

AMA Journal of Ethics®

April 2019, Volume 21, Number 4: E370-371

ART OF MEDICINE

Journeys

Madeleine Schachter, JD

Abstract

This abstract painting represents how patients' experiences of darkness and doubt can be replaced by a sense of buoyancy and lightness. Color and movement convey a patient's sense of striving, aspiration, and optimism.

Figure. *Journeys*



Media

Acrylic on canvas.

Abstract arboreal images at the sides of the painting suggest patients' and their carers' seeming independence and separateness, each reaching and striving on their own. Both share common aspirations of healing, each traversing alone yet needing one another. The top of the image emerges from a murkier, darker chaos below; the possibility of hope is evinced in lighter, brighter colors. The curvature of earth tones at the lower right depicts a swarm of lurking doubt, the weight of decision making, and uncertainty about what might lie ahead along patients' and carers' journeys. Colors and paint layers become more ephemeral, in parallel, perhaps, with how a caregiving collaboration progresses. Density and depth of color and texture shift; metaphorically, that which was initially cumbersome lightens. Contrasts of light and dark convey movement, tilt, wisp, and froth, further signaling release from doubt, the evolution of certainty, a decision made, and the conviction in a path now taken.

Madeleine Schachter, JD is an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Medical Ethics, at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City, where she also serves on an institutional review board. She also teaches bioethics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and is a member of New York Presbyterian Hospital's ethics committee. A certified emergency medical technician, she is also an artist who uses art to empower homeless children in shelters, Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, and inmates at the Rikers Correctional Facility.

Citation

AMA J Ethics. 2019;21(4):E370-371.

DOI

10.1001/amajethics.2019.370.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The author(s) had no conflicts of interest to disclose.

The viewpoints expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the AMA.

Copyright 2019 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.
ISSN 2376-6980