

CUENTOS

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

2022



Letter from the Editors

We are excited to share with you the 14th edition of Cuentos, the humanities magazine that is produced annually by the George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates Division of General Internal Medicine. Each year, Cuentos gives a glimpse into the lives of our healthcare providers. This year is no different, as we feature artwork from current and past faculty and residents at GW, which includes photography, drawings, paintings, poetry and essay reflections. We are excited about the diversity of entries that collectively represent our GW family.

In this year's edition, we continue to highlight our beautiful city of Washington, DC and its neighboring cities, filled with rich history and natural beauty. As literal and metaphorical travel bans imposed by Covid lifted over the past year and Covid had its quieter moments, many of us began to travel again, both near and far. Some of these experiences are represented in this edition as well. Still, other submissions invite us to reflect on how Covid has affected us in ways big and small.

We continue to adapt within our new normal that is the ongoing Covid pandemic. Last year brought hope with the production and dissemination of the Covid vaccine. We made progress on this front, as over 500 million vaccines have been given in the US thus far. We did also witness setbacks as we experienced a rise in infection rates at the end of 2021. However, we are approaching a steadier state of calm with fewer new cases. We are hopeful that we have passed over the hump, and may soon be able to look back on the worst of the pandemic and continue to restore some of the normalcy we once knew. All we can say with certainty is that we have grown in ways we might not have imagined a few years ago; we carry on with resiliency.

Thank you all for your continued support and readership to this magazine for over a decade. Thank you also to our sponsors who made this edition a reality. Lastly, thank you to all those who contributed their treasured form of art to make this edition a memorable one. You embody the notion that 'medicine is an art' and we are grateful for your creativity. Whether it is your first time reading with us or a loyal follower, we hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

Michelle Camp, MD, MS, 3rd Year Resident
 Julie Zemskova, MD, MS, 3rd Year Resident
 Shaitalya Vellanki, MD, 2nd Year Resident
 Alicia Zellmer, MD, 1st Year Resident
 Elizabeth Evans, MD, 1st Year Resident
 Katalin Roth, MD, JD, Professor of Medicine
 Charles Baron, MD, MPH, RESD '21, Assistant Professor of Medicine

On the Cover



Milky Way over Rhode Island

Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD '21
Assistant Professor of Medicine

BEYOND THE WATERS

05
Two Other Hikers
Talia Bernal

- 06 1848, Stefano Leitner
- 07 The big wheel will keep on turning, Jennifer Makhoul
- 08 Syrian Refugee Children, Elsa Alaswad
- 10 The Angel of Independence, Michael Bourne
- 11 Light in Darkness, Michelle Camp
- 12 Graffiti....Art?, April Barbour
- 13 Starry Night in Person, Taher Tayeb
- 14 Cactus, Michael Bourne
- 14 Beach Babe, Michael Bourne
- 15 Morning Views, L. Nedda Dastmalchi
- 15 N Pali Coast, Kauai, Hawaii, L. Nedda Dastmalchi
- 16 The castle that inspired Walt Disney's, Anokhi Shah
- 17 Cascadia, Matthew Taglieri
- 18 Puente Nuevo, Anokhi Shah
- 18 Revitalized, Anokhi Shah

PEACE IN NATURE

19
Autumn leaves and wind chills, pumpkin spice and everything nice
Shivangi Vachhani

- 20 Pandemic Parenting, Hana Akselrod
- 21 Bears of Admiralty Island, Hana Akselrod
- 22 The First Snow, Michael Bechara
- 23 Frozen in Time, Michael Bourne
- 23 Solitude, Elizabeth Evans
- 24 Change of Scenery, Adam Possner
- 25 Sunset on the Potomac, Matthew Taglieri
- 26 Oh Shenandoah, Michael Bourne
- 28 The Prophet Joshua, Matthew G Petersen
- 29 Oregon Driftwood, Matthew Taglieri
- 30 La Curiosidad, John Yi
- 30 soir bleu, Evan Ciarloni
- 31 Blue Ridge Mountains, William B. Borden
- 32 Idyll, Jennifer Makhoul
- 32 Jordan Pond in Acadia National Park, Maine, Maryam Khan

INTERNALIZING MEDICINE

33
Post Call Blues
Sneha Shah

- 34 Before Your Breakthrough, Sylvia Gonsahn-Bollie
- 34 Time Takes the Time Time Takes, Taher Tayeb
- 35 Pandemic Musings, Marijane Hynes
- 36 How I Got Here, Paul Silver
- 37 The Waves We Know, Shaitalya Vellanki
- 38 Stethoscope, Alicia Zellmer

HEART AND HOME

39
Covid Flags
Jessica Huang, MD

- 40 Looking out over the DC skyline from the Netherlands Carillon, Everett Chu
- 41 District Tessellation, Charles deBoisblanc
- 42 No Victory without Grief, Matthew G. Petersen
- 43 A Time to Play, Michelle Camp
- 43 A Holiday Prayer for Felix, Aileen Y. Chang
- 44 Incoming, Michael Bechara
- 45 Ἰδδδδδ δῆμαρρρρρδ, Stefano Leitner
- 46 My Two Rivers 2021, Chavon Onumah
- 47 Reflections on lessons learned from my two rivers, Chavon Onumah
- 48 Sunset on the National Mall, Sneha Shah
- 49 Autumn colors along the Potomac River, Everett Chu
- 50 Cotton Candy Sunset, Jessica Huang
- 51 The Lincoln Memorial on a snowy day, Everett Chu
- 51 The Smithsonian Castle surrounded by magnolia blossoms, Everett Chu
- 52 Zen, Jehan (Gigi) El-Bayoumi
- 53 WWII Memorial Fountain, Matthew Taglieri



Letter from the Chairman

Dear friends,

The beauty of medicine lies in the interplay between science and humanity. Science informs our practice, but humanism guides us. In many ways, medicine is a reflection on life itself: science shows us how genes lead to proteins, cells, organs and systems, but cannot explain that spark that creates life - that makes us human.

To understand humanity, we turn to fields such as religion, philosophy, literature and art. I am so proud of the GW tradition of our community sharing their creative expressions here in Cuentos. Especially in today's age of strife, injustice and inequity, in the midst of a pandemic, we need art to center us on the kindness and commonality that sits within us all.

Thank you to Dr. Baron and all the contributors and supporters of this wonderful edition of Cuentos. I hope all who read this journal enjoy it, perhaps are challenged by it, and hopefully find insight.

In peace,

Bill

William B. Borden, MD
*Interim Chair of Medicine
Chief Quality and Population Health Officer
Professor of Medicine and of Health Policy and Management
The GW Medical Faculty Associates*

EY
OND
THE
WAT
E



Two Other Hikers

Talia Bernal, MD, RESD '18, CHIEF '19

Fimmvörðuháls trail in Iceland, September 2021



◀ 1848

Stefano Leitner, MD, MPH, RESD '20
Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 3rd Year Resident

San Francisco, CA

The big wheel will keep on turning ▶

Jennifer Makhoul, MD
2nd Year Resident

Montreal, Canada





Syrian Refugee Children

Elsa Alaswad, MD
1st Year Resident

Al Zaatari Refugee Camp 2013, Jordan



◀ The Angel of Independence

Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident

Mexico City, Mexico

Light in Darkness ▶

Michelle Camp, MD, MS
3rd Year Resident





Graffiti...Art?

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

Growing up, I thought all graffiti was vandalism. I guess that is true if one paints on a building without permission to defame or damage it. However, there is a whole collection of graffiti artists around the world who are invited to showcase their art on the sides of buildings, sidewalks or even planter boxes. Over the past few decades, this art form has grown, thus allowing people to express their unique opinions and passions in a public forum. Recently I was able to take a "Graffiti Tour" and see some of the amazing work created by several artists in Bogotá. Colombians are proud of their street art, and Bogotá is a very diverse city that embraces both the art and the artists. The story behind the Bogotá graffiti scene involves police corruption and Justin Bieber, but I digress. I learned that Colombian artists often use graffiti to highlight indigenous peoples, nature and, of course, socio-political ideas. It is not hard to guess what Carlos Trilleras was trying to convey with this young girl in a mask—likely a nod to all three.

One of my favorite artists, DjLu (also known as the Banksy of Bogotá) celebrates the children of Colombia in this photo. I love how his simple technique captures their innocence.

And now, street art has shown up in my neighborhood. I watched this painting go up over a couple of days this summer. While I am not ready to commission someone to paint a mural on my house, I do like seeing street art as I walk around. Who knows? Maybe one day there will be a Graffiti Tour in the DMV. One can only hope.



◀ Starry Night in Person

Taher Tayeb, MD, RESD '20

Museum of Modern Art, New York City, NY

I spent a lot of time dreaming of seeing this painting: Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. For some reason, I had always assumed it was somewhere else across the globe. I thought seeing it could be nothing more than a dream. Then I came to know - it was a measly flight away!

Most of Van Gogh's life's work was never valued as it is today. It's a lonely, sad, and anxiety-provoking thought that you can live your whole life and never be appreciated. To be so consumed by your thoughts that those same thoughts inevitably result in your own premature demise. Only then, to understand that it is not until you become a past tense that your work becomes inspirational for many generations to come.



▲ **Cactus**

Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident

Casa Gilardi, Mexico City

Beach Babe ▶

Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident

The Exumas, Bahamas



◀ **Morning Views**

L. Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA, RESD '21

Moloa'a Kauai, Hawaii



N Pali Coast, Kauai, Hawaii ▶

L. Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA, RESD '21



◀ **The castle that inspired Walt Disney's**

Anokhi Shah, MD, RESD '19

Segovia, Spain

Cascadia ▶

Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD '21
Assistant Professor of Medicine





▲
Puente Nuevo

Anokhi Shah, MD, RESD '19

Ronda, Spain



▲
Revitalized

Anokhi Shah, MD, RESD '19

Ronda, Spain



P E A
C E I N
N A T
U R E

Autumn leaves and wind chills, pumpkin spice and everything nice
Shivangi Vachhani (formerly Pandya), MD, RESD '14
Medical Reviewer, FDA



Bears of Admiralty Island ▶

Hana Akselrod, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Alaska, 2021



◀ Pandemic Parenting

Hana Akselrod, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Medicine

Alaska, 2021



▲
The First Snow

Michael Bechara, MD
3rd Year Resident

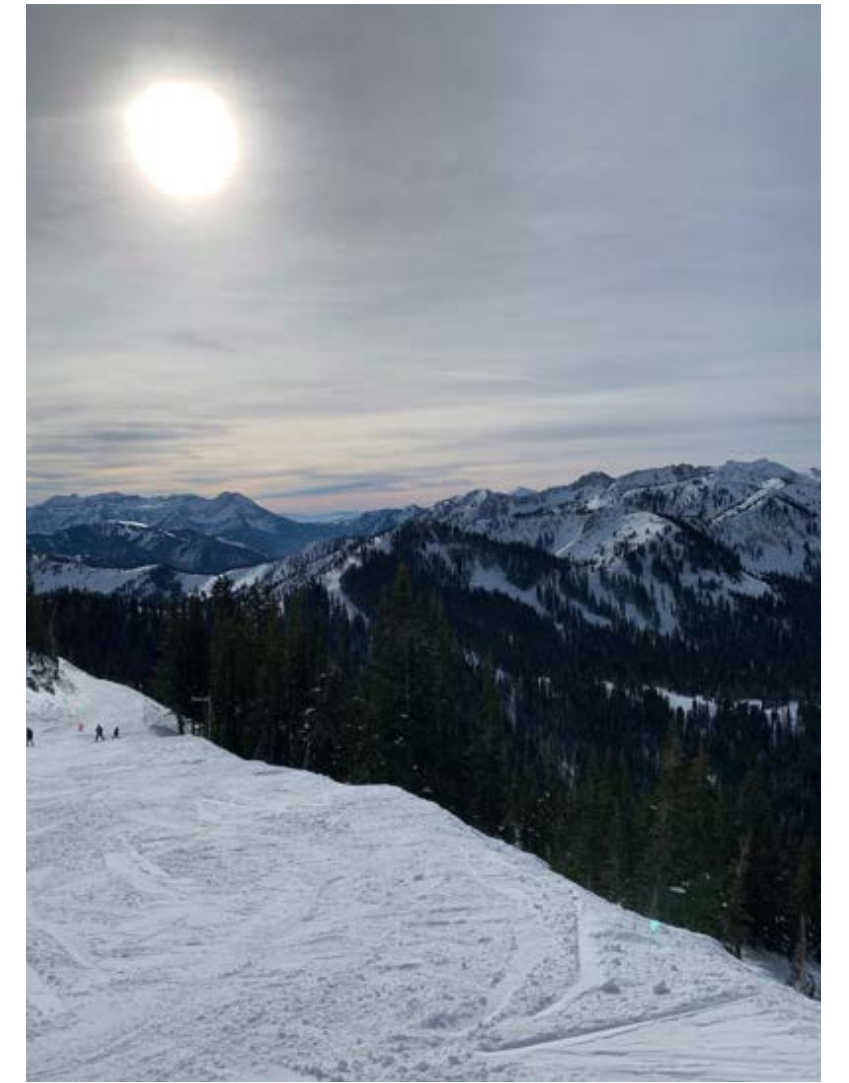
Boulder, CO



▲
Frozen in Time

Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident

Washington, DC



▲
Solitude

Elizabeth Evans, MD
1st Year Resident

Utah



◀ Change of Scenery

Adam Possner, MD
*Primary Care Physician and Owner, North Bethesda Primary Care
Former MFA Internist (2010-2016)*

It's October 2020, nearly seven months into the pandemic, and I've spent many weekends trapped at home with my wife and two cherub-like children. I decided to do something a little unorthodox -- for me, at least. With my wife's blessing, I woke up early one Saturday morning and drove about an hour away to the historic town of Burkittsville, Maryland, to take photos at sunrise. I had passed through Burkittsville several weeks before on my way back from a hike with my youngest child and thought it would be a special place to capture at first light. The photo shared here is one of the products of that trip.

In the ensuing months, I would go on to take many such early weekend morning solo excursions: to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on the Eastern Shore; to Cape Henlopen State Park in Lewes, Delaware; to various hikes off of Skyline Drive; to Maryland Heights overlooking Harpers Ferry; to Mount Weather and the Raven Rock Mountain Complex; and to Weverton Cliffs along the Potomac River, to mention just a few. My rule of thumb in choosing a destination was that it couldn't be so far that the ratio of time spent driving to the time spent at the destination was greater than 2:1. I'd wake up at 4 or 5 AM, go out on my adventure, and be back by noon to rescue my wife from the children.

Two-plus years into the pandemic, I still take my "Daddy Adventures," as I've come to call them, albeit less frequently. In truth, the novelty has worn off a bit. Still, these trips helped keep me sane through the bleaker months of the pandemic. They also helped me decorate my medical practice, North Bethesda Primary Care.



▲ Sunset on the Potomac

Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD '21
Assistant Professor of Medicine



◀ **Oh Shenandoah**

Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident



◀ The Prophet Joshua

Matthew G Petersen, MD, RESD '21, CHIEF '22

Mojave Desert

Deserts are often viewed as hostile places - harsh, unforgiving, and resource-limited. Upon further inspection, it becomes evident that their scarcity produces strength and diversity not seen in other ecosystems. Flat leaves turn into plump spines to preserve water. Large vascular ears release heat. Life cycles sync with precipitation rather than seasons. Inverted sleep patterns maximize cool, moonlit nights. The desert is not a crucible to test the purity of the faithful. It is an incubator where we can grow to meet the needs of the moment.



▲ Oregon Driftwood

Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD '21
Assistant Professor of Medicine



◀ La Curiosidad

John Yi, MD
2nd Year Resident, Anesthesia

La Isla de los Monos, Iquitos, Peru



soir bleu ▶

Evan Ciarloni, MD, RESD '21



▲ Blue Ridge Mountains

William B. Borden, MD
*Interim Chair of Medicine
Chief Quality and Population Health Officer
Professor of Medicine and of Health Policy and Management
George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates*



▲
Idyll

Jennifer Makhoul, MD
2nd Year Resident

Montreal, Canada



▲
Jordan Pond in Acadia National Park, Maine

Maryam Khan, MD
3rd Year Resident, Radiology



INTE
NAL
IZIN
ME I
INE

Post Call Blues
Sneha Shah, DO
3rd Year Resident

Before Your Breakthrough

Sylvia Gonsahn-Bollie, MD, RESD '13, CHIEF '14
EmbraceYOU Weight & Wellness, CEO
Obesity Medicine / Primary Care

2020 was a pivotal year for me, personally and professionally. I lost my Dad, my biggest cheerleader, in January 2020. Starting in March 2020 I worked on the COVID-19 frontlines as lead Internist in a subacute rehab center and nursing home. In August 2020, while still on the frontlines, I stepped out in faith to start my own wellness centered weight management program, Embrace You Weight & Wellness. The past few years have been filled with many humbling changes that have brought out many emotions I once suppressed because I was afraid of "falling apart". I've learned embracing your emotions may feel like you're breaking down but it's only because you're transforming "Before Your Breakthrough."

Breaking down often precedes your breakthrough. Breaking down isn't completely falling apart. But God breaking off parts that clog your heart & will hinder your breakthrough like:
Pride;
Insecurity;
False identity;
Distrust;
Low self-esteem;
Scarcity mindset;
Childhood wounds;
Unforgiveness;
Fear;
Anxiety;
Worrying;
Selfishness;
Stinginess;
People pleasing;
Approval seeking;
Perfectionism.
Releasing these & more opens the door of your heart for what God has in store for you.

To release the parts that have carried you through life hurts. That's why God uses a slow process as you progress. The more you prepare for your breakthrough, you realize that God has used all you went through to renew & refresh you for this moment. Parts that once clogged your heart have been replaced with liberation once unimaginable. As you now flow in God's Grace, Love, Trust, Forgiveness, Confidence, Hope, Faith, Clarity, Generosity, Abundance Prosperity, Security, Worthiness.....
All because you embraced breaking down as essential to your breakthrough.

Pandemic Musings

Marijane Hynes, MD
Clinical Professor of Medicine
Director, Weight Management Program

Last week I was cleaning out my closet. I found a pair of silver shoes I had to have to pair with a silver dress I wore to the GW Christmas party in 2019. Although I did not let my hair turn silver like many of my friends, I cannot imagine going anywhere I need a silver dress or caring enough about having matching shoes for any reason. It was part of pre-pandemic life.

In early March 2020, I was asked to speak in Hawaii and was funded for a 6 day trip in the most beautiful hotel possible (think White Lotus). We went on a whaling tour and saw the most gracious orcas swimming right next to our boat. We saw double rainbows daily and the hotel where the original South Pacific was filmed. One day, while we were watching a hula dancer perform, my mother called and asked us if we were affected by the new virus. We had no idea what she was talking about. We came home and made reservations for a St. Patrick's Day dinner and were told it could be canceled. "St. Patrick's Day canceled?" we asked. Being from NY, I was aghast. How could any virus be worthy of a St. Patrick's Day cancellation?

And the rest, as we say, is history. Every year for this journal I write what I am most grateful for. This year was much harder of course, but I am grateful for the new changes it brought us.

I am grateful that my home roles have changed. My husband has been home the whole time, working from our living room couch, observing our little world. He saw how hard I worked. He had dinner ready every night I walked in, and my clothes were always washed and folded. He is becoming a good cook, and he has enjoyed being home. I am so grateful to him for really taking over the home.

I am grateful for the news environment that allows us to finally talk about race. The Black Lives Matter movement brought us a new dialogue that has liberated all of us and opened our eyes to injustice everywhere. In addition, the movement allowed us to talk about other issues impacting everyone, such as unfair labor and income inequality, which is improving across the country. I think this has allowed us to say how we are really doing when asked. We are not free until we are all free, as Emma Lazarus said.

I am grateful for enjoying the outside more. I have appreciated the little gardens in my neighborhood. I have taken more walks and eaten outside more than I ever have. I planted a garden in my backyard, which became like an extra room. I bought a bird feeder and enjoyed the sparrow's happy hours on my back porch.

I am truly grateful for the residents. Despite being fully immersed in COVID, they are amazingly upbeat. They are very enthusiastic about nutrition and caring for patients with obesity and learning. Their serious interest in delivering preventative care to patients combined with their ability to make me laugh lights up my day.

I am grateful for my patients. They always ask me how I am, and I used to say "Fine, but let's hear about you." Now, I let them know how I am. I find I let them in more and my relationships with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

Although I have always appreciated my internal medicine colleagues, I did get to know some more closely than before, as we have come to rely on each other more. In addition, the young attendings coming up have so much to offer us, and we are all learning so much from them. I am hoping for more intellectual and social events in our future again.

As for me, I am looking forward to a better world and future. My mother used to say, "Every cloud has a silver lining," and she was not referring to shoes or hair.

Time Takes the Time Time Takes

Taher Tayeb, MD, RESD '20

Life has many contradictions - it's worth this, yet it's not worth that...
It's not worth the pain, suffering, and misery, yet it's worth the happiness, the joys, and even those stupid moments that make sense to no one else but you!
Life is short, yet what we do with it can be permanent. So I beg of you to enjoy the temporary while it lasts.

How I Got Here

Paul Silver, MD, FACP

Associate Professor of Medicine

I have had an unusual career path. I started medical school thinking I would become a surgeon like my first mentor, my uncle Art. My surgery rotation quickly disabused me of that notion. Throughout medical school, I was attracted to both internal medicine and pediatrics and thought that training in family medicine would allow me to pursue both. I was also attracted to the patient-centered ethos of that specialty. My internship in family medicine, however, turned out to be stressful. Family medicine is a great specialty for people who love to try new things and tolerate a fair degree of uncertainty. Moving from medicine to obstetrics to pediatrics without feeling any growing sense of mastery within any particular specialty was disheartening and anxiety-provoking. I also did not like the thought that there would always be someone, by dint of their specialty training, who would be better prepared to deal with any problem that came my way.

About halfway through the year, I sat down with my medical school psychiatry preceptor to discuss the situation and to seek a referral to help deal with my growing angst. He pointed out that I did not seem happy with what I was doing and noted that I had excelled in psychiatry in medical school. The thought of entering a specialty with a more limited scope and a finer focus, in which I could ultimately become an expert, appealed to me. Thus, I became a psychiatry resident after completing my family

medicine internship. I noticed an interesting trend: two of my co-residents had spent time in family medicine prior to switching to psychiatry. Another had previously been one of my medicine attendings when I was a student. I was not alone in my transition between specialties.

I did well in my residency, and stayed at my parent institution as an attending upon finishing. I saw patients in various settings, from the inpatient unit to the consultation service to the outpatient clinic. Eventually I did a psychopharmacology research fellowship, published some papers and edited a book. In 1990, I came to Washington from Philadelphia to be the director of a university hospital inpatient unit. Since there were

THE EXCITEMENT AND SATISFACTION OF FIGURING OUT WHAT'S WRONG, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE'S A SPECIFIC AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENT, IS HARD TO MATCH.

fewer psychopharmacologists in Washington compared to Philadelphia, I quickly established a busy outpatient practice as well.

In the early 90's, psychopharmacology was, to an extent, practiced by trial and error. You would prescribe a medication which you thought would be helpful and then adjust the dose and watch for a positive result. The medications took a long time to take full effect and it was difficult for patients to tolerate their symptoms while waiting for a response. Since I was a consultant, I often saw patients who had failed the simpler, more straightforward regimens.

In the summer of 1993, my mother became ill while "down the shore" (as we Philadelphians say) and was admitted to a nearby community hospital. Since her doctor was back in Philadelphia, I asked a physician, Angelo, who I knew from my days as a family medicine student and intern, to assume her care. When I went up to see Mom, I went over to visit Angelo too. He explained that though he was the medical director of the hospital (which was already a full time job), he still saw patients part-time because he loved practicing so much.

I realized I could not say the same thing. I had just turned 40 and my oldest child was in high school. If I was going to make a change, it would have to be soon. I decided to spend one afternoon a week in a medical clinic to see if I really wanted to re-train in medicine. I approached the head of medicine at my university and he gave me the go ahead.

The last patient on my first afternoon in the clinic was a heavy-set young man with a "stomach flu", or at least that

was what was cited as his primary complaint. He told me, "I've been throwing up, having diarrhea, not eating anything, and peeing all the time." Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea were consistent with gastroenteritis, but peeing all the time? That did not fit. I asked the nurse to dip his urine (finger stick blood sugar test came into practice during my time in psychiatry). She looked at me quizzically thinking that I did not know what I was doing. After all, it said "stomach flu" on the chart. The urine dip came back positive for sugar and ketones. The young man was an undiagnosed diabetic presenting in diabetic ketoacidosis.

If I had sent him home telling him to "just drink some Gatorade and you'll be fine," he might have died.

I was hooked.

In my experience, great doctors have a phrase they keep in mind while seeing patients. Marshall Wolf, the legendary internist at the Brigham would look at a chart and ask his trainees, "What doesn't make sense here?" Andrew Manson, the protagonist in A. J. Cronin's, *The Citadel*, would tell himself, "Never take anything for granted." For me, one of the joys of returning to medicine was the opportunity to listen carefully to the patient and note a small point or physical finding, which may reveal the diagnosis. The excitement and satisfaction of figuring out what's wrong, especially when there's a specific and effective treatment, is hard to match.

The Waves We Know

Shaitalya Vellanki, MD

2nd Year Resident

During times of world crises, two entities remain in abundance –

An engulfing ocean full of incoming information,

and its undulating waves dribbling human emotions.

Science has taught us that a wave is simply a disturbance in transmission,

during which energy transports from one being to the next.

This is exactly what human emotions have experienced over these past few months:

Energy transference.

An energy to connect chaos unbounded by geographic borders.

An energy to bring unfamiliar vocabulary of disease and demise to our tongues.

And an energy to force an inward retreat.

Now, although no beings should enter unprotected into the open air,

All feelings are free to linger...

Sorrow can speak in solidarity.

Frustration can falter faith.

And anxiety can acclimatize adversity.

Yet now more than ever, this we have come to know:

Happiness shall heed to the home.

And optimism shall ordain all those who remember

that we are not in this alone.

Stethoscope

Alicia Zellmer, MD
1st Year Resident

As I press against her skin, I feel the reverberations of her heartbeat pound against her ribcage. Lub dub, lub dub, lub dub. Her heart rate is slightly elevated. The rhythm is normal. Her heart is strong, healthy. He pulls me back from the warmth of her skin and then guides me to a new area on her chest. "Take a deep breath," I hear him whisper above me. The sound of wind - clear and crisp - flows through me. And then again and again, I hear the same sound each time he repositions me. As he sweeps down to the base of her right lung, she takes in another deep breath. I feel a slight change in this inhalation. Like static rippling. Then I hear her cough. "That's ok," he says gently. "You can breathe normally now." He pulls me away from my place on her back and holds me in his hands. "Do you mind leaning back so I can give your belly a quick listen?" he asks. "Any pain today?" "No pain," she says. Her voice sounds weak, hoarse. I hear the shuffle of sheets in parallel with her pained movements. And then I hear the sound of popping bubbles tickle me as I listen to her abdomen. Satisfied with the extent of the examination, I pull away from her stomach. He sits her up. I droop flat against him. My ears hang just below his. His belly, like hers, lets out a voracious rumble. He ropes me around his neck so my bell rests atop the left of his chest right over the heart. Slow and steady, I listen to the familiar heartbeat. In the background, I hear him remove his latex gloves. They begin to talk, although the words sound muffled from where I lay. I feel his heart rate quicken as the exchange continues. Across from him, I hear her cry. He grasps me from around his neck and nervously fidgets with my tubing. His hands are clammy. For a few moments, I hear only silence. Then I hear the sandpapery sound of the rough hospital sheets crinkle beneath me. He has released me from his hands to grasp onto hers.

- *Stethoscope*

Letter from the author: This style of prose was inspired by the works of Francis Ponge, the "poet of things." He took inanimate objects and made them the subject of his writing, once stating all objects "yearn to express themselves, and they mutely await the coming of the word so that they may reveal the hidden depths of their being."



HEA T
A N
H M E

Covid Flags

Jessica Huang, MD
1st Year Resident



District Tessellation ▶

Charles deBoisblanc, MD
1st Year Resident



◀ Looking out over the DC skyline from the Netherlands Carillon

Everett Chu, MD
3rd Year Resident, Anesthesia



◀ No Victory without Grief

Matthew G Petersen, MD, RESD '21, CHIEF '22

The Peace Monument, standing on the grounds of the United States Capitol, features four primary figures. Three of those figures are visible in this photograph. Victory is seen in the forefront, triumphantly holding a wreath of laurels. Elevated behind her, Grief weeps on the shoulder of History beneath an overcast sky. Together they cast a shadow over Victory.

For two years we have experienced incredible triumphs and bitter defeats in the realm of medicine and beyond; but more than the wins and losses, history will remember what we have grieved.



▲ A Time to Play

Michelle Camp, MD, MS
3rd Year Resident

A Holiday Prayer for Felix

Aileen Y. Chang, MD, MSPH
Associate Professor of Medicine

Please let Felix catch his breath for long enough to finish a bottle so that next Thanksgiving he can be seated in a high chair with grandma's cranberry sauce smeared across his face.

Please let Felix survive the surgery so that for future Christmas Eves he can share the bunk bed room with his brother chattering about Santa.

Please let Felix make it through this lonely year unscathed so that New Years Eve 2022 can be filled with warm embraces of family and friends.

Please heal Felix's heart completely so that next Valentine's Day we can celebrate our dogs' birthdays with each brother walking a weiner dog to deliver valentines to the two little girls living across the street.

Please God I know Felix is just one small boy with a weak cry but please hear my prayers bellowing loudly for him from the depths of my soul.



▲
Incoming

Michael Bechara, MD
3rd Year Resident



Stefano Leitner

Stefano Leitner, MD, MPH, RESD '20
*Occupational & Environmental Medicine,
3rd Year Resident*

My Two Rivers 2021 ▶

Chavon Onumah, MD, MPH, FACP
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

Eager to explore
The crashing waves say "welcome"
What does the world say



Reflections on lessons learned from my two rivers

Chavon Onumah, MD, MPH, FACP
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

It turns out that going through medical residency was not the hardest thing I would ever do...parenting while doctoring through a pandemic is. Like many parents, my husband and I had the privilege of putting our parenting-and-homeschooling-while-working-full-time-during-a-pandemic skills to the test for 18+ months. I should put this skillset on my resume or CV someday. Nevertheless, our nuclear family of 4 survived- no actually - thrived and learned (A LOT) about ourselves, each other, our peers, and the world we live in.

Here are a few things we learned...

One-on-one time is so important. I recently discovered that I was accepting new patients when my kindergartener attempted to schedule a doctor's appointment with me via Zocdoc while he was supposed to be engaged in his virtual classroom. It reminded me that, although we were all physically together more, our children each need one-on-one quality time.

One can find purpose in just about anything. When I asked my 6-year-old son to throw away his holey sock, he said "Why? They help me to connect with God." The English language has too many similar sounding words, all with completely different meanings. *Holy socks, perhaps?*

We need better vocabulary (and healing, among other things). Unfortunately, my kids encountered their first experience being called the N-word while we were on the National Mall. My 6-year-old son immediately said, "They don't have enough vocabulary" while his 10-year-old brother appeared disturbed. I replied "You are so right, son," impressed that he recalled a previous talk about how we shouldn't use bad words because we have better words to say. We've had conversations about speaking out against biases, "-isms", and injustices, yet I remained silent in that moment, and we continued on our walk. I could not figure out if this was because I had become numb to the term, or because I lacked the vocabulary to deal with the situation in a meaningful way with my children in tow. We later debriefed, explored the feelings they felt (anger, hurt, confusion), shared why mom and dad's reactions differed (history, experience, numbing), and discussed how or why we may not always address certain actions in the moment (safety concerns, emotional drain, self-preservation). We also deliberated on the vocabulary and skills necessary to deal with similar situations. Furthermore, we came to the conclusion that hurt people hurt people, intentionally or unintentionally. Our goal as a family is to be on the side of addressing hurt and healing to stop perpetuating this cycle.



◀ **Sunset on the National Mall**

Sneha Shah, DO
3rd Year Resident

Washington, DC

Autumn colors along the Potomac River ▶

Everett Chu, MD
3rd Year Resident, Anesthesia





Cotton Candy Sunset
Jessica Huang, MD
1st Year Resident



▲ **The Lincoln Memorial on a snowy day**
Everett Chu, MD
3rd Year Resident, Anesthesia



▲ **The Smithsonian Castle surrounded by magnolia blossoms**
Everett Chu, MD
3rd Year Resident, Anesthesia



Zen

Jehan (Gigi) El-Bayoumi, MD, FACP
Founding Director, Rodham Institute
Professor of Medicine

My sister is an artist and when the family gets too loud and feisty (our usual state), she brings out the paints. She plays the teacher and gives us each our mini canvases and colors.

From the oldest to the youngest, we all become obedient students and begin to get lost in making art.



WWII Memorial Fountain

Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD '21
Assistant Professor of Medicine



2022 Cuentos Editorial Team

Left to right: Charles Baron, MD, *Chief Faculty Advisor*; Shaitalya Vellanki, MD, *Editor*; Michelle Camp, MD, MS, *Resident Chief Editor*; Elizabeth Evans, MD, *Editor*; Julie Zemskova, MD, MS, *Editor*; Alicia Zellmer, MD *Editor*; Katalin Roth, MD, JD, *Faculty Advisor*.

Please consider showing your financial support by making a tax deductible donation at go.gwu.edu/SupportCuentos

For inquiries, comments, and/or contributions, please contact us at gwimcuentoseditorialteam@gmail.com

GW Medical Faculty
Associates

School of Medicine
& Health Sciences

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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