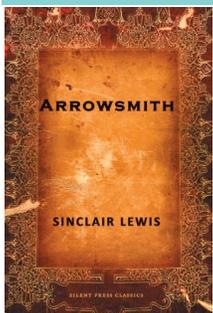


Medical Ethics and Humanities in Utah

Spring 2021

Lessons from the ages: Re-reading the classic, *Arrowsmith*

By Linda Carr-Lee Faix, PhD, MA



A classic work holds truths that transcend generations. The relevance of Sinclair Lewis's 1925 classic novel, *Arrowsmith*, is especially striking during COVID-19. It is worth noting that Paul de Kruif, a prominent bacteriologist of his day, helped Lewis to write this realistic novel. Two 2020 articles on *Arrowsmith* that illustrate uncanny comparisons with today are Dr. David Eisenman's [article in JAMA](#) and J. Russell Teagarden's [article](#) in which he "pairs" statements from U.S. government officials during today's pandemic with quotations from *Arrowsmith*. **Susan Sample, PhD, MFA**, points out that *Arrowsmith* is a satire-- humorous with a moral twist that encourages reform. She believes that history will see today as satire, too. For medical training, practice, social climbing, and medical research are all rife with satirical moments, yesterday and today.

Arrowsmith follows the life and work of Dr. Martin Arrowsmith, from an idealistic Midwestern, small town boy in 1897, to medical school, as clinician in private practice, as public health official, as clinician in a private hospital, and eventually into scientific research, where he is most at home. In research for a private research institute, Arrowsmith discovers phage, a serum that destroys bacteria and becomes the hope of many as a possible cure for the bubonic plague that rages on a Caribbean island. Our **January Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group** focused on *Arrowsmith* as he began his work for the private research institute that sends him to the Caribbean island to study the effects of phage on the bubonic plague. (chapters 30-35) What insights into today's dilemmas can we glean?

Similarities between *Arrowsmith* and today's COVID situation abound. Of note are social distancing born of fear rather than concern for others, denial of the reality of the infection, economic and political objections to quarantine, distrust of unproven claims for the value of face masks, logistical complexities and difficulties of the rollout of vaccinations, distrust of tropical medicine as colonization, varied objections to taking the vaccination, and ethical dilemmas surrounding scientific integrity: What is the proper balance between controlled studies to demonstrate what is effective and harmful versus compassionate use and emergency authorizations amidst a pandemic? Arrowsmith said that "he would not yield to a compassion which in the end would make all compassion futile" or be "tempted to...give up the possible saving of millions for the immediate saving of thousands," but the pressure for early therapeutic uses— then and now— is intense, and understandable.

What lessons for reform in healthcare impressed our reading group?

- We need to break through the distrust—even if you are right, scientifically, if you can't convince people of it, it's not that useful. (eg. vaccinations). How do you convince people?
- We need to restore faith in public health— not all people see the efforts of public health officials as positive and protective; some resent recommendations as encroachments on their lives. We need to be more receptive to the reasons why people see recommendations this way.
- For physicians choosing careers— be aware of commercial vs. scientific medicine and on guard against disingenuousness—you may enter medicine to serve and care for those in need but end up, instead, serving avarice—in it solely to make money.
- Role models are important— mentoring is much more formalized today than in Arrowsmith's time. The medical profession is exemplary here, clarifying expectations and emphasizing respect on each side of a mentorship.
- Sexism and racism of the times in which the book was written are still with us, albeit, in different ways. Address these issues, but do not let them blind us to the wisdom and warnings shared in this classic. It is a beloved read for the insights it can provide to each of us in our lives today.



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Evening Ethics Discussions



These informal, multidisciplinary discussions about current issues in medical ethics take place approximately bi-monthly or as ethical issues arise. A PME member facilitates discussion. Guided by the topic, we invite people with relevant expertise and experience and informed opinions to join us. Generally about 15-60 people from a variety of disciplines, including healthcare, public policy, philosophy, law, and business attend. We distribute short, timely articles from the nation's most thoughtful newspapers, journals, blogs, and magazines to the group in advance of our discussions. CME is offered.

Genetics Hot Topics A Collaborative Evening Ethics with UCEER (Utah Center for Excellence in Ethical, Legal and Social Implications)

**“Disability, trust and
marginalization in
precision medicine
research”
with Maya Sabatello,
LLB, PhD**

Thursday, February 4, 2021
4pm-5:30pm

[https://us02web.zoom.us/
j/581623206](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/581623206)

No Passcode
CME Event Code: 35019

Precision medicine research is gaining momentum across the healthcare landscape in the U.S. and elsewhere. Although in its infancy, precision medicine research holds promise for tailoring disease diagnosis, treatment and prevention to individual variability in genes, environment, and lifestyle. It is also hoped that precision medicine research will curtail the deep health disparities that have plagued the country; indeed, precision medicine is increasingly viewed as the new, future-looking healthcare model for improving individual and public health. These promises may be particularly salient for people with disabilities who can be key beneficiaries of precision medicine research but often experience health disparities.

This presentation will share findings from a national study that was conducted in the U.S. that explored interest in and barriers to participation in precision medicine research among people with disabilities. Our findings indicate that marginalization may have significant implications for the success of ongoing efforts to advance precision medicine research and that (dis)trust may play a key role in views about participation in precision medicine research. Better understanding of the unique barriers faced by such groups can facilitate the ultimate goal of precision medicine research to translate findings from research to bedside and public health benefits.

Maya Sabatello, LLB, PhD joins us from Columbia University where she is Associate Professor of Medical Sciences (in Medicine), Center for Precision Medicine and Genomics, Department of Medicine, Associate Professor of Medical Sciences (in Medical Humanities and Ethics), Division of Ethics, Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics, and Co-Director, Precision Medicine: Ethics, Politics and Culture Project.

There will be no background readings for this session.

“Mend: Re-examining Racism in Medical History through Contemporary Poetry”

with

Kwoya Fagin Maples

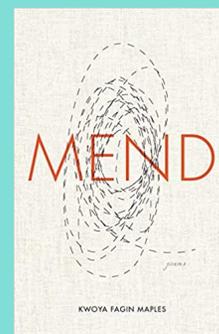
Wednesday, February 24,
2021

5:30pm-7pm

[https://utah.zoom.us/
j/9433052554](https://utah.zoom.us/j/9433052554)

Passcode: 845689
CME Event Code: 55019

Mend, a unique poetry collection by Kwoya Fagin Maples, presents the history of medical experimentation upon which obstetrics and gynecology are based from the perspective of Black women. In her 2018 award-winning collection, Maples has written persona poems in the voices of three enslaved Black women—the only ones named from among the many operated upon by J. Marion Sims, revered by many as the of “father of gynecology.” Her poems raise ethical questions regarding racism in medical research in the past but also in contemporary medical practice: black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white females (CDC, 2019). *Mend* alludes to the inequities through the personal experiences of the author. In our discussion, we’ll re-examine racism in medicine, particularly ob/gyn, as well as consider the vital role poetry can play in social justice, “changing the shape of our social relations and, inescapably, our individual and collective consciousness,” as one Poetry Foundation writer claims.



Maples will be featured virtually as our guest at Evening Ethics. She teaches in the MFA creative writing program at the University of Alabama. Her research for *Mend* was funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation. Maples has published in literary journals, including *Blackbird Literary Journal*, *Obsidian*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *The African-American Review*, *Pluck!*, *Tin House Review Online* and *Cave Canem Anthology XIII*.

More Evening Ethics Discussions

"Why Doctors Write: Finding Humanity in Medicine"

**Wednesday, April 21, 2021
5:30pm-7pm**

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/96488638499>

**Passcode : 329273
CME Event Code: 111019**

At this Evening Ethics, we will view a new, 36- minute documentary by Ken Brown that includes interviews with physician-writers but also explores how medical schools increasingly are incorporating reflective writing into curricula to help foster empathy, compassion, observation, and communication, necessary skills for clinicians. Following the film, a panel of U of U writers and educators will help facilitate discussion.



Watch for more information closer to the date!

David Green Evening Ethics with Steven Joffe, MD:

"Ethical Challenges in Pediatric Vaccine Clinical Trials"

**Wednesday, April 28, 2021
5:30pm-7pm**

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/91444413298>

**Passcode: 246214
CME Event Code: 118019**



Steven Joffe, MD

Steven Joffe, MD, will be our 2020-21

**David Green Memorial Speaker,
April 28-29, 2021.**

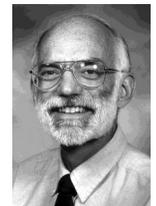
Watch for more information closer to the date!

David Green Memorial Lectureship

In addition to the above Evening Ethics, Steven Joffe, MD, will present the David Green Memorial Lecture at Pediatric Grand Rounds : **"The ethics of first-in-child clinical trials"**

Please click on this link to view Dr. Joffe's Pediatric Grand Rounds on **Thursday, April 29, 2021, 8-9am:**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNQP-M_3-PdPDvnlCr2Fjpg



David Green, MD

Welcome to Carrie Torr, MD, our newest PMEH faculty member!



Carrie Torr, MD

We are pleased to announce that Carrie Torr, MD, is joining our faculty in the Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities. Dr. Torr is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Utah, Division of Neonatology. She is an attending neonatologist at Primary Children's Hospital (PCH), University of Utah and Intermountain Medical Center NICUs. She serves as an Ethics Committee Member and Clinical Ethics Consultant for PCH as well as the founder of the Moral Resiliency Forum in the PCH NICU. Dr. Torr is currently working towards acquiring her clinical hours to be eligible for the ASBH HEC-C exam as well as pursuing her Masters in Bioethics and Health Policy from Loyola University Chicago. She is originally from Ohio and received her BA in Political Science from Ohio University, completing her medical degree and Pediatric residency at the University of South Carolina and her fellowship in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at the University of Utah prior to joining the Division of Neonatology as faculty in 2017.

On a personal note, Dr. Torr has two children, Curran (8) and Henry (6). Her husband, Alex, is a third grade teacher at East Midvale Elementary and they have two rescued pups, Macey and Molly. They enjoy hiking, kayaking and camping, although the dogs can make kayaking perilous at times. Dr. Torr's clinical interest include parental consent in the NICU, genomic medicine, ethics education and quality improvement. She is excited to be joining PMEH and is looking forward to future collaborations.

Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group

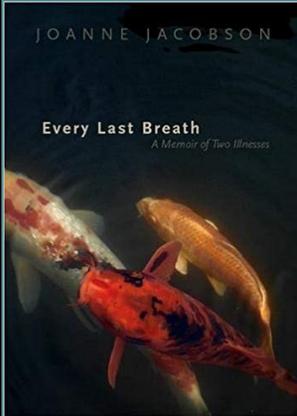
Schedule of 2021 Readings can be found on our website

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

6-7:30pm, Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/95041833671> Passcode: 252665

Every Last Breath: A Memoir of Two Illnesses by Joanne Jacobson



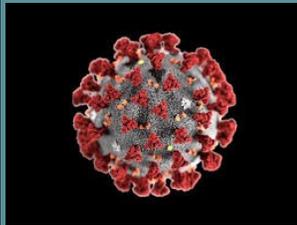
Joanne Jacobson's memoir *Every Last Breath* addresses in tandem her own rare blood disorder and her mother's chronic respiratory condition, exploring themes of hope, loss, remembrance, and resilience. Jacobson combines aspects of poetry and prose in a series of essays on illness and wellness, concepts which take on new meaning when her memoir is read during the pandemic, a time of uncertain health for all of us. Her writing is lyrical and rich in both meaning and metaphors; her attention to detail, keen and resonant, transporting readers into the emotional core of the story. Dr. Joanne Jacobson will join us as a special guest and begin our discussion with a short reading from *Every Last Breath*.

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

6-7:30pm, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/94524878168> Passcode: 142900

A Cross-Genre Selection of Writings about COVID-19



For March's selection, Rachel Borup has put together a "COVID Reader." The pandemic has dominated every aspect of our lives for about a year now and will probably be the greatest health crisis of our generation. In these short stories and personal essays, some of our greatest writers respond to this moment of great loss and social change with their talent and creative vision.

The COVID Reader:**

Lorrie Moore, "Face Time"

Jesmyn Ward, "On Witness and Respair"

Charles Wu, "[Systems](#)"

Edwidge Danticat, "[One Thing](#)"

"Recipe for Connection"

Don't Stop Believin" by Shana Mahaffey

by Jennifer Rosner

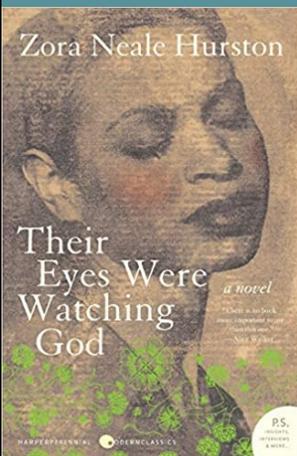
**for pdfs in the COVID Reader, contact linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

6-7:30pm, Facilitated by Hailey Halley, PhD

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/96778793017> Passcode: 053110

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston



Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a Harlem Renaissance classic rich with insight for present-day analysis of the interplay between gender, class, race, religion, psychology, and bodies. Key for our conversation will be Hurston's use of storytelling as it relates to the health and wellness of the self and the community. Published in 1937, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* follows the life story of Janie Crawford, an African American woman who recounts coming of age in rural Florida. Through both first-person and third-person narration, Hurston reveals Janie's histories of trauma involving illness, death, racism, and gendered violence. In Janie's relationships with men, with her community, and in the development of her own voice as a narrator, we see the necessity of storytelling as a device of reflection, self-knowledge, and healing in the face of suffering. Further, our discussion will also be framed by a conversation about the ways Hurston's fiction employs ritual to make meaning through an introduction to her work as a pioneering anthropologist who personally documented the symbolism and folk medicine of Voodoo culture in the Southern United States, Haiti, and Jamaica.

Internal Medicine Grand Rounds



Teneille R. Brown, JD

Teneille Brown and Leslie Francis will present Internal Medicine Grand Rounds, **“Addiction, Disability, and Anti-Discrimination Law,”** on **Thursday, February 18, 2021, at noon.** To watch, go to <https://medicine.utah.edu/internalmedicine/grand-rounds/gr-livestream.php>



Leslie P. Francis, JD, PhD

PMEH Calendar of Events

<p><u>*The Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group 6-7:30 pm (via zoom)</u></p>	
<p>Every Last Breath: A Memoir of Two Illnesses by Joanne Jacobson, Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA ; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/95041833671 Passcode: 252665</p>	Wed. February 10
<p>A Cross-Genre Selection of Writings about COVID-19, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD ; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/94524878168 Passcode: 142900</p>	Wed. March 10
<p>Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, Facilitated by Hailey Halley, PhD; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/96778793017 Passcode: 053110</p>	Wed. April 14
<p><u>*Evening Ethics (via zoom)</u></p>	
<p>Genetics Hot Topics: “Disability, trust and marginalization in precision medicine research,” with Maya Sabatello, LLB, PhD, 4-5:30pm: zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/581623206 No Passcode</p>	Thurs. February 4
<p>“Mend: Re-examining Racism in Medical History through Contemporary Poetry,” with Kwoya Fagin Maples, 5:30-7pm: zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/94333052554 Passcode: 845689</p>	Wed. February 24
<p>“Why Doctors Write: Finding Humanity in Medicine”, 5:30-7pm: zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/96488638499 Passcode : 329273</p>	Wed. April 21
<p>David Green Memorial Evening Ethics: “Ethical Challenges in Pediatric Vaccine Clinical Trials,” with Steven Joffe, MD, 5:30-7pm: zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/91444413298 Passcode: 24621</p>	Wed. April 28
<p><u>Other Lectures of Interest</u></p>	
<p>Internal Medicine Grand Rounds: “Addiction, Disability, and Anti-Discrimination Law”, noon-1pm: https://medicine.utah.edu/internalmedicine/grand-rounds/gr-livestream.php</p>	Thurs. February 18
<p>David Green Memorial Lecture, Pediatric Grand Rounds with Steven Joffe, MD: “The ethics of first-in-child clinical trials,” 8-9am: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNQP-M_3-PdPDvnlCr2Fjgg</p>	Thurs. April 29
<p><u>Internal Medicine Ethics Resident Conferences 12:30-1:00 pm (via zoom)</u></p>	
<p>“How to disclose bad news ,” with Gretchen Case, PhD, MA and Paige Patterson, MD</p>	Tues. February 9
<p>“When, How, and Why We Evaluate Patient Competence,” with Leslie Francis PhD, JD and Philip Baese, MD</p>	Tues. March 2



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Program Members on the Road and In Print

Leslie Francis's commentary, ["Politicians get vaccinated early to build public trust, while furious health workers wait,"](#) was published in The Washington Post December 23, 2020.

Leslie Francis was a panelist in Internal Medicine Grand Rounds, January 14, 2021, " with Andrew Pavia, MD, Sankar Swaminatham, MD, and Angela Dunn, MD: "Expert Panel Discussion on COVID-19 Vaccine: Challenges and Potential."

Peggy Battin's article, ["Those Denied Care Still Deserve Consideration,"](#) was published in the Salt Lake Tribune November 1, 2020.

Sam Brown published a new book, [Joseph Smith's Translation: The Words and Worlds of Early Mormonism.](#)

Sam Brown helped run a COVID trial published in NEJM, December 22, 2020, ["A Neutralizing Monoclonal Antibody for Hospitalized Patients with Covid-19,"](#) and he co-chaired a COVID trial published in JAMA, November 9, 2020, ["Effect of Hydroxychloroquine on Clinical Status at 14 Days in Hospitalized Patients With COVID-19."](#)

Sam Brown was awarded a \$2.5M D0D grant to study Long COVID, and he is chairing a new international trial for COVID ARDS.