

Through the generosity of Charles R. Millikan, D. Min., vice president for Spiritual Care and Values Integration, an annual award competition was established at Houston Methodist Hospital among the resident staff. To enter the writing competition, residents submitted a poem or essay of 1,000 words or less on the topic, "On Being a Doctor." A committee of seven was selected from the Houston Methodist Hospital Education Institute to establish the judging criteria and to select the winning entries. This is the 3rd-place winning essay and last in the series.



J. Roberts, M.D.

## THE FISHERMAN

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And so the old man waited, patiently. The shrill cold pierced deeply. It was the kind of cold that penetrated deep into your bones, perhaps even the soul. The cold, the isolation, and the stillness made it difficult, but patience made it worth it. For there was beauty in the stillness, and there was solace in the isolation, and there was completeness in enduring the cold. The gentle warmth of the sun began to peek from atop the steadfast mountains, and the trees began to cast lurching shadows across the ice. The air was crisp, and every breath that filled the lungs brought new strength. The surrounding forest seemed to breathe the air and come to life with activity. But still patience was the key, for the old man was a fisherman.

The old man lived in his fish house near the lake. He lived by himself but was not alone, for every day the mysterious power of nature surrounded him, nurtured him, and soothed him. His life was completely in tune and on beat to the world around.

There was great harmony in fishing, as it allowed one to explore important thoughts — the kind of thoughts that could only be had when cradled in the arms of Mother Nature herself. The patience would pay off when, like a syncopated rhythm, the fish would fall prey.

Unfortunately, I never knew this man. I never knew his way of life. I never experienced what he had felt. But as I sit late at night with instrument in hand, I try to catch a glimpse. I try to see through his eyes and know what he knows. For a second, I am part of it. And from my mind, the emotions channel through and the notes dance from the guitar as my fingertips fly. The melody sings out and catches in the breeze only to fade into the distance. But for a while, everything washes away and I fold into the slipstream. My thoughts clear and my worries fade. And like the fisherman, I become one with the world around me — perfectly in tune.

## IN THE NEWS

### Contributing Editor to Poet's Pen Publishes Book of Poetry

Kudos to Dr. Michael Lieberman, Contributing Editor of the Poet's Pen, who has just published a new book of poems, *Bonfire of the Verities*. Lieberman says that these are poems of late middle age/early old age that reflect our struggles with doubt, faith, remembrance, loss, love, and what truths can be wrested from a lifetime of living and what must be discarded. A YouTube video of him reading, "Grant's Atlas of Anatomy," a poem about his failure to recognize that his mother's emotional distance and declining mental state were the result of a series of ministrokes is available (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwXLqwUIDJ0>). The book is available from Amazon in both print and Kindle format.