

her home. This time Ana lay silent, a rosary in her hands. Maria sobbed at the foot of her bed. Ana's silence and the family's grief left me speechless.

I pronounced her dead, completed the death certificate and abruptly raced away. Rain pounded on my windshield as I distanced myself from Ana and her family. I felt an unexpected liberation, as though I was fulfilling my childhood fantasy of racing away from my own tenacious grandmother.

But the taste of freedom didn't last long. For the next few days I admonished myself for my actions, for failing to embrace Ana on that first urgent house call, and for failing to attend her wake. Three long days later, I called to follow up with the family.

"Dr. Pottie," Maria said in a radiant tone, "you should have seen the hundreds of people who showed up at her wake yesterday, even people who didn't speak Spanish!" This time Maria spoke in never-ending sentences. "I never knew so many people loved her; we cried, we sang, and the priest gave a 40-minute speech honouring her contribution to

the community. They had to open extra rooms and although we were supposed to leave by nine, everyone stayed 'til one in the morning. She was not just my grandmother, but a grandmother to the whole community, especially my friends whose grandmothers are far away."

Maria had comforted me. She had shown me how Ana's affectionately loquacious nature had touched many lives, including my own, and how she had ultimately become a thread binding together her community, a thread that would now continue through Maria.

And now, as I think back to my own grandmother, I realize she too must have felt my young spirit racing away. But, like Ana, she held tight, using that same binding thread to hold together my family and my Catholic Acadian community. A magical thread that makes racing away only another way to return home.

Kevin Pottie

Assistant Professor
Department of Family Medicine
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ont.

What did that poem mean?

The theatre has dimmed,
leaving a moving lattice
of luminescence,
reaching from hidden darkness
to touch a snowy screen
with carbon images —
a 40s film in black and white.

Here and there,
a cigarette reveals a glowing tip,
the source of languid trails
of opalescent smoke,
drifting ribbon-like,
to rise and fade.

These evanescent clouds
are like the phrases
penned to touch imagination —
and slip like rivulets of spring,
between your fingers —
if you try to grasp
for meaning.

Robert Dickson
Family physician
Hamilton, Ont.

Lifeworks

Alternative anatomy

In *New Readings in Female Anatomy*, Newfoundland artist Pam Hall seeks to reinterpret traditional Western definitions of the female body. Hall spent

two years as the first artist in residence at Memorial University's School of Medicine in St. John's. The recent installation at the Carleton University Art



Pam Hall, *New Readings in Female Anatomy* (installation). Carleton University Art Gallery (March 4–April 15, 2002).

Gallery in Ottawa reflects her ongoing interest in "medicine and the body and how they encounter one and other."¹ Using historical depictions of the female body and on-site studies of medical specimens as part of her source material, Hall has created an ambitious multimedia installation incorporating prints and drawings, sculpture and extensive written and spoken text.

Hall presents her work in the guise of an academic reading room. Two library tables with four seats each occupy the centre of the room. Burgundy-coloured leather-bound books rest on one, *The Reading Table*. Three-ring binders of papers and a cardboard box of stubby pencils rest on the other, *The Writing Table*. Glass-fronted specimen cabinets occupy the wall behind the tables, and compact-disc players trans-