

## Anatomy Creative Project I 2011

██████████, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was given yours, for which I'm grateful, because I enjoyed it very much. The conceit of an interview is great, and your questions sounded exactly like what a newscaster would ask. You had a very good insight when Dr. Cadaver admitted nothing in his experience had prepared him for actual dissection. Interestingly, when doctors become patients themselves, they often make very similar comments. How lovely that the doctor had a positive experience, and felt he was in "good hands." It's heartening that you and your colleagues have taken such care with your dissections thus far. I also liked that you imagined Dr. C happy with his choice. Donation is certainly a way of continuing to give beyond the grave, and your interview picks up on that generosity. Thank you for a lovely effort. Dr. Shapiro

Hello, ██████████. I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was given yours, for which I'm grateful, because I enjoyed it very much. I really appreciated how you adopted the voice of the cadaver for this essay. The detail with which you imagined this person's life was impressive, and made her seem "real." I particularly liked the dichotomy you set up between "inside" and "outside." Most people of course are very familiar with their "outsides," and often, as your imagined cadaver, spend a great deal of time attending to this part of themselves. For most, the "inside" remains mysterious and unknown, which if you think about it, is so strange: we know so little about all the bits and pieces that day by day sustain us! I'm glad your imaginary cadaver got to cross the finish line! Thanks for a very creative essay. Dr. Shapiro

██████████, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was given yours, for which I'm grateful, because it was extremely thought-provoking. In fact, it was so thought-provoking that I immediately rushed to my favorite research site, google, to find an answer. Here's an interesting site that provides a range of opinions, and also cites *pikuach nefesh*:  
[www.byaaronhoward.com/index.php?action=details&record=534](http://www.byaaronhoward.com/index.php?action=details&record=534).  
Like you, I am reform Jewish (although more Jew-Bu than full-Jew :-)) and have struggled with questions about cremation and body donation. Your analysis is wonderful, knowledgeable and thoughtful. Like a good Jew, at the end of it, you're left with more questions than answers :-). As Rilke said, "Live the questions now/Perhaps then, someday.../You will... live your way/Into the answer." All best, Dr. Shapiro

██████████, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was lucky enough to get your project, lyrics (thanks also for including the original song) + youtube. This was fantastic, so creative and well done. I loved the parallels you developed between your song and Journey's. The whole metaphor

of anatomy (and medical school) as a journey into (at times) some dark and difficult places, where it is important to hold on to (some) emotion is apropos. Your chorus is great – very true to the anatomy experience. All in all, an absolutely amazing job! Thanks for the obvious effort. Dr. Shapiro

Hi [REDACTED], I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was fortunate to get your project. These haiku (which are actually harder to write than it looks!) are beautiful, like perfect dissections. The images ("eyes like frozen winter," "brains like soaked sponges") are precise and evocative. The arc from doubt to confidence is well-developed, and the ambiguity of the brain reference (cadavers? Students?) is rich. Thank you for these little gems. Dr. Shapiro

[REDACTED], I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was given your project, which I enjoyed very much. You were very effective in adopting the cadaver's voice. How reassuring that you imagined him happy to hear students' voices after a year of silence and pleased by the warmth of their hands on his cold body. However, from that point on, things kind of go downhill :-). You portray vividly the roughness, even violence, of dissection, and the helplessness of the cadaver. Of course, the cadaver willingly donated his body, and cannot actually feel what transpires. But think of patients, and how often (with the best of motives, as in anatomy) painful procedures are performed on their bodies and they are completely passive (like a cadaver, except they have full awareness and sensation!). And many patients feel it is not only their disease that they must survive, but their encounters with medical professionals! In my view, the empathy and sensitivity you demonstrate in this essay will be relevant far beyond the anatomy course. Best, Dr. Shapiro

Hello, [REDACTED]. I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I received your project, and reading it was a wonderful experience. You are a fine writer, with a strong command of language to evoke compelling and at times disturbing images. Your reaction to the cadaver's hands, so vividly described, is very moving. And you're right – it is often the hands and (eventually) the faces that remind us that these "tools" for learning were once living people. Your increasingly frenetic tone as you and your classmates struggle to turn your cadaver well shows the anxiety and dread that pervade the room. I especially love what happens at the end of this event: "...we make her comfortable, and as we do so, we make ourselves comfortable." This is an incredibly beautiful insight. After performing a fairly brutal procedure, you all take a moment to pause, to show consideration for the cadaver, to treat her as the "former person" she is... AND this respect and courtesy helps you as well. You are ALL This awareness of the interdependent mutuality between you and the cadaver (and later your patients) is profound, and something I hope you will be able to carry with you throughout your training. Best, Dr. Shapiro

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■■■■, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was given your poem to comment on, and I enjoyed reading it very much. Through the rhyme scheme, you established a humorously rueful tone. You also imagined very well the cadaver's frustration and passivity. Although these are strange emotions to associate with a non-living body, they are very pertinent to the experience of many hospitalized patients. Your poem also cleverly contrasts the student's lack of skill with the more experienced person's ability. Finally, I like the way you recognize that dissection is indeed a journey, for both student and cadaver. Thank you for your effort.  
Best, Dr. Shapiro

■■■■, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I received your essay, which I found thoughtful and insightful. I loved your characterization of the human body as an "eloquent yet fragile machine." A very evocative image! All the subsequent dichotomies you note underline and elaborate on this theme. The detail with which you describe your discoveries also reveals your own awe and appreciation of the human body. The balance between strength and vulnerability is one that characterizes much of human life, not only our actual insides. I think as you proceed through your medical training, you will see many, many examples of both these qualities. Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Dr. Shapiro

Hi ■■■■, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. Thank you for the opportunity to read this touching poem. It is full of memorable images ("strangled veins," "weak, weak heart," "decaying toll" the last "gas exchange"), but its conclusion transcends all these parts and pieces, bringing us back to the humanity of the cadaver, who once dreamed dreams "higher than the skies." The last lines are so poignant. They beautifully express the yearning, aspiring heart we all have; and thus despite the "decaying toll," we feel connected rather than separated from the cadaver. Very nicely done. Dr. Shapiro

■■■■, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was lucky enough to be given your very creative "dialogue" with med student and "teacher"/cadaver (by the way, I liked this designation. The cadaver truly is an amazing teacher). The differing perspectives were really skillfully portrayed – the students' rather limited curiosity ("nailing" a girl with silicone breasts), the teacher's sober realization of her grim situation (and annoyance with pink – great touch!). The student's thoughts seem limited to a fascination with the implant {"I never looked up cause of death. Too lazy"} while the teacher takes in all the implications and ramifications, and meditates on death and life. The last sentence is fabulous – it says so much so powerfully and with such brevity. I also thought the "music interludes" were a great touch. They created a great sense of pacing, and also made the dialogue much more "cinematic." ("Ain't Misbehavin'" was a perfect ironic touch, as Teacher implies she had plenty of misbehaviors in her time :-)). An imaginative and perceptive project. Dr. Shapiro

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██████, I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects, and I was lucky enough to get your "blog." Is this excerpted from your actual blog? I've known a couple of students who started blogs about their anatomy experience. It's intense enough that it definitely warrants this type of ongoing commentary.

Your account is redolent with the sights, sounds, and sensations of this difficult first day. You vividly evoke the humanity of the cadaver (your "gentle" touch, his "reluctance"). You wrestle with the inherent brutality of dissection (something to remember as you enter clinical medicine – what happens to patients can be pretty harsh, although as in anatomy, the goals are beneficent and the motives pure). You come up against our inevitable mortality when you recognize that nothing separates you and the cadaver except time. You admire and respect the courage of the donors. It seems to me that you are taking full advantage of all the richness and complexity of dissection.

Thanks for sharing your essay, Dr. Shapiro

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██████. I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. You wrote a very effective point of view paragraph. You nailed the voice! I'm wondering if you are actually a fan of the fifties/sixties. You certainly got a lot of visual and linguistic details right! Even though you are writing about a cadaver, through this rich personal knowledge you've managed to bring him to life. I loved the idea of this old codger deciding that you had "smarts and heart", and on this basis deciding to share his most "inner" secrets with you. Your essay was pithy but perfect. Very well done! Dr. Shapiro

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Hello, ██████. I am one of the SOM faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review students' anatomy creative projects. I was touched by your lovely ruminations about a woman you never knew, but who has had a profound impact on your life. It is a question many medical students ask, "Who was she?" this stranger who offered such a profound gift to another. It is clear from your writing how seriously you take the responsibility you've incurred, how dedicated you are to working as hard and learning as much as you can. In effect, it is a way of honoring your cadaver. By seeing beyond the veins and arteries and anatomical structures, you reconnect with the person of the cadaver and recognize the importance of making the most of what she's given you. All best, Dr. Shapiro

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Hi ██████, I'm one of the faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. Fortunately, I was assigned your very beautiful pastel sketch. Unfortunately, I don't have any special art background, but even my untrained eye can see that you are a very talented artist. The title of the piece helped me interpret it a lot. What struck me initially was how you rendered indescribably beautiful the interior of the body cavity. Yet coupling this awareness with

the title, I realized that what I was viewing had (to my untrained eyes) almost nothing to do with a "person". In this sense, anatomy both reveals aspects of our literal selves that most of us are completely ignorant of; yet it also distorts and destroys the recognizable human. This juxtaposition of discovery and destruction I found very compelling, and full of implications for your future relationship with living patients. Congratulations on such a strong piece. Dr. Shapiro

Dear [REDACTED], I am one of the faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. Unfortunately I have no special background in the arts, but even my untrained eye can discern your talent as an artist. When I look at the back you portray, what it highlights for me is the incredible beauty and functionality of the human body. The sketch is beautiful but impersonal - the body is face-down so we do not experience any sense of direct connection with the "object" portrayed. It also suggests to me the sorrow that even this work of beauty inescapably turns to dust. Thank you for sharing this work, I found it quite thought-provoking. Best, Dr. Shapiro

Hi [REDACTED], I am one of the faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. I had the chance to review your clever and humorous sketch. Your "anatomy" of the brain definitely summarizes the life of the anatomy student with a comical lightheartedness that you probably don't always feel. Your visuals and funny bubble comments reveal very well the sense of information overload, the fear of personal harm, the occasional sense of disgust and revulsion, the unfamiliarity of the tools that so quickly become part of you, the pressures of exams... What's interesting is that anatomy identifies aspects of becoming a doctor that persist throughout your medical training. You will continue to experience all these and more - so it's good to be able to smile about them and to become familiar with them. Thank goodness for brain plasticity to accommodate all these new developments! I enjoyed this project very much :-). Dr. Shapiro

Hi [REDACTED]. I am one of the faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. I was fortunate enough to review your collage and poem, which I really enjoyed. The visual images of hands and (memorialized) bodies in the form of masks and statues combined with evocative words suggesting memory, existence after death, and the "encounter" between the dead and the living was both beautiful and powerful. I was moved by your sensitivity to the cadaver as someone who was loved and mourned, and above all, someone who was living, animated. I also liked the phrase "Cradling her heart" because it intimated the respect, even cherishing, you brought to the act of dissection. I think attitudes like this will serve you as well you begin to care for the living! Best, Dr. Shapiro

Hi [REDACTED], I am one of the faculty working with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. Unfortunately, I cannot claim any special expertise in the arts, so I am responding simply as a layperson. Nevertheless, your clever and technically well-executed ink-and-color painting provoked many thoughts and associations. It was certainly reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland, down the rabbit hole! (especially with that great lime-green hallucinogenic background!). The fact that the rabbit is holding a timepiece, which the skeleton desires, seemed a wonderful reminder of the tick-tock of mortality. And of course the juxtaposition of (dead) skeleton and (living) bunny was a poignant contrast of the (temporarily) living and the permanently (yet uncannily animated) dead. To me, the piece was funny, a bit creepy, and deeply perceptive. I'm glad I had the opportunity to view it! Dr. Shapiro

Dear [REDACTED], I am one of the faculty that works with Dr. Leonard to review the anatomy creative projects. I recently viewed your striking pen-and-ink (?) sketch. Unfortunately, I do not have an art background, so I can only respond as a lay person. That being said, there were several things that impressed me. One was the lack of faces - of course the cadaver's face would be veiled, but the student's/supervisor's have been conveniently truncated by the frame of the picture! It creates a powerful sense of impersonality and instrumentality. Perhaps the most "alive" aspect of the sketch is the life-like supple arm of the cadaver, crowned by those glowing red fingernails (the only spot of color in the piece), hanging forgotten off the side of the dissection table. The work made me think of the instrumentality of medicine yet the impossibility of escaping from its humanity. Thanks for sharing such a well done and thought-provoking piece.  
Dr. Shapiro

Dear [REDACTED],  
Thank you so much for participating in Part 1 of the Optional Two-Part Creative Project in Anatomy with your stunning self-choreographed ballet solo piece. Your performance for your classmates in Tamkin was a touching celebration of the human body, an artful succession of varied transitions that evoked a wide range of thoughts and emotions. Your gracefully precise movements reflected an awesome discipline and an extraordinary depth of compassion of the human spirit, beckoning motions that healed through their mystery and magic; these talents will serve you well as a future physician. Your thoughtfully planned and heartfelt choreography transported us on a seamless, yet varied, journey, a metaphor for the quiet as well as the dynamic ways in which we experience life's joys and challenges. Your courage in sharing your humanity through dance will doubtless adhere to the memories of those in attendance. Your work was a generous gift, a one-of-a-kind moment in the Human Gross Anatomy and Embryology Course's Optional Two-Part Creative Project in Anatomy. I am very fortunate to have been a witness to such beauty; at its conclusion I was speechless.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Leonard