

*"Although the world is full of
suffering, it is also full of the
overcoming of it."*

~Helen Keller



CREATIVE
EXPRESSION
GALLERY



17:00
by
Dr. Ariadna Perez-Sanchez



*Despite it, nature finds its
way to flourish*

by

Dr. Chirag Buch



THIS IMAGE WAS CAPTURED IN A SMALL TOWN IN BULGARIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. STREETS EMPTY, COFFEE SHOPS CLOSED, VIRTUAL LEARNING; YET, NATURE CONTINUES TO BLOSSOM.

My First Day of Residency

“Don’t forget your face-shield,” says my husband as I get into my car, ready for my first day of residency. On my way to the hospital, I don’t see many cars on the road. Feels kind of lonely. I turn the radio on, but the news isn’t helpful: “COVID cases keep rising and hospitals are reaching full capacity—” I turn it off.

I get to the hospital, and I see my fellow interns’ faces for the first time, or at least half of their faces. We never got to meet before. We never had the white-coat welcome ceremony I always dreamed of. Small talk begins and it seems like we’re all on the same boat. We don’t know what we’ll be dealing with at the COVID unit.

Our attending arrives. He welcomes us and proceeds to teach us how to wear PPE. Double gowns, double gloves, N95 first, then surgical mask, then face-shield. “Write your name on your gown, so people know who you are.” That sounds funny at first, but as I look around, I quickly understand what he means. We all look like we came out of a Sci-Fi movie. You can’t really tell one from the other. “Ready? Let’s get into the unit.” Wait, I don’t know if I’m ready...

We cross the one-way door to the other side. There are 50 rooms, all occupied, 5 with intubated patients. Then there’s the lobby with 15 patients hooked-up to oxygen tanks, waiting for a room. Waiting for someone to get well enough to go home. Or waiting for someone to pass away.

I see my first patient. She’s coughing a lot. I’m afraid to get too close. I hope my N95 is sealing well. She complains of excruciating chest pain with every cough. She’s never felt so bad before. But she can breathe without oxygen, and there are patients waiting for a room. “Ma’am, we’re going to send you home.”

The patient next-door is a young nurse. She looks like she just finished running a marathon. Except she hasn’t been running, not even walking. The only thing she has run for the past week is that never-ending fever. “We need to intubate you,” says our attending. She cries, she knows what that means, she is a nurse. But she’s tired, so she agrees.

...

...My First Day of Residency

We move on to the next room. And the next. It's my first day of residency and I just saw 8 patients. Luckily, I didn't have to see intubated patients. I've never managed a ventilator before.

Time to get out of the unit. "You have to shower on your way out." I first liberate myself from the gowns and gloves. I wipe my face-shield with this spray that reads "do not apply to bare skin." It should do the job. Then I get to the bathroom, and I can finally take my N95 off. I suddenly smell the flowery scent of the soap. I realize now that my mask had been sealing well all this time. It's such a relief. Then I look at the mirror and I see all these red marks across my cheeks, forehead, and nose. It's not a pretty picture for the "first day of residency" post I wanted to share on Facebook.

Now, time to do notes. It's hard to concentrate with the background noise. They're taking down a wall to make more space in the unit. It feels like a war zone. Then we realize the real challenge is how to treat our patients. Oxygen, steroids, anticoagulation, yes. But tomorrow might be a different story. Recommendations are changing so quickly. We have no clue how to deal with this virus.

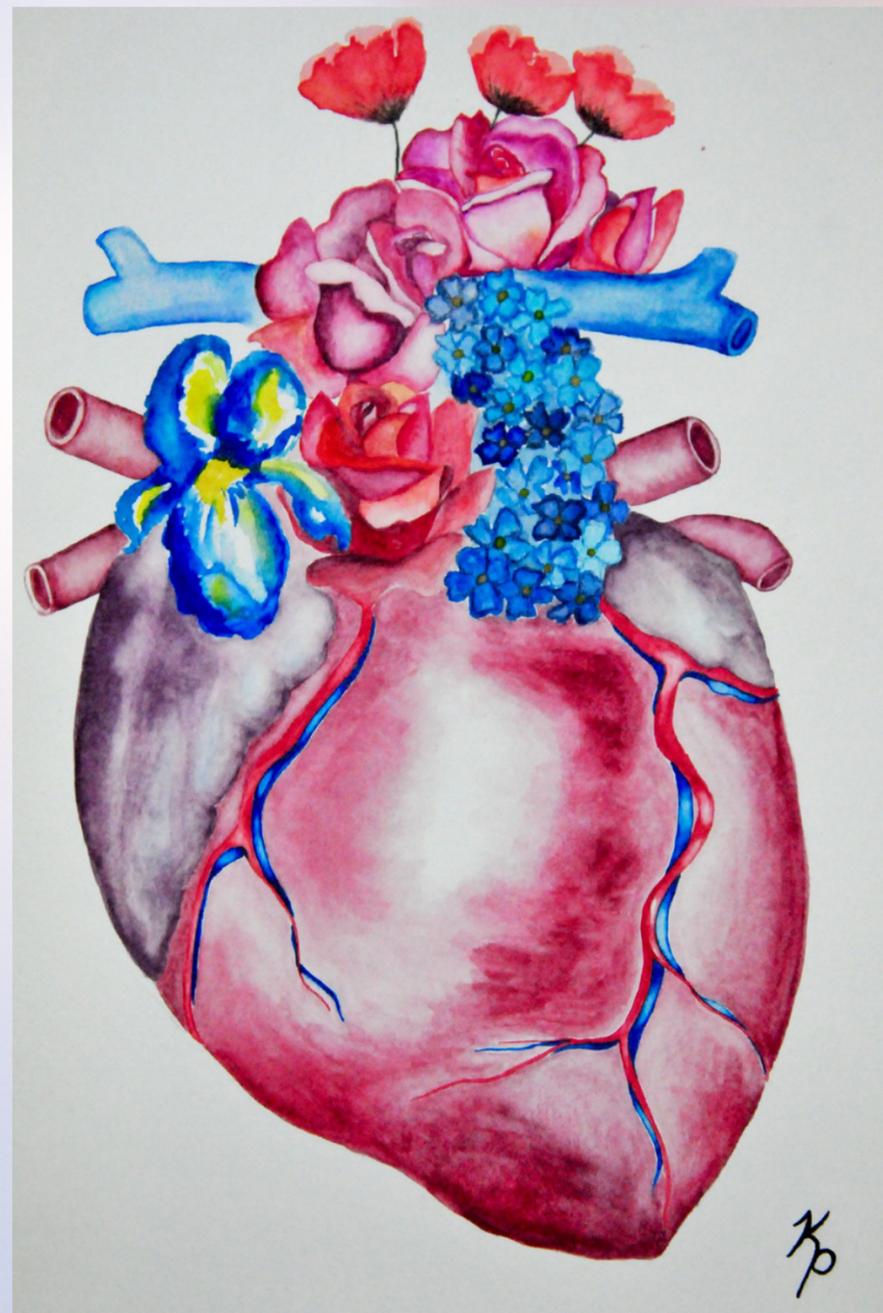
"Code blue, COVID unit, room 45." The adrenaline kicks in and our first instinct is to run back to the unit. But our attending quickly stops us: "You need to gown-up first." Upper levels attend the code, and we interns are spared from the exposure.

We finish our notes and it's time to go home. I don't bother to turn on the radio this time. I saw it with my own eyes. We'll start placing 2 patients per room tomorrow. I know the numbers are rising.

I get home and I take off my scrubs in the garage. The first thing I want to do is hug my husband, but I won't. I need to shower first (again). "How was your first day?" he asks. I can see that he's worried. "It was OK, honey, I'll be OK."

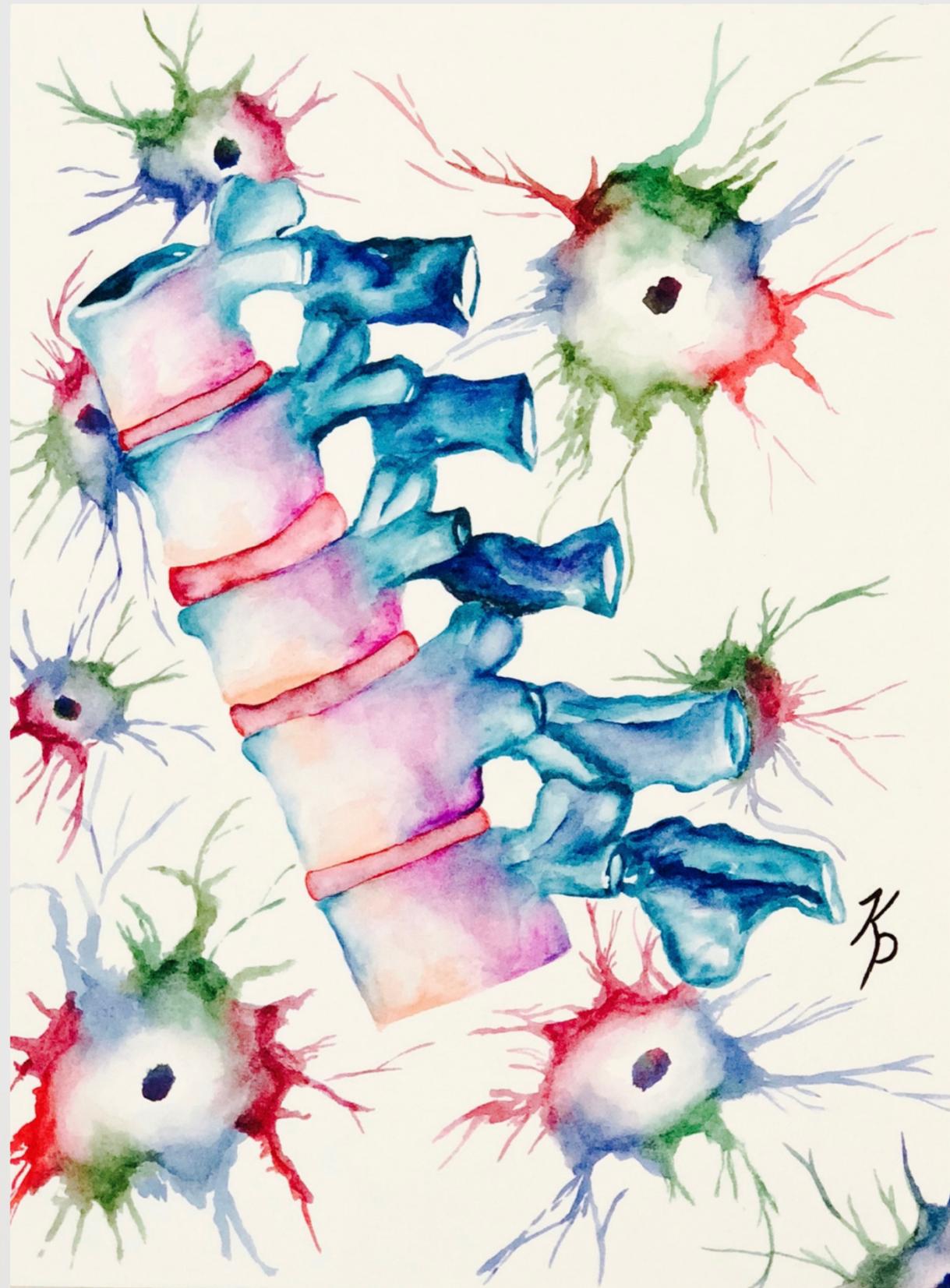
By Dr. Martha Solis

*The Bloom After the
Storm*
by
Dr. Keerthana Pakanati



THIS PIECE IS INDICATIVE OF THE BEAUTY THAT GROWS FROM EVEN THE DARKEST OF PLACES. BEING ON THE CARDIOLOGY SERVICE I HAVE WITNESSED THE INCREDIBLE STRENGTH OUR PATIENTS POSSESS IN THE FACE OF GRAVE DANGER AFTER SIGNIFICANT CARDIAC EVENTS. THE FLOWERS THAT BLOOM FROM THE TOP OF THE ANATOMICAL HEART REPRESENTS THE OPTIMISTIC FUTURE THAT LIES BEYOND THE SUFFERING, BEYOND THE HOSPITALIZATIONS AND BEYOND THE CATH LAB INTERVENTIONS. THESE FLOWERS ARE THE LOVE FROM THE FAMILY MEMBERS, THE PROMISE OF A LIFE BEYOND THE ICU, AND THE DREAM OF CREATING MEMORIES OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL. CARDIAC EVENTS ARE LIFE-ALTERING, BUT MY PIECE IS A TESTAMENT TO THE PATIENTS WHO HAVE FOUGHT VALIANTLY WITH THE PROMISE OF A FUTURE AS BRIGHT AS THE FLOWERS ON THIS PAINTING WAITING FOR THEM ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Nerves
by
Dr. Keerthana Pakanati



Life is Color

Submitted

by

Dr. Jorge Guerra

I find art a peaceful, therapeutic release from the most stressful overwhelming days. In the words of professor John Martin:
"Life depends on science, but the arts make it worth living".



My Husband's Not The Same

Author: Dr. Ashley Barasa

August 01, 2021

A clinic day like any other
In walked the Mr. and Mrs.
Just moved from another state
A beautiful couple

He had a brain tumor removed
A meningioma
WHO Grade II

"Not a glioma" I thought
"Many sleepless nights" he said
For him, the future still unclear

An interview and an exam
Questions from the wife, with much anxiety
Only to be answered and addressed by the husband
Who was trying to appease his wife

"We'll get through this together" I say,
With nothing but supportive therapy and referrals in my hands
And no cure
And I shake their hands at the end

...

...My Husband's Not The Same

Time

I think about them and wonder how they're doing

A call later to review the surveillance imaging

The wife answers the phone

I tell her the growth has not returned

Specifically, "unchanged compared to prior"

Or in other words

I tell her

Nothing has changed compared to prior

Now that we're alone,

She tells me that the other day

She and her husband were driving to a new place

"I've been here", he says, "with my brother a long time ago"

But they call the brother:

"We've never been there before"

And again

"I can't buy that table saw", he said,

"The one I talked about with my brother"

"Just the other day"

The brother:

"That conversation happened over a year ago"

...

...My Husband's Not The Same

Did you get confused?", she asks

But her husband changes the subject

She tells me there's something new as well

Paranoia

"My husband's not the same" she says

"After the surgery, he was back to his old self for a while"

"And now he's changed - He forgets. He's anxious."

The meningioma was in the left frontal lobe

Of a right-handed man

Like Phineas Gage's railroad spike

I educate

I give her everything I know

I make a plan

"We'll test to find exactly what deficits he has

And we'll work with neurology

Psychiatry

Neuropsychology

To try to get back as much function as we can"

Or in other words

"We'll try to get back as much as we can"

That the tumor took

From both of you

By
Dr. Ashley Barasa

Heroes
by
Dr. Nisha Soneji



The 26.2 Bumper Sticker

Driving down the road, I spot a sticker in bold

The numbers 26.2 bordered by an oval

Takes me back to those days on the road

Flat, raised, long, grassy, paved roads

A career in medicine is like a marathon

Fast forward the commutes and punch in the hours

Live the story of each person's narrative tale

And re-tell each as if it's our own

Re-read texts, map out the routes

Simulate procedures, adapt to temperature variations

Connect the dots, snack on breaks

Make mistakes, re-tie shoelaces

...

...The 26.2 Bumper Sticker

Sometimes life throws some curveballs

These unexpected slices of life

Gives pause to what matters

And who matters most to each of us

Though illness and poverty

Sickness and burn-out

Work shifts amidst a pandemic

Can steal the last rays of hope, don't let it

My favorite race was the one that I ran

With the company of friends, our footprints aligned

The burden not meant to be solely our own

For no one can run a relay alone

...

...The 26.2 Bumper Sticker

So that 26.2 means more than just races
Brings back moments, sounds, thoughts
Takes me back to those days forming memories
Broad, focused, colorful, changing, encoded memories

By

Sanghwa Park, PGY-2

BAMC GME

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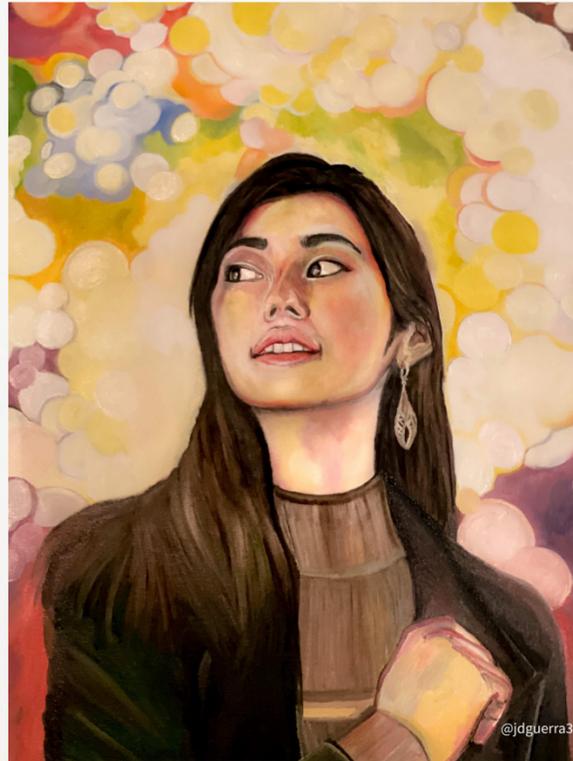
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@jdguerra3

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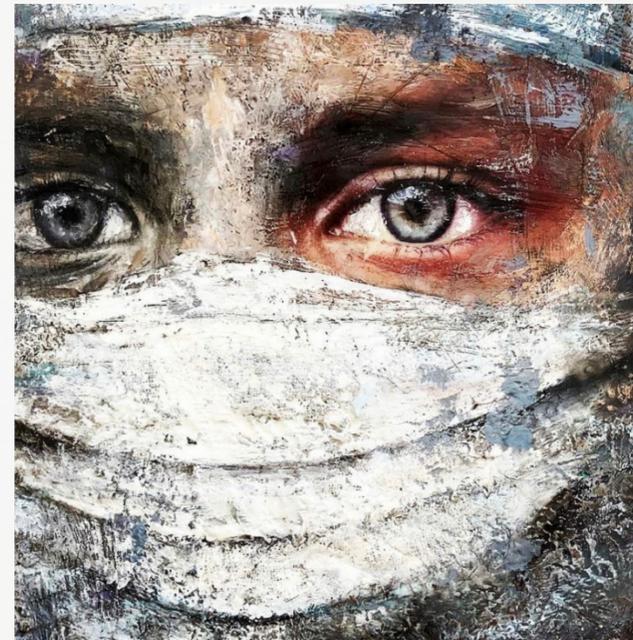
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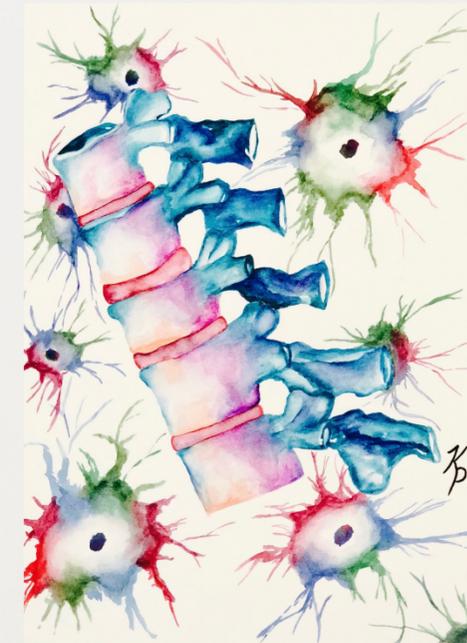
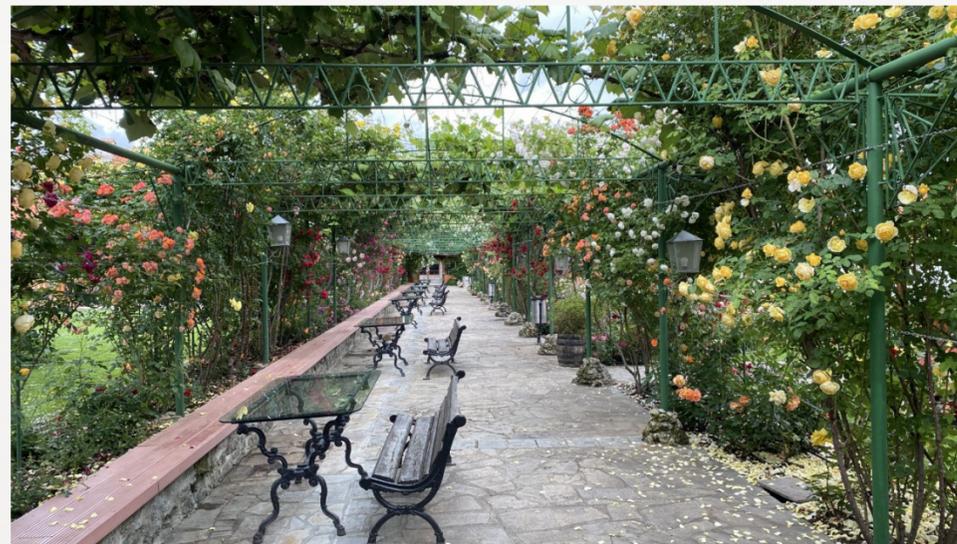
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