

Creator Biographies

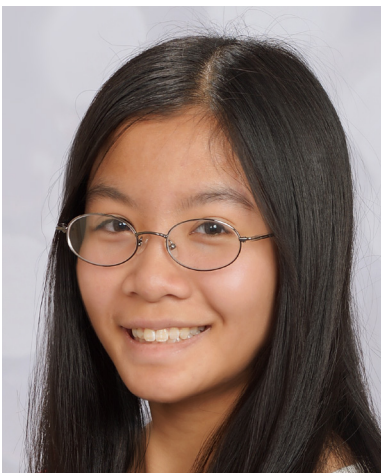


Ellis Jones, the author of “The Nature of Our Nature,” is a master’s student in UTA’s Industrial Organization program.

“I wrote this poem on my back porch as the sun was setting on Earth Day in 2020. This poem was written to reflect on the honest and stark truth that we humans must face: the certainty of our own death. We fight it, try to forget it, and live to escape it. Through this poem, I hoped to remind people of the naturalness of this process. And that it is just that, a process. It was never for us to fight but embrace.”

Smriti Ghimire, the collaborating author of “Disconnected,” is an undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology.

“As a premedical student, I have been exposed to the many ways in which healthcare is changing as a result of continuous technological advancements. Though technology is helping to make treatment more efficient, there have been several concerns from patients about the lack of connection with their physicians. ‘Disconnected’ is a piece that serves to illustrate this issue in healthcare and highlight the importance of the medical humanities. I wrote the poem in a free-form couplet style and in a manner that walks the reader through the modern patient experience. I also meant for the title to hold a double meaning so that it emphasizes the irony in modern healthcare practices. The final takeaway is that efficiency doesn’t necessarily equate to effectiveness, and that is something for current and future healthcare providers to keep in mind.”



Kathleen Dao, the collaborating illustrator of “Disconnected,” is an undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology.

“I’m a premed student, and all my life, so many people have told me to focus on the science of medicine, that helping people has more to do with medications and treatments than anything. It wasn’t really until I entered college that I began to hear more about the issue of patients feeling that they weren’t being seen or heard by their doctors. Therefore, I decided to draw this picture to represent this problem. I used warmer tones on the patient and cooler tones on the doctor to show the disconnect between them. Instead of providing the patient with the attention and warmth that they are seeking, the doctor instead focuses more on their laptop, prioritizing the science of medicine over its humanity.”

Alfredo Palacios, author of “Speaking Spanish in the Healthcare System,” is an undergraduate at UTA studying Linguistics and Biology.

“As someone who has worked with the Hispanic community his entire life, I know how severe the language barrier is between patients and medical staff and how it can even manifest itself in very deadly ways. The Spanish-English language barrier is considered one of the biggest factors in the disproportionate rates of diabetes and hypertension in the Hispanic community and I hope that this small study of mine can bring some light and spread awareness of what a dire issue this is.”





Caroline Nguyen, the author of "Peace at Heart," is an undergraduate student studying Biology at UTA.

"This work is really important to me because I was finally able to showcase my creative side, which I haven't been able to tap a lot during undergrad. I used an iPad with the app Procreate to make my art piece because it is easier to fix mistakes on a digital medium compared to a physical one. The first inspiration behind my piece is my uncle who passed away from cardiovascular disease. The other inspiration is the general public because they often get 'lost' on the internet and don't realize that the true beauty of life is right in front of them."

Dr. Barbara Chiarello, the author of "Ingrained Patriarchy, Opportunity Lost," is an adjunct assistant professor in the UTA English Department.

"I have taught multicultural American literature for over 20 years. I use various critical approaches, including feminist theory and cultural studies, to enable marginalized voices to be heard more fully, as they must be to sustain justice in a democratic society. The vignette that I submitted illustrates how we often understand past events in terms of current knowledge. Graduate school gave me the language to re-see a traumatic moment in terms of the systemic sexism that continues to influence us all. As more of us become aware of our implicit biases, if even retroactively, as I did, maybe we can let them go."



Alison Ngo, the author of "A Resident," is an undergraduate student studying Biology at UTA.

"My name is Alison Ngo and I am a born and raised Texan. I am currently studying Biology hoping to pursue a career in the medical field. My goal is to become a pediatrician as I have always enjoyed working with kids. I grew up being the eldest of three, so I have always looked after my younger siblings and have taken on jobs to babysit or tutor children. Being able to combine my love of helping others and working with children is so fulfilling for me and is my ultimate aspiration. I have gained some experience in the medical field as a certified nurse assistant, and while working I have noticed the elderly are left alone a lot of the time with little to do but eat, sleep, and watch television. I wanted to capture this bleak and bland kind of lifestyle in their points of view. They are oftentimes very lonely and bored and family members can only visit so much. This has worsened with the onset of the pandemic where visits are restricted in many facilities. I wanted to portray this unique perspective, which we may not actively think about regarding the daily lives of our grandfathers and grandmothers."

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Thao Thu Nguyen, the author of "Dinner Is at 10 pm," is a UTA alumna who graduated in the Fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering and a minor in Disability Studies.

"I have read many stories about the experiences from the physician's view, the patient's view, and the patient's family's view. As I placed myself in each of their shoes, I thought to myself that there was still missing another point of view. Not often do I come across stories told from the physician's family's standpoint. I realized that I fit into this category and was inspired to write about my experiences growing up in a physician's household. As you read the story, you will notice that I only mention my father's profession as a doctor, never specifying what kind. Depending on what kind of doctor one is, daily life differs. However, I purposefully omitted this specification to emphasize that despite his vocation shaping his lifestyle, in my eyes he is my father before he is a doctor."





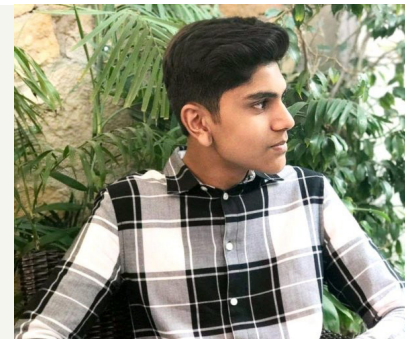
Dr. Timothy Ponce, author of “Technical Writing Pedagogy and Empathetic Medical Intervention,” is a Senior Lecturer of Technical Writing and Professional Design at the UTA Department of English.

“I hold a PhD in Literature and a certificate in Teaching Technical Writing from the University of North Texas. I currently serve as a senior lecturer of Technical Writing and Professional Design and as Coordinator of Internships in the Department of English at the University of Texas at Arlington. While my doctoral research focused on perceptions of heroism in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, I have since published and presented papers focused on technical communication, writing pedagogy, literary pedagogy, and curricular accreditation, with an overarching research agenda that

addresses the intersections of pedagogy, professional skills, and employment. In addition to my teaching and research, I also serve as a board member at the Society for Technical Communication Loan Star Chapter, as well as on grant review committees for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In this article, I demonstrate the value of technical communication courses—particularly those informed by design thinking—to aspiring medical professionals. Due to technical communication’s user-centered approach to writing, the theoretical framework taught in technical writing courses helps prepare these students to offer empathetic, wholistic, patient-centered care.”

Sami Ali, author of “Souls Tearing Apart,” is a Freshman undergraduate student at UTA studying Marketing.

“Born and raised in Pakistan, I have been making digital art since 2018. I am a proactive student with skills revolving around marketing strategy and content creation. I have been interested in arts my entire life. My art is heavily influenced by the styles, ideas, and techniques of Surrealism. I try to focus on these ideas of chaos and unconscious desires in an effort to dig deep into the unconscious mind to find inspiration for artistic creativity.”



Jacob Litsey, the author of “Impediments to Patient-Physician Communication in a Hospital Setting,” is a senior undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology with a minor in Biochemistry.

“I plan on pursuing a medical degree after I complete my undergrad and hope to specialize in cardiovascular surgery. My inspiration for this paper came from a combination of my own experience in clinical medicine (both as a volunteer in the ICU and as a student shadowing physicians), as well as the topics discussed in Dr. Gellman’s Clinical Medicine and the Human Experience course. It is a well-known fact that communication is the key to the healthy development of any type of relationship, and the

patient-physician relationship is no exception to this. I believe improvements can be made in the communication between physicians and their patients. In order to bring about this positive change, however, potential contributing factors and solutions must be discussed and public awareness must increase. Ultimately, I hope that this short essay will play a part in achieving that.”

Skylar Robinson, the author of “Student Wellness: Mental Health,” is a junior undergraduate student at UTA studying Public Health with a minor in Data Science.

“My article about mental health is important because many students often don’t talk about their well-being. Mental health awareness is something that should be talked about to help those who are going through hard times. The subject I chose for my art-form is student wellness, because students need to have good mental health. The inspiration behind the article is that I once struggled with mental health as a student, but because I sought professional help from CAPS and my professors, I have excelled in school since.”



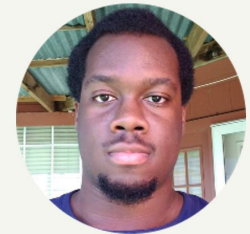


Asma Fuad Saleh, the creator of the crossword, "College Student Wellness," is an undergraduate at UTA studying History.

"I plan on pursuing a law degree and am studying to become a medical lawyer. Throughout my time at UTA, I noticed that stress often more than not gets the best of my peers. Students with poor management skills often crumble under pressure and end up sacrificing their sleep and health to get assignments turned in. These seemingly innocent all-nighters can cause insomnia in the long run and can lead to weight fluctuations and health issues in the future. The reason I decided on addressing this issue through a crossword puzzle, is that this activity both boosts brain productivity, as well as serves as a relaxing activity for said students."

Michael Ibeke, the author of "Language Learning," is a senior undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology with a minor in Spanish and a certificate in Medical Humanities.

"For all of these reasons that I mentioned in my article I decided to become trilingual in English, Spanish, and a Nigerian language of mine called Igbo. These three languages have a personal relevance to my life. My parents are Nigerian-born immigrants, and they are fluent in English and Igbo. In June 2018, I started to take learning Igbo a lot more seriously. I went to Nigeria, where I was around so many people that spoke Igbo, which was why I made an effort to start my journey to fluency in the Igbo language. I also started learning Spanish last fall semester at UT Arlington. I decided to get my minor in Spanish because I plan to go to medical school in Texas and to continue on to practice medicine in Texas when I become a doctor. I am making an effort to become fluent in Spanish because I realize that when I get done with school, the Spanish-speaking population in Texas will have doubled. I do plan on learning more languages in the future as well."



Dr. Eli Shupe, the author of "Reading the Pandemic," is a professor in the Department of Philosophy and the Humanities and is the co-director of the Medical Humanities Program at UTA. In Fall 2021, she will be teaching Healthcare Through Fiction (HUMA 3340) and Biomedical Ethics (PHIL 3319).

"As Co-Director of the Medical Humanities program here at UTA, I am extraordinarily proud of our students. This first issue of Stimulus is a product of their passion and hard work, and I am honored to contribute an article to it. The arts have tremendous power to enrich our lives and deepen our understanding of the world around us. I hope that my article helps to bring out the ways in which literature can help us to understand—or at least to endure—this particular moment in the history of our species."

Katherine Tran, the author of "From Division, To Relation," is a sophomore undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology.

"Drawing has been one of my hobbies for a long time as a way to express my own creativity. My career aspiration is to become a physician assistant, a job which I understand requires risk-taking skills. This artwork is about why it is important to provide quality care and love for the patients, despite facing obstacles in the healthcare industry. I think it is rare to hear any healthcare professionals' experiences when it comes to coping with a difficult task for their patients, which this is why this artwork means a lot to me as an understanding about the emotion it can bring to anyone. The connection between the health professionals and patients made me think of flowers, with their meanings and how they intertwine with each other. I use the symbolism art practice, which it is one of my favorite art concepts to portray meaning behind these ideas. Initially, the artwork was supposed to have a different flower, inspired by some of my other hobbies. I hesitated, because the audience might not like it; instead, I used a gold chrysanthemum. This flower is used in a Vietnamese tradition to pay respect to loved ones that have passed. Additionally, I thought about using an iris, based on its meaning of hope, which made me combine it with the gold chrysanthemum."





Waris Khuwaja, the author of "In Loving Memory of Gulzar Ali," is an undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology.

"The essay that I have written for Stimulus talks about an important aspect of medical humanities and gives a real-life example of negligence in patient safety and its consequences. This work of mine is very close to me because it showcases my family's experience. I was born in Pakistan and for the most of my childhood I visited a hospital to meet a person very dear to me and that was my maternal grandfather, who had become vegetative for the rest of his life due to a hospital error. I used to see others' maternal grandfathers expressing love to their grandchildren but I never experienced that love because of a mistake made by a healthcare worker. I could never understand who a maternal grandfather was because of a hospital error. The only way I could imagine my maternal grandfather's love for me was through the stories

told by others about how he treated them with love and respect. The inspiration for this article is my grandfather as his life story can serve as a great lesson for future healthcare workers. Even though he is no longer with us today, his life's story and its moral will always be alive."

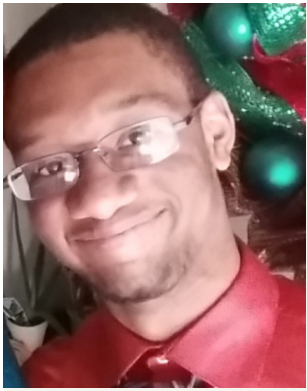
Karyssa Nelson, the author of "To Doors that Lead to Nowhere," is a senior undergraduate student studying Psychology with a minor in Biology.

"The inspiration behind my poem is rooted in my experience living with my grandmother since she was diagnosed with vascular dementia 12 years ago. To me, dementia is one of the most dehumanizing diseases there is: as it progresses, the line between the illness and the person's identity begins to blur. This is why at the beginning of the poem, it may seem as though the door is being anthropomorphized to seem like a person, but you may quickly realize as the poem continues that it is actually a person who is being dehumanized to seem like a door. There are flashes of what lies behind this door, however, when memories occasionally resurface. I find myself often trying to replicate those moments of lucidity by showing her old photographs or her creations as a seamstress, hoping that something will trigger a memory. The result of this is often defeat, leaving me wondering why I would think that I could hold the keys to a door that is not my own. It is a strange thing to have been shaped and molded as a person by someone who can never know the impact that she has had on the woman I am today. Although I miss the woman I once knew my grandmother to be, growing up with her beside me has given me many gifts; the dearest to me being empathy and patience for others. I find solace in knowing that she is always surrounded by those who love her deeply, whether she knows it or not."



Dr. Steven Gellman MD, MFA, the author of "-15°," is the founder of the Medical Humanities program at UTA. He became an educator of humanities within the Philosophy Department at UTA after retiring from his career as a physician in family practice.

"I am a physician, teacher, and advisor; however, when people ask who I am—I am a photographer. Ever since I could hold a camera, here is where my creative spirit lives, and my passions are unleashed. I have always been drawn to the shoreline as my constant source of spirit and inspiration. The cold spell of 2021 offered a unique opportunity to visualize -15 degrees at a place where I find respite and solace."



Kendall Hayes, the author of “Nature’s Conquest,” is an undergraduate student at UTA studying Computer Science.

“The events and effects of current health involving COVID-19 brought about some personal experiences with me, as an African American male that had just started working at a grocery store. I chose to put together a poem for my submission because poetry makes it easier to look at the pandemic with a more social and nature-based side from the effects. Poetry is one of the most effective ways for an author to express their feelings to a large audience. This leads to a more appropriate atmosphere for the reader to understand the author’s feelings, and for them to create their own interpretations and feelings toward how others saw the events that happened during COVID-19. Though a lot of people tend to look at what the virus does to other humans, I prefer to

look at it from an outside view, from other objects, in order to give a wider view on the happenings. I believe that the social and natural world will be changed far more than the physical sphere that people live in currently.”

Rumaila Hussain, the author of “The Gifted Yet, Broken Healer,” is a UTA alumna who graduated in the Fall of 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She is now a first-year medical student.

“My inspiration for this poem and drawing stem from the loss of identity that many medical students face when they embark on this journey. I was able to describe the image that I wanted to portray to a talented friend of mine who was able to bring that to life, so the credit for the drawing goes to Jaime Hernandez. The poem was written by me to describe how the loss of identity is all too common for medical students. It is a reminder to all students who embark on long journeys to hold on to their other identities and not to neglect the other important things in their lives. We must remember not to be consumed by our careers as we are more than just that. Love yourself and take care of yourself, so that you are able to care for your patients in the best possible manner.”



Jaime Hernandez, the illustrator of “The Gifted Yet, Broken Healer,” is a recent high school graduate and independent artist.



Jade Amerilda Scielzo Irving, the author of “Don’t Be Perfect: Just Be You” is a freshman undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology.

“I am hopeful of being accepted to a medical school (to achieve my goal of eventually becoming a physician). I am also a United States Figure Skating Association senior-level figure skater. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking vegan meals and playing with my pets: a Hahn’s macaw and two pugs. This essay is important to me—not only because it allowed me to reflect on my past, but also because it may potentially help others who will follow my path. This freshman year has been very challenging with many ups and downs for me, but I hope that I can help inspire others to keep pushing and to succeed. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experience!”



Marcy Davis, the author of “Come Hither,” is a junior undergraduate student at UTA studying Sculpture.

“I am prone to exploring the influence of texture with material as well as the use of intricate detail in my sculptures. Creating subtle hidden details has been an interest to me with my current concentration on marine and woodland terrains. Intentionally, I use the psychology of texture to display the mood of the sculptures. In my sculptures, the materials included are just as intentional as the sculpture itself. Media for this sculpture include wood, cement, gems, wire, feathers, plaster, and resin. Specific media such as plaster and wood were intentionally used for representing mankind and nature. Other media like

the cement and gems were intended to bring weight and color into this sculpture. ‘Come Hither’ was inspired by hope and grief that comes from human connection. The three hands are realistic and as the eye travels upwards, the sculpture transitions into an abstracted style to depict the uncertainty that comes after losing a loved one. The proximity of the bird and hands symbolize that the loss of a loved one does not mean the end. Instead, it only means that we rediscover their presence through signs on Earth as a new way to grow closer to them. These signs remind us that death does not mean the end of their presence.”

Jano Venter, the author of “ ‘Duplication of Cases’, ” is an undergraduate student at UTA studying History and Psychology.

“I was born in South Africa and moved to the states because my father got a job here. Originally I came to UT Arlington with the intent of studying aerospace engineering, but after I graduated from the IB program I found my calling in history of ideas, especially when I realized the potential of psychology to innovate the way Cultural History and Historical analysis is done. At some point in my career, I wish to approach history with a more scientific psychological approach drawing from social psychology to see if it is possible to trace the morphology of cultural institutions throughout history and perhaps one day measure them in a way that makes historical analysis meaningful, but for now I need to get my degree and get through my exploratory research. Because history of ideas and literature has always been dear to me, I decided to write a new type of science fiction story, one dealing exclusively with medicine, but in the traditions of the steampunk genre. I also always wanted to write a vampire story, and I felt Algernon Blackwood’s ‘Transference’ was a hallmark of vampire stories in its original subject matter. In that vein I wanted to write something that is in effect a ‘medical mystery’ that also draws on Celtic folklore and some gothic elements. Essentially I wrote what I would want to read, and I can only hope others enjoy it as much as I enjoyed writing it. In my spare time I write reviews for the website folk-metal.nl and I also have one comedic piece published titled ‘The True Cost of Misconduct,’ which is available on amazon.”



Kelle McVey Plummer, the author of “Understanding Disability in Literature Through Graphic Novels,” is a UTA alumnus who graduated in the Fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies and minors in English and Disability Studies.

“I am a native Texan, mother, wife, passionate advocate for learning, and a community servant. My research interests are multicultural literature, creative writing, and disability studies. I am particularly inspired after helping my two children navigate literacy and learning disabilities throughout their educational lives.”



JaiAnna Megahan, the author of “You Live and You Learn,” is a junior undergraduate student at UTA studying Biology and Psychology

“I am very excited to be in UTA’s first edition of Stimulus: A Medical Humanities Journal. As an aspiring child and adolescent psychiatrist, I believe that mental health and physical health are not only equal, but also reliant on each other. Likewise, I believe that a patient’s experience in any aspect of the medical field will play a pivotal role in their mental and physical well-being. In my short story, ‘You Live and You Learn,’ I am not a pre-medical student learning about disorders and illnesses, but instead a scared and confused patient. Seeing and interacting with medical professionals while at my most vulnerable allowed me to learn something that isn’t commonly taught in textbooks—compassion. We

all start our journey in medicine with the same basic notion: “I want to help people.” We all begin that journey with compassion and empathy, but I believe somewhere down the line we forget how to express it. As I progress in my studies, I plan to be an advocate for relearning how to express humanity the way a patient needs. I hope you enjoyed my story and thank you for reading!”

Prishmi Nagarajan, the author of “Hope’s Fall,” is a senior Biology Student at UTA studying Biology and the first president of the Mavericks for Medical Humanities student organization.

“A topic that’s always been of interest to me is hope. Although there are many miracles in the medical field, there are just as many, if not more, hope-shattering moments. In a simple sense, hope is uplifting and pure, pushing people forward during the dark times of their life. But when looking deeper, I couldn’t help but think about how much courage it takes to continue to hope. My goal with this poem was to discuss the complexity of hope and the courage of those that are able to keep holding onto it, despite the pain of the past.”

