

Uncomplicated Arthroplasty—an Artist's Perspective

Frances McGuire, BA

A visual artist uses a graphic drawing “comics” format to tell the story of her knee replacement.



JUST BEFORE the anesthesia knocked me out, I enjoyed the music played in the operating room: mostly '80s and '90s pop, and once a Yo-Yo Ma cello piece.

I floated in the key of G while dreaming of the key that would unlock my knee.



BY THAT EVENING, I had two shiny new devices: the knee in my leg and an iPad. I learned to use the iPad as I do a paintbrush or pen. Still on painkillers, my ideas began to flow, and I sketched what I had just been through. My view of New York City, a city that perpetually rebuilds itself, mirrored how I had just been rebuilt.

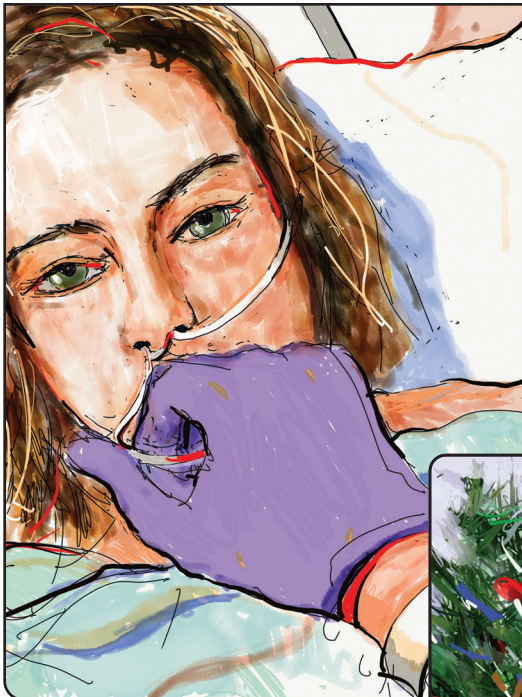


LATER THAT NIGHT, I felt there was more to do with the sparkling Manhattan view.

The nursing staff got me up but I felt lame and laid up just the same.

So I pretended I was James Stewart in *Rear Window*.





THE DOCTOR'S MORNING ROUNDS

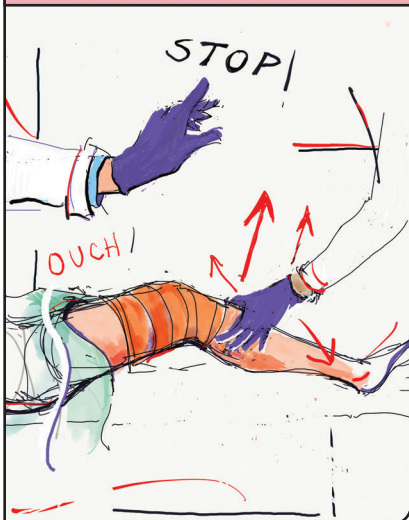
were, for the most part, fun for me because they combined art and medicine.

After one of the surgeries, I still had an oxygen tube so my doctor asked, "Why are these still in your nose?" "Because I like oxygen," I replied.

"But you don't need oxygen," he said, and we both laughed as he removed the tube.

LATER his assistant lifted my leg to see my bandaged knee and gave it a yank.

This I did not find humorous.



BARELY SIX MONTHS

after my second knee replacement, I was back on the cross-country ski trail handling steep hills with ease. No more lock.

I WAS FINALLY FREE.

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Conflict of Interest Disclosures: None reported.

Additional Information: Ms McGuire is a member of the YOHO Artists Community in Yonkers, New York. She attended classes at the Art Students League of New York and completed her academic degree at Queens College,

City University of New York. Drawings from her "Hospital Drawings" series are adjacent to the surgical suite at Mount Sinai West in New York City, where she had her knee surgeries. Her work has been represented by galleries on Martha's Vineyard.

Submissions: For more information about graphic story submissions, see [JAMA Instructions for Authors](#).