

Anastomosis

SPRING 2020 Volume 4, Issue 1

Atrium

Nasal Vestibule

Lingula of Lung

Horizontal Fissure

/A·nas·to·mo·sis/

n. A connection between two normally divergent structures. From the Greek *anastomoun*, to provide with a mouth.

Letter from the Editors

You can watch a Sketchy Micro video about coronaviruses in less than two minutes on x2 speed. In it, a crowned monarch sneezes into a handkerchief. The monarch is robed to remind you that coronaviruses have an envelope. The road from his kingdom winds up to his castle to remind us that these viruses have a helical capsid. In the distance, beyond his kingdom, the sun sets.

Meanwhile, the amount of suffering in the world is, at most times, overwhelming. And certainly not captured in our studies. As medical students — people who spend years studying so many devastating diseases that we often turn to curated cartoon mnemonics in order to keep the details straight — maybe we should have learned this lesson by now.

Every once in a while, as much as we can, we need to remind ourselves what statistics often miss — the people behind every number. We need to remind ourselves that these times are as much about solidarity as they are about isolation.

In the Sketchy video for coronavirus, the rays of the sun serve as a symbol for positive-sense RNA viruses. This is a fact, and I hope this fact will help someone someday. For the rest of us, I hope that these pages remind us, as they did for me, that there is so much more to our world today than these simple facts in isolation. And you are worth more than your ability to memorize them.

We would like to thank all of the contributors of this issue. It takes time and courage to share a part of yourself. This issue would not be possible without you. (A lonely Letter from the Editors is a sad, sad thought.) We would also like to remind (ourselves if not others): Attend a protest. Wear a mask. Donate. Listen. Read. Vote. Check in on each other.

We hope this issue brings us all a little closer together and toward the world we are fighting for.



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Eulogy for a Cadaver

1

Julian Howland

Hey You,
you, about whom we know not at all and yet
through and through,
you, with whom we never spoke but with
whom so much was exchanged,
you, whose silent heart we held heavy in our
hands and through whose empty orbits we
peered,
you, whom I call “You” not for lack of wanting a
name, but because I have none by which to call
you.

(And so, we called you “our body”—haphazardly,
as if we presumed to possess you;
yet in some ways you have become our body:
your heart now sits superficial to ours, and
our hearts deep to yours.

And from now until my mind fails me,
when I think of hearts—the ideal heart, heart of
textbook, Heart with capital H—I will think of
your heart. And with my stethoscope touched
to the warm breast of a living patient,
whose heart will I hear through the tube but your
own?
drumming well beyond your exit from this mortal
world.)

I write these words to you after having
gathered all the learning our time allowed;
to you, who gave so much of life beyond your
death;
to you, who will give more life still to those who
suffer and seek our help;
to you, who taught us more about life in death
than in life itself;
to you, who was and is and irrevocably will be
our first patient.

 *Julian Howland is a first-year medical student at Stanford.*

The Sea

Daryn Longman

2



Daryn Longman is a first-year PA student, as an undergraduate she studied Marine Biology at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Natasha Abadilla

CW: intimate partner violence/domestic violence

**Note from author: This was an assignment for my creative non-fiction class, in which we had to describe a room or a person in 700-800 words. I'm sharing it to show how IPV victims aren't a homogenous group; we are intelligent and part of the circles you are in today.*

It wasn't much, but it was ours.

It was a two-bedroom apartment on the second floor of the recently built Morning Star apartment complex in the up-and-coming Thindigua district of Nairobi. Thindigua was an up-and-coming district on the outskirts of too-busy Nairobi. A new apartment complex was opening for leasing every other week then. Unlike the whitewashed districts of Westlands and Karen, Thindigua was where local Kenyans wanted to raise their families, a place where there were people who looked like them, who understood. Johnny was a Kenyan “entrepreneur” who came from humble rural beginnings. Born to a single mother, he didn't have much growing up, but now his translation company takes credit for people being able to change their Facebook language to Swahili. He moved into the Morning Star complex with me knowing that he'd be moving in with a mzungu who “wasn't like the others,” who genuinely tried to immerse herself in Kenyan culture and not just in the tourist experience of safaris and African art. I was proud to have passed this checkpoint in his book. After

all, I didn't spend weeks practicing my Swahili with my slum-kid friends where I worked for nothing.

Our living room was our sanctuary. It was the perfect size for two people. I could stand at its center and take five large steps before one of the bare, pristine walls. I suggested getting some funky art pieces from the Youth Arts Collective near the slums where I worked, but he wanted huge Bruce Le posters. We compromised on bare off-white walls. That was probably the better choice, as the large area rug and curtains Johnny picked were hideous: black with an abstract print of large overlapping gray-white circles. It looked like a 70s print created by someone on acid, but made grayscale and devoid of fun. I hated that rug and curtains but held my tongue.

At the front of the room was a 35-inch TV that Johnny was so proud of. I didn't have the heart to tell him that before I was in Kenya, I lived in Silicon Valley, where only 65-inchers and above were worth even bragging about. We mostly watched Bloomberg News on that TV, with Johnny scoffing at how corrupt the United States was. Sometimes when we got drunk enough, we'd watch music videos – for some reason, many local television networks were dedicated to music videos – and I'd be overcome with classic 1990's and early 2000's MTV

Natasha Abadilla is a fourth-year medical student at Stanford, who will be graduating in five years. She is currently writing an anthology of short stories about her patient experiences as a medical student.

nostalgia. Next to the TV was a side table that carried a printer, Johnny's "must-have" for his home-based company. He was constantly printing out pages of translations of American texts. Whenever it jammed and he got angry at it, I'd quickly become invisible. His books sat on a shelf below the printer. The one on Robert Mugabe, a controversial revolutionary and ex-President, was Johnny's favorite; he adored that man.

Johnny's desk sat next to the door leading into the hallway and kitchen. I don't remember what color it was because papers covered in his hurried chicken-scratch notes almost always completely covered it. True to two of Johnny's vices, there was also either a cup of coffee or whisky ever present among them. Post-it notes littered his computer monitor – ideas for new businesses that never came to fruition while I was there. I can't say much else about the desk because I learned to avoid Johnny's work area.

My favorite part of our living room was the big comfy navy-blue sectional that I was able to get Johnny to splurge on. It was made of the softest of fabric, some kind of a cross between satin and fur, I think. It felt like a newborn puppy's soft coat. Its L shape dominated our living room; being 5'1" I could sprawl across the short side and still not have my legs hang over the edge. I spent many hours sitting on it while working on my laptop. We spent even more hours on the couch together – sharing bottles of whisky, eating traditional Kenyan dinners I so proudly cooked for us, and watching Bloomberg television.

It was on that big comfy sectional that I buried my face into a pillow and cried the time he broke my glasses out of frustration during the Bruce Le poster argument, and the early morning after a long night of work when he hit me so hard I saw stars, and the evening when, after accusing me of not sufficiently washing the pots I had just sautéed onion and garlic in for our dinner, he twisted my left arm so hard I thought it would break.

The beatings were always followed by "I'm sorry"s, at least in the beginning. Our relationship was just so passionate, too fiery, he couldn't help himself. I knew our love was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. We had made a home there, after all. It wasn't much, but it was ours.

Sunny Days, Foggy Mornings

5

Rebecca Bromley-Dulfano



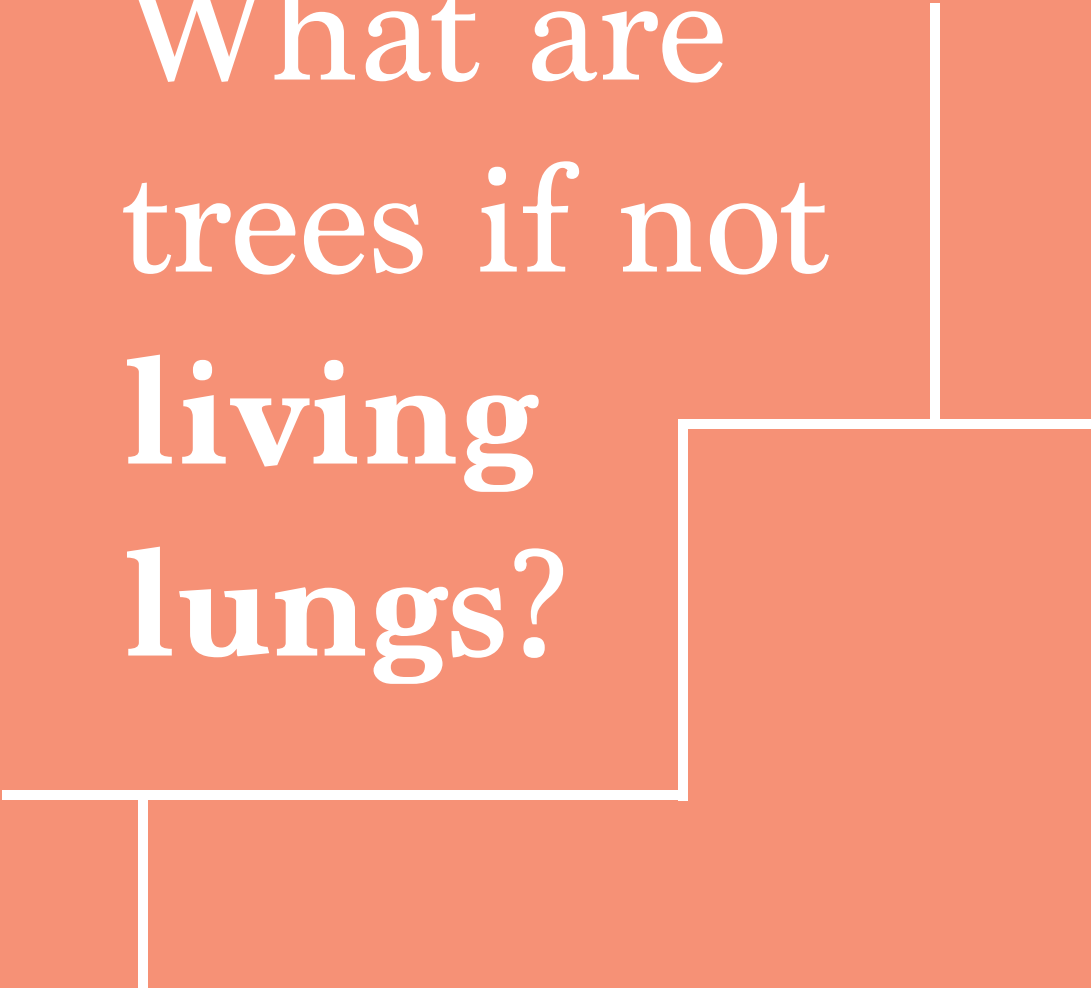
In these 10 weeks, we are learning about the heart and lungs. When I go on runs outside, I am struck by how the physics and the order that governs our bodies are echoed in nature around us.

What are trees if not living lungs?

Sometimes, it feels like there is an almost overwhelming amount to learn. This piece is sloppy, but the haziness is a good approximation of my progress so far. The content is beautiful, but with only partial information, things feel a little out of focus.

”

What are
trees if not
**living
lungs?**





Arborization

Daniel D. Liu

From the moment the first micrographs of the brain were taken, scientists have likened neurons to trees sprouting their branches into the sky and extending their roots into the earth. This painting imagines neurons as trees making up a dense forest.

Daniel D. Liu is a second year MD-PhD student at Stanford.

Developing into Doctors

Aswini Krishnan



“In medical school, we embark upon an exciting path of growth and learning. First-year medical students as fledgling doctors, scientists, and leaders, grateful to be taken under the wings of brilliant role-models and mentors.”

Aswinin Krishnan is a first year medical student at Stanford.

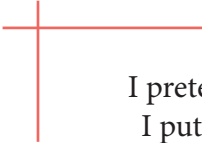
“

Though we tried
everything,
hope is
ephemeral.

Facing Grief: A Patient's Perspective

10

Vaishnavi Rao



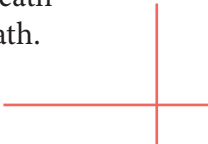
I pretended as if that day never happened.
I put up a barrier each time I remember
the daunting sensation, surge of information,
when I was diagnosed as an aberration.

Yesterday I was fine but today I am weak.
I can no longer do the things that I'm used to.
I'm forced to acknowledge my body is broken.
I want to curse my fate, yet I've hardly spoken.

If only I could have another twenty years -
I'd give the universe in exchange for these tears.
That which mattered before is now peripheral.
Though we tried everything, hope is ephemeral.

Prayers fall on deaf ears. I contemplate my end.
As depression sinks in, I can only begin
to imagine the pain when I leave you behind.
I wish for solace from the depths of my mind.


With the time I have left I shall stay by your side.
When I'm ready to move on, my fears will be gone.
Resigned to destiny, I'll draw my final breath -
for inevitably, all living beings face death.



Vaishnavi Rao is a third year medical student at Stanford.

Joy Doong



The background features large, stylized letters 'A' and 'B' outlined in orange. The 'A' is positioned in the upper left, and the 'B' is in the lower right. A central white rectangular area contains the text.


This oil painting is a visual collage composing of five main segments: a “black-and-white” figure, a colorful crustacean leg, a blurry representation of industrial wires and pipes, a merged landscape of rocks in ocean and upside down sky and a flat area of organized geometrical shapes. To create strong contrast between the segments, I utilized a variety of shapes and edges, employing both organic and artificial shapes along with hard and soft edges. The complicated composition is intended to be somewhat disorienting and confusing, as I scattered many seemingly unrelated elements. The crustacean leg is upside down and hard to identify out of content. The upside down orientation of the sky, minimally revealed by the upside down bird and landscape, is also concealed as it merges with the right-side-up rocks and ocean landscape. I hope my work provide viewers many points of interest to explore and invite them to contemplate ways humans have and can manipulate and engineer natural and biological systems.

Remission

Sedona Ewbank

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My piece is a series of three watercolor paintings which represents my own fears about how struggling with mental illness and the process of getting well impacts my identity and sense of self. Also, more broadly than my own experiences, the profound impact that neurological and psychiatric disease can have on affected individuals' identity is a big part of what compels me to do research in neuroscience.



Sedona Ewbank is a first-year Neurosciences PhD student at Stanford.



My New Child

Christine L. Xu

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Christine Xu is a first-year medical student at Stanford. In her free time, she enjoys playing music, swimming, and making her friends laugh.

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, my boyfriend and I have adopted a child. His name is Hubert. He gurgles mirthfully and grows more bubbly and vivacious every day, secretly under our noses, as we go about our business.

Hubert now sits in the corner of my room. Born just a week ago, this spunky Sagittarius has already proved himself to be precocious. He's a go getter. An up-and-comer. A sourdough starter.

Last Saturday, we pulled him out of a Ziplock bag and placed him gently into a small ceramic bowl. We nourished him with flour and water, and he giggled gleefully as effervescent bubbles rose to his surface.

The next day he crawled up the sides of his bowl, begging and crying for more food. As two new parents who didn't yet know how not to be pushovers, we complied.

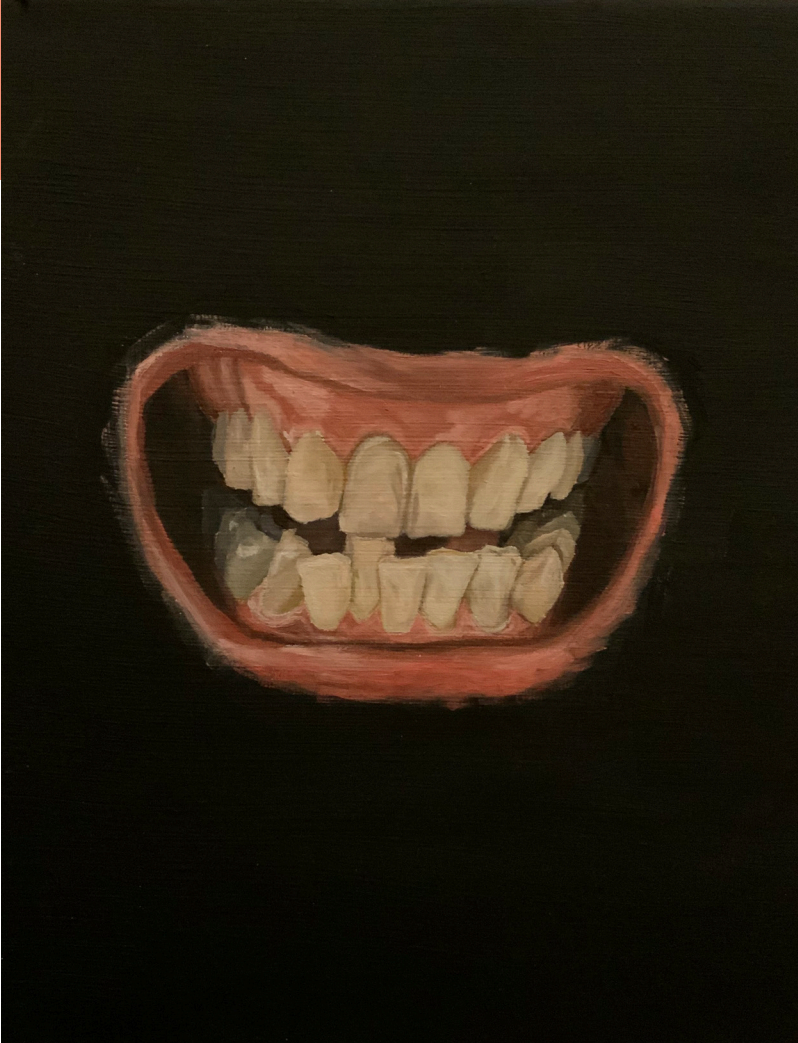
But then, in hushed tones, with Hubert out of earshot, we nervously noted his alarming rate of growth. We discussed new options for his childcare, finally deciding on the kid-tested mother-approved Rao's Homemade jar, a vestige of our dinner from the night before.

He was thrilled to move into his new home. We sighed with relief. That morning, we doubled his meal size. He was so excited that he crawled out of his jar and sprawled out all over the floor, where we found him the next morning. We love our new child. But please, send help.

Bite Me

Millie Trimm

16



British people have bad teeth. It's a stereotype that I've heard many times over my years in the US and was something that

I worried about as a young teenager. As I mixed my palette in the kitchen of my childhood home, I thought about how the events of 2020 have put all of these trivial worries and insecurities into perspective. The owner of the teeth that inspired this painting is someone who means a lot to me. They nurse patients on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic and put themselves at risk on a daily basis. This pandemic has showed us some of the true ugliness in our society (spoiler— it wasn't crooked teeth), but it has also revealed some bright sparks of compassion, kindness, and community. When quarantine ends and we all move six feet closer, I hope that these are the things we'll remember.

Millie Trimm is a first-year medical student at Stanford.

Lemonade

Daniel D. Liu

Daniel D. Liu is a second year MD-PhD student at Stanford.

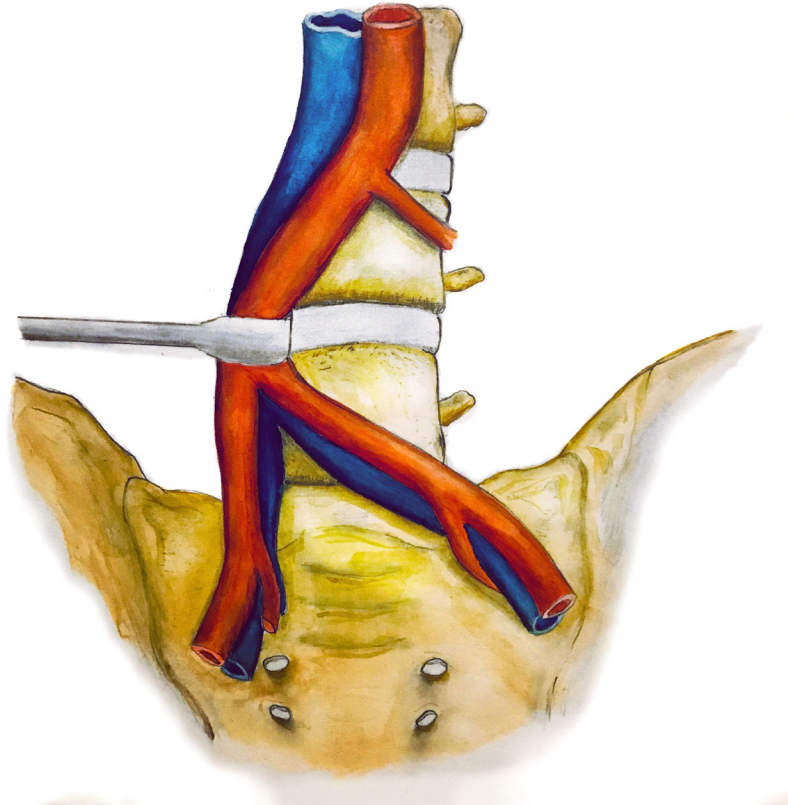
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Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion Exposure

18

John Cannon



I chose to paint this operation because the ALIF procedure requires close collaboration between teams of vascular and spinal surgeons. As a student on 3rd and 4th year rotations it can be tempting to silo the various specialties and subspecialties, but this operation reminds me that medicine is at its heart a collaborative endeavor.

John Cannon is a 4th year medical student at Stanford from Toronto, Ontario.

Deconstructed Anastomosis

19

Rebecca Bromley-Dulfano





“

This image is made from pieces from the last Anastomosis issue. It was meant to capture what I am feeling towards the global pandemic right now. I toyed with different phrases to use, pulling from words together from different piece's titles: "Uncertain White Coats" or "The Ironies of Hope." I settled on what I am yearning for deeply right now - less uncertainty. In the coming months, medicine will need to recover and rebuild; perhaps we don't have to put it back together with the way it was.

”



Untitled

21

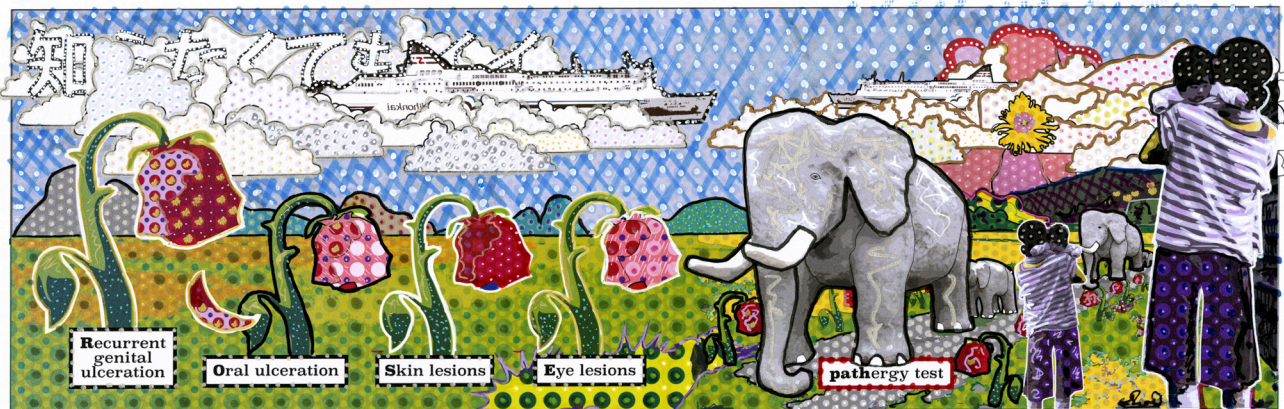
Kevin Lee Sun

I reemerge to
sear again my sheer-thin skin
with kindled sunbeams

Kevin Lee Sun is a third-year medical student at Stanford. He just finished his preclinical training.

Nick Love

Behcet's syndrome, presenting symptoms:



ROSE path

Behcet's syndrome can present with **Recurrent genital ulceration**, **Oral ulceration***, **Skin lesions** (e.g., erythema nodosum, subcutaneous thrombophlebitis, cutaneous hypersensitivity), **Eye lesions** (e.g., iridocyclitis, chorioretinitis) and a positive **pathergy test** (*Oral ulceration is a central criterion for diagnosis). Neural and vascular lesions can also be present.

