

captures and then distorts her fractured body, her artistic process mirroring the attack of the disease on bone and identity. These images, overlaid with text, attempt to reconfigure the fractured self into new arrangements of meaning.

Between these two works we witness acts across time and geography that seek form out of the deforming experience of illness. The materials and craft garnered from artistic practices recreate the body in various aesthetic guises and, in turn, share new perspectives with audiences, creating collective meaning. It is our collective vision to have *Ars Medica* as a place to share these aesthetic approaches to the body in all of its stages of development, and manifestations of wellness and illness. Too complex to be captured in a single aesthetic category, writers, poets, and artists have rendered the body through the aesthetics of beauty, sublimity, disgust, horror, cuteness, camp, and beyond.

Digital innovation creates ever-evolving ways to expand the repertoire of the means and possibilities for exploring the body. As *Ars Medica* has embarked on a transition from print to digital publication over the last three years, we have also found new modes of understanding both our readership and the art and artists that form this aesthetic community. Google analytics shows readers now as far afield as Nigeria, India, Kosovo, South Africa, and Australia. From Canada we welcome this expanding community. As the graphic above shows, we can also get a quick “read” on the themes and ideas shared by our contributors. In this issue, many words reference the tools of craft—acrylic, digital,

print, photography, paint, and ink—used to convey embodied experience. Through artistic practices, medical words and states such as “cancer,” “drugs,” and “cells” receive transformative treatment, becoming “miracle,” “cherish,” and “profound.”

This range of art form also expresses a range of perspectives. In “A Case for Patient Ownership,” Geoffrey Shouse and Steve Hardin delve into the complexity of the physician’s ongoing relationship with patients after their care has ended. The reasoned arguments of their essay contend with the often uneasy parallel lives of patients who can be “frustrated and suffering in a body over which [they are] losing control.” Cammy S.H. Lee shares her near death from routine surgery in “Naming, Not Blaming: A Story About a Surgery Gone Wrong.” Her narrative goes a way toward repairing the “sudden and dramatic” disruption to both her body and sense of meaning. She quotes Anne Michaels on this ability of words to create new meaning:

If one could isolate the space, that damaged chromosome in words, in an image, then perhaps one could restore order by naming.

As a counterpoint, in “Eating, Sleeping, Playing” by John Vurro, parents experience anxiety awaiting the results of a follow-up for a child with cancer, and the limits of narrative to settle on meaning, incommensurate with their lack of closure, where “whatever the outcome ... we’ll always be waiting.”

Poetry as an art form uses not only the meaning of words, but also their musicality, their arrange-

ment on the page, and the spaces between words to convey meaning. In Sarah Shirley's "Charm," the poem itself is an incantation or spell. Among Virginia Aronson's series of three poems, illness is performance with the poem providing a new stage to explore it. In "Triaging Your Life" she writes:

the waiting
room in stitches, you cracking them up.
You are the crisis.

Similarly, in "Consent to Orchidectomy" P.W. Bridgman's surgeon announces, "it's show time," and the surgical suite of the poem reveals "the cruel beauty masked by the floral-sounding word."

Poetry also allows for the containment of affect. In "An Emergency Doctor's Silent Prayer," Samina Ali confronts the loss associated with being a pediatric emergency room physician. While for Elizabeth Morton the poem itself is personified to contain anger: "the poem spat / and hissed through the gaps / in it's teeth." Schneider K. Rancy, in "The Psychobiology of Feeling," uses the gaps and white space that creates poetry out of words in an attempt to traverse the gap between neurobiology and the experience of feeling. Gaps are also spaces of possibility. Over a span of 500 years of representation, the range of approaches, art forms, aesthetics, and perspectives in this issue of *Ars Medica* reflect what the journal strives to create space for.

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