

2016

Inside Out, Spring 2016

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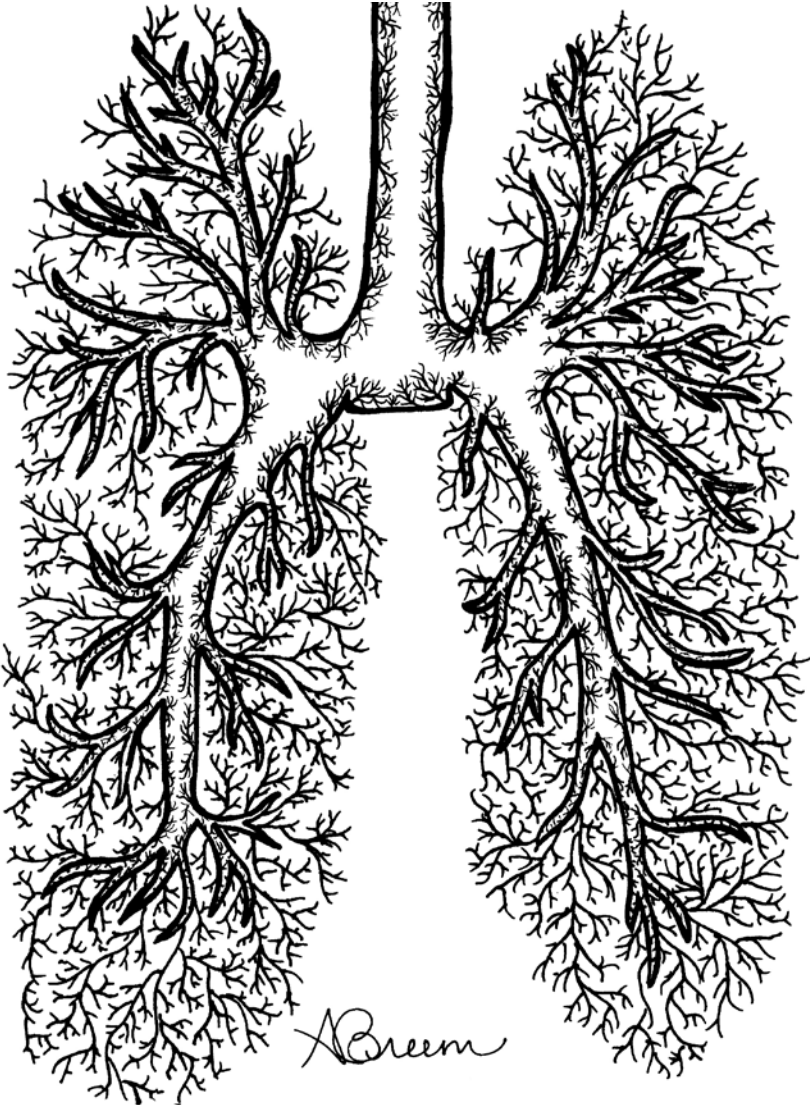
(2016) "Inside Out, Spring 2016," *Inside Out*: Vol. 6, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/IO.006>

Available at: <https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

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Inside Out



Spring 2016



Inside Out

JeffArts Literary/Arts Journal
Spring 2016

Editors-in-Chief

Adina Wise
Karly Brown
Anitha Ahmed

Editors

Andy Chan
David Chou
Jarett Beaudoin
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Julie Gallagher

Faculty Sponsor

Dr. Mark L. Tykocinski

Amanda Gilkey
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Mike Natter
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Naveed Rahman
Sara Sadeghi
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Zach Schoepflin
Laura Simpler
Amy Tressan
Kathryn Tuazon
Anusha Vemuri

The Jefferson Arts Organization was founded primarily to offer Thomas Jefferson University students the opportunity to express themselves through art. The Jefferson Arts organization focuses on such media as art and photography, writing, and music and supports diverse activities including live readings, art exhibits and musical performances. In addition, the organization publishes *Inside Out*, an annual art and literary journal which showcases photography, paintings, sketches, short stories, poems and essays contributed by university students. All of these activities are designed to bring more diversity to the Jefferson community; to allow students, faculty and staff the chance to stop and reflect on their daily lives; and to provide a creative outlet from the rigors of school and work.

Stolckholm Underground

David Chou

Photograph

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/IO.006>

Foreword

The creative imagination of our Jefferson students is once again on display in this 2016 edition of *Inside Out*. A tapestry of words and images reflect the spectrum of human experience, from near and far. Cityscape photos appear alongside paintings of the human form. Whimsical cartoons and anatomical renderings are juxtaposed.

At Jefferson, we aspire to students who are whole — reaching for multi-dimensional lives. As they train for their professional futures — whether in healing, discovering, educating — we encourage our students to explore their artistic spirit. Those co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that embrace the arts loom large in this respect, as they additionally foster an outward looking gestalt, beckoning our students to see and touch the communities that surround them, along with the broader community of mankind. At once, artistic initiatives such as *Inside Out* are part of a conscious push to preserve a sense of play, amidst the intensity of curricular demands.

Mark L. Tykocinski, MD

*Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs,
Thomas Jefferson University
The Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean,
Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University*

Submission Information

Inside Out is a presentation of artwork, photography, short stories, poems and essays that is published annually. All full-time and part-time Jefferson students are welcome to submit work and to apply to serve on the magazine's editorial board. Submissions may be emailed to Dorissa.Bolinski@jefferson.edu. Photographic submissions should be saved as a .jpeg file using the highest resolution possible. Artwork should be photographed from a direct angle, without glare or visible background, and saved in the same manner as photographs. Artists who submit non-photographic material will be given the opportunity to have their accepted pieces professionally photographed by a Jefferson photographer in order to assure the best presentation in the printed magazine.

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously; not all submissions will be printed. Please note that entries will be judged as submitted; *Inside Out* will not crop, sharpen or otherwise adjust an improperly-saved graphic submission.

Manuscripts (prose, poetry, translations, short plays, etc.) should be submitted in a Word-compatible document, and saved under the name of the piece (or "untitled," if applicable).

All submissions must be accompanied by a separate cover letter document containing the following:

- Author's or artist's name
- Email address and local phone number
- College, department or undergraduate program and year in school
- Genre/medium and title of each submission

Inside Out does not publish anonymous submissions or previously published works. Further submission inquiries may be addressed to JeffersonArts@jefferson.edu.

View the online version of Inside Out at:
Jefferson.edu/university/campus-life/inside-out.html

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Chen Zhou

Oil on Canvas

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

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The Happy Prince
Yuhang Zhou
Photograph



Winged Scapula (on medicine and love)

By: Daisy Zhang

You lay with your back curved towards the outside
To the window where I see stars starting to creep in
One shoulder digging indents into the mattress
The pillow cupping your ears and hugging your jawline

Your hair whispers secrets against linen
The blanket wraps around your ankles and your ilium
Enveloping soft skin and calvin klein underwear
The stars dance to your breathe as it warms the room

My fingers slide down the spine of your back
Your knees are brought up and your shoulders hunched
So that each process is peaking through the skin
Like road bumps on your viscera

And your shoulder blades rise with every breath you take
Digging into air and pulling skin taut
A ghostly outline of wings aching to protrude
And fly out the window to splay against the dotted sky.

I keep forgetting that you can't feel me anymore
And I'm here because of forgotten business
As I stand by the window ready to leave
I can't help but wish that your scapulae were really wings
And that you could take flight with me into forever.

Feeling Limited

Amy Tressan

Ink Drawing

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/IO.006>



Untitled
Kathryn Tuazon
Pencil

Cooking with Papa in Ramadan

By: Anitha Ahmed

Papa throws onions
Cut into crescents
into the pot. They wane,
brown as my skin.

Why don't I ask my father?

Simmer time up.
Papa lifts the lid.

He adds cauliflower, potatoes,
into the sauce.
Lid on, it simmers.

Perhaps this is enough for now—
to close my eyes and inhale the steam.

Papa tells me a story of Dhaka—
Once he scoured a spring night
for the new moon before Eid.
The next day,
he delivered Daadi's curry to neighbors,
running up neighborhood streets exalting,
"*Eid Mubarak! Eid Mubarak!*"
He lit firecrackers on the street.

Papa draws the lid, sprinkles spices:
Red chilli powder, orange turmeric
Green methi leaves, garam masala
Lid back on, we wait.
"More time to melt," he says.

I want to feel a Dhaka spring night, too,
the tepid breeze on my skin—
Is there a breeze at all?
I want to see his neighborhood street,
hear neighbors' chatter on their porches—
How close are the houses?
Do they have porches?



Not Sure Where I'm Going

Jessica Gatt

Photograph

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/IO.006>

Salt Marsh

Jessica Gatt

Photograph

Bite your liquor, not your tongue

By: Daisy Zhang

Words freeze on tablet tongues
And ecstatic lights dance around pale faces
Arms flail and limbs crack like lips
With a lick of lime
Liquid poison burns your throat
When we wake we take turns complaining that
Water feels sore
And our eyes blink back blurred visions
Of broken nails and helium highways
There are streaks of old red on your arm
And bruises from a stranger blossoming up my belly
Thoughts pump through brains popping veins and wiring pain
The lighter flame covers your mind between temples
You clutch your head and duck between your thighs
While I click my tongue to the beating of absent drums
And lock my dreams in cans of carbonation
We sit through nothingness
With clouded eyes in smoky rooms
And beat our own thoughts
Until our knuckles split
Yet still we ask
Why the question is always
Why.



Dr. Frank N Furter
Kathryn Tuazon
Pencil



Calm

Jessica Gatt

Photograph

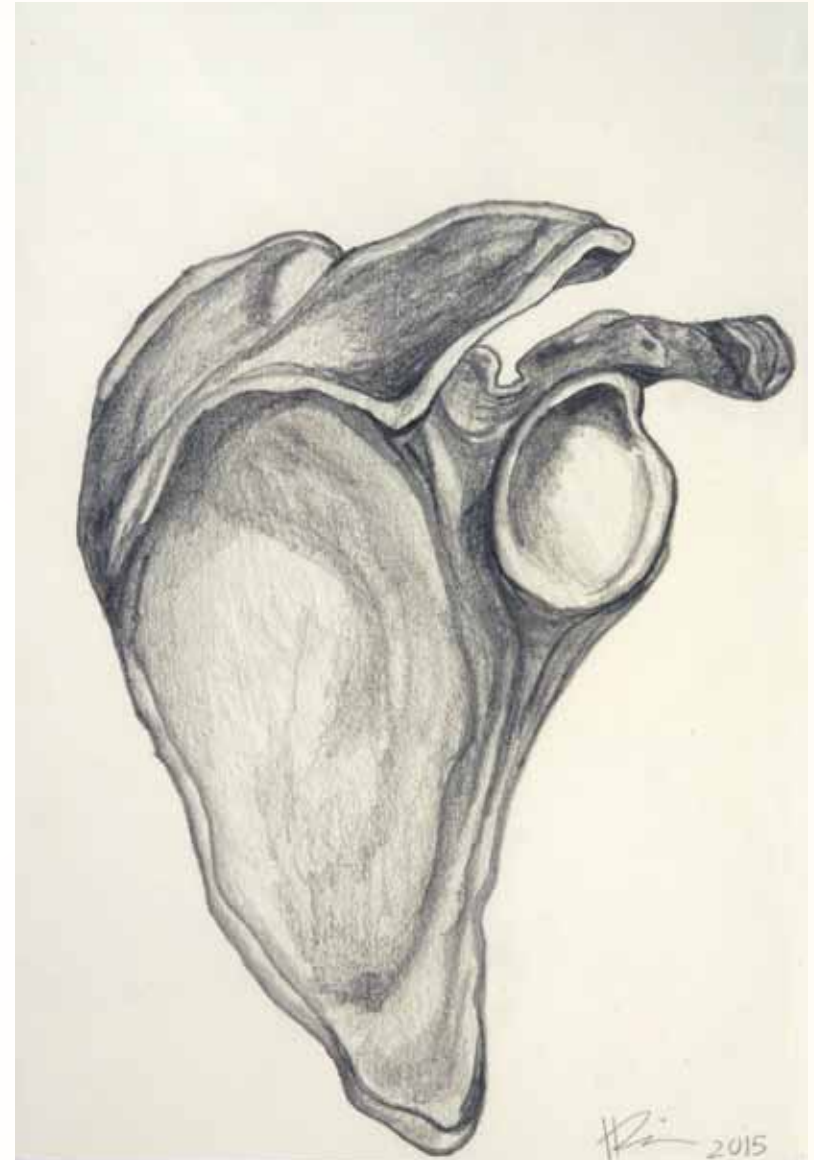
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River Basin

Jessica Gatt

Photograph



Thoracic Vertebra
Holly Rankin
Pencil sketch

Scapula 2
Holly Rankin
Pencil sketch



Fructose-Drunk
(for Daadi, my grandmother)

By: Anitha Ahmed

Summertime, we eat mangoes—
Their sweet ether smell
And wrinkled skin,
Easily broken, oozing juice.

I prick your finger,
Your aged hands shake
You are quiet though it stings.
I squeeze your blood up test strips
—too sweet, always too sweet—

Still, you ask me to slit us mangoes
We suck sweet pulp to the pits
Pluck fibers from our teeth.

Soon you'll weaken and feel your pulse
Pounding in your head, but for now
Sticky trails run down your neck,
Your face creased deep with dimples
As you laugh, fructose-drunk.

The Kacha Bazaar
Tanziyah Muqem

Photograph

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

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Portrait of My Friend
Danylo I. Holubnyk
Collage

Laborer at the Docks
Danylo I. Holubnyk
Collage



Chai Tea Lattes

By: Karishma Kodia

First I Google: "How to make a chai tea latte."

This time there is no kind soul, pouring love into his storytelling,
With a new independence
an access to information
comes isolation.

Alone with noise of endless highway traffic
in a sticky room
well past midnight
I search.

Now dump condensed milk after mixing with prepackaged powdered
spices.

What of my grandmother's kitchen roller, her hand crushed ilichi?
of our family's cows in the village?
of warm fresh milk,
of laughter and giggles as the little ones tug on udders?
Swiftly replaced by Splenda and aspartame that poison the tongue.

"Priya your order is ready!" They call.

The commercialized concoction is tipped into a throwaway plastic cup,
as the salt of my tears mix with the artificial sweeteners,
as I remember my Nani's heirloom hand-painted china,
accompanied with tea biscuits and stories for our daily tea.

"Have a nice day," the barista chirps.

The chai in my hands, the end of the transaction
With Nani, chai is just the beginning.

No End in Sight

Sarah T. Cohen

Graphite on Paper

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

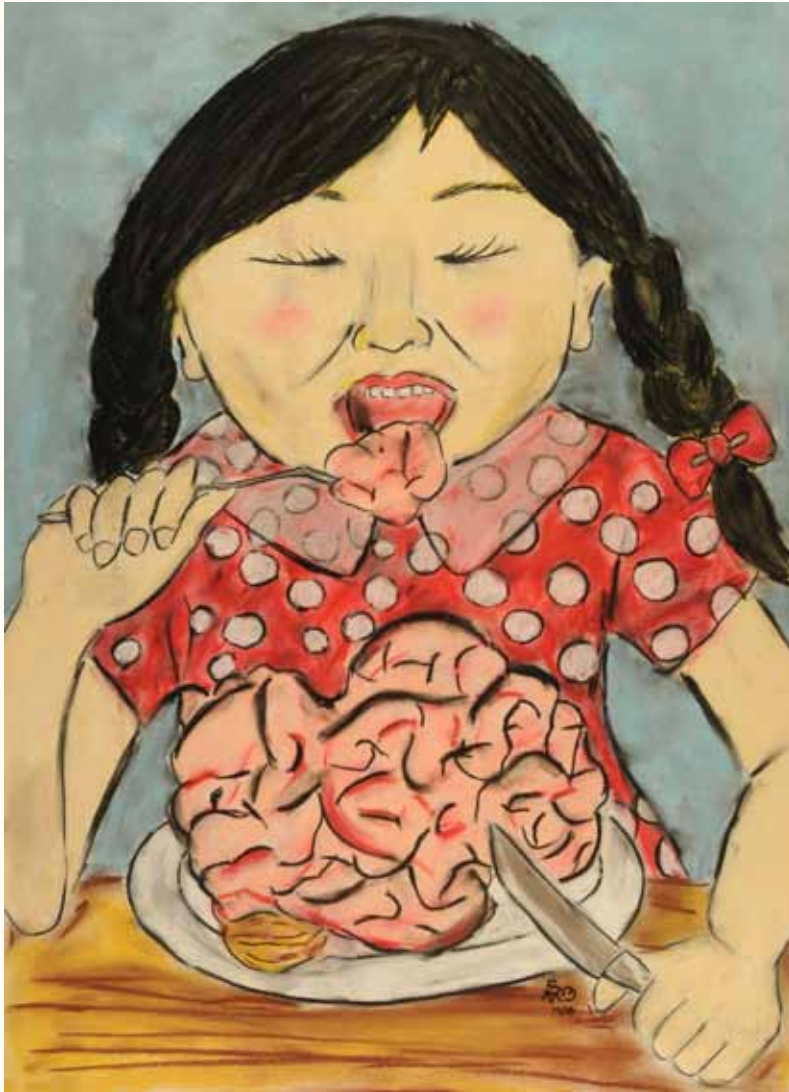
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Untitled
Mary Riley
Photograph



Not Just Another Horse
Sarah T. Cohen
Ink on paper



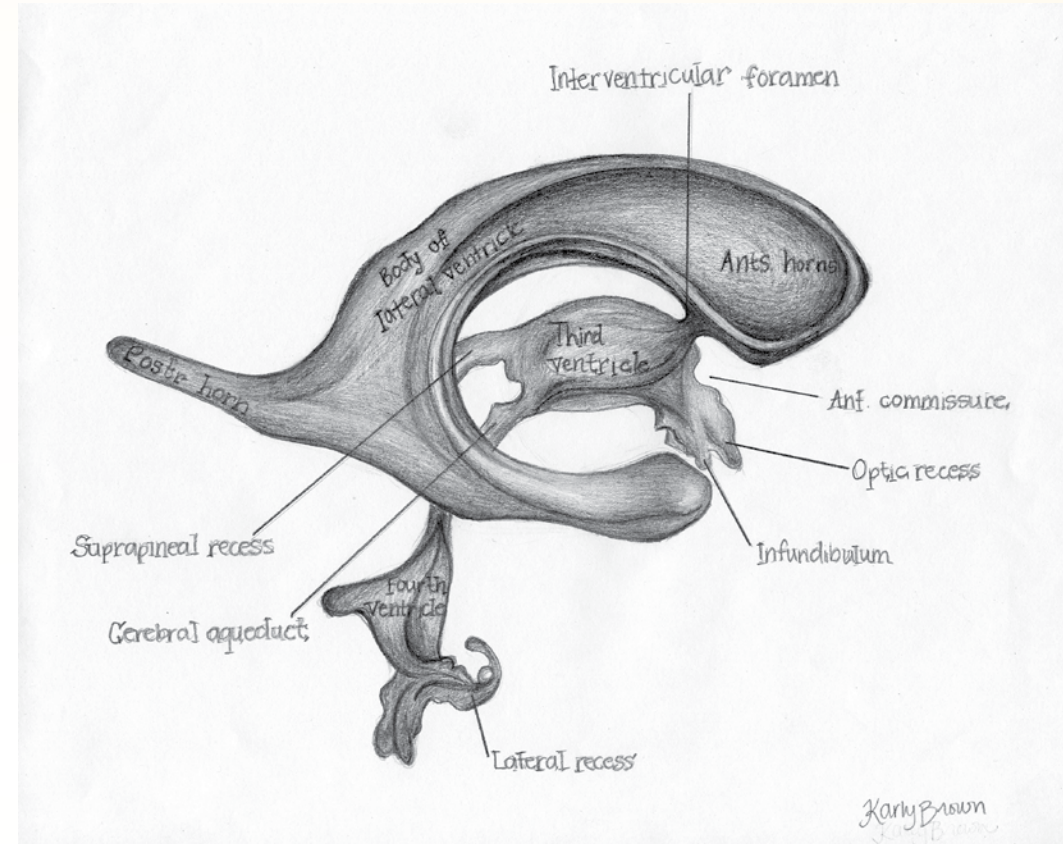
Brain Food

SoniaMae Bedua

Pastel on paper

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The Broom

Karly Brown

Pencil

279

By: Karishma Kodia

I stumble in from the dark — dazed — hurt in foreign places
Victim 279 they call me, guiding me into the blinding exam room.

I slip into a cloth gown — freshly laundered they say
While my body craves a scorching shower — a painful cleanse from this nightmare.

As I lay down, they pull out “the kit”

Classifying — organizing — blood in this vile — cutaneous debris in that envelope
They forgot to put in my fear, my anger into that perfectly packaged pouch.

A warm blanket is handed to me as I shiver with shame.

I long to be wrapped with the comfort of my mother’s arms, her reassuring touch.

If I feared everything, I wouldn’t be able to get out of bed, my father tells me,
Sighing, I begin to look within and to look above for courage, for strength.

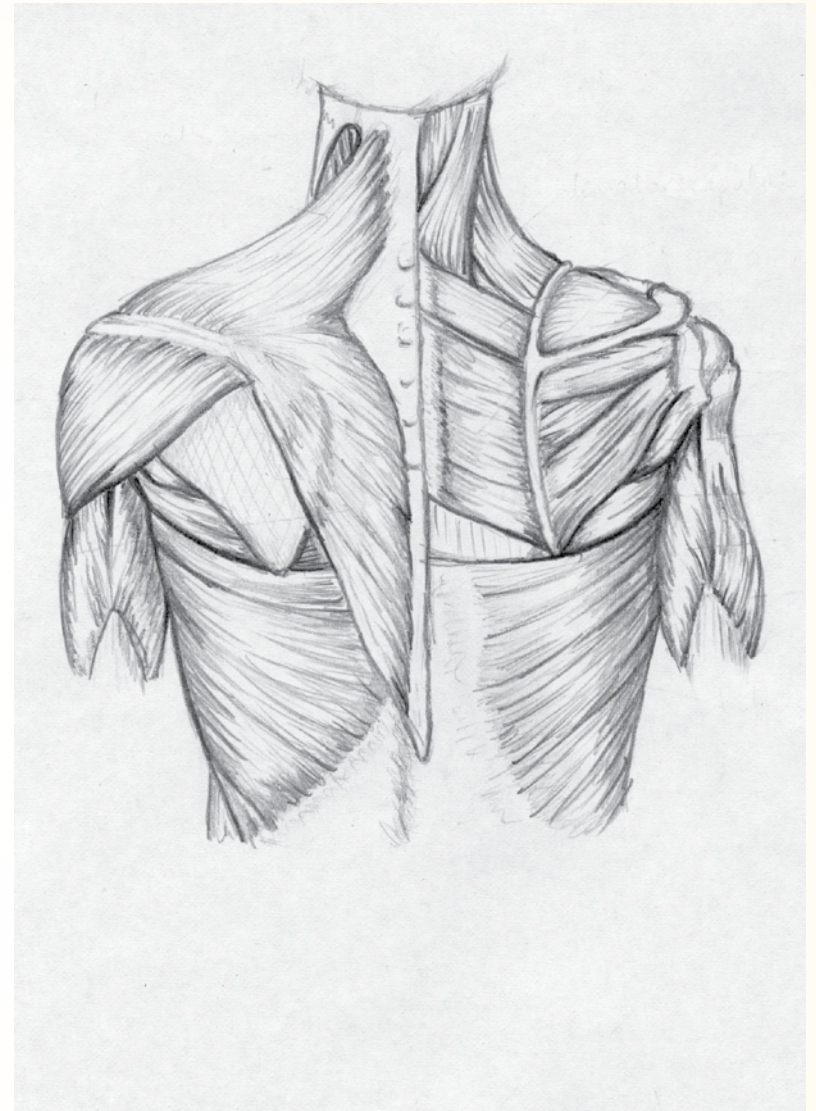
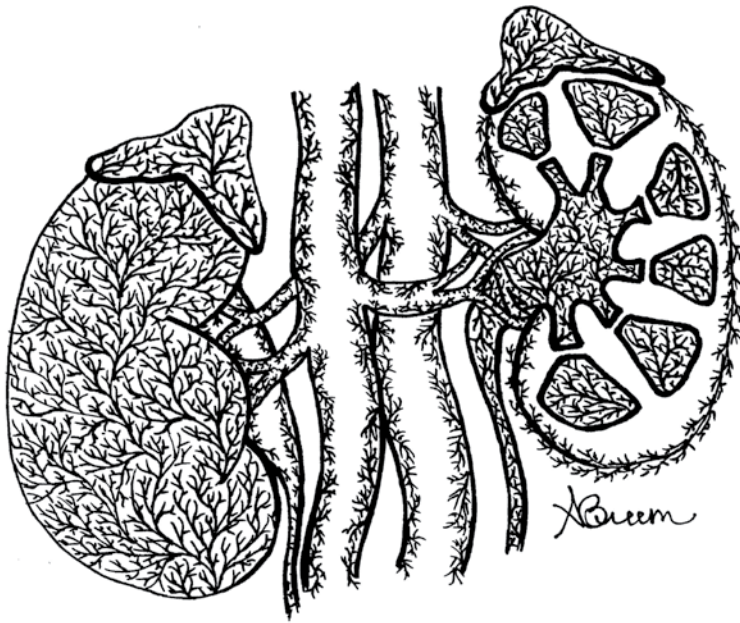
And as the moon begins her final trek across the nocturnal sphere

A swirl of peaches and roses emerges lighting the morning sky.

‘Victim’ they called me. ‘Survivor’ I begin to call myself.



Shoes
Karishma Kodia
Photograph



Untitled
Amanda Breem

Ink on paper

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

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Muscles – Posterior View

Kathryn Tuazon

Pencil

Ghar Ki Murghey, Daal Baraabar

By: Anitha Ahmed

"Ghar ki murghey, daal baraabar."

—Home-raised chicken's same as lentils—

Papa says it often. When his mother died,
We rode the backyard bike path down and found

Bushes and bushes of blackberries,
Shrivelled, branches sharp as IV needles.

"Chicken is Friday's food;
Lentils for beggars," Papa says.

I licked my fingers,
Bloody with gone blackberries.

Putrid—so many in my backyard—
If only we had discovered them sooner, sweeter.



Cobalt
Chen Zhou
Oil on canvas



Daadi's Story

By: Anitha Ahmed

The few truths I know come from here, out of wet mouth and shuttered eyes, in hospital chairs across my shallow-breathing grandmother, reduced to organs and machinery. Tomorrow, she will leave this world.

“Your Daadi was a hero,” Papa says, “Did you know?”

I shake my head. But of course I know. Daadi had been widowed to five children in the time of the Bangladeshi independence. Her husband murdered in racial riots, she alone brought her children from Dacca to Bihar, India, and finally to Karachi, Pakistan. A young woman with young children, fleeing penniless from patriarchy to new patriarchy, emerging unscathed. Making it finally to America, where the conflict of her youth resumed inside her. Who but a hero could accomplish such feats?

These facts I have pieced together by careful eavesdropping of calls to Pakistan, from Daadi's other-worldly moans — her garbled Urdu through her sleep. From Papa and his siblings' taciturn recounts of their adolescence through it all; from the way he, loud-voiced and trembling, advises my brother and I not to take him for granted — we may lose him any day, as he lost his own father.

But I shake my head all the same. “Tell me,” I say. I want to know the story, and Papa rarely offers to tell.

There is no once upon a time, no fairy-tale wilderness. There is only Dacca, East Pakistan, 1971.

“On the day my father died,” Papa says, “Your Daadi went to look for him. The riots were over, but still, it was not safe for a woman to be outside. On the road, she saw two men drag another man into a house and lock the door behind. They were

Dutchman

David Chou

Photograph

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/insideout/vol6/iss1/1>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29046/IO.006>

going to kill him. But she went after them — banged on the door and screamed. Luckily, an officer saw her and intervened. She saved a life that day. Those men would have killed her too.”

Story over — again we stand in silence. *And then what?* I want to ask, *And then what happened?* But the words never leave my tongue. It feels wrong, greedy, to ask for more. Through my father, I understand culture — and Papa’s culture is subtlety. Stories like his are painful, sacred presents: best kept fermenting in silence until precisely the right time, best delivered in small enough dosage to keep sober.

My mind is left to fill in the gaps, replaying the scene with all the smoke and drama of Bollywood, all the tropical gore of post-colonial documentaries:

Young Daadi shaking between smoldering bungalows, whispering the verses of Ya-Sin for protection. She steps through hacked mango boughs and onto the gravel road. Nauseous from the smell of carnage, the wailing of women and children around her. She calls for her husband — *Muhammad! Muhammad!* But every fifth man in East Pakistan is Muhammad, and no one answers. Then, I imagine Daadi witnessing struggle — the thrashing, kicking. Pleading. Seeing one as dark-haired and handsome as her husband, bleeding, pulled up porch steps and through a narrow doorway. She deliberates momentarily before scrambling up the steps, bringing her small fists to the wood — she saves a life.

I watch Daadi across from me now. I’ve never had the words in Urdu to ask her for the full story, and she would skirt my questions with words of love. Approaching stillness, she is closed-eyed and almost bald, her skin like elephant leather, her legs pitted as cheese curd. Hip-fractured and half-blind; the features of her youth now wilted, indecipherable. But my father spoke of her as heroine and it is easy for me to imagine her fire-eyed and lithe — a most valiant and faultless version of myself, with higher cheekbones, sharper nose, longer hair, straighter

back. A full Bollywood heroine, with sweat-moistened salwar and rivulets of kohl dripping from her eyes. Here, searching for her husband in a country on fire with revolution, she has reached a climax. I myself have never known such fear, such bravery; never been tested with another’s life over my own, never undergone the trauma of brutal, unjust loss. This is my understanding of crisis: Daadi’s ebbing life, the stories she will take with her. So it is not empathy or sadness I cannot shake when I imagine myself in Daadi’s stead — but guilty, stomach-prickling excitement.

When I try to understand the parts of myself that are Pakistani, how do I know what is Daadi and what is her culture? What is my own sensationalizing and what is the truth? How do I separate East Pakistan from the movies?

In the years to follow Daadi’s death, Papa will sometimes find it opportune to tell me more: flashes of the migration following his father’s murder, brighter stories of his sisters’ weddings in Karachi. I will feel more questions in my throat — *where did you stay, what did you eat, what colors did you wear, who was there to support you through it all?* Some of them I will find the courage to ask, some of them Papa will answer inadvertently. *In Bihar with our cousins, we ate biriyani like kings, after the weddings we had a big family again.* Always, no more than bullets on a storyboard. The rest — the calligraphy-embossed doors, the calls to prayer, the tandoors on the road, the grey ocean — everything I have filled in with my own reading and watching and living — the rest is fiction.

“Take me back with you,” I ask my father soon after Daadi passes away, “Where you grew up.”

“One day,” he promises, and then, “One day I’ll tell you the whole story.”

It’s an exciting promise, one I hold in my heart and remember often. One day, together we will retrace his steps from

Dacca to Karachi, together we will try to recall those experiences, those feelings. But I know it will entail just as much discovery for Papa as for me — the places of his youth were likely razed and rebuilt, the landmarks (a corner-store, a schoolhouse, a swimming-hole) perhaps long lost. Replaced with familiar industry, repopulated, renamed. We can never return to East Pakistan — it no longer exists.

Papa has given me nearly all that he has: his features, his color, his faith. But willing or unwilling, his memories are his own. No matter how much research or travel I do, no matter how much probing, I will forever be one generation — fifty turns of the world — removed from his childhood.

Still, I wait for the day I'll receive all the plot points. I myself will assemble the screenplay, roll the reel with color and language and tradition and smoke. I will cast myself as the lead, walk the illusory steps and imagine Daadi's fear until I believe it — until I discover it within myself. Perhaps then, I'll begin to understand where I come from, and where I belong.





Contributors

Anitha Ahmed: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2019

SoniaMae Bedua: Jefferson College of Nursing, 2016

Amanda Breem: Jefferson College of Health Professions, 2017

Karly Brown: Jefferson College of Health Professions, 2017

David Chou: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2017

Sarah T. Cohen: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2017

Jessica Gatt: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2017

Danylo I. Holubnuk: Jefferson College of Nursing, 2016

Karishma Kodia: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2018

Tanziyah Muqem: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2020

Holly Rankin: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2019

Mary Riley: Jefferson College of Nursing, 2016

Kathryn Tuazon: Jefferson College of Health Professions, 2017

Amy Tressan: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2017

Daisy Zhang: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2019

Chen Zhou: Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2018

Yuhang Zhou: Jefferson College of Biomedical Sciences, 2017

Saturday Night at the Empire State
Yuhang Zhou
Photograph

Acknowledgements

Inside Out appreciates the kind support of the following.

Janice Bogen, MA: Assistant Vice President, International Affairs Office of International Affairs

Dorissa Bolinski: *Inside Out* Advisor, Publications Editor, Academic Affairs, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Kaitlyn Delengowski, MPA: Coordinator, Student Programs, Office of Student Life and Engagement

David Keenan: Senior Director, Office of Student Life and Engagement

Charles A. Pohl, MD: Associate Provost for Student Affairs, Thomas Jefferson University
Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Mark L. Tykocinski, MD: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Thomas Jefferson University
The Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

