



## 2026 Annual Gerald F. Berlin Prize for Creative Writing

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

7:00pm-8:00pm

Zoom: <https://umassmed.zoom.us/j/92290588488?pwd=ZPK29ZMerx5KEJUSglbp6CkOouylrJ.1>

### Opening Remarks

Hugh Silk, MD

### Thank you and Brief History of Award

Richard M. Berlin, MD

### Author Readings (In order of presentation)

#### **Amanda Mangano**

*UMass Chan SOM 1*

*Honorable Mention: Listening Beyond the Monitor*

Amanda Mangano is a first-year medical student. Raised in Mansfield, Massachusetts Amanda studied in Boston and worked at Boston Children's Hospital in the Emergency Department and with the Boston Celtics, experiences that helped shape her interest in emergency medicine and a possible future fellowship in sports medicine. Amanda has been writing since high school, using it as a form of reflection and self-care. Her piece draws from a defining moment in her life and education, one that also inspired her to create a scholarship in her mother's name for Northeastern University for students who have experienced the loss of a parent.

#### **Sean Bowden**

*Resident (PGY-2): Department of Medicine*

*Honorable Mention: Dead End Diner*

Sean is originally from Oregon. As a kid, his grandmother was instrumental in his love for reading, which naturally evolved into his love for writing. While in medical school, he took courses in narrative medicine and was immediately infatuated with the blend of his two passions. Since moving to Massachusetts, Sean has continued to write as a means to process the hardships of residency.

#### **Austin Klein**

*Resident (CA-3): Anesthesiology*

*Honorable Mention: The Weight of the Lead*

Austin is an anesthesiology resident at UMass Chan Medical School, with a clinical focus on perioperative care and pain management. When he is not at work or recovering from an injury, he enjoys hiking and spending time with his dog, Odin. He is especially interested in pain medicine and how physical suffering shape's identity, a theme that runs through his essay, The Weight of the Lead. Austin reports his writing reflects on what it means to care for others while confronting the limits of one's own body.

**Nihal Chaudhary**

*UMass Chan SOM 2*

*Third Place: Deck of Cards*

Nihal Chaudhary is a student writer and aspiring physician whose work explores the intersection of human connection, storytelling, and care. Drawing from her experiences in healthcare settings and community outreach, her writing often centers on moments where trust, vulnerability, and communication shape real outcomes. She is particularly interested in how small, seemingly ordinary interactions can carry profound meaning; a theme reflected in her “deck of cards” piece. Through both her clinical and creative work, she aims to better understand—and tell the stories of—what it truly means to care for others.

**Iris Vale**

*UMass Chan SOM 1*

*Second Place: From a Scream to a Whisper*

Iris Vale is a pseudonym for the author of this piece, who has chosen to remain anonymous to prevent future prejudice. She is a first-year medical student with aspirations to go into psychiatry. She has been writing narrative essays and poetry for most of her life and is highly interested in how medicine and the humanities intersect. In her work, she discusses mental health from the dual perspective of both patient and future provider. The following essay, titled "From a Scream to Whisper" chronicles her experiences and insights navigating medical school with PTSD.

**Amanda Berry**

*UMass Chan GSN Doctor of Nursing Practice*

*Winner: The Look on Their Faces*

Amanda Berry was raised in Newtown, CT and is the oldest of three siblings. She graduated from Newtown High School in 2018 before attending Clemson University in SC, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 2022. Her family now resides in North Carolina. Amanda moved to Massachusetts on her own to pursue her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, where she is enrolled in the Family Nurse Practitioner program. She has always known she wanted to work in the medical field and is especially passionate about caring for children and supporting families during difficult moments. Growing up in Newtown and later working in healthcare shaped her commitment to compassion, resilience, and healing. “The Look on Their Faces” reflects those values in a deeply personal way.

**Closing Remarks**

Richard M. Berlin, MD