

THE CASE WESTERN BLOT

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2018 Women's March - Cleveland, OH  
*Bethel Mieso*

## she walks into a patient's room with a male classmate

*Vivian Qin*

one of us is called  
'Doctor', the other: 'honey'  
(take a wild guess.)

Standing erect in the center of our nation's capital is the Washington monument, encircled by  
Many other structures -- built by men, decided upon by men, and portraying men.  
A little boy might ask, "Where are the other monuments? Did women just live in a different part of town?"  
Sizzling inside, Mom kneels next to her son and says,  
"History has proven that it is he who will decide where she will go, and how much she can grow.

Those damn colossal monuments of men, always pushing their way into center stage of every D.C. postcard.  
'Hover harder,' they say. 'She's still breathing. She's still speaking. She may live to tell and rebel.' But,  
Even the strongest women do not stand a chance to be seen. To be heard. To be believed.

Perhaps, one can dream  
About a time in which our world will change, my son.  
The time when having a beer and liking beer, while  
Reaching under someone's skirt to 'grab 'em by the pussy' is no longer an emblem of the all-American male.  
I thought that the time was near... I thought that raising our own voice would be enough.  
Alas, women's voices remain like the cherry blossoms -- ephemeral and  
Restricted to serve as a mere background for the masculine, and more powerful monuments.  
Come here and listen, my son. Your sex has granted you privilege to help undo man-made, institutionally-derived  
Hypoxia of women's voices. Let your fire be ignited when you hear someone say 'boys will just be boys.'  
You, my son, must join the fight and bring what was wrongfully pushed aside to the foreground."

It is Time.  
By Katia DaSilva

**Naked**  
*Emily Hannon*



**Grand Prismatic**  
*William Merrick*

## Bubblegum

*Vivian Qin*

There is your mother. There is a woman in a mask. There are others. You think they are smiling, but you can only see their eyes, staring, so you are not sure. The smiling ones surround you and chatter at you and grasp for your limbs.

You are in a bed, but it is not your bed. It is the bed of the souls who were carried into this room before you and the countless souls who will be brought against their will after you. Here you lay, and here your flesh will be dissected, too.

But you do not know this, yet, so you are not scared. It is too cold and too bright, but you are holding your mother's hand and you are definitely. not. scared.

The denizens of the room give you a thing that is like a toy, they say. Hold it to your face, they say, and breathe in. Breathe in deeply. Deeper. Doesn't it smell like bubblegum. Yummy yummy bubblegum, they chant.

You like bubblegum, but you do not like this. You writhe and squirm and try to hold your breath like you are underwater. You fail. In the sickly sweet fumes of pungent bubblegum, you take your last breath. You cease to exist. You never existed.





**The Wild Inside**  
*Tegan Schmidt*



**Confusion**  
*Annika Sinha*



**View of Positano**  
*Elma Baron*



**Rainy Day**  
*Anonymous*

## **Water Lilies**

*Saarang Deshpande*

Our lilies, green from the spoils of Spring,  
flock as a company in violet ripples,  
as if to question the need for  
blue hues of solitude.

Beyond this scene, there must be a hive,  
encircled by its exacting workers,  
honeycombs banded as one  
by these sunlit hermits.

This smooth frame, woven in solitude,  
exposed for pastoral gaze,  
to rest parallel its pond,  
for what?

--To attend a scene so separate, so stilled,  
it could be nothing but the work of many.



A flower in Giverny, France  
*William Merrick*





**Untitled**  
*Michael Han*

## Fragilidad

*Alberto Montero*

Recumbent  
in a window side  
hospital bed  
sunsetting  
sun watching  
could be my last, (shethinks)?  
lives are fragile  
daffodil blooms

doctor bedside  
her eyes  
like glass shattered by  
moremedicalbadnews

seeking scientific salvation:  
make humanity great again?  
can't cure enemy within  
shethinks:  
I'm splitting apart at the seams  
just breathe—  
keep it together a bit longer

docthinks:  
seems calm  
her yellow eyes  
fudōshine  
in lateafternoon sunlight  
caring hand grasps hers

thoughts  
turn to the postscript:  
what's afterbeing?  
not perpetual Sundays at candysugar mountain  
eternal flux  
her life: a word written in the cosmic sea  
nebulous enigma  
ineffable

**Hang Tight**  
*Eric Tichle*



**Untitled**  
*Saagar Vallabh*

# THE POWER OF THE CYBORG PATIENT

Muriel Lederman PhD

Here is a photograph (Figure 1) of an eighteen-month old child shortly after he was diagnosed with a neuroblastoma. The most immediately striking aspect of the photograph is the size of the port relative to his body. In the terminology of Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* (1), the boy and the device constitute the studium, the impression the photograph makes on the viewer. However, Barthes describes another element in some photographs, the punctum; it will “break (or punctuate) the studium . . . (it) rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces (p. 26).” The punctum changes the entire impact of the image in a way that is irreversible; once apprehended, the studium cannot be retrieved as it was initially perceived.

The punctum in this image of the toddler is the folds of the blanket in the lower right corner. They, by their resemblance to an umbilical cord, suggest that the child may have been born with the port already imbedded in his chest. He was a human/machine embryo, a cyborg. The cyborg, especially as developed by Donna Haraway (2), will be used as a point of departure to address the patient/practitioner relationship.

The term cyborg was coined by Clynes and Kline to describe an entity that, because of its ability to self-adjust, could break the earth/space boundary and explore the universe (3). Haraway’s cyborg, too, is the result of broken boundaries, especially the one between human/animal and the machine. Within health care, the concept of the cyborg is broadened to include technological practices that impact the health of individuals, (diagnostic imaging, use of prostheses, implantable devices), especially in contrast to the more humane aspects of person-centered care (PCP). Lapum et al. (4) discuss how “a cyborg ontology can initiate and complicate the liminal space between technology and PCP (p. 279).” They note the risk that technology becomes over-riding and contrast it with the risk that “context and subjectivity overshadow the objective technological knowledge (p. 280).” The balance between technology and the patient is clearly fraught, but these authors place responsibility for addressing this duality on practitioners – “by acknowledging ourselves as cyborgs, we can capture and preserve our humanness as caregivers, as well as thrive as we proceed in our technological way of being (p. 276).”

This conceptualization does not acknowledge the power differential between the provider and the person receiving care, a distance grounded in the specialized (technological) knowledge of the provider that is reinforced by society. However, we can overcome this gulf by focusing on the patient as cyborg, rather than the provider. Someone who has an implanted medical device, or even someone who has had a vaccination to reprogram the immune system, is a chimera. It is the practitioner who transforms the patient into the hybrid creature. In doing so, she sows the seeds of her own undoing: the patient gains enough control to challenge the power differential in the relationship. For example, by implanting pumps that release needed biological molecules into the body, the physician has fulfilled the vision of the original coiners of the cyborg concept, since these machines maintain a constant milieu interieur, as described by Claude Bernard (5). This constancy lessens the dependence on the health care provider, freeing the patient from the need for constant care. Even an immunization may prevent additional attention for the complications of a disease such as influenza.

Medical practice, often perceived of as grounded in and dispensing objective knowledge, values the (masculine) mind over the (female) body, irrespective of the sex of either patient or provider. At the Scientific Revolution, this was expressed through mechanical metaphors and machines, exemplified by the Strasbourg astronomical clock, a huge set of gears that portrayed many aspects of the heavens. An eighteenth century engraving, *L’Horologie*, shows a woman with a clock face in her belly/uterus

wearing a headdress of a second clock (6). She is a crucial cyborg; this woman’s body internalizes the privileged (male) mind/machine, thus negating the gender duality played out in the mind/body split. Consequently, the power of any cyborg body with an embedded machine, even a female body, may claim equality with the mind of the provider who created it. Thus, the cyborg ontology vanquishes, in both practical and philosophical senses, the hegemony of the health care provider relative to the recipient, reclaiming power for the patient, who can demand, rather than passively await, dignity and respect in her care. As Haraway says “Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves (p. 181).”

1. Barthes R. 2012. *Camera Lucida*. New York; Hill and Wang.
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3. Gray C.H. 1999. *Manfred Clynes and the Cyborg*. In: Williams D. *Festschrift for Manfred Clynes*. Chicago: MMB Music.
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5. Bernard, C. 1957. *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. New York: Dover Publications.
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Fig. 1. A child with a port.



**Poison**  
*Lisa Tan*

## Editors

**Saarang Deshpande**  
**Benita Glamour**  
**Kerrin Sunshine**

## Advisor

**Lynda Montgomery, M.D., M.Ed.**

## Writing

### **Katia Dasilva**

Katia Dasilva is a second-year medical student at CWRU SOM.

### **Saarang Deshpande**

CWRU SOM MS2

### **Muriel Lederman**

Muriel Lederman is retired from Biology and Women's Studies at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg VA and teaches in the Health Humanities track at CWUSOM.

### **Alberto J. Montero, M.D., M.B.A.**

Short biographical sentence: Alberto is an Associate Professor at Case Western and Staff Physician at the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Institute.

He is a practicing medical oncologist, and his creative writing has appeared in several places including: The Oncologist, Abaton, Down in the

Dirt, and The Acentos Review. In addition to writing poetry, he loves to take black and white photography, meditate, practice Kendo, read, and assist his kids with their homework.

### **Vivian Qin**

Vivian Qin is a fourth-year medical student at CWRU SOM.

## Art

### **Elma Baron, M.D.**

I am a professor in Dermatology, CWRU SOM, and the Chief of Dermatology at Cleveland VA Medical Center. My art is inspired by my travels.

### **Joseph K. Daprano, M.D.**

Joseph Daprano is an Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at CWRU School of Medicine and is a staff physician at MetroHealth Medical Center. He is the medical director of MetroHealth at J Glen Smith where he has been in practice for 20 years. He is the codirector of Quality Improvement for the MetroHealth Adult Wellness Service Line. He works overseas on a periodic basis and this poem was written while he was serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Papua New Guinea.

### **Lisa Fleischer**

### **Michael Han**

### **Emily Hannon**

My name is Emily R. Hannon and I am an MSTP student interested in studying epidemiology, infectious disease, and global health.

### **William Merrick, M.D.**

Dr. William Merrick has been a Biochemistry faculty member at CWRU for the past 40 years. He teaches biochemistry to undergraduates, graduates and medical students. His research focus is on eukaryotic protein synthesis, mechanism and regulation.

### **Bethel Mieso**

Bethel Mieso is a third year medical student at CWRU.

### **Tegan Schmidt**

CWRU SOM MS3

### **Annika Sinha**

Annika Sinha is a fourth year medical student at Case Western University School of Medicine who is pursuing a career in OBGYN.

## Art

### **Lisa Tan**

Lisa Jjnjo Tan is a first year medical student who hopes to continue her artistic pursuits throughout her medical career. She strongly believes that medicine and art are closely intertwined and together have the power to enact social change

### **Eric Tischler, M.S.**

Eric Tischler is a medical physicist at Cleveland Clinic, and Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. By day, he helps cancer patients by ensuring they get safe, accurate and high-quality radiation therapy. In his free time, he enjoys photographing local wildlife and various subjects around Cleveland.

### **Sagar Vallabh**

MS4

