



Stories

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I am a physician.
I work in the “Crescent”
Rochester’s inner city—
Neighborhoods among the poorest in our state
I care for people who
might not vote
might not speak English
might not read any language
might live with violence

I listen to their diverse stories
I hear...

I came from Cuba
en una lancha, a tiny boat.

I set foot in Florida...
they gave me asylum, sent me to Rochester.
I cannot find work.

I live across the river
My husband beat me
he’s long gone now...
My son died seven years ago
Murdered
I’ll never forget.

I grew up in this neighborhood
worked my whole life in the factory
My retiree benefits just got cut
I want a prescription for Viagra
Don’t you have a “private practice” somewhere?
I’m not like these “others”.

I am from Puerto Rico
I lived in New York
New York got too crazy—I came to Rochester
Rochester got too crazy—I moved to the suburbs
I wanted better for my kids
they still don’t do too good in school...

I am from Cuba
I am a dancer
Soy gay
Can’t believe I have HIV
I don’t know a soul here

I work at the school cafeteria
Those kids!
They make me smile
My doctor—she’s young and cute
I just love to hug her
Her pills don’t do much good, but
I like to ask how her kids are doing

As I doctor, my patients entrust me with
their voices and stories
I receive these precious stories, honoring
people so often unheard.

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