#### Anatomy Bequest Program

## Donor Appreciation



### Introduction

The following is a compilation of original artwork, poetry, song lyrics, and essays created over the past 26 years by University of Minnesota medical, dental, occupational health, mortuary science, and physical therapy students in honor of the Anatomy Bequest Program donors. This booklet is dedicated to those whose generosity extended beyond their lives, to their loved ones who trusted us with the care of their favorite people, and to these fine students who made it their lives' work to protect the health and improve the wellbeing of our community.



**Angela Mcarthur**Director



#### FAMILY/FRIENDS — BOTH — STUDENTS

The above image was crafted by the medical students for the 2017 Service of Gratitude. Surveys were sent to families of those who donated to the University of Minnesota and our students who learned from our donors. We asked donor family members to share some of their loved ones characteristics during their lifetime. We asked the students what they imagined their donors were like during their lives. The red words represent how students responded, blue represents how families responded, and purple represents characteristics both groups chose. The resulting image symbolizes the beautiful lives our donors led and the positive impact they've had on our students and community.

# Gifts of Appreciation

#### **Original Essay**

by Haley Sharma, Medical Student

Day one of anatomy lab, and I thought I was prepared. Prepared to meet my donor, who would become my First Patient and my First Teacher. I had seen pictures while going over the material I needed and videos of what was to come. I had read blogs from medical students about their first experiences, and I had even read a book about people who had donated their bodies to science. So, Wednesday morning, when I put on my maroon scrubs, stuffed a bunch of purple Nitrile gloves in my pocket, went over what was going to be done that day in my head, and tied up my hair to enter Anatomy lab, I thought I was ready.

I was not ready.

They say it's the little things that make you realize who it is in front of you. The nail polish on the toenails, the delicate tattoo on the neck, the smile lines still etched on their faces. For me, it was my donor's hand. As soon as I saw my First Teacher's Hand, the wrinkles, the sun spots, the calluses that told a story, I had to step back and breathe.

This is a human being. This is a human being. This was no longer a plastic model used in undergraduate classes around the country. This was once someone's child, sibling, parent, grandparent, friend, classmate. This is a human being. I felt so much gratitude.

Looking around the room at the other donors, it was clear to me that selflessness filled the air. In their wishes after death, these men and women had wanted to be here. These men and women had willingly donated their bodies to our school so that we could learn. So that we could be better physicians. So that we, with their permission, could see for ourselves the wonderful workings of the human body. So that those of us, myself included, who are kinesthetic learners and need to touch and do and feel in order to understand, could finally grasp the concepts we had once struggled with before.

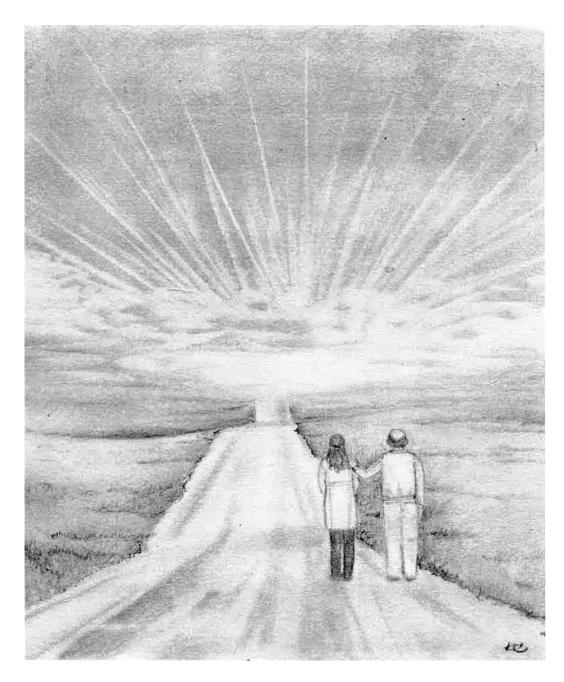


▲ Original Painting by Katherine Sherrard, Occupational Therapist Student

I held the hand that made me pause, overwhelmed with feelings of wonder, fear, honor, and thankfulness. Thirteen weeks later, and I still feel all of those things every time I enter the room. Wonder, for the beautiful and intricate creation that is the human body. Fear, of the complexity of it all and of the possibility of making mistakes.

Honor, for being among the very few given the opportunity to explore the human body in such a way. Thankfulness, for my First Patient for letting me see what the skin hides, and for you, family and friends of all the donors, for letting them donate their bodies and for trusting us with such a precious gift. Thank you. I know that I am not unique in these feelings. So I must say: We have all felt these things. We held their hands, but they have been the ones to hold ours.

We touched their hearts, but they have been the ones to touch ours. So thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for letting your loved ones donate their bodies to the University of Minnesota. The precious gift that your loved ones made for us to learn will not be forgotten.



▲ Original Drawing by Kyley Crotty, Dental Student

#### Forever Teaching, Forever Giving

by Diane Reader, Physical Therapy Student

So selfless your hands,

Forever teaching, forever giving.

Your hands held me when I was a child

Fed me, clothed me, bathed me.

As I grew, your hands guided me.

Forever teaching, forever giving.

I watched your hands grow busy with work.

Knitting, building, cooking, cleaning.

Serving, teaching, making, playing.

Never were they idle,

always they were moving.

Forever teaching, forever giving.

Then it was time for your hands to set me free.

And I set off into this world, but little did I know,

Your hands were still supporting me.

Forever teaching, forever giving.

Loving hands that helped me grow.

Working hands that served in the community.

Compassionate hands that touched many lives.

Hands that brushed away tears, clenched in pain, rejoiced in happiness.

Hands that told a story.

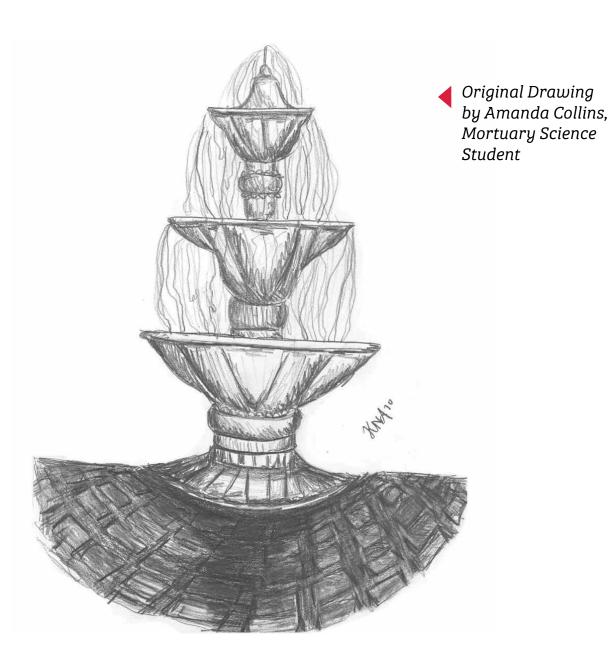
Now, as your story has ended, your hands continue to give.

Teaching students through the selflessness of your heart,

Learning your story as they create theirs.

The work of your hands carry on your legacy.

Forever teaching, forever giving.



#### **Ode to the Bodies of Anatomy Class**

by Tchao Thao, Medical Student

Formalin reeks of mortality
Its seeps through my pores
Ferments my soul
As I, drunken with this medical gaze
Examine this body
These youthful hands of mine
Having not yet been doctored by demise

Having not yet embraced the hands of death

Must now weave through seams of flesh

And I stand before this body

Shaken and stirred for answers

Questioning my future worth as a physician

Until finally it came to me

It came at that moment of reflection

It came as I reflected the eyelids back

And found myself in his reflection

I in his eye

It came as poetry

It became poetry

It became poetry in stillness

It became poetry in bodily incarnations

It became poetry in pronated poses

Rather than pronoun and proses

His body became poetry

And now I stand before his body

No longer afraid

For his body inspires fruitful breaths inside me

Nourishing the fevers of forgotten wings

As they sprout from my back

Drape over my body

And paint my being

With white coats

And in rhythmic motion

I can now weave along networks of flesh

Finding fascial layers

As if conducting songs

And unraveling psalms

From my palms

And in rhythmic motion

I unravel newfound heavens

Summon skies, encircle planets and now,

I no longer cloud my mind with doubts, I brainstorm

I condense healing, beauty, and life

Into poetic medicine

I diagnose the sick with smiles

I overcast suffering

By showering metaphors

And flooding hospital floors

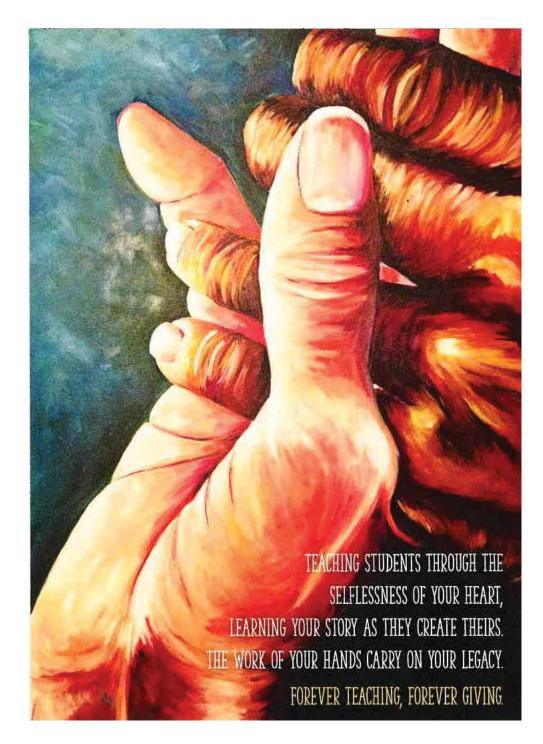
Three feet deep in his poetry

And I, a first year medical student

Am no longer blinded by the lightness of being

For I saw a glimpse of the naked truth

This body before me



▲ Original Painting by Diane Reader, Physical Therapy Student

#### **Exchange**

by Laura Knudson, Medical Student

What can you tell me
What can I tell you?
Two Strangers-Never spoken
But by touch, and the occasional textbook-fuddled examination

What can you show me What can I show you?

Two lives-Never intersected

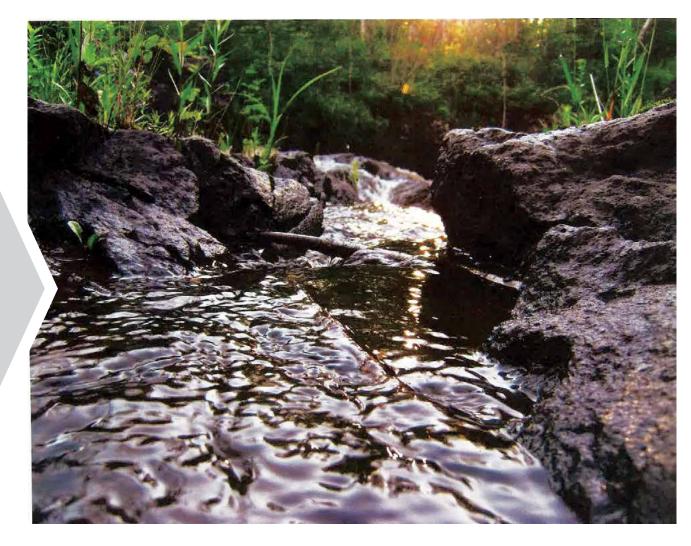
Until now-One toddling along new roads bright with wonder, gliding along silvery trials shrouded in mist

What may we share together, in our awkwardly beautiful partnership?

I can tell you what is behind your belly button
You can tell me what hue looks best on your nails
I can show you the secrets you carried,
known only to your creator and your surgeon
you can show me the result of 40, 60, 80 years of lifting, carrying,
pulling, and pushing innumerable burdens, cares, and joys

Together we share an enormous gift

Alone you have revealed to me the power And love of knowledge bequeathed



▲ Original Photograph by Anonymous Student

#### The Gift We Share

by Vicki Brown, Medical Student

I closed my eyes one day Thinking about the lives we live All of the people I have met All of the special things they give

I thought about our teachers And the message that they sent Things they must have thought about,

All that their lives meant

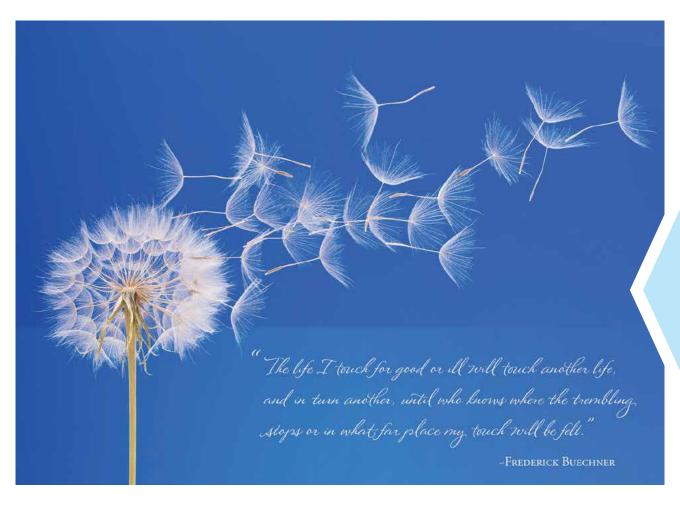
All throughout our lives
As your friends and family
And then as our amazing teachers
They gave so much so freely

Through our teachers kind actions I thought about them each day I tried to decide, if I were them Some of the things I would say

"I am here for you don't worry I'll leave you with a gift so dear I want to make a difference Use it well and keep it near" My friends and family can feel my gift,
It's forever in their hearts
My love, my smile, my wit
Can be cherished even though we're apart
My students can use my gift
What I taught is forever in their minds
I want to help them be better doctors
Will every patient they greet, every problem they find

As a student I appreciate
All of the gifts I got, I'm lucky
My life was touched my wonderful people
People who thought how they'd like the future to be

Family, friends, students
What a wonderful gift we share
Every now and then we'll close our eyes and remember
That, even as time passes, our gift is always there.



Original Photograph by Anonymous Student

#### Coming down the stairs this morning

by Rachael Harlos, Medical Student

Coming down the stairs this morning there you were pink and orange and yellow I knew you were there before I saw you-your light-coming through the window so lush on the steps Welcome it in.
That is what you would say.

Fill in the story.

Was it all loss?

Kali is the Hindu goddess of destruction.

She destroys to make space. An opening, a hiatus, a lapse, a leeway, a margin.

We twist our bodies occupying angles that

challenge and stretch-that feel good and

uncomfortable.

And we when we come out of the twist

there is a space, an opening, a place to be filled.

You have died.

This body we became so familiar with-the lines of your smile, the way you held your shoulders when you stood in a crowd, the way your laugh jumped out of you-this body that held you

we can no longer reach out for, hold, touch, ask it to comfort us with the familiarity of you, the smell of you, the contours of your hands.

You have died.

I want to acknowledge that you were alive. You were here-in this world-loving and crying and laughing and shouting. You breathed, you ate, you sang, you whistled, you told bad jokes, you slammed doors, you wrote poetry, you built houses, you loved, you hurt, you lived.

In this twisting work of dying

we are faced with our limitationsour ultimate limitationthat to live is to die. But is it all loss? We come out of the twist of dyingthe living and the deadand there



▲ Original Painting by Jessalyn Weaver, Medical Student

there
is a space
an opening
still
blue
quiet

It reverberates with the hum of your life-the chord you played-how you found a way to be in this world so that you could be you. And we, the living, the ones who remain for a bit more, carry your hum with us and it becomes our love, our laughter, our bad joke, our poetry, our carpentry, our pain, our joy.

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#### A different dissection

by Kristina Tester, Medical Student

Grant's Dissector instructs a rigidity in the teaching of Anatomy. Know the muscle, recite origin, insertion, innervation. Describe Action. The body becomes the parts list, the student the master of recitation, route memorization and fact regurgitation.

Here is another parts list.

Muscle: Supraspinatus, Origin: Fossa of scapula.

Action: lifted four children and sixteen grandchildren countless times, spinning them in the air, placing them on shoulders to see the world, helping them reach higher, stretch farther, grow taller.

Ligament: Anterior Cruciate Ligament. Insertion: lateral condyle of femur. Action: barely held together a knee bruised and battered by high school hockey, collegiate soccer and explorations through backyards, on bicycles and by backpack. Torn by a game of thanksgiving football because saying no was never an option.

Joint: Temporal Mandibular. Location: between squamous portion of temporal bone and condyle.

Action: held his jaw shut when she smashed the Subaru, when they lost the offer on the house, when they told him they "no longer had a place for him at the company." Opened his jaw: every Sunday night football game, every soccer game in the fan section, and every piano recital, even when cheering wasn't allowed.

Gland: Lacrimal. Innervation: parasympathetic from CN VII.

Action: only the memorable moments. Walking his daughter down the aisle.

Carrying his wife's casket down that same aisle. Running to the hospital when they thought the baby was breach. Saying hello to life, and saying goodbye to it.

Muscle: Iris Dilator. Innervation: sympathetic from superior cervical ganglion. Action: never knew what true clarity was until these muscles brought her into focus. Every inch of her glowing and focused in front of him, for 55 years.

Organ: Lung. Location: pleural cavity.

Action: breaths... deep ones of solitude, alone in the mountains. Ragged ones after a fight ...or sex... or fear... Short ones: towards the end.

Bone: Malleus. Location: inner ear.

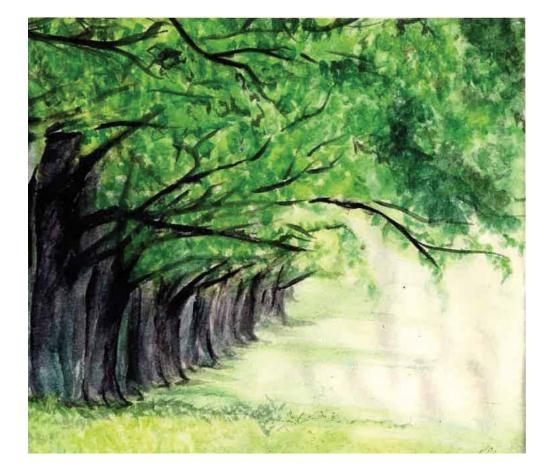
Action: listened. To worries, to stories around the fireplace and laughter at the dinner table, to patients, to son-in-law's, to friends who quit jobs and friends who started families. To MPR every morning and A Prairie Home Companion every Sunday. To her voice, every day, with "good morning", "I love you" and "goodnight."

Organ: Heart. Location: pericardial space.

Action: beat for 82 years, 30,000 days, for four children, sixteen

grandchildren, and—always—for her.

In our dissection, let us not forget the forest for the trees.



Original Painting by Kyley Crotty, Dental Student

#### **Light in Mourning**

by Aaron Henderson, Dental School Class of 2018

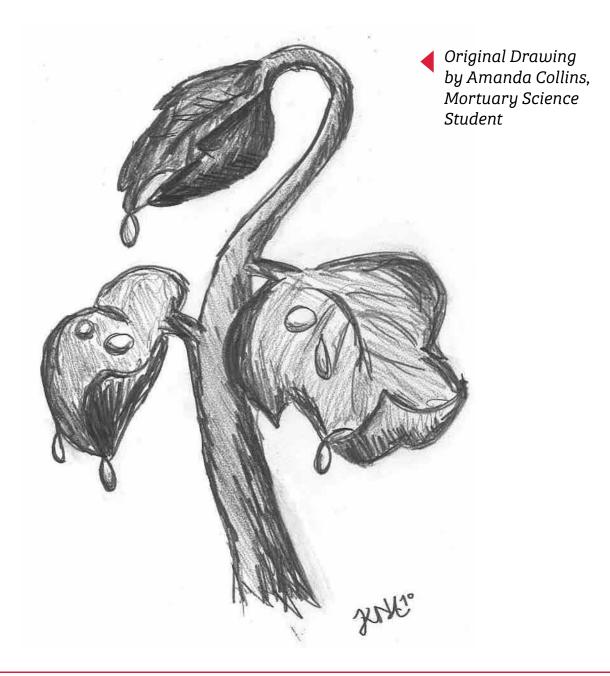
Death. Death is the substance necessary for life. The view may seem pessimistic, but I challenge you to view it as a positive set of circumstances: the death of stars provides the elements necessary for life (yes, to invoke the late Carl Sagan, all we know is the stuff of stars); the death of plants and animals provides the sustenance and energy for homeostasis, the maintenance of both micro and macroscopic biochemistry; the death of relationships supplies oxygen, stoking the future fires for which new love has provided the spark; the death of ideas makes way for new points of view, seeing the light of the universe through the lenses that others have worn. I'm not trying to convince you that death is desirable – I've in fact found it to be the most difficult of the foundational elements of the human condition with which to deal, but it enables.

A unique aspect of life is how readily it is defined by its opposite. Instantly the concept of living is provided with profound meaning when death arrives – not unlike when light is immediately understood when it's blotted out by darkness. When directly asked "what is light?" one may be at a loss for words, just as life lacks precise definition. We mourn this loss of life. I'm recently and intimately familiar with this concept – with the passing of my grandmother in late September, I ruminated on the loss of family –the immediate absence, the prospect of future loss. Watching my father bid his mother farewell was a powerfully visceral reminder of the mortality of my parents, my sisters, my family, and my friends.

Upon reflection, I realized the situation was a catalyst for growth. As a non-religious man, I questioned the circumstance which surrounded the somber ceremony, but soon discovered an understanding that the people who gathered for her funeral came together to remember, to share stories of how she influenced their lives, how she had played such an integral role in their endeavors. This ceremony of loss was the foundation for a collective of shared memories to be born, an intangible representation of the exponential influence one individual can have on a community. She spoke to us all without language as we know it. Before I became a student of dentistry, I was an anatomist. The set of circumstances which brought me to such a place were unique, and the experiences I had as a member of the anatomical society were surreal and formative, to say the least. I was part of a group which utilizes death to facilitate the growth of countless people.

Teaching one student – opening the eyes of just one student to the prospect of comprehending his or herself, their peers, their patients, can in ways both miniscule and great spread knowledge like seeds on the wind. As a lecturer, I was able to play the role of the wind, distributing those ideas to fertile soils. However, as a teacher in the laboratory, I came to realize that it was not I who did the teaching; I acted merely as an interpreter for those who could no longer speak for themselves. In death, I was able to both deliver as well as experience first-hand immense emotional and academic growth.

It's because of those who have chosen to donate that we are enabled to further our understanding of all aspects of medical knowledge; that we are enlightened by the natural masterwork of each individual, collectively showing us a physical manifestation (a set of phenotypes, if you will) that we average out and call, "human." In death, we have opportunity to sort out the detail contained within people, hopefully acquiring a deeper - yet curiously incomplete - recognition of that which makes us uniform, that which makes us unique, and an appreciation for the blurry bits in between.



#### **An Everlasting Gift**

#### by Ben Rosenstein, Medical Student

I wake up in the morning and look in the mirror

And no longer ever do I see only myself Rather you, you are there too, by my side Now a reflection of what's inside. This hand you see, it's no longer just a part of me. But also a part of you. Every day I look at it, and I see my fingers, but yours yours are the muscles, the tendons, the nerves

When I stare in that mirror, I can only imagine my heart. But I see yours. The gift you gave me at the start is a memory. A memory of you. A teaching, given to so few. It's strange how we met, you and I. For in order for us to meet, you had to die. But in your death, you gave so much. Not only to me, but so many others you'll touch.

You taught me first, this is true.

But it is within me now that
I carry you. And through your memory
I shall take you so far.
To wards and rooms, and patients, many.
I shall teach them of their hearts, their bones
Their muscles, tendons, and nerves.
But as I do, I will see you.
As it is your heart your bones your nerves
I'll remember, as I teach
and we see patients together.
And one day we'll teach so many patients,
I will teach other young doctors.

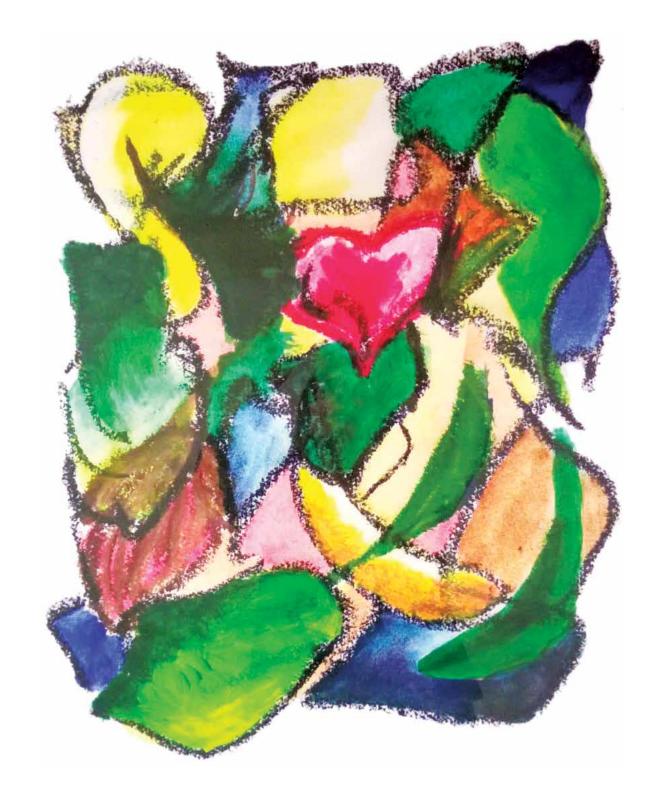
Students, like me.
I will teach what I remember.
I remember you, your heart. Your gift.

And they; They will teach others
And they will teach patients,
And our patients will teach their families
And our students, one day, will teach
other students.
And so you see, And Dear Families Here
I say this. This, I say so sincere

Your one gift will help Countless others. Your gift is well beyond me. Your gift is to the entire community. That is my entrusted reward, my privilege. To carry you on. That is my responsibility

Know this, dear You,
Ever shall I remember
That August to December
You shall remain ever, in my memory
In the mirror,
You shall remain beside me

So, now and forever and for generations to be you shall always be Within others and me Living.



▲ Original Artwork by Jennifer Ringlien

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#### **Just Like Me**

#### Lyrics by Mike Kroll, Medical Student

Early August and I walked into the room And I thought this day has come a little too soon Lying there she offered us more than I could ever conceive didn't know what alive meant, What death meant, or what she meant to me

But just like me She tried to make someone happy She gave as much as she could And if I could you know what I would Give everything I have

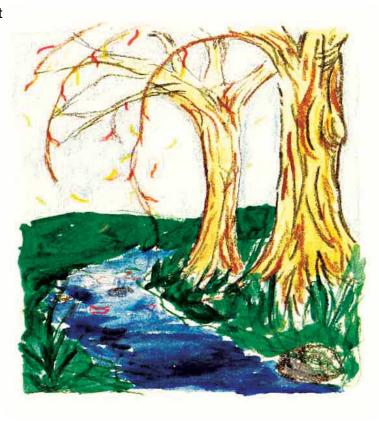
She could have been smart, she could have been dumb, she could have been Someone special to someone.

Her favorite thing could have been to look at kids and smile at the little ones I wonder if she cried before she died or if she smiled yet another time And if she had a son, daughter, or a lover who would be kind

But just like me she could have been a little lonely But nevertheless she gave the most sincere gift yet

And I don't know how to handle it And I don't know what to do with it And I don't know how to treat it But I do know I appreciate it

She reminds me There is more than one place for the heart



Painting by Unknown Artist

#### **Donor Anatomy-Learning Humanity**

by James R. Carey, PhD, PT

Such brilliant architecture

Arches for protection

Feather-fibered muscles for power

Tendons tethered sharply to bone

Slippery sheaths to reduce friction

Pearly ligaments collaborating collaterally

Fulcrums, levers, pulleys and tunnels

All compactly contained behind veil now pale

Biologic beauty—yes, but where is the humanness

Look deeper they silently beckon to me

Past your science

Past our machinery

Seize our stories

Uphold our soul

I hear you and struggle at first

An impossible task, now, in your stillness

But perhaps not

I retreat from scientific training

And with mind wide open

I approach, I imagine and I see

Sturdy hips, hollow hips, metallic hips

That balanced you, advanced you

So many movements, so many miles, ever uphill

Nearly a century of stability, mobility

No wonder your weariness

Knees with thick cartilage, shallow cartilage, no cartilage

That bore the weight

Of playmates tussling in the backyard

Of crippled comrades carried from fury in '43

Of postures bent and reverent, in supplication

No wonder your joint mice

Thick fingers, calloused fingers, crooked fingers

That tackled the shovel

And the fruit of the earth, despite the pain

Delicate fingers, caring fingers, color-tipped fingers

That tickled thimbles and threads

and backs and heads, of sleepy grandchildren

Brains once heaving with rolling hills of magical cells

That orchestrated fanciful dance, diction and dreams

And countless other thoughts unique to you

Now with narrowed hills and widened valleys

As genetic forces and merciless decades Eroded your memories, appetite and pace Still, in stillness you retain your grace Abdominal walls with staples and stitches Remind us of our many vulnerabilities But most poignant are structures repaired After the many lives you lovingly beared And of course, your hearts Some healthy, some enlarged, some mended To extend the journey Of repetitive pumping Of unceasing pleasing, of others And now, with all that done You yield one last gift of selfless virtue Your body to us

In awe, we learn anatomy

Higher, we learn humanity

Original **•** 

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#### Now and Then

by Peter Ragusa, Medical Student

For the young student's unsure heart and anxious hand Your loved ones were there, eager to impart lessons unplanned

We first arrived, not knowing what to say Yet, we were somehow sure that said it all-in a way

Through our days of attentive and muted angst Your loved one's spirit quietly conveyed

"I am here for you, young doctor; I am here for you today"

As the nights passed The mornings each day

Through their gift
A most sincere and gracious display

Our first teachers Who, with us, reside always

Warmly calmed our hearts, and steadied our hands, again to say "I am here for you, young doctor; I am here for you today"

#### Threads of Life

by Rick Mitchell, Chris Dwan, and Laura Knudson

In the soul of every stranger, there gleams a golden light Common to all lives between the dawning and the night As the thread of every person, weaves into life's tapestry, The cloth shines with the love of lives gone and lives to be. At the finish of our labor we see the woven whole. All life's strands are bound together with the gifts of Each soul.

#### Learning

#### by Matthew Schroeder, Physical Therapy Student

Dear Donor: Though you cannot receive it now, I write to you this letter. The gift you gave: incredible; of which I am a debtor! First of all, may I begin, with utmost appreciation? For what better way to learn: structure, function and relation?

Far more than physical, many other things as well you teach. Your influence, now vastly extends, beyond your own life's reach! Your gift has touched the lives of many whom you will never know, and these lives will then go onward: helping others learn and grow!

So to us, the hopeful caregivers for your children's future, you teach us the base of healing: like how to mend and suture! As life begets life, with gifts given, from father and mother, so life's torch is passed, from one generation to another.

I hope this, our leg of life's relay, after the stretch you ran, keeps up the pace of advancement, your time set, when we began. What stories you could share, of your journey's finish, from the start! And even more knowledge and wisdom, to us, you could impart.

But, the race does not always align to our hearts own beating. And yet again you teach me: that this life we have, is fleeting! Though, perhaps your length of time with us had seemed so far from fair, yet in all the ways you gifted us, you had one more to share!

Now my eyes have seen the inner workings, and it's beauty shown, and can understand our body's form, in ways I've never known! You have taught me that our bodies are beautifully diverse, take for instance: how our sensation, can travel and disperse.

The mind-numbing network of complex circuitry, just to feel, all the needed parts to react and move toward what is real. Or the variety even found in how we circulate, and the extraordinary exchange for air to percolate!

Or the magnificent arrangement of muscle, joint and bone, and the seamless nature of our tissues, together sewn. Still, I often muse and wonder, who it is you might have been, many things that I call history, your very eyes have seen!

And which of these things did you most enjoy, and still feel fonder?

And of those who knew, and think of you, what things they might ponder?

Now the only barrier between us, being merely time;

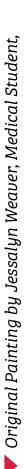
for once you also had strengths and passions similar to mine!

And now the thought occurs to me that a principle reigns true: a theme that holds all together with a sort of cosmic glue. The thread: that in every twist in life's journey, and every turn; in all of our desires, and goals of life, for which we yearn, and especially true in the passions for which we burn; Life's more meaningful, if we live in such a way, as to learn!

So thank you once more, for graciously, teaching me so dearly, With my deepest appreciation, I remain sincerely -A Grateful Learner



▲ Original Drawing by Anonymous Student





#### Minnesota Plates

Lyrics by Justin Seningen, Medical Student

My suburban was all gassed up Steam rising from my coffee cup The windshield was all covered with frost Living here you gotta pay the cost The cabin needed some work done I was driving into the rising sun But just across the Wisconsin line State trooper handed me a speeding fine (I said) Give me the Minnesota plates Hot coffee and ten thousand lakes Mister I'll have you understand I've been through this land No matter where I roam That's the place I will call my home We'll smile and we'll look you in the eye But we've never learned to say goodbye Just be careful up on the iron range Cause folks up there; we're a little strange Give me my Minnesota Plates Bob Dylan and ten thousand lakes Mister I'll have you understand I've been through this land And this boy is home-grown That's the place I will call my home Officer I wish I could stay And thanks for not making me pay The interstate is calling my name But please tell me the score in the game Give me my Minnesota Plates Bob Dylan and ten thousand lakes Mister I'll have you understand I've been through this land No matter where I roam This is the place I call home

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#### Goodbye

Lyrics by Michael Donohue, Medical Student

There comes a time in all our lives When we must all say goodbye It's so hard to prepare for Your very soul seems to cry

So much to say in so little time, you never thought they'd leave your side... Goodbye

It's so easy to take for granted, The time you spend with those you love. But these are the moment you'll remember, The memories that you'll recall.

Cause when the end is come and gone, it's the memories that keep you strong... Goodbye

Don't let your faith pass you by, You'll be together again in time. And with hope and care, they'll always live on with the love you share.



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