

MIND TO MIND

Creative writing that explores the abstract side of our profession and our lives

Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor

Life in a Moment

Nathaniel J. Brown, M.D., Ph.D.

I learned to diagnose,
to salve suffering,
or at least attempt it.
I tried to console
when medicine could not
heal, and when it could, too.

Each day added
another petiole,
a shoot or two,
sometimes even a leaf.
I grew slowly,
case by case.

The years elided
one into the next
and life passed all but unwitnessed
until a glimpse of cast-off
photographs at the back
of a forgotten drawer

awakened me with a jolt.
How did my spouse live when I was

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still waiting for life to begin?
Now on the cusp of adulthood,
my daughter's eyes from well over
a decade ago catch mine. Playful, carefree—

an intimate moment with passing friends.
She was small.
I still feel young,
but the thinning leaves of my own canopy
herald the coming autumn.
How can the journey be so far spent?