In this age of celebrating diversity, it is prudent to also periodically reflect on the similarities shared by people across the globe. There is beauty to behold in every situation, and there are artists belonging to every people group. This year’s volume of *Humanitas* marks its twentieth anniversary, and from the front cover photograph taken in China to the back cover painting created from within our own Charleston, South Carolina, we aim for a greater recognition of the arts as drawing us together from far and near. In keeping with our special twentieth-anniversary theme, we have included 20 of the authors’ and artists’ descriptions of their work.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to the Medical University of South Carolina’s Office of the Provost for annually funding the publication of *Humanitas*. In addition, I would like to recognize Dr. Steven Kubalak, to whom we are indebted for 10 years of service on the *Humanitas* staff, and Dr. Lisa Kerr for their advisory roles. Thank you both for your leadership and truly deep-seated interest in seeing to the success of this publication. Many thanks also to Caroline Duncan, assistant editor, to Tom Hamm, graphic designer, to the student editorial board, and to the many members of the university family for sharing your talent through your submissions. Your contributions to this work are invaluable.

We hope you are delighted as you peruse the pages of this twentieth volume of Humanitas.

Ashley N. Smith | Editor-in-chief

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**CAVE FISHING**

Jason Mack | Student, College of Dental Medicine

For seven years I lived out of a suitcase globetrotting and working as a freelance contractor as an environmental arbitrator.

“What in the world am I doing here?” was a common question I would ask myself. I questioned why I was abroad away from friends, family, and familiarity. And then moments like the one portrayed in this image would remind me.

Cave fishing, Xiangshin Province, South China.

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**FORWARD**

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STILL LIFE WITH PIPE
Eliza Barnwell | Student, College of Medicine

HUMAN BRAIN - THE PERFECTION IN IMPERFECTION
Mira Patel
Student, College of Medicine
A SENSATIONAL MIND
Matthew Husband   |   Student, College of Health Professions

The cars are neatly arranged in a row. Blue, purple, red, yellow, orange. Set down with concentration and purpose. A very smile and purposeful hand flapping exhibit a sense of completion and victory. The sequence is logical. It brings a sense of peace and normalcy to a life of noise and distraction. The day starts out like every other. After the cars are placed, the pictures on the back of the door show today’s schedule. It is a school day, so unfortunately, the favorite SpongeBob pajamas will have to stay in the closet. Oh, the dreaded texture of cotton. Left foot in, right foot in, left arm in, right arm in. Clothes are on, time to head upstairs.

The Lucky Charms box is already on the counter with the Cars bowl neatly placed on the mat in front of the chair farthest from the door. Luckily, mom bought the 2% milk yesterday. Last week the fat-free milk bought at the store was immediately rejected and thrown on the floor.

“Does it really make that big of a difference?” Yes, of course it does. Sitting happily slurping Lucky Charms (the blue ones removed from the bowl), numbers emanate in the mind. 8, 64, 4096. Over and over again. The light from the window sends translucent images that mix into a chasm of color spinning and landing in the empty space of the 0s, 6s, and 8s. Pop.

“Time to brush your teeth and get ready for the bus.” Yes. Mom.

Standing on tip-toes hopping up the stairs one by one, the weight radiating from the toes up to the knees feels tremendously satisfying. Bounding into the bathroom with a little too much force, a perfume bottle crashes to the floor.

“DONOVAN!” Agh, sorry mom. The bottle is so pungent it causes a gag reflex. Pugh. The whiz and hum of the toothbrush is so mesmerizing that it takes several moments to remember that toothpaste has to actually be applied to the brush.

“Come on Donovan, you are going to be late.” Yes. Mom.

After making sure to watch the toothy timer hit 0:00 it is time to put on the backpack and head to the bus stop. The bus labors down the road, the brakes creaking, creating an awfully high pitch. When it comes to a complete stop, an incessant beeping tells the whole world of its presence. With instinct, the hands cradle tightly over both earlobes. Entering the bus is the most daunting part of the whole experience. Everyone is chattering and moving about.

“Remember. Count to 5 and take deep breaths. 1, 2, 3…” The submission is a prose piece about the mind of a child with autism spectrum disorder. The title reflects how sensations are perceived and modulated in a way that is unique to this pediatric population. I hope this piece shows the complexity of thoughts in a mind that is always working.

The cars are neatly arranged in a row. Blue, purple, red, yellow, orange. Set down with concentration and purpose. A very smile and purposeful hand flapping exhibit a sense of completion and victory. The sequence is logical. It brings a sense of peace and normalcy to a life of noise and distraction. The day starts out like every other. After the cars are placed, the pictures on the back of the door show today’s schedule. It is a school day, so unfortunately, the favorite SpongeBob pajamas will have to stay in the closet. Oh, the dreaded texture of cotton. Left foot in, right foot in, left arm in, right arm in. Clothes are on, time to head upstairs.

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“Remember. Count to 5 and take deep breaths. 1, 2, 3…”
A handshake can be a powerful symbol. The handshake is a form of greeting and respect toward another person that can act as a gateway into a conversation. It is great to sit back and think of the physical acts we engage in on a daily basis like the handshake, why we do these certain actions, and how our body works internally to make it happen.

This drawing, “A Firm Handshake,” displays the underlying anatomy that allows each of us to engage in handshakes every day.

We followed our Navajo guide as we chased the light beams deep within Antelope Canyon.
HORSE ISLAND
David Williams
Student, College of Medicine

I captured this image of the wild horses of Horse Island off the coast of Beaufort, NC where these horses have been living independently hundreds of years.

MOORING LINES
Thomas L. Hamm II | Staff, ITFR

Sitting aboard the ferry across the Sound to Ocracoke, I spied this knot just next to our car as we waited to get underway.
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WOMAN IN INDIA

Dimpi Patel | Student, College of Pharmacy

The role of a woman in India is typically thought to be that of a housewife who cooks and cleans and takes care of the children. This picture is of my grandmother who has embodied much more than that role throughout her lifetime.

When she married my grandfather, his parents had just died, and they were both left to take care of his eight brothers and sisters. Together they built a farm out of a forest with their bare hands and put each of his siblings through school and college, sacrificing their own education.

Even to this day, my grandmother makes rus, a dessert, from the mangos they grow in their farm. She and many other women in India have made lives for themselves that far exceed the role of a housewife, and this is what it means to be a woman in India.

AN ENUMERATION OF MY THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST DAY OF GROSS ANATOMY

Emma Kofmehl | Student, College of Medicine

Let me preface this with a confession: I am not completely on board with death*. It would be easier to say that I am “afraid” of death or that I “try not to think about it” too much, but the reality is slightly too complicated to fit in either one of those camps. The reality is that I do think about death, I am profoundly interested in end-of-life healthcare, and yet if I think about what dying means with too much chutzpah I find myself transformed into Alice falling down the rabbit hole of: Why am I here? What is nothingness? What is the meaning of life? This warren is simply too deep, too obscure, and too tortuous for my young and exhausted medical-student mind to grapple with, and so I have come to a tenuous stalemate with the mystery of death. I acknowledge that I do not have any of the answers but one - that I will die - and that a more fruitful use of my time would be to make the lives of others and my own as fulfilling and happy as I possibly can.

This acknowledgement aside, I admit that I do sometimes feel a little nervous when the meanderings of my mind begin to follow paths that skirt the lip of the abyss. I believe it to be only natural - at 24, I should be decades away from my own demise and thus the fear of a life unlived is to be expected. I also don’t enjoy the feeling of mental defeat; I enjoy finding answers as much as the next person. And so it was with a sliver of trepidation that I pointed my feet in the direction of the anatomy lab and started to walk forward, my path guided by my prevailing compulsion of curiosity, on the day we first met our cadaver.

After navigating the pandemonium of the locker rooms we piled into a single, rickety service elevator that filled me with absolutely no confidence that I would survive the summit to the sixth floor. The elevator did, however, take my mind off of the pomegranate seed-sized knot of anxiety that I couldn’t help but notice as I changed in the locker room earlier. We all arrived in lab and milled about looking for our tables, arriving at them in time to hear about lab protocols and pretend that we all weren’t far more interested in what was inside the black bag in front of us. When we were given the go-ahead, two of my table-mates unzipped the bag; I was not one of the two, given that I was too busy holding my lab partner’s hand to ground me in case I needed it.

Our cadaver is a woman. Was a woman? After months in the lab I am still not quite certain which tense to use,
but she was a woman alive in the world for many years, and now she is a deceased woman who had the courage and the generosity to donate her body to the education of young medical students.

Of average height and average build, she could be anyone’s grandmother, anyone’s daughter, anyone’s neighbor, and anyone’s friend. We receive no information about our cadaver’s life before death and so our introduction to her feels conspicuously one-sided.

At the same time, we do know a few things: we know our cadaver was a woman who valued medical education, and we know that just a few hundred years ago, we would never have been granted the privilege of this experience. We know that we can respect our cadaver best by learning from her and by becoming the best doctors we can be thanks to her tutelage.

As I met our cadaver I felt none of the tightness my chest had expected to feel when facing one of my oldest quandaries head on. Rather, I felt calm and yet struck by the odd dichotomy that she could look lifeless in that malapropos, industrial black bag before me and yet be the example from which we, her inexperienced pupils, would draw so much of our understanding of life. Once all of us had taken a moment to meet our cadaver and settle in to the scene, we struck up conversation about what we should call her.


Based on her age, we thought maybe a name associated with an older generation would be appropriate, if it can ever be appropriate to call someone by a name they likely never went by in life. “Margaret” seemed fitting and respectful, and so we mulled over that as a potential moniker for her as we stood around and awaited further instructions.

While we waited, the six of us new anatomy partners discussed the privilege of having this opportunity, and how we wanted to be respectful of the woman who had so selflessly donated her body to our education. One of my lab partners drew to our attention to the idea that we will likely remember this woman every time we think about anatomy or explain what gross anatomy was like for the rest of our lives.

As the rest of us all nodded our heads in recognition of his statement he suggested, “Why don’t we call her ‘Professor’?”

Immediately I felt what can almost be described as relief streak through my heart. I wanted to respect this woman – we all did and do, of course – and I wasn’t sure if the best way to do that was to name her or not name her at all.

Calling her “Professor” felt just right.

As our introduction to the lab and to our cadaver came to a close we carefully tucked her in under a sheet, zipped the bag back up around her taking care to not catch the sheet in the zipper’s teeth, and bid our Processor adieu before stepping out of the building into the stifling, wet summer air.

I’m glad we students got to have a moment to meet the cadavers before we began to dissect for two reasons. The time we spent in the lab that day quelled my seed of apprehension and reminded me of some words I seek to live by, courtesy of Stephen Grellet: I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again. The experience also humanized the Professor immeasurably, ensuring that we will treat her with the respect she deserves for the rest of our time learning from her.

She is not just a specimen. She is a mystery, like every human. She could have been wonderful or terrible; she could have had ideologies in direct opposition to my own or exactly the same and we’ll never know. However, she was a living person, and she cared enough about education to entrust her body to us after her death. I hope she doesn’t mind being called “Professor”.

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PILLS OF POVERTY
James Segars
Student, College of Medicine

This is a drawing I made in December 2015.
Based on a picture published by the Romeo Dallaire Children Soldiers Initiative, it depicts a child forced into military conflict.
It is done in graphite and reproduced with permission of the photographer.

VOICELESS
Brianna Williams | Student, College of Health Professions

Look into my eyes and attempt to understand,
My life changed in an instant, all of it unplanned.

Although I can’t speak I think just like you,
Take time to talk when just passing through.

But don’t talk so fast you finish my sentences and words,
Is it too much to ask, just to be heard?

During therapy I listen to conversations and laughing,
Won’t you include me; it’s not brains that I’m lacking.

You look everywhere – ceiling and floor,
You may feel awkward, but must you ignore?

At the end of the day if you must be all knowing,
It’s family support that truly keeps me going.

Simple one-sided conversations on the phone,
Is a constant reminder I am not in this alone.

So next time you run into someone like me,
Exercise patience, compassion and let me be free.
GOING TO FISH
Rupak Mukherjee
Faculty, College of Medicine

This photo of the fisherman was taken at a beach just north of Chennai (Madras), India. The fisherman appeared to be headed to an estuary to place his nets and ensnare his family’s next meal. In the meantime, he left a trail of footprints – a trail that would surely be erased by the next wave.

This photograph is a metaphor for going about one’s business without regard to the potential interruption imposed by a pesky photographer.

SAILBOAT
Laurene Cunningham
Kitchen Supervisor, Main Hospital
“Atomic Number 20” is an acrylic painting on an 11” x 14” canvas. It is named after the shell’s primary component, calcium.

I was struck by the leading lines of the 526 overpass on Daniel Island and decided to take a photograph of it. I had been standing there for a couple of minutes contemplating how best to frame the shot I wanted when I saw these three boys heading home from the soccer fields nearby. It was then that I was struck by how small we are as individuals, but how large of an impression we can leave on the world.

Jordan Denski
Student, College of Pharmacy

Alex Holt
Student, College of Pharmacy
SUNSET FROM THE BATTERY
Morgan Morris | Student, College of Graduate Studies
I reach for you. Reach and reach and I’ve never stopped.

From the days of us sitting on almost-white floors surrounded by almost-white walls only one of us talking as we eat our sandwiches to the years of waiting for the “go” of green pixels and any word.

Your flight didn’t surprise me. You’ve always been far, and I’ve always been reaching.

I know you’re out of reach, but I’m greedy. I want all of you.

Because inside my heart you’ll be safe; we’ll be safe. It’s warm there, I promise.

I’ve made a nice nest for you: years of picking up stray pieces, dirty or clean, belonging or not belonging - all for you and of you. But you won’t come. You don’t need it. You never have.

I’m the one who needs and in a way neither of us can understand.

You build no nests. At least not for me. And yet you’re always flying in some unreachable space and sometimes I think you’re falling but I can never really see you.

Is it that you’ve gone too far or is my vision just not good enough? Not good enough.

I find a loose feather and add it to the whorl. I’ll keep it ready. Always.

And I’ll keep my hand raised for when you want my answer to perch upon.

Almost 20 years ago, I purchased a painting off of Ebay, back in the days when you could view ALL of the paintings for sale on Ebay in maybe 1 hour. This Southwestern artist, Shawn Rossiter, had many paintings listed, but the painting “Las Trampas Night” reminded me of Van Gogh’s “Starry Night,” so I purchased it. That painting still hangs in our house. So, on a vacation to Santa Fe area, I realized that the real Las Trampas Mission was nearby, so we took a trip to see it. I didn’t tell the family what we were up to, but they all immediately realized that the mission in front of them was the one in a painting at home.
This is a photograph of a fence near my apartment on Bee St. It was an attempt to isolate two of the X's of the fence's pattern to represent the 20th volume of Humanitas. The light was playful and I found the bushes behind the fence particularly attractive with their Christmas lights.
LOOKING BACK
Emily Hutson | Student, College of Medicine

HUMMINGBIRDS
R. Allen Sharpe | Resident, College of Medicine

Two hummingbirds in pursuit of food nearby. Monteverde, Costa Rica.
DON’T BAT AN EYELASH
Kimberly Fender | Student, College of Medicine

SLEEPY SNAKE
Kenny Vaden | Faculty, College of Medicine
EVENTIDE
Hope Friar
Staff, OCIO

LITTLE OAK ISLAND
Joy Lauer
Faculty, College of Nursing
RE: THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY
Michael Knowles | Student, College of Health Professions

The beauty of the human mind comes across the pages of paper
His vibrant life ripped away in a moment
Replaced with endless solitude and longing
To walk beside his children,
To taste again a delicious meal
Oh, to have seen them then for what they are
Glimpses of beauty and meaning in a broken world
And all he – and we – are left with is
A glimmer of hope
As delicate and elusive as the wings of a butterfly

This poem was written for a humanities assignment in my pediatrics class. Dr. Cindy Dodds had all of her students read a book entitled The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, a memoir written by a French gentleman, Jean-Dominique Bauby, who acquired locked-in syndrome (a neurological condition where one cannot move or speak but is still present cognitively).

Mr. Bauby is able to dictate painstakingly by blinking one eye. The book impacted me as I consider the way that I treat patients who may not appear to have a high cognitive level. One really never knows “what is going on in there.” This poem was a response to how the book made me feel and the lessons that I took from it.

LETTER TO POP
Bradley Krisanits | Student, College of Graduate Studies

Pop,
I thought about you today,
You sitting at the table,
My eyes all in amaze.
As you tell us your story’s,
Saying, “Back in my day…”
Coffee in hand,
Cigarette in the tray.
We talk sports and school,
Just wasting our day.
Jokes were always cracked,
And the smiles always stayed,
But I didn’t know,
I treated every talk the same.

All those times I said,
“I’ll stop by tomorrow.”
And “It’s always the same,”
I didn’t know,
I was wasting our days.
Cause you were dying,
And now I’m in shame.
Those times are gone,
It will never be the same.

But, when I come to visit,
My eyes are still in amaze.
Cause I tell you my stories
Saying, “Remember that day...”
FREE BAY
Bradley Krisanits
Student, College of Graduate Studies

As I drove down the curvy coastal roads of Dunedin, New Zealand, I took in a lot of the sights and scenery. Among one of these sights was an open bay. Within this open bay was a single boat, pointed outward away from the shore.

FLIGHT
Lisa Graves
Staff, College of Medicine

The lowcountry is a haven to magnificent vistas and home to some of the most beautiful birds. The painting "Flight" depicts one of my favorite fowls, the blue heron, soaring over the harbor.

For my months of travel in this beautiful country, I could not find a more surreal moment to describe how it felt to be there. This single boat on its own was facing a beautiful bay of adventure, exploration and freedom. As I myself was facing these feelings and more everyday, the boat, as I was exploring uncharted waters, not knowing what to expect, but hoping for something beautiful. Knowing one day we would both return to our known shore with memories of a glorious voyage of adventure and freedom, we sailed through along the way.
“Blue” is a therapy horse who works with the staff at Lowcountry Equine Assisted Psychotherapy on Wadmalaw Island. This non-profit organization utilizes the telling interactions of horses with human patients to understand and treat behavioral and emotional issues, with stunning results.
ON THE CHARLESTON HARBOR

Jessica Dinh  |  Student, College of Graduate Studies

1879

Hope Friar  |  Staff, OCIO
there lay a small, one-roomed grocery store in a north-end Spanish-Italian neighborhood

a tiny bell on the door announced each customer inside:

oil cans, soup, cereal, sacks of flour, strings of sausage—air was a spicy fragrance, a flavored aroma of meat piquancy;

Storekeeper: Felipe Gonzagas: brown and lean with a stringy leanness of youth; but his graying hair spoke his age, boisterously true

“you know what he say once?”: his wife murmured: deep, rich voiced that strung together her broken english into harmony

“Once he say—an’ I ain’t forget it—that it is more happier for him to sell foods for to make people live, than to cut stone to make memories of dead people. An’ he is right, yes?”

As she trailed on, her eyes rested affectionately; proud of her husband

My poem, “Aged Old,” was actually first written during my high school years. We had an assignment to write a poem using history archives. At first, I dreaded the idea, but this has stayed one of my favorite poems that I’ve written. I wanted to focus on something simple, but meaningful, and also personal. I have been reworking and revising this poem for years – and it has definitely changed tremendously – but my goal was always to keep the simplicity and beauty of the human connection in it.

ST MICHAEL’S BY MOONLIGHT

I painted this for my stepdaughter and son-in-law. They had a frame they wanted to use in one of their guest bedrooms and asked me to paint something in black and white that signified Charleston.

“St. Michael’s by Moonlight” was the result. It is acrylic on black foam board, 12 x 16.