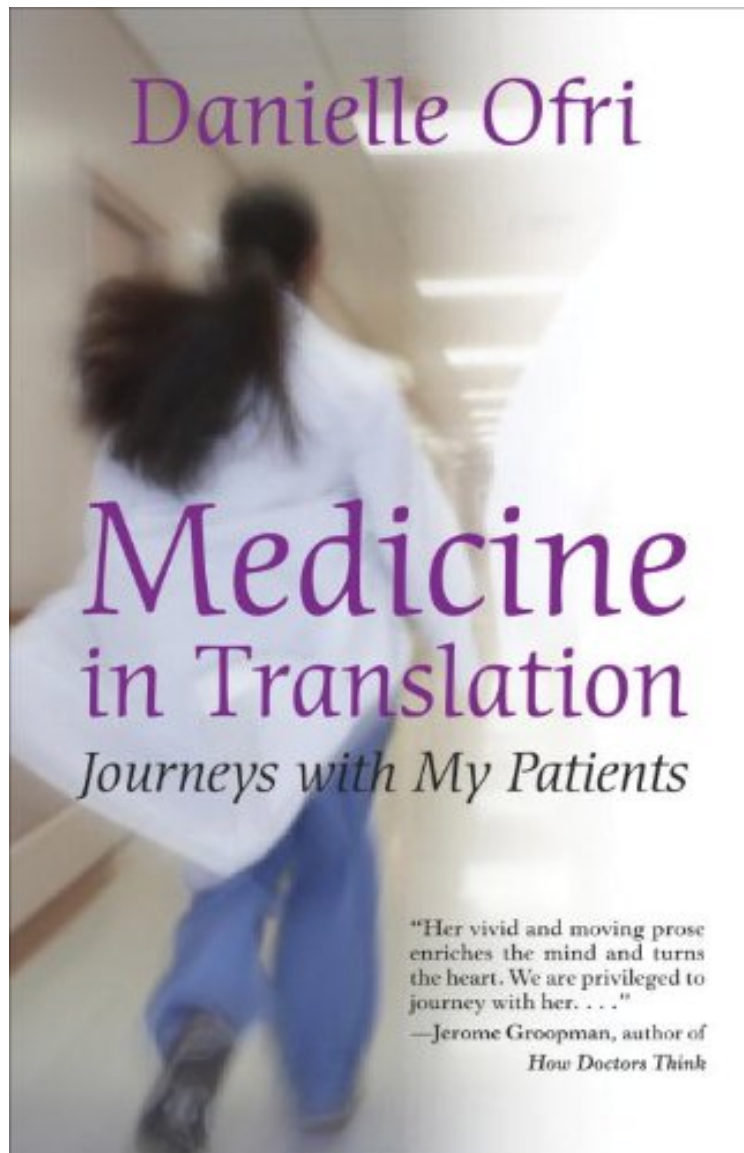


Medicine in Translation: Journeys with My Patients

Danielle Ofri

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#613084 in Books Danielle Ofri 2011-04-12 2011-04-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.49 x .64 x 5.511, .74 #File Name: 0807001260251 pagesMedicine in Translation Journeys with My Patients | File size: 77.Mb

Danielle Ofri : Medicine in Translation: Journeys with My Patients before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Medicine in Translation: Journeys with My Patients:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A worthy bookBy MuffyboyFrom the moment you pick up the book Medicine in Translation, you are drawn into Dr. Ofri's world of medicine, home life and music. These three are

the pillars of this book, a sensitive and sometimes heart-rendering portrayal of one very busy doctor's work with patient's many of whom have traveled a long distance between their homeland where torture has maimed their bodies. Along with others who have left a country for more benign reasons, these people arrive at Bellevue Hospital needing medical attention and come under the care of an especially caring, doctor who attempts to provide state of the art medical attention to those who are often undocumented aliens lacking health insurance, money and even a basic language in which to discuss the medical problem. None of this comes easy, not to the beleaguered people who need the help, nor to the doctor who wishes to bestow the treatment learned in medical school but who is often stymied by governmental regulations that govern the dispensation of needed help. A young woman, a mother trying to bring her child over to this country is weakened by a faulty heart that a transplant would certainly remedy and is prevented from applying for it because she is without the proper papers. Imagine trying to work out treatment plans as the two - patient and doctor sitting in one room connected by a telephone and an invisible translator, an unsung hero at Bellevue Hospital who listens to both doctor and patient translating symptoms and intended high-tech medical regime. Dr. Ofri mulls over the difficult situations she encounters at work often mixing her thoughts with pieces from her own life. An approachable doctor, she meets with one of her elderly patients in the building where he lives to discuss his wish to leave the country (and his ailing wife) to return to China for his remaining years. The ethics of leaving a wife who soon will not be able to recognize him to return to his country on first hearing seems callous and maybe selfish to her, but true to herself, she ponders these and other issues, intertwining them with thoughts about her children and their developing lives lived so near yet so far from the problems that her patients wrestle with, thoughtful interludes which provide a mirror on the readers' own lives. A budding cellist, Ofri often expresses her thoughts, medical ones, in terms of music that is always under the surface of her thinking. One patient was advised to have a pacemaker installed in his body even after a first installation did him a great disservice. Despite his deep reluctance to having a new one implanted he agreed to do whatever his beloved doctor suggest he do, based on a long association with her since her days of internship, and so, it was installed. Very much aware of her role in his well being, she listened to his heart some weeks after the procedure and "was greeted with the steady metronome of the pacemaker beat" an unavoidable pairing of the pacemaker with a trusty tool of musicians. She doesn't stop there: thinking of those who wrecked havoc on the once pristine bodies of so many of her patients she says: "Even if some humans seemed to exist solely to offer pain and destruction, there were others who existed only to create beauty. The chance to feel the hem of that beauty graze the cheek, was sometimes the only thing that kept the last straw at bay." The book deals with the very timely issue of immigration which often allows people to think of a large mass of people who are essentially faceless to the average person. In this book Dr. Ofri gives voice to people who, though lacking legal status share in our humanity and whose bodies are as vulnerable as are ours. We not only hear their stories through the pen of one person who works with them, but we are helped to understand the ethical issue of turning away people in medical need through the prism of the dilemmas as seen by this particular doctor who cares for and about them. Although she remains politically neutral about the issue of immigration it becomes clear that pathways to citizenship should be opened to people who arrive on our shores to work and contribute to this country. The reader is allowed a glimpse into the life and thoughts of a compassionate doctor, mother, musician and writer who is somehow weaving these aspects of her life into a book so worth reading. Enjoy.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Illuminating Book Shimmering With Beauty, Honesty, Humor, and Beautiful Prose By Batya Swift Yasgur MA, MSW This book is beautiful, haunting and incredibly well written. The scenarios and personalities jump off the page to walk around the readers living room, and then settle down in the readers heart. Some of those scenarios and characters are profoundly disturbing. Dr. Ofri works with survivors of severe trauma in the renowned Survivors of Torture program at Bellevue Hospital, and she does not flinch in recounting some of the horrors that befell her patients before coming to the US. Other scenarios are beautifully uplifting her year in Costa Rica, for example, or the story of the Tibetan patient who is on a hunger strike and decides to eat after a nurses aide speaks to him about the mountains in Tibet. Throughout the book, Dr. Ofri is honest about her own struggles, irritations, limitations, and strengths in all the arenas of her life--as a doctor, a mother, and a human being. She writes with poise, lightness (even when describing heavy subjects) and a wonderful sense of humor. Her reflections on cross-cultural medicine and on linguistics are fascinating and make this book a must-read for humanitarians, health/mental health professionals working with people from other cultures, and anyone interested in human rights both abroad, and in the US (especially regarding immigrants).

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Medicine in Translation - Danielle Ofri looks at medicine from both sides now By Evelyn Sharenov Danielle Ofri is a triple threat - practicing physician, renowned author, and editor of the Bellevue Literary review. With her earlier collections she has taken her place in the growing pantheon of physicians who write - but rest assured her stories engage readers on a deeply human level; no medical education required. Ofri's world requires much of her; it takes empathy, insight, respect and patience to care for the poor and disenfranchised. As an attending physician at the nation's oldest urban hospital, Bellevue, Ofri is ideally placed to observe the human condition up close and personal. In 'Medicine In Translation' Ofri continues to write of her professional growth. Along the way, she and her family - husband, two children, big dog - decide to take a sabbatical in Costa Rica where Ofri will become more fluent in Spanish, in order to better understand the needs of many of those who come under her care. After all the

arrangements are made for this journey, Ofri discovers she is pregnant. Where others would have changed their plans, Ofri goes ahead and has her child in Costa Rica. Her experiences provide the juxtaposition that differentiates 'Medicine In Translation' from her other essay collections. Working on the floor at Bellevue feels like rapid travel between foreign countries. Ofri's patients share our struggles, but do so from the foreign lands of illness, language and poverty. Becoming a patient - pregnant and a mother - on foreign soil, goes a long way to increase understanding between cultures. Ofri poignantly and honestly describes her experiences at Bellevue: "I took a moment to contemplate the capacity of American society to set aside superficial appearances and consider the person beneath the face. I was not optimistic." She deals with the frustrations of scamming patients, underserved populations, a medical system gone haywire. The only thing that can work in the face of such odds is the human factor. Ofri does a brave thing in stepping through the looking glass and brings more of herself to her practice as a result.

From a doctor Oliver Sacks has called a born storyteller, a riveting account of practicing medicine at a fast-paced urban hospital For two decades, Dr. Danielle Ofri has cared for patients at Bellevue, the oldest public hospital in the country and a crossroads for the worlds cultures. In *Medicine in Translation* she introduces us, in vivid, moving portraits, to her patients, who have braved language barriers, religious and racial divides, and the emotional and practical difficulties of exile in order to access quality health care. Living and dying in the foreign country we call home, they have much to teach us about the American way, in sickness and in health.

Danielle Ofri is a finely gifted writer, a born storyteller as well as a born physician. Oliver Sacks, MD, author of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* A gifted storyteller, Ofri provides vivid details that bring readers right into the exam room with her . . . describing how her patients histories stirred her to practice medicine more compassionately, inspired her with their hope and fortitude. Sarah Halzack, *Washington Post* Danielle Ofri's new work presents the reader with artfully controlled chaos. . . . Brisk, fast-paced, and organized with an eye both to variety and recurrence. Rachel Hadas, *Times Literary Supplement* Her writing tumbles forth with color and emotion. She demonstrates an ear for dialogue, a humility about the limits of her medical training, and an extraordinary capacity to be touched by human suffering. Jan Gardner, *Boston Globe* About the Author Danielle Ofri, MD, PhD, is an associate professor of medicine at the New York University School of Medicine and has cared for patients at New York's Bellevue Hospital for more than two decades. Writing in the *Guardian*, Andrew Solomon singled out Ofri as the only woman among an extraordinary new generation of doctor writers, saying, Ofri has produced four impressive books and numerous articles, all striking for their reversion to empathy, their willingness to sense not only the physical life of a patient, but also the emotional. Ofri's books and articles have become academic staples in medical schools, universities and residency programs. She is the editor in chief of the *Bellevue Literary* and writes regularly for the *New York Times*. Ofri in New York City.