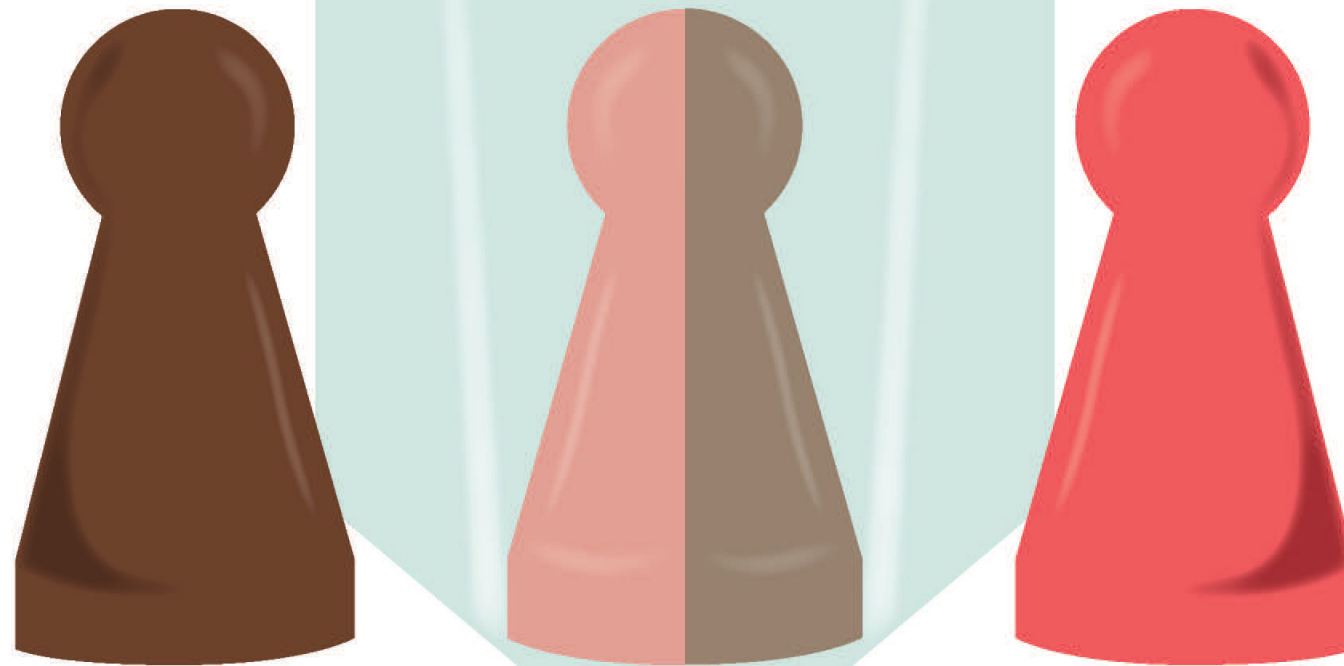


[IN DEATH, LIFE]

I spend much of my life preparing for the inevitable passing—
nurturing relationships not for the immediate value of enjoyment,
but to ensure as best I can that I will be remembered kindly.

When my work is published,
I need at least three copies;
one for my bookshelf,
and two more which I store in separate boxes—
one for each of my boys.

Their names, written on the side of the boxes
in black permanent marker,
remind me of how much I miss them.



Each publication is an admission of my failure,
a reminder of what I have already lost in life,
hoping somehow to redeem myself in death
through print.

Their discovery of who I am through my work,
my journals, and the photographs I take,
feels like an experience stripped of substance and
humanity.

Blocky serif letters stamped on bound white pages
instead of honest, illegible, handwritten imperfec-
tion.

Kiel Gregory
SUNY Oswego