Dear Readers,

Thank you for your interest in Volume XIII of Humanitas. The Medical University of South Carolina has been lucky to have had a venue like Humanitas for over thirteen years now to encourage reflection and expression, which may otherwise go unnoticed, from all members of our community. Despite the ominous issue number, this year’s publication has been more than fortunate in many respects. From the ground up, this issue is a bigger production than we have been able to support in years past.

To begin, we received an unprecedented 153 submissions this year, for which the staff of Humanitas would like to thank each and every student, faculty, and staff member who submitted. As a result of heightened interest, we have been able to expand the issue to more completely represent the myriad talents found across campus. However, even with 10 outstanding judges on staff, we have made some hard decisions. To those discouraged! Every submission was wonderful in its own right, and we urge you to continue creating and submitting.

I would like to thank the MUSC Humanities Committee, composed of dedicated folks from on campus and throughout the Charleston area, who dedicated their time and energies toward Humanitas success, and those in humanities flourishes on our campus. It is vital to the work that we perform on campus that we never lose sight of why we are on this campus -- to better lives of our fellow man and woman.

Finally, I would like to thank four members of the Humanities Committee in particular. This year, Dr. Paul Rousseau offered to reward the best efforts in the categories of submission. Spurred by his generosity, Kristi Rodgers-Cishkek, Carol Lancaster, and Tom Waldrep decided to lend their patronage and help craft the awards in their final form of $200 for each winner in four categories. On the following page, please join us in congratulating the four inaugural winners of the Humanitas Awards for Creative Excellence.

Sanford Zeigler
For Excellence In Poetry:
“Thank you, Man”
John Korman
College of Medicine

For Excellence In Prose:
“The Hawk & the Flycatcher”
Charles Brown,
Library

For Excellence In Photography:
“Hope In A Dry Land”
Jason Curry
College of Medicine

For Excellence In Visual Art, Non-Photographic:
“Dog”
Kate Humphries
College of Health Professions
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Visual Selections are indicated by Italic type.
Thank You, Man

Yesterday
my last day
on the wards
I found a
new courage:
gratitude
in the face
of a pain
I cannot imagine

His reed-thin frame
withering yet
undisfigured
by infections
amputations
ulcers
hand, leg, fingers
lost, but with joy
that filled his room

I woke him
so early
too had
as I tate
what was left
he still grinned
ear-to ear
and chinked
so thankful
that it hurt

Before I left
for a cabin
one final time
to say goodbye
for everlike

"Thank you, man," he whispered warmly
"You kept your word"

John Korman
College of Medicine

Winner - 2009 Humanitas Prize for Excellence in Poetry
Hope In A Dry Land

Winner - 2009 Humanitas Prize for Excellence in Photography
Curious - Leh, India

Mary Barter

College of Medicine
I was disk ing a ra vault ed, terraced wheat field on a hot July day in Oklahoma. Disking a field tur ns under all a m bine leaves after ra vault st. As I went ov er the edge of a terrace, a jackrabbit sprang up and began running along the edge of the terrace ar ds th left. I saw a rabbit a red-tailed hawk sitting n th terrace. It lo oked like a coll ision, deere tractor to watch "nature, red in tooth and claw..." W hen and the hawk grew nervous. Th e large hawk clum sily tried to lift into the air seeking a ther mal th at w oul d take hi m hi ghe r. Out of dove at the hawk' s he ad. Th e larger bird duc ked and sw erve d he ad. I w atche d in amaz ement as in again and again.

Time sh ef te d.

(Th loaded bom ber raced dw n the runway preparing to lift into the air. A fighter dove from above and h mmered the bom ber's nos e. Th bom ber staggered and the fighter circled to continue its attack. One of th bom ber's engines was trailing smoke as the two aircraft disappeared over th tree line.)

Th red tail hawk and scissor-tailed flycatcher reached a point of separation and they parted safely.

The jackrabbit and I star ted the large, green tractor d at each b h r and grinned. He left to seek shelter and shade. I started th large, green tractor and continued to prepare the field for a future crop while mus ing at th wnde r it all.

Charles Brown

Winner - 2009 Humanitas Prize for Excellence in Prose
Dog

Kate Humphries

College of Health Professions
Driving Home From The Grocery Store

Driving home from the grocery store with $200 worth of groceries in my trunk.

My mind begins to wander over what bills need to be paid, did I RSVP to that party?, money’s tight right now, I really need more work clothes, I need to finish that project at work this week, did I send Pam a birthday card?, what am I going to fix for dinner tonight?, what color are we going to paint the guest room, damn — I forgot to pick up that prescription.

And then a guy on a motorcycle pulls out ahead of me.
And I am instantly young again.
The wind tearing through me like freedom itself.
Flying.
And I suddenly miss the days of youth, those years between being a kid and being an adult.
Starting the night out at 11 p.m. instead of being asleep by then.
Having $16 in my bank account, without any care.
Drinking vodka-spiked grape Kool-Aid with my roommates in my dorm.
Feeling like the whole world was open to me.
Indestructible.
Ordering fins from Sharky’s at 2:00 in the morning.
Before bills, before work, before responsibility.
When I could climb onto the back of my boyfriend’s motorcycle, and just go.

Aimee Strohecker
Pediatrics

Facing Page: Winner - 2009 Humanitas Prize for Excellence in Visual Art, non-Photographic
 Shotgun Wedding

In this land of ninety-ninth floor drinks
And nd and at all, wh re my smile is a secret
To h millins , I was stune d tbe ar witness
To sh gun w edding.

He, the troubled soul whose eyes, if ever uplifted,
Loke d th gls andsto ms, bracing against
Sun, whipping sand, whirled aimlessly through
A peopled desert of solitary souls;
And sh, a widw, mb h r d two
Victor once over the same cancer that strangled her mother;
Her soul survived but her heart did not.

Wh le sh fh h r early death
He coldly pursued his own.
The nly star h named in h s rclde d sky
Was th cb d cm fo t d early twiligh.
But h s betr h d, th th eatened sh -wb f, clawed fo life.
For love? She had not yet loved them enough.

Each took pains with future-perfect verbiage:
Epistles from the grave to those who will have lived.
All hope abandoned, the boy pulled the trigger with his toe;
And with a muffled crack like a rib pulled from flesh,
The ceremny be gan.

The boy was found, breathing but hopeless,
Functional only in the most archaic sense of the word.

They exchanged vows.
He, by force of shotgun, with no concern
For self or other, would give his heart
T h v and t d, fo e v r and e v r, amen.
And she pledged consent.
Machines, they breathed and beat when she could not, leaving cold silence for life’s ever-present iambs.

There would be no church bells, only organs.

The surgeon, frocked in sterile blue, and his deacons

Bedecked in the linens and caps of their offices,

Performed their ceremony in 5 hours, according to official record.

In short, the woman’s dying heart was excised

Sheared from its stalks with the cold precision of steel,

(which, in another situation, would be typed “serial”)

All except the left atrium, which remained, opened.

It was here the boy was joined to her,

Here was sutured together the vessel of life,

That most Holy of liqueurs, unwillingly willed

From an imperfect stranger to another

That she might perfect her future.

A scissor snipped the final suture.

Slowly the heart warmed.

The organ crescendoed triumphantly.

It was the only act I have seen

In this anonymous land and

And ninety-ninth floor drinks:

Two hearts joined as one in unison and harmony,

As long as they both live.

Forever and ever, amen.

Sanford Zeigler

College of Medicine
The Mighty Rubicon

Th' Rubicon
is a thin brook
bled from the Apennines,
fooled daily
torn and fro
by barefoot laborers.
Only Caesar crossed it but once,
the seventeen months it took
made a rivulet
Mighty.

Any who today cross
the Mighty Rubicon
does it in the blink of an eye
and need know
nothing of geography nor history,
only the stir of transit,
something at stake.

Against their gross indifference,
Nature, nature's scarcely-tamable
beauties happily collide,
forming august conspiracies which,
achieved across a grant for the
escape some trifling niche
to a mighty Rubicon, transforming
an empire or
a lofty art.
Each is an act
achieved but once,
its minutiae married to the belittle
of history,
but
its prowess instructually
promiscuous, making
the process of Mighty,
fordable;
its time,
exacting.

Richard Hoyland
Outcomes and Quality Management
Faded Glory

Jason A. Curry
College of Medicine
Upasuaji: Surgery, or Splitting

I stood at the head, where,
In surgery,
An anesthetist would ordinarily
Have taken up position.
Her body was draped in a graying sheet
But the fact was red stó of
Only by accident.

These were doctors trained for surgery,
Forced to commit butchery;
It’s ten the same story:
Questionable government provides
My first day in the operating theater
That sponge demanded that me for wasting
One square of gauze,

That dry buttered to do and see
Permeated as fully as the blood
Of my first hysterectomy
Seeping through Goodwill scrubs
They didn't like it any more than I did,
A belly filleted open, blood filling up
The bowl of another open abdomen.
The windows were ajar
For hopeless relief of the choking air
In the unfinished concrete octagonal room,
Temperatures approaching three digits
While flies floated in on yawned breezes
And took up the sanguine buffet.

I stood at the head, and her face
Between my hands,
One epidural and a relaxant
All they could spare against the sensations
Of skin being split, organs wrenched,
Fascia tearing like spider webs.

As the scalpel made its first descent,
She began singing, something
I only knew because of the occasional
"Yay-soo" distinguishing itself from between
The Swahili still falling short
On my unl earned ears.
It was the only time in the country
I ever felt gratitude
Toward damned colonial religion.

C. Morrow Dowdle

College of Health
Professions
A War Song

I never drew a sword
Or felt his sweating flesh
Beneath my hands.
I did not wrestle to the ground an enemy
Intent on silting my throat.

It's not fair, this war.

I didn't even get a bead,
Sigh him down my gun.
Never go to see him
Before light and noise and heat
Washed over me.
A tornado lover's touch.

Where's the glory?
Where's the warrior's song?
The answer to the call?
Thor's hammer, Mars' spear,
My mother's Pride?

Do I have to find it for myself?
Try to fashion a reason
Made up from bits and pieces of songs & legends,
Poems & books?

Something to speak to me.
Will me to lift my gun
And hunt again.

Cam Poston

STNICU
Hannah On Approach

Richard Hoyland

Outcomes And Quality Management
I’ve seen movies where brain children of the scientific revolution scoff at wizards of eras gone by. At turning lead into gold. Or horseradishes into diamonds. Maybe that’s all bullshit, but I’ve seen magic.

I’ve seen hasty scratch pad musings metamorph through the typed page and into hanging lives. I’ve heard the rabble and scrape of tuned strings become lumps and swallows in and of threads that will learn to sing. I’ve found relief in recycled trees and my own pen. My faith is in magic. And neither split molecules nor hasty crusaders will tear that from me.

Matthew Dettmer

College of Medicine
Katrina’s Song

Caroline Norment
Pediatric Neurology
**Green Ink**

How unlikely, this relaxed retirement morning,
A little green ink from a ball-point pen
Propels me back to a crisp autumn day,
My first day of private practice.
It’s 1953: I’m in a small suburban office
With a single nurse-assistant
Presiding over a waiting room of
Crying infants, anxious new mothers,
A lone, nervous dad,
Waiting to see and test
“The new young doctor.”
In my hand the topmost patient’s
4 by 6 lined index card
With the departed senior doc’s handwritten minute ciphers
...in green ink...
Distinct from nurses’ script
For height, weight, immunizations.

“What Next?” I thought,
Here comes day one, on my own.
A far cry from two years in the Public health service, doing infectious diseases,
An even farther cry
From white-coated residency days
In the pristine teaching hospital.

That was a different world...
Fee for service: five dollars a visit,
Two extra for a shot, ten for a house call,
Fifteen for newborn nursery...
Cash only, no business-savvy.

How would I manage?
How to cope with no business-savvy?
How to answer, at day’s end,
A young wife, in a flowered apron,
Holding our dimpled smiling infant,
At the open apartment door,

“How did it go, hon?”

How did it go?
I recall… green ink and all…
“I did my best, dear,
I did my best.”

**Stan Schuman**
*Retired*

---

**Lady Elly of Great Sutton**

**Robert Hosker**
*College of Medicine*
ALONE

BRIDGET HINKEBEIN

Public Safety
The paradigm of this paradox
Is from Pandora’s Box
My slander, vanity and lies
Have ruined my insides
Now envy, greed and pining
Casting my inner lining
The truth of the situation
Is not a new creation
But a repetition
Something of a tradition
With you and I.

Sure I sit and write this down
Verb, adjective, and noun
A declaration of independence
266 days of attendance
The length of my sobriety
The removal of a monster from society
Since I have partaken in that sin
That was the stimulus to the end
Of you and I.

I ask God for redemption
But not exemption
For what I have done
Battles that I have lost and won
I need serenity
To accept my identity
And recognize things I can change
But some are not in my range
And the wisdom to know the contrast
I know this is very cursory
Almost to the anniversary
Beyond you and I.

I have yet to find solace or strength
My peace is at an arm’s length
My sleep is troubled and dark
My life is bare and stark
But I am proud in the reality
Of my morality and mortality
Waiting for the altar
Then back to the altar
On my knees to pray
Strength or more of an end
After you and I.
Worth the Drive

Colin Crowe
College of Medicine
“I Crawl Into Bed...”

I crawl into his bed as silently as silk.  
I don’t want to wake him.  
I move toward him,  
and finally lay my head  
on that soft space between his shoulders  
and chest.

It’s as if God himself  
made that spot just for me.  
I drape my arms around his chest,  
and, though deeply asleep, he wraps  
his arms about me in turn.  
Instinct.

Before him, I never knew this place existed.  
This love, this light.  
I tilt my head up,  
Kissing him softly on his neck.  
And slowly melt into sleep.

AIMEE STROHECKER  
Pediatrics
FEMALE FORM

JANE ANNE SWEENY
College of Nursing
Ghosts

Almost asleep
She moved into that half-space
Between what isn’t
And what is

Tow’r that could be.

Half-shadows, she said to herself
When they flitted around a corner
Or red at a door.

Hello, she half-whispered
tow’r migh be th’re
Breathing softly in her ear.

Half-awake she lied
In twilight sleep,
Waiting for a slight movement
At the foot of her bed.

Half-expecting,
Hoping,
It would be her Mom.

Cam Poston
STNICU

Solitude

Ghosts

Almost asleep
She moved into that half-space
Between what isn’t
And what is

Tow’r that could be.

Half-shadows, she said to herself
When they flitted around a corner
Or red at a door.

Hello, she half-whispered
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Breathing softly in her ear.

Half-awake she lied
In twilight sleep,
Waiting for a slight movement
At the foot of her bed.

Half-expecting,
Hoping,
It would be her Mom.

Cam Poston
STNICU

Solitude

Bridget Hinkebein

Public Safety
Atrial Fibrillation

Be still little bird,
   Your fluttering wings in my heart cause concern.
Be still little bird,
   Your fluttering wings in my heart make me nervous.
Be still little bird,
   Your fluttering wings in my heart make me look to the
   horizon a storm.
Be still little bird,
   Your fluttering wings in my heart are a portent of dread.
Be still little bird,
   Stop your fluttering in my heart and be quiet.
Be still little bird,
   We shall both be at peace some day.

Charles Brown
Library

Wyoming

Michael Humeniuk  College of Medicine
**SEA OATS**

**HOPE FRIAR**

*Office of the Chief Information Officer*
"Get in your room!" I heard my father yell. It amuses me to think I can still remember the time when I flinched at that. I heard him yell a lot since then. You get used to things.

This time I can ignore it because the yell is directed toward my little brother. It's not fair, but in a way, I guess, my brother deserves a scolding. Maybe. I don't know. Really, if he doesn't know the basics rules of survival, it's his own fault.

The rules are simple.

You accept Dad as the ultimate authority. You keep your voice down and do as told. You apologize for your actions, even when you're not at fault. You don't argue or talk back, ever. Not even if you have an open mind, and your father just called someone stupid. If you all him out, he'll tell you he has black friends and he's not racist. When he talks about homosexuals in a degrading way, and you all him out, he'll tell you hes friends who are like that, he is not a homophobe.

Really, he's a great Dad. He goes hunting and fishing with his friends, and takes my brother along. I consider myself a little too old or too busy. Maybe I think I'm too close to snapping at him. I don't know.

He goes to baseball games and promises everything. Just don't ask for anything when he's there. He will tell you that we have no y to waste on useless things. But he will buy himself an expensive tin can of popcorn.

And when he's yelling at my little brother for no listening. I can hear my brother's voice, arguing with him, but Dad's louder. I guess it's loudness that decides everything. Now under I decided.
never win. I can’t even say “Hi” to my friends loudly enough to be heard. I’m now here near the yelling level.

My dad stopped screaming, and it’s peaceful now. Seemingly. I drink my tea. I wonder if I should go console my brother, but I don’t think I will. This war is one-on-one. Besides, even if I said something about the rules, he wouldn’t follow them. My brother just isn’t like that. Wish I were still able to learn from him.

Dad asks me something, but because I’m secretly mad at him, I say something in the wrong tone of voice. My mistake. He yells at me. I don’t even flinch. But I apologize once he’s done. I say, “Sorry, Dad. I didn’t mean it. I’m just a little out of it.”

He says something about me always being smart with him and making snide comments. I can’t say I didn’t try. It’s hard to do it back when I am the one rationalizing myself in the same sentence.

My little brother leaves his room, and comes up to Dad, saying: “No Dad, it’s me you’re thinking about. She didn’t do anything. It’s me who always gets into trouble!”

In a way he’s right, but it’s still nice that.

My Dad tells him, on top of his lungs, to go back to his room. My brother obliges, but once he’s gone, I say, loud enough:

“Hey Dad, lay off. He’s just a kid.”

And I really don’t care what happens next.

Vasilinia Kochurina

College of Pharmacy
LA PUSH, 2ND BEACH, CANDACE MOORER
WASHINGTON

Library
My Kidney Donation

The grasp of what I have done escapes me
I lay in bed sore, depressed, and having to pee
I hit the call button for a pill that will make it subside
At least if I failed, I will have tried
People call me good, people call me a saint
I feel sick, light-headed and faint
If they only knew, if they only saw
They wouldn’t remark or stare at me in awe
I did this out of greed
I did this out of need
To repay a guilt
That I had built.
As a child we were so close
But we drifted as age opposed
I should have talked to her more
But to a kid it was a chore
My grandmother was old
Her hands were too cold
I remember so well
It plays in my mind like a picture show
I remember her face, her food, and her face
I can almost go back to that time and space
But what drives me the most was her last breath
A slow, painful, acidic, and tough death
She died from refusal of dialysis
But I had killed her with my paralysis
She was dead a second and her tank is still
Now it is her that I miss
So I pay a debt I owe to my Grandmother
I gave my kidney away to her
I forget to give her the love that was inside
At least now I can say that I tried.

On December 17th, 2008, I donated my kidney to a stranger. People have asked me why and I’ve tried to explain, but I think this poem says it best.

Zachary Wade Sutton
Rehabilitation Sciences
Denali

Colin Crowe

College of Medicine
What Kind of People Live Here?

The pediatrics office
is closing while the office
for old people is the biggest
in town. Most people look at
me with eyes peering out between
wrinkles talking with pride about children
who moved away. Or friends
passed away. Or abilities
fallen away. Or bad farms
washed away. Or bright colors faded
away. The only stores here sell antiques
and the only lives lead here are
the same. But like the things to
old to keep pace but too
familiar to have away, I don’t want
to see them go. And like the world
I am sitting, I love the world
they live in. The tangles between their mouths and their graying
hair covered ears. Their world, that
slow and softer but with more
meaning. I don’t care if it doesn’t exist, if the concerns of war or
corruption or lie-beaten despair have
not reached this place. It is enough
for me that they believe.

Matthew Dettmer

College of Medicine
Hibiscus

Diana Wells

College of Pharmacy
Skylight

Th' darkness is cold.
The pain is plenty.
Nothing lets up,
Never gently.

Some changes led
to life declined.
Every change's change,
People have realigned.

In the middle I sit,
Reflecting on what I've become.
Sifting through the moments,
Can sing what can't be undone.

Reassessing what.
Coming up naught.
It's myself
That's always at fault.

Suddenly a ray of hope,
Enters my sigh.
Gives me a reason
To enter the night.

Where will I stop?
When will it end?
When it is --
Will it be enough to mend?

Adrian Nida
College of Graduate Studies
Jefferson Memorial

Nancy Carson Dennis

College of Nursing
Rosy’s Find
Genevieve Thul

College of Nursing

Finally Home
Kristi Rodgers-Cishek

Office of Integrated Planning and Assessment
In 2006, the Medical University of South Carolina asked six noted and emerging photographers to focus on portraying South Carolinians in the Lowcountry, Piedmont, and Upstate, reflecting the full range and diversity of the state’s citizens, occupations and recreational activities. In creating a collection of art to display within MUSC’s educational and clinical buildings, the University hoped to remind students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the people they serve not only at MUSC, but throughout South Carolina. The project has continued, and from the third installment of Palmetto Portraits, we have selected seven for inclusion in Humanitas.

2008 Palmetto Portraits Photographers

Gayle Broker
Ruth Rackley
Blake Praytor
Cecil Williams
Julia Lynn
Lee

Party of Three  Ruth Rackley
HERMAN THOMPSON
Blake Praytor
Beth Coiner
Gayle Broker
Josh Neissenbaum and Helen Rice
Gayle Broker
Dr. Leo Twiggs
Cecil Williams
Do you want to be a part of the next Humanitas?

Please send submissions to:

Kristi Rodgers  
E-Mail: humanitas@musc.edu  
Campus Mail: MSC 205  
Office: 17 Ehhardt St. Suite 3  

or in person at the MUSC Library Circulation Desk.