

# UC Irvine

## Plexus

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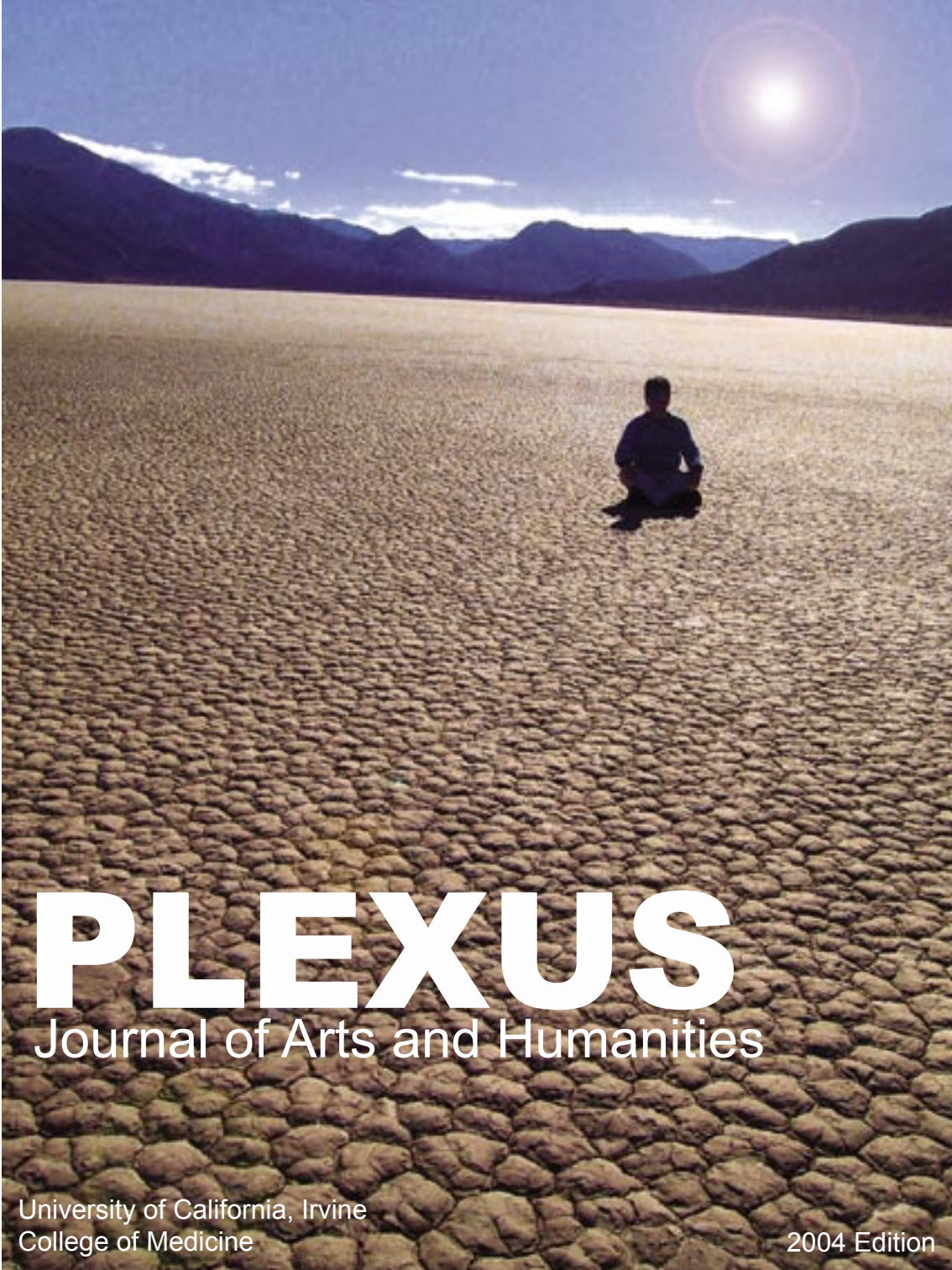
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Peer reviewed



# PLEXUS

Journal of Arts and Humanities

University of California, Irvine  
College of Medicine

2004 Edition



**Entrust in Oneself** Photography by Francesca Staiti, Class of 2006

FRONT COVER PHOTO:

**Desert Solitude**

Trung Minh Thai MD  
Department of Psychiatry

BACK COVER ARTWORK:

**After Hours**

David Finley, Class of 2004



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# PLEXUS

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## Journal of Arts and Humanities

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UCI College of Medicine

2004 Edition

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The PLEXUS staff wishes to recognize the hard work and support of the following individuals:  
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arwani, Carroll Rudy, Bob Hammer, Marcida Dodson, Christine Stoffel, Darren Raphael, Dr. Marianne  
Ross, Amy Shulz, Alice Parsons, Judith Frank, Barbara Lutz, Mark Sellick, and Lora Simmons

“it’s easy”

talking to my wife  
at one in the morning  
about reading poetry  
begetting writing poetry  
then it comes out,  
“when we can watch cable  
while laying in bed  
that’s when I know we’ve  
made it,”  
and just like that,  
a poem  
and then this,  
another.

-Michael Doo, Class of 2004

NOT EQUAL TO THE WHOLE

Pathology  
Study of suffering  
A misnomer  
--These specimens suffer no longer--  
The sum of the parts  
Jellylike in formaldehyde froth  
Arrives in our classroom packaged in plastic...  
Two lungs, two kidneys, a brain, and  
One damp heart  
Blanched, bloodless, beatless,  
beaten,  
Exhibit A.

-Meghann Kaiser, Class of 2006



**Wash Day in Venice** Painting by Betty Wong, Administration Analyst,  
Department of Pediatrics



**Untitled** Photography by Darren Raphael, Class of 2006

## AS SHE PUSHES

silken thighs  
sweat film embracing  
taut self  
as she pushes

the rhythm of the pain  
dances round her navel  
as she pushes

screams of everywoman  
fly round passive walls  
as she pushes

hair turns back  
muscles quiver  
feet reject stirrup bounds  
as she pushes

form into substance  
self into shape  
as she pushes

thought into void  
sound into silence  
as she pushes

christopher into the world  
screaming

-Vanessa Francis,  
Training Coordinator, Human Resources





**Self Impression, February 2004** Painting by C. Gail Ryan, Class of 2006



## A Heavy Plea

There is a ten minute window in my day when I can eat whatever I want and neither of you can stop me. Right after Rosa goes home. Mom is upstairs changing out of her lawyer clothes, and Dad is still trapped in his rush hour commute, another long day in court. I take as much as I can without you ever knowing, or yelling those insults you believe will scare and shame the weight off. I used to time it perfectly. I can be meticulous too you know. Though lately I've been slipping. Dad catches me as I leave the scene. Crumbs are evidence. A peanut butter knife in the sink. And a motive you've tried to understand. Before you asked for help, you used to wonder what made me eat. Finally a subject that left you at a loss for words. After law school you thought you were prepared, but the Bar doesn't test for how to overcome the embarrassment of an overweight daughter.

Teachers say I'm quiet, afraid to raise my hand, afraid to draw any more attention. They say they see how the other kids treat me in the hallway, and at lunch. Your lawyer friends suggested therapy. An insult. But Mom, you were curious, and finally admitted your inability to solve this one. You tried to cut back my diet, overflowed the house with vegetables and fruits, hid the sweets, and signed me up for scheduled teen exercise programs. It wasn't working. My therapist warned of the harmful effects of low self-esteem, and advised you to be patient and kind; humiliation will not make her stop, she said.

Dad, you see me as a challenge, your challenge. This "illness" is something your superior intellect and reasoning skills should help you overcome. Are you helping me though? You prosecute people with problems so much greater than mine, but this is different. This one is personal. And a lack of self-control has no place within your world of order and rigid laws and pinstripes.

You can yell and curse, joke about my weight like everyone else, blame me for how I am, and send me to a shrink. You think this will work? Well I'll only make it harder for you. You catch me because I want you to. The disobedient eating in the kitchen, missing my exercise class, wrappers in my bedroom waste basket. I'm not sloppy or forgetful. It's all done with intent. You want my motive? It used to be no self-confidence, or hopelessness – a continuous cycle of eating because I'm depressed, then becoming depressed because of my weight. Most of the time it was out of apathy and self-hatred. Sometimes it was an escape from my life, from you. Now I eat to mock your futile efforts to change me, your desperate attempts to fix your pathetic daughter. Now, I eat for revenge.

- Savak Teymoorian, Class of 2006



**AND** Photography by Edan Wernick, Class of 2007

TV(mind)Set

I need a revolution.  
I need someone to wake me up and  
change the channel-  
But I just stopped playing video games.

I need inspiration.  
I need someone to show me that  
the world can be seen as grey;  
And not as program, menu, double-click,  
select, start, B, or A.

I need enlightenment.  
(TV) "...but recent polls suggest that  
73% of Americans are  
not in favor of one..."

I need...sh\*t-another commercial?  
The controls are on the...  
(TV) "...try new and improved.....  
...easy.....simple.....worry free.....no mess...  
no hassle.....no thinking.....no thinking...  
.....convenient.....convenient....."

I need convenience.

- Nick Athanassiou, Class of 2006



**Lily 2, San Francisco** Photography by Natasha Shah, Associate Specialist,  
Beckman Laser Institute



**Lake Louise, Banff National Park  
Alberta, Canada** (Opposite Page)

Photography by Jose Ospina Ph.D.,  
M.D./Ph.D. Student

**Synchronicity** Sculpture by Fran Stephens,  
CAM Coordinator, Educational Affairs



## My Cup Runneth Over

Once you get there, everyone wants to know what it's like. Your sister, your best friend, the old lady your parents talk to at church, even the tall red-headed guy who sat two rows behind you in freshmen algebra. Is it hard? Is it fun? Is it better or worse than undergrad? Are the professors nice, is there a lot of homework, are there any hot guys in your class, what does the anatomy lab smell like, are the standardized patients hairy, and how many caramel macchiatos does it take to stay up for 46 hours straight? What's it like? What's medical school like? Well, I've been fielding these questions for almost two years now, and I'll tell you all the best way I know how—all you ladies out there will know what I mean. Just think back—way, way back—to sometime around the sixth grade....

I had signed up with a team of three other girls to run relay for the school track-and-field day. Don't get me wrong—I was never what you might call athletic. I was always more of a "Mathlete" and "Academic Decathlon" kind of medalist. But this race seemed the chance to outrun my reputation. I practiced for hours every day at recess (or for 20 minutes, anyway, since that was all the time they gave us, but you get the point). I had the whole routine down to an art: pick up baton, run, run, run, trip, get up, run, run, hand-off baton, stand there hunched over all casual-like without looking like I'm desperately out of breath-- and graciously accept trophy. I was a well-oiled machine, primed for junior high fame. Then, the unthinkable happened. I remember, my mom had dropped me off for school early that Thursday morning. A silvery blue mist still hung over the playground asphalt, and the slant spring sunshine just dimly warmed my bare forearms. I took off running towards the tetherball courts, imagining the poles to be my awaiting teammates. My fist seethed tighter around the imaginary baton. My shoes smacked urgently over raspy gravel. I could see my goal. But something was horribly wrong. At first I thought I was out of breath. My own gasps bit into me; my chest ached deep with a heaviness, tugging at me, holding me back. All too soon, though, I realized the devastating truth—I wasn't out of shape. Rather, for the first time in my life, I actually HAD a shape. Overnight, it seemed, hormones had found me. And as I looked down, aghast, at the two puny but distinctly visible molehills stewing insolently beneath my T-shirt, I knew—right then I knew—that things were beginning to change all around me.

Needless to say, I didn't win that race, or the trophy. Junior high rushed over me with all the usual drama, but not one opportunity to deliver that grand acceptance speech I had so enthusiastically prepared. Then high school, and college, and pretty soon, of course, medical school, and here I am. So now you're asking, what on earth does my little story have to do with med school? More than you would believe. We all start medical school like that little girl I once knew—striving for great things, intent on the prize, trained and trimmed and ready to win. We come from the biggest and best schools in the nation—we ARE the biggest and the best—replete with the blinding bright scores to prove it. But the moment you first set foot in that underground anatomy lab, fling the canvas off the corpse, and try to find the thoracic duct, well, you know you've hit mental puberty. Acne, armpit hair, and boobs—great big boobs. Weighing you down. Dragging on the ground. Because I may look like a B-cup to you, but in my mind, I'm a double D.

-Meghann Kaiser, Class of 2006



**Swallow-tailed Gull: Wolf Island, Galapagos**  
Photography by Tiffany Chang, Class of 2006

### **First Sip**

Coffee, sweet nectar  
Guide me through another day  
Deadlines stare at me

- Marcida Dodson Senior Editor of  
Marketing, UCI Medical Center





**Iguazu Falls on a Sunny Day**  
Photography by Phil Reich,  
Class of 2007

No Penance

Old man, I know not your name  
And nor who you are

But don't you explain!

I need nothing but these  
Glasses and gloves, so

Please,

Do not try to move me  
To thoughts of your life,

Who you might be

Or rather, that is, wherefore  
Because I really can't care

For

Your fabula vitae, only your corpus  
Is mine now to fully corrupt -

A queer sort of quest,

For secrets and truths, to honor and live  
By, cherish and keep, and to others

Give

This knowledge – a gift! And also  
Receive, and extract the most possible

This day, as it stands

In our way of discovery  
And progress! So proceed I must, believe-you-

Me

To use this tool – and forcing my hand  
Unlock your bare body

Whole wide open and naked

And taking no time to bother  
With thoughts of you as a

Father

Or brother I suppose  
For that matter of fact

It doesn't at all!

So let us get to your door  
That we might start searching

For

What it is we seek  
That surely is hidden

At the center of you, but

Since we're not sure how, exactly – or why  
I'll take this blade now and quietly

I

Will slice you open so wide like  
A fish, or some piece of bread

But having no wine

To enjoy with all this – and now I laugh  
But it's not funny at all, now that I

Have

To do this without even seeing your face  
'Cause it's masked with that shroud

Of surgical wrap

And for all I know you even grinned  
When it occurred to me I might have

Sinned.



**Human Territories** Photography by  
Stephanie Dittmer, Class of 2005



**Flowers** Painting by Sentelle Eubanks, Research Assistant - Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior

“what can pass as a poem these days”

every day  
is filled  
with  
uncommon  
moments worth  
writing about  
but not always worth reading  
about

- Michael Doo, Class of 2004

**Daisy's Comfort**  
Quilt by Daphne Gallagher,  
Webmaster - UCI Marketing



**Stitches** Photography by Nguyen Pham, Class of 2006  
-17-



**Trapped in Myself** Photography by Reuben Chen, Class of 2006



Mr. R., One of a Type

65 year-old white male  
qualified for placement  
alcoholism X30 years  
cirrhosis  
2 packs cigarettes/day X50 years  
hypertension  
multiple small strokes  
increasing reliance on wheelchair

returned to Iowa after many years in California,  
twice-divorced, estranged from his children,  
unstable housing situation, limited social support

dry if not sober, ornery life-long Cubs fan  
the staff likes him because he's a character

Social Security covers the veterans home, health and comfort items,  
cigarettes from the Reservation, with some change to spare

after missing twenty-five years, he sends the daughter  
a blanket for Christmas

she makes the 4,000-mile round-trip, twice  
to gain her own memory of him, then within two years

pulmonary congestion  
bed rest  
O2 - continuous positive airway pressure  
Patient no longer smoking  
>2 liters fluid drained from chest cavity  
differential diagnosis  
mass in right lung  
further interventions refused  
hospice only  
DNR noted

a letter arrives from the stepson in California  
the eldest son in Colorado takes on power of attorney

the Cubs make the National League play-offs  
and lose the pennant 3 games to 4

-Brian McMichael, Class of 2007



**“Mary Dean”**  
Sculpture by Miya Allen,  
Class of 2007



**Grand Central, NY**  
Photography by Vinh Nguyen, Class of 2005



## Driving with My Grandpa

After my grandpa stopped  
being a big city surgeon  
he moved to the Ozarks  
and became a country doc

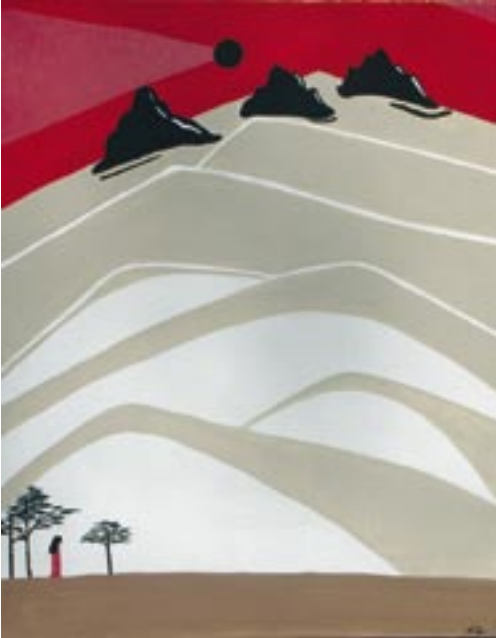
When we visited,  
my brother and sister  
stayed back to eat pancakes  
play dirtball or catch fireflies

I went with grandpa  
in his rickety, rattletrap car  
driving along bumpy, unpaved  
roads that seemed relentless

Grandpa didn't say much  
He had a small smile  
that showed up  
when he asked me if I knew

how to tip a cow  
Mostly the radio blared  
twangy tunes or hell-fire preaching  
which also brought back the smile

One time he drove farther out  
than I'd ever been  
The house was just two rooms  
a dirt floor, no electricity



**Localmotions** (Series of 7) Paintings by Mary Wang, Class of 2006

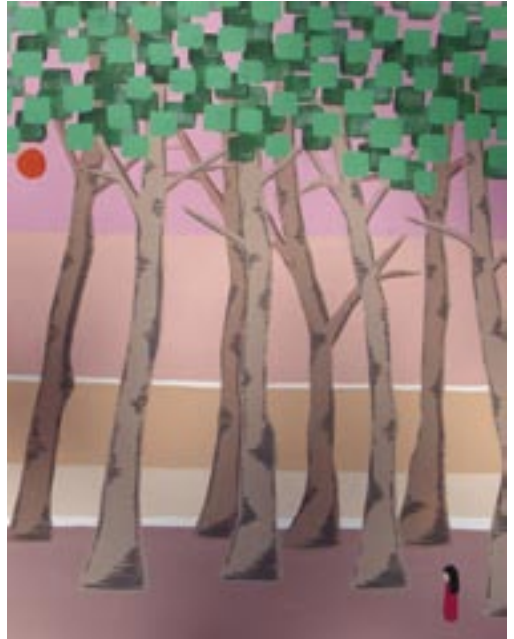
In the bed  
was a woman with no face  
Skin cancer, my grandpa said  
This didn't need to happen, he said

She never sought out care  
until it was far too late  
She was too proud and too poor  
She worked too hard

feeding her men  
and her pigs, sweeping that floor  
till the cancer ate her face  
and there was nothing left

I remember she had no face  
But I remember more  
the way my grandpa  
caressed where her cheek had been

- Johanna Shapiro, Ph.D.  
Department of Family Medicine





**Tesfaye (Future Hope)** Photography by Patricia Lenahan, Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Family Medicine

ICU

6/11/2003

5/3/1914  
(89)

6/11/2003  
405->55->5  
“101.5 x 3”  
150/95, 102.8, 88, 24  
456-6988  
5->55->405

6/12/2003  
405->55->5  
“32!”  
180/105, 103.8, 96, 32  
7.51/52/29/.21  
12/750/.60

6/13/2003  
80/45, 103.5, 120, 12  
7.42/82/38/.7  
12/750/.7

6/14/2003  
02:30 120 96 84 84 70 48 30  
5/3/1914-6/14/2003

482.4  
2:17

- Steven Cramer, Assistant Professor,  
Departments of Neurology and  
Anatomy & Neurobiology

## One Night

Somewhere, thousands of miles away, an American doctor is prescribing expensive medications, maybe even sending a patient home with colorfully-packaged samples. His scrubs may be wrinkled, but they're certainly not soaked in blood; that would be simply uncouth in a US hospital. The ER is clean, with bright lights, boxes of gloves on every wall, and antibacterial soap standing dutifully next to every faucet.

But this same night here I stand, in the blood of a 23 year old man. The ancient defibrillator that refused to respond to Dr. Mwilobo's coaxing has failed him. My untrained hands, which took hours to suture his superficial wounds, but could not halt the rage of internal bleeding, have failed him. The beaded leather thong, wrapped tightly around his right bicep by the gnarled old hands of a Xhosa medicine man, has failed him. His struggling country, which cannot protect its own people from the violence that tears it apart from the bowels of the impoverished townships, has failed him. And now I watch Dr. Mwilobo leave the room to tell Lukunda's mother and younger brothers that their family's provider is dead. Lukunda. The name rolls around in my mind, this man who was born the same year as I. This man who watched me with glazed eyes only minutes ago, who did not flinch from the needle.

I am numb as I pull off my gloves and look around for the dwindling bar of soap that the nurse keeps hiding, because she says the patients will steal it. I think of how Dr. Mwilobo laughed when I told him about bedside ultrasounds. Somehow, I think he wondered at the competency of doctors who relied on machines. I think of how the nurses first smiled at my strange accent, and asked why I would leave America to come here. Everyone wants to hear about medicine in America, but I am at a loss. It seems so foreign now; my previous world of medicine, governed by anatomy exams and standardized patients. I think of my coveted medical education, with state-of-the-art facilities that shape healthcare, surrounded by the rapid unfurlings of well-funded research; the top-rate medical centers and designer antibiotics that have lost their original splendor and are now considered practically a constitutional right. As much as I am a product of this environment, I am dumbfounded by my sudden sense of abandonment.

As I leave the make-shift trauma room, I walk briskly down the hallway lined with dirty benches to avoid the reaching hands that tug at my coat. One woman tries to place her limp child in my arms. I have never felt so helpless. This must be the critical interface where solidarity with the patients is achieved, the most prominent dividing factor between these doctors and ours. Here the doctors accept medicine as imperfect. Death is not a failure, and Recovery is a blessing. They scold their patients, laugh with their patients, pray with their patients. Because they, too, are fallible.

-Nicole Datrice, Class of 2006

Fences

Money

buys fences  
to keep the Other out.

It buses them to the county line  
and leaves exhaust  
flung in faces without names.

And with money comes good  
breeding (sometimes)  
and good breeding  
aches the conscience.

Maybe, tickles the conscience,  
if it was dire.

So to swat the conscience away  
money  
loosens the nail  
of one board  
in the fence.

They can swing it aside now  
if they really need to.  
If it is dire.

And it is dire  
at first  
tide of blood  
blunt  
force  
trauma

They pushed through the  
loose board in the fence  
and left a smear of red fingers  
on the whitewash.

Then came the sniffles  
first a little here and there  
mainly in flu season.

But then the giant dripping nose  
was always there  
pushing through  
the loose board in the fence.

Kids missed school  
all day  
that's how long it took.

The tide of people  
chipped away  
to widen the hole  
splinters pushed deep  
under fingernails  
flecks of whitewash mixed with wood  
and blood

And in the corner  
the conscience sucks its pacifier

It loosened the nail,  
it smacks contentedly  
they can get in  
if it is dire.

- Sarah Blaschko, Class of 2007

**White & Red** Photography by  
Stefano Sensi MD, PhD,  
Department of Neurology







***JAZZ DIVA***

I like it best when she swings into scat

Triple fortissimo  
experienced notes of power  
distant thunder breathed in A minor

Or

Whispers like shock waves  
skin deep sounds of passionate pianissimo  
tremblers  
honey cords  
riffs of vibration unleashed

Talk to me scat static

Moans from every instrument  
float on scores of E minor

An ill wind hid that lush life

Sassy Sarah  
Lady with a song

- Vanessa Francis,  
Training Coordinator,  
Human Resources

**10th Annual Winter Formal: January 23, 2004**  
Ballroom Dance by Jason Phillips, Class of 2007  
and Cathy Hung



Roseanne Bravo '06



Warren Wiechmann '06



Nicole Datrice '06



Nick Moss '06

Class of 2006  
and  
College of Medicine  
Alumni Chapter  
present  
Midnight Masquerade  
10th Annual Winter Formal  
and  
Art Exhibition  
by PLEXUS  
January 23, 2004



Vikas Mehta '06



Lena Schultz '06



Dr. Martin Morris, Alumni



Jonathan Chen '06



Alexis Long '07



C. Gail Ryan '06



**Yosemite** Photography by Jose Ospina Ph.D., M.D./Ph.D. Student

### The Rocks of Ahwahnhee

Cutting through the great divide of the majestic Rocks of Ahwahnhee  
I find solace and peace among the few chirping birds and trees  
Snow packed peaks lie to my west and  
The drying thirst of demons lie to my east  
It is no site to seek service and certainly not a time to give my fleece  
But my comrade is cold and wounded  
And I know of no other gift but my warmth  
The father is stronger and wiser and has seen it all before  
He warms our beloved with fire and tells us we have a little more  
Our comrade is lifted onto our leader's shoulder as we reach above the horizon  
Lifting the pain and anguish from our team's disposition  
We know our closeness overshadows our discomfort  
For we are all doctors and patients and no matter where we are  
Our lives are forever entwined and we must love each other  
We will live our lives together whether in the mountains or the stars  
I need no coat to understand the fear of my brother  
But I will learn from my father for the meanings  
Of compassion and devotion to my patients and my doctors

Life, death and the in-between

A body which lies upon the table  
A mass of tissue, bone, cartilage  
Caught in a tug-of-war between  
its preservation by our chemicals and putrid decay

It is caught between what it was in this life  
On the surface of the Earth  
And what it was once before  
Absolutely  
Nothing

Although it is this mass we study  
Learn meticulously  
hover over and inhale  
It is not  
The dad who adores us  
The mom who loves us  
The man who holds us

It is a mass.

What keeps us afloat in this state, life, is beyond  
any border of vertebra  
any border of pleura  
Beyond all the earth  
and the moon and the sky  
Beyond all comprehension  
by our inadequate imaginations

What keeps us afloat in the space of air  
is just what we can not see  
lying still in a puddle of phenol on a steel  
table

Love  
Between the souls of this existence  
The breath of life, death and the unknown  
Beauty  
Within every soul that blooms  
Desire  
To know the creator of that soul

God

For if we do not acknowledge  
the depth of our own existence  
it only reaches that distance  
dictated between the borders of our skin.

-Roya Saisan, Class of 2007



**Line Poppies** Drawing by Anita Rowhani,  
Class of 2006





## Ocean Song

Blue, infinite, deep and true  
Touches sky like I try to do  
Blue  
Wants to touch me too  
Mad desire fills this ocean, Blue

Warm, ever changing, soft and forlorn  
Carries mood like I tend to do  
Warm  
Holds me close I'm torn  
Tainted memories drown in oceans, warm

Ocean, Show me the way  
To a simpler place, to a brighter day  
Ocean, Take me home with you  
Ocean, Show me your source  
And your destination  
And your sweetest temptation  
Ocean, take me home with you

'Cause like you I'm  
Blue, infinite, deep and true  
I wanna kiss the sky like you do  
Blue  
I wanna touch you too  
Mad desire rages in me too

I'm Warm, ever changing, soft and forlorn  
I carry mood just like you do  
Warm  
Hold me close I'm torn  
Tainted memories drown in oceans, warm

I'm growin' older  
Yet timeless is this ocean's allure  
My eyes are Blue  
Blinded by  
Your salty water  
It stings but still I stay  
Beggin' you, Beggin' you  
To show me the way

Ocean, Take me away  
To a simpler place, to a brighter day  
Ocean, Take me home with you  
Ocean, Show me your source  
And your destination  
And your sweetest temptation  
Ocean, take me home with you...

- Lyrics by Jeanette Waller, Class of 2007



**Ekbalam** Photography by  
Shari Atilano, Research Associate III,  
Department of Ophthalmology

## A Prince of Alexandria

Photography by Dina Seif, Class of 2006



**Remembering Kerala** Line drawing, photo, and stipple  
by Marianne Ross, Ph.D.



### Neural Transformation

Swayed by action potential waves  
Lost in the multitude of his fellow creatures  
A lonely neuron questions the meaning of life.

He was born to transmit signals  
He was born to produce neurotransmitters  
He was born to maintain vital actions.

But, he wondered, where did these signals come from  
And where will they go, he could not answer  
Because the young shy neuron dared not to make synapse.

One day, having more and more synapses  
A ray of consciousness crosses the length of his axon  
And he becomes the image of the whole brain.

Suddenly, his individual and humble life explodes  
And all his being is transformed into a magnificent body  
Soaked up in the fascinating melody of life.

In a sudden, his concept of self is stripped off  
Like torn and worn old clothes  
Both frightening and welcoming is the new universe.



## Reflections

Reflections of the inner type  
Seared with the flames of fire  
No matter how far you reach  
It never fails to require  
The best of you and your movements  
Brings you from up top to bottom  
Makes you forget the meaning  
Of why, where, how to come  
To peace and harmony inside  
The growth that once consumed you  
Hold tight and never release  
For fear that it may leave you  
It is the growth of the soul and heart  
Tormented by surrounding envy  
The hatred, the discontent  
The centered mind of the greedy  
Whether it be in you or others  
It obscures the beauty of existence  
For every step should be taken with caution  
And every decision with persistence  
In the knowledge of hope and love  
And the appreciation of the mind  
By recognizing the reflections  
And never leaving your soul behind

**Portrait of my Pal** Painting by  
Tracy Slone, Class of 2007 and  
Maria Reynoso (Age 9)

*PALS at UCI is a student-initiated adaptation of the big sister/ big brother program that fosters relationships between medical students and chronically ill children or their siblings.*



“Topsy Turvy”

Even such systematic distraction—Fun Centers, polka dotted  
Curtains,  
Clowns roaming the halls—cannot disguise the fact that this  
Is a place very different than home

In this place, open all night, lives are measured  
In tempos of four, and eight, and twelve, and  
A legion of healers clad in cartoon creatures, toil  
In a perpetually still undersea world,

It perplexes,  
Jerry Springer and Martha Stewart preaching their respective world orders to a sleeping child,  
While amidst a steady background of voices, chirps, beeps, and clicks  
A cadence of cries beats on—

Sharp cries, soft cries, cries without tears birthed by the pains of illness,  
Sharp sticks, and a stranger’s probing hands—  
The path to restoration sometimes cuts, and deeply  
A reality still alien to such newly drafted souls

But there is brilliance uncontained within these rooms  
Of love, of the life of youth,  
Of good work done well  
And it is this brilliance that speaks loudest to reaffirm

“Welcome to Miller Children’s,”  
A sign reads upon entry  
Where among the smallest are giants,  
No place for a child to be.

- Michael Doo, Class of 2004

## Changing Perspective

“Let’s play one-on-one!” you shout,  
As we walk together on a beautiful day,  
We arrive to the park and I begin to wonder,  
Do we see your legs in the same way?

I see the effects of spina bifida,  
Legs with hardly any strength at all,  
“Be careful! Does that hurt?” I call out,  
As you relentlessly shoot the ball.

They seem as though they’ll snap in half,  
As you wobble around the court,  
But what amazes me more is the fact that you,  
Seem to think nothing of the sort.

“Let’s shoot three-pointers!” you say,  
And throw the ball with all your might,  
And I watch with wonder as the shot,  
Is 2 feet short in its flight.



**Twelfth Day** Sketch by Gina Gajdos, Class of 2006

Don’t you see your legs aren’t capable?  
I think as I run after the miss,  
Shouldn’t we be reading or coloring?  
Anything but doing this!

I think it hurts me even more,  
As I think of my days as a boy,  
This game seemed to come so easily,  
And was much more fun than any toy.

But you don’t seem to notice,  
That your legs are a handicap,  
You dream of playing in the NBA,  
And beating the 1-3-1 trap.

“Let’s shoot from the half-court line!”  
I guess you don’t see what I see,  
But your unbridled optimism,  
Is a wonderful lesson to me.

You teach me that the real joy is the  
“try”,  
It can be better than the first-place prize,  
And that when you measure the heart of  
a man,  
It’s not related to his shoe-size.

When we’re back at your house,  
You turn to me with a smile,  
“You’re a world-champ Mike!”  
No Ernilo, you’ve got me by a mile.

“Next time, let’s play soccer!”

- Mike Taylor, Class of 2007

## A “Transcript” Of My Conversations with OB/GYN Surgeons

Yes sir doctor, I am a third year. Bobby Rostami, sir.

Thank you for allowing me to watch this procedure, doctor.

Yes sir I did scrub for 5 minutes.

Yes sir I tried to learn the names of the instruments.

Well I don't know, sir, I guess I didn't learn them well enough.

Yes sir, I am stupid.

Thank you for telling me how to do it correctly.

Yes sir, I agree, I hate patients too.

Yes sir, it is their fault for getting the cancer, sir.

Yes sir, I also deserve to get a tumor sir.

Well sir, I don't know why the standard approach for uterine cancer is like this.

You're right sir, this is further testament to the fact that medical students are getting stupider and stupider as the years go by.

Yes sir, I wish I were dead, too, sir.

Yes, thank you for sticking that bloody scalpel in my face sir. I now know how to use one.

Well sir I'm not used to waking up at 3:20 AM and standing on my feet for 9 straight hours.

Yes sir, it does show what kind of a pussy I am.

Yes sir, you're right. I should pray for my own death.

Thank you for praying for it as well sir.

Well yes sir, I do enjoy the sweet savory smell of cauterized flesh.

Yes sir, you can cauterize my intact flesh. Mmmm that smells great.

Yes sir, I agree. I should drop out of med school and become a shoe salesman.

Thank you, sir, for allowing me to watch this procedure, sir.

Ha ha ha . . . thanks for tripping me on the way out of the operating room, sir.

- Bobby Rostami, Class of 2005



**Devil Dog** Pointillism (Ink) by  
Troy Pulas, Class of 2006



**La Mano** Photography by Steven Daines, Class of 2006

### Fifth Column

The tip of my right, ring finger  
begins to ache  
it swells into a tender knob  
hot against my cheek

The surgeon says  
it could be cancer

The game plan is:  
I go under  
they go in  
a biopsy goes to pathology

Depending on the findings  
I wake up  
repaired  
missing my finger up to the wrist  
or missing my right arm up to the shoulder

- Brian McMichael, Class of 2007



## Undulations

I see you through the bandages wrapped around my face, but you are unaware that I am watching. Instead of shaking my hand hello, you slice into me with a steady hand and the sharp blade, newly opened and fastened to your scalpel.

Only the quick, suppressed gulp caught in your throat as you make the first cut shows me you think this is somewhat unnatural. You hide behind your goggles and gloves, but my essence creeps deep into your lungs and becomes part of you. My layers imprint on your mind. You caress my lungs like a lover, but my lovers could never reach so deep inside.

You own me, I gave myself to you, but I own a piece of you as well. You didn't count that as part of the bargain when you filled out all of the application forms and shook hands and smiled on interview days. You didn't think about me then, just fleeting thoughts on where our visitation rights would take place.

You must think about me now. You are required to. It is part of the course. You took out government loans, groveled to mom and dad, and sold your soul to the Ph.D. program so I could be part of your life.

Don't fail me now. Don't become too familiar even though we are intimate. I know you think I am fat. And cold. And old. The people who love me don't mind. I led a rich life. Besides, I'm just watching. I am not making any judgments about you.



-Sarah Blaschko, Class of 2007

**Face** Color Pencil by  
Glen Moore, Class of 2006



**W**elcome to Plexus Audio, the newest addition to the Plexus Journal of Arts and Humanities Publication. The concept behind Plexus Audio is to provide a medium for audio artists to showcase their talents in anything from music to poetry to plays. All art is created by affiliates of the UC Irvine College of Medicine and Medical Center and can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.plexusaudio.com>.

So please check out the variety of innovative and interesting audio art we have to offer and stay tuned for future developments from Plexus and Plexus Audio.

Enjoy,

Nick Athanasiou  
Audio Editor

Jeanette Waller  
Assistant Audio Editor

## Music

*Classical South Indian music  
on the Violin*  
.: Sagus Sampath, MS3

*Behind Your Eyes  
Taboo's Playground  
Homie*  
.: Matt Sanford, Staff

*Anatomic Reflexion*  
.: Anatomical Rappers

*Sunshine Five  
Del Metal*  
.: Nick Athanasiou, MS2

*National Anthem*  
.: Boys to Med

*Natural Disaster  
Love of my Life  
Gone Fishin'*  
.: Jeanette Waller, MS1

*c3 Beat*  
.: Cliff Wang, MS3

*mein glaubiges herze  
kdyz mne stara matke  
quando men vo*  
.: Karin Sindavinsky, MS1

## Spoken Word

*Jazz Diva*  
.: Vanessa Francis, Staff

## Poetry

*Driving with Grandpa*  
.: Johanna Shapiro, Faculty

## Plays

*The First Day of Anatomy*  
.: Vikas Mehta, Scott Bradley

*An Extreme Caricature of my  
Clinical Service Experience*  
.: Vikas Mehta

## Multimedia

*Talent Show Plexus  
A/V Presentation*



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