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, it is no different, as we feature artwork between current and past faculty and residents at GW, which includes photography, drawings, paintings, poetry and various 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, 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 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 can say with certainty 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
Julia Zemskova, MD, MS, 3rd Year Resident
Shaltayla Vellanki, MD, 2nd Year Resident
Katalin Roth, MD, JD, Professor of Medicine
Charles Baron, MPH, RESD ‘21, Assistant Professor of Medicine

On the Cover

Milky Way over Rhode Island
Matthew Taglieri, DO, RESD ‘21
Assistant Professor of Medicine

05 Two Other Hikers
Tania Herno

Cuentos 2022
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

Two Other Hikers
Talia Bernal, MD, RESD ’18, CHIEF ’19
Fimmvörðuháls trail in Iceland, September 2021
Stefano Leitner, MD, MPH, RESD '20
Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 3rd Year Resident
San Francisco, CA

Jennifer Makhoul, MD
2nd Year Resident
Montreal, Canada

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 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.
Morning Views
L. Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA, RESD ‘21
Molokai, Kauai, Hawaii

Nā Pali Coast, Kauai, Hawaii
L. Nedda Dastmalchi, DO, MA, RESD ‘21

Cactus
Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident
Casa Gilardi, Mexico City

Beach Babe
Michael Bourne, DO
3rd Year Resident
The Exumas, Bahamas
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

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 Bachara, 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
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. Truth be told, 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.
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.
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
Post Call Blues
Sneha Shah, DO
3rd Year Resident

Idyll
Jennifer Makhoul, MD
2nd Year Resident
Montreal, Canada

Jordan Pond in Acadia National Park, Maine
Maryam Khan, MD
3rd Year Resident, Radiology

The GW Medical Faculty Associates Cuentos 2022
The GW Medical Faculty Associates Cuentos 2022

Sylvia Gonsahn-Bollie, MD, RESD ’13, Chief ’14
EmbraceYOU Weight & Wellness, CEO

Clinical Professor of 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 intensivist in a suburban 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 is a sign you’re breaking through.

Breaking down isn’t weakness.

But God breaks off parts that clog your heart and will hinder your breakthrough like:

Insecurity
False identity
Distraction
Scarcity mindset
Childhood wounding
Untergiving
Rice
Anxiety
Worrying
Selfishness
Stinginess
People pleasing
Approval seeking;
Perfectionism.

Perfectionism.
Approval seeking;
People pleasing;
Stinginess;
Selfishness;
Worrying;
Anxiety;
Fear;
Unforgiveness;
Childhood wounds;
Scarcity mindset;
Low self-esteem;
Distrust;
Insecurity;
Pride;

That clog your heart &
completely falling apart.

Breaking down isn’t
precedes your breakthrough.

you’re breaking down but it’s only because you’re transforming “Before Your Breakthrough.”

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.”

To release the parts that clog you for a 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, Clarity, Generosity, Abundance, Prosperity, Security, Self-worth, Worthiness……

All because you embraced breaking down as essential to your breakthrough.

Before 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 turn 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 were on a whale tour and saw the most gracious orcas swimming 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 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 my patients. They always allow 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 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 attending coming have come 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.

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.

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 allowed us 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

I am 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 allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for the little gardens in my neighborhood that taken more walks and eaten outside more than I ever have. I planted a garden in my backyard, which became like an extra room. It was 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 allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.

I am grateful for my patients. They always allow 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 with them have become richer, and I have been grateful for their support.
Paul Silver, MD, FACP
Associate Professor of Medicine

I have 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. Through 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 was disheartening, however, turned out to be stressful. Family medicine is great specialty for people who love to try new things and tolerate a fair degree of uncertainty. Moving from medicine to pediatrics to internal medicine 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 a specialist. She offered to see my patient and ultimately referred me to a specialist in the psychiatry department. I was an expert, who 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 specialty training program’s diagnostician fellows. More recently, I saw patients who had failed the simpler, more straightforward diagnostic tests, (fnger stick blood sugar test came into practice during my time in psychiatry). She looked at me (and was admitted to a nearby community hospital. Since her doctor was back in Philadelphia, I asked a physician, Angela, who I knew from my days as a family medicine resident, to assume her care. When I went up to see Mom, I went over to visit Angela 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 not been as happy with psychiatry as I had expected. 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 frst afternoon in the clinic was a heavy-set young man with a “stomach fu” 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 ft. I asked the nurse to dip his urine sample into a clean container and kept in mind while seeing patients.

In my experience, great doctors have a phrase for a response. “What doesn’t make sense here?” Andrew Manson, the protagonist in A. J. Cronin’s, The Well, would tell himself. “Never take anything for granted.” For me, one of the joys of being in medicine was the opportunity to listen carefully to the patient and note a small point or physical nding, which may reveal the diagnosis. The excitement and satisfaction of nding out what’s wrong, especially when there’s a speciﬁc and effective treatment, is hard to match. The Waves We Know
Shailaja 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 disbibbing 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, we feel freedom to live free. 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.
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.

"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 the warmth of her skin and then guides me to a new area on her chest.

"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 fat against him. My ears hang just below his.

His belly, like hers, lets out a veracious 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 crackle beneath me. He has released me from his hands to grasp onto her.

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.”
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 Year’s 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.

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

The GW Medical Faculty Associates
Cuencos 2022 43
Incoming

Michael Bechara, MD
3rd Year Resident

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

0 ne-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.

0 ne 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
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.
2022 Cuentos Editorial Team

Left to right: Charles Baron, MD, Chief Faculty Advisor; Shataya Velzarski, MD, Editor; Michelle Camp, MD, MS, Resident Chief Editor; Elizabeth Evans, MD, Editor; Julie Zernakova, 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 gwimcuentoseditorteam@gmail.com