The Arts
AT BOSTON CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL

SUPPORT THE WELL-BEING OF PATIENTS, FAMILIES AND STAFF
CREATE A HEALING ENVIRONMENT
LOWER STRESS AND ANXIETY
At Boston Children’s Hospital, the arts are recognized as a powerful tool to aid patients and families through challenging circumstances.

Collaborating with Boston’s diverse arts community, Children’s offers unique programming in a variety of disciplines. Art activities on the units bring cheer to the bedside and playrooms on each floor. Creative, cultural experiences like these help to reduce stress, spark imagination, and offer a means of self expression.

Colorful, engaging works of art welcome and direct visitors. Special exhibits create community and provide a positive way to fill the time. A variety of artworks; sculpture, glass, kinetic and lighted artworks fill the hospital with visual delight. In clinical settings, artwork is used by staff to help distract and relax patients so that procedures go more smoothly.

Promoting healing, transforming the hospital experience and bringing joy to our visitors is a goal the arts help us to achieve. We use all the arts have to offer to help provide the best possible care to the patients and families at Children’s.

Learn more at childrenshospital.org/art
About this book

Read these pages, and you will find the inspiration and hard work of many talented, wonderful young writers at Boston Children’s Hospital. Over the past six months together, we have explored many kinds of creative writing. From power writing to odes, from free verse poetry to personal narratives, patients discovered various ways to express themselves. Through writing, we can learn so much about our lives, our families, who we are, and what memories have shaped us. The writing and art included in this anthology exemplify that self-discovery, as well as the resilience, power, talent, and patience required to truly investigate one’s self. We are awed by the courage of these young writers and amazed by their ability to make art and meaning out of the challenges they face.

The process

While “The Mirror” was one of many projects we embarked on, it became one of the more insightful and inspiring, and thus, the natural centerpiece for an anthology. Self portraits, like all pieces of art, reflect ourselves to the world on our own terms. Gazing at their faces in a mirror, patients traced their own likeness onto an affixed transparency. Then we asked these young artists to be brave: Look at yourself. Draw what you see. What you really see. Who are you? The results were astounding, and the pieces speak more for themselves than we could ever attest to, so please enjoy.
Poetry and Art by Patients

The View from Here

A sampling of work from the Artist-in-Residence Program at Boston Children’s Hospital

Volume 1

Created November 2010 to May 2011 with Artist-in-Residence Ian Schimmel

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LIVESTRONG offers free and confidential support to all people affected by cancer. For assistance please call 855-220-7777
A Night Away
by CJ, age 18

Sitting in the hospital
Three screens around me
The only way to the outside world.
People’s lives going on around me
While mine sits still.
I watch them pass down on the street
And I wish I were as free...
I dream of being at Fenway
On a warm August night,
The smell of Fenway franks
Under the bright lights
As Big Papi struts to the plate,
Pounding the spit in his hands
As he soon will the ball.
Down by one.
Everyone up on their feet.
The ball clears the Monster,
“Dirty Water” cranks over the loudspeakers
And sets off a car alarms on Boylston.
…but I’m here sitting in the hospital
Listening to my IV beep away
As I watch the sox on TV win at Fenway.
Going Deeper

by Mark, age 12

My hand is hammered
My hand is colorful
My hand has lines
I see purple, green, yellow, orange, red
I’m going deeper
And I’m going smaller
And I’m gorgeous
In my hand I see ants,
Turtle bugs, water bugs, fish,
Dandelions, sofas, bears,
Planets and stars
Look very small-
There- right there…
And then we start to make a wish
With all our hearts
So give it a high five
Literally

by Ankit, age 18

Just because you understand something doesn’t mean you should do it. That’s how I feel about the career path I’ve chosen. The food in this collage represents the joy I have for cooking and the equations represent the talent I have for engineering. However, there just isn’t the desire for engineering.

This collage represents the turning point, or the break-away moment towards something I’m more passionate about. Cooking allows me to be less rigid and more fluid. In engineering \( A+B = C \), but in cooking \( A+B = Q \). This path is murkier, but I have more passion to go down it. I’m hungrier. I just need to follow my gut. Literally.
Sunset Tree
By Regina, age 13

This picture reminds me of the night at camp on the Fourth of July. While a bunch of kids sat, I stood up with my friend as the last evidence of the sun slowly dissolved into the sea of darkness. While kids giggled at the feeling of unidentified bugs’ feet crawling up their legs, I stayed behind breathing in the honey sweet smell of the summer air on the Fourth of July.
Planet Pink!
By Sophia, Age 4

Pink was born first and he cried because he was a baby. The mother, Orange, took care of Pink so he wouldn’t be scared of the other colors who were always mean to him. Pink was scared because he didn’t like the other colors, or volcanoes, and he wanted his daddy, Purple. His dad worked at the movies where he handed out purple tickets. Pink grew bigger and bigger and bigger until he was as tall as his mommy and daddy. Now Pink was older and he wasn’t afraid of volcanoes or the other colors anymore.
Lines

BY IAN, AGE 8

up down left right
through over under
wooooosh  wooooosh
sweep sweep
curve under over
side  side
down up
zing zing
flash flash
twist twist
round
round
these lines
Melancollie

by Rachel, age 14

She sits in the echoing kitchen
Listening to the faucet drip
And the snow
Whisper outside the
darkening window.
It is gone.
The empty reflection stares back at her
As she ponders how long she’ll have
To sit until the next meal fills
The empty dish.
How I Felt
BY JAMES, AGE 25

It was tough... hard
to
breathe.

It felt like a hammer
Doing damage to my body.
It felt like flames on
the edge.
But now I’m breathing,
Really getting around.
I feel like a calm breeze.
Postcard of the Sunset on a California Beach — A Bright Orange Light Near the South Docks
by Tyanna, age 12

Wish you were here
The Californian sunset is so unpredictable
The imperfection of it reminds me of you
The light blue sea swirls in knots
The sun has a dark edge
Unpredictably made
The last time I saw you
The sky looked quite the same
This is the déjà vu,
Only you’re not here
I just remembered I left my
Phone at the docks
You’re probably calling me now
Wondering why I’m not answering
When I get on the plane
I will ask the flight attendant for a drink
And when I get off
I will hope to see the face
I was reminded of before
I Am

by Norah, age 15

I am the electrocardiogram
Drawing the peaks and valleys,
The formation of my heart.
I am the trail of bubbles
Following a pair of raisined feet
Through the pool.
I am the hushed murmur
Of conversation
Before the show.
Being all of this, I am not the wind in the fall
Taking down the last, crunchy leaves
On the solemn tree.
But I am the line leader
Of the sugar-rushed
Kindergarten class,
And the luminescent moon
Changing its fragile position
Each night.
On Getting a Transplant

by Stephen, age 16

The whole idea of it makes me nervous
Like the world’s about to come to an end.
You never know when or how.
They’ll call you in the middle of anything
And you’ll have to go.
It makes me frustrated to wait,
And excited to go.
Every night when I go to bed I think,
“Can’t it just be today?!?”
It will eventually happen.
The call will come.
They will open me up
And put the kidney in my right side,
And I’ll be in pain,
But only for a little while,
And after I’ll feel
Like I’m in Victory Lane.
The waves dance along the seashore.
My sandals sink into the soft scalding sand.
Seagulls are helicopters circling above the earth's surface.
The horizon continues for eternity
Like a never ending road.
The wind whispers in my ear,
Whhooooooosshhh.
Time drifts away as I observe
The beauties of the beach.
You are the ducks in the ocean
But you’re not the breeze in the air.
I am the shining light that
No one pays attention to.
But I am not the last leaf on the tree,
And you certainly are.
You are the lion
And I am the bacon.
We don’t mix.
We are oil and water.
The Poem About Me
BY LAICHI

I’m from the blank white wall.
I’m from the sound of Chinese music.
I’m from two different countries
With two different dialects.
I’m from a school that made you wear
a uniform,
A white shirt, and gray skirt.
I’m from twirling my hair into a tornado,
From spring, the flowers blooming.
I’m from making people laugh,
Cheering them up.
I’m from everything.
Brokenhearted
BY LEAH, AGE 26

You get it by being mistreated.
Your heart is fragile like glass.
When you hold a broken heart that’s trying to mend
You should wear mittens
Because a broken heart feels like an injured
dove’s wing.
And you can’t bring a broken heart to the hospital.
They won’t know what to do with it.
Emotions That You Can See

BY EMMETT, AGE 9

Anger is a monster body,
A red ball with a blue shield covering it
With blue spikes. Careful-
If you touch it you become angry.

Strong is rope
Stretched from left to right
On two poles.
It will never break.

Confused is a red, white, and blue
Hypnotizing wheel, and if you look at it
You will be stuck looking at it forever.

Happy is swirling brown hair
On a woman
Who is sitting in a red chair.

Brave is a thick, blue iron shield
That can defend you
From stars, from space,
From anything.

Frightened is a hedgehog
Curled up and frozen,
Standing like ice.

You can always see your emotions.
When you feel them you can see them.
People on Islands
by Shyann, age 9

Sadness feels like a flat tire
On your body. You feel like
You’re melting into mud, or like
You were run over by a piano
Playing the lowest note. Sad
Feels like you’re breaking up
Into islands.
What is She Doing?

by Elizabeth, Age 9

She could be reaching out
to give someone a hug.
She could be walking far out
On a tightrope trying to keep her balance.
Or she could be taking her own picture.
She could be lying out under the stars
About to use her telescope.
She could be dancing ballet in her room.
She could be opening a present and
Seeing what’s inside.
She could be meeting a new baby of the family
And experiencing what it’s like
To be a big sister for the first time.
Or she could be skydiving.
Is she doing any of these things?
Or is she watching us?
The Drifting River

by Arianna, age 12

She is hugging her dog Spike
She is about five years old
She is dreaming about her whole future
She is imagining that one day
She will be a vet so she can take
Care of him.
She is happy being here, by a slow
River and its whispering, beautiful sounds,
And she dreams that when she grows
Up that her veterinarian hospital
Will be right on this river.
This river drifts with memories.
To be experienced by everyone and owned by a few

World’s Greatest

The one and only

Who doesn’t

ACT LIKE A BABY.

What’s the fastest way to learn a language?

THERE’S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO GIVE UP

- Review edition

but In on a mission

That NEVER STOPS.

Fear is coming right after you!
Found Poem

by KaRven, age 11

To be experienced by everyone
And owned by few
The world’s greatest
The one and only man of steel
Who doesn’t act like a baby.
There’s never been a better time to give up,
But I’m on a mission that
Never stops.
FEAR is coming
Right
After
You.
Sorry is a purple river full of dark water with plastic, and paper, and cans floating in it. A hurricane builds up in the sorry of the river. The people who live on the bank of the river, where the dock is, are sad because the world is about to be destroyed.

Sleep is a smooth stone that lays on the Beach. The water moves like a blanket To push it back into the ocean. The stone of sleep never wakes up.

Danger is a scary river with plastic And trash that people put in it, and it Doesn’t help the earth breath. It only Helps the animals get hurt.

Beauty is a sunset in the spring. Beauty likes to be out all day long. She never likes to stay in her home. She wants to be out flying through the sky to make people happy and tell them, “Wake up to see me!”
he was going to keep a legi
and that my history was the
experience, and my expe-
ging up. That was a mystery
was very interested in be-
investigate that mystery. Su-
acitized there was a life lived
me as a child—there were st
here. Those lives interac-
and, yet I’ve also an
experience of enacting
the hardest of their circums-
gave me a position to reflect
All artists are psycho-
emotionally driven to tell
I’m not so sure we choose to
choose you. We don’t
understand the things
but I do believe there’s a good
out of the direction of the
when I had a choice about
was going to go, was back in
the mysteries of the past
out “Who am I, who am I
k new my future?”
If very young—how much
we have from that wealth
now...

here are these rules that
have been set up
in society—
and I find it really
fun to break
all of them.

...
A Part of Me

BY HAYLEY, AGE 16

A part of me was going to keep a leg
   In my history.
A wave of change was pulling at both sides of me
   The tide getting stronger
   With every passing day.
With one foot in the sand, one foot on the shore,
   Finding balance is a struggle
   I can see on the horizon.
But like the leaves in autumn,
   I must change my colors
   To get rid of what’s dead and broken
   To be healthy
A part of me was going
To keep a leg in my history
But most of me was ready
To move on.
It’s Time to Make History

by Charlie, age 13

He is thinking about the next Hockey playoff game. He imagines himself Scoring the game-winning goal, the crowd going wild, The team leaping on top of him In a pig pile. He is thinking about The big, gold, trophy that he will put in His trophy case at home. “Hey!” His coach yells, “Wake up 24! It’s time to get on the ice!” Then he thought to himself It’s time to make history.
Memories
by kiara, age 19

This is a picture of me almost a year ago. I took it myself because my boyfriend still lives in Puerto Rico and I wanted to put it on Facebook so my boyfriend, Leonardo, could see me here.

I still remember the first time he came to our house in Puerto Rico. It was Valentine’s Day and my uncle and aunt where there visiting, but I didn’t know it was because he had called them for support. He needed support because he was scared of my father. My family was talking when we heard the horn from his sister’s car. But we didn’t know what was going on until my father opened the door. At first my father saw my boyfriend’s sister holding chocolates, balloons, a stuffed animal dog with a red heart, and a letter from Leonardo. Then he saw Leonardo behind the door. My father and Leonardo shook hands. He was wearing a tight tie and a white shirt and a red vest, dressed up for the occasion. I was wearing shorts, a t-shirt, and sandals, and my hair was in a bun. His sister said, “Hi Kiara, these are presents from Leonardo.”

I said, “Thank you Leonardo,” and was surprised he had the courage to come. He came inside and was very nervous. That night he opened up his heart and told me all that he was feeling and I decided to give him the opportunity for us to talk more and see what would happen.
Once upon a time, a little girl found herself in a fantasy world. She was sent there by a witch, not a mean witch, but a good one. The good witch captured the girl because she needed to find the right person to cast the spell. She needed someone who was not a witch because only that person could cast the spell to get past the evil witch’s gates and find the compass. The girl and the good witch needed to get the compass because the evil witch had used it for evil and had made the entire universe go bad. The good witch told the girl, “You cannot return home until you’ve found that compass!” But what the little girl did not know was that she was in a dream, and because she was in a dream she did not know how to wake herself up! So she bravely went to the witch’s castle. She snuck by the gates and crept inside and just as she was about to get the compass she heard a noise. It was the evil witch! But as the witch came towards her, the girl woke and opened her eyes and saw her wonderful mother tapping her on the shoulder.
On Turning 100
by Phyllis, age 14

It feels like I climbed Mount Everest and survived.
I feel light as a feather in the wind.
You tell me not to do anything by myself:
drive my car, cook my food, go down my stairs.
But that is because you haven’t experienced adventure:
Skydiving at 89, hiking through
A rain forest at 50, or trekking through the Sahara at 92.
But now I’m just sitting on the beach
Watching the waves spread on the shore.
This is the end of my beginning.
To Africa

BY MARK, AGE 11

It’s nighttime and I’m wearing a scarf and a Red Sox baseball cap. I’m going to Africa on vacation and I’m going to see lions. In my luggage I’m going to bring swimming goggles, pizza, a shirt, pants, jeans, undies, and socks. I’m leaving Boston to go on safari and rescue animals like baby giraffes. I’ll be gone from dialysis for ten years and then I’ll fly back in a helicopter to Children’s and land on the roof where everyone will be waiting for me.
My Home

by Brandon, age 12

Home is Tiffany colored jewelry
holding in my mom’s room.
Home is old concrete basketball courts
empty except for the elements.
Home is colored raindrops
pattering on my window.
Home is my hyper-active puppy Brownie
trying to get my attention to play.
Home is the Fourth of July
fireworks pop-popping over my roof.
Home is the cars honking
outside my bedroom window.
Home is the woodpeckers
drilling my grandma to frustration.
Home is my father
and his Gentleman Jack, listening
to the fireworks,
the colored rain,
my dog
the cars,
and the old basketball courts weeping.

My home.
My Paw

by Mya, age 12

It’s strange to have a heart. I’m not sure what emotions I have, but it would be nice to know so I don’t hurt anyone. My heart… it feels like pudding. Or a small gentle thing.

But my brain feels like a crowded cafeteria. It’s full of people waiting in line to pay, and they are all trying to get out at the same time.

I’m excited about my life line because it means I might be able to live through my surgery, and it means I’ll be okay in twenty years when I’ll have to go on dialysis again.
I was thinking about what she was thinking about…
She looks like she’s thinking about someone she loves…
Maybe her family, maybe her birthday…
Is it a surprise?
Is she watching her baby brother DJ taking out pots and pans from the cabinet?
Or is she watching her mom fix a hole in the wall?
Is she remembering the memories from her childhood?
Who knows what’s going on in her brain.
Is her mind moving like wind
Or like dandelion seeds in the soothing breeze?
Who is Emmett?

BY EMMETT, AGE 9

I am a GI Joe hiding in the bushes
I am a bazooka about to fire
I am wrestler in the ring
With sixty million people cheering
I am happy as candy
I am strong as a warrior
I am all those things
And I am powerful
A Wish
by Miryam, age 12

gone are the sunny yellow petals
to be replaced
by a white ball of fuzz
the tiny brown seeds wait underneath
make a wish
    one…
    two…
    three…
the seeds float through the air
their fuzzy white wings unfolding
new dandelions
    new wishes
do they ever come true?
A Blessing, Not a Curse

by Stephan

CF keeps you real
When it’s hard to deal.
Every day is blessing
And another day to heal.
You either beat it
Or you let it beat you,
The stuff you gotta go through
You have no clue.
But you gotta stay true to you.
It’s a lotta work but you can’t give up,
You can keep going or call it enough.
It’s a long road and you gotta stay tough,
Make sure you got your friends and your family to keep in touch.
There’s a lotta things in life
I had to find out the hard way,
So here’s a little poem,
And trust what I say.
Take you meds,
Do you nebs,
And stay outta trouble.
If you take risks everything’s gonna be double.
It’ll be twice as hard to breathe,
So you gotta keep your heart at ease.
Please keep in mind that there’s always
Someone out there who has it worse,
So don’t think of this as a curse.
Always remember, you’re not the first.

*CF is the abbreviation for Cystic Fibrosis*
Thanks

Working with these young writers had been an enlightening and life-changing experience. For this opportunity, special thanks must be given to Boston Children’s Hospital’s own Jessica Finch, Beth Donegan, Miranda Guardiani, and Johanna Black, as well as to the Livestrong Foundation for their continued support and funding. Thank you all.

And thank you for simply taking the time to pick up this book. Our words and ideas only become powerful when others stop to listen. We hope you enjoy reading this collection as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Best wishes,
Ian Schimmel

Writer and Artist-in-Residence
Boston Children’s Hospital
November 2010 to May 2011
Be part of the art

Make a donation to support the arts! For information on how to make a gift and bring great art to children and families at Children’s please contact Kate Renaud at 857-218-3183 or kate.renaud@chtrust.org.

Learn more about the arts at Children’s at childrenshospital.org/art

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