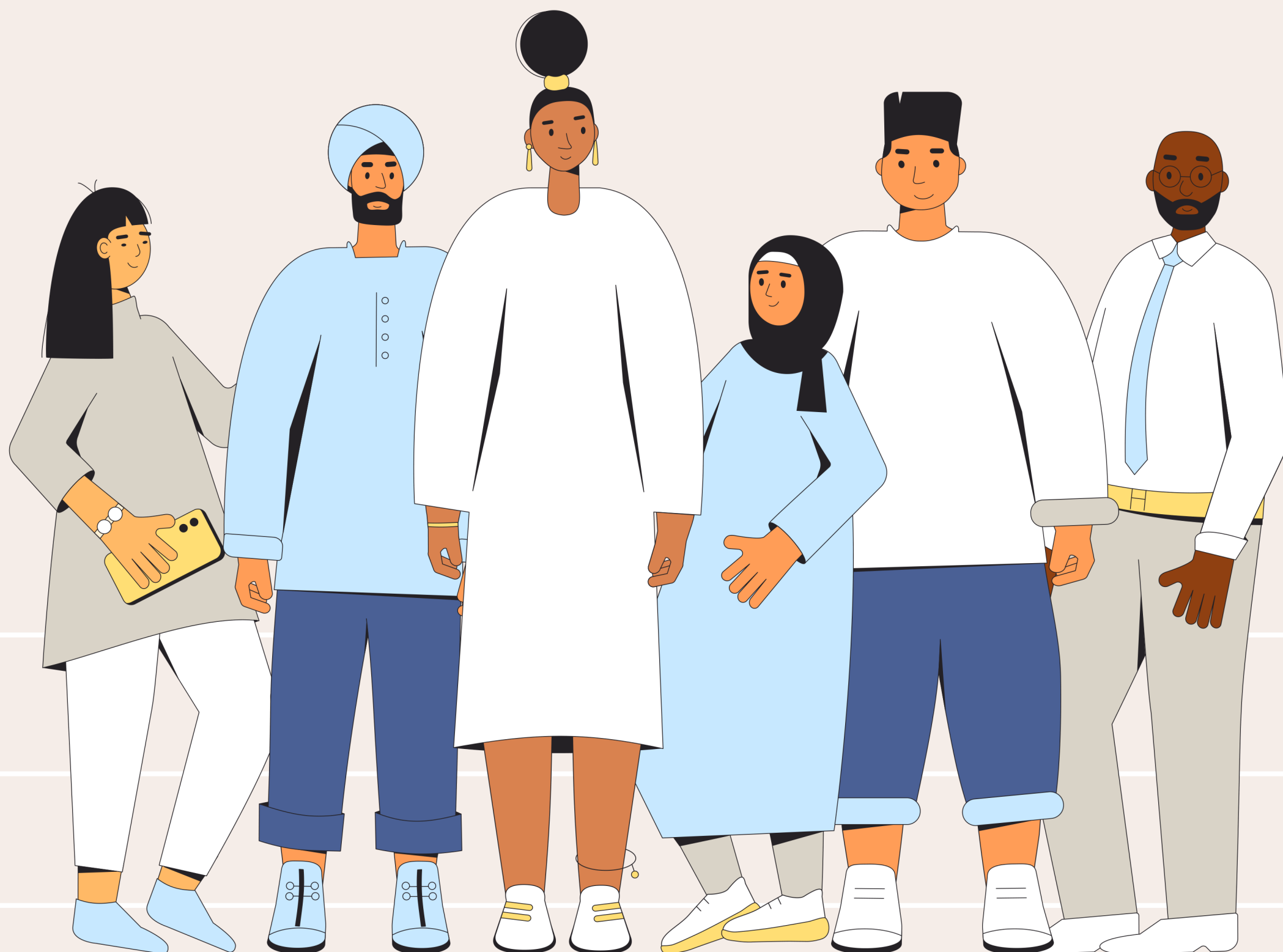




paper  
margins

an anthology of marginalized voices in medicine



## Disclaimer and Journal History

The Paper Margins anthology was originally created in 2021. This is the second edition. Stemming from a collaboration between the McMaster Undergraduate Medicine Narrative Medicine Interest Group and Social Justice Interest Group, Paper Margins was envisioned to be a platform for medical students, residents, and physicians who are marginalized in the healthcare community to share their truths and find solidarity among the pages. Paper Margins and its contained works do not represent the views of and are not officially affiliated with OMSA nor McMaster University.

For additional information about Paper Margins, please visit our website:  
<https://www.papermargins.com>

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### Clause de non-responsabilité et historique du journal

L'anthologie Paper Margins a été créée en 2021. Cela est la deuxième édition. Une collaboration entre le Narrative Medicine Interest Group et le Social Justice Interest Group de l'université McMaster, Paper Margins a été conçue comme une plateforme pour les étudiant.e.s en médecine, les résidents, et les médecins qui sont marginalisés dans leurs milieux pour partager des vérités et trouver la solidarité parmi les pages. Paper Margins et les ouvrages qu'il contient ne représentent pas le point de vue de l'université McMaster et ne leur sont pas officiellement affiliés.

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## *Land Acknowledgment*

The Paper Margins anthology was envisioned, created, and curated on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations and within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Agreement.

Our contributing authors and artists currently live on Indigenous lands throughout the country. We invite all to visit <https://native-land.ca> to reflect on the land on which you work and reside.

The ethos of our anthology is equity- and justice-seeking: we acknowledge our privilege in being able to share the stories contained in this edition, and we are committed to acting on this privilege by amplifying the voices of communities that continue to remain marginalized in medicine.

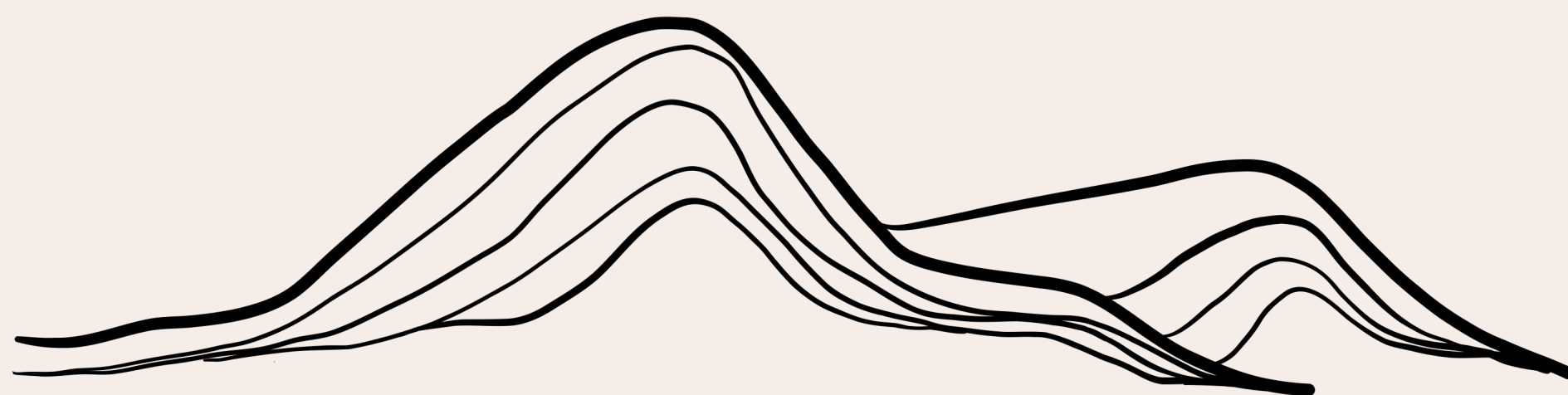
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## *Reconnaissance des territoires*

L'anthologie Paper Margins a été imaginée, créée et organisée sur les territoires traditionnels des nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe et sur les terres protégées par l'accord de la ceinture de wampum dit du « bol à une seule cuillère ».

Nos auteurs et artistes collaborateurs proviennent de terres indigènes de tout le pays. Nous vous invitons à visiter le site <https://native-land.ca> pour réfléchir à la terre sur laquelle vous travaillez et résidez.

Notre anthologie est axée sur la recherche de l'équité et de la justice; nous reconnaissons le privilège que nous avons de pouvoir partager les histoires contenues dans cette édition, et nous nous engageons à amplifier les voix des communautés qui restent marginalisées en médecine.



Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to explore our annual edition of Paper Margins!

This anthology is composed of artistic pieces created by medical learners from marginalized communities. Contributed pieces range from narratives to visual representations which explore themes of cultural identity, gender, faith, resilience, and family values, and which encourage deep reflection in all readers.

By sharing these creations with the broader medical community, we hope to empower the voices and experiences of marginalized learners in medicine. We aim to raise awareness of the pervasiveness of social inequities – the way they manifest in our day-to-day interactions and the way they shape our learning environments.

Our hope for this art and poetry anthology is to foster shared resilience among medical learners with marginalized identities, and to encourage reflection from the healthcare community as a whole. Historically and presently, pursuing a medical career is marked by substantial barriers, which perpetuate the underrepresentation of students with marginalized identities. Despite overcoming these hurdles to enter medical school and beyond, learners may continue to encounter disempowering experiences, including feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome stemming directly from underrepresentation.

As such, this anthology aims to provide marginalized learners with a place to speak their truths and to find empathy and support among the pages. We hope this platform has provided and will continue to provide a community for learners to connect and discuss lived experiences that may resonate with one another.

We welcome your responses and thoughts at our email address:  
[macnarrativemed@gmail.com](mailto:macnarrativemed@gmail.com)

With love in solidarity,  
Paper Margins Team

## Editors and Creators

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**PRAVEEN  
SRITHARAN**



*Cher Lecteur,*

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de lire cette édition de Paper Margins!

Cette anthologie comprend des œuvres artistiques réalisées par des stagiaires médicaux des communautés marginalisées. Les œuvres comprennent des récits et des représentations visuelles qui explorent des thèmes de la culture, de l'identité de genre, de la foi, de la résistance, et des valeurs familiales afin d'encourager une réflexion profonde chez tous les lecteurs.

En partageant ces articles avec la communauté médicale, nous espérons mettre en lumière les expériences des étudiant.e.s marginalisés en médecine. Nous souhaitons sensibiliser les gens aux inégalités sociales omniprésentes qui se manifestent dans nos interactions quotidiennes et dans nos environnements d'apprentissage.

Nous espérons que cette anthologie d'art et de poésie favorisera une résilience partagée entre les étudiant.e.s en médecine ayant des identités marginalisées, et encouragera la réflexion de la communauté des soins de santé. Historiquement et actuellement, l'admission dans les écoles de médecine est marquée par des obstacles qui perpétuent la sous-représentation des étudiant.e.s ayant des identités marginalisées. Par conséquent, ils/elles éprouvent de manière disproportionnée des sentiments d'isolement et de syndrome de l'imposteur à cause de la sous-représentation persistante des groupes minoritaires.

Avec la création de cette anthologie, nous espérons offrir aux étudiant.e.s marginalisé.e.s une plate-forme pour exprimer leurs vérités et trouver empathie et soutien parmi les pages. Nous espérons que cette plateforme a permis et permettra aux étudiants d'établir des liens entre eux et de discuter de leurs expériences communes.

Veillez envoyer vos réponses et réflexions par notre e-mail:  
[macnarrativemed@gmail.com](mailto:macnarrativemed@gmail.com).

En solidarité, avec amour,  
L'équipe Paper Margins

Créateurs et  
éditeurs

**ALEXIS KARASIUK**

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## **CONTENT WARNING**

This piece includes discussion around  
marginalization and medical racism

/I am all women/

My name is my name  
It's not "little Miss"  
And why am I "First Name"  
When he's "Dr. X"?

I don't want to discuss  
Family planning again  
When your conversations with him  
Never go the same way

Am I not professional  
If I'm not in a dress?  
Are my credentials so linked  
To heels and red lips?

When I'm vocal, I'm bossy  
And not a team player  
But passivity to you means  
Not suited to lead

I'm unravelling, but I know  
Enough to keep quiet  
Cause his rage is personality  
But mine is my sex

So I'll nod and I'll smile  
And pretend I'm ok  
Suppressing my implosion  
Till it's not in your way

**Helen Jin**

Medical Student, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry



## Our Names

During the pandemic, we have all worn masks to protect ourselves and others. They have become a symbol of unity and solidarity. With a mask on we can blend into the crowd. However, we miss out on connecting with the people and smiles behind the mask.

For immigrant families and their children, face masks are not the only shield we present to the world. Our names are another.

Many of us have a name our parents and grandparents gave us, but also an English version of our name, an anglicized pronunciation of our name, or an entirely different English name.

We hold all our names with pride but know that often it is our English name we present to the world to fit in.

So, this one is for the names our parents gifted us, to the culture and history we hold dearly in our hearts, and to the beautiful people behind all the masks we wear.



هنا



張綺恩



পেখাম



杨大卫



દયેચ

Andrea Zhuang

Medical Student, University of Calgary Medical School

/cardinal movements/

I imagine my mother with her long, black hair tied in a braid,  
the tips of her fingers still stained with haldi,  
and her mouth with broken english,  
becoming a bridge between two lands,  
carrying the sweet taste of warm cha and the spice of long and elaichi,  
distant memories of lush fields of saron where koyals sing,  
and where peacocks, a blur of firozi and green flutter from one perch to the next.

I press the tips of my fingers to the edge of my wrist,  
muscle fibers contract and relax to the beat of my mother's heart.  
I descend the stairs to labour and delivery,  
maneuvering through beeping monitors and tired bodies,  
and look down to find myself standing in a puddle of broken water,  
wet socks and feet.  
I feel my umbilical cord around my neck,  
my shoulders ache with its weight.

“Can I get an epidural now, please?”

**Sharan Preet Aulakh**

Medical Student, University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry



**Munirah Aljaser**  
Resident, McGill University Faculty of Medicine

## Artist Statement

Well Office has been very important to me and have a pivotal role in my residency training at McGill University and survival. This poetic piece is an English translation of the Urdu “Ghazal” I wrote. There is melancholic sadness in the poetry, but I think strong people face their hardships and yet are hopeful and see the positivity at the end. We are all born with certain instincts and as we grow old, we lose it. It is very important to adopt but not to lose our inner innocence and go back to those abilities as they make us reliant and help us survive and succeed. It does not matter if one believes in fate/destiny or not, but life has its own plans and we should trust that at the end things will work out and hard work, patience pays off eventually.

**Ayesha Baig**

Resident, McGill University Faculty of Medicine

/We travel across the seven seas/

We travel across the seven seas  
walking under a hot sun.  
In the thirst of life,  
and in want of shade,  
we are searching for someone.

Dreams have no limits  
until they are confined  
by the colours of reality.

But let us live with restrictions.  
Let us walk across a desert  
knowing there is no water  
Let us make mistakes  
and live in our illusions.

New destiny, new ways, new world, new relations.  
Without recognition, we look into the mirror.  
We meet many people. We love and are loved.  
Yet it takes so long to know ourselves.

No more innocent smiles and childish laughter.  
But we learn to be happy in adapting.  
But why is there still sorrow at the bottom of joy?

We are told there are even ways through jungles,  
that some don't give up.  
So we accept our lot,  
and change our colours to match life's hue.

**Ayesha Baig**

Resident, McGill University Faculty of Medicine



**Iryna Savinova**

Medical Student, Michael DeGroote School of Medicine



## /A BROWN WOMAN'S DAILY REMINDERS/

1. I AM self-aware. I know myself, my values, and my worth. I love who I am, flaws and all, completely and unconditionally.
2. I AM confident. I am comfortable taking up space and pursuing or asking for what I need and want when reasonable and warranted. I am also comfortable making mistakes and apologizing when required. No matter what happens, I believe in myself and carry myself with grace, poise, class, and grit.
3. I AM healthy. I focus on my body, mind, and spirit. I breathe, eat, drink, move, think, dress, decide, and love in ways that serve me well. I never feel guilty for making myself a priority.
4. I AM ambitious and driven. I have high expectations and set SMART goals. I strive for excellence and success in all I do. I acquire beautiful things, but never covet what others have. I am self-made.
5. I AM capable of giving and receiving deep love. I prioritize my loved ones. Their needs, goals, and fears and future hopes matter to me and I am there for them in every way possible at any time. I am comfortable being open, honest, and vulnerable with those who matter and trust they will love me even with my mask removed.
6. I AM an advocate. I respect all peoples regardless of background and strive to learn something from everyone. I remind myself that I stand on the shoulders of giants and am responsible for giving back and improving my community, leaving the world better for those who follow.
7. I AM resilient. When I fall, I pick myself back up, reevaluate, and recommit. I never lose hope because I may fail but I am not a failure.
8. I AM grateful for everything life has to offer. I see and appreciate beauty in small and big things. I experience as much as I can as fully as I can and am always open to new opportunities. I welcome lifelong learning and personal growth. I get as much as I can from my time here.
9. I AM satisfied and happy with who I am. I am my biggest fan, not because I am arrogant or obnoxious, but because I am enough and deserve it. I have no regrets.

**Anonymous**

Queen's University School of Medicine

## Thank you

We hope you were able to engage in these artistic works and reflect on the voiced experiences of medical students and resident physicians who are marginalized in the healthcare community.

## Merci

Nous espérons que vous vous êtes engagé dans ces œuvres artistiques et que vous avez réfléchi aux expériences exprimées par les étudiant.e.s en médecine et les résident.e.s qui sont marginalisés dans la communauté des soins de santé.

