

I can't believe an entire year has passed since my last letter. I somehow forgot that my month was coming up and I really enjoy reading everyone else's letters so I can't drop the ball. Life is busy as always, but that's nothing new. I am finishing up my second of 5 years of residency and Matt is just weeks away from being done with his 3-year residency. Matt accepted a job with Mercy Pediatrics here in Iowa City. He will be an outpatient general pediatrician in their Coralville office. We are so happy he managed to find a job in town. It turns out that Iowa City seems to have an abundance of pediatricians and we were afraid for a while that he would either have to commute or potentially live elsewhere while I finished up here. Every year of residency seems to bring its own challenges. When I was an intern (first year resident) I was always amazed at how my senior residents could just off-handedly answer my questions about potassium or insulin or whatever. They always seemed to have things together and know the answer. In June of last year, it hit me that I would be expected to be that person for the incoming interns, and it was terrifying. I got assigned to nights on July 5th and 6th at the University. New interns all start on July 1 so not only was I responsible for helping to cross-covering 40-50 medicine inpatients and do new admissions, I had an intern who at most had worked 1 or 2 days as a resident. And I had just come off of 5 months of psychiatry. We survived that first weekend and then a couple weeks later I was the night senior at the VA hospital. That was even more terrifying because there are very few physicians in-house at the VA hospital at night. Generally, at night there is only a senior medicine resident, a medicine intern, a hospitalist, and an ER doctor for the whole hospital. There is a small ICU at the VA we are responsible for covering as well. The ICU fellow at night though is at the University which is at least a 10-minute run away. Fortunately, all the rooms have cameras/monitors and there are ICU attendings we can pull up if needed. I was so nervous. Near the end of my first week one of the interns said to me "Lisa, you doubt yourself too much and put yourself down. You know what you're doing, be confident in your decisions." God bless that intern; he truly has no idea how much he helped me start to step into my role as a senior resident over the next few months. It turns out that being a senior resident is just as hard as being an intern, only in different ways. I don't think I ever knew how much work I was for my seniors. I did my first month of ICU on the cardiovascular ICU. I don't particularly like cardiology. We also do 28 hour shifts every 4th day in the ICUs. That was incredibly challenging. I understand why sleep deprivation is a form of torture, I cannot describe how painful it is to be woken up by a pager when I have been at work for 24 hours with maybe an hour of sleep. I was on medicine from July until early January. I ended my last month of medicine on our med/psych unit. That unit is my home and it's the only rotation where I am happy most of the month and truly sad to be leaving at the end of the month. I did get the short end of the stick on some late schedule changes and ended up having to work all day on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, *and* New Year's Day, but I survived and went back to psych shortly after that.

My first couple months on psychiatry were actually required rotations in neurology. The most important thing I learned on neurology is that I do not want to be a neurologist and thus did not miss my calling in choosing a specialty. Working in healthcare, COVID-19 was obviously the biggest issue of the spring. We went from normal daily happenings to having to wear masks with all interactions, to telemedicine, to no visitors for hospital patients or clinic visits, to masks and face shields. For a couple months there were numerous emails a day about COVID and

almost daily policy changes. We are now in the process of returning to normal clinic operations as apparently telemedicine doesn't pay the bills. Inpatient essentially remained the same. There was initially a big decrease in hospital stays and ED visits for other conditions but over the past few weeks that has ramped up and we were notified today that for general medicine our hospital is over capacity and we need to move people as quickly as possible. We are still required to wear our masks and face shields all the time (see lovely picture below). It is not at all comfortable, the mask is hard to breathe in and the face shield gives me headaches on a daily basis, but I don't have COVID, so I guess it's worth it? I was lucky during the peak point here that psychiatry was one of the few places where all patients were tested for COVID before admission due to the close contact they have on our units. Our hospital just announced that they have been able to expand testing capacity and as of this week we will be testing all patients admitted anywhere to the hospital regardless of symptoms, so even as I go back to medicine in a few weeks I will be in about the safest possible situation there is. I haven't had to directly care for an COVID positive patients, but I will be spending a month in the medical ICU this fall, so will almost certainly have some then. I was supposed to be doing an elective in Denver this month, but COVID, so they weren't accepting any out of state residents at this time. We are looking to reschedule for next May, hopefully it will work out then.

Outside of work we have about the same hobbies. I unfortunately got a knee injury after a fall last July, so I have barely run over the past year. A big shift from our year-long run streak just before that. I had one physical therapy session before COVID happened and everything was cancelled. I've kind of been stuck where I am and still very limited in how much I can run, it's a bummer. We made a couple trips up to North Shore in Minnesota again. Matt's little sister came with us in the summer. In the winter we were able to get more cross-country skiing done than last year as it was much warmer (we went up during the Polar Vortex last year). We were supposed to go visit David in Seattle in April but again, #COVID. We just bought tickets to go out in August, hopefully all goes well with that. I bought a new DSLR camera last fall and I can't wait to take it on a good trip. Our dogs are their usual crazy selves. They love running around in the yard and barking non-stop. Our neighbors probably hate them because they never shut up. But at least they're cute. We also have been putting in a lot of work in our yard. Our lot is fairly sloped, so we've put in some small retaining walls and reworked some of the flower beds in addition to planting grass and other things. I have a decent sized garden made of some terraced beds on the south side of our house. I haven't had great luck in producing a lot of vegetables, hopefully that will get better. We have a lot of trees and shade which makes the garden and grass growing more challenging. I started a sourdough starter in the winter (before COVID baking was a thing) and have had a lot of fun experimenting with that. I have really gotten into the fermented foods with making my own yogurt and have recently started making kefir (a fermented milk drink). I also perfected by hummus recipe this spring, look forward to that along with some homemade sourdough crackers at our next get together. Hope you all are well! Again, love the cousin letter rotation. Stay healthy, wash your hands and wear your masks.



All dressed up for a friend's wedding



Hammes representation in the 4th of July Alumni band



Middle of the night at the VA, don't I look thrilled?



The "High Falls" in northern Minnesota (though this picture is from the Canadian side)



Hiking on the North Shore



Our hiking buddies, in an unusually well-behaved moment



View of the North Shore from just outside Matt's parent's condo



Backyard shenanigans featuring Zero



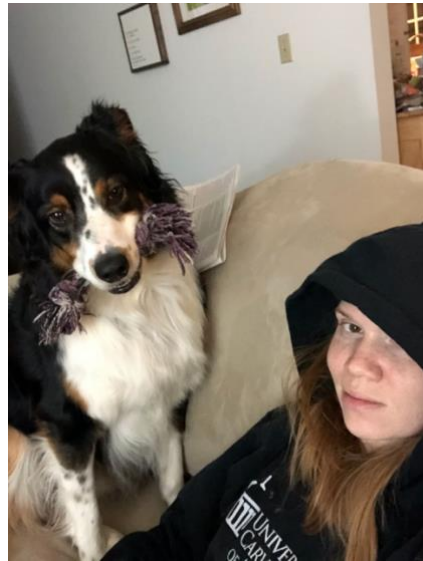
A visit to Lake Macbride



Puppy class with Mom and Jackson



Lovely fall views at the park just a couple blocks from our house, we walk here a lot with our dogs



Post-28-hour shift vibes, don't expect anything productive from me on post-call days



This adorable face is the only reason Ziva has stayed alive this long



Christmas on Med/Psych



One of our favorite places to go cross-country skiing on the North Shore





Hospital bathroom selfie from the day one of my patients told me I looked like Kim Possible. #lifegoals



Current daily work garb