



Meraki

the soul, creativity or love put into something; the essence of yourself that is put into your work

Issue VI
October 10, 2023

WELCOME TO MERAKI

Meraki (pronunciation | mA-'rak-E), now in its sixth year of publication, is a journal of collected written works from Johns Hopkins Community Physicians (JHCP) employees. Literally translated from Greek as “labor of love,” *Meraki*'s goal is to provide a stage for JHCP employees to share their passions through the written word. Employees were invited to submit artwork of any kind: from sketches to poetry to music files.

Meraki celebrates the passions of all of us. Perhaps the following essays, poems and works of art will encourage you to take stock of your own creative pursuits and inspire you to develop and hone them.

Meraki

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Editor – Alice Lee, M.D.

The views and opinions expressed in Meraki are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Johns Hopkins Community Physicians.



JOHNS HOPKINS
M E D I C I N E

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INTRODUCTION

by: steven kravet, m.d., m.b.a.



There is so much talent among the employees of Johns Hopkins Community Physicians (JHCP), and no better way to showcase it than through *Meraki*. This journal, now in its sixth year of publication, and its parent program, Arts at JHCP, have ensured that creativity and joy remain woven into the fabric of our organization.

Every member of our team is deeply skilled in their field, whether that be in patient care or a central administrative function. Each year, as I read through *Meraki*, I am blown away by the artistic talents that our colleagues simultaneously possess. I cannot wait for you to explore the following pages and experience the incredible artwork, spirited musical performances, skilled craftsmanship and moving written works of Johns Hopkins Community Physicians' employees.

I ask you to remember where these wonderful creative works come from: health care workers—those who directly care for our patients at our practices and hospitals, and those who support their safety, education and operations. These are their stories and their souls put bravely on display for all of us. This is their meraki.

My thanks as always go out to Dr. Alice Lee, office medical director at our Columbia North practice, lead for the Arts at JHCP program, and *Meraki's* champion and editor. I have so much gratitude to every contributor to this journal for the joy and meaning you share with us. And I thank you, Reader, for supporting this important initiative.

All my best,



Steven Kravet, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.P.
President, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians
L. Douglas Lee & Barbara Levinson-Lee Professor in Clinical Practice

SARAH

by: **claire wood, r.n.**

acrylic on 18 x 24 canvas



ALOHA JHCP

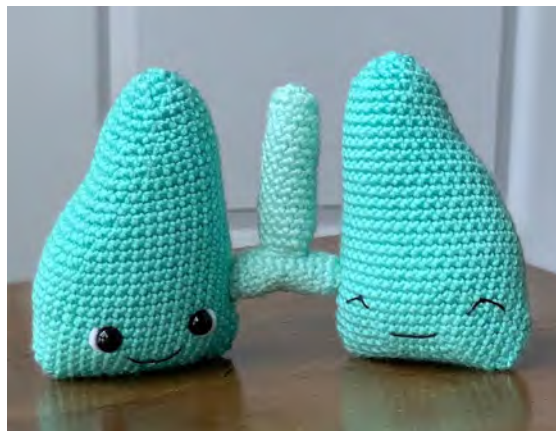
by: mizumi graham-jones





CROCHET

by: samantha swords, m.d.



DOING NOTHING... IS DOING SOMETHING!



by: ashley gillis

Ripping and running ... running and ripping.
Monday through Sunday, taking on task and no
time to relax. I wear many capes. I'm always here
to save the day. I have no time for me.

Mother, daughter, friend, lover, co-worker. Each
role that I'm in, I give my very best. Now it's time
to give the best to myself. The thought and the
joy just to sit and do nothing sounds amazing.

Neglect the cooking, the cleaning...if only I had an
internal "DO NOT DISTURB SIGN!"...Turn off
the phone, turn off the television, tune the world
out, and tap into myself.

I'm imagining myself sitting beside a window with
the sun shining through, providing my chocolate
complexion skin with vitamin D. Enjoying a cup
of chamomile tea, wearing my favorite fuzzy
socks and pajamas, while the time reads well past
noon.

Sitting...gazing...In deep thoughts.

Doing nothing...is doing something. ■



GIVE ME ONE REASON



produced **by: norman dy, m.d.**
vocals **by: kellie renich, r.n.**



Kellie Renich, R.N.
'Give Me One Reason'



Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D. Vocals by Kellie Renich, R.N. Written by Tracy Chapman.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to listen. Alternatively, you can [click here](#), or click the play button above in the digital version of *Meraki*.



GALÁPAGOS WILDLIFE



by: kerrian mross, m.d.



Santa Cruz and San Cristobal Islands, Galápagos, Ecuador

THE VALUE OF A LIFE



by: jayanti dasgupta, m.d.

There's a man in the hospital, not forty years old,
Came here for a better life and even without
papers, his life has value.

Even though he hears voices and wants to kill
himself sometimes, his life has value.

And the transplant he needs to live and the
medicines he needs to want to live,

And a place to sleep where he can feel safe,

Aren't out of his reach because of a green card
that he doesn't carry.





There's a man on the corner of Sunset and Vermont.

He talks to himself

And sometimes the ghosts of those he's lost,
Wears a big green sweater in the sweltering
Los Angeles summer.

His heart's gone bad, the doctors say, if only
he would take his meds...

But still his life has value, and people look at
him with kindness and understanding

And do him the dignity of not crossing to the
other side of the street while he lies sweating
and hurting and muttering and dying.

There's a girl in my clinic, old, sad eyes in a
sixteen year-old body.

Ran away from home hoping out there was
safer than in here...

Maybe this is the safest she's ever been,
picked up by cops after a man buying sex from
her bashed her head into the pavement.

And while I check her pupils she tells me that
the ladies from the church across the way,

They don't warn her about fire and
brimstone, but remind her that God loves her,

She deserves better. And she hears them and
believes what they believe,

And she knows that her life has value. ■

CORDYLINE AT BROOKSIDE GARDENS



by: jennifer janus, m.d.

oil on gessobord, 18 x 36



PEACE, BE STILL!

by: abby abraham



MT. WASHINGTON CAMPUS THROUGH THE SEASONS



by: melissa nyulasi



MT. WASHINGTON CAMPUS THROUGH THE SEASONS by: melissa nyulasi



FLOWER POWER

by: rena hale-morgan

antique pie crust side table; acrylic paint



MADRE & BE FIERCE

by: amina watson, m.d.
pencil



MONUMENT VALLEY

by: mark phillips, m.d., ph.d



SHARIN' THE LOAD

by: robert kass, m.d.



E'enly, the trio of
Cologuard technicians
Spli' their duties,
A t'ird, a t'ird, a t'ird

OAHU & DISNEY

by: danny lee, m.d.



ALL TOO WELL

produced by: norman dy, m.d.

vocals by: emily l.



AVAILABLE INTERNALLY ONLY



Emily L.
'All Too Well'



*Vocals by Emily L.; Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.
Written by Taylor Swift and Liz Rose.*

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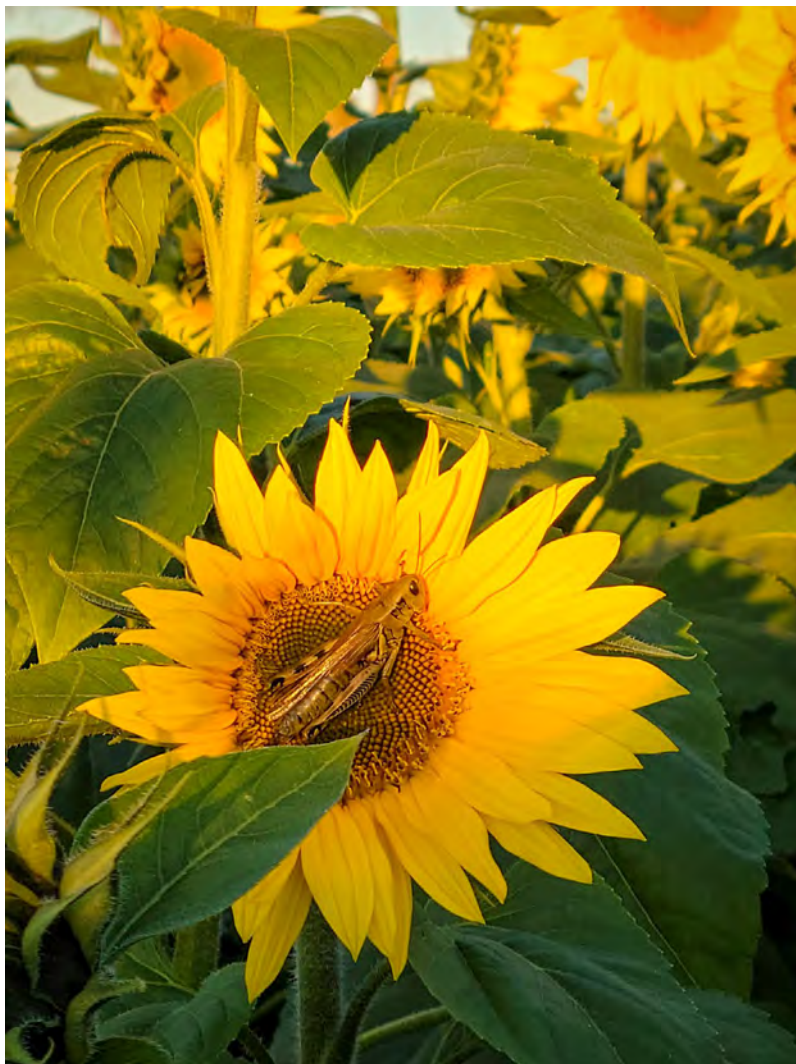


[Norman Dy, M.D.](#), Office Medical Director, Direct Primary Care
Emily L., 3rd Year Student, School of Medicine

BE SOMEONE'S SUNSHINE WHEN THEIR SKIES ARE GRAY.



by: paige hooker



PERSONALIZED CRAFTS

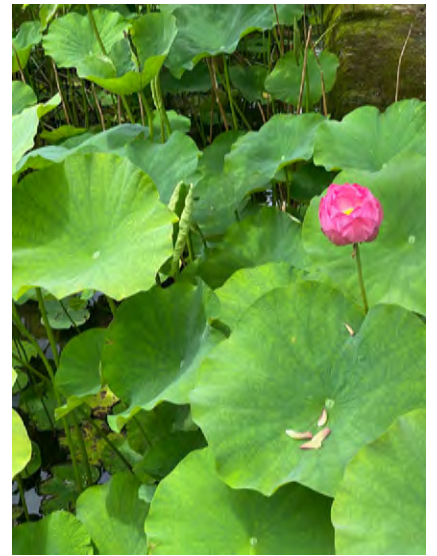
by: tabitha sweetney



CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN JAPAN



by: kelly koay, m.d.



OCEAN ISLE DREAMS

by: sarah lantzy, m.d.



A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF



by: alice lee, m.d.

Dear Alice;

This is a letter from me, your older self, to you—a younger Alice—at the beginning of your career, about to move to Baltimore to go be a doctor.

You will have moments that you want to give up – that you want to walk out of the hospital and keep walking 'til the end of the world. Remember these following points, please.

You are smart, you are brilliant, you are caring and you are great at what you do.

Be good to yourself! You deserve it!

You will know haters, mean girls and jerks – whether it is in kindergarten, organic chemistry, residency or at your clinical practice. You can't please everybody all the time, but the most important person you need to please is yourself.



Not everyone will see it, but you are a **bright star!**

You don't need to memorize the coagulation cascade.

Don't be afraid to get lost while you are driving.

It is not terrible to admit to a patient you don't know something.

Make friends and allies.

Cry with your patients.

It is okay to like rainbows, unicorns, and **sparklies.**

Finish and sign all your notes before you go to bed. It is a great habit, but don't let it break you: The work will always be there, but let your family and friends be first sometimes!

Have empathy and care for all patients; even the one who will try your last nerve.

Humor is a great way to break the ice and connect with others.

Sometimes if the path is not clear, forge a new path.

When you get a compliment or a thank you from a patient or colleague – cherish it! They can fuel your bad days better than a cup of coffee!

It is okay to still love coffee, too.

Sincerely, with much love,
Alice ■

NURSERY FRIENDS

by: jessica segall

pencil



SE & WHEN I FALL IN LOVE



produced & performed **by: norman dy, m.d.**

AVAILABLE INTERNALLY ONLY

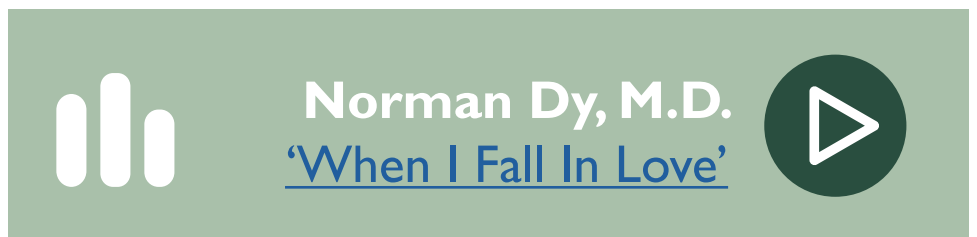


Norman Dy, M.D.
'Se'



Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D. Se (from "Cinema Paradiso").

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Norman Dy, M.D.
'When I Fall In Love'

Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.

Scan the QR code to the left with your smartphone to listen. Alternatively, you can [click here](#) or click the play button above in the digital version of *Meraki*.

LOOK AROUND YOU.

by: I. shannon davis



HOPE STREET

by: vicki kline, m.s.w., l.c.s.w.-c.



A friend saw something in me once, among the layers.
Told me to write more, though I'm not sure
I have much to say.

I can't hear my own voice most days,
though there is a persistent pull,
a nagging whisper,
reminding me to find Beauty among
the crumbling plaster
in this broken city.

I keep moving.

I make my way, bolt high under the weight of early heat.
Am I anchored by roots, or cement?

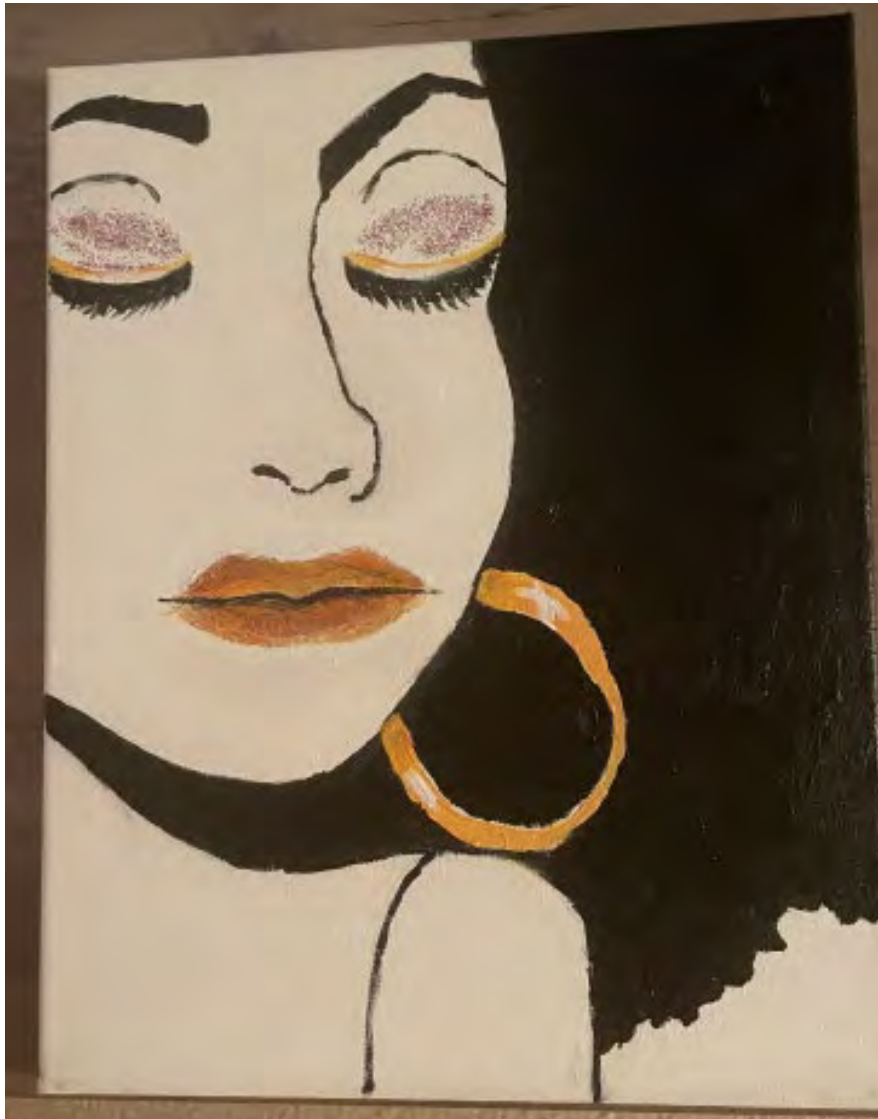
I long to flourish.

There was a garden once, on Hope Street,
tucked between vacants and warehouses.
For a summer, maybe three, someone
tended rows of flowers and tomatoes.
It's grown over now, abandoned,
with weeds as tall as the buildings.
I don't know if anyone else remembers it,
or if it was a fleeting mirage in this barren landscape,
but when I close my eyes,
I can still see the zinnias. ■



ENDLESS BEAUTY

by: chamara hasan, m.d.



LOTUS

by: yao-yao zhu, m.d.

ink & watercolor



THE FABULOUS AND GREAT JHCP MERGE



by: alfreda adams

Signature Ob/Gyn staffed 30 or **More**
Serving vendors, staff and patients
Galore

Things began to change, as they often **Do**
And after COVID-19, needing divine
Breakthrough

Providers and staff left and became **Few**
What would become of Signature
Nobody **Knew**
From 30 to 20, and then to **Eleven**
And finally, down to the Fabulous **Seven**

Introducing The Fabulous Seven: Drs.
Margot Watson,
Denise Kirkner-Vourlos, Sasha Nelson,
And Louis Kokkinakos
The Midwives Nora Molloy-Daly and
Jeanne Prins,
And Nurse Practitioner Laura Lynch

Thank you for holding it **Down**
With our heads above water you
Didn't let our patients **Drown**

And so, I dedicate this poem to **You**
Fabulous Seven while you serve
And wait for procedures **Anew**

Fabulous Seven

You are the greatest Doctors
We all stand and **Applaud**
Doubled booked and working **Hard**
We schedule patients but we are **Awed**

Dealing with a mad rush
Of patients often **Late**
You squeeze them in
Resolve their needs
Which they **Appreciate**

Affectionately called the **Fabulous Seven**
Remaining and standing **Strong**
We thank you much for all you do
To Signature you **Belong**

We salute you for being the soldiers
You really truly **Are**
Deserving medals of honor and a
Bright shining gold **Star**




CONTINUED

Always providing a healing touch
To each patient you **See**
Courageous and talented you are
To this we all **Agree**

And just like the musical artist **Sings**
You are the wind beneath
Signature Ob/Gyn's **Wings**

The Fabulous Seven still standing
Strong
But caring for patients short **Staffed**
The days grew **Long**
The steady, busy pace could not
Prolong
Then JHCP came **Along**

Unsure of what to **Expect**
Or what would happen **Next**
We gathered together
With mutual **Respect**
And discussed direct **Subject**

Signature and JHCP merge
Was the topic at **Hand**
To create new business
Was the ultimate **Plan**

Merging together and **Blend**
I can't **Pretend**
JHCP was truly a **Godsend**
Changing was not with **Ease**
But JHCP aimed to **Please**

And now we are **One**
JHCP Gyn/Ob Columbia
Our work is not **Done**
We're on the right **Track**
And our patients don't **Lack**

And we are getting **Better**
Much better than **Ever**
And basking in the **Splendor**
Of knowing how to be **Tender**

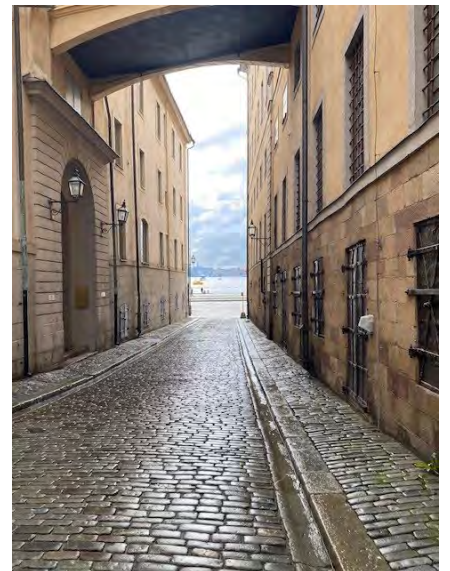
As we gingerly conquer every **Situation**
And provide each patient **Accommodation**
We are still standing **Proud**
And laughing out **Loud**

As our new journey has **Begun**
Our Signature has **Become**
Johns Hopkins Community **Physicians**
And caring for patients is our **Ambition** ■

NORTHERN EUROPE: BRUSSELS, STOCKHOLM, COPENHAGEN



by: lorie cram, m.d.



KODA

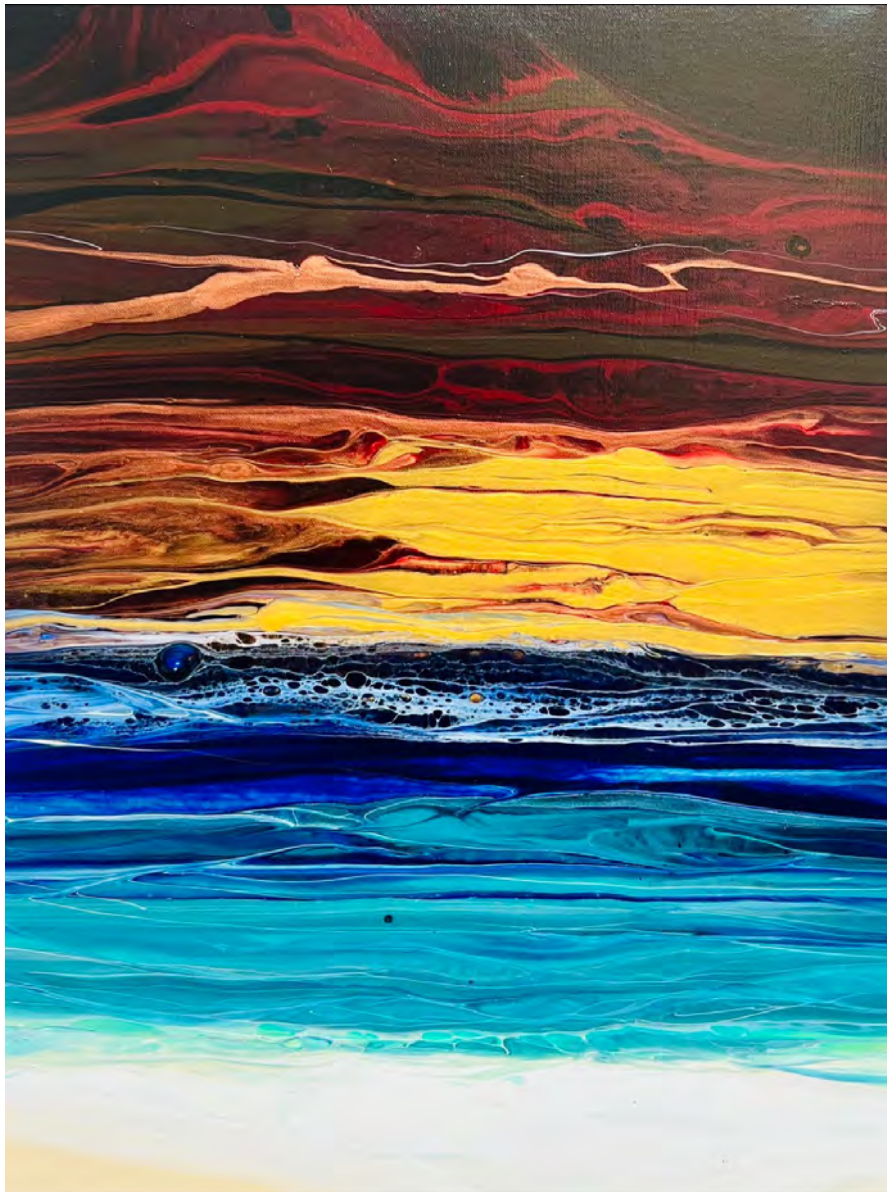
by: danie noble



LET'S GO

by: natasha haag, m.d.

acrylic, 16 x 24 stretched canvas



CHURCH, VIK, ICELAND

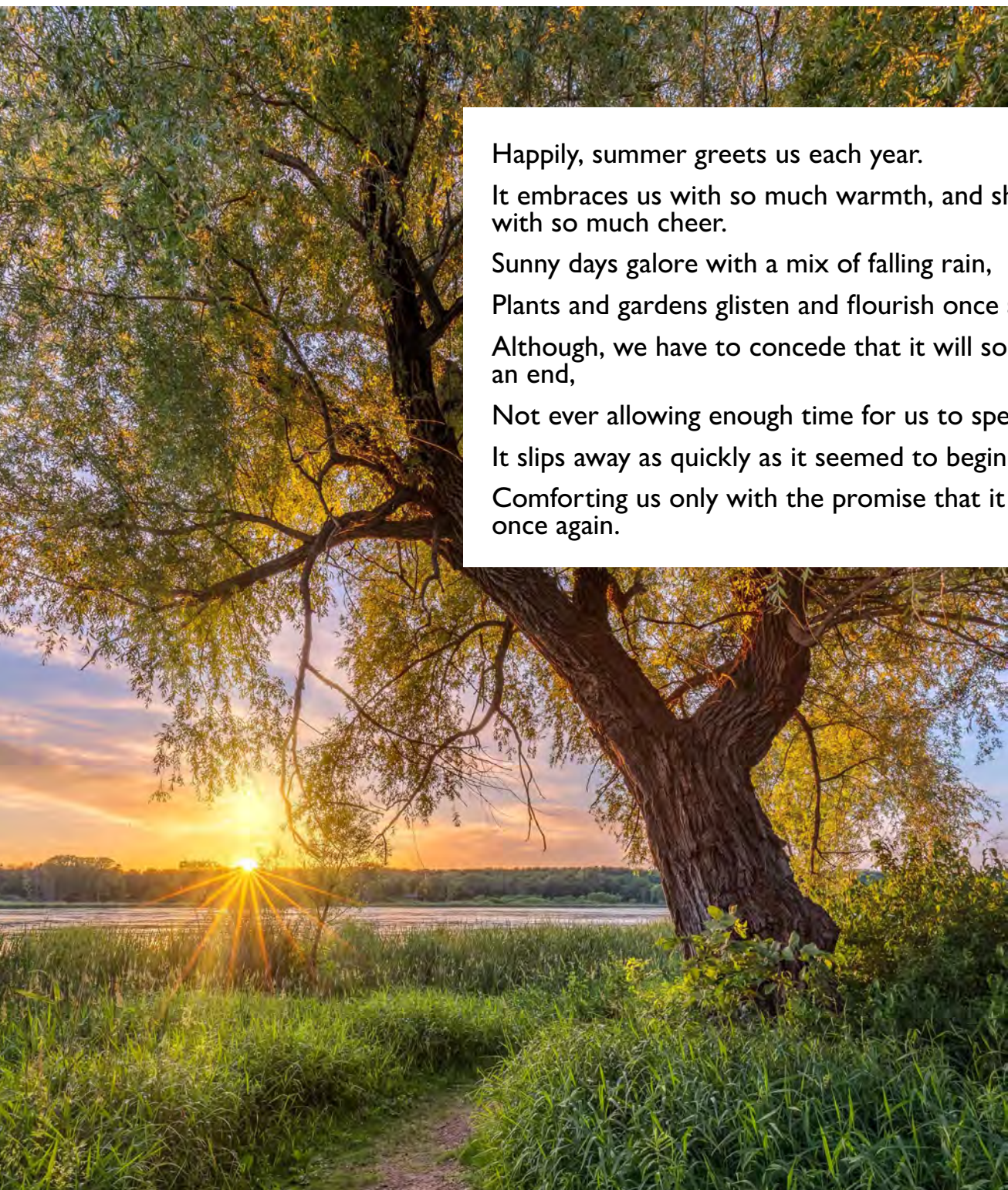


by: alyssa cook, m.d.



SUMMER

by: dawn fitzsimmons



Happily, summer greets us each year.
It embraces us with so much warmth, and showers us
with so much cheer.
Sunny days galore with a mix of falling rain,
Plants and gardens glisten and flourish once again.
Although, we have to concede that it will soon come to
an end,
Not ever allowing enough time for us to spend.
It slips away as quickly as it seemed to begin,
Comforting us only with the promise that it will return...
once again.

DR. ROO'S KITCHEN

by: ruby panju-merali, d.n.p., m.s.n., f.n.p.-c.



BARRACKS AT EL MORRO



by: chris rawlinson, m.s.n., r.n.



CROSS STITCH

by: melissa blakeman, m.d.



GRUMPY MORGS: A VERY EXPRESSIVE INFANT



by: allyson crouse, m.h.a.



THE PATIENT'S EXPERIENCE



by: ron cox, m.a.

Patients arrive with hearts a wonder,
Seeking comfort, not to be another number.
In waiting rooms, they take their seat,
A diverse symphony of life they meet,

Nurses and MA's bustling with compassion's grace,
Guide them through this unfamiliar place,
Their smiles, a calm to anxious souls,
In their tender care, anxiety often strolls.

Doctors, like captains, chart the course,
With expertise, they wield their force,
Listening closely to each concern,
In their wisdom, patients yearn to discern.

In this setting where compassion reigns,
Empathy's the cure for all their pains,
Doctors and nurses, they understand,
It's not treatment, but a healing hand.

Lab coats, stethoscopes, and sterile light,
Illuminate this realm, through day and night,
But it's the kindness shared, the empathy sown,
That makes this place feel like a healing home.

So, here's to the patients, brave and strong,
In the outpatient world, where they belong,
May their journeys be filled with care so sweet,
In this realm where patient and healer meet. ■



CROCHET PROJECTS

by: karen radowich, d.n.p.



POEM

by: amber burgess

inspired by a team-building exercise



Having a party inside my house
In the walls there lived a mouse
Scaring people all day long
Poking around while singing a song
All the people run and hide
No one wants to be on this frightening ride
In and out the mouse is running fast
Chuckling on the inside, this mouse is having a blast! ■



UNTITLED BOOK DRAFT



by: barbara dunbar chalom, m.s., p.a.-c.

During the pandemic I learned, first, that I had undiagnosed ADHD and, then, with some training, I learned to read. I have gone from reading a dozen or so books in my life (aside from textbooks of course) to reading a book every 2-3 days. As I am known to do, I have not only learned to love reading, I have become a semi-professional book reviewer in my “spare time.” My favorable genres are contemporary romance, particularly LGBTQ themed. And now I have started to write a book of my own. Here is an excerpt from the untitled draft of my unfinished novel.enjoy (I hope).

....

As the bell above the door startles me back to the cafe, I look up to see a young woman wrestling a stroller across the threshold.

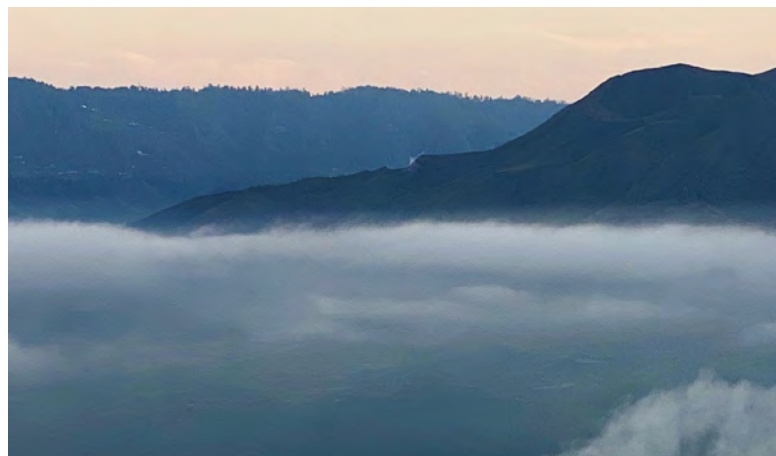
She is not the person I am looking for.

Straightening up in my chair, I settle back into my own thoughts.

The truth is, I do not want to be here. I can hear the clock over the cashier’s head clicking the seconds away as I become increasingly restless. I did promise my daughters and my friends that I would at least try a few dates. I had no choice; they ganged up on me, in a well meaning sort of way. They are trying to pull me back into life and living while I would rather hide in work and at home.

The thing about trauma is that it is subjective. The survivor is at risk of denying that anything has ever happened to them. I suppose, as I am shredding my paper napkin absently, each of us only knows our own suffering, and as such, one person may feel quite shocked or victimized by the same thing that may be entirely trivial to someone else. The other thing about trauma is how random it is, I muse. Several terrible things may happen to one person in a lifetime. At least they have to me.

I suppose this line of thinking is what my therapist would refer to as the intellectualization of my crap. My worst fears would come true if I just blurted all of these thoughts out to my date – the classic overshare that I am prone to when nervous. That would make for a memorable date, although not in a good way.



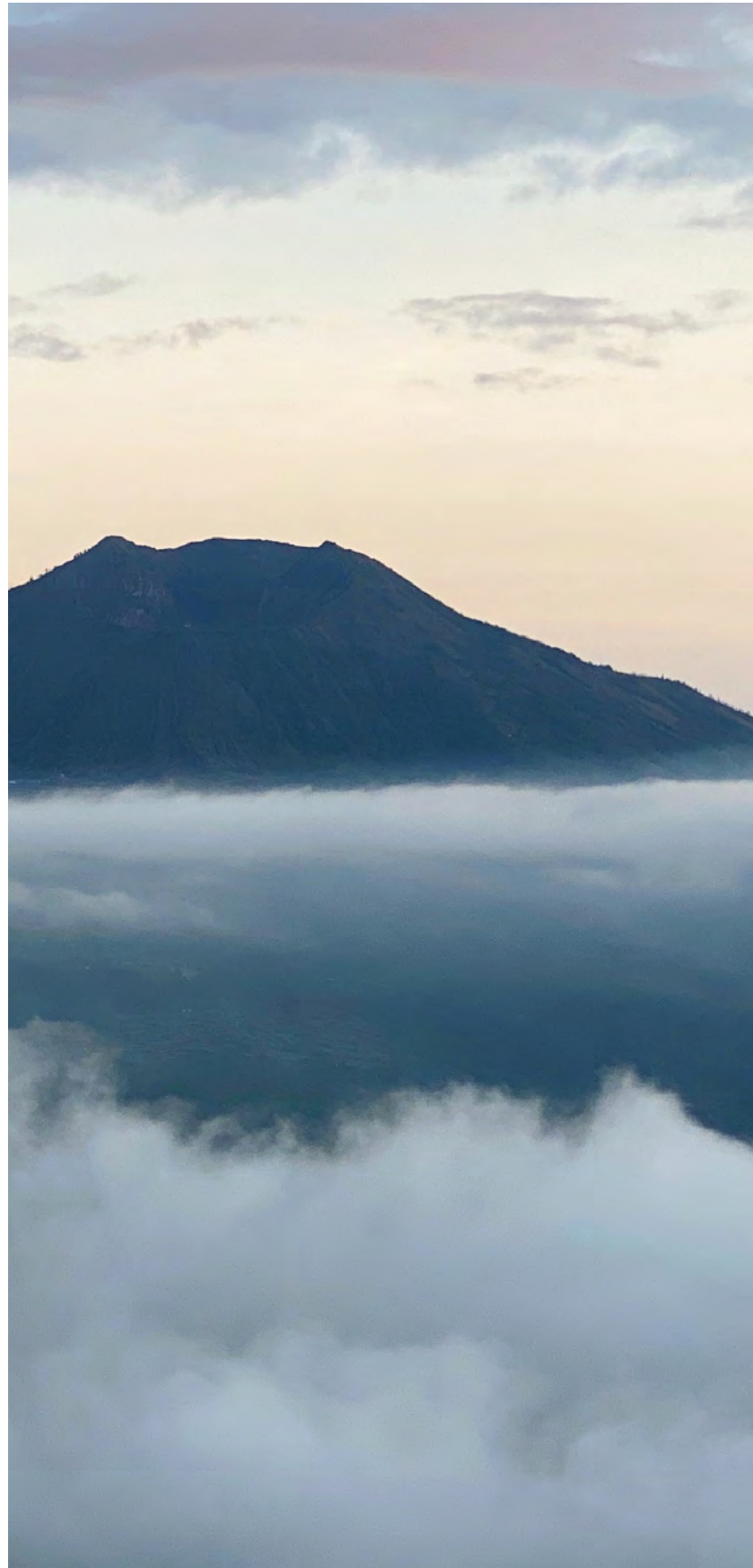
I try, unsuccessfully, to stop reflecting and play a game on my phone, like a normal person.

This anxiety and tendency to make social faux pas is what I am at risk for any time I go somewhere new. Or meet someone new. It is that impostor syndrome: the sense of being in my life by accident. Of waiting for someone to show up to the door of my home or my office – or maybe they will peek their head behind a curtain while I am with a patient and say, “Excuse me, but we have just realized you actually do not belong here.” That dread that my white coat does not belong to me. That it was actually meant for someone else. Or, on worse days, it is that feeling that I should have done more – that I chose the wrong path and have short-changed my entire life. A sense of being trapped by my choices.

So here I sit, on a Tuesday, with a sense of being stuck in a constant state of wanting more while feeling guilty about all I have not done. I wish I had called out sick from my own life. Or at least this date.

I check my emails, again, to confirm his name...David... does not rhyme with anything I can think of and I expect I will forget it again soon.

I picture myself calling him by the wrong name, or forgetting all names I have ever heard – or worse – thinking of all of them all at once. Like the lamest super power ever – and what would I do then? Likely just sit here and look blank. I picture myself, embarrassed, which to me is the worst feeling in the world. If any of that happens I



suppose I could try to make a run for the exit. Or, at my age, at least a brisk walk to hide in the bathroom until the place closes.

I check my lipstick in my compact and frown. My daughter, Hannah, picked the color and it is not a choice I would have made for myself. Of course, my choice would be colorless chapstick. Hannah, being an interior designer, made it difficult to argue with her insight and oversight on my makeup and outfit choice. She said this color was perfect for me, but I think I am looking a bit more like I run a brothel in my spare time than as if I am truly elegant and polished.

I check the time. He, (Mark? Mike? I have already forgotten) is late. Or probably not coming. Or maybe he took one look at me, could see the insecurities floating around in my aura and decided to give this opportunity a miss.

Why is my brain like this?

Was this how I was born? Or was I molded this way by my less than ideal childhood. It has been worse – the anxiety and heightened awareness of my awkwardness – in the last few years. During the pandemic, I nearly had a breakdown and so many things came to light. After a lifetime of avoiding professional help I now had an entourage of specialists. Sometimes it seems to make me feel worse, not better.

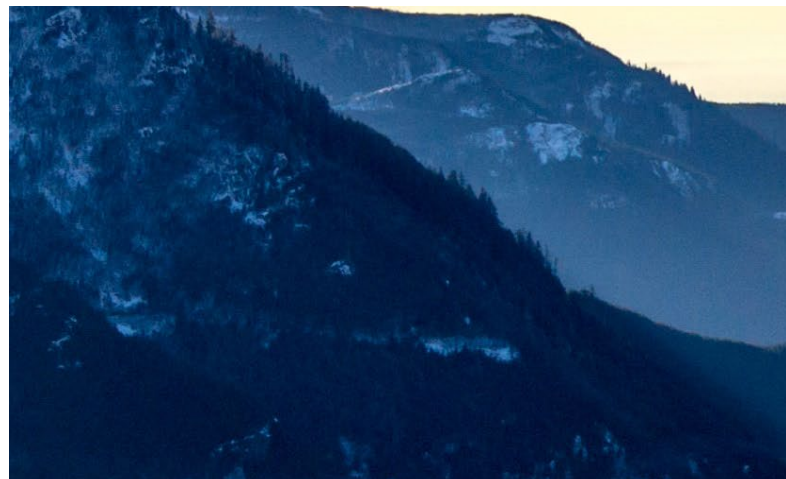
The truth, to me, is that so many things about me seem to be the product of how I think rather than any one thing that has happened. It is not as if I could know

another life...another set of experiences. While it is true a day does not go by that I do not hear the constant criticism of my father in my head, I think I have finally started to tune him out.

I hear the bell of the door opening again and startle, nearly spilling my coffee. I startle so easily – it used to drive my husband crazy. It is funny the things we bickered about seem to be the things I miss the most.

I sigh, and looking at the time on my phone, I come to the decision that this was just not meant to be.

I may not be entirely satisfied with my life, but I know I do not want to be the sad, upper-middle aged lady that gets stood up by a date her people forced her to go on. I did tell them, I really do prefer to go on as I have been: binge-watching British crime dramas with my cat, eating too much and wearing sweatpants. And that is truly what I would rather be doing. It is not as if I need a date for that matter. I am much happier enjoying my lipstickless company at home.




CONTINUED

I look around for the waitress – make eye contact – and nod my head for the check. She looks at me and my too-red lipstick with sympathy. I do not bother hiding my eye-roll at that.

I close my eyes, and think of three things to be thankful for; one of my tools from therapy.

My children, even if they intimidate me a little.

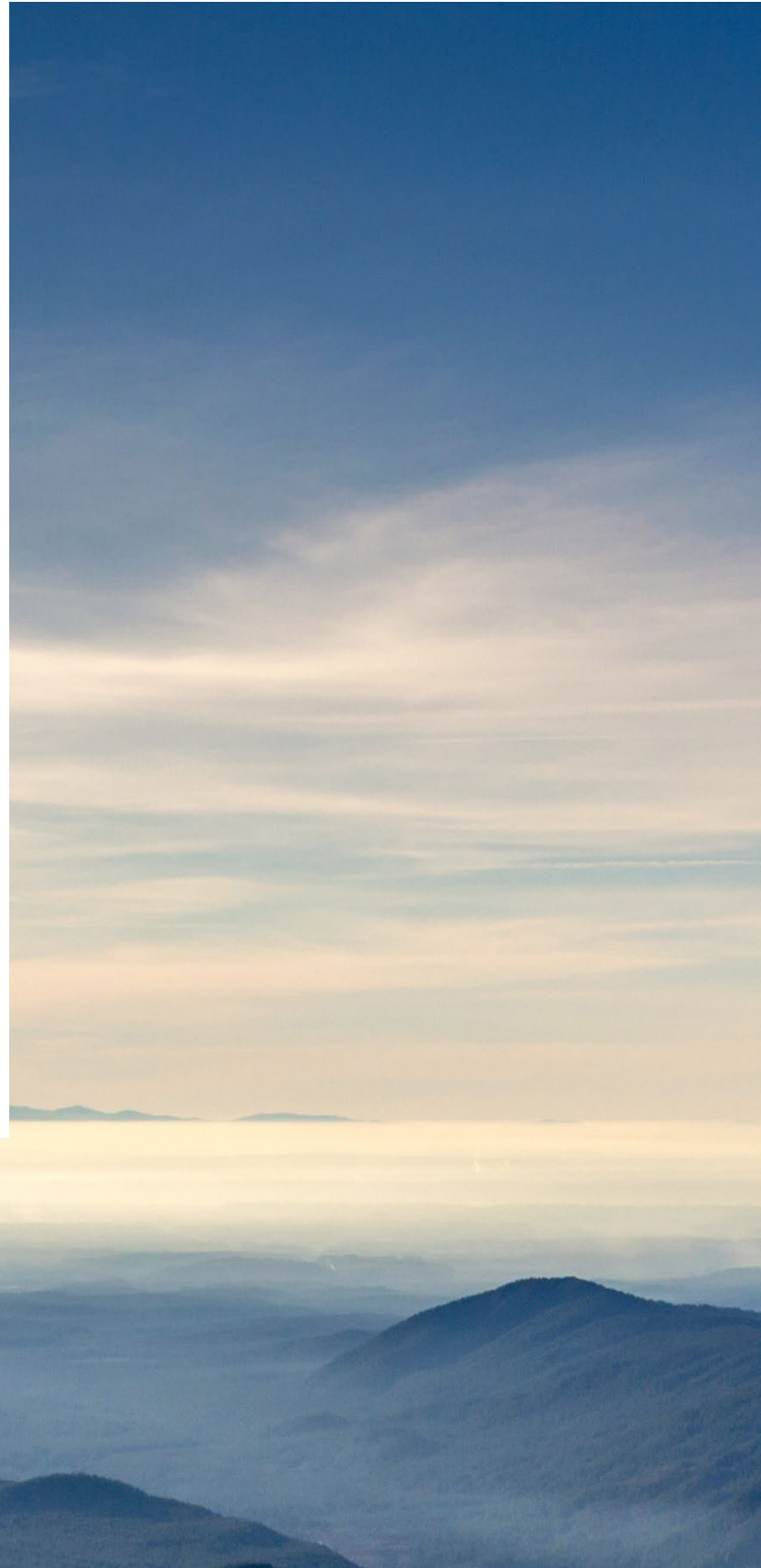
That I spent more than half my life without my father actually in it.

That I have a wonderful job I actually enjoy.

As I fish for my credit card, the bell rings above the door, and a man walks in, looking for me. As soon as we make eye-contact I recognize him and my anxiety quickly transforms to pure anger at the universe and my perpetual bad luck.

Of all of the people in the world to be set up on a date with...

“You have got to be kidding me.” I mutter. ■



VALERIE

produced by: norman dy, m.d.

vocals by: carolyn le, d.n.p.



Carolyn Le, D.N.P.
'Valerie'



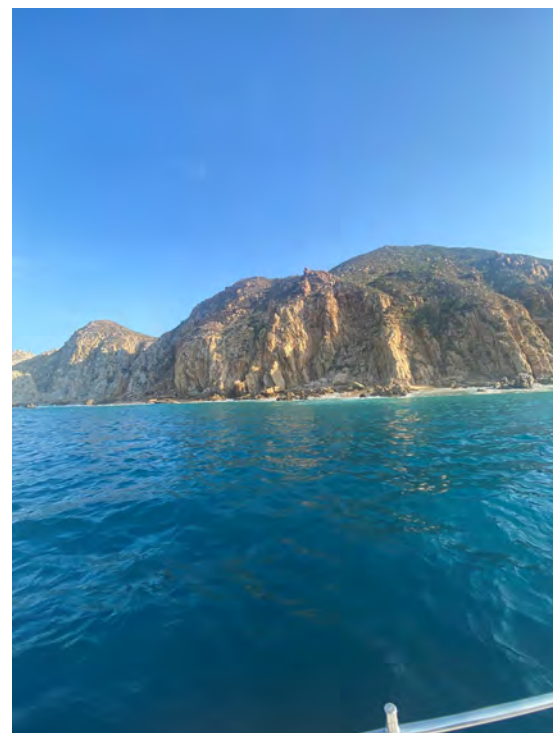
Vocals by Carolyn Le, D.N.P.; Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D. Written by Sean Payne, Abigail Harding, Russell Pritchard, David McCabe, Boyan Chowdhury.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to listen. Alternatively, you can [click here](#), or click the play button above in the digital version of Meraki.



LOS CABOS SAN LUCAS

by: talin glasco, r.n.



THE WARRIOR ROAD



by: clara e. stevenson-nyang

I wanted to feel strong and vibrant

Yet I wondered where the light had gone

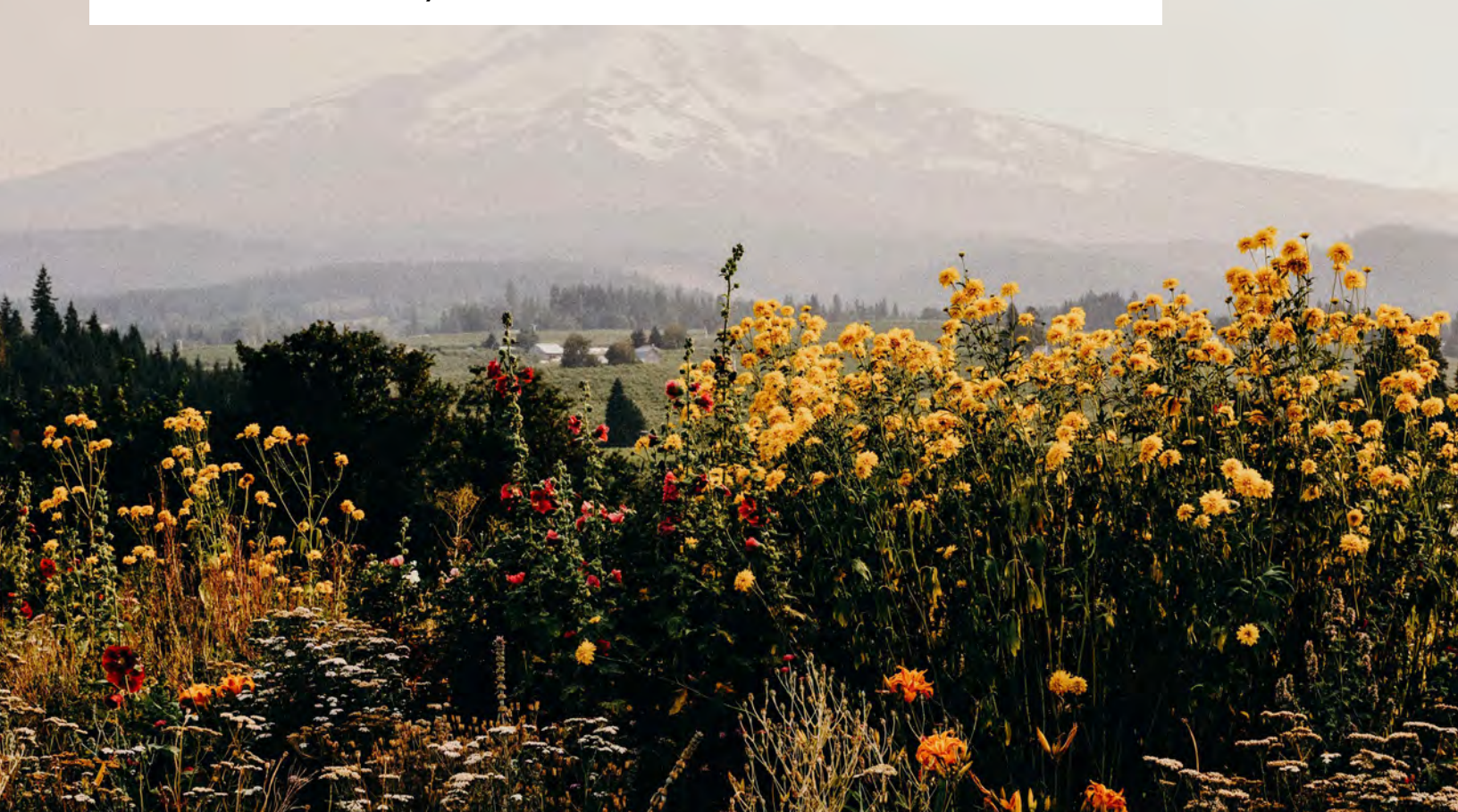
No filtering, NO indication of the last remnants of youth,

I looked into the mirror offff—

Reflected lines and fuller jowls than I wanted them to be—

I howled at the basal pain in my hip—begone the way you came—

And gloried in the quick steps of my female child, knowing one day she
would come this way, too. ■



SACRED SOLITUDE IN PARADISE, NA PALI COAST



by: latoya edwards, m.d.



ELEPHANTS

by: sarah peet, c.r.n.p.

cross stitch on 14-count aida



HOLIDAY ON FILM

by: jamie crain



SUNRISE, SUNSET, MOONRISE



by: janet siddiqui, m.d.



QUILT

by: tara hebert, m.d.



A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

by: ameta coleman



A LETTER TO MY FATHER

by: chona engco



A letter to my Father:

In the dark, by the window... I was calling for you. Can you hear me? Or are you just gone away? What's the plan, the next step? You were good then, but now what?

You were patriotic, I get that. You cared about people, that's wonderful. I just wish you considered us. Your children left alone, four and three; and me not even one.

So many sacrifices, so long ago. So many things that happened, so many not new.

Well, we somehow grew up. Maybe beaten and banged, but not broken. It's uncanny how it would be. We will replicate your strength, resilience, and passion.

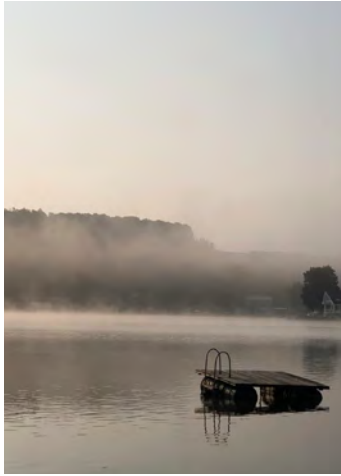
Maybe it's to be closer to you, or maybe it's just supposed to be. Whatever it is, I still miss you. ■

Background:

My father died during the Martial Law in the Philippines in 1972. He was an activist against that regime. He was gunned down by the military during a curfew. He had documents and pamphlets - lots of literature opposing the political leaders and their cronies. He and his group were under police radar back then. My mother had to go abroad to work to support us children. She eventually came here (USA) and brought all of us.



CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

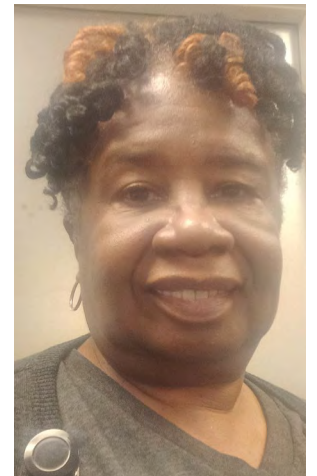


Abby Abraham

Abby Abraham, practice administrator at our Columbia North practice, joined JHCP just a few weeks ago. She loves being part of a team of wonderful individuals who thrive on providing excellent patient care and experience. Her inspiration for her photograph, "[Peace, Be Still!](#)" (p. 17), is the notion of letting go of stress and enjoying the moment. "Life is short we need to pause and take a deep breath and enjoy the beauty that is all around us." Outside of work, Abby enjoys reading, writing, taking pictures, cooking, baking, and enjoying time with her family and friends.

Alfreda Adams

Alfreda Adams, medical office assistant at Columbia Gyn/Ob, has worked with Johns Hopkins Health System for 26 years. Her favorite thing about her job is experiencing diversity through her coworkers and community, experiencing other cultures, foods and traditions. Alfreda's first submission to *Meraki*, a poem titled "[The Fabulous and Great JHCP Merge](#)" (p. 38), was inspired by the integration of Signature OB/GYN with JHCP. "I have witnessed many challenging times, and [our team] has always been great and should be recognized." Alfreda says that writing keeps her leveled, confident and uplifted. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with friends, and going to parks, restaurants and the movies. She recently wrote a book about surviving abuse, and is looking for a publisher.



Melissa Blakeman, M.D.

Melissa Blakeman, M.D., serves as regional medical director for our Maryland Suburbs region, and medical director for patient access. Additionally, Dr. Blakeman practices internal medicine at our North Bethesda location. [Her cross stitch submission](#) (p. 47) is her second contribution to *Meraki*.

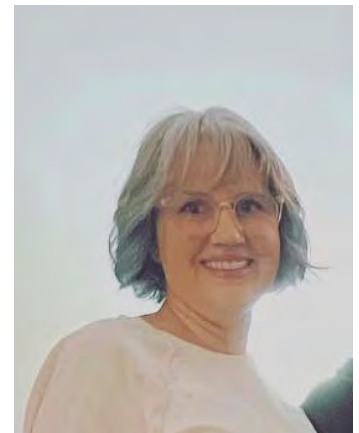


Amber Burgess

Amber Burgess is a medical assistant at our Annapolis practice. She has worked with Johns Hopkins Community Physicians since April 2022, and loves helping people and the feeling of making a difference in others' lives. Amber is in charge of the entertainment and diversity committees at her practice, and came up with the idea of an acrostic poem for Hispanic Heritage Month to foster creativity and community. She submitted [her example](#), which can be found on page 51. Coworker Dawn Fitzsimmons submitted [hers on page 44](#). Outside of work, Amber is kept busy by her two toddlers. She also enjoys diamond painting.

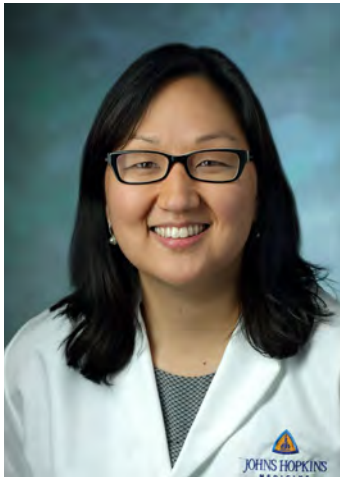
Barbara Chalom, M.S., P.A.-C.

Barbara Chalom, M.S., P.A.-C., is a physician assistant on the Johns Hopkins Community Physicians hospital-based medicine team at Suburban Hospital. She has worked with Johns Hopkins for 13 years. Her submission, the an [excerpt from an untitled draft](#) of the book she is writing, can be found on page 52. This is her third submission to *Meraki*. Her favorite thing about her job is her colleagues, and outside of work she enjoys reading, making art, exercising and being with her family.



Ameta Coleman

Ameta Coleman, executive assistant to the chief operating officer, has worked with JHCP for over eight years. She loves having the opportunity to work with amazing people, and be a resource for others. Although not a professional, photography plays a big role in her life. "I love taking random photos of people, places and things that catch my eye." Ameta's photo collection, "[A New York State of Mind](#)," can be found on page 64. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling to any place where the water is blue, spending time with her family, and singing karaoke.

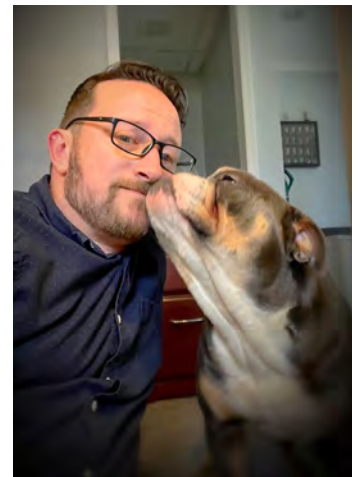


Alyssa Cook, M.D.

Alyssa Cook, M.D., practices internal medicine and pediatrics at East Baltimore Medical Center. She loves both her colleagues and her patients. Dr. Cook's second submission to *Meraki*, "[Church, Vik, Iceland](#)" (p. 43), was taken upon chance. "I happened to look outside our hotel in the evening and saw the pretty sunset. When I stepped outside to see it better, I saw the church in silhouette against the sky and had to get my camera immediately." Outside of work, Dr. Cook enjoys photography, reading, and spending time with her family.

Ron Cox, M.A.

Ron Cox, M.A., director of patient experience, joined Johns Hopkins Community Physicians about seven months ago. His favorite part of his job is getting to help minimize the gap between patients and their care teams. Ron has dedicated his career to helping organizations in their journey to providing patient-centered care. This sentiment is his inspiration for his first contribution to *Meraki*, a poem titled "[The Patient's Experience](#)" (p. 49). Outside of work, Ron enjoys spending time with his family, hiking with his pup, and being outside.



Jamie Crain

Jamie Crain, communications specialist on the Marketing and Communications team, has been with JHCP for more than five years. She loves her job because every day is different and she gets to work with people across the organization. She also feels awkward writing about herself in the third person, as she is *Meraki's* designer. [A few of her photographs](#) from a recent trip to Strasbourg, France, and Galway, Ireland, can be found on page 61. They were taken with an Olympus Trip 35 camera.

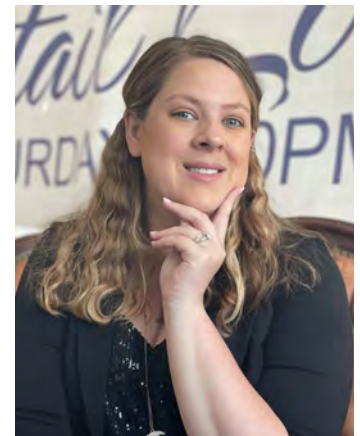


Lorie Cram, M.D.

Lorie Cram, M.D., M.B.A., serves as the office medical director at our Charles County location, where she also practices family medicine. She received her medical degree from the McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston and has worked with Johns Hopkins Community Physicians for more than six years. Dr. Cram's third submission to *Meraki*, [photographs of Brussels, Stockholm Copenhagen](#), can be found on page 40. Outside of work, Dr. Cram enjoys traveling.

Allyson Crouse

Allyson Crouse, patient experience manager, has worked with JHCP for six years. She loves spreading positivity and sharing different communications perspectives through the use of Language of Caring and other tools and data. Her photo on page 48, "[Grumpy Morgs](#)," is her first submission to *Meraki*. "As a first time mom, my camera is always close at hand to document all the little moments. This picture was taken when my baby, Morgan Arthur Crouse, really started to show a bigger range of emotions at four months. He was teething and...found a new way to express his feelings with a simple arched brow." Outside of work, Allyson enjoys baking and showing she cares through a shared meal or a simple, sweet treat.



Jayanti Dasgupta, M.D.

Jayanti Dasgupta, M.D., practices family medicine at our Howard County practice. She has worked with JHCP for about six months. Her favorite thing about her job is being able to work with patients and families on a day-to-day and long-term basis to make shared decisions to help improve their health. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[The Value of a Life](#)," can be found on page 12. Outside of work, Dr. Dasgupta enjoys finding local (ideally outdoor) adventures with her husband and two young kids.



L. Shannon Davis

Shannon Davis is a medical office assistant at our Odenton practice. She has worked with JHCP for nearly a year. Her favorite thing about her job is getting to know her coworkers and forming bonds with them. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Look Around You](#)," can be found on page 34, which was inspired by seeing everyday things in a different way. She says art is like therapy to her; especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, she painted and photographed more than ever. Besides photography, Shannon enjoys water color and chalk painting, and kayaking.

Norman Dy, M.D.

Norman Dy, M.D., is the office medical director for Johns Hopkins Community Physicians' Direct Primary Care (DPC) program. Dr. Dy collaborated with colleagues, Carolyn Le, D.N.P., Emily L., and Kellie Renich, R.N., to produce, arrange and play instrumentals for five musical contributions. You can find them on page 12 ("[Give Me One Reason](#)"), page 25 ("[All Too Well](#)") and page 33 ("[Se & When I Fall In Love](#)"), and page 56 ("[Valerie](#)"). Dr. Dy's favorite thing about his job is helping people. He loves working with his wonderful colleagues. Art adds a little sunshine to his everyday life. He enjoys drawing and music (both playing and producing).



Latoya Edwards, M.D.

Latoya Edwards, M.D., is the office medical director at our North Bethesda practice, where she also practices family medicine. Dr. Edwards loves having the opportunity to connect with others (patients and coworkers). Her submission to *Meraki*, "[Sacred Solitude in Paradise, Na Pali Coast](#)," can be found on page 59. She says, "During a boat ride to a snorkeling site, I was awestruck by the beauty and natural, unique formation of the mountains of Na Pali." Art and photography provides her a sense of peace and balance. She often creates photo journals of places she's visited and family moments over the years. Besides photography, Dr. Edwards enjoys spending time with family, including movie nights in her backyard, badminton, tennis, rollerskating and hiking.





Chona Engco

Chona Engco is a medical assistant at our Germantown practice. She has been with JHCP for 12 years. "I feel like I belong. I love knowing how to care for people so they are less afraid." Chona's inspiration for her submission on page 65, "[A Letter to My Father](#)," is her own experience with resilience and loss. Outside of work, she enjoys going for walks with her son's dog (her grandpup), Evan.

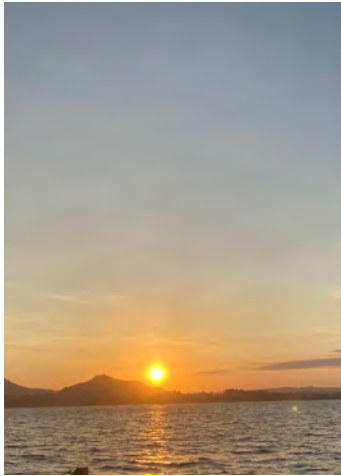
Dawn Fitzsimmons

Dawn Fitzsimmons, clinical supervisor at our Annapolis practice, has worked with JHCP for nearly 23 years. Her favorite thing about her job is being part of a team and feeling responsible for leading that team to success. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Summer](#)" (p. 44), was written as part of a diversity and team-building exercise for Hispanic Heritage Month, led by Amber Burgess (submission on p. 51). Dawn finds all forms of art, especially music, to be cathartic. Outside of work, she enjoys boating, gardening, reading, and, most of all, spending time with her husband, family and close friends.



Ashley Gillis

Ashley Gillis is a medical office assistant at our Downtown Bethesda and is a member of the Arts at JHCP program. She has worked with JHCP for about four years and her favorite things about her job are being able to help others and laughing with her coworkers. Ashley's third submission to *Meraki*, "[DOING NOTHING...IS DOING SOMETHING](#)" can be found on page 11. Writing is her outlet, and she's honored to share her work in *Meraki*. Outside of work, Ashley enjoys spending time with her children.



Talin Glasco, R.N.

Talin Glasco is a registered nurse at our Columbia North practice and has worked with JHCP for one year. Her first submission to *Meraki*, photographs of [Cabo San Lucas](#) on page 57. She was inspired to capture the amazing views on her vacation.

Mizumi Graham-Jones

Mizumi Graham-Jones is a medical office assistant at our Charles County practice – she has been with JHCP for almost 12 years. Her photo, "[Aloha, JHCP,](#)" can be found on page 8. "Life passes by so quickly....a photograph captures a precious moment in time that can be relived each time you see it. It is important to remember, as it reminds of us of how to be grateful and to move forward...living life with each moment we are given." Her inspiration for her photo collection:

- A -Akahai - Kindness
- L -Lōkahi - Unity
- O -'Olu'olu - Agreeable
- H -Ha'aha'a - Humility
- A -Ahonui - Patience



Natasha Haag, M.D.

Natasha Haag, M.D., is a physician on our hospitalist team at Suburban Hospital. She has worked with Johns Hopkins for around 15 years, and her favorite thing about her job is taking care of the elderly population. Her inspiration for her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Let's Go](#)" (p. 42), is Malibu skies. Besides artwork, Dr. Haag enjoys gardening, cooking, puzzling, exercising, reading, traveling and spending time with family in her free time.





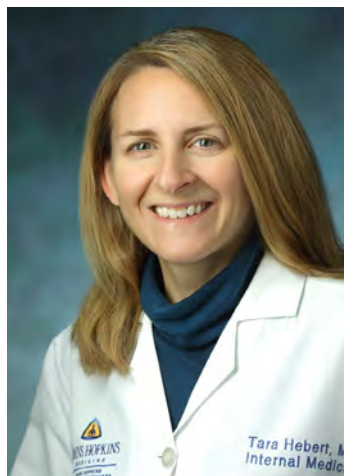
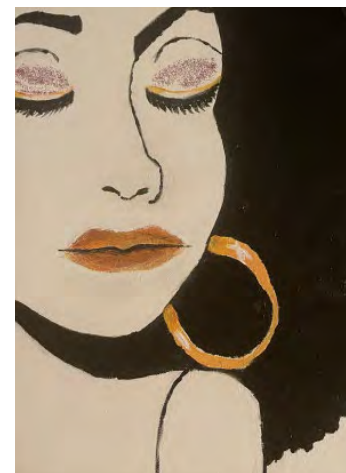
Neola "Rena" Hale-Morgan



Neola "Rena" Hale Morgan is a patient access specialist and has worked for Johns Hopkins for nearly three years. Her favorite thing about her job is the ability to engage with patients and provide excellent customer service when assisting with their scheduling needs. She worked in health care for 18 years, previously as a licensed/registered polysomnographic technologist. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Flower Power](#)," is on page 20. "I have always enjoyed refinishing older antique type furniture, but this was my first whimsical piece inspired by Dr. [Alice] Lee's rock painting class." In addition to refinishing furniture, Rena enjoys walking in nature (which reminds her of her WV upbringing), going to the beach, reading and spending time with her PomChi named Dagoberto "Dago."

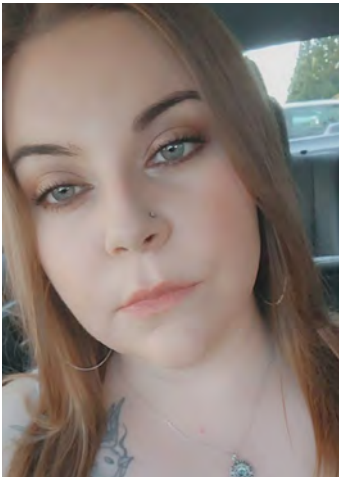
Chamara Hasan, M.D.

Chamara Hasan, M.D., practices family medicine at our Odenton practice. She has been with JHCP for about 15 years. Dr. Hasan earned her medical degree from Michigan State University, and completed her residency in family medicine at Oakwood Hospital. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Endless Beauty](#)," can be found on page 36.



Tara Hebert, M.D.

Tara Hebert, M.D., practices internal medicine at East Baltimore Medical Center. She received her medical degree from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and also completed her residency in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine School of Medicine. Her first [submission to Meraki, a quilt](#), can be found on page 63.



Paige Hooker

Paige Hooker is a medical assistant at our Annapolis practice. Her favorite about her job is putting smiles on patients' faces during hard times. A perfect example of this: her submission to *Meraki* on page 26 is titled "[Be Someone's Sunshine When Their Skies Are Gray.](#)" Paige says, "Photography helps you slow down and notice the little things in life." Outside of work, she enjoys hiking and spending time with friends.

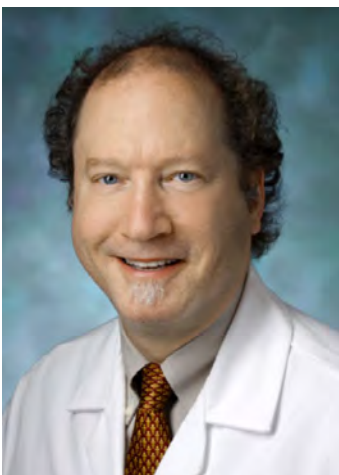
Jennifer Janus, M.D.

Jennifer Janus, M.D., practices internal medicine and pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Hagerstown. She has worked with JHCP for 13 years and her favorite thing about her job is problem solving with her patients to find the best way to care for their health as an individual. Her painting, "[Cordyline at Brookside Gardens.](#)" can be found on page 16. Outside of work, Dr. Janus enjoys art, hiking, cooking and traveling.



Robert Kass, M.D.

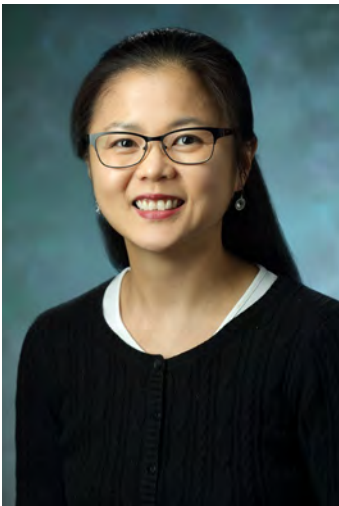
Robert Kass, M.D., practices family medicine at our Westminster practice and has been with JHCP for 33 years. His poem, "[Sharin' the Load](#)" (p. 23), is his third submission to *Meraki*. He describes his submissions as "pokes" – poem-jokes. Dr. Kass received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine, and completed his residency at MedStar Franklin Square Hospital Center.





Vicki Kline, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.-C.

Vicki Kline, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.-C., is JHCP's bilingual social work manager. She has worked with JHCP for nearly eight years. Vicki loves having the opportunity to walk alongside our patients in their realest moments; as a leader. She also loves having the opportunity to shape our vision for how to help and support people, particularly in East Baltimore. Her poem, "[Hope Street](#)" (p. 35), is her fifth submission to *Meraki*. Writing is important to her. It "gives me a space to breathe, to name the mysteries that mesmerize and baffle me, to capture fleeting moments of creativity in an otherwise very routine life!" Outside of work, Vicki enjoys spending time with her friends and family.



Kelly Koay, M.D.

Kelly Koay, M.D., practices both pediatrics and internal medicine at our White Marsh practice. She has worked with Johns Hopkins Community Physicians for about six and a half years. Her favorite thing about her job is making personal connections and longitudinal relationships; being able to positively impact her patients. Dr. Koay's submission, "[Cultural Experiences in Japan](#)" on page 28, was inspired by a trip to Japan. "The pictures display a small slice of the things we saw and did." Outside of work, she enjoys taking walks with her family, doing puzzles and crafts, watching C-dramas, and working with children.

Sarah Lantzy, M.D.

Sarah Lantzy, M.D., is an internal medicine and pediatrics provider at our Frederick practice. She has worked with JHCP for nine years, and her favorite thing about her job is meeting and getting to know all types of people. Her second submission to *Meraki* is a photograph titled "[Ocean Isle Dreams](#)" on page 29. "Ocean Isle has been a summer vacation place for my extended family since I was a toddler. We missed a few years with people going off to college and going in different directions in life. This past year my cousins, brother, kids, parents, and aunts were all back for a reunion." Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, audiobooks, podcasts, and outdoor walks, getting some sunshine.





Alice Lee, M.D.

Alice Lee, M.D., serves as office medical director at our Columbia North practice, in addition to practicing internal medicine and pediatrics. Outside of her medical career, Dr. Lee is passionate about all things creative: music, poetry, writing, painting and photography. This passion for the arts is what inspired her to champion the Arts at JHCP program, as well as this project, *Meraki*, now in its sixth year of publication, for which she serves as editor. Dr. Lee's contribution to this edition of the journal, "[A Letter to My Younger Self](#)," can be found on page 30.

Carolyn Le, D.N.P.

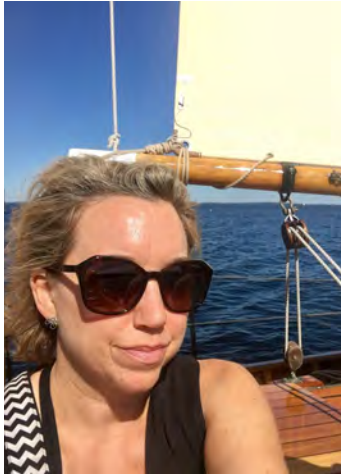
Carolyn Le, D.N.P., is a nurse practitioner for our Direct Primary Care program. N.P. Le also serves as a co-lead for JHCP's Advanced Practice Provider workgroup. She collaborated with colleague Norman Dy, M.D., to produce a musical contribution, for which she provides vocals. "[Valerie](#)" can be found on page 56. N.P. Le contributes musical pieces to *Meraki* year after year and has historically been a part of JHCP's provider band, the Asystolics, as a singer.



Danny Lee, M.D.

Danny Lee, M.D., serves as chief medical information officer for JHCP, in addition to practicing internal medicine at our Odenton practice. Dr. Lee has worked with JHCP for 16 years and his favorite thing about his job is his role in helping our providers deliver the best care possible. Photography reminds him that there is beauty all around, "you just have to be receptive to seeing it." His submission to *Meraki*, "[Oahu & Disney](#)" can be found on page 24.



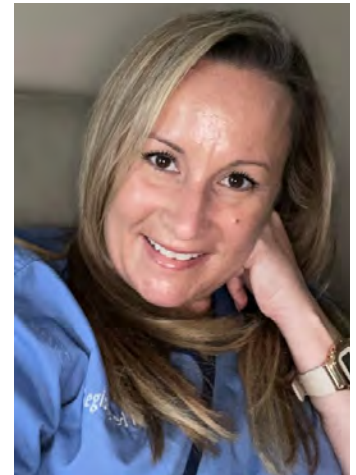


Kerrian Mross, M.D.

Kerrian Mross, M.D., practices internal medicine at our Remington location. She has worked with JHCP for almost 14 years. Her favorite thing about her job is building meaningful relationships with her patients, staff and colleagues. Dr. Mross' submission, "[Galápagos Wildlife](#)," can be found on page 13. Featured in her photos are giant tortoises, a blue-footed booby, and sea lions, captured during trips to Santa Cruz and San Cristobal Islands, Galápagos, Ecuador, in May 2023.

Danie Noble

Danie Noble serves as practice administrator at our Howard County pediatrics practice. She has worked with JHCP for six years, and loves the children she takes care of and her amazing team. Danie started photography as a hobby, and says it has helped her be more present. Her photograph on [page 41](#), "[Koda](#)," is taken of her dog. "She brings so much joy, love, and playfulness to our home." Outside of work Danie enjoys reading, spending time with her boys and Koda, and enjoying nature.



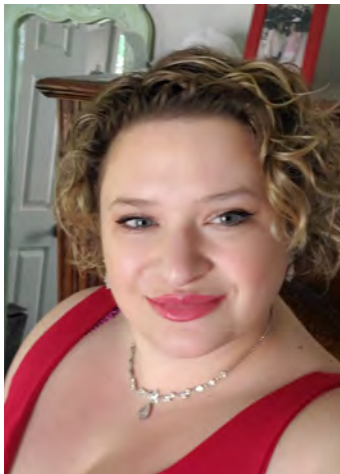
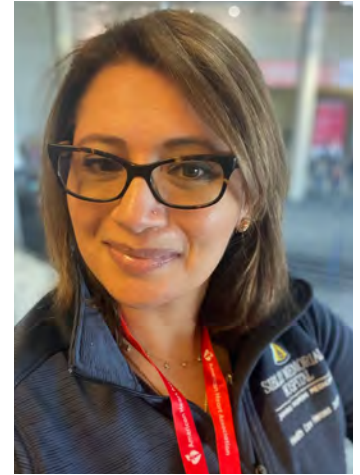
Melissa Nyulasi

Melissa Nyulasi is executive assistant to the vice president of Medical Affairs. She has worked with JHCP for a little over two years. She loves working with an amazing team that supports each other. Her inspiration for her [photo collection on page 18](#) is the Mt. Washington campus, home to our administrative office. Melissa enjoys taking pictures of nature as it motivates her to explore different areas. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, reading and volunteering with the MDSPCA.



Ruby Panju-Merali, D.N.P., M.S.N., F.N.P.-C.

Ruby Panju-Merali, D.N.P., M.S.N., F.N.P.-C., is a neuroscience nurse practitioner on our team at Sibley Memorial Hospital (SMH). She has worked with JHCP for nearly a year, and with SMH for seven years. N.P. Panju-Merali got a passion for baking from her late mom, who was an amazing self-taught cook and baker. "My mom has always been my inspiration fueling not only my passion for baking but was also very influential in supporting my academic and professional journey." Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Dr. Roo's Kitchen](#)" (p. 45), includes photos of her scrumptious desserts. She notes, "When I graduated with my Doctorate in Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) my son automatically renamed Roo's Kitchen as 'Dr Roo's Kitchen.' Dr Roo's kitchen often serves as an outlet for sugar and spices, laughter and chuckles, and celebration of holidays and religions."



Sarah Peet, C.R.N.P.

Sarah Peet, C.R.N.P., is a nurse practitioner at our White Marsh practice. She has been with JHCP for nearly a year. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Elephants](#)," can be found on page 60. She had previously completed another cross stitch project of lions, and wanted another to fit the theme. Art provides her with time to unwind and release tension. Outside of work, N.P. Peet enjoys crafting, playing video games, baking and laying in the sun.

Mark Phillips, M.D., Ph.D.

Mark Phillips, M.D., practices family medicine at our White Marsh practice. He also serves as the chair of the JHCP Credentialing Committee and a co-chair of the JHCP Research and Projects Committee. He has worked with JHCP for 23 years. Dr. Phillips received his medical degree from University of Maryland School of Medicine, and completed his residency in family medicine at University of Maryland Medical Center. Dr. Phillips' submission, a series of photographs, "[Monument Valley](#)," can be found on page 22.





Karen Radowich, D.N.P., C.R.N.P.

Karen Radowich, D.N.P., C.R.N.P., is a nurse practitioner providing family medicine care at our Canton Crossing location. N.P. Radowich earned bachelor's degrees in biology and nursing from the University of Delaware, and her master's degree, Family Nurse Practitioner, at The Johns Hopkins University. Her [crochet work](#) can be found on page 50.

Chris Rawlinson, M.S.N., R.N.

Chris Rawlinson, M.S.N., R.N., is director of education and nursing for JHCP's Clinical Education department. She has served in this role for three years and loves getting to work with her incredible team. Her second submission to *Meraki*, "[Barracks at El Morro](#)," can be found on page 46. "I loved the symmetry of the hallway and the stark white paint. It had an ethereal vibe which was in direct contrast with the purpose of the space (housing soldiers)." Chris says she finds peace perusing art exhibitions at local museums - simultaneously a solitary and group experience. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends and traveling.



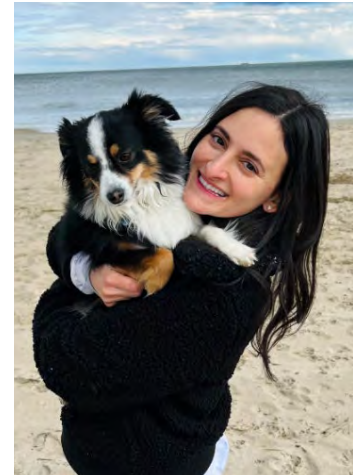
Kellie Renich, R.N.

Kellie Renich, R.N., is a clinical education nurse on the JHCP Clinical Education team. She has worked with JHCP for 11 years. Her favorite thing about her job is helping someone learn something new and find their 'ah ha!' moment. Kellie is active in the Arts at JHCP program and has historically been a part of JHCP's provider band, the Asystolics, as a singer. Her cover of "[Give Me One Reason](#)" can be found on page 12.



Jessica Segall

Jessica Segall is a marketing project administrator on the JHCP Marketing and Communications team. She has been with JHCP for eight years, and her favorite thing about her job is getting to be creative and watching her team come up with such great ideas that they can bring to life. Her second submission to *Meraki*, "[Nursery Friends](#)," can be found on page 32. "When my nephew was born, I wanted to do something special for him. Something one-of-a-kind. So I painted a baby giraffe, lion and elephant for his jungle-themed nursery." Outside of work, Jessica enjoys hiking, being in nature, cooking, traveling, photography, spending time with family and friends, and, of course, painting.



Janet Siddiqui, M.D.

Janet Siddiqui, M.D., serves as office medical director at our Odenton pediatrics practice. She has been with JHCP for 29 years, and her favorite thing about her job is the people she works with. Dr. Siddiqui's submission to this year's edition of *Meraki*, a photo collage titled "[Sunrise, Sunset, Moonrise](#)," can be found on page 62. "Nature looks different everyday, so find the beauty and embrace it." When she is not providing care to patients, Dr. Siddiqui enjoys gardening and spending time with her grandchildren.

Clara E. Stevenson-Nyang

Clara E. Stevenson-Nyang is a medical office assistant at our general surgery practice in Bethesda. She has been with JHCP for ten years, and most enjoys the opportunity to meet and speak with so many different people of different backgrounds and energies. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[The Warrior Road](#)," can be found on page 58. Her poem is inspired by "the difficult, surprising, humbling and enlightening journey of aging. Coming to terms with the changes of body, soul and spirit. Seeing a world you once knew shift and rise to a new generation." Outside of work, Clara is an avid hiker, and "welcomes every opportunity to be out in nature."





Tabitha Sweetney

Tabitha Sweetney is a certified medical assistant at our Sibley Primary Care practice. She has worked with JHCP for about one year and enjoys being able to help others. Her first submission to *Meraki*, a collection of [personalized crafts](#), can be found on page 27. Tabitha says she enjoys making things, and crafting offers her a quiet place. Besides crafting, she enjoys reading and spending time with her family.

Samantha Swords, M.D.

Samantha Swords, M.D., serves as office medical director at our Fulton practice. Her first submissions to *Meraki*, [crochet pieces](#), can be found on page 10. She says, "I learned to crochet about five years ago and started knitting about a year later and it has become such an integral part of my life since then. Creating something with yarn has become my happy place and stress relief. I love making other's ideas come to life as well as designing my own patterns and seeing other's creations from them." Outside of work, Dr. Swords enjoys fiber arts, cats, tea and anything related to autumn.



Amina Watson, M.D.

Amina Watson, M.D., is a pediatrician at our Bowie practice. Her favorite thing about her job is interacting with her patients. Dr. Watson is a long-time contributor to *Meraki*. [Her submissions, two drawings](#), were inspired by childbirth ("Madre") and embracing one's own style ("Be Fierce"). "Art is an outlet, a chance to be free flowing in thought and create something a little weird and different." Outside of work, Dr. Watson enjoys art, writing and fitness.



Claire Wood, R.N.

Claire Wood, R.N., is a registered nurse at our Remington pediatrics practice. She has worked with JHCP for about nine years. Her second submission to *Meraki* is a painting titled "[Sarah](#)" on page 7. Art plays a large role in Claire's life – she says that, "creating something out of nothing gives me a sense of accomplishment, but without the stress of having to do something a certain way or by a certain time." Outside of work, she enjoys reading, drawing and anything that allows her to lounge around without feeling too guilty about it.



Yao-Yao Zhu, M.D.

Yao-Yao Zhu, M.D., is an internal medicine physician on our hospital-based medicine team at Suburban Hospital. She enjoys helping her patients and their families. Artwork and painting is an oasis for her. Her second submission to *Meraki*, "[Lotus](#)," can be found on page 37. She notes, the "lotus is a pure and spiritual flower, only shown in the summer." Outside of work and painting, Dr. Zhu enjoys yoga, ikebana, and playing the piano.



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