

ARTS & HUMANITIES

The 2007 Anatomy Ceremony: A Service of Gratitude

II: Poems and Meditations

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Yale University medical and PA students, classes of 2010 and 2008 respectively, express their gratitude in a compilation of reflections on learning human anatomy. In coordination with the Section of Anatomy and Experimental Surgery at the School of Medicine, the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* encourages you to hear the stories of the body as narrated by the student.

ROSIE'S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN ANATOMY

by Tami Brining, Jaime Stewart, and Melissa Studdard
Yale PA Class of 2008

Ingredients:

- 1 generous person willing to give herself, such that the knowledge gained from her one body will benefit countless others
- 2 knowledgeable, passionate, and, most of all, patient anatomists
- 5 curious minds with many “pockets” to fill
- 1 full box of instruments: Kapadia’s scissors, forceps, and a probe — but in a pinch after hours you can point with your finger or the pen that was sitting behind your ear
- 1 door stopper-sized lab manual

Step 1: Mix all ingredients in a large, well ventilated room, preferably under 65 degrees, two times a week for 4 months.

Step 2: For best results, use all five curious minds in equal proportion.

Step 3: Continue to follow the steps in the manual until you see desired structure. In the event of hopeless confusion (due to the door stopper-sized manual), add two more parts of knowledgeable anatomist!

Step 4: Oops! Remember! Objects in cadaver are sometimes more superficial than they appear.

Step 5: Keep in mind that the hands can often be the most valuable tool you have.

Step 6: Proceed with the case until finished or until you are startled by a “YO” (in which case, proceed to step 7).

Step 7: Follow source of “YO” to discover possible substitutions* that will enrich your recipe for success in anatomy

*Variations in the recipe only serve to enrich the process as well as the outcome, so don’t be afraid to venture from the manual! The extent of your success with the recipe may not be immediately recognized, but don’t get discouraged — it’s right there in your pocket ready to be used.

LAB MANUAL

by Nicholas Villalon
Yale Medicine Class of 2010

So learn upon this painted flesh
To drive the longing steel,
To rest your eager hands undone
By the first press of blade to breast.

And from these uncomplaining lungs
Squeeze out the final breath,
Impress your finger's lasting print,
And learn to trust the work they've done.

Hold tight these ribs, this silent face,
But tighter hold the saw.
And teach your palms the force required
To break the body's skeleton.

And when warm skin awaits your hands,
Hands now calm and daring, recall:
They've rid this heap of human shape
And it's rid them of hesitating.

TO MY DONOR:

by Sumayya Ahmad
Yale Medicine Class of 2010

When you were a child, did you watch the night sky
with your eyes, (they are tinged brown, with shades of blue),
fascinated by what you saw?
And as a teenager, did you hold the same insecurities as I,
uncomfortable in your own skin (which is peach, darker around the edges)?
Our professor said that you may have had children.
When you held them in your arms, and there's a birthmark on the back of your
left elbow,
what did your lips whisper in their tiny, soft ears?

I can only imagine the answers to these questions.
I can only wonder, what it was like
to see your smile, hear your voice, watch your brows frown in the sun.
And yet, your humanity resonates far louder than such acts can.

How could I have known the depth of your gift on a Tuesday afternoon,
tired and cold,
in the presence of at first-strangers, soon to be friends?

I only did realize it in the moments in-between, and the moments after.
Feeling my carotid pulse at night when I couldn't sleep,
I thought of yours
and how it bent so graciously toward your skull.

Hearing of a friend's impending ovarian operation,
and imagining yours,
excised so cleanly.

Performing a physical exam and while adducting the hip,
seeing yours in my mind,
its joint moving ever so slowly in its place.

In the beginning, I was told that you would become a part of my journey into
this culture they call medicine;
a right of passage into the difficult years ahead.
But you have become, somehow, so much more than that.
You've become a foundation to the very way
in which I understand the world.

And it has become increasingly decipherable, more complex,
and just a bit more beautiful,
all at once.

POEM

by Dan Heacock, Vanessa Lehner, Courtney Southard, Jenny Willets, Matt Wark
Yale PA Class of 2008

This man was stout of heart,
His body seemed a work of art!
We looked and learned all that we could!
In our memories he will always be a part...

We treated him like a friend,
Because to us his body he did lend
To wander through and learn about.
We knew him end to end.

His life and works we can't say
What kept him going through day to day?
His life is a mystery, not knowing his history
What man who in front of us lay?

The gift that he has left us
Is the opportunity he bestowed
We never will forget this first patient

Because much to him we owe.

It was a noble sacrifice he made
 So that we might learn our craft
 And for that we would like to thank him
 For helping us on our path

We will honor his memory
 With each patient that we treat
 This man with a great heart
 Who we never got to meet.

Nuestro bisturí fué la puerta a sus historias secretas
 En nuestras manos estudiamos al derecho y al revéz su corazón y su cerebro
 Sin embargo nunca sabremos si su corazón alguna vez estuvo roto o si alguna vez amó
 Sus sueños permanecerán para nosotros por siempre olvidados y nunca mencionados
 Ha sido nuestro primer paciente que ha venido a enseñarnos
 Y nunca sabrá de la forma que nuestras vidas ha tocado.

SCIENCE AND SOULS

by Kseniya Golubets
 Yale Medicine Class of 2010

Since childhood, was she a fighter? Since life's beginning, was she her own to keep?
 If children loved her dearly, did she watch them with pride and in their sleep?

Evolution's postulations make us ponder the marvels of the world.
 No one knew her mystic story, even those, who with her, grew old.

Come and find the wrinkles, find the veins and nerves that be
 Endless marks and memories of life that still linger after her soul did flee.

And memories remain in photos and in her husband's eyes.
 No one knew her story, not he, not they, not I.

Did she keep her secrets in a journal, was a best friend her trusty ear?
 Since death, she says no words, nor sings for us to hear.

Out there lies the infinite world of knowledge, of emptiness, and spirituality.
 Under here, lie the inexhaustible details of Latin words and, long ago, even sexuality.

Life comes in a neat little package that succumbs to the enduring blitz.
 Since life and death she remains a mystery, but now she's in a place where the truth she meets.