

# CUENTOS

A COLLECTION OF ART FROM THE INTERNAL  
MEDICINE RESIDENTS AND ATTENDING AT GW

2020



## On the Cover



### Animals of the Okavango Delta

Danielle Engskow, MD  
*3rd Year Resident*

My husband and I spent several days at a safari camp in the Okavango Delta in Botswana this past fall. The Okavango is one of only a few inland deltas in the world and is formed at the junction of the Okavango River and the Kalahari Desert. It has one of the highest densities of animals in Africa including several vulnerable and endangered species such as the black rhinoceros, African wild dog, and lion. Our favorite animal to photograph was the leopard.

### Ephemera

Hana Akselrod, MD, MPH, *Assistant Professor of Infectious Diseases*

Tidal Basin

## Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the 12th edition of *Cuentos*, the humanities magazine produced annually by the providers at The GW Medical Faculty Associates Division of General Internal Medicine. This year we have over fifty submissions from past and current faculty and residents.

*Cuentos* translates to "stories" in Spanish, and this creative collection gives a unique opportunity to take a peek into the lives of our healthcare providers. By learning our backstories, viewing our reflections on the practice of medicine, and following our travels and artistic ventures, *Cuentos* lets you see who we are as a whole.

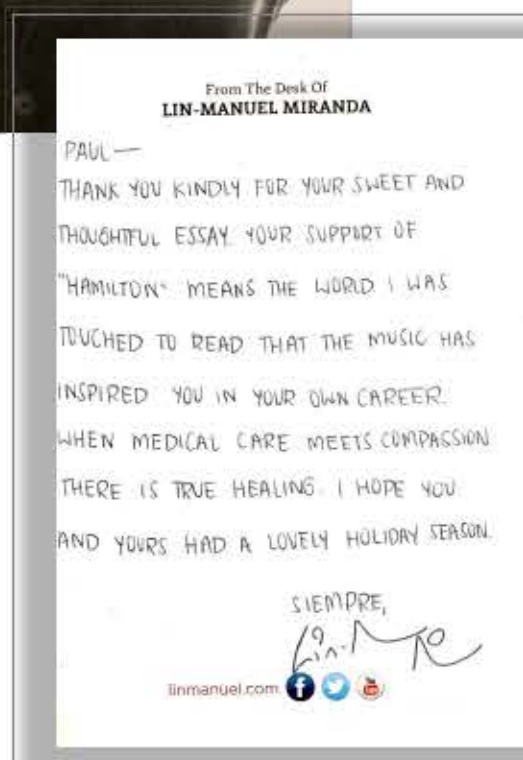
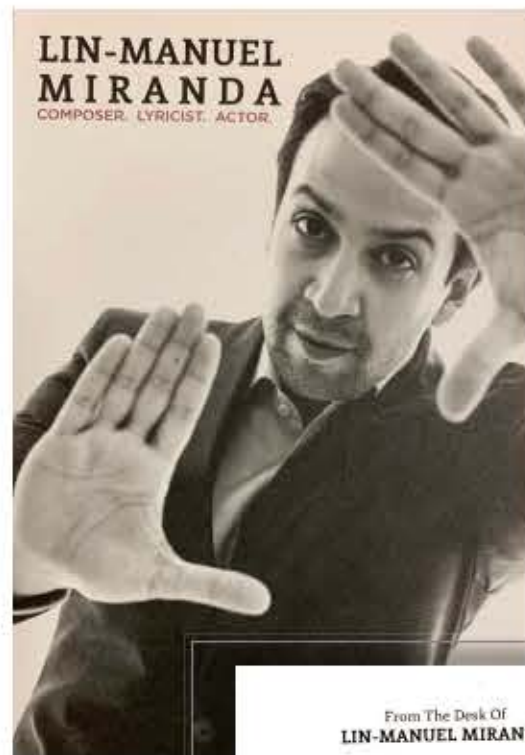
Over the years curating *Cuentos*, we have enjoyed receiving many positive comments from our readers. This year we have an extra special response we would like to share. One of our esteemed contributors, Dr. Paul Silver, wrote a piece in *Cuentos* 2019 titled, "Hamiltonian Medicine." The essay highlighted the positive impact that the musical, *Hamilton*, had on Dr. Silver's practice of medicine. He then sent a copy to Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of *Hamilton*. On receiving his copy of *Cuentos*, the Grammy Awards, Pulitzer Prize, Tony Awards and Emmy Award winner sent a hand-written note to Dr. Silver in which he wrote, "when medical care meets compassion there is true healing" - such true words.

That said, we thank you for reading. Please get comfortable wherever you may be and be prepared to laugh, cry, be amazed, but ultimately share in the stories of our community. Thank you to the sponsors for funding this magazine that we hold in our hands. And thank you to the contributors; without you prioritizing your self-care via travels, art, photography, reflecting, and writing, we would not have this amazing collection of works to peruse.

Keep creating,  
Keep pausing to appreciate life,  
And keep sharing stories!

Yours Sincerely,

Esosa C. Imasuen, MD, 3rd Year Resident  
L. Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA, 2nd Year Resident  
Albert Samost, JD, MD, 1st Year Resident  
Carlos Rodriguez-Russo, MD, 1st Year Resident  
Stefano Leitner, MD, 1st Year Resident  
Katlin Roth, JD, MD, Professor of Medicine  
Anokhi, Shah, MD, RESD '18, Assistant Professor of Medicine



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Alan G. Wasserman, MD, MACP  
Eugene Meyer Professor and Chair  
Department of Medicine  
The George Washington University  
School of Medicine and Health Sciences

## Letter from the Chairman

It is 2020 and we are presenting the 12th edition of *Cuentos*, our humanities magazine. While we are preparing for our Bas Mitzvah next year I began to think about what we are trying to achieve while showcasing our talented faculty.

What do we mean when we say this is a humanities magazine? There are many definitions of the word humanities and sometimes it gets confused with "humanism," a specific philosophical belief, or with "humanitarianism," the concern for charitable works and social reform. But it is neither of those.

Taking multiple different definitions and putting them together what I came up with is that the humanities are stories, words, ideas, (and I will add) pictures that help us understand ourselves and the community around us. What you will find enclosed will introduce you to people, places and things that are new and exciting and sometimes beautiful but always thoughtful. The humanities allow us to share joint experiences and just might help us to realize what is important in our own lives. I can think of no better way to be able to connect with other, people hopefully bringing us together.

With all the challenges we face at work, at home, and in our body politics it is refreshing to enjoy a magazine that slows us down and awakens in us the brilliance of the world. How's that for an easy task?

As always, I want to thank our hard working editors and faculty advisors that have once again produced a masterpiece (in my eyes). I am honored to support this endeavor. So I know for next year, please check one of these and return:

- |                                      |                                      |
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Flowers Lead The Way  
Stefano Leitner, MD  
1st Year Resident

Ko Tao, Thailand



## Travel Bug

Jill Catalanotti, MD, MPH, FACP

Associate Professor of Medicine and of Health Policy  
Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

I love to travel and try to do so at least 2-3 times per year - at least once with my husband and once with a close friend. Traveling allows me to immerse myself in new experiences, to learn about history where it occurred, to disconnect from the responsibilities and stresses of life back home, and to feel awestruck at beautiful landscapes that are new to me. These are two of my favorite landscape photographs from my travels in the past year:

▶ **Walking Path in Point Lobos State Natural Reserve in Carmel, CA** - This is my favorite place in the U.S. Its juxtaposition of rocky cliffs, ocean waves and beautiful cypress trees in close proximity always takes my breath away and fills me with tranquility.

◀ **View from Mont-Saint-Michel in France** - Just a few hours after this photo was taken, this entire area filled with water as the tide rose around us, creating the famous tidal island. The people seen walking here can do so only at low tide.





### Flowers of the Alhambra

Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA  
2nd Year Resident

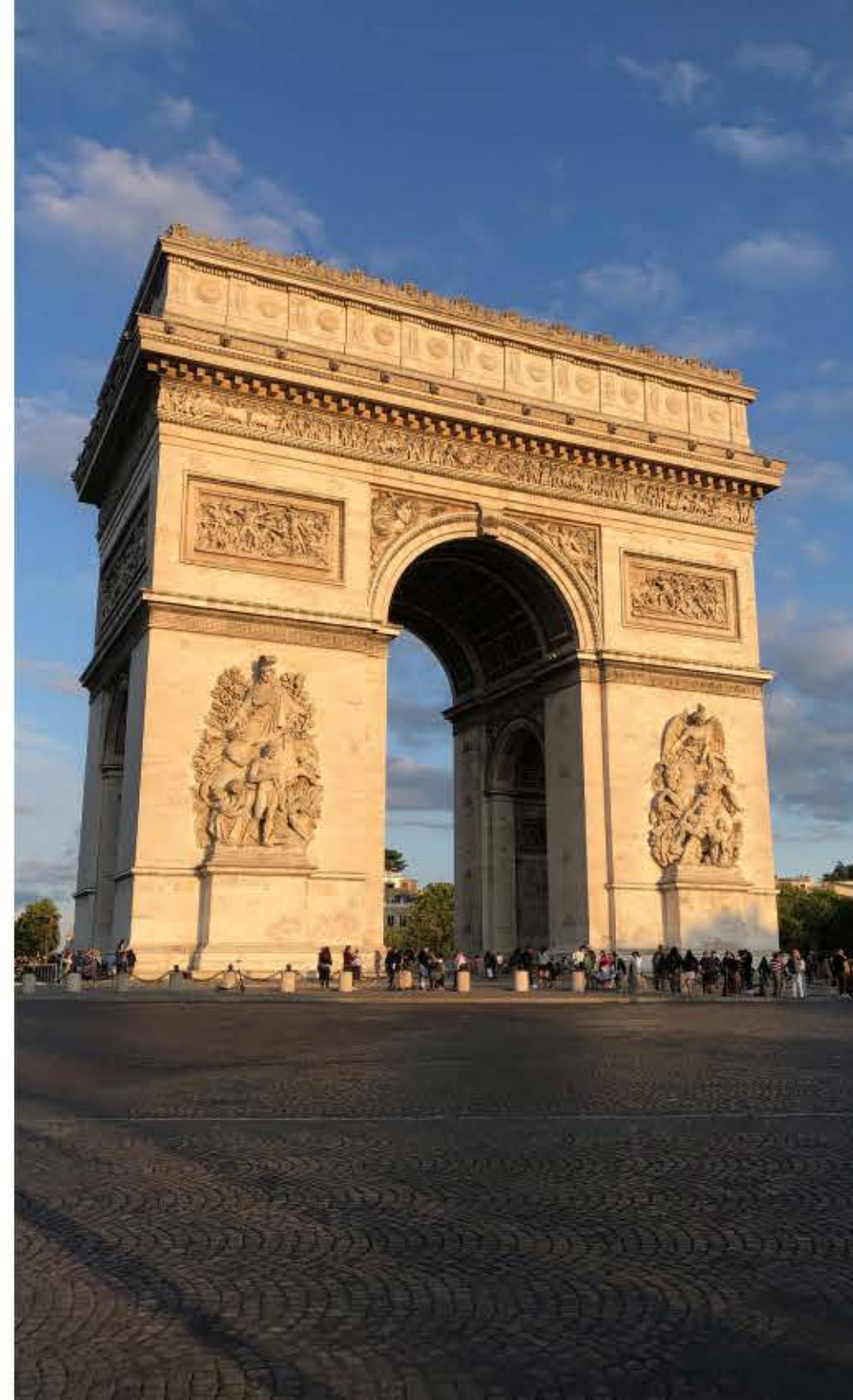
Granada, Spain



### Every day is a blessing

Barrett Holen, MD, RESD '19

Florence, Italy



## What I did on my Summer Vacation

Jehan El-Bayoumi, MD, FACP, RESD '88  
Professor of Medicine  
Founding Director, Rodham Institute

Slept in  
Read the newspaper  
Had lunch  
Swam in the pool more than once  
Ate breakfast  
Sat on the balcony  
Made a bracelet and earrings for my niece  
Took voice lessons  
Delivered a birthday present 6 months late  
Took photos at the bishop's garden at the Washington National Cathedral  
Had long intellectual and philosophical discussions with my family  
Hung out and watched movies with my family  
Ate soft serve ice cream at Dairy Queen  
Went to the farmers market  
Bought an EZ pass  
Went to a show on Broadway  
Had lunch with Hillary  
Read a book  
Worked on my novel  
Saw a baby bunny  
Called friends  
Saw friends  
Hosted friends at my home  
Drove to Connecticut and house-sat for two weeks in a five bedroom house with a pool overlooking the ocean  
Ate lobster tails on the beach  
Walked down the Champs-Élysées  
Visited museums  
Saw a movie in an actual movie theater  
Did some drawing and coloring  
Spent time outside  
Spent time with my grand niece  
Reconnected with myself  
Missed my colleagues  
Missed my patients  
Didn't miss the paperwork



## Animals of the Okavango Delta

Danielle Engskow, MD  
*3rd Year Resident*

My husband and I spent several days at a safari camp in the Okavango Delta in Botswana this past fall. The Okavango is one of only a few inland deltas in the world and is formed at the junction of the Okavango River and the Kalahari Desert. It has one of the highest densities of animals in Africa including several vulnerable and endangered species such as the black rhinoceros, African wild dog, and lion. Our favorite animal to photograph was the leopard.





### Window to the Islands

Albert Samost, MD, JD  
1st Year Resident

Oahu, Hawaii

### Sunset at Lido Key

Brad Moore, MD, MPH, FACP  
Associate Professor of Medicine,  
Health Policy, and Health Services Management and Leadership

### The Children's Room

Christina Puchalski, MD, OCDS, FACP, FAAHPM  
Professor of Medicine and Health Science  
Executive Director, The George Washington  
University's Institute for Spirituality and Health  
Co-Director MFA-GWU Supportive and Palliative  
Outpatient Clinic

While in Kigali, Rwanda, I visited the Museum of the Genocide that honors the thousands of people slain in the Genocide that occurred in 1994. The museum has burial grounds for over 250,000 victims of the Genocide. Each day survivors come to visit the graves of their families and loved ones often leaving a rose or card. Next to the section of graves is a huge Forest of Memory. This was built to signify hope for future generations to learn to create societies which will never allow hatred and prejudice. The Children's Room has photos of children who were killed in this massacre. This reminds all of us of the devastation that hatred can bestow on societies. I was deeply touched by the people I met who survived this tragedy. They speak now of love, forgiveness and hope for a future of world-wide peace.





## Sunset in Sweden

Robert Kruger, MD

*Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine*

We almost missed this photo of a sunset over the archipelago in Smögen, Sweden. Luckily, I was able to stop our car over a narrow bridge so my daughter could take this shot from the back seat.



## The Apostles

Hana Akselrod, MD, MPH

*Assistant Professor of Infectious Diseases*

Victoria, Australia



### Kumano Nachi Taisha

Samantha Ober, MD, RESD '18, CHIEF '19

At this Japanese shrine, a buddha is found smiling, sitting next to a waterfall.

Nachikatsuura, Japan

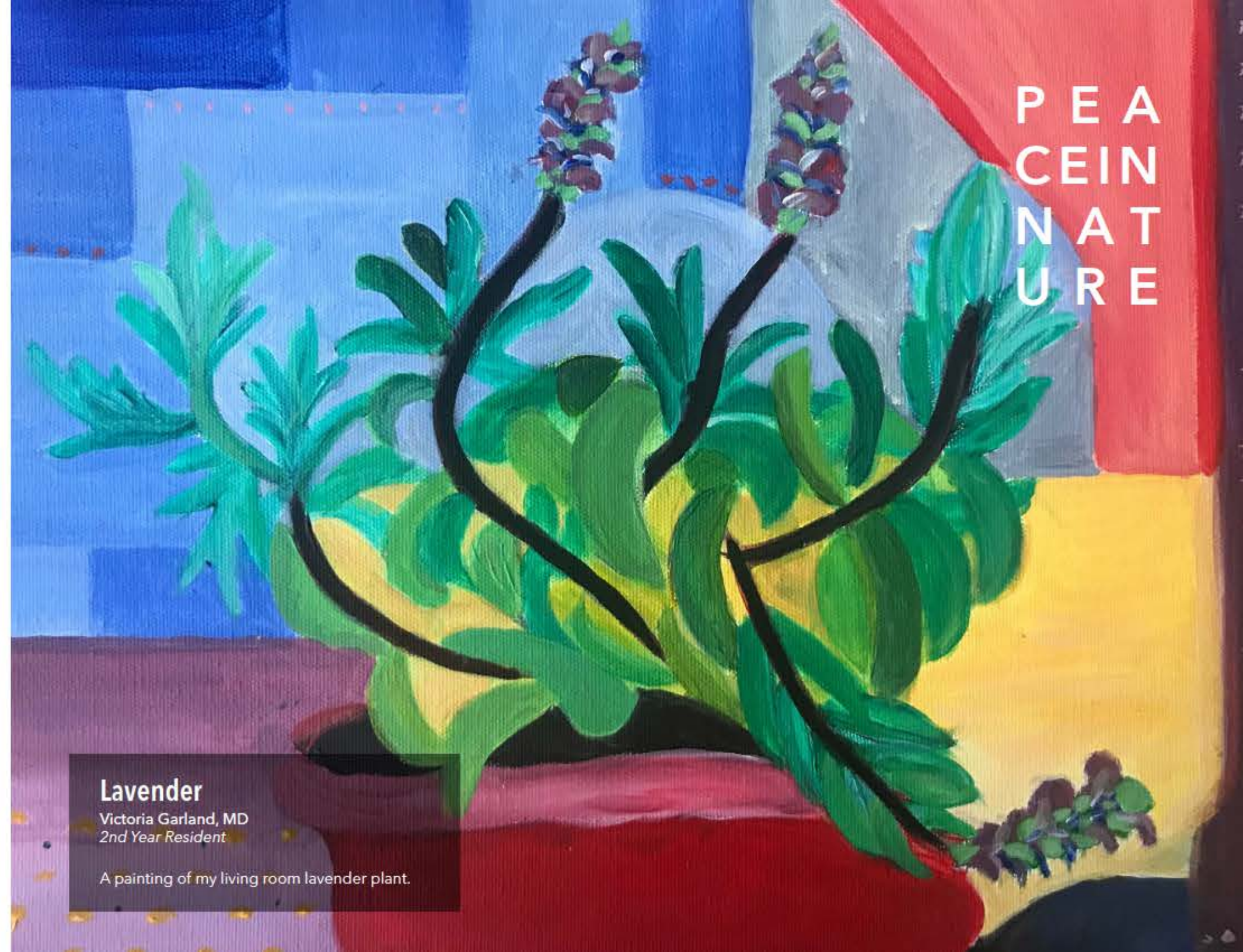


### Wat Pha Lat

Samantha Ober, MD, RESD '18, CHIEF '19

An enchanting Buddhist temple hidden within the lush jungle.

Chiang Mai, Thailand



### Lavender

Victoria Garland, MD  
2nd Year Resident

A painting of my living room lavender plant.



## Nirvana

Prudence Kline, MD, RESD '81  
*Clinical Professor of Medicine, Emeritus*

## Central Park

Sarah Alsamarai, MD, RESD '19



## Skyscraper

Joseph Cioffi, MD  
*2nd Year Resident*

Tanzania



## Focus

Aileen Y. Chang, MD, MSPH  
*Assistant Professor of Medicine*



### Up close and far away

Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA  
*2nd Year Resident*

Phoenix, Arizona





## Autumn on the Billy Goat Trail

Katrina Naik, MD  
*2nd Year Resident*



## Hiking Down Mount Rainier

Katrina Naik, MD  
*2nd Year Resident*



## Reflections of Self

Albert Samost, MD, JD  
*1st Year Resident*

Franz Josef Glacier  
South Island, New Zealand



## The Darling Buds of May

Sonia Silinsky Krupnikova, MD  
*3rd Year Resident*

Pen ink and watercolor





## Hosta

Homan Wai, MD, RESD '09  
Associate Professor of Medicine,  
Inova Fairfax Hospital



## A Penguin in Antarctica

Christina Puchalski, MD, OCDS, FACP, FAAHPM  
Professor of Medicine and Health Science  
Executive Director, The George Washington University's Institute for  
Spirituality and Health  
Co-Director MFA-GWU Supportive and Palliative Outpatient Clinic

I was privileged to be an invited speaker on an educational cruise to the Antarctic. Topics ranged from research in Antarctica to end-of-life issues, which I spoke about. Everything about this trip was inspiring - from the conversations with people around the world to the beauty of silence, the majestic icebergs and, of course, the wildlife. This penguin hung out with a group of us as we enjoyed his home in Antarctica.





## Grazing

Albert Samost, MD, JD  
1st Year Resident



## Ups and Downs of Health and Healthcare

Anokhi Shah, MD, RESD'18  
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine

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CINE



## Ups and Downs of Health and Healthcare

Anokhi Shah, MD, RESD'18  
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine

I met HD in 2018, a few months after he underwent a bone marrow transplant. Since then, he has had several complications requiring countless emergency room visits and hospitalizations. He has been on nineteen different medications and has seen over ten consultants this year alone.

As his primary care physician, my role includes coordinating his care and directing him towards interventions he requires: imaging, biopsies, procedures, or potent medications that can only be administered in a specialized clinic. It is painful to know what he needs yet I struggle to find him timely access to these resources, realizing this can make the difference to prevent another hospitalization.



At times I am disheartened, but HD never gives up. He continues to advocate for himself despite his overwhelming fatigue, frailty, and frustration. His resilience and positivity are impressive. He even used his experience to pick up drawing as a hobby. His images are created on an iPad and easily portable. He draws while he is in the hospital, in waiting rooms, and, if he is lucky, at home. He has a plethora of drawings, all unique and beautiful.

This first picture is a depiction of him at the nadir of health, held in the arms of his supportive wife. The second is when he could finally get some sleep.

## A Cognitive Evaluation

Laura Perry, MD, RESD '14, CHIEF '15  
Assistant Professor, Division of Geriatrics, University of California at San Francisco

My patient came to this country eight years ago. It was her first encounter with indoor plumbing.

She now lives alone in a shanty apartment where the laundry hangs outside on ropes. A few of the neighbors are her fellow elders, who gossip in her language over chain-link fences. Her kids don't call as much as she thinks they should.

She's upset. Her memory is acting up. She wants my advice.

We look at each other but both yell at the phone. She yells because she has not yet obtained those oh-so-precious hearing aids I want for her. I yell because every fourth sentence or so, the phone call drops and the interpreter disappears.

I redial. Before the next disconnection, I try to test her brain. Could she draw a clock for me? With the time set to ten past eleven? No, she cannot. She did not learn to do that.

Her cell phone rings, she answers. I have now learned how to say in her language, "I'm at the doctor's office, don't call me right now!" Or something similar, I assume.

She is here, in this clinic, by herself.[i] I tell her she is fine.

[i] Lerner AJ. "'Attended alone' sign: validity and reliability for the exclusion of dementia." *Age and Ageing*. 2009 Jul;38(4):476-8.

## I see you

Danielle Engskow, MD  
3rd Year Resident

Machines beeping  
in a sterile white room;  
contact precautions and wires  
separating the sick from the  
not sick.

Together we fill the space  
with familiarity, solidarity  
that comes from moments  
layered over time.  
"I'm so glad you came doc".

## Love. It's what makes a Subaru, a Subaru

Paul A. Silver, MD, FACP  
Associate Professor of Medicine

I just bought a new Subaru. I like it. It is fun to drive, safe, comfortable and gets good mileage. Its clearance and four-wheel drive makes the coming winter less worrisome - transportation-wise. Despite my affection for my new car, I am not sure "what's love got to do with it." (No, I am not going to go on another musical riff like my last piece.) There are other endeavors, however, where love is key.

I spend Friday mornings during the winter interviewing candidates for our medical residency. A question which I am invariably asked is, "What keeps you here at GW?" The answer which immediately pops out of my mouth is, "I love my partners." I am privileged to work with a phenomenal group of people. The members of the Division of General Internal Medicine are an incredibly smart, talented, dedicated and caring group. We are always there for each other which allows us to do the difficult work of practicing medicine. Our patients are the ultimate beneficiaries of our bond.

In his keynote address at the 2019 American College of Physicians Annual Meeting, Dr. Vivek Murthy, the former Surgeon General, spoke movingly of the need for physicians to provide comfort, succor, and encouragement - love for each other. This umbrella of caring covers not just physicians, but all of us who are doing the work of providing care for patients.

In 1897, the legendary physician, Sir William Osler wrote:

"No physician has a right to consider himself as belonging to himself; but all ought to regard themselves as belonging to the profession, in as much as each is a part of the profession; and care for the part naturally looks to care for the whole".

In many ways, we are like soldiers who serve together in a noble fight to bring healing and comfort to the ill and to maintain the health of the well.

I consider myself fortunate to have landed among such an amazing group of professionals. Their love sustains me in the day to day struggle. As Osler said, "To prevent disease, to relieve suffering and to heal the sick - this is our work." I hope that they find in me a worthy compatriot.



## a physician's path.

Stefano Leitner, MD  
1st Year Resident

silence erupts as she stares to the top.  
the end of her journey for autonomy.  
each climb has been more punishing than the last.  
forgetting the pain, she continues, as this is her life's work.  
and yet, at this base, at this beginning, she is lost.  
no bearing of direction nor branches to grab.  
once promising aspirations, now seem like fabled dreams.  
limbs for support, spoken of by the top, seem impermissible.  
enduring a hierarchy, this climb is a rite of passage.  
in fear, she tears. with bravery, she climbs.  
to the top, she declares - "a physician's path" - even at her own expense.  
no hesitation. pushed to heal. pulled to serve. expected to accept it all.  
each of three years pass and she climbs to her end.  
reluctant to find just another base at the top.

## Sleep and Health

James K. Cooper, MD  
Clinical Professor Emeritus of Medicine

Walter and Maggie live down the street from our house. We see them a lot in the seasons that call us outside, spring and fall, and we chat with them about the usual things: weather, sports, gardening. They're both about seventy years old, appear to be in OK health, and seem to be reasonably intelligent and self-caring.

So this casual meeting figured to be the usual. But instead, the first thing Walter said was, "You're a doctor, right? We've been talkin'. What should we be doin' to stay healthy?"

I'm usually really edgy when neighbors ask a health question. I usually claim uncertainty and refer them to their regular doctor. But staying healthy, that's preventive medicine, and I'm psyched up about that.

Stay healthy? I went through the usual menu to preserve health in older people: regular physical activity, and an acceptable waistline and diet. Regular mental activity. No smoking. Little or no alcohol. Up-to-date on pneumonia, flu, and shingles immunizations. And adequate sleep.

I asked Walter about his sleep.

"I sleep OK, I guess..."

"How many hours do you sleep each day?" I asked.

He tilted his head rightward a little, scrunched his right eyebrow down and raised his left eyebrow in thought. He mumbled, "Let's see, 11:30, get up 4:30...that's, uhh..." I wanted to help him, but I held back. He soon did come up with, "Five hours, I guess."

I have to admit, that produced a wave of excitement in me. He just set me up to give him my little sleep lecture.

Enough Sleep. Walter is getting less than the advised duration of sleep. He should be getting at least seven, maybe eight hours a night. As a short-duration sleeper, he has increased risk for heart attack, and stroke, and diabetes, and depression. And he will have less protection from immunizations, and possibly higher risk for Alzheimer's. I told him all this.

He said, "I thought when you sleep, the brain is just resting, like your muscles."

NO! No, no, no. Research shows the brain does many critical functions during sleep. Brain nerve cells (neurons) shift-around and organize and improve memories. Brain-support cells (e.g., microglia) remove damaged and useless material, like flushing a toilet. Other cells calm down neurons that are over-stressed from work while awake. Some sections of the brain affect the production of hormones necessary for bodily functions and have a different schedule during sleep. Completing the night shift of hormone-work takes hours, and five hours may not be enough.

Not enough sleep increases Walter's risk in a lot of ways. And Maggie, the same risks plus possibly greater risk for osteoporosis (soft bones).

I asked Walter what he's going to do after learning all that. He pursed his lips, lowered his head and nodded a little, and said, "I reckon I'll sleep on it."



*We All Need to Get Enough Sleep*



## Relic

Matthew G. Petersen, MD  
2nd Year Resident

Built in 1962, the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland sits at the intersection of American hope for the future and anxiety over war and espionage. The sleek, geometric, sixties architecture evokes the Jetson family with their flying cars and housemaid Rosie Robots. Clean lines and mid-century finishes held promises of family picnics on the moon with astronaut ice cream and miracle-cure medicines. Paradoxically, the thick cement walls, minimal windows, and three underground levels belie a more pragmatic soviet-era fear. The building is a bunker meant to safeguard knowledge and treasures from outside attack. What is billed as a house of knowledge is revealed to be constructed as a bomb shelter.

Now, more than a half-century later, the names and nations have changed, but the intersection remains the same. Will we follow our imaginations beyond the stars, breaking the barriers of the impossible, or will we be mired down in human conflict? In 2020, the library is now mostly digital, broadcasting vital services and information worldwide. The building, however, is a husk, a shell of its former self - a memory. It stands as an important reminder of our past as we face our future.

## Immigration

Katalin Roth, JD, MD  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine  
The George Washington University School of Medicine

She asks for help in getting her driver's license renewal.

A car rear-ended her, a little bump, but the policeman thought she was too old to drive.

Never mind that the legal presumption favors her. She got a citation recommending a medical evaluation.

I have known her for many years, a dignified older woman with only a trace of an accent. She has managed a career, family, medical issues, and life - independently, expertly. She emigrated from a war-torn country with two small children almost fifty years ago, determined to save her son from a military draft. Now the children, and grandchildren, live on the other coast.

She tells me how much time she spends on the internet, following events in her native country. She has mastered a new alphabet, a new language, and now, social media. When she has a medical question, she sends me a text.

She tells me that becoming old is like arriving in a new country. Once again she needs to document her fitness to live here.

## A New Gig

Monica L. Lypson, MD, MHPE, FACP  
Professor of Medicine  
Director, Division of General Internal Medicine & Endocrinology  
Vice-Chair, Faculty Affairs, Department of Medicine

New Job fell in hand  
Colonials are thoughtful  
Medicine Rocks! Thanks

## DC Street Umbrellas

Matthew Taglieri, DO  
2nd Year Resident

HEA T  
A N  
H M E





## The Hospital at Dusk

Matthew Taglieri, DO  
2nd Year Resident



## The Kennedy Center Reflections

Matthew Taglieri, DO  
2nd Year Resident



## Setting an Example for Generations to Come

Haneen Ismail, MD  
3rd Year Resident

"What do you want to be when you grow up RayRay...an engineer? A fireman? A police officer? A doctor?" I once asked my three-year-old son. He had played these roles and tried on all different costumes. He chose to say, in his innocent words, "I wanna like Mommy and Daddy help sick people."

During my training years, I often feel guilty for leaving my son for long hours while at work, and everyday I wake up worried that this might affect him adversely. To my surprise, my little boy has actually matured enough at a young age to wish me a good time at work whenever I put on my scrubs to go to a night shift or long call. Always in a cheerful tone he says, "Bye bye Mommy... have a good time... come back... RayRay see you tomorrow." On my days off, he refuses to go to bed early and tries to stay with me as long as he can, eventually falling asleep while reading his favorite book.

Going back, I remember my mother caring for three little girls while pregnant with her fourth baby girl while working as a psychology teacher and preparing for her master's degree thesis defense in psychology. I also remember rarely seeing my father in the living room; rather, he would spend long hours in his office at home with a small table lamp turned on while working and preparing for court hearings as a lawyer. I would bring my pillow and blanket and doze off on his lap while he continued to work.

Without knowing it, my parents had set the example of hard work and ambition for many generations to come. They influenced their four daughters to become four successful women, who serve their communities and aspire to achieve higher educational degrees. They have an influence on their grandson who has yet to discover his dreams and passions, but will work hard to accomplish them... just like his grandparents did and continue to do.



## Treat Every Day like Christmas

Maryam Khan, MD  
1st Year Resident

## A Three-Year-Old and Her Princess

Mihir Patel, MD, MS, FACP  
Assistant Professor of Medicine

They wake me up and say  
It's time to get going  
I'm still tired though  
Isn't it showing?

On the bed  
My brand-new outfit  
On it goes  
Great, I still fit in it

Don't forget the bangles  
They're really swanky  
If you do  
I'll really get cranky

At the hall  
Many different colors  
Happy tiny babies  
Carried by their mothers

The stage is empty  
People walking, talking, laughing  
What are we waiting for  
It is so baffling

Alas she walks down the aisle  
I must confess  
The best part is seeing the bride  
A real-life princess.





## Roosevelt Island

Matthew G. Petersen, MD  
2nd Year Resident

## Belong?

Maram Alkhatib, MD, MSc  
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Where am I from? Where do I belong?  
I am from here and there  
I lived here and there  
Pieces of my heart are everywhere  
Where am I from?  
I am from nowhere...I am from everywhere



**"Only Light Can Do That"**  
Hana Akselrod, MD, MPH  
Assistant Professor of Infectious Diseases

## The Capitol, Christmas 2018

Christina Puchalski, MD, OCDS, FACP, FAAHPM  
Professor of Medicine and Health Science  
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## Bianca

### Little White Dogs. A Story.

Marijane Hynes, M.D.  
Clinical Professor of General Internal Medicine  
Director, Weight Management Program

When my son was eleven, he wanted a dog. My husband wanted a large dog, such as a German Shepherd or Collie, but knowing I would likely be the one to take care of it, I started looking for a little white dog.

One day, we were in Middleburg, Virginia and we met a woman who had a little white dog, and I told her how cute I thought she was. She told me she had a friend who could not take care of her little white dog anymore, and I gave her my number. I never expected her to call.

She called, a week later, on Saint Patrick's Day. She wanted us to see her dog, Lady. We went to her home, and she told us that Lady was a wonderful dog and a great traveler. My husband said, "No," but my son cried, and that was that. We put her in the car and took her home. In honor of Saint Patrick, I named her Cathleen. I was worried the owner would come and take her back, but a cousin once told me that when an owner gives a person the dog's bed and leash, she is serious.

My son renamed her Bianca. My mother called to tell me she could not believe I allowed my son to rename her. She did not understand that this re-naming was so low on my stress list that it was inconsequential.

Of course, I was Bianca's mom. I found out I loved having a dog. You could brag about your dog to anyone, and the person would listen as though it were interesting. For example, I could say, "You would not believe how smart she was ..." or "When I came home one day..." People love animal stories more than human stories.

One day I let Bianca off her leash and a car driven by a teenage student hit her. I heard her scream. I thought it was over. I set up a little ICU in my living room, and she walked after three months. My neighbors visited with dog treats. She finally fully recovered.

Six years passed. We dressed Bianca for Halloween and Christmas and took her on vacations. She was a good traveler indeed.

Last year she was sick, and I took her to the vet, and she was full of cancer. The day before she died, my husband came home on his bike, and as always, she came out to greet him on the deck, now barely able to walk, with her tail just slightly wagging. It was her way of saying goodbye. We buried her in the backyard. We put a little gravestone over it with her name. A few days later, I was looking out the window, and Hector, who cuts our lawn, took off his hat when he saw the grave and said a prayer. I just bawled. I then fully realized the meaning of the quote "Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened."

A few months later, we obtained our new rescue little white dog that I named Mr. Darcy. Sadly, Mr. Darcy is obsessed with my husband and has not expressed any interest in me, although I pay his vet bills. I do not brag about him, but my husband does. Now I think of another quote, "The more I learn about my new dog, the more I like people."



## Henna Inspired Pumpkin

Farida Izzi, MD  
Hospitalist, Assistant Professor of Medicine



## Reflections

Esosa Imasuen, MD  
3rd Year Resident

Christian Science Reading Room, DC



## Poplar Turned Bowl

Richard Hansen, MD, FACP

Gesso black acrylic with hand carved design





## Life Lessons from Baseball and a World Series Win

April Barbour, MD, MPH, FACP  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Director, Primary Care Residency Program

Those that know me, even a little, know I love baseball. My father cultivated that love during my childhood. Growing up he took me and my siblings to watch the Arkansas Travelers, a minor league team for the Seattle Mariners, play and made sure we knew how to score the game properly.

Fast forward to the early 90's. I was in my residency in Atlanta and the Braves were on fire! They made it to the World Series five times in the 1990's and won it in 1995. I saw firsthand how a team could pull together a very diverse community. I have vivid memories of rounding at Grady Memorial Hospital during those summers. It seemed like every patient had the baseball game on their TV. We would stop and watch with each one for a few minutes, sharing our thoughts on how the team was doing at that particular moment. Everyone seemed to be a Braves fan. It was like being part of a very special club.

Fast forward again to the early 2000's. I moved to DC and began working at George Washington Medical Faculty Associates in 2003. Rumors were that Major League Baseball (MLB) was looking at this area for a baseball team franchise. My parents had a sign in their front yard in Arlington that read "Bring baseball back to DC". When it was clear that the Washington Nationals were coming to DC in 2005, my dad realized one of his lifelong dreams to become a season ticket holder for a MLB team and he encouraged me to do so also. Just like that, my entire family became Nationals fans.

This year (in case you hadn't heard), the Nationals won the World Series for the first time in franchise history. For the many diehard fans, the past fourteen years have been a roller coaster of emotions and this season was no different—and yet, it felt completely different. So what did I learn from this season? These aren't novel thoughts, but this season really seemed to highlight them:

- Remember the long game (and life is a long game). This team only won 19 of the first 51 games. Many people counted them out and yet they made it to the playoffs anyway. They won many games in late innings, coming from behind. My dad often says, "That's why you play all 162 games" or "all 9 innings." The team never seemed to doubt that they could win.
- Have a short memory for your own mistakes (once you learn from them). The best hitters make it on base only 3 out of 10 times. The best fielders still make errors. The best pitchers still give up home runs. And the best players learn from those mistakes and make corrections. It was fun to watch the young players make adjustments and learn from their more veteran teammates, often during the games.
- Recognize the value of a good team. I think this is what I loved most about watching this team. They played for each other. When someone made a mistake, another came behind them and picked up the team. They celebrated each other's accomplishments by dancing or hugging. In post-game interviews, the players talked about how much they respected each other and how special the team was.

Winning the World Series seemed like the natural outcome for this team because they absolutely believed in themselves and each other. May we all be so lucky to be on a team like that!



## Bearded Collie named Zoe

Alan Wasserman, MD, MACP  
Chairman of the Department of Medicine  
Eugene Meyer Professor of Medicine



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## 2020 Cuentos Editorial Team

Left to right:  
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