

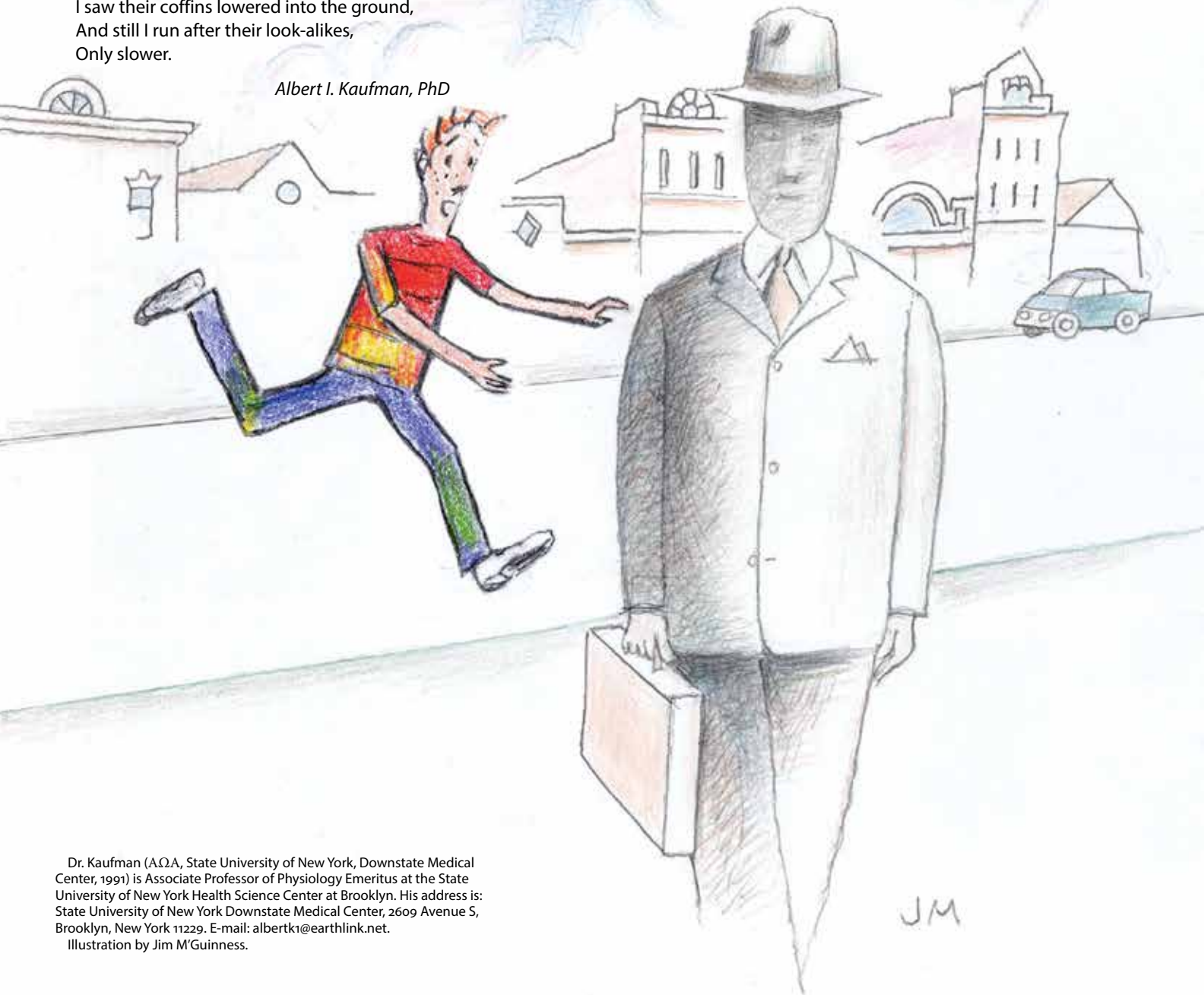
When I was thirteen
My father died in his sleep;
I heard his death rattle,
I watched my mother's efforts to revive him,
And I listened, without hearing,
As the doctor tried to comfort me.

I saw my father in his coffin,
And saw that coffin lowered into the ground;
Yet, weeks later,
When, from a distance,
I saw a man that looked like him,
Walked like him and dressed like him,
I ran to get a closer look,
Hoping I'd been cruelly tricked—
Realizing I had not.

Now in my seventy-seventh year,
Beloved friends and relatives have died;
I saw them in their coffins,
I saw their coffins lowered into the ground,
And still I run after their look-alikes,
Only slower.

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Hope Springs Eternal



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Illustration by Jim M'Guinness.

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