



Meraki

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

Issue VII
November 12, 2024

WELCOME TO MERAKI

Meraki (pronunciation | mA-'rak-E), now in its seventh year of publication, is a journal of collected written and creative 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. 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

CONTENTS

PAGE	5	<u>INTRODUCTION ... Steven Kravet, M.D., M.B.A.</u>
	6	<u>CORTICIACEAE ... Jennifer Janus, M.D.</u>
	7	<u>SOME GAVE ALL ... Chris Rawlinson, M.S.N., R.N.</u>
	8	<u>DR. ROO'S KITCHEN ... Ruby Panju-Merali, D.N.P., M.S.N., F.N.P.-C.</u>
	9	<u>CROCHET PROJECTS ... Karen Radowich, C.R.N.P.</u>
	10	<u>MONOCHROME PHOTOGRAPHY ... Mark Phillips, M.D., Ph.D.</u>
	12	<u>UNBROKEN & GROWTH ... Amina Watson, M.D.</u>
	13	<u>ON THE ROAD TO AVICENNA ... Farhan Shah, M.D.</u>
	14	<u>MAMA ... Mihail "Misha" Zilbermint, M.D.</u>
	15	<u>JAPAN PANORAMA ... Ta-Ya Lee, D.N.P., Ph.D.</u>
	16	<u>BLOSSOM ... Jacqueline Navarro</u>
	17	<u>JELLY DANCING ... Dawn Fitzsimmons</u>
	18	<u>PEBBLE HILL PLANTATION, GA ... Alexis Taylor</u>
	19	<u>NOTRE DAME & EN ROUTE ... Danny Lee, M.D.</u>
	20	<u>ART AND FRIENDSHIP DAY ... Alice Lee, M.D.</u>
	21	<u>TURNING LEAVES ... Jill Troilo, M.D.</u>
	22	<u>CRESTED PEAFOWL IN BLUE ... Sarah Lantzy, M.D.</u>
	23	<u>TOUCH OF VINTAGE ... Nicole Weyant</u>



CONTENTS

PAGE	24	<u>LULLABY (GOODNIGHT MY ANGEL) ... Carolyn Le, D.N.P.</u>
	25	<u>TRAIN ROBBERY ... Angela Saylor, R.N.</u>
	26	<u>SOLAR ECLIPSE OVER BALTIMORE... Benjamin Fakheri, M.D.</u>
	27	<u>A TRIO OF POKES ... Robert Kass, M.D.</u>
	28	<u>THE FARM FRENCHIE ... Nichole Jantzi, R.N.</u>
	29	<u>HAND MADE WITH LOVE! ... Aleaya Gordon</u>
	30	<u>NIAGARA FALLS ... Lorie Cram, M.D.</u>
	31	<u>BOTH SIDES, NOW ... Kellie Renich, R.N.</u>
	32	<u>LINCOLN ... Claire Wood, R.N.</u>
	33	<u>MESMERIZING EVENING SKIES ... Linda Stark</u>
	34	<u>DARK GIRL DREAMING ... Amina Watson, M.D.</u>
	40	<u>PHOTOGRAPHS ... Kelly Koay, M.D.</u>
	41	<u>MITTENS ... Tara Scheck, M.D.</u>
	42	<u>MYSTICAL MIMI ... Chona Engco</u>
	43	<u>PHOTOGRAPHS ... Danie Noble</u>
	44	<u>3 SONGS ... Norman Dy, M.D.</u>
	45	<u>CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES</u>



Throughout *Meraki*, click or tap this button to go back to the table of contents.

INTRODUCTION

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

Who would ever guess that their primary care physician is also a talented painter? That the medical assistant that they interact with at each appointment is a profound writer? That their nurse practitioner can sing as well as the best?

Now in its seventh year of publication, *Meraki* continues to showcase the talent and passions and of our team members at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians (JHCP). This journal, alongside its parent program, Arts at JHCP, has ensured that joy and creative expression remain a priority at our organization.

Within these pages lay deeply personal essays, museum-worthy artwork and beautiful photography. As you explore *Meraki*, I hope that you remember who these submissions came from: health care workers. The physicians, clinicians and team members who care for our patients at our practices and hospitals, and the staff that supports their safety and operations.

I give my thanks to Dr. Alice Lee, office medical director at our Columbia North practice, and lead for the Arts at JHCP program, for her continued support of this production. I have the deepest gratitude for every person who was brave enough to share parts of themselves with us through their submissions in the following pages. And I also thank you, Reader, for continuing to support this journal and your community.

After reading, maybe you will be inspired to chase your own meraki.

All my best,



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



CORTICIACEAE

by: jennifer janus, m.d.

oil on gessobord; 24 x 36



SOME GAVE ALL

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



DR. ROO'S KITCHEN



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



CROCHET PROJECTS

by: karen radowich, c.r.n.p.



MONOCHROME PHOTOGRAPHY



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



THE FALCONER, CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK



BETHESDA TERRACE, CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK



WAREHOUSE C, ORIOLE PARK AT CAMDEN YARDS



GALERIE VÉRO-DODAT, PARIS



ENTRANCE TO THE CONE COLLECTION
BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



THE RING, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC



FENCE & GRAPES
ÎLE D'ORLÉANS, STE-FAMILLE, QUÉBEC



LE CHÂTEAU FRONTENAC, QUÉBEC CITY

UNBROKEN & GROWTH



by: amina watson, m.d.

pencil and pen



ON THE ROAD TO AVICENNA



by: farhan shah, m.d.



Starlit tomes of healing guide me on the road to Avicenna.
Honing this blest art, I ride on the road to Avicenna.

Dried heavy tears of weary relief stain my worn faded
white coat, droplets of joy.

The whispered prayers of my patients anchor me on the
road to Avicenna.

A relentless elder peers back at me in reverent silence
through the fine mahogany diploma frames.

What an august privilege to witness the young apprentice
age in knowledge on the road to Avicenna.

I listen to my despondent sister-in-humanity while she
narrates years of trials and torn hopes, revealing the
diagnosis to me.

I pause sailing on my dhow, only to grab hold of my
brother's outstretched hand, as the Jaihun river meanders
on the road to Avicenna.

Preventable hospital readmissions, merciless insurance
denials and drowning healthcare costs blacken the sizzling
scorched medical desert and its parched inhabitants.

I shut my eyes and dream of a Persian master writing
Arabic in Greek texts on Egyptian papyrus catching me
while I fall forward on the road to Avicenna.

I am not that son of ancient Bukhara, the architect of the
Canon, Ibn Sina.

But perhaps one day you will find Farhan waiting for you
on the road to Avicenna.

MAMA

by: mihail zilbermint, m.d.



Mihail Zilbermint, M.D.
'Mama'



Vocals and guitar by Mihail Zilbermint, M.D.; Produced by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Mihail Zilbermint, M.D.

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*.



JAPAN PANORAMA

by: ta-ya lee, d.n.p., ph.d.



BLOSSOM

by: jacqueline navarro



JELLY DANCING

by: dawn fitzsimmons

sea glass and ink



PEBBLE HILL PLANTATION, GA



poem & photos **by: alexis taylor**

Underneath the oaks, I find my way,
In the maze of Pebble Hill, where shadows play.
Each path a heartbeat, a tale to tell,
In the whispers of leaves, I feel magic swell.

Sunlight filters through, a golden embrace,
I dance with the wind, in this sacred space.
The roots of the trees, like stories entwined,
Ground me in strength, where dreams are designed.

With every turn taken, my spirit takes flight,
In the warmth of the day, and the cool of the night.
Here, in the maze, I'm both wild and free.



NOTRE DAME & EN ROUTE



by: danny lee, m.d.



NOTRE DAME IN THE RAIN



EN ROUTE POUR PRENDRE UN CAFÉ

ART AND FRIENDSHIP DAY



by: alice lee, m.d.

Drs. Troilo, Lantzy and I had a “Girl’s Day Out” one fine day in June. We met at a Paint-Your-Own studio (Hot Fired Arts in Frederick) and created beautiful plates with colored glass. We each chose a different template and decorated with colors of our choosing for the next couple hours. We chatted, vented and gossiped. We debated our problems—“Should I do yellow?” “Should I do red?” “Oops I spilled!”—and gave each other feedback and encouragement. When we were done, the plates were sent to be prepared and fired to be picked up two weeks later. Afterwards, we had a lovely lunch at a small café and discussed movies, books and whatever else was going on our lives. I had so much fun creating art, but also cultivating relationships among colleagues. We all live miles apart and purposefully meeting to grow a friendship takes time and effort that may not be so easy as busy adults, but it has been so valuable to increase my own joy and happiness, and I have this lovely piece of art to admire and remember that wonderful day! Highly recommend to all!



TURNING LEAVES

by: jill troilo, m.d.



CRESTED PEAFOWL IN BLUE



by: sarah lantzy, m.d.



LULLABY (GOODNIGHT MY ANGEL)



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

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



Carolyn Le, D.N.P.
'Lullaby (Goodnight My Angel)'



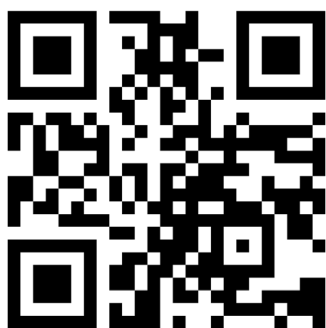
Vocals by Carolyn Le, D.N.P.; Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Billy Joel.

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*.



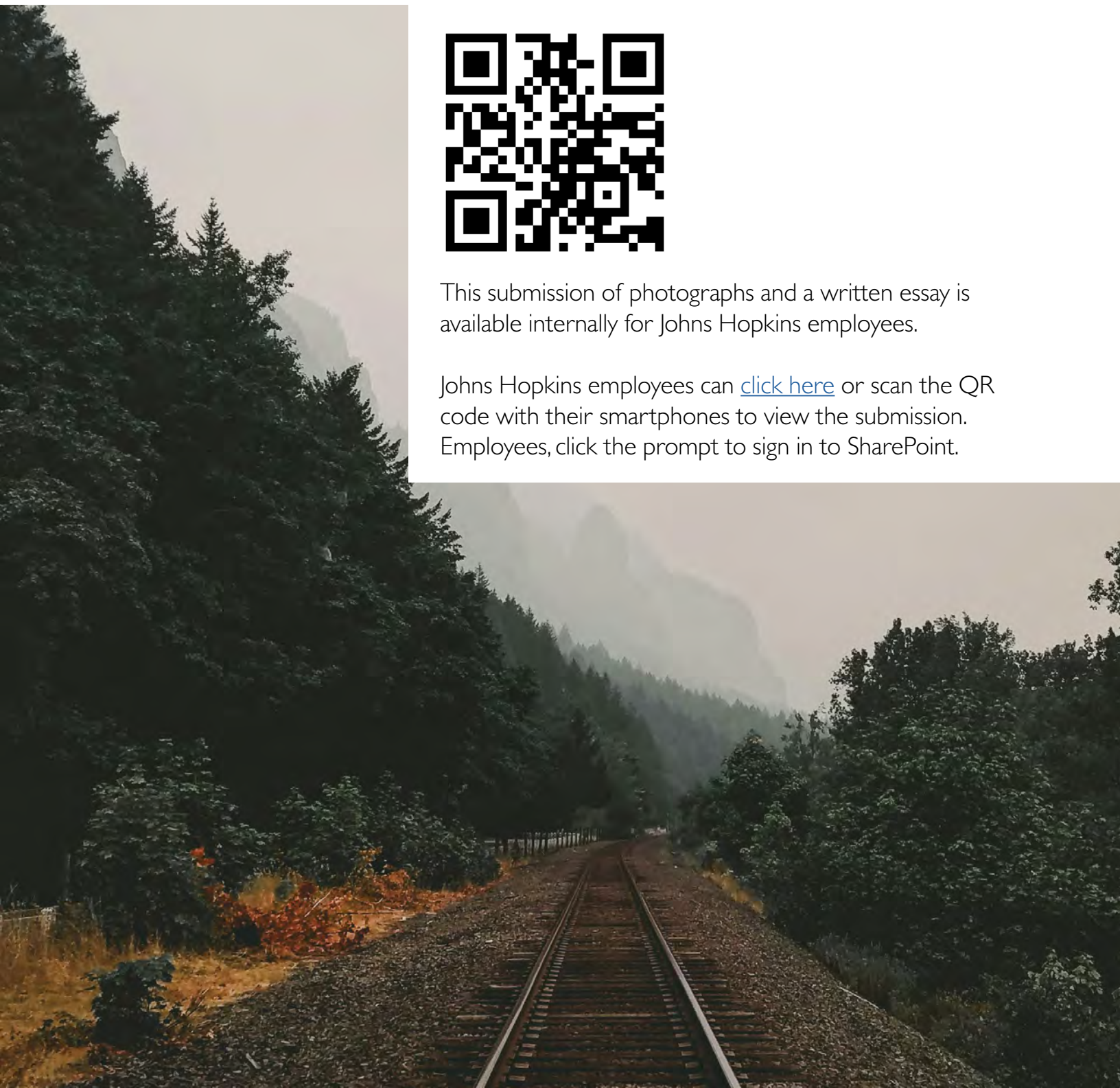
TRAIN ROBBERY

photos and essay by: angela saylor, r.n.



This submission of photographs and a written essay is available internally for Johns Hopkins employees.

Johns Hopkins employees can [click here](#) or scan the QR code with their smartphones to view the submission. Employees, click the prompt to sign in to SharePoint.



SOLAR ECLIPSE OVER BALTIMORE ON APRIL 4, 2024

by: benjamin fakheri, m.d.



A TRIO OF POKES

by: robert kass, m.d.



ENLIGHTENED

Haltingly,
I approached
the campground elder
and asked,
“How do you toast a marshmallow?”
“Sit down,” she said, “and I will tell you.”
“Here’s to you, marshmallow!”

CURIOSITÉ, EGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

It should be no surprise
that I was named
after my brother.
After all,
he was born
before me.

PAYING IT FORWARD

My wife’s close friend,
now living far away,
shipped her a mug that read,
“Wish you lived next door.”
So affected was she,
that my wife promptly
gave the mug to me.

THE FARM FRENCHIE

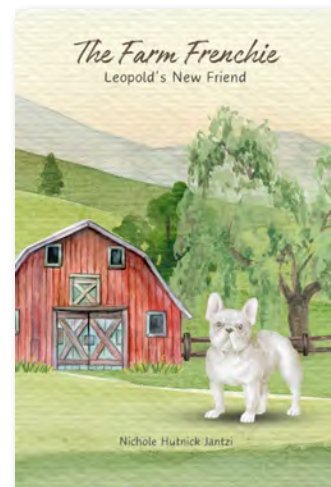


by: nichole jantzi, r.n.

children's book series

About the series: Leopold is a lovable frenchie who loves his life on the farm, especially his friends that make the farm a wonderful place to live. Follow along as Leopold meets new friends and learns new lessons. The Farm Frenchie series uses experiences from nature to subtly teach valuable lessons through the eyes of Leopold.

In the first book, **Leopold's New Friend**, Leopold learns about overcoming false perceptions and assumptions when he meets Antenna, a dark fishing spider. In the second book, **Muncher's Transformation**, Leopold learns about the beauty of change as his friend Muncher, a black swallowtail caterpillar, transforms into a butterfly.



Coming soon! Leopold learns to be brave in **Leopold Goes to the Creek**.

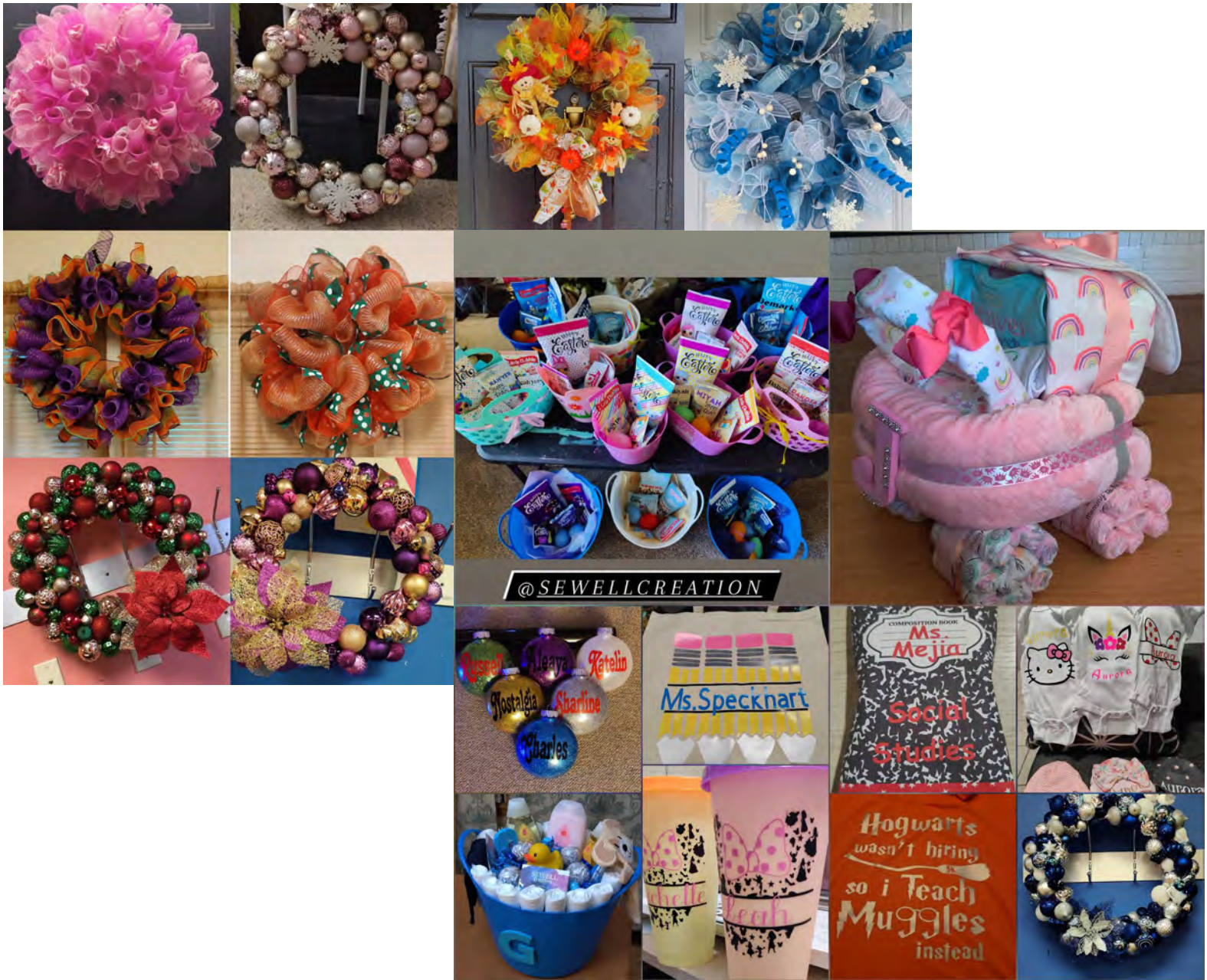


Paperback books, 30 pages
Stories by Nichole Jantzi
Artwork created by Nichole Jantzi using
Canva Pro

HAND MADE WITH LOVE!



by: aleaya gordon



NIAGARA FALLS

by: lorie cram, m.d.



BOTH SIDES, NOW



vocals **by: kellie renich, r.n.**

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



Kellie Renich, R.N.
'Both Sides, Now'



Vocals by Kellie Renich, R.N.; Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Joni Mitchell.

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*.



LINCOLN

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

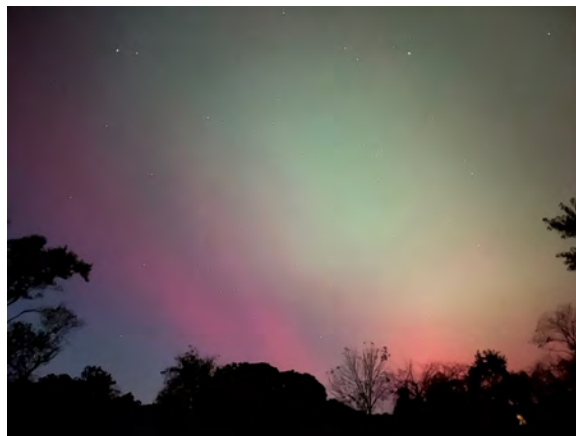
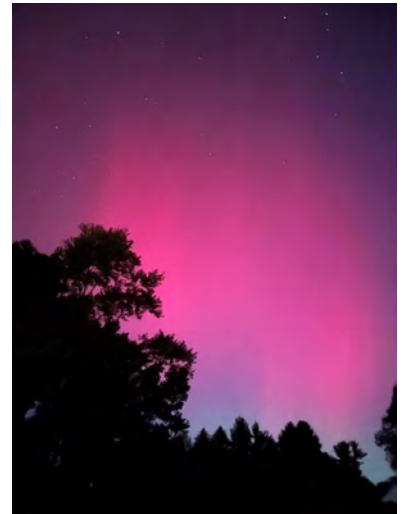
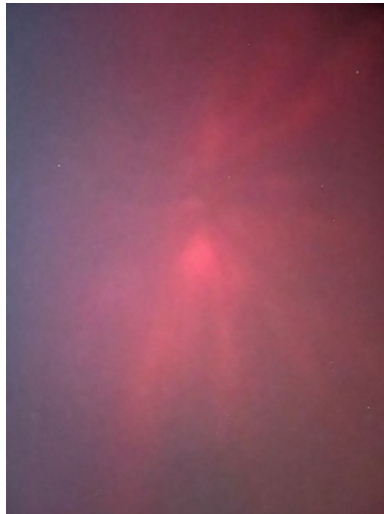
acrylic on canvas



MESMERIZING EVENING SKIES



by: linda stark



DARK GIRL DREAMING: HOW I BECAME THE SECOND DR. WATSON



book excerpt **by: amina watson, m.d.**

Are you going to be a doctor or a nurse?

This is the question that my pediatrician, Dr. Akan, would ask me at every visit from as far back as I can remember. And with glee, I would proclaim - “a doctor!” - every time.

My pediatrician was probably aware of my unusual intelligence. I sat on my dad’s lap reading books at two years old, and throughout childhood, I always had a book in my hand everywhere I went. I played Beethoven’s 5th at seven years old to a standing ovation in a small church in Detroit at a recital. I was so little that I felt that the big piano in that church might swallow me up. But somehow, I was able to perform. I had skipped kindergarten, and would later go from the 4th to the 6th grade. I am not certain where the sureness that I would be a doctor came from. Maybe some adults recognized my potential, and brightness, and made the assertion first.

My families were never rich, but many of them were educators and hard workers. My dad, Clifford, the first Dr. Watson, had earned his doctorate in education by 24 years old, after getting a scholarship to college via his football skills. His parents built their own business and house in Akron,



Ohio, in the 1960's. My grandparents also had simple beginnings, having come from the back woods of Louisiana, and a small farm in Missouri, respectively. My mother, Patricia's, grandmother and grandfather were educators in the pre-integrated south. After their migration to another small town in Ohio, Mansfield, most of their kids would grow up to work in the steel mills. My stepdad, Perry Hall (not a typo, Marylanders), grew up in the Brewster projects of Detroit, but later went on to earn his Ph.D. from Harvard. My families were not a part of the black upper middle class (aka the Black Bourgeoisie). I came from salt of the earth small town people, and grew up around brilliant educators, musicians, artists, lawyers and engineers. I saw that even though many people in my family had simple beginnings, hard work and talent could lead to a good life.

There were no medical doctors in the mix of my families, however. So, I had no idea what becoming a doctor looked like. I just knew that it was my destiny. Some affirmation of this came when I attended a lecture at Wayne State University where my mom worked as an administrative assistant. It was a community event; and many people came out to hear the famous doctor who was from Detroit speak. He was soft spoken, and he didn't come from much, but he had family who believed in him, and he was now a surgeon at a place called Johns Hopkins. In him, I saw the possibility of coming from Detroit, and going to this place that I hadn't heard of – but that everyone else had, because it was considered one of the best hospitals in the world. In seeing this famous African American surgeon from my hometown, I saw the possibility that I, too, could be a doctor with THE Johns Hopkins.



So I carried on, thriving at an independent high school on a full scholarship, and later being somewhat forced to attend the same university where my mother worked. I was 15 when the decision was made regarding which college I would attend, and Wayne State offered me a full scholarship. That, combined with my young age, made the decision for my parents easy. I lived at home during college and I would often catch a ride with my mom, because she worked on campus. I worked hard, balancing my pre-med studies with plenty of Spanish, math and dance classes. I was laser focused on my goals even though I tended to hang out with the creative kids, who shared my love of dance and writing, and the math nerds. My boyfriend was a math genius, and I also loved math. I generally found the pre-med students to be relatively toxic and too competitive. For me, medical school was certain, so I didn't harbor the same worries that they seemed to have.

My father suggested, in my third year of college, that I write a letter of introduction to the Dean of Minority Affairs at the time at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Dr. Roland Smoot. I obeyed his suggestion, not quite understanding why I had to do this, but I had nothing to lose. I have no idea what I wrote – I didn't save the letter, unfortunately. However, to my joy, my letter was answered with a request for an interview at THE Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. By then, I understood the reputation of the hospital and the medical school.

Freshly 18 years old, in my third year of college, I found myself applying to one of the best medical schools in the country, and

actually being asked to come talk to them in Baltimore, a city I had never visited. My mother, little brother and I hopped on a train to Baltimore – an unfamiliar and hot, humid city compared to my hometown. My mom was pretty overprotective, and she had never been to Baltimore either, so she was sure to come with me on this adventure.

She and my brother also rode with me to the medical school campus on the day of the interview. We were surprised to see that the surrounding streets had the familiar tone of poverty, and inner-city struggle that was on the streets of Detroit. But we stayed within the boundaries of the campus, and she watched me walk towards the building where I was to be interviewed.

I was quite a sight, a little brown girl in a hot pink skirt suit, with large, gold buttons. It was definitely not expensive looking, but it was probably the fanciest thing I had to wear at the time. At 5 feet 4 inches tall and 105 pounds, and no makeup except lip gloss and a bit of eyeliner, I looked more like I was 12 than 18.

The serene, academic vibe within the halls of the building were relatively familiar. My independent high school had provided me with a great education alongside the children of people like the owners of Vlasic Pickles, and Little Caesars. Set in one of the most exclusive suburbs of Michigan, my educational experience in this setting made me just as comfortable with the vibe of prestige as I was with the tone of the inner city. So, despite my youth and my hot pink garment, I felt comfortable in the prestigious halls of Johns Hopkins. It was all a part of my destiny.

Once I arrived at the admissions office, someone led me into a room where a few other candidates were already present. The room had walls adorned with portraits of probably famous white doctors, I imagined, and was conservatively decorated. There were a few expensive looking leather couches arranged in a square in the center of the room, where a few other candidates sat chatting with each other. They were all white, and dressed in appropriately conservative dark suits.

As I approached this relatively intimate sitting area, I said, "Hello." Hard to ignore in my hot pink suit against my dark skin, they paused their conversation, looked me up and down, and as if they had a synchronous mind, they chose to ignore me, and turned back to each other to resume their conversation. Now, some others may have taken offense to this, but I smiled, and simply thought about a poem that I had memorized for speech class a few months before that day, and that poem had stuck with me for some reason. The poem was "Incident," by Countee Cullen. I was in Baltimore, and this was my incident, but I kept smiling because my destiny was clear, and at that moment, my ultimate goal was in reach.

I received my acceptance letter to THE Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine that spring. I had to speed up my college courses so that I would be finished in time. I had been enjoying college, and I was taking my time getting to the finish line, but with my acceptance, I had to continue classes through the summers so that I could finish up the required courses for my biology degree before my return to Baltimore as a first year

medical student.

Once getting to the School of Medicine, the seed was immediately planted. "You are the best of the best." This phrase was repeated to us at our new student orientation. It was the expectation for all of us throughout our journey there as well. I had a great time as a medical student, this was my dream, and I was living it. I found my way to pediatrics eventually. Maybe because I had endured being called a baby doctor by most of my adult patients. I still looked like I was in middle school for most of my medical school journey, but I knew that it was where I belonged. Incidentally, none of the other candidates that I saw on my interview day made it into my medical school class.

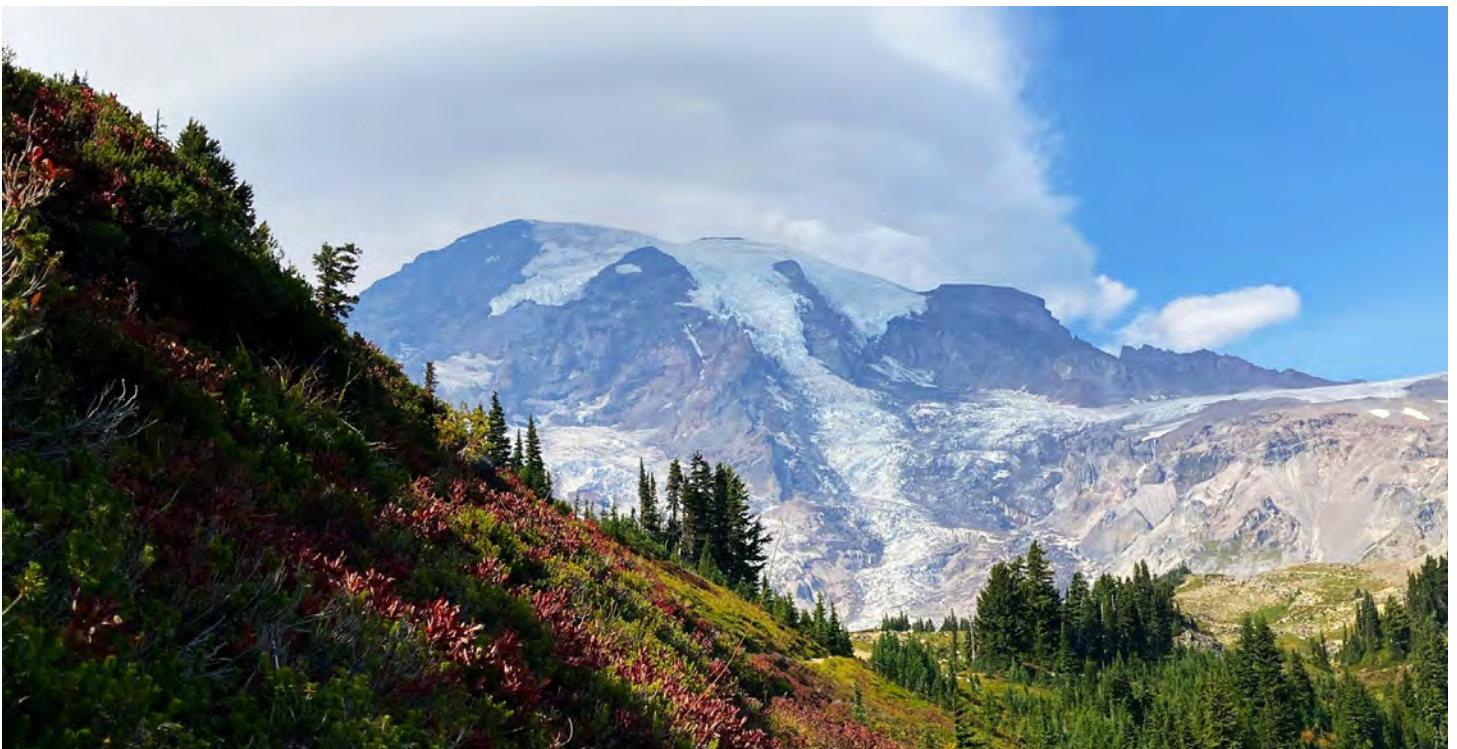
Medical school and the specialty specific training that follows – residency – is a challenging endeavor without doubt. Mostly, I was fascinated and excited throughout the process of becoming a doctor, but residency was so much more challenging, for several reasons. I had other incidents along the way. My initial match into a pediatric training program wasn't ideal. This program was full of people who again, didn't see me. And for the first time, I started to doubt if this was truly the path that I belonged on. I couldn't see myself working with the type of people I was surrounded by; they had the same toxic energy of the pre-med students that I avoided in college. I had matched to another tertiary care center – or highly specialized hospital – like Johns Hopkins, but weirdly, the people there were arrogant, judgmental and unwelcoming, and this was completely in contrast to my experience at Hopkins as a medical student. I wondered if I had chosen

the wrong specialty, and the wrong place. And my surety in my choice of becoming a doctor also began to crack under that stress. Sometime during the winter of my first year of residency, my father called me and told me that he had fainted, and was not feeling well recently. Even though my parents had divorced before I turned three, I was very close to my father. In that moment, whether from intuition, or the amount of knowledge I had so far gathered in my training, I immediately worried that he might have cancer. I wept after talking to him, because my spirit told me that something was very off. When he found out that he did indeed have cancer, the decision to transfer to another program back home in Michigan was easy for me.

I transferred to a community-based pediatric residency program in Detroit. It was the best decision for me on many levels. There, I was seen. I was serving my own community. I was nurtured and encouraged by the doctors

who trained me, and I was back home again, in my parents' house, and closer to my dad.

My dad was the first Dr. Watson. He was a great educator and principal, and he helped countless children in the Detroit Public School system. He was well known in the community, because he truly loved children and defended their right to the best education possible. He helped create culturally centered schools for African American children, and was known to walk the perimeter of his elementary school, when it was initially placed in a neighborhood that had ignorant people who threatened the children simply because they did not look like them. He was an intimidating presence, and he often had a no nonsense look on his face. He had maintained the muscular solidness that helped him secure his football scholarship years before, but all of his kids, and his own kid, me, knew that he was a gentle spirit. He once wrote me a note saying that I would do more for children than he could have ever



imagined. At the time I had no idea how I could possibly ever do more than what he did in life, and affect so many. My dad was my hero. Watching him lose his battle with cancer was one of the most challenging times in my life. I would sit in his hospital room with him if he happened to be in the hospital when I was on call, and join the morning rounds on him if I happened to be nearby. Some of the other residents who knew that he was my father would look at me apologetically, but being able to be by his side was everything to me. He saw where I was headed, and what I had accomplished so far, and I know that gave him some degree of peace.

My other hero in this journey to become a doctor was my own pediatrician, Dr. Akan. He did his part in encouraging a little dark girl to know that she could do what he did. In a full circle moment, during my clinical rotation at the end of my residency program, he happened to be one of the preceptors, or clinical teachers, that I was assigned to. On my first day of clinic with him, I was beaming in my long white coat, and was able to tell him, "Look, Dr. Akan, I did it. I am a doctor."

There I was, working alongside this man, who saw my potential as a child, officially on the same path that he was. I was able to see that he had generations of patients at that point. He was seeing the babies of children that he had taken care of. It was clear that he was so loved in the community, and that he loved what he did.

Even though neither my dad, Dr. Akan, or my mom or stepdad (they passed away during the pandemic) or grandparents are still here, I carry their legacies with me. I have worked

hard, and I still do. I love my patients, and I love what I do. I try to plant the seed of becoming a doctor in any child who might be interested, and I have had the joy of seeing a few of them get into medical school. And I also now take care of some of my former patients' babies.

I carry on the name of Dr. Watson. It is a name that evoked love and respect in our community in Detroit, and perhaps I really will do even more for children than the first Dr. Watson predicted. Whatever I do, it is an absolute privilege, and I hope that someday I will have the full circle moment of seeing one of my patients in a long, white coat, too.

This wasn't an easy journey, but most things of worth do not come easily. And incidents will happen. The key is, knowing that your destiny is truly yours, and that it awaits you. ■

Excerpt from the in-progress biography, Dark Girl Dreaming.



PHOTOGRAPHS

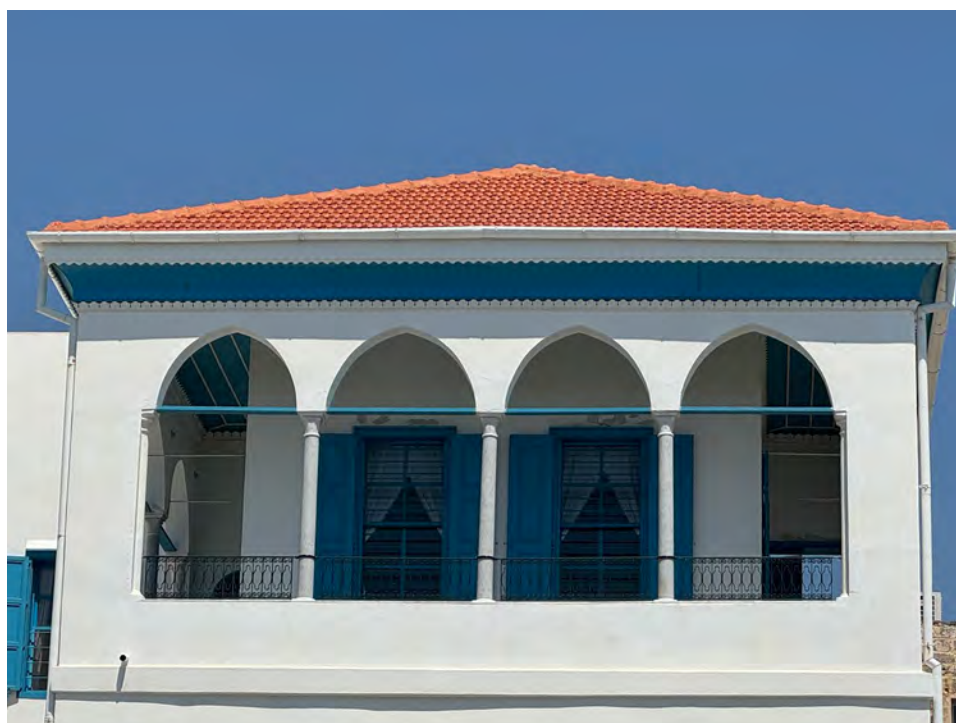
by: kelly koay, m.d.



SEA GATE, AKKA, ISRAEL



BAHÁ'I GARDENS & SHRINE OF THE BÁB, HAIFA, ISRAEL



HOUSE, AKKA, ISRAEL

MITTENS

by: tara scheck, m.d.



MYSTICAL MIMI

poem and photos **by: chona engco**



Mimi is my daughter's cat, my grand baby.
A gift from my friend, Laicey V.
She's a beauty – yes, Laicey, but not more than Mimi.

Mimi is a majestic princess.
She's clever, captivating, and cuddly,
Yet fierce and feisty.

Don't mess with my baby or you'll be sorry.
Her purrs have power, her stare has fury.
She defies gravity with effortless grace.
She can tear you down, but don't you worry.

Her heart is pure, her spirit's divine,
She grasps with reason, just her instinct, that's why.
She's sweet like honey and soft like bread,
She's a blessing from heaven, not just from my head.

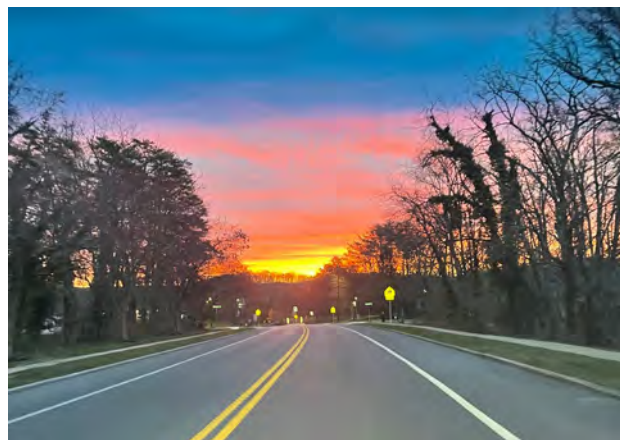
I feel loved by Mimi when she meows at me,
Her unbridled affection melts my sorrows away,
To be one of her humans is an honor,
That I will forever treasure.

Let's snuggle together, it's the best time for me,
I love you, my grandcat, you mesmerize me.



PHOTOGRAPHS

by: danie noble



TAKE THE HIGH ROAD



GOAL SETTER



PINK!



SANDBRIDGE



THOSE EYES

3 SONGS

music & production by: **norman dy, m.d.**



Norman Dy, M.D.
'Forrest Gump Piano Suite'



Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Francesco Parrino.

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



Norman Dy, M.D.
'Feel So Good'



Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Chuck Mangione; Jazz standard.

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*.



Norman Dy, M.D.
"Round Midnight"



Production and instrumentals by Norman Dy, M.D.; Written by Thelonious Monk; Jazz standard.

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

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES



Lorie Cram, M.D., M.B.A.

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 seven years. Dr. Cram's fourth submission to *Meraki*, [photographs of Niagara Falls](#), can be found on page 30. Outside of work, Dr. Cram enjoys traveling.

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., Kellie Renich, R.N., and Mihail Zilbermint, M.D., to produce, arrange and play instrumentals for four musical contributions. You can find them [on page 14 \("Mama"\)](#), [page 24 \("Lullaby \(Goodnight My Angel\)"\)](#), [page 31 \("Both Sides, Now"\)](#), and [page 44 \("3 Songs"\)](#). 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).



Chona Engco

Chona Engco is a medical assistant at our Germantown practice. She has been with JHCP for 13 years. Her favorite part of her job is "knowing that my patients could've been my brother, sisters, mother, or friends. I'm proud knowing that I can make an impact on how they feel while patients are under my care." Chona's inspiration for her submission on [page 42, "Mystical Mimi,"](#) is her daughter. Writing brings her peace and joy. She mostly writes about personal experiences. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family, including her furry kids.



Benjamin Fakheri, M.D.

Benjamin Fakheri, M.D., serves as office medical director and practices internal medicine at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians at Green Spring Station. He has worked with JHCP for more than five years. His first submission to *Meraki*, [a photograph on page 26](#), was inspired by the unique opportunity to see the solar eclipse. Outside of work, Dr. Fakheri enjoys spending time with his family.



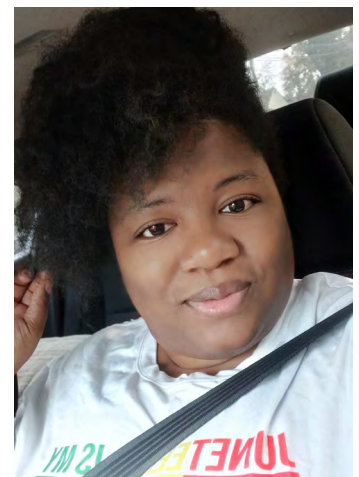
Dawn Fitzsimmons

Dawn Fitzsimmons, clinical supervisor at our Annapolis practice, has worked with JHCP for nearly 24 years. Her favorite thing about her job is mentoring other staff members and working together toward common goals. She created her second submission to *Meraki*, ["Jelly Dancing" \(p. 17\)](#), after a special request from her daughter-in-law. Dawn enjoys arts and crafts, and finds her sea glass on a beach on the Eastern Shore. "Who doesn't love the beach!" Outside of work, Dawn is an avid gardener (she especially loves flowers!), and she and her husband enjoy boating and fishing.



Aleaya Gordon

Aleaya Gordon is a float medical office assistant (MOA) for our National Capital Region. She has worked with JHCP for two years, and her favorite thing about her job is getting to meet many people, as a float MOA. "I love that I can help so many people with many different things!" Aleaya's first submission to *Meraki*, ["Hand Made With Love!" \(p. 29\)](#), is a collection of her hand made, DIY items. She loves to craft and make things that bring a smile to people's faces. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family, crafting and reading.





Nichole Jantzi, R.N.

Nichole Jantzi, R.N., assistant director of clinical education on our Education and Training team, has worked with JHCP for 15 years. Her favorite thing about her job is getting to create engaging visual representations of content for our front-line team members. Nichole's first submission to *Meraki* is "[The Farm Frenchie Children's Book Series](#)" (p. 28). The stories are based on experiences in nature with her family through the eyes of their beloved dog, Leopold. Creating these books has given her an opportunity to create memories with her family. Outside of work, Nichole enjoys spending time outdoors with her family.

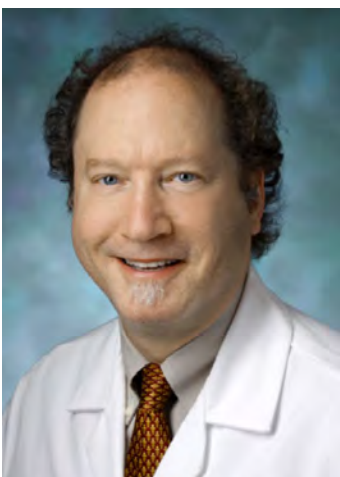
Jennifer Janus, M.D.

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, "[Corticiaceae](#)," can be found on page 6. Outside of work, Dr. Janus enjoys art, hiking, cooking and traveling.



Robert Kass, M.D.

Robert Kass, M.D., practices family medicine at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Westminster and has been with JHCP for 34 years. [His trio of "pokes"](#) (poem-jokes) can be found on page 27. This is his fourth submission to *Meraki*. Dr. Kass received his medical degree from New York University School of Medicine, and completed his residency at MedStar Franklin Square Hospital Center.





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 seven and a half years. Her favorite thing about her job is making personal connections and longitudinal relationships; being able to positively impact her patients. She says that art brings joy, and joy is essential to our lives. Dr. Koay's submission to *Meraki* this year is [a collection of photographs](#) on page 40 taken during a trip to Israel. Outside of work, she enjoys taking walks with her family, doing puzzles and crafts, watching C-dramas, and working with children.



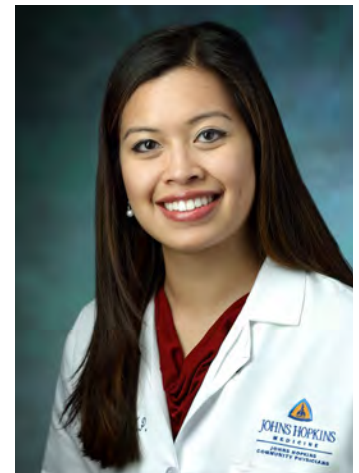
Sarah Lantzy, M.D.

Sarah Lantzy, M.D., is an internal medicine and pediatrics provider at our Frederick practice. She has worked with JHCP for ten years, and her favorite thing about her job is meeting and getting to know all types of people. Her third submission to *Meraki* is [a painted glasswork plate on page 22](#). Dr. Lantzy's plate was submitted alongside the submissions of Dr. Alice Lee and Dr. Jill Troilo. "I don't really think of myself as a fancy artist but really enjoy crafting and the chance to be creative. I also love the opportunity it brings to connect with others outside of our typical work duties." Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, outdoor walks and traveling.



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. ["Lullaby \(Goodnight My Angel\)"](#) can be found on page 24. 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.





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. She has worked with JHCP for 20 years, and her favorite thing about her job is having the opportunity to try to do good for the world. 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 seventh year of publication, for which she serves as editor. Dr. Lee's contribution to this edition of the journal, "[Art and Friendship Day](#)," can be found on page 20.

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 17 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*, [two photographs from a trip to France](#), can be found on page 19.



Ta-Ya Lee, D.N.P., Ph.D.

Ta-Ya Lee, D.N.P., Ph.D., is a nurse practitioner for Johns Hopkins Medicine Primary VirtualCare. N.P. Lee worked for JHCP from 2002-2017, then returned in 2022. Her inspiration for her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Japan Panorama](#)" (p. 15), is the beauty of the world. She enjoys incorporating the arts into her life and outside of work enjoys traveling, cross-stitching and photography.



Jacqueline Navarro

Jacqueline Navarro is a medical office assistant at our Columbia North practice. She has worked with JHCP for nearly a year. Her first submission to *Meraki*, [a collection of flower arrangements](#), can be found on page 16.

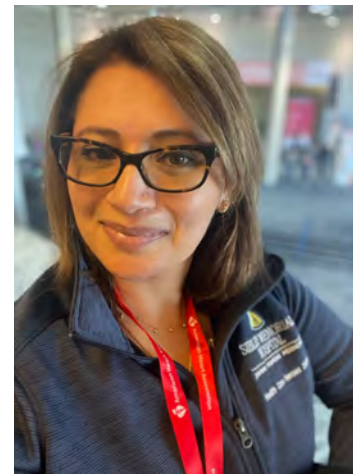


Danie Noble

Danie Noble serves as practice administrator at our Howard County pediatrics practice. She has worked with JHCP for seven 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 and is a stress-reliever. Her submission to *Meraki* this year, [a collection of photographs](#), can be found on page 43. Outside of work, Danie enjoys reading, photography, and spending time with her husband and boys.

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 two years, and with SMH for eight years. N.P. Panju-Merali's passion for cooking came 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 second submission to *Meraki*, ["Dr. Roo's Kitchen" \(p. 8\)](#), includes photos of her scrumptious desserts. "Dr Roo's kitchen often serves as an outlet for sugar and spices, laughter and chuckles, and celebration of holidays and religions."





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 been part of the JHCP family for 24 years. He is also a photographer with a special interest in Baltimore, neon signs, architecture, travel and street photography. His work has been featured in the *Baltimore Sun*, in *Baltimore* magazine, and on LED Baltimore. His work includes color, monochrome and infrared photography, with a heavy emphasis on monochrome. His submission to *Meraki* this year, a collection of photos titled "[Monochrome Photography](#)," can be found on page 10.

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

Karen Radowich, D.N.P., C.R.N.P., is a family medicine nurse practitioner 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 submission to *Meraki*, [crochet projects](#), can be found on page 9.



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 four years and loves getting to work with her incredible team. Her third submission to *Meraki*, "[Some Gave All](#)," can be found on page 7. "I visited Omaha Beach in Normandy, France two weeks before the 80th D-Day anniversary and it was very moving. These pictures are my very small way of honoring those that made the ultimate sacrifice so they are never forgotten." Chris says that art in all of its forms bring her joy and helps her to see the world through other's perspective. 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 our clinical education team. She has worked with JHCP for 12 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 ["Both Sides, Now"](#) can be found on page 31.



Angela Saylor, R.N.

Angela Saylor, R.N., is a nurse at our White Marsh practice. She has been part of the JHCP team for 13 years, and her favorite part of her job is talking with patients and advocating for them. "I get to know my patients pretty well. I always validate what they are feeling, I am honest with them, and they know they can trust me." Angela's first submission to *Meraki*, a written essay and photographs titled, ["Train Robbery,"](#) can be found on page 25. Her submission is available internally for Johns Hopkins employees. [Click here to see it.](#) Note: You may be prompted to sign in.



Tara Scheck, M.D.

Tara Scheck, M.D., practices family medicine at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Urbana. She received her medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and completed her residency in family practice at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Shadyside Hospital. Her first submission to *Meraki*, [knitted mittens](#), can be found on page 41.





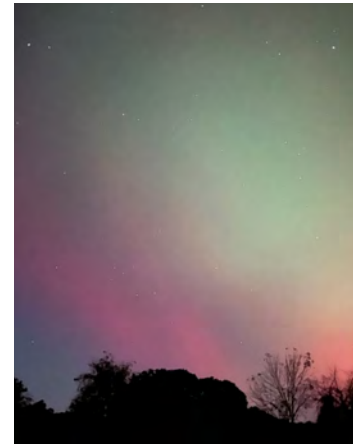
Farhan Shah, M.D.



Farhan Shah, M.D., practices internal medicine at our Frederick practice. Dr. Shah just started with JHCP a few months ago, and his favorite thing about his job is the trust that his patients have in him to improve their health and well-being. Writing helps connect Dr. Shah to universal human truths, which brings him inner peace in times of stress. His first submission to *Meraki*, a written piece titled "[On the Road to Avicenna](#)" can be found on page 13. "Sometimes we may forget why we embarked upon our long and difficult journey to become healers. I wanted to inspire and remind ourselves of the great footsteps we follow and the path they paved for us to have the privilege to be physicians today." Outside of work, Dr. Shah enjoys spending time with family, traveling, reading and writing, and eating great food in the DMV.

Linda Stark

Linda Stark is the practice administrator at our Green Spring Station practice, and has been part of the JHCP family for 19 years. She was amazed by the beauty of her area's recent peek into the Northern Lights, which inspired her first submission to *Meraki*, a collection of photos titled "[Mesmerizing Evening Skies](#)" (p. 33). "Seeing the Northern Lights was on my bucket list."



Alexis Taylor



Alexis Taylor is a medical assistant at our Annapolis practice. She has been part of our team for more than half a year and her favorite part of her job is helping to bring peace and a sense of understanding to others. Alexis loves photography because it allows her to capture moments that will last a lifetime. Her first submission to *Meraki*, "[Pebble Hill Plantation - GA](#)" (p. 18), was inspired by a trip to the plantation. "The ancient oak trees evoke a sense of strength and history, while the maze invites exploration and discovery. Additionally, the peaceful setting sparks feelings of nostalgia, connection to nature, and personal reflection."



Jill Troilo, M.D.

Jill Troilo, M.D., is a pediatrician and office medical director at our Rockville Pediatrics practice. She has been with for three years, and she has many favorite things about her job: the patients, getting to know their families and constantly learning new things. "I could go on and on - I love my job!" Dr. Troilo's first submission to *Meraki* is [a glass plate \(p. 21\)](#) that she submitted alongside Dr. Alice Lee and Dr. Sarah Lantzy. Outside of work, she enjoys reading ("shout out to my JHCP book club friends who I did this art with!"), watching geeky television, tabletop gaming, D&D, and snuggling with her cats.



Amina Watson, M.D.

Amina Watson, M.D., is a pediatrician at our Bowie practice. She has been with JHCP for 12 years and her favorite thing about her job is interacting with her patients. Writing and artwork are important outlets in Dr. Watson's life. She is a long-time contributor to *Meraki*. This year she has two submissions: [two pieces of artwork](#) that can be found on page 12 and an [excerpt from her autobiography](#) on page 34. Outside of work she enjoys fitness, writing, art, and hanging with her kids.



Nicole Weyant

Nicole Weyant is a senior performance improvement specialist on our central operations team. She has been with JHCP for 16 years, but has worked for Johns Hopkins for more than 30 years, collectively. Her favorite thing about her job is getting to work with people across the organization. She notes that art and creativity "helps me unwind, whether it is creating a gift for someone or trying new recipes in the kitchen." Nicole's first submission to *Meraki*, ["Touch of Vintage"](#) can be found on page 23. Her inspiration is to provide memories for family and friends. Outside of work, she enjoys spending family time with her husband, three college-aged kids and four-year-old charcoal lab, Willow. She is also a big soccer fan, and especially loves watching her daughter play in college."





Claire Wood, R.N.

Claire Wood, R.N., is a clinical education nurse on our clinical education team. She has worked with JHCP for about nine years. Her favorite thing about her job is "getting to meet so many of my amazing JHCP colleagues. If you see me at your practice, come say hi!" Her third submission to *Meraki* is a painting titled "[Lincoln](#)" on page 32. 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.

Mihail "Misha" Zilbermint, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.E.

Mihail "Misha" Zilbermint, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.E., serves as chief and director of the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at Suburban Hospital. Additionally, he is an associate professor of Clinical Medicine and is a member and the director of the JHCP Academy of Clinical Excellence. Dr. Zilbermint has worked with JHCP for 11 years and his favorite thing about his job is teaching nurses, residents, fellows and hospitalists how to manage diabetes in the hospital. His first submission to *Meraki*, "[Mama](#)" (p.14), is an original song, written for his mother, Natalia, in March 2006. After moving to the United States, he missed her tremendously. "In this song, I reflect on memories of walking with her to a children's fair in my hometown of Chisinau, Moldova, as well as our trip to St. Petersburg in 1987, where bridges would open at night to let ships pass."





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