The year 2019 marked the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt’s death, a painter that has consistently fascinated physicians. Rembrandt maintained both professional and friendly relationships with doctors, and often portrayed them. In return, physicians have written a variety of papers on Rembrandt’s anatomy portraits, diagnoses of disease, description of depression, and his own depiction of aging. Yet, what Rembrandt’s eyes uniquely captured is the whole spectrum of the human condition. The emotions he portrayed on his canvases, and especially in his self-portraits, reveal not a painter but a psychologist. Thus, they allow us to look through someone else’s eyes and understand their sufferings and struggles. They remind us that we are all fighting a momentous struggle, and by doing so they foster our empathy. They remind us that without art we become less human, and in fact more likely to accept the dehumanization of others.

Salvatore Mangione, MD, is a clinician-educator with a long interest in physical diagnosis, medical history, community service and the role of the humanities in medicine. His innovative programs and engaging teaching style have been recognized by multiple teaching awards, and his work has been featured in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal, the BBC, CNN, NPR, and Forbes. Dr. Mangione has been an invited speaker at many national and international meetings, especially in regard to using visual arts to teach bedside observation. He is the author of the book Secrets in Physical Diagnosis.