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Histology Found Me (Author Withheld)

It's 0721 in the morning. This morning started out, like every other morning. I catch myself literally running for the train. I climb to the upper deck, and choose a seat in the corner, leaning against the oversized picture frame window. The sun barely peaks over the horizon, as the train hisses loudly, and high-pitched bells begin to sound. Swiftly, the doors slide closed and the train jolts with a strong kick as the brakes are released and it begins to roll. *I am now on my way to work.*

I make the same 1 hour and 20-minute commute, in each direction, on what feels like mental and physical autopilot. As I settle in to my seat, the train wheels squeak and grind loudly, slowly transitioning over to a rhythmic *click-clack... click-clack... click-clack.*

The pattern speeds up with the gaining speed of the train, interrupted by the loud blaring horn. B-o-n-k!...B-o-n-k! it yells, as it races through each passing intersection, picking up passengers and strangers at each stop along the way. The faces begin to look familiar, with each passing day, as they smile and nod, or say a simple *good morning.*

Somewhere between half-awake and needing coffee, I dig into the side pocket of my solid black scrubs, to reach for my phone, to pensively scroll through the messages of texts, emails, and social media. While doing so, I see the histology posts sharing the exchange of ideas, thoughtful discussions, and maybe even a few laughs. Then I see a post from NSH, "Tell us your story!". These four words carrying such excitement and intrigue. I used to ask this same question, as an icebreaker to conversation, but I have never had anyone ask it of me. I wonder, *would anyone even care to know my story? Would anyone want to read it?* Even if they did, I wonder to myself, *how did I get into histology?* Honestly, I wonder, *why am I on this train?*

I think what matters most, simply, is not how I got into histology, but instead how histology got into me. The influences of histology have profoundly shaped and directed my course for almost a decade. Perhaps, maybe, it's not simply just about the beginning. What exactly drives me forward in professional growth, while keeping my head in the game?

Fear of failure? They say you have to be willing to fail, in order to succeed.

Sense of pride? The moment you spill (and break) your first case of slides, for a critical patient, or hold a severed hand in your hand, or sense the loss of dignity for the rapid staging cancerous patient, or see the POC on the cutting board and can almost hear a mother's cry; most certainly these moments will keep you humble, while racing the clock to send out the *perfect* slide.

Histology silently carries the burdens of ailments, with resolve to deliver the *why(s)*. If nurses and doctors are the face of medicine, histology, to me, represents the heart beat that keeps it on point. Crafting a diagnosis with skill and artistry, we become part of something much greater than ourselves. A



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wise professor, and hero, once told me something like, “everyday we keep to this journey, and every now and then you’ll find a rare gem...and it gives you hope.”

Never let go of the rare gems! Yet, don’t grasp so tightly, that they never shine. Be the gems of histology. For me, histology quickly became a place of intrapersonal reflection, that fills a void, engaging all five senses of being. I see professional growth potential, while keenly listening to the needs of others around me. Working with my hands, I play a vital role shaping the potential outcome for treatment of diseases. For me, there is also power behind the non-verbal acknowledgement that comes with the grasp of a handshake implying, *a job well done, indeed.*

When I think of the course of my journey, I won’t tell you how it began, because that’s personal to me. Therefore, I relate it to the inner workings of the train. Somewhere in our path we may hiss (sigh) wondering if there will ever be any hope. Then someone or something jolts us into action, and we begin to move toward a goal. That goal may be small, as one, but then quickly becomes two, or three... or more. We influence others on our path, at different points in our journey, becoming their colleague, co-worker, perhaps even their mentor and friend. There is never a dull moment, in histology, even with routine job tasks, each day will never be the same. My love for histology runs deep. From the very moment I began my journey, histology imprinted on me and with time has grown to become my niche.

The train rolls on... click-clack...click-clack... click-clack. I didn’t find Histology. ***Histology found me!***