

Beginnings

The idea for this journal was planted during a warm week in northern Manhattan last summer (2015). A group of us, egged on by UNE's own Dr. Gugliucci, signed up for Columbia University's introductory course in Narrative Medicine, put on in partnership with the American Medical Student Association. During those five days, we grappled with reading closely and writing honestly. Our classmates were from around the country and all over the world. Some things we wrote about included our names, our journeys, and our scars. In smaller groups, other strangers read our works and told us directly what they saw in them. Often, it was terrifying.



UNECOM students and founding editors of *Akesis*, at Columbia University's summer Narrative Medicine program, June 2015. From left to right: Ariela Zamcheck, Nicole Butuzov, Nehal Shah, Julet Baltonado, Natasha Neal, Arooba Almas, and John Cooper

The coursework varied from watching a Japanese film about a man becoming a funeral director to a reflective final afternoon at the Cloisters, pondering tapestries with unicorns. By the end of this program, we learned that Narrative Medicine was about telling the stories of living in its most direct terms: illness, healing, and our shared humanity; the narrators and the characters being social workers and cops, nurses and doctors, patients and families.

Coming back to the Maine-land, our heads did not stop buzzing with excitement for a Narrative Medicine-related project. This was an experience we certainly wanted to share. We decided to start a community here at the University of New England, where others could share their personal stories of prose, poetry, narration or other artwork as a creative outlet, inspired by our involvement in medicine. We gained enormous support and excitement from our faculty, classmates, and the Library Services department, who went above and beyond to make this journal possible.

Akesis is our first step toward building this community. Our background in Osteopathic Medicine teaches us to help others find their health, and with this endeavor, we hope to share such stories. We are excited to see how this project grows, hopefully expanding to other professions and healthcare-related fields. Thank you for your interest, and for becoming part of this story.

The Editors
Akesis