

The Red Wheelbarrow

THE 2021 LITERARY
AND ARTS MAGAZINE
OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF VERMONT LARNER
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE



The University of Vermont
LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE





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so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

"THE RED WHEELBARROW"

William Carlos Williams, M.D.

Published in *Spring and All* (1923)



mission

The Red Wheelbarrow is the student-run magazine for the literary and visual arts at The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at the University of Vermont. Named after physician-writer William Carlos Williams' poem, "The Red Wheelbarrow," our publication aims to capture, cultivate and explore the creative endeavors of the medical and scientific communities—past and present—here at UVM and its clinical education partners.

The Red Wheelbarrow encourages submissions related to the medical humanities—an interdisciplinary field that strives to contextualize and interpret topics including, but not limited to, the medical profession and education, and human health and disease; however, our publication remains inclusive of all ideas and artistic pursuits outside the scope of the medical humanities.

The Red Wheelbarrow is published annually, and welcomes submissions from all members of the Larner College of Medicine, UVM graduate health sciences and biomedical programs, and our clinical affiliates.



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ANNA QUINLAN
Class of 2022
Unpredictable



MEL WOLK, M.D.'60
Anti-Covid Macrophage



Apology

JULIA PURKS

Class of 2023

Can we forget that thing I said?
Because,
Even though I said it—
In loud, fluent, articulated, coherent, linear speech—
I didn't really mean it
And,
Well—
It could be the case that I meant the opposite
And,
To explain how that happens
Would require a certain math
In fact—
A certain calculus
That goes back fifteen years
(At least)
And still bends
To algebra written
By a small, frightened animal
Who couldn't have known

ISI BEACH
Class of 2022
Perspective





ANDREW DESLAURIERS

Class of 2023

*Mt. Mansfield from the HSRF 310
Study Room and opposite,
Alex Cavert '23, looking toward
the HSRF 310 Study Room from
Mt. Mansfield*



Internship, 1965

SHARON HOSTLER, M.D.

Class of 1965

It was July of 1965. I had a secret.

I didn't belong in Vermont. After medical school graduation in May, I made the rounds of the wards at Mary Fletcher and DeGoesbriand Hospitals. The nurses and doctors smiled, but they'd moved on. They had new medical students to teach, new house staff to train, new patients to be admitted. They all wished me well, even Dr. Lucy.

I had no place to go. My friends were scattered. Jean was still in the Peace Corps in Kuala Lumpur. Mary was married and in North Carolina with a kid. George was in Seattle starting his pediatric internship. I had left New England to follow Alan when he moved to Washington, DC. Now he was an exchange oceanographer in Bergen, Norway. Nellie had one bed. I damn well wasn't going there.

I lived in a guest cottage at Beau Pré in Charlottesville, Virginia. The rent was \$150 per month. My salary as an intern at UVA was \$153 a month. I could eat in the cafeteria and the hospital provided uniforms. I had \$50 left for emergencies from cocktailing on Cape Cod in June. No money to put gas in the red VW Alan left for me. No money to make a long-distance call. No one to accept a reverse charge call.

I wore my white starched skirt and jacket and the required Ben Casey with its damnably scratchy clerical collar for my first day of work on the 1st of July. It was hot as Hades in the newborn nursery where I was assigned for the month. The head nurse admonished me about my flesh-colored hose and my pumps: "You must wear sturdy Oxfords and white stockings." I was not a nurse.

In the Emergency Room, the surgical residents harassed me, called me a “baby doctor” and challenged my competency to treat a snake bite. The attending, Dr. McLemore Birdsong, asked me if I’d met Mr. Jefferson on the Lawn yet and wondered if they had taught me about seizures in Vermont. The pediatric resident in the nursery instructed me not to call him until August. He was studying for his boards.

The patients were divided in the hospital as Black or White, sometimes “high yellow,” Negro, private or public pay, headed to one-bedrooms or wards. On my first day I was scolded for carrying a “colored” baby through the white mothers’ section to reach the “colored” mothers. There was resistance to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that mandated the hospitals be integrated, especially in obstetrics and the nursery.

Faculty wives suggested I had come South to snare a doctor for a husband, that I had no intention of practicing medicine, that I was taking the space of a good Southern boy who will practice medicine and support his wife and family. My landlady didn’t believe that I had night call in the hospital when I declined her invitation to the hunt club.

I understood the messages, loud and clear. New hospital expectations, new language, and new social rules. I did not belong here. Not at the hospital or the hunt club. Not as a single woman. Not as a Yankee woman. Not as a working-class woman.

I had no place to go.

That was my secret.

I stayed.





KAYLA MENENDEZ
Class of 2023
Untitled



SARAH MARSH, M.D.'14
Untitled Flowers





MICHELLE BOOKLESS
Medical Communications
*Camp Toast and opposite,
Vermont by Water*





SHARI ZASLOW
Class of 2024
Permanecer

Weight

A poem about one pediatrician's experience of the recent spike in teenage depression.

SARAH MARSH, M.D.'14

Weight is what they wear on their face, their shoulders, into their shoes—beat up or brand new Jordan's
Echoes, crickets,
Silence, noise is what fills the loneliness of this forced isolation
A crack—the door as I enter, perhaps, I hope a stream of light shattering the darkness
Blinding at first
Blinking, one eye squinting skeptical
Afraid, shuddering they open their cracked lips behind a mask of fabric and of shame and fear
They open the thick iron door to the safe
The safe—what an appropriate name
The safe of their hearts.
They watch, trying to read my reaction—horror? Fear? Displeasure? Laughter? Insincerity?
When I just sit and listen, they open the safe and slowly show me something, something small to see how I react.
They wait and when I don't disregard it, ignore it, shatter it, they trust.
It is an honor to hear them.
Weight—lighter when they leave? I hope.
Weight—heavier when they leave I know is this office
These walls ache, longing for a day—just one—of joyous children afraid of shots, new parents tremulous
with their new honor, stories of a four-year-old interrupted by their two-year-old cousin's need to say
something to the doctor, big dreams, skinned knees, runny noses, without depression.

What Was Lost in Lockdown

LIAM JOHN

Class of 2023



Summer 2019



This piece consolidates the nine-month decline of my grandmother under the 2020 lockdown. Despite living with Alzheimer's for several years and transitioning from independent to assisted living to memory care, she managed to hike and paddle until the lockdown. At the time of her 90th birthday in March 2020, we did not anticipate her dying within the year. Being with family and being outside were the most important things to her. When those things were taken away, she declined. She was isolated for six months; our interactions limited to window visits. When restrictions relaxed in August, I was able to take her outside but at that point she was too weak to do much of anything. By September she was on hospice, which permitted us to visit her inside the facility. In late November she stopped eating. For nine nights my mom and I slept on the floor while my grandmother died –our final camping trip together.



March 2020: Three days before lockdown

WHAT WAS LOST IN LOCKDOWN

What was lost in lockdown
my Grandmother
a prisoner
for nine months
trapped inside
losing her mind

People are getting sick

No wind
no rain
no sun on her skin
stuck inside
with nowhere to go
and not a clue as to why

Stay there
I can't hug you

Face pressed
against the glass
she tried to climb

When will we go on the water?

To be with me
paddle a canoe
hear a loon
sleep in a tent
is all she wanted

We don't want you getting sick
Stay inside

Thin
distant
getting weaker
was she eating?
Nothing I could do

Not the way I hoped
her life would end
my best friend
crumbling in
her worst nightmare



April 2020: Lockdown window visit

"When are we gonna go out for the water?
The water! The water!"

"We are going to make a list of the things we want
to do and when to do them."

"It is just so nice to be outside instead of inside."

"What do we do? Nothing."

"I don't know what to do. I gotta go out."

"I want to sleep outdoors for sure. I want to go out...
because I walk indoors more...you say gee, when
am I gonna get out? Because I wanna do this and
this and this!"

Are you comfortable? "With you."

"One person can do a lot."



November 2020: The Silence

December 2020: Near the Window





PRASANNA KUMAR

Class of 2022

Glowing Dawn

ISI BEACH
Class of 2022
This is Not a Stage



PRASANNA KUMAR
Class of 2022
Starry Dreams



A Break

SARAH MARSH, M.D.'14

A break, a breath for these walls weary with poverty and all that comes with it.

The walls exhale and the roof almost rises a bit

Off it's cracked load-bearing walls

A smile of a baby loved and cared for, tremulous hands of a dad receiving his newborn son just weighed, a skinny little 5-year-old speeds into my office, his brain geared to match his feet, runs to hug me at my desk—his mom 4 steps behind. “The medicine works,” she says. “He can sit still at school.” Reassurance that it's only a cold or a scrape or a rash. One refugee high schooler got accepted to the Ivy League and another won the state STEM competition. I learn the story of a dad who before he had kids took three bullets to save one. A thank you when I was just doing my job.

Breaks, light shooting through the blue-grey clouds. Thank you, thank you for the beautiful moments.

SARAH MARSH, M.D.'14
Wilson's Shadow



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