"when I get the angle right, I know it."

Love for the plants surely helps. "I don't notice a movie star walking by," she says, describing her West Hollywood neighborhood. "But I will cross the street to smell a night-blooming jasmine or see a bougainvillea." —CRAIG LAMBERT

ment how President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger '50, Ph.D. '54, backed the losing side in the blood-soaked and unsuccessful war that led to the separation of Bangladesh amid sharp conflict between Pakistan and India—what Bass calls "a forgotten genocide."

Fortune Tellers: The Story of America's First Economic Forecasters, by Walter A. Friedman (Princeton, $29.95). Those economic seers who predict GNP and unemployment—and move markets? They were not always with us. The director of the Business School's business history initiative takes readers back to some pioneers of the art; his title, and the appearance of "astrologer" as the third word in his introduction, suggest some of the underlying hopes invested in forecasting today.

Finding the Dragon Lady: The Mystery of Madame Nhu, by Monique Brinson Demery, A.M. '03 (PublicAffairs, $26.99). The U.S.-backed 1963 coup that deposed South Vietnam's government cost the life of President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, whose wife, the feared Madame Nhu, survived, only to live in exile for decades. The author fills in this uncovered chapter from the war that escalated so horribly after the coup.

Turmoil and Transition in Boston, by Lawrence S. DiCara '71, M.P.A. '77, with Chris Black (Hamilton/Rowan and Littlefield, $24.99 paper). At a time of generational change in Boston's mayoral suite, DiCara's political memoir of his service on the Boston City Council (he was the youngest person ever elected, in 1971) and his 1983 campaign for mayor recalls the city during the busing crisis, when today's prosperity and appeal could not even be envisioned.

Poet and physician Rafael Campo relaxes at home with a book.

Sestinas from the Clinic

Rafael Campo, M.D., straddles medicine and metonymy.

RAFAEL CAMPO WRITES clear, inviting, open-hearted poems about the most difficult, most troubling, and—for readers unused to them—most private and least traditional of subjects. He is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and practices at Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center. He treats—and writes about treating—people living with serious illness, especially HIV and AIDS. That enterprise informs all his six books of verse, but in his latest, *Alternative Medicine* (Duke University Press), his work as a doctor becomes, literally, central. The book's three parts concern, in turn, Campo's early years as a Cuban-American child of immigrants; his professional work, both clinical ("The Third Step in Obtaining an Arterial Blood Gas") and interpersonal; and the rest of his life, as teacher of poets, traveler, gay man, lover, beloved, and citizen. The volume concludes with warm love poems ("You're the heaven I'm still rising towards"), but its power rests with its patients and their troubles—in the repeated worry of the phrase "I'm not a real doc without my white coat," with the hospitalized audience for "Wish Bone the cancer clown."

By the time he entered Amherst College in the early 1980s, Campo knew he would be a doctor. He came to take poetry seriously thanks in part to his teacher Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who later helped create the field called queer theory. Her class, he says, let him "transgress into the realm of the literary" and "put on the drag of science in my poems." "Part of my own impulse to write poems had to do with my queerness," he continues, "wanting to be out, to have a voice." Another impulse was humanistic, pushing back against "the impersonal norms...of a strictly biomedical paradigm" for pre-med and medical training.

HM

Visit www.harvardmag.com/extras to hear Campo read several poems aloud.

Both impulses flourish in *Alternative Medicine,* which celebrates Campo's erotic commitments in love poems ("Shared," "Love Song for Love Songs") and also speaks to his work in humanistic medicine, training other doctors to see their patients as whole people. A vigorous man-

Photograph by Stu Rosner

ifesto in couplets, with the not altogether ironic title "Reforming Health Care," concludes by observing, "in the final absence of a cure,/ the need in all of us for someone's care."

The poet found Harvard Medical School "in some ways, very disheartening," and took a year off to study creative writing at Boston University, where he evolved his pellucid formal style. After earning his M.D. in 1992, he took a medical residency in San Francisco, where—before the current "triple cocktail" treatment regime—"we had nothing to offer other than compassion" to gay men dying of AIDS in his care. *Alternative Medicine* looks back to those years—"Remember when it seemed miraculous/that most of our close friends weren't dead? We feared/their blood...We cried/at patients' funerals."

These lines commit themselves at once to wide intelligibility—all the poems make sense the first time through—and to traditional ways of arranging words: pentameter quatrains, sonnets, a sestina, two double villanelles. Campo, who grew up fully bilingual, speculates that his pages' clean shapes reveal his "immigrant mentality": "to master these forms is becoming truly an English speaker." Stanzas here address his second-generation identity: "We never learned to swim in bitterness:/to us, the river's water's flow is free."

Campo makes a point of listening to his patients: their voices and their own writings inform his poetry, as they informed his book of essays *The Healing Art* (2003). "We doctors are famous for interrupting patients," he explains; his work could help them speak. And yet the patients' voices often tax the doctors' temperaments; sick people need a kindness and a patience that their physicians cannot always provide. "Can't you just be happy I'm gonna die/and give me my damn prescriptions?" asks one; another was "sure she was infected with a lie,/and inside her, it was the dream that died."

Much of Campo's writing—and some of his medical practice, too—seem designed to say to readers and nonreaders, the sick and the well, that we are not alone. Nor is Campo alone in his stylistic goals: fluent and sociable, versatile within his forms, he has something in common with the poet and translator Marilyn Hacker, and with the late poet Thom Gunn. "The kinds of poetry that I am writing," Campo says, "I do hope will reach people in the hospital, people who are not necessarily poets themselves." And yet that hope comes hand in hand, throughout *Alternative Medicine*, with the poet's own need to explain hope and grief, life and death, memory and desire, to himself: as Campo puts it, "A doctor writes because he must, because/not one of us can stop the final cure."

—STEPHEN BURT

OPEN BOOK

Annals of Anxiety

"I have since the age of about two been a twitchy bundle of phobias, fears, and neuroses," writes Scott Stossel '91, editor of *The Atlantic* (and an incorporator of this magazine). In a self-revealing, funny, and unsparing act of exposing one's dark fears to the light of day, he has drawn on his personal experiences to address the history, etiology, and science of a broad topic in *My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind* (Knopf, $27.95). From the vivid opening:

I have an unfortunate tendency to falter at crucial moments.

For instance, standing at the altar in a church in Vermont, waiting for my wife-to-be to come down the aisle to marry me, I start to feel horribly ill. Not just vaguely queasy, but severely nauseated and shaky—and, most of all, sweaty. The church is hot that day—it's early July—and many people are perspiring in their summer suits and sundresses. But not like I am....In wedding photos, you can see me standing tensely at the altar, a grim half smile on my face, as I watch my fiancée come down the aisle on the arm of her father: in the photos, Susanna is glowing; I am glistening....We turn to face the minister. Behind him are the friends we have asked to give readings, and I see them looking at me with manifest concern. *What's wrong with him?* I imagine they are thinking. *Is he going to pass out?* Merely imagining these thoughts instantly makes me sweat even more. My best man, standing a few feet behind me, taps me on the shoulder and hands me a tissue to mop my brow. My friend Cathy, sitting many rows back in the church, will tell me later that she had a strong urge to bring me a glass of water; it looked, she said, as if I had just run a marathon.

The wedding readers' facial expressions have gone from registering mild concern to what appears to me to be unconcealed horror: *Is he going to die?* I'm beginning to wonder that myself. For I have started to shake...I feel like I'm on the verge of convulsing. I am concentrating on keeping my legs from flying out from under me like an epileptic's and am hoping that my pants are baggy enough to keep the trembling from being too visible. I'm now leaning on my almost wife—there's no hiding the trembling from her—and she is doing her best to hold me up.

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