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What It's Like to Study the Brain: A Creative Exploration

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(*) Indicates primary advisor

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Introduction: In recent years, medicine and the humanities have evolved to be adopted synergistically in dual practice. Employing principles of narrative medicine, this multimodal piece explores the experience of hunger to draw parallels between creativity in art and creativity in medicine. By stimulating reading, writing, listening, and seeing, this account aims to represent these faculties as necessary to both art and medicine and to exemplify synergy between the two.

Methods: As codified by the field of narrative medicine, methods consisted of a repetitive practice of close reading, writing, and reflecting. In viewing medicine as interconnected provider-patient narrative, scholars of narrative medicine write to contribute to these accounts of "self". This engages them in healing, intersubjective contact that enhances empathy, self-awareness, and ethical consideration. This project serves a dual function: first, as an account of the enrichment of skills of observation, interpretation, and reflection that result from a purposeful practice of narrative medicine

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and second, as a platform for engagement for those who wish to develop their own practice.

Results: Reflection on the neuroscience and psychology inherent to medical education has yielded six (6) chapters of topical creative writing consisting of short story, prose, and poetry: hunger (1) for knowledge, (2) for meaning, (3) for food, (4) as ambition, (5) as struggle, and (6) for wellness. Each chapter consists of original writing resulting from subjective and objective experience in medicine such as neurosurgical research and patient interaction at needle exchange clinics.

Discussion: This project serves as a tangible representation of the multimodality of both art and medicine. It underscores the importance of narrative in the enrichment of empathy within medical practice and enhances accessibility to narrative medicine by inviting active engagement. Further extrapolations would facilitate more opportunities for narrative training based on this project, such as workshops or interactive exhibitions.