Thursday Memo – February 21, 2019

This week we have a poem from Tiffany Chen, UMMS Class of 2019. This is what she wrote to me:

"I wanted to send along a poem I've been unconsciously working on for the last two years since my grandmother died. Grief is such a funny thing - so much that the only way to describe it was through poetry. It is meant to be disjointed because it pops up in so many different ways throughout life, and through different people. Trying to capture it in words was therapeutic, but felt like trying to catch a moonbeam in a jar, so to speak. There are some things that no human language can fully describe."

I think that captures the power of grief and of poetry - and at some point, the power of the two become intertwined. But I appreciate Tiffany's point, that still, even poetry can't quite describe it perfectly.

You can respond with comment to Tiffany at tiffany.chen@umassmed.edu or to the listserv directly. Enjoy.

To the feeling I can’t understand:
Some say you will go away with time,
Others say I’m sorry, that’s hard.
At the most unexpected moments, tears spring to my eyes.
Then later, a memory brings a bubble of warmth to my heart.
My teacher’s voice trembles as she shares her parent’s journey,
A patient lifts their eyes to meet mine after hearing “you have cancer.”
There’s pain in my stomach, a burning sensation in my soul.
An emptiness. `
A hole that will never be filled.
Deep heaviness settles on me as I remember, she won’t see me graduate.

In the middle of a sentence, he says, “I didn’t know I would cry today. But it would have been my parents’ wedding anniversary.”

Staring at a photograph of us together, her smile lifts my spirit and has me bursting with pride.

This is the ever changing wave we ride.