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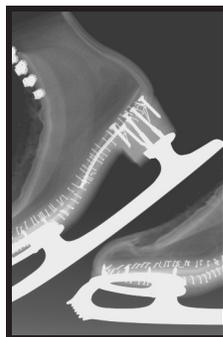


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Radiological Technology

Masood Hassan

These X-ray images were produced at the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences in a learning activity to provide radiological technology students with an opportunity to develop a better understanding of X-ray attenuation and technical factors. This was a highly successful activity, which the students enjoyed.



Masood Hassan is a professor of Medical Radiation Sciences at the Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences. He received a Bachelor of Science from the University of Toronto and a Diploma of Radiological Technology from the Michener Institute. He is pursuing a Master of Health Professional Education and works part time at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center as a technologist.

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Contents

Volume 10, Number 2, 2014-2015

EDITORIAL

Boundaries and Bodies in a Cyborg Era **Lisa Richardson** 1 – 4

FEATURE PIECES

Radiological Technology **Masood Hassan** 6 – 9

December May **Chiara DeLuna** 10 – 18

That Elusive Quality of Life **William Orem** 19 – 29

In the Mouth of the Wolf: Cancer and Its Contingencies
Steven Gore 30 – 32

PROSE

The Unexpected **Joy Wasserman** 33 – 43

Pressing Replay on a Life **William Pence** 44 – 50

The Perfect Day **David G. Thoele** 51 – 69

tick **William Fung** 70 – 71

Cleavage; a Director's Notes **Bahar Orang** 74 – 90

Early **Amitha Kalaichandran** 91 – 96

A View of Palliative Medicine: The Third Option
Anthony Mistretta 99 – 104

Cooper **Gwynyth Mislin** 124 – 132



POETRY

Poetry Collection Mary Helena Rykov	72 – 73
Lament for a Lost Grandmother Joanne Sinai	74 – 76
But how? Joseph Allencherril	97 – 98
Assemble, Like So (Instructions from the Phrenologist's Lover) Daniel Scott Tysdal & Elizabeth D. Harvey	105 – 122
Earache Geoff Budden	123



Volume 10
Issue 2
2014–2015

Boundaries and Bodies in a Cyborg Era

Editorial

Liz Richardson, MD, FRCPC

I am making an argument for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings.

— Donna Haraway¹

In the era of posthuman medicine,² our medical bodies are cyborgs. But contemporary human/non-human hybrids are not apocalyptic creations from science fiction. Our cyborg bodies are subtle. A person may have a porcine heart valve or an artificial retina. She may be connected to a dialysis machine or to a watch that monitors heart rate and physical activity. Healthcare trainees practice emerging skills on simulators such as a mannequin, with heart sounds recorded from a “real” patient, or on a virtual patient on a computer screen.

Contemporary imaging technologies extend a healthcare practitioner's gaze below the body's surface and bring to light its depths to be named, mapped, and shaped by science. In the era of cyborgs and posthuman medicine, boundaries between technology and the body are more permeable than ever.

Many of the works in this volume of *Ars Medica* foreground the theme of boundaries in healthcare, in particular the boundaries between technology and the body. Masood Hassan's photographic X-rays expose the interiors of domestic objects and reframe the banalities of everyday life as wondrous. But the wondrous X-ray images are also expository ones; they remind us about the vulnerabilities of opening up interior spaces for diagnosis, treatment, and judgment by a dominant medical gaze.³ Other works in this edition allude to the patient-as-cyborg: tubes taped to a boy's face during a catastrophic neurosurgical procedure (William Orem), a small plastic catheter entering a toddler's femoral vein (David G. Thoele), a premature baby on a ventilator machine (Amitha Kalaichandran), or the prosthetic breast of a breast cancer survivor (Bahar Orang). Cyborgs also represent hybridity between humans and non-human animals. Stephen Gore's story about the wolf underscores how hybridity may lead to fresh perspectives as we "learn from a world turned sideways." Even the literary trope of *metaphor*, which holds together two disparate ideas, is a figurative enactment of hybridity and its resultant creative possibilities. Anthony Mistretta's biker, a metaphor-

ical patient with a terminal illness, demonstrates how metaphors and hybridity lead us to new ideas as he discovers an undescribed route that offers a different path for the dying patient.

The works in this volume of *Ars Medica* explore boundaries and liminal spaces beyond those of the cyborg and its human/non-human hybrid species. The boundaries between life and death seem mutable and messy due to technological devices as described in Chiara Luna's "Letter from a Dead Lover" or William Pence's story about an audio recording. Joy Wasserman's "Unexpected" challenges the boundaries between youth and age, as her protagonist is diagnosed with premature ovarian failure, a reminder that life stages do not conform to the linear diagrams depicted in a biology textbook.

While contemporary cultural representations of cyborgs may be nihilistic, the works contained in this volume of *Ars Medica* unveil the creative promises of cyborgs, boundary-walkers, and hybrid spaces. They put forward a multiplicity of perspectives and unexpected pairings and, in so doing, explore new possibilities for both patients and healthcare providers.

Reference notes

1. Haraway, Donna J. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*, p. 150. New York: Routledge.
2. Waldby, Catherine. (2000). *The visible human project: Informatic bodies and posthuman medicine*. New York: Routledge.
3. Foucault, Michel. (1973). *The Birth of the Clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. New York: Vintage Books.

