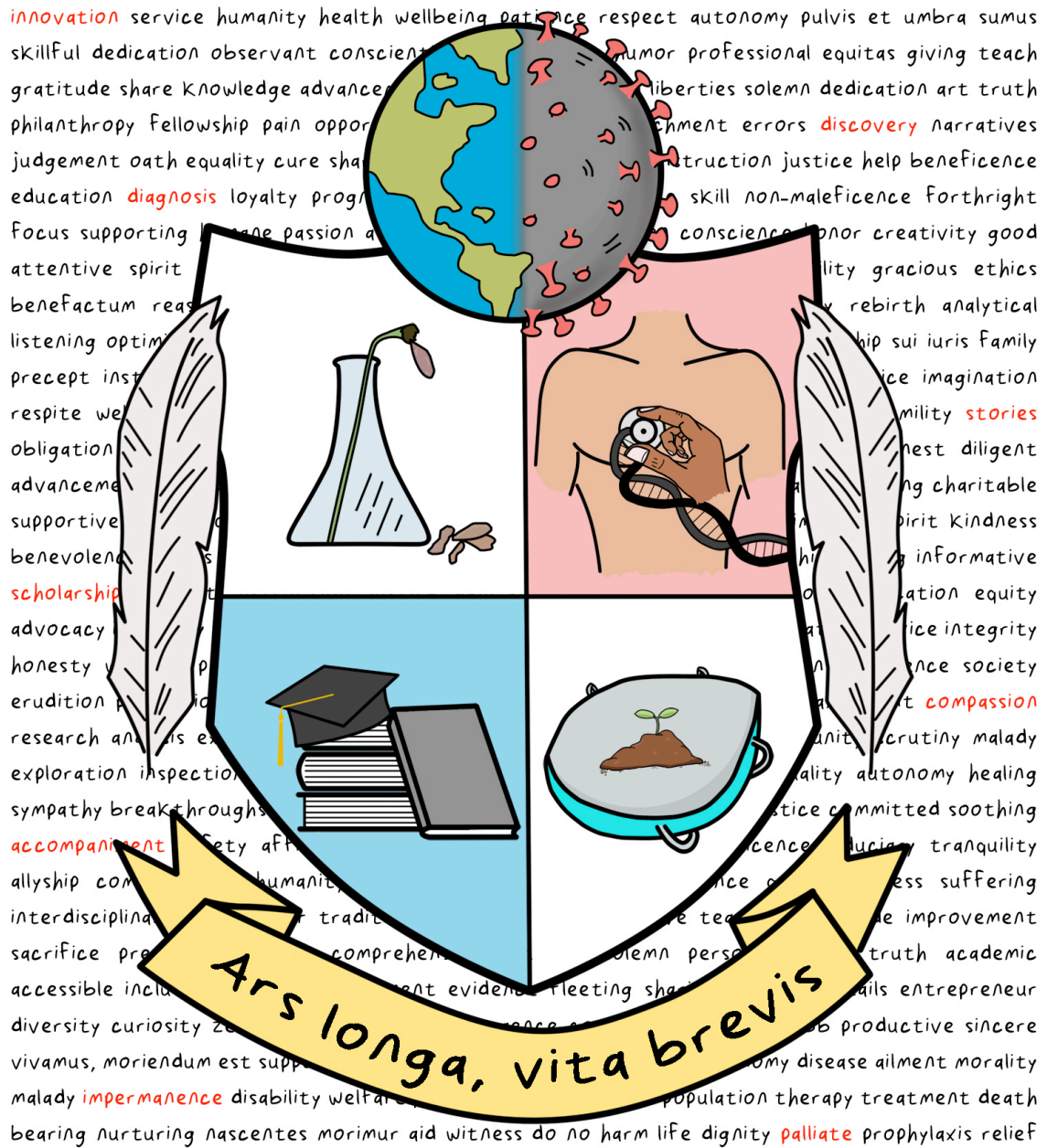


# Coat of Arms

By Zachary G. Jacobs



© Coat of Arms by Zachary G. Jacobs Spring 2022 Intima

This illustration began as a quiet rumination on what it means to be a doctor. I reflected on the varied roles we play—clinician, scientist, and witness—and how stories, teaching, learning, innovation, accompaniment and compassion all work together to define what it is to be a healer, witnessing every day the beauty of a fleeting existence and the terrible inevitability of mortality.

What started as a list of words was transformed into an assortment of pencil drawings in my notebook. Drawing them, I realized I was trying to create a symbolic representation of that which binds us together as healthcare providers, particularly during the shared-experience of a global pandemic. Something abstract, yet recognizable. A coat of arms, so to speak. Anachronistic, like so much else in our profession. Even the etymology was fitting, the term having originated from the practice of emblazoning heraldry upon the surcoats of combatants, often worn over armor.

This immediately called to mind our collective march into battle these past years, adorned in personal protective equipment and our very own stark white coats. Rough pencil drawings went from my notebook and easily found homes on my computer screen. All that was left was to choose a motto, which seemed obvious, borrowed from Hippocrates and encapsulating the concepts I hoped to illustrate, like ephemerality and the durable impact of passion and well-honed skill: **While life is short, art and craft are eternal.**

---

**Zachary G. Jacobs is a physician (hospitalist) in Portland, OR who was drawn to a career in healthcare by the stories. He writes, draws pictures and takes photos in order to reflect on his experiences as a doctor. To see more of his work, visit <https://zgimd.wordpress.com>. TW: @ZacharyGJacobs**

---

© 2022 *Intima: A Journal of Narrative Medicine*