

# Narrative Medicine Workshop

Attention, Representation, Affiliation

Mark Kissler, MS, MD – Feb 2023

# Disclosures

- None



## Objectives

- Articulate 3 ways that the humanities can enhance clinical practice
- Experience basic techniques of close reading in a workshop format
- Provide time and space for reflection on clinical work, to deepen participants' own reflective practice



# REASONS FOR ADMISSION (NOT INDEXED IN ICD-10)

Gaetan Sgro

The need to catch up on sleep. An ache to sleep on clean sheets. The prospect of waking up dry. To sleep without fear of being robbed or kicked in the night. Having just gotten insurance. Never having had insurance. Thinking it might be cancer. Thinking you'll deal with it later. Thinking it's one thing and finding out it's another. Doing it for your partner. Doing it to get back at your partner. Being sick and tired of lying. Of working in that kitchen. Owing it to your children. Something you saw on television. Because someone was too busy typing. You can't remember ever laughing. Because you are terrified of dying alone. Because you are terrified of living alone. Because you are terrified of him. Because you blacked out and your friends dragged you in. Because nobody speaks your language. Because your wife left with the kids. Left you with the kids. Got herself admitted. Because of the voices. Because of the Earth's movements. Something the moon did. The bus strike. The election. Fleeing persecution. Because of a broken system. A positive review of systems. Because you lost a bet. Because you found religion. The promise of life-changing medicine. Broken promises. Because you needed a lift. Because like everyone else you wish.



# NARRATIVE MEDICINE

*Honoring the Stories  
of Illness*



RITA CHARON

## *The* PRINCIPLES *and* PRACTICE *of* NARRATIVE MEDICINE



Rita Charon, Sayantani DasGupta, Nellie Hermann,  
Craig Irvine, Eric R. Marcus, Edgar Rivera Colón,  
Danielle Spencer, Maura Spiegel

OXFORD





## How do the humanities enhance clinical practice?

- 1) Broadening our ability to know, see, and experience by increasing our capacity for meaningful **attention**
- 2) Shaping observations via **representation**, allowing us to examine them from new angles
- 3) Expanding our capacity for empathy and **affiliation** with patients via recognition of the difference of their experience and our shared frailty





A close-up photograph of a green fig leaf, showing its intricate network of veins and several large, irregular holes. The leaf is set against a blurred background, and a semi-transparent text box is overlaid in the center.

*To The Fig Tree on 9<sup>th</sup> and Christian, Ross Gay*



**ROSS GAY**  
Author of "Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude"







*The Visible Man Series*, Jordan Casteel





















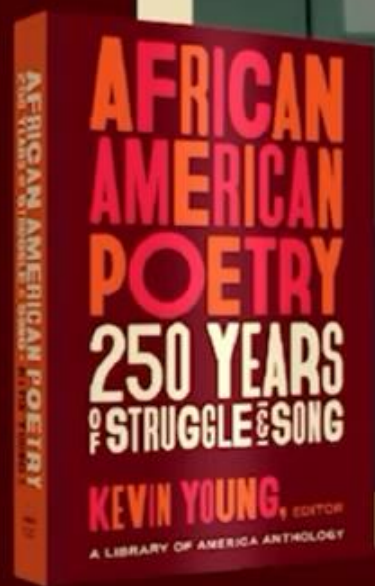




A small bird with a crest, possibly a Kinglet, is perched on a snow-covered branch. The bird has a grey crest, a black collar around its neck, and brownish-grey wings and back. It is looking down and to the left. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey, suggesting a snowy or overcast day. A semi-transparent white banner with black text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

*Inside the Blues Whale, Afaa Michael Weaver*





# AFAA MICHAEL WEAVER

READS AND  
DISCUSSES HIS POEMS

INSIDE THE BLUES WHALE

SCRAPPLE

WASHING THE CAR WITH MY FATHER

JOHN HENRY SLEEPING IN HIGH GRASS



Library of America



## Integrating the humanities into teaching or practice

- Rigorous discipline set in contrast to our rigorous discipline of medicine
- Think differently/critique our ways of knowing
- Exposure to diverse experiences
- The movements of attention, representation, and affiliation in art have direct corollaries to those movements within clinical work

