

*Artist, Turned Physician:*

Atelier studies in figure and form

Forged rigorous hours in search of tone.

Flesh was not flesh, but the sum of its hues:

Alizarin earlobes, so delicately perfused –

Lead white for the forehead, dark indigo chin,

The indent of temples in viridian green.

But those days are past and my hunt for resemblance

Has turned on its end, to a search for aberrance.

My subject's planes, once traced and honored

Are duly assessed as avulsed or valgus.

Orbicularis oris – that expressive ring –

Pulls the dent near the mouth that speaks to pain.

Is that cyanosis in phthalo blue?

The shadow of ptosis, subtly drooped?

Like smoothed-in paint a jaundiced sclera

Shines brightly, infused with cadmium yellow.

And waiting for judgment, the shivering nude

Sits quietly wrapped in a thin cotton robe,

For the verdict to spill from the brush or the pen  
His personhood summed, his illness sketched in –

If portraiture taught me to draw out what's vital,  
The whole made plain with a line and a color,  
Then medicine's trick is taking that time,  
And lifting a brush to heal what's awry.

by Kate Marshall, MD class of 2016