

## Comments Anatomy Creative Projects I 2005 E-M

██████████, thank you for the opportunity to review your creative project for Gross Anatomy. And it was creative! It was a certainly a creative idea to “revivify” your cadaver so that you could “hang out” with him. You also came up with some pretty funny lines (e.g., the one about the efficacy of the PD course ☺). You imagined an interesting and detailed life for your cadaver, and I thought it was an especially nice touch to give him a shrewish, nasty wife (students tend to idealize the lives of their cadavers). I noticed your comment that one of the ways you coped with dissection was to “stop thinking of [your cadaver] as a person.” Seeing bodies as just bodies – as “machines” – does provide a certain safety, but also runs the risk of objectifying your patients. Perhaps by reconnecting with “Cad-man” as a person, you are acknowledging the importance of relationship in medicine as well as technical skill. Thanks again for this imaginative effort. Dr. Shapiro

██████████, thank you for the opportunity to review the creative project you submitted to Gross Anatomy. You wrote a thoughtful and nuanced essay about your experiences, and I respect your insight that, in order to function effectively in anatomy lab, you need to be able to detach from the *person* so you can see the *body*. I might suggest a slightly different language to understand this balance, which defines a critical dimension of the doctor-patient relationship. Rather than “detachment,” you might think of it as a kind of steadiness, an equanimity that you learn to maintain in the face of suffering and death. Yet, as you intimate, this steadiness must always be complemented by tenderness, caring and concern for the “person” of the patient. Enthusiasm and appreciation for the miraculousness of the human body is a natural and positive reaction to its study; so is emotional connection. I appreciated reading your work. Dr. Shapiro

██████████ Thank you for the creative project you submitted to Gross Anatomy. From listening to many accounts from medical students over the years, I know that the feelings of gratitude, curiosity, and enjoyment are common: gratitude for the great gift of the cadaver, curiosity about the mysteries of the human body, and enjoyment at the process of discovery. I also appreciated your awareness of the human dimension of your cadaver. Noticing the small scars and scabs not only is a testament to your excellent skills of observation; the fact that they reminded you of the personhood of your cadaver shows you know the importance of the human dimension in medicine. Regards, Dr. Shapiro

██████████, thank you for the opportunity to review the creative project you submitted to Gross Anatomy. It was an authentic and honest piece of writing. The excitement and “allure” of dissection will likely contribute to making you a fine doctor. The image of you working alone in the lab, and breaking into dance as you tag parts of your cadaver’s body, has a real beauty to it. I hope as you proceed through your training, you can find ways of “dancing” with your living patients. Regards, Dr. Shapiro

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I very much liked the poem you submitted as your creative project for Gross Anatomy. It's filled with beautiful images of the cadavers' voices, speaking in reassuring tones, eager to teach a last lesson to you and others. Your concluding lines are a poignant confirmation of a life force that extends even beyond death. You seem to have achieved a respectful and tranquil attitude toward the dissection experience. I hope you are able to sustain this as the course continues. Regards, Dr. Shapiro

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██████████, I had the opportunity to review the essay you submitted as your creative project for Gross Anatomy. It was an interesting reflection on your expectations and experiences during the first days of the anatomy experience. I especially appreciated your observation that much of dissection is not always elegant. Yes, indeed! The whole issue of professional distance that you raise is a complex one. Personally, I don't know that the goal is to see the body as a "machine" separate from the soul and emotions. Rather, eventually the clinician must be able to move imperceptibly back and forth between the two, so that she sees the "whole person" of the patient. Luckily, you have four years (really, your entire professional life!) to perfect this skill. Thanks for sharing your perspective. Regards, Dr. Shapiro

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██████████, I really enjoyed the essay you submitted as your creative project for Gross Anatomy. Personally, I found your reflections very relevant to the anatomy class. Thankfulness is an attitude of great importance in medicine. It is an excellent exercise to periodically think of all what you have to be thankful for, while you are in anatomy, as you begin to take care of real patients. It reaffirms your core values and beliefs, the things that pointed you toward medicine in the first place. This was a thoughtful and original way of addressing the assignment. Regards, Dr. Shapiro

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██████████, thank you for the opportunity to review your anatomy creative project. Your essay developed a lovely and original metaphor. It was really a charming image to picture your class as a bunch of excited, enthusiastic, sweet little kids, exploring, discovering, getting dirty, and struggling to put into language all that you are learning. But your essay did make me think...Hmm, is medical school just one big daycare center (just kidding 😊) ?  
Regards, Dr. Shapiro

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Hi ██████████. I'm glad I got a chance to read the poem you wrote for your gross anatomy creative project. I've been reviewing these projects for 3 years, and there was only one other example I remember that explored the dimension of physical intimacy that arises through the process of dissection. It is a fascinating insight. Juxtaposing the two relationships effectively blurs the distinction between the living and the dead in a way that is disturbing and provocative, and suggests that the two contain elements of both tenderness and loss. Beautiful writing!  
Dr. Shapiro