



Baldeep Singh MD and Kim Chiang MD perform *More Than Words* at our first Stuck@Home Concert. March 2020

MEDICINE & THE MUSE PRESENTS

2019-2020

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

During an unprecedented year, the Medicine & the Muse Program remains the home for the arts and humanities at the medical school, with programs that support diversity and inclusion and integrate the arts and humanities into medical education, scholarly endeavors, and the practice of medicine.

Medicine and the Muse
Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics
November, 2020

Setting Out

It's tempting to begin talking about this past year as if it began in March.

But in truth, there was a time before COVID, and there was "business as usual."



In September 2019, Medicine & the Muse delegates presented at the [Sorbonne University](#) in Paris for a conference on "[Emotions in the Therapeutic Relationship](#)" as part of a burgeoning collaboration. Alumni of the School of Medicine engaged with the first [travel experience](#) to focus on the history and art of western medicine. In January 2020, Dr. Laurel Braitman traveled to the National Geographic Summit for Storytellers in Washington DC as a 2020 grant recipient.

Business as usual changed when Santa Clara County issued a shelter-in-place order on March 17, 2020 and students, faculty and staff left Stanford campus – and international travel, once a keystone of scholars, came to a stand-still.

Business as usual changed when protesters in Minneapolis decided enough was enough, after George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man was killed during an arrest after a Minneapolis Police Department officer knelt on Floyd's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds as three other officers looked on.

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In the weeks and months that followed, between 15 million and 26 million people participated in the demonstrations in the United States, making the protests the largest in U.S. history. Protests continue.

At times, it has felt strange to carry forth this work in the humanities and the arts from home, due to COVID. But as the needs of our community have shifted, so have we.

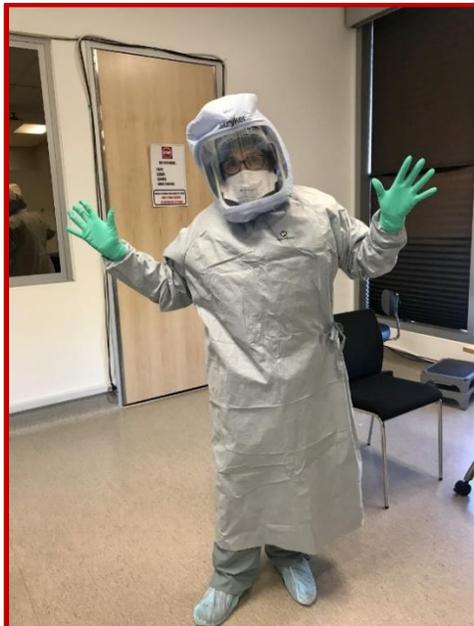
Our quarterly newsletter became a weekly publication. Medicine & the Muse leveraged the newsletter to better resource our community with current virtual event offerings in the arts and humanities and to inform our community about emergent resources for understanding both COVID and systemic racism within the institution of medicine and in the broader community of Stanford University, our towns and in ourselves. Initiated by Executive Director Jacqueline Genovese and edited and produced by Program Coordinator Christy Hartman, [MedMuse 4 U](#) provides timely updates as well as an archive of an extraordinary year.

Medicine & the Muse created new opportunities for students and healthcare workers to express themselves musically and artistically with a virtual concert series, and two new guest columns on our website: [Voice of a Physician](#), and [Unmasked: Voices from Healthcare](#). Stories are larger than facts and information. They can be about a moment, and larger than the moment. Our writing programming and virtual storytelling events are thriving, with new websites and a new [virtual writing workshop](#) for health care workers.

Medicine & the Muse leaders have continued to create, publish, and guide this community with grace and care, showing up in PPE, and [passing the microphone](#) so traditionally marginalized voices in media are heard. These actions and qualities are evident in the articles, talks, art and events you'll see in this report.

The arts inform this sensibility. At close in this summary is a poem from Dr. Audrey Shafer, entitled, *Prayer for Home*. Dr. Shafer has been advocating for the arts and humanities in medical education and practice for over 25 years. The arts and humanities are ever more essential as we carry forth in the face of the unknown and wrestle with the many complexities of the human condition.

Warmly,
Your Medicine & the Muse Team



Dr. Audrey Shafer in PPE at the VA Palo Alto, March, 2020. (Photo credit: Dr. Jody Leng)



A student-created memorial for Black lives marks the Stanford Oval. Photo credit: Yasmin Rafiei, MS2, The Stanford Daily. June, 2020.



Rally by the Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine department. June, 2020. (Photo credit: Robert Townsend)

Re-envisioning our offerings



Art by [Eliza Reinfeld](#)

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You have to start where you are, doing what you know how to do. When the pandemic hit, without much to-do, we continued offering our programming in the arts and humanities, but now virtually.

We serve residents, medical students, ICU teams, OR nurses, physician assistants, surgeons, social workers, clinical chaplains, respiratory therapists, neonatologists, family practice physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, pediatricians, surgeons, anesthesiologists, emergency responders, trauma nurses, clinic and hospital administrators, psychiatrists, bioethicists, retired clinicians, nursing students, and so, so many more.



Dean Lloyd Minor, MD played *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* on November 19, 2020.

On March 26, we launched the **Stuck@Home** series to foster a sense of community, and provide some normalcy for healthcare workers as we all transitioned to sheltering in place and faced increasing uncertainty about what was coming.



At our first Stuck@Home concert, Dr. Audrey Shafer introduced the concept of the interlude of spoken word or art as part of the series. Here, she addresses the Zoom audience, “We hope to highlight our common humanity through this crisis and beyond, so from my heart to yours, thank you for joining us this evening.”

Eight months later, [Stuck@Home](#) has featured more than [100 Stanford physicians](#) and family members, medical students, staff, students, and even Dean Lloyd Minor playing the cello. Concerts have recognized Women in Medicine Month, Asian Pacific American Health Awareness Month, Black Lives Matter, as well as moments of silence for those who have died from Covid-19.

The concerts have brought music, laughter and a much-needed respite from the pandemic.

One physician said, “I had the worst week and then to come in and watch this [concert] was such a relief.”



Tamara Dunn, MD sang a song from the musical *The Wiz* on November 19, 2020.

Special gratitude to Bryant Lin, MD for proposing and co-hosting this series with Executive Director, Jacqueline Genovese. Stuck@Home is supported by the COVID Creativity Grants from Stanford Arts.

View a highlight of the debut concert [here](#).

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Audrey Shafer, MD, Founder

In June, Dr. Shafer was published on *KevinMD* in response to George Floyd's murder: [I Can't Breathe: An anesthesiologist's perspective](#). Her reflections on being a front-line worker during the COVID pandemic were published as part of the [2020 Art & Anesthesia Soirée](#) and accepted into an anthology, *Voices from the Front Lines*.

Dr. Shafer co-organizes a new [Geballe workshop](#), *The Medical Humanities*, funded by a grant from Stanford Humanities Center, led by Professor Tanya Luhrmann.

As part of [Pegasus Physician Writers](#), Dr. Shafer continues to write and publish poetry. Her work is included in a forthcoming volume of poetry from Pegasus, edited by Dr. Rick Mamelok.

Medical Student Engagement, Research & Leadership

Arifeen Rahman, MS4, serves as the medical student representative on the [Medicine and the Muse Steering Committee](#). Her work can be found at [McSweeney's](#) and [KQED-NPR](#), and she spearheaded a project, Letters to Rising Clinical Students, with Dr. Poonan Hosamani.

Medicine and the Muse affiliated students, including Dan Bernstein, Maïté Van Hentenryck and Dasha Savage, worked with a broad student coalition to [collect and distribute PPE during the pandemic](#).

Other medical student leaders include those enrolled in dual degree programs, Candice Kim, a PhD candidate at the School of Medicine and the Muse Program and the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford School of Medicine wish to thank our financial supporters and advocates for their generous collaborations.

of Education, Bonnie Wong, a PhD candidate in Medical Anthropology at UC Berkeley and Anna Goshua, a masters in Journalism candidate at NYU. Other emerging medical student writers include [Grace Li](#), [Lauren Joseph](#), [Orly Farber](#), [Pablo Romano](#), and [Noemie Levy](#).

With Dr. Holly Tabor, Dr. Shafer co-directs the Biomedical Ethics and Medical Humanities Scholarly concentration. Students form the heart of our program, completing mentored projects, launching new courses, and leading numerous extracurricular projects. For example, Pablo Romano, MS4, initiated TalkRx, a storytelling project with mentorship by Dr. Laurel Braitman. Vibrant interest in our scholarly concentration can be seen in the diversity of student projects, [here](#) and the ever-growing list of publications, [here](#).

On May 28, the annual Medicine and the Muse **Symposium**, a celebration of the many scholarly, artistic, literary, musical and other creative talents at the Stanford School of Medicine took place virtually for the first time.



"As we're each called to step up, as we're each called to represent and serve our communities, we also have the blurring of identities, we're juggling many different things at once," said Symposium Steering Committee Director, Rose Wong MS2.

This year, the [Symposium](#) keynote presenter was filmmaker Ken Browne, who

premiered his documentary film, "[Why Doctors Write: Finding Humanity in Medicine](#)." The film features [Pegasus Physician Writers](#), including director Dr. Hans Steiner, [Pegasus Review](#) Editor-in-Chief Dr. Jennifer Pien, premedical student Eugenia Puglisi, as well as Dr. Shafer, who also served as panelist for the UNAFF film festival after the film's virtual screening [there](#).

View a [Symposium highlight video](#) of student presentations and performances, and the [event program and student steering committee](#).

Jacqueline Genovese, MFA, MA, Executive Director

This spring, retired four-star general James "Jim" Mattis, who served as the United States secretary of defense until 2019, was a special guest in Jacqueline Genovese's War Literature and Writing seminar for Stanford Military Affiliated Students, a seminar now in its sixth year that is supported in part by a grant from the Drs. Ben and A. Jess Shenson Funds.



In addition, Genovese, with student leadership by Bonnie Wong, MD/PhD

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candidate, has reimagined the popular "Literature in Medicine" discussion series, as "LitMed: Conversations on Structural Violence and Systemic Racism in Medical Practice." This reading seminar hopes to create a community of learners who together understand and critically appraise the structural violence and systemic racism in medicine and to enact change in their personal practice.

Genovese also co-lead the third Stanford Story Rounds event, a joint project by Medicine & the Muse and the [WellMD/PhD](#) program that features true, spoken stories about life as doctor.

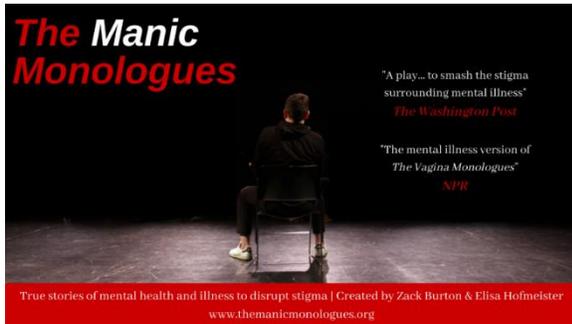


Virtual Story Rounds in October, 2020 featured storytellers: Iram Ahmad, MD, Adjoa Boateng, MD, Iris C. Gibbs, MD, Megan Mahoney, MD and Dean Lloyd B. Minor, MD.

Story Rounds is an opportunity for attending doctors, fellows and medical students to hear their peers and mentors share meaningful stories.

The goal of this initiative is to promote a sense of community, collegiality and mentorship across Stanford Medicine. Stories include intriguing tales of humor, challenge, relationships, vulnerability, grief, love, hope, faith, self, triumph, growth, and what matters most.

Dr. Shafer gave a presentation, *Silence and Voice*, at the February 27 Story Rounds, our last in-person event.



For Mental Health Awareness week in October, we hosted *Manic Monologues: True stories of mental health and illness to disrupt stigma* as a virtual screening and discussion with Stanford PhD candidate Zack Burton and Stanford alumna Elisa Hofmeister, co-creators of the Manic Monologues play, and Dr. Omar Sahak and Dr. Rona Hu.



Palliative Care has entrusted Medicine & the Muse as the new home for the annual **Kalanithi Writing Award**. This award and contest were imagined and made possible by Jean Hurley, a part of the Medicine & the Muse community and a graduate of Stanford's Distinguished Career Institute.

Paul Kalanithi was a physician writer and neurosurgery resident at Stanford University. In the final years of his training, he was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer. His memoir, *When Breath Becomes Air*, beautifully chronicles his reflections on living with illness and on legacy.

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Our award winners will be announced in winter, 2021.



To kick off our new virtual film series depicting medicine in movies, under the film program leadership by Dr. Jonathan Berek, we hosted a screening and discussion of the film, *Unrest*, with the film's subject and producer, Jennifer Brea. Read a write-up of the event [here](#).

Dr. Laurel Braitman, Director of Writing and Storytelling



Dr. Laurel Braitman's TED talk released in April.

Despite dealing with early days of the pandemic, the students in Creative Writing for Medical Students (INDE 211) created a powerful support network for one another and have continued to meet informally over the ensuing months to encourage their own creative writing and well-being. The more

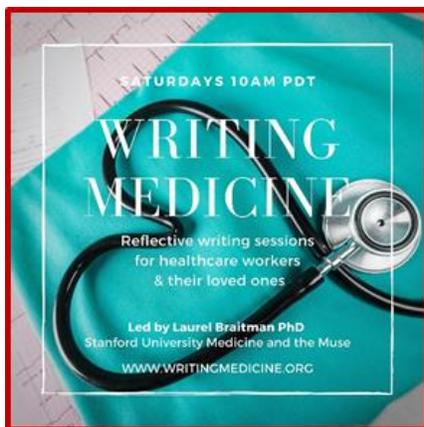
opportunities she gave medical students to tell stories about their frustrations, joys and fears, the better the students reported feeling about themselves and their medical careers, Dr. Braitman explains in her [TED talk](#), viewed over 1.5 million times.

Since March 28, Dr. Braitman has led a community of physicians, medical students and other healthcare professionals virtually for an hour in **Writing Medicine** enabling participants to pause, reflect, be creative, and share.

[Writing Medicine](#) has a mailing list of over 1400 individuals; average attendance is 120 people. Now in its 28th session and counting, many participants have published work that began in the workshop, everywhere from [McSweeney's](#) to [JAMA](#).

Writers login in from all over the world-- Kerala, India; Whitehorse, Canada; Johannesburg, South Africa; Detroit, MI; and Brooklyn, NY to name a few.

Dr. Braitman has begun an initial phase of research on possible impact for participants. Writing Medicine is supported by the COVID Creativity Grants from Stanford Arts.



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Writing Medicine is a free, reflective writing session for all healthcare professionals and loved ones.

"When I see Laurel with her hat, selfless honesty and humor each Saturday (and recognize others that I know in the audience) then I know that I am ok. That is, if they are ok, then I must be ok also— this is invaluable to me during this time."

Yeuen Kim, MD, MAS, Clinical Instructor, Primary Care and Population Health, Stanford University School of Medicine

In April, Laurel produced, coached and co-



managed, with medical student Pablo Romano, [Talk Rx: Virtual](#), a storytelling series (based on our popular in-person series) for clinical students across the nation. The first virtual event featured six storytellers, and 200 attendees. In June, NPR/TED Radio Hour released a special with Laurel on physician mental health and writing. Listen [here](#).

In September, Laurel completed a book proposal for *Writing Medicine: a handbook for healthcare professionals*, a light-hearted but rigorous guide for individuals who wish to use reflective writing to process stressors, deepen relationships and improve

their communication skills, clinically and personally.

In October, Laurel presented at the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) conference on “Storytelling and Medicine” with Pablo Romano, Candice Kim and Dr. Alyssa Burgart. She also moderated a public conversation at the SF Science Festival, with Emily Silverman MD and Ashley McMullen MD entitled: *The Nocturnists and Black Voices in Healthcare*. Listen [here](#).

Join us

Stay in touch

Sign up for our newsletter. Check our [website](#) for upcoming events.

Donate

Online donations are welcome, however, to ensure your donation specific to Medicine and the Muse reaches the program, please refer [here](#) and contact us at ashafer@stanford.edu or hartman7@stanford.edu

All contributions are welcome, we are ever grateful for your support.

Stuck@Home

We believe in the power of music to heal and unite, particular during uncertain times. Thursday, December 10 | 5:30PM PDT Register [here](#).

Contact jmgeno@stanford.edu for information on performing in a future concert

Writing Medicine

A community of physicians, medical students and other healthcare professionals

who meet for reflective writing and sharing of creative work.

Saturday, November 28 | 10:00AM PDT

Saturday, December 5 | 10:00AM PDT

Register: www.writingmedicine.org

Share your work

Let us know of your accomplishments!

Submit your writing for an award:

For students and medical trainees:

[Irvin D. Yalom Literary Award](#)

Deadline December 30, 2020

Open submission:

[Kalanithi Writing Award](#)

Deadline December 1, 2020

Gratitude

We can't know what the future holds, we have to let it unfold. Medicine & the Muse will continue to develop arts and humanities programming to support students, the Stanford community, and our new network of virtual friends all across the globe. We continue to be so grateful that you've joined us for the journey.

We conclude with a nonsectarian poem by Dr. Shafer, first performed virtually on November 4, 2020 at a joint event with [The Pegasus Physician Writers](#) and [The St. Lawrence String Quartet. An Evening of Ekphrastic Poetry and Music](#) inspired by String Quartet, Opus 20 no. 3 in G minor, 3rd movement Poco adagio, Joseph Haydn.

Flyer design: Christy Hartman

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Prayer for Home

Pray: a hand reaching
for light and shadow and light again
hope for pattern and surprise
for the memory and pull of dance

Pray for birdsong
chirps and chatter
language of treetops and roof angles
choral, insistent

Pray for night song
the ever present stars
pierced galaxies
past times vanished into now

Pray for new life
beginnings folding on themselves
the grainy womb
birthing lullabies

Pray softly, then with a voice
that thunders:
fill the arch of the sky
fill it with fierce gratitude

If we do not love this spinning home
if we do not rejoice in the harmonies of water
caressing rock at the oxbow
if we barricade ourselves from

Beauty seeping under the doorframe; and instead
we heat the overheated, desiccate, infect, flood
we leave no home to cherish –
the day rises amidst falling ash

Pray, then, with our very lives
with the eternity of our choices
nurture the next moment like a newborn
cradled in our arms.

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