine Hospital

Arti Vaishnav

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Honorable Mention, Prose

black suit black tie with gray crutches. i have no idea where to look or how to stand to make it less obvious that i am alone here. this may be my most awful moment, and now someone is walking towards me, someone in a silver dress. she stops in front of me, smiling. she asks me to dance. i tell her i cannot dance as i gesture to my crutches. she says i can stand still, and she will dance around me. i am grateful for her. she dances, and i cannot look away. she is beautiful, and this homecoming dance is just the beginning.

we get married, we live in a ranch, and you love sitting by the fire when you stay up late for me to come home after an extra shift at work. we have many dogs in the home throughout the years. our kids go down to the creek my brother and i would go to. they fish and bring their catches home for us to cook. you call me inside for dinner when i stay outside on the porch too long talking to the dog.

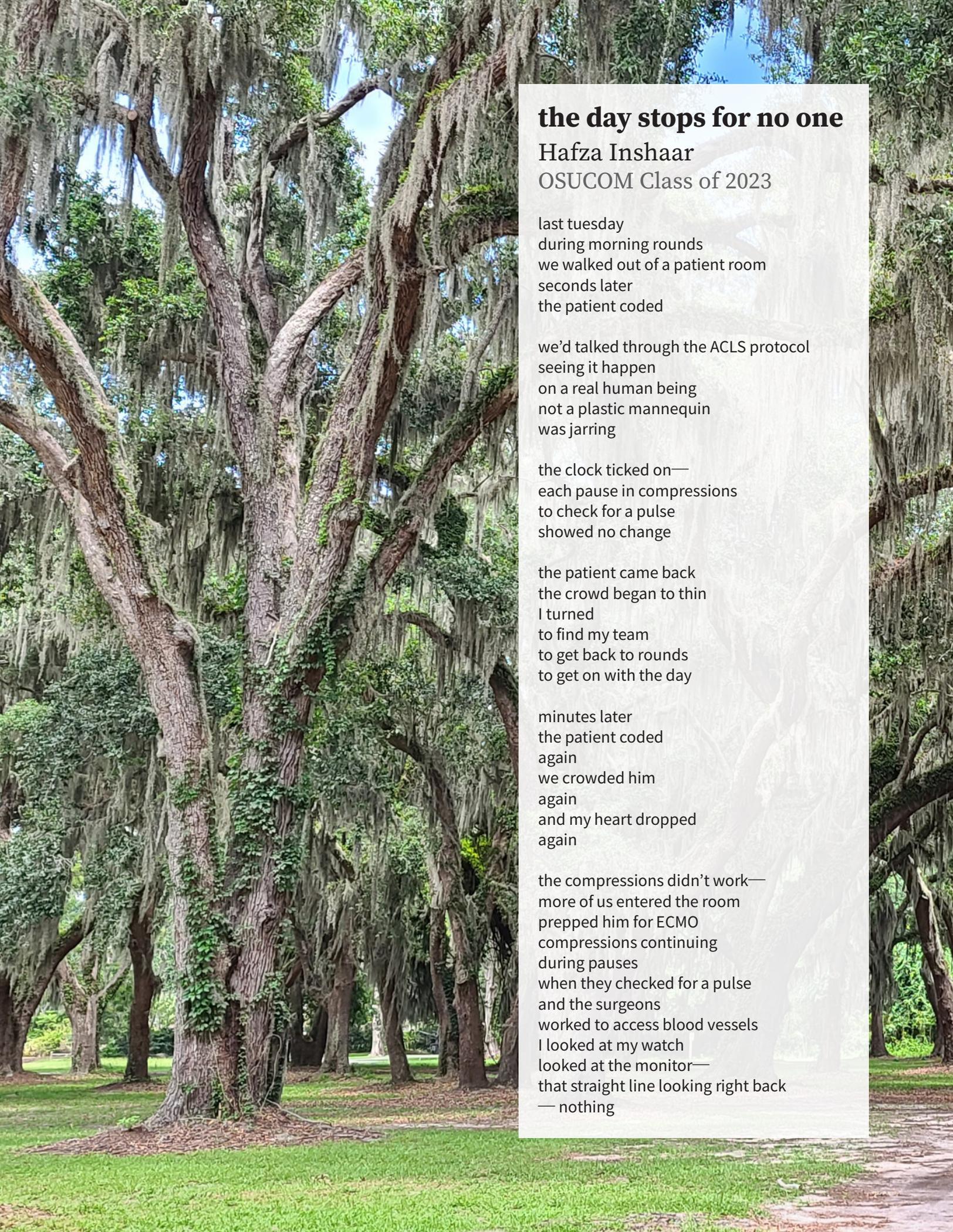
your lungs are weak now. i wake up to your wheezes at night. you sleep more. i will come home early, and i will do the cooking. stay resting. i will carry your oxygen and take you to your appointments. i will stop smoking, too. i won't stay outside too long talking to the dog. i will do the things we love: we will go on walks. it might rain, but we will go anyways. but you tripped, and your hip is broken, but i will take you to the hospital. i will be here when you wake up from surgery. wake up from surgery. please. wake up.

you shone like light from your hair to the tips of your toes. i wish there was a part of you that i didn't like, a part that i could hold onto in these precarious moments to drag me into freedom from you, but i cannot find one. i am chained down to you, but we fly like the birds in the big sky. over meadows and rolling hills. if only we were back there, away from anything that mattered enough to create stress but not important enough to be you. life is good, life with you was imaginary. three hours laying in your arms felt like five minutes. fifty-seven years later, and i want you more every morning i wake up. your cheeks in your palms, your eyes wide, i can see you staring at me like i know the answer to life. if i did, will you come back to me?

you made me laugh. you made me calm. you made me smarter and stronger. you made me forget if i had stress, if i was anxious. it was just you and me, and happiness that brought me to my knees. you were heaven on earth, and my younger self would never have believed me if i told him i would find you at the dance that day. life is good, life without you is abysmal.

The image is a full-page illustration. In the center, a silhouette of a person stands on the peak of a dark mountain. The person's arms are outstretched horizontally. The mountain's slopes are defined by white, glowing lines. The background is a vast, swirling night sky filled with concentric, colorful bands of light in shades of blue, purple, and pink. Numerous small, bright stars and speckles are scattered throughout the sky, particularly concentrated in the upper half. The overall mood is one of awe and aspiration.

To the Stars
Lin Abigail Tan
OSUCOM Class of 2026



the day stops for no one

Hafza Inshaar

OSUCOM Class of 2023

last tuesday
during morning rounds
we walked out of a patient room
seconds later
the patient coded

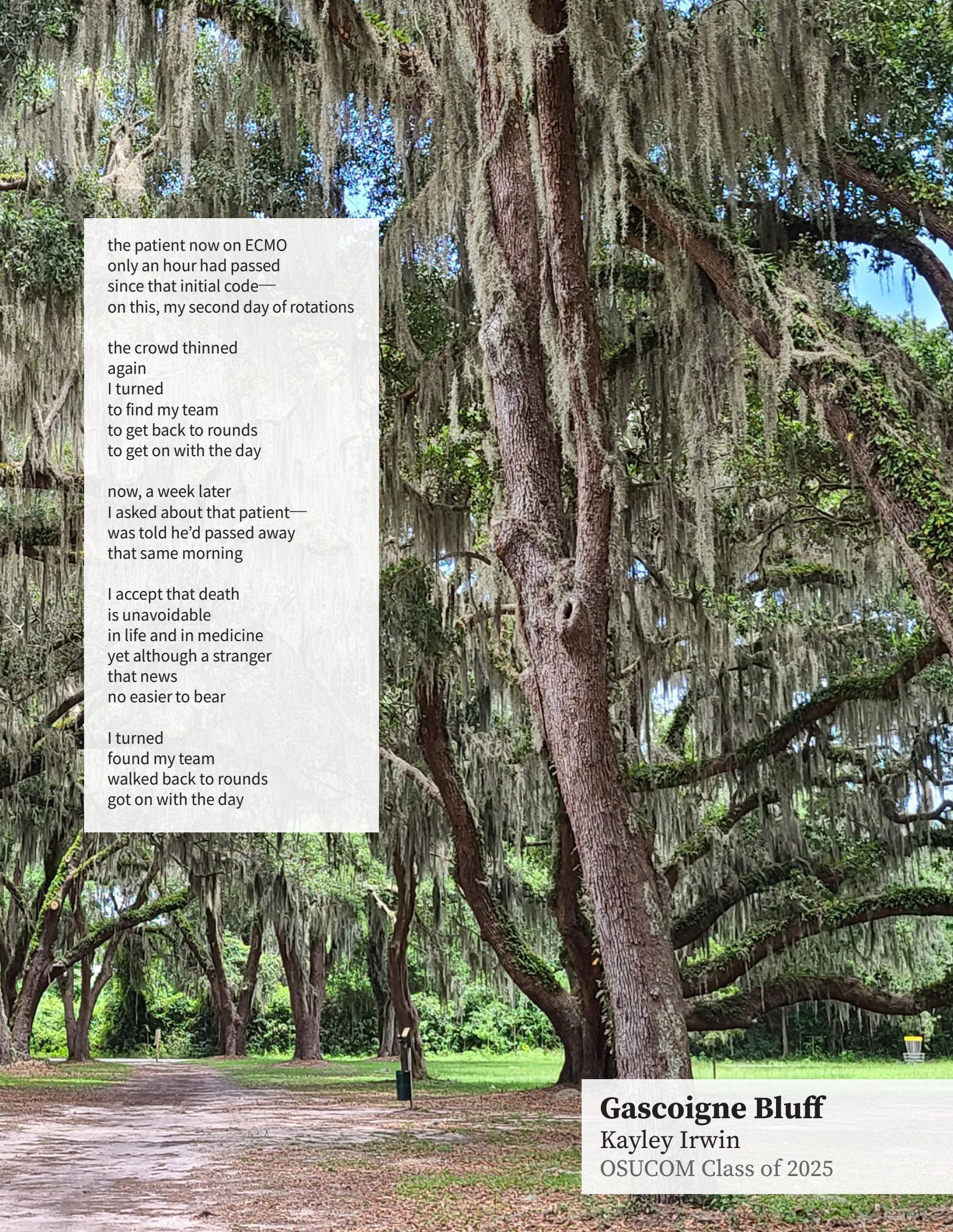
we'd talked through the ACLS protocol
seeing it happen
on a real human being
not a plastic mannequin
was jarring

the clock ticked on—
each pause in compressions
to check for a pulse
showed no change

the patient came back
the crowd began to thin
I turned
to find my team
to get back to rounds
to get on with the day

minutes later
the patient coded
again
we crowded him
again
and my heart dropped
again

the compressions didn't work—
more of us entered the room
prepped him for ECMO
compressions continuing
during pauses
when they checked for a pulse
and the surgeons
worked to access blood vessels
I looked at my watch
looked at the monitor—
that straight line looking right back
— nothing



the patient now on ECMO
only an hour had passed
since that initial code—
on this, my second day of rotations

the crowd thinned
again
I turned
to find my team
to get back to rounds
to get on with the day

now, a week later
I asked about that patient—
was told he'd passed away
that same morning

I accept that death
is unavoidable
in life and in medicine
yet although a stranger
that news
no easier to bear

I turned
found my team
walked back to rounds
got on with the day

Gascoigne Bluff

Kayley Irwin

OSUCOM Class of 2025



the fragility of memory

Hafza Inshaar

OSUCOM Class of 2023

in the top drawer
I keep
pictures of you
badges from work

I'm afraid
I'll forget
what you look like

I've already forgotten
what you sound like

Mormon Row, Jackson Wyoming

Richard Orlando, MD
OSUCOM Class of 1979

Salt

Madeline Fuller

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Award for Best Poetry

Her tears slipped under her top lip
They tasted especially salty, like the crisp spray
of his sea adventures
And if she let her tears conjure up all the thoughts of him,
they tasted like black coffee
The kind made in a french press,
with congealed grains
greeting you at the bottom of your mug

Or they tasted like cigarette ash,
like a campfire on its last legs,
or like a nearly frozen Coca-Cola
in the sweltering Brazilian sun

Sometimes they tasted like a quick sip
of Fever Tree tonic water
sans Beefeater gin
Or they tasted like the puff of air that greets your face
when you open a bag of salt and vinegar chips.

If she really focused,
she could make them taste like a ripe dopamine hit.
The kind she would get when her phone pinged:

“hey pup text me when you get home safe”
or “hey dude picked up groovy things at the grocery store for you”
or “hey mojo i love you”

And sometimes their taste would be angry,
and resentful and dark,
and acutely melancholic,
like soap or cough syrup or blood or black licorice.

They would taste like his sharp, prideful, biting words.
The kind of words that linger like a fresh, flaming sunburn.
Or like his forceful shoves, his delusions of grandeur,
his rageful grey-blue stare.

Or even worse.
Like his seasons of sadness, his recluse from his daughter, and
his violent final earthly act.

This is when she would wipe her cheeks,
her snotty nose,
her upper lip.
And return to the present,
because she knew she needed to.

She would return to the regular old salty tears
and just regular old miss him.

Through the Looking-Glass: Reflections from a First-Year Medical Student

Lin Abigail Tan

OSUCOM Class of 2026

This past year, I spent my birthday assisting with the debridement and closure of a massive abdominal wound. “Here, feel this,” the surgeon had exclaimed, dropping a dollop of necrotic fat in my gloved palms. It was dense. Tough. Not squishy, like healthy adipose tissue.

I shadowed plastic surgery in August, a few weeks into my first year of medical school. The schedule just happened to fall on my 21st birthday, but I didn’t mind. The OR’s intense lights and upbeat pop music rivaled those of any Columbus bar, and under my surgical cap and glasses, I was drunk with the excitement of seeing so many cool cases.

For me, the beginning of med school was filled with the breathless anticipation of any new school year, intermingled with an overhanging sense of loss. My grandfather in Los Angeles and my grandmother in the Philippines passed within a few days of each other a week before my white coat ceremony. Ama was sudden, 公公 was not. I wanted to reflect on their memories and keep them close in my thoughts as I crossed the stage to receive my white coat, but that didn’t happen. Somehow, in the turbulence of the moment, I’d placed my arm in the wrong sleeve, and the dean of the medical school had to discreetly inform me that my collar was untucked. I was awkward -- not contemplative, like I’d originally intended.

Looking back, this semester has been a kaleidoscope of moments, from the monumentous (witnessing a live birth during my first time in the labor and delivery unit!), to the mundane (so many dazed hours memorizing cytokines and streaming pharmacology lectures at 2x speed), to the misfortunate (a rooming mix-up at the volunteer clinic led me to confidently take the wrong patient’s history of present illness for a solid minute before I realized what was going on). With each new experience came new opportunities for growth, and I was astounded at just how much I could learn from the people around me.

The human narrative is nuanced. Through navigating my own loss and celebration, embarrassment and exhilaration, and more, often simultaneously, I’ve come to better recognize the exquisite complexity of others’. *Chronology, onset, duration... right?* I was startled the first time I heard a stroke alert while studying in the hospital cafeteria. There I was, sipping tomato soup and diagramming the complement pathway, and in that same instant on the floor below me, a person I didn’t know was probably having one of the scariest days of their life. They could have been someone’s grandparent. In a jolt, I remembered that Ama had died of an uncontrolled bleed a few months earlier. I knew a bit better, then, how much pain and worry could surround one intercom call.

On the same day I entered legal adulthood, a woman was wheeled to the operating room because the exasperated folds of tissue over her belly would not heal. In the same moment I watched a new mom stroke her baby’s damp hair, Papa lit three sticks of incense and planted them next to his mother’s urn in the serene, flower-filled church of Lucena City. *Intensity, exacerbation, remission. Patient perspective?*

As physicians, we will see patients through the opaque fragments of their own mosaic in time. In school, we are trained to ask the standardized patients (SPs) open-ended questions in order to better appreciate their perspective. But it’s often difficult for SPs to replicate the intricacy and emotion of actual patients. In a single exam room with so many ideas, beliefs, and perceptions -- and fear and worry often clouding the view -- it might be hard to understand each other at first. But we must try. Even amidst the chaos or drudgery, we must try. A certain sanctity comes with peering through the glass and sharing our own moments of vulnerability, and it’s a sacred space we enter when a patient confides in us. We might not always see clearly, but we can still listen. And we will always still care.

Sometimes being a first-year medical student feels like staring into a prism of eternity. Sometimes it feels like there’s way too much to know. As I advance in my training, though, I hope to keep improving myself so I can better serve my patients. I vow to truly cherish these coming moments -- all the tumultuous and tired and glorious ones in-between. And as of this moment, this sliver of time, right now? I am content. Excited. Ready to keep learning.



sunkissed
Chioma Aneke
OSUCOM Class of 2026

a close up of her skin,
its horizon slightly glazed,
shows magnitudes of the
lands her presence has transformed
Unknowns to both.
She is a landscape no camera can picture,
One picture cannot mask a mere
thousand,

Her essence is not masked
But coated underneath fields of
her natural resources with a Midas touch;
Let the layers of her epidermis
converse, it is essential, and
oh inviting they truly
are.

Brazen and bare, I cannot compare
Her to anything else.

Many days unnumbered will they rue,
For letting such wrapped thoughts
slip from between closed lips and open eyes,
have they no knowledge
of the impact of black skin?

Luna
Justine Schneider
OSUCOM Class of 2024



**Today's accomplishments,
a listing.**

Jessica Rutsky Privette, MD
OSUCOM Class of 2017

You must be proud
for at the forefront
of my thoughts today
was not a baby
my hand did not fall
unbidden to my abdomen
to comfort what is not there
and lest I dwell here
and ruin my glowing spoils
I'll quickly skip to the fact
that I didn't deprecate my own skills
at work today
I did make a patient smile
and I remembered to give you
many kisses in the few hours
we spent together
after we ousted the plastic figurines
that attacked us at the kitchen table
in a game of skill, luck
and unknowingly confusing rules
You only watered some of the plants
and I didn't fold all of the laundry
but we fight together nonetheless
against board games villains, chores,
the passage of time –
it depends on the day.



Whirlpool

Lahari Ramagiri

OSUCOM Class of 2026

UWorld Question 32

Anjali Fernandes

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Award for Best Prose

A 65 year old man with a history of diabetes, alcohol use disorder, and 40 pack years of tobacco use presents to clinic for abdominal pain.

My mom's sister is about a year younger than she is. Her daughter is a single day older than I am. And her son is the same age as my brother. Needless to say, our families have always walked in tandem. My mom and her sister are the classic example of two sides of the same coin. Where my mother is calm and gentle, my aunt is excited and bubbly. My mom tends to bear her burdens in silence while my aunt is unafraid to inform everyone of what she needs. Both are forces of nature in their own right. They've shared career paths, pregnancies, stressors (usually from their children), and losses. Like most Indian mothers, they had all of us busy with music lessons, summertime studies, volunteer work, and athletics. In our youth, my siblings and I had the joy of being able to bond with our cousins over how intolerable our mothers were. These days, we tend to marvel at how powerful they are.

He had been experiencing intermittent RUQ pain that has increased in severity over the past several months. He notes that it is worse when eating fatty foods. He also mentions some weight loss, fatigue, and decreased appetite but attributes this to the abdominal pain. On further questioning, he does note that his stools have been paler than normal.

My grandmother told me a lot of stories about how my aunt was born about 2 months early. Looking at her now, you would have no idea about her tenuous beginning. Whenever we'd visit as kids, no matter the hour of our arrival, we would be welcomed with exclamations of joy, bone crushing hugs, and a myriad of snacks for after our journey. Throughout the day there would be an endless torrent of snacks, sandwiches, and cookies for the army of children rampaging through the house. My cousins and I used to sneak up into her craft room to mess around with all the stamps, paper cutters and scraps of ribbon that she used to design cards for every occasion. Then we'd run downstairs and get in trouble when the little ones got injured on the exercise equipment in the basement. After suffering through our timeouts, my aunt and my mom would smother us with hugs and kisses as if all was forgotten. Through all of it – the cooking, the chastising, the energetic displays of affection – my aunt never showed a moment of annoyance or exhaustion.

Physical exam reveals mild jaundice, scleral icterus, and sharp right upper quadrant pain with a palpable gallbladder. Lab results are notable for elevated LFTs, elevated lipase, and thrombocytopenia.

Over the years, the visits to my aunt's house have become less frequent but our families have grown closer. My mom and her sister continue to walk in tandem. My cousin and I are closer to sisters than cousins. Although she is a day older, I am a year ahead in school. She came to me every time she would panic about applying to medical school and I would remind her that she was perfectly qualified and capable. I went to her after losing my grandparents and she helped to guide me through my grief. Naturally, when our families come together, my cousin and I try to follow in the shadow of our mothers as they create mountainous feasts, elaborate graduation parties, and riotous reunions amidst the bustle of their everyday lives. Just as my mom and my aunt share their lives, my cousin and I now move together in a similar way.

Abdominal ultrasound shows dilated bile ducts and a large tumor in the head of the pancreas. Abdominal CT shows hepatic opacities. Biopsy confirms pancreatic adenocarcinoma. The patient asks about his estimated survival. What is the likely five- year survival rate for this patient?

I hadn't heard from my cousin for awhile. So when she called, I knew I should probably answer. Usually if she called it was a frantic question about how to schedule her studying or what I'd recommend for getting through the next stage of medical school. If anything, it would be a great break from the dullness of my current UWorld block. I answered the phone after a few rings and heard her voice coming to me from the bottom of the ocean. I had her repeat what she had just told me. And then again. She told me how her mom told her minutes ago. They thought that it was gallstones that caused her random abdominal pain. Perhaps one had gotten stuck and that's why her stools became acholic. As I tried to console my cousin, I imagined the rest of our lives together – the weddings, the births of our children, the Thanksgivings and New Year's parties. All the moments where we'd stand together alongside with our mothers, who walked their lives in tandem. I thought of her medical school graduation in 4 years. I turned to my computer to look up the survival rate for the mass that obstructed my aunt's bile duct, the mass that obstructed her life, the mass that obstructed all certainty of the future.

Correct answer: A. 5% five-year survival rate



Vie

Daniel Abul-Khoudoud
OSUCOM Class of 2024

11:05

Jacob Lesinski

OSUCOM Class of 2026

11:05 the clock read when he came in
Face bright red with eyes filled to the brim
You were gone, your struggle completed
A Herculean effort ended, us all defeated

The halls grew longer and longer
A tunnel that never ended even as I inched closer
The shock of it all accumulating, temperature dropping
An avalanche developing in the middle of August

The sobs were audible as I entered the wing
An unsettling suspense peaking
As certain as I could hear our family sing
I heard others weeping

The cardinal flew far, away from this place
Given me finally the time and space
To understand what it meant, that you drew your last breath
That you were no longer of Earth, finally at rest

The first time I questioned if He even existed
A faith that nevertheless persisted
Was seeing you lying there still
Your mother caressing you, beside you in bed

At times I said I'd have traded my place for yours
The younger one should never precede the older in death
The guilt is overwhelming still
As if I am lucky to still be taking a breath
Alas, your journey was always different
A bad heart they always said
One that led you down this path
A life imbued with meaning from your struggle

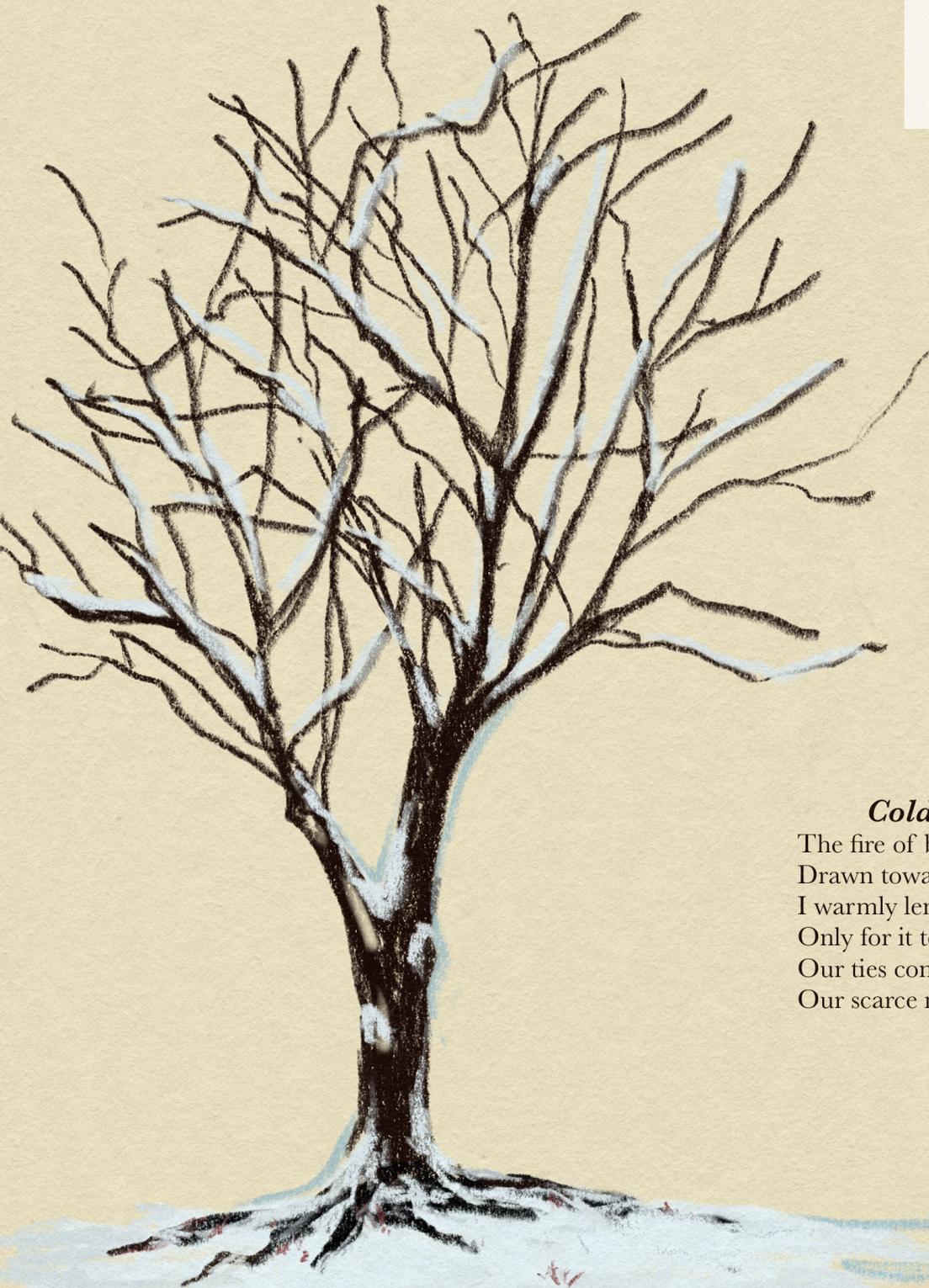
That moment when you passed, the last you were alive
That last breath that ended who I was
Few would believe that you were only five
A life that ended, just because.

But in your passing was hope
Hope for a better tomorrow
A desire that came from a need to cope
A change that came from sorrow
Without death, I am static
Idle in my ways
A moment so dramatic
Nothing after was simply a phase

For my pursuits change without you
The moments and struggles you endured
The life I live has a different view
A legacy you've secured

Forever thankful for you
The changes you made for me
I will never forget you
The middle child, Emily.

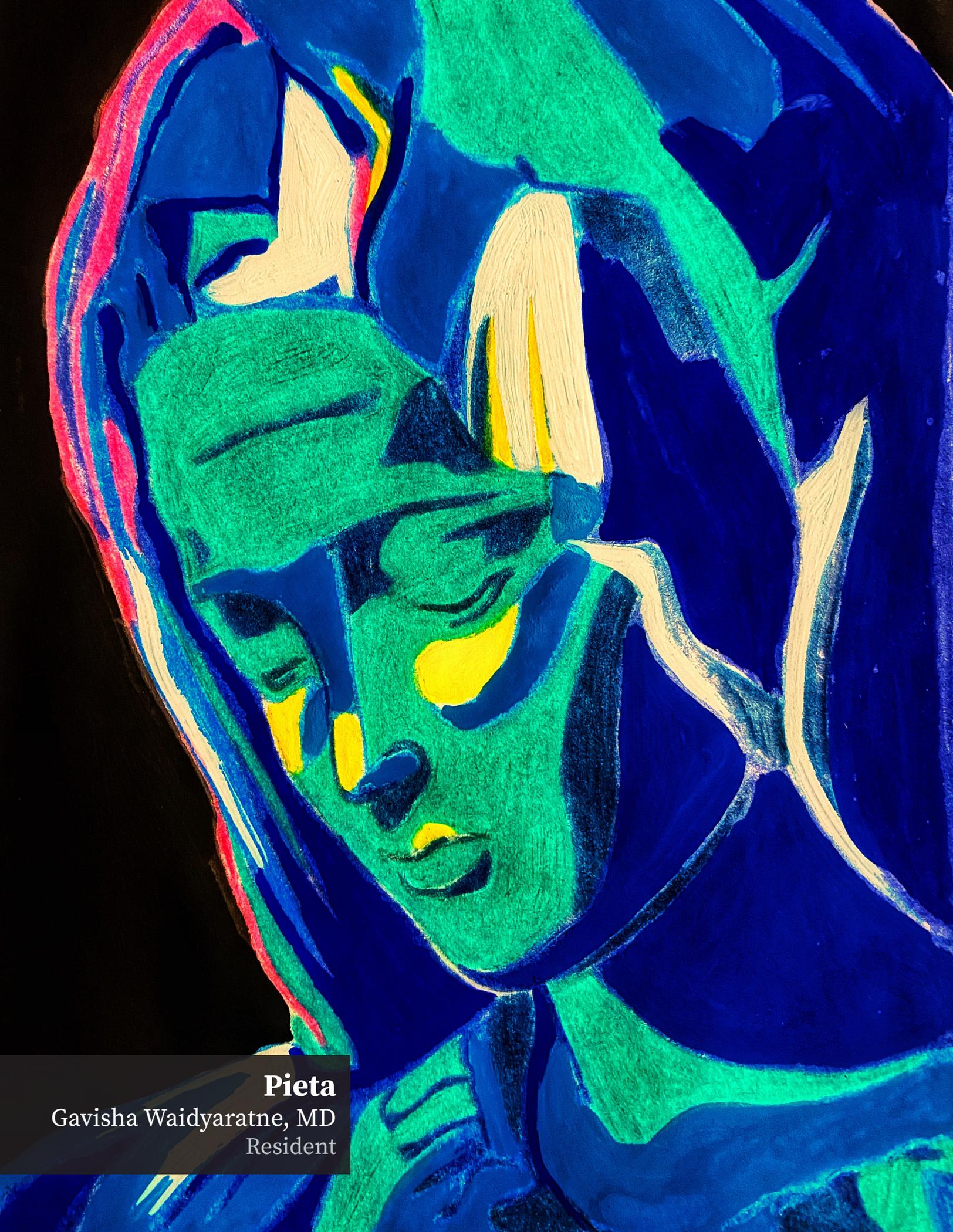
Cold Flames
Grace Hobayan
OSUCOM Class of 2024



Cold Flames

The fire of burning passion
Drawn toward the coldest heart
I warmly lend my hand
Only for it to be frostbitten
Our ties consumed by flames
Our scarce memories frozen in time

Stillness
Juhi Katta
OSUCOM Class of 2024



Pieta

Gavisha Waidyaratne, MD
Resident

Ice Age

Lahari Ramagiri

OSUCOM Class of 2026

Trauma
is a winter wind
that brushes past me
and makes my hairs stand on end.
A wind that whispers words of woe
to weaken me.
Pours snow on my embers.
An uninvited guest
who shows up without warning.

I walk on a path of thin ice,
treading with caution.
Careful to not look down
and by chance see the reflection of
a broken face I had forgotten.

Trauma
is a blurry line
between nightmare
and memory:
can't seem to wake up from it,
yet people's suspicions
make me question my recollection.

Heavy tears
freeze before hitting the ground.
Not even my despair is in my control.

When do I start healing
during an endless cycle of hurt?
When do I start dealing
with these feelings
trapped inside of me?
I keep breathing in
the frost of this wind
and my lungs are freezing
I feel like screaming
but it's caught in my throat
and all that comes out is
air.

My icy breath
spins in front of me
until it quickly vanishes,
enveloped by the wind.

A coat and gloves
hold no protection,
as my skin still turns blue,
and my fingernails: purple.

I might as well be bare,
like the trees surrounding me.
Even so, bear with me,
for every winter passes.

The birds sing their hymns again
as they bathe in the sunlight,
and bright colors flow across the snowy white canvas
as mother nature awakens from her slumber.

My thoughts empty onto paper,
each word chipping at the ice
until it shatters the silence.
Words of spring warmth
that drive the winter wind away,
one day ending the ice age that is trauma.

Summer Days

Hajera Afreen

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Summer days bring out this side of me
The one that meanders aimlessly
Filled with desire to measure the winds
And turn my face to the golden light like a sunflower

Oh, to be so carefree!
I banish the mental list
Of chores and errands
Expectations and deadlines
Things I need to study
With time that's never enough
But drowns me all the same.

I convince myself *only 15 minutes*
At last, I break above that busy surface
And time stands still,
Forgotten by the bending roads
Blanketed by hovering trees
Whispering secrets to each other,
The wind their messenger,
I reach out, grab a wisp with my bare hands –
Tell me, I want to know
My heart says
But the wind is no traitor
Buffets my hand away
I apologize
Caress it gently instead
Can we be friends?

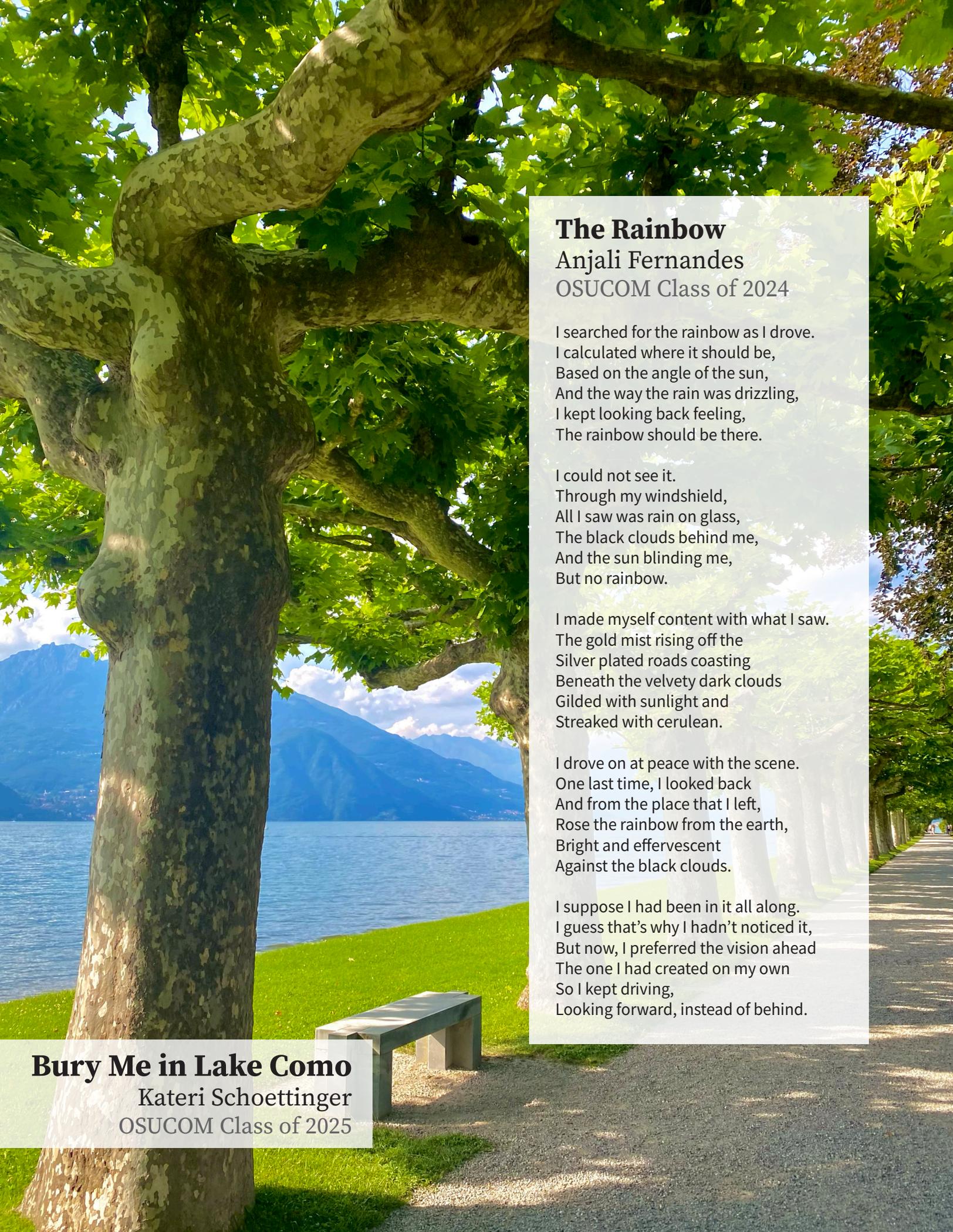
It slips through my window
Playfully teases my hair and tickles my chin
Where are you from?
From beyond the lush green, it tells me
From the towering blue peeking between
The breeze promises tales of adventures untold
Beckons to bathe in weightless gold
Onwards I go to discover its source
Past the schools, past the houses,
Past the bridge, past the railroad tracks –
30 minutes gone
The magic drowned by time's relentless current
My chest feels tight
Senses thrashing again as
I abruptly turn around, go home



Colors Before Commute

Cassandra Pasadyn

OSUCOM Class of 2025



The Rainbow
Anjali Fernandes
OSUCOM Class of 2024

I searched for the rainbow as I drove.
I calculated where it should be,
Based on the angle of the sun,
And the way the rain was drizzling,
I kept looking back feeling,
The rainbow should be there.

I could not see it.
Through my windshield,
All I saw was rain on glass,
The black clouds behind me,
And the sun blinding me,
But no rainbow.

I made myself content with what I saw.
The gold mist rising off the
Silver plated roads coasting
Beneath the velvety dark clouds
Gilded with sunlight and
Streaked with cerulean.

I drove on at peace with the scene.
One last time, I looked back
And from the place that I left,
Rose the rainbow from the earth,
Bright and effervescent
Against the black clouds.

I suppose I had been in it all along.
I guess that's why I hadn't noticed it,
But now, I preferred the vision ahead
The one I had created on my own
So I kept driving,
Looking forward, instead of behind.

Bury Me in Lake Como
Kateri Schoettinger
OSUCOM Class of 2025

Student Shadow

Lin Abigail Tan
OSUCOM Class of 2026

Your hand is warm, she said to me, my gloved palm on her cheek.
I smile, tilt her head away, yet do not try to speak.
For I'm just a student shadow in the neuro clinic, where
I know my role is to observe, ask questions here and there.

The doctor feels her neck, the bulge where muscle fans the side.
A quick injection, in hope that her spasms will subside.
A quiet flinch of pain, her eyes dart downward to the floor.
I shuffle over to the side and wish I could do more.

The doctor's voice is soft and kind. "We're nearly done, okay?"
I marvel at his empathy, the caring he conveys.
And in my mind, I give my thanks for all I see and learn.
In time I'll master these skills, too. One day it'll be my turn.

The Swing

Andrew Phillips
OSUCOM Class of 2024



The Practice of Medicine

Grace Hobayan
OSUCOM Class of 2024

We must remember them,
those questions to ask,
when to ask them,
why we ask them.
And we must remember
the sequence,
the flow,
the purpose
of questions whose answers
tell patients' stories.
That's why they call it
"the practice" of medicine.

And we must remember
maneuvers to make,
where to percuss or palpate.
And we're told to recall
the tools of the trade
and the timbre
of gallops,
of murmurs and rales.
That's why they call it
"the practice" of medicine.

And we must remember
to interpret images —
the blacks and the whites,
the blues and the reds
of cardiac ultrasounds,
the dilation of chambers,
the patchy patterns of fluids
in those laboring lungs.

And we must also remember
the horses and zebras,
the lists of diseases
our patients may have,
yet must also remember
to be kind bearers
of bad news —
of their malignant metastases,
of their necrotic tissues,
of their multiple organ failures,
and bear witness to
their loss of the will to work,
to live,
to play in the ways
they once used to do.



Fresh Powder

Kateri Schoettinger

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Under Deconstruction

Lahari Ramagiri
OSUCOM Class of 2026

Frustrated fingers run through my ink-black hair
until entrapped in a tangle;
frizzy wavy hair
that will never be silky straight
unless charred at 400oF.

Age 13:
wrinkled noses around me
prompted a defiance to
applying my mother's coconut oil to my hair.
Age 15:
the obsidian cascade pouring over my shoulders
lost its luster with its smell.
Yet those wrinkled noses would re-appear
at the aromas of my spice cabinet spiraling when I spoke,
while I endured their teasing
soaked in scents of bacon grease and burgers.

Feet entrenched in the soil
between the East and the West.
Standing under the shadows of the Charminar,
both a historical emblem of my native home
and an overcrowded tourist attraction.
Confined by four pillars and arches,
trapped within an ambiguous identity.

Heavy hand glides down my smooth toffee arm
that hours ago was covered by a prickly coat.
Wax and shave and pluck and pray
for no discoloration,
as my skin is already coffee-stained and tarnished
like the aging remains of the Charminar
or my mother's oil lamps,
crafted from clay and covered in soot when neglected.

Butchered name
rooted in years of "It's pronounced like Ferrari"
when it's not really.
Stripped
of its cultural significance
"waves of music,"
for the comfort of the Western audience.

Criticizing eyes float down the mirror
after growing up in a household where "I love you's"
were swapped with pats on the back,
a Pavlov stunt to value academic achievement.

Oldest daughter, only daughter.
Built on the foundations of the family's aspirations.

If only my melanin could be traded for some melatonin
to drown out the noise of unjust burden.
The clinking and clanging of architects
assembling my structure without my opinion.

Immigrant parents who
became free from the white man in 1947
to flee to a new white man in 1996.
Left their dreams behind
for me to chase mine,
or just a projection of theirs.

Tender touch traces the graveled trails on my palms,
broken by my culture and redrawn to its desires.
It's said that these lines transform as we grow older,
like buildings over time,
so as I learn to reverse a lifetime of dysfunction,
let's just say that my fate is under deconstruction.



Life in Riomaggiore

Kateri Schoettinger

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Ripple Effect
Caroline Lehman
OSUCOM Class of 2024

Peanuts
Olivia Gevedon
OSUCOM Class of 2024

I've been thinking about peanuts
The Planters kind in a blue can
Rolling on the floor of your car
Mixing with the scent of leather
And rattling with every turn

We didn't say much on those drives
When you picked me up from school
I never asked about the can
Its perpetual existence
Now a part of your memory

Would you believe me if I said
The sound lulls me to sleep sometimes?
Like soft rain against a window
Except it stays with me always

You were a loyal Jif fan too
A museum of repurposed jars
Filled with nails, screws, etcetera
Lining the shelves of your garage
Smell never quite dissipating

Other jars became habitats
For fireflies I caught with you
Summer nights on Heritage Lane
I closed my eyes and made a wish
On each creature between my palms

You poked holes with your pocketknife
Into the lids so they could breathe
Sometimes I would forget this step
Missing you is suffocating
Yet peanuts linger in the air

Kintsugi

Chloe Amsterdam
OSUCOM Class of 2025

Scars mark our differences
Why not make them glow
Glisten glimmer in the light

Imagine if your scars were painted
Gold
Being broken a badge to wear rather than
Shame to bear

Different cracks and marks highlighted
Emphasized. Not hidden.

The curve of your face
Whispered secret from the past
A chip by your eye
Fill it with gold

Fill it with gold
Celebrate!
Celebrate!
Celebrate!

Embrace

Display your brokenness
To all

It's what unites us

**Kintsugi (join with gold): a Japanese art in which broken pottery pieces are joined back together with gold; the breaks and repairs are part of the object's history*

Still Processing: Community Pandemic Memories

Elizabeth Abrams, OSUCOM Class of 2026

The very thing that confirms I am alive became a danger to people around me. Why did it have to be breath? I learned that some of the best memories we can make with our kids are unique things we do at home. It has made incredible situations even harder, with barriers even higher to access services. I'm both proud and most humbled to continue servicing some of the most vulnerable populations in the U.S. during a pandemic. I am sad that such an adverse global event makes lives harder than they already were. Respect, kindness, grace, family, prayer. I realize that for some these were things we did not do well, but they became very evident to me. I'm remembering that being with people doesn't affect my closeness to them. I built stronger bonds with my family + friends. I will remember being hospitalized and being amazed at the care and attention to my breathing and challenges. Gloved human touch that member thinking cradled. I will re-member thinking in my life 'what shall I prepare for my passing?' I remember calmness and trust in my care team without hesitation. It was a retiring nurse's assurance the future of healthcare is strong and good and bright. I remember goodness and endless gratitude. I am making it out of there with opportunities because of the incredible amount of learning all these confer-ences of Zoom and Youtube sessions on so many topics. A great ferment in shared, participat learning. Literally anything can change if it needs to- from the tax deadline to school schedules to societal norms. That means we can hold these things lighter than before. It also means we can't be afraid to push for change we believe in. Nothing is as firm or unmoveable as we think. Extremely and younger people are way more willing to sacrifice a little bit of clear fresh air and gorgeous BLUE sky. Praise the Lord. Kids and students help enforce correct mask-wearing among their peers. I watched rates just be eager to abide by new guidelines and resist change for the sake of strangers while kids don't think twice about it. For a lot of life, I found self-worth in accomplishments; with my ability to do things I really struggled. It hurt, but a little more sturdy and I hope I remember circumstance. I was a bit anchored me. I hope I'm grateful to be all over the place, but relationships remember that love and its endurance. I will remember beauty in the eyes. They truly are the windows to the soul. Even with masks we can smile with our eyes. They can show compassion and kindness. The eyes reveal the person behind the mask.

Rough Palms

Lahari Ramagiri

OSUCOM Class of 2026

I unwillingly find myself
on North High Street in the heart of Columbus
my wallet half empty, stomach full.
Enticed by the chaotic mosaic of stores along
overcrowded sidewalks. Swamps of drivers with
their road rage and noise pollution.

To escape
the sensory overload, I pay a visit to a floral boutique
sandwiched between two sweets shops
and treat myself with a pale rose.

The last time someone gave me flowers
was my father at my high school graduation. I kept that pride
and validation in a vase of water until they wilted away.
His hands were blistered from working in the garden that day,
plucking weeds around tomato plants
and trimming overgrown bushes.

That's what happens
when your backyard is the only grocery store you trust.
No produce pumped with chemicals, flawless on the outside to
conceal the stains within. No faded expiration dates stretched for an extra taste.
One more week if refrigerated. Another month if frozen.

Stretched to extremes
until the smell of rotting flesh becomes too uncomfortable and
the crumbling corpse is cast into the morgue.

No "organic" this, "natural" that,
and receipts longer than our waistbands. People love the green thumbs that
grow apartment windowsill plants and aesthetic succulents, but not
the rough palms putting food on the table.

Now I'm lost in the city with a wallet half empty
hypnotized and fooled into seeking comfort in convenience.

April 2020

Alissa Deal

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Jack's muffled cheering breaks through the barrier of my floors at 10 minutes to midnight again. As his voice rises past his ceiling, my blood pressure doesn't rise in suit like it used to do. Soon after, a motor revs on a neighborhood street below, and the steady booming of a car radio grows, then fades beyond my bedroom window.

Downstairs, the sound of a hard plastic bowl rolling to its resting place in a stainless steel sink, the thud of a wooden cabinet door meeting its frame, two hard footsteps, a pause, a footstep, a pause, retreating footsteps, all echo up toward me, some just strong enough to feel softly vibrating the couch I am sitting on. In my own home, Max Richter's "On the Nature of Daylight" swells just before its final decrescendo into a flattening final note.

My ears perk up and my focus shifts to follow the noises below, but the frustration that joins these distractions is coupled with contentment. Contentment in knowing that Jack is alive and probably well—or, at least well enough to be cheering. Well enough to be on his feet.

The sound that tipped Alice off was quiet. An argument had preceded it, but the normal scuffle of life and fights and clinking glass bottles and hard-shutting doors didn't follow in the hours thereafter. The next morning an ambulance silently carried Harvey away, leaving only his adult son in the residence below Alice. Rumors circled that Harvey had COVID-19. His son was recently ill too, but Harvey was sicker, and there were only so many beds in the city.

Two weeks later, the siren of a police cruiser announced its presence before stopping abruptly nearby. When I glimpsed the cop car parked ten feet from our building's front door, I figured it was here to complete a welfare check on Jack. He'd been cheering again. A woman was visiting him. Their music was loud, blaring. Maybe another neighbor had become fed up enough to call, especially given that we were all stuck indoors from the lockdown orders, left with little means to tune each other out. I heard Oliver start the shower one room over, and—without the fear of being caught snooping — I pressed my ear to our unit's living room floor. Their talk traveled up through the walls, the ceiling.

"This is ridiculous!" the woman's voice harsh, clipped.

"Ma'am, please—" another voice joined theirs.

"—Whatever. This is stupid." The woman again.

"Have you been drinking?" the second voice this time.

My curiosity was satisfied, so I stood up, returned to the couch, and went back to work, only getting up



Little St. Simon's Island Marsh

Kayley Irwin

OSUCOM Class of 2025

periodically to check if the police cruiser remained.

“Are they still here?” Oliver asked as he exited the bathroom, moving from the restroom to the dining room chair where his hair dryer sat on a nest of tangled cord.

I got up to see, lifting just one section of the mini-blinds out of place to peek out of the window. “Yeah, still here... lights still on, too.”

That cop car had arrived around 6 p.m. and would not leave until after 9. I cannot say exactly when it left, because I did not hear it go. It left in silence.

Three more weeks passed. In this time, Alice would hear the drone of the TV wafting up from the unit below — it was on at all hours of every day.

It turns out that the welfare check three weeks prior had been for Harvey’s son, not Jack. Soon after Harvey had disappeared into the hospital, a neighbor across the street noticed that many lights in the apartment remained on for days, and yet there was no sign that anyone was still living inside it. That day, when the police cruiser left in silence, so did the body of Harvey’s son. None of us knew exactly who had made the call. Only that the officials who had responded to it had left the unit exactly as they had found it: TV running and lights on, simply sans son.

Alice hadn’t thought to make that call when she no longer heard the shuffling of feet below her. She’d thought nothing much of the new-found quiet— Harvey had moved out of the unit and into an ICU bed; it seemed only natural that the loss of a person to argue with would lead to a slightly quieter household downstairs. Never would she have thought that the TV left running and the voices it projected had become the sole occupants of the unit.

Alice would hear those projected voices non-stop for five weeks in total: two between Harvey’s departure and this final welfare check on his son; three between his son’s removal and the day a family member cleared out the uninhabited apartment and its chattering appliances. During this time, Alice would hear that TV talking to itself, others would see the lights left on, and all of us would wonder how hard and for how long one must listen to understand what constitutes a significant sound, and the meaning in a lack thereof.

Written in memory of ‘Harvey’ and his son, in acknowledgement of others who have passed on alone during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic thus far, be it in a hospital like ‘Harvey’, at home like his son, or elsewhere; as a thank-you to neighbors who look after neighbors; and as a gentle reminder to all of us—myself included—to listen out for one another.

This writing depicts actual events in the life of the author as truthfully as recollection allows, however names of all individuals mentioned herein have been changed to respect their privacy.



LSSI Boardwalk

Kayley Irwin

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Out of Egypt, Into the Unknown

Jacob Lesinski

OSUCOM Class of 2026

The hills of Shawnee grow silent as we pass
Thebes and Cairo disappearing behind us
Wondering aloud if we were free at last
Liberated as the verdant pastures refuse to make a fuss
No one came for us, our loved ones concede
As we cross Lincoln Memorial, Moses' staff as asphalt and concrete

The chariots never gave chase
Springfield's men never pursued
Approaching the heart of it all
The gravitas strikes me, a hammer to steel
The City of Granite and Snows reveal
What was left behind, starting over anew.

Wandering aimlessly with a destination set
The wilderness beckoned, the hills rising
Wondering if this was the place I knew best
The western reserve, the ancestral home
Now a foreign land filled with uncertainty
Separated from the tribes I knew in seeming perpetuity

An exile of my own volition
Left to meander amongst new edifices
Pyramids amongst men, a new expedition
Shrinking further and further into a shell
While a city of arches passes me by
Leading me further to dwell

A stranger in a unfamiliar land
Seeking to be whole again
Reconnecting with the vestiges of old
The place my sister took her last breath
Caught between two worlds, out in the cold

Yet, called out of Egypt I was
A prodigal son returning home
A goal I've made with cause
Finding the promised land again
To make myself anew
Asclepius' Rod the new staff
Leading me forward into a new home
A familiar land made even more so again.

Beyond the Veil

Ayush Peddireddi

OSUCOM Class of 2025

Its origin ascribed to a single fault,
Fluttering in the windless vault;
Ethereal gloom pierces its amorphous shape
How long on the wall will shadows drape?

-

The ellipse rounds its final arch
While two cups remain deplete
Forever stuck in a bottomless parch
Attempts of quench incomplete

-

Sometimes a crease of small appears
Inviting an attempt to escape dear
Alas a mirage, Persephone's smile can unfurl
With a resolute return to Hades' sad swirl

-

Our capes will never truly shed
Paths diverge but pain abreast
The only option, regardless of dread
Bequeath it at once to Pandora's chest

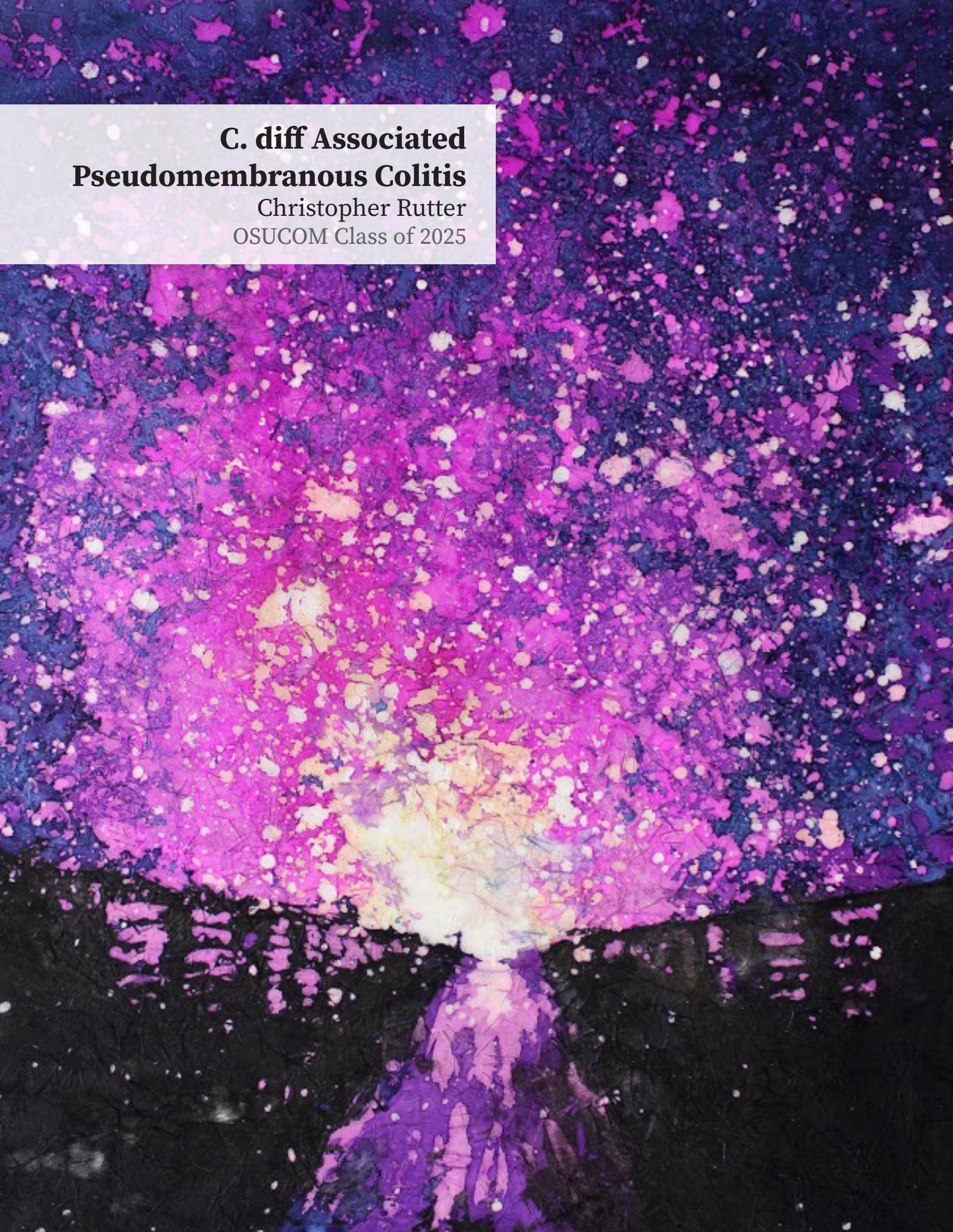
-

The time may come for lock to hug key
For now, an unwilling adieu I must bid thee
As sound as your carapace may currently seem
Inside love flows freely, fulfilling thy sweetest of dreams-

Sunset Sails

Justine Schneider

OSUCOM Class of 2024



**C. diff Associated
Pseudomembranous Colitis**

Christopher Rutter
OSUCOM Class of 2025

Time Travel

Kavita Ramnath
OSUCOM Class of 2025

What a marvel it would be,
To travel through space and time.
To observe the stages of life,
See where fate has taken us.

Time travel: a lucrative project,
Taken on by many.
Yet no one has found,
The tools to succeed.

But, I discovered a little secret,
Some time ago at work.
While I roamed the hospital halls,
Trying to find a reprieve from the monotony of notes.

I peered into the first room: celebration of a birth.
The second: a teenager recovered from a broken ankle,
Third, a wife held her husband's hand as he received cancer treatment
Finally, I saw an elderly couple hold hands as they left the world together.

And I realized time travel was possible after all.

Ephemeral

Caroline Lehman

OSUCOM Class of 2024

Even in the city

The thistles reach their spiny hands out to the bees
In the shade of slender branches that embrace the sky
While birds sing songs of gratitude
For their resting place

Even in the city

Downy rabbits rustle shyly under leaves
Where nematodes move in harmony with the soil
And cicadas whisper that night is near
While the clouds set the sun
Gently down

Even in the city

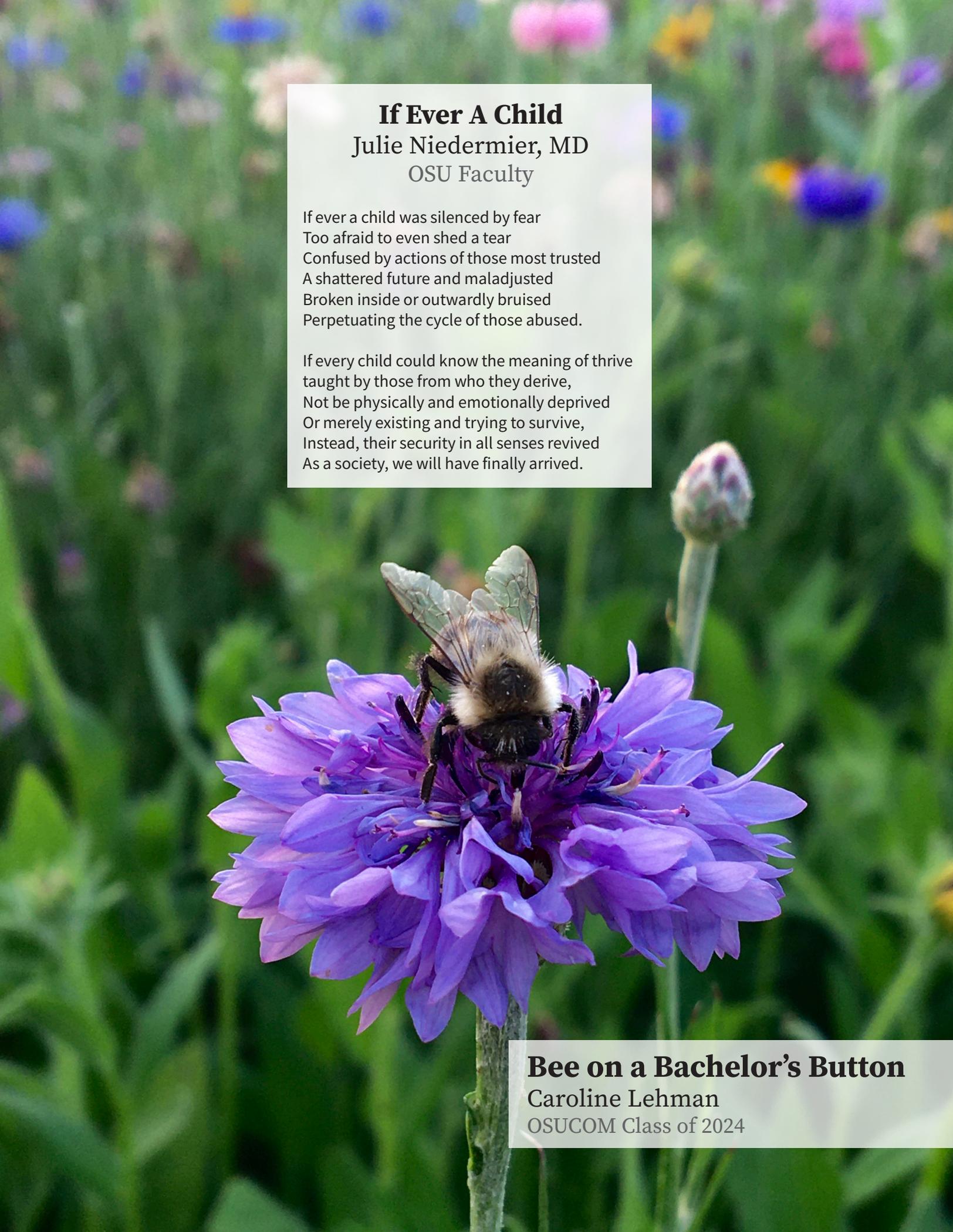
Ivy climbs defiantly over stone and metal
Reminding us that our struggles are ephemeral
While each tiny pulse
And molecule of chlorophyll
Tell the story of a Force that will exist long after
The tallest tower crumbles



ducklings

Olivia Shao

OSUCOM Class of 2026



If Ever A Child
Julie Niedermier, MD
OSU Faculty

If ever a child was silenced by fear
Too afraid to even shed a tear
Confused by actions of those most trusted
A shattered future and maladjusted
Broken inside or outwardly bruised
Perpetuating the cycle of those abused.

If every child could know the meaning of thrive
taught by those from who they derive,
Not be physically and emotionally deprived
Or merely existing and trying to survive,
Instead, their security in all senses revived
As a society, we will have finally arrived.

Bee on a Bachelor's Button

Caroline Lehman
OSUCOM Class of 2024

The Word of God

Jodie Makara

OSUCOM Class of 2023

“Thanks be to God”
I close the holy book
All eyes on me
As I bow before the alter
Dressed in my white alb
A symbol of purity
In body and soul
Only 2 years before my birth
Were female bodies allowed to serve
I’d hate to tell them now
My body and soul is nonbinary
Are queer bodies considered pure
In the eyes of the church?

Lucky for me I didn’t yet know it
When I fetched the bread and wine
In those years of serving
I grew closer to God
More than Sunday school
I learned discipline and respect
Before learning how to love

Every drop of blood cleaned off the chalice
Handles pointed correctly
So Father could work efficiently
I was supposed to love God, but
I was figuring out how

Love thy parents
But they were not the first people
I learned to love
I carried the weight of the cross
Sometimes slipping from my young hands
In preparation for years of
Heavier burdens to come
Respite came with the donation basket
So much giving, yet so much hate
Confirmed under the name Sebastián
Patron Saint of athletes
And maybe the gays?

Speculation I’ll gladly take
Now years later
Hair shorter, voice deeper
Chest just as flat again
I am closer to the “noble tradition”
Altar boys serve the Lord
I still honor God
Even though the church says I’ve sinned
I carry pride with me everyday
I still serve God
Even when I’m not in his place of worship
Through serving
I found new peace in my body
And love in thy soul
“Thanks be to God”

Midnight, Lisbon

Richard Orlando, MD
OSUCOM Class of 1979



Skies

Antoinette Pusateri, MD
Gastroenterology Fellow

Hypothesize.
Analyze.
Prioritize.
Synthesize.

Then at 10:36,
pupils fixed,
She dies.

Capsize
my heart,
as I hear her family mourn.

Disguise
my pain,
as I recall the Oath I've sworn.

Oh agony!
Does the Oath imply I
cannot cry?

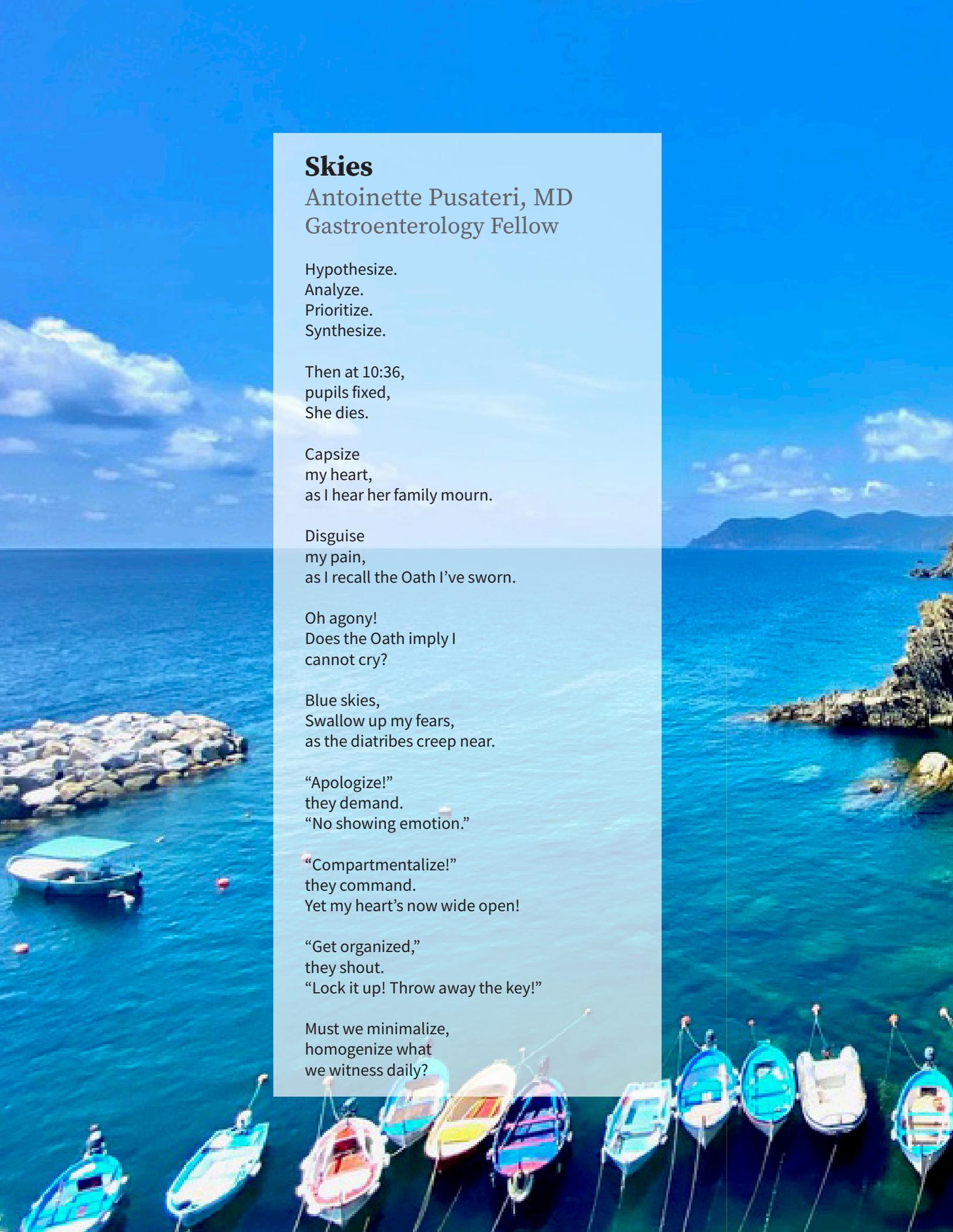
Blue skies,
Swallow up my fears,
as the diatribes creep near.

"Apologize!"
they demand.
"No showing emotion."

"Compartmentalize!"
they command.
Yet my heart's now wide open!

"Get organized,"
they shout.
"Lock it up! Throw away the key!"

Must we minimalize,
homogenize what
we witness daily?





Let me drive da boat

Kateri Schoettinger
OSUCOM Class of 2025

Honorable Mention, Photography



The Ohio State University
College of Medicine
Office of Student Affairs
138 Meiling Hall
Columbus, OH 43201