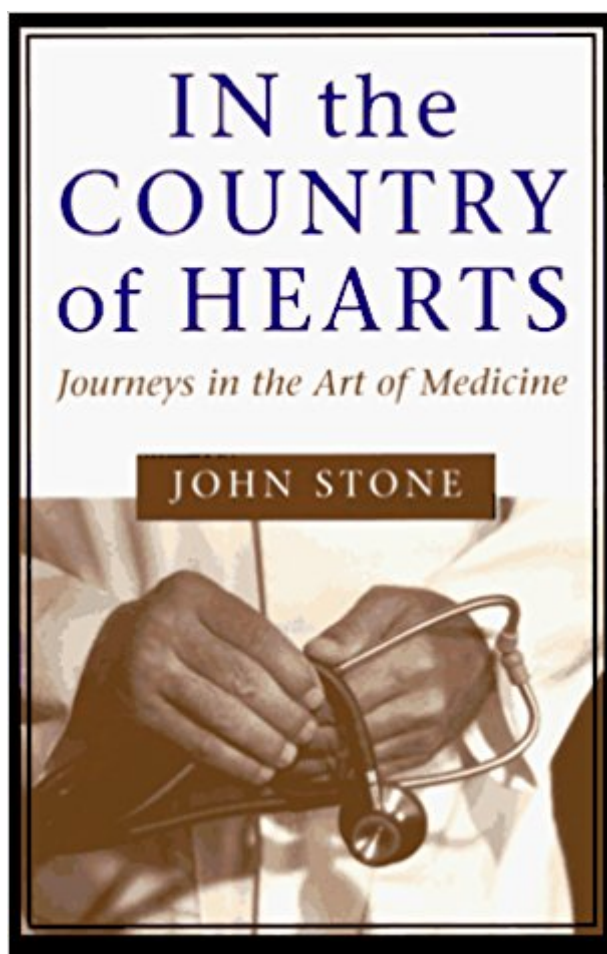


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In The Country Of Hearts: Journeys In The Art Of Medicine



Synopsis

"As he explicates and celebrates the possibilities of modern medicine, Dr. Stone remains firmly attached to the humanness of its endeavors....[He] has used his senses well." --"New York Times"

"This book should be required reading for every person who aspires to be a physician--it makes me proud that I am a doctor." -- Ferrol Sams

In this text, the author, a cardiologist and poet, examines the relationship between the physical heart and the metaphorical heart of literature. He looks at the emotions felt by doctors and by those who seek their help.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Georgia cardiologist and poet Stone (*In All This Rain*) has heart, as readers who follow him into his consulting rooms will find. Drawing on 25 years of experience in treating patients, he recalls encounters with a wide variety of heart ailments and other diseases such as lupus, killer of novelist Flannery O'Connor, whose physician was his mentor. Stone deals reasonably with the healer's dilemmas: for example, should technology be utilized to prolong a life already lost? He ruminates as well on a vexed moral problem he unknowingly introduced in attempting to save the life of a severely burned arsonist who fabricated a tale that his injuries were caused by rescuing a child caught in a fire. A physician with a large talent for narration, Stone here establishes his place among his more famed literary brethren. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Stone, author of three volumes of poetry-- *The Smell of Matches* (LJ 7/72), *In All This Rain* (LJ 10/1/89), and *Renaming the Streets* (LJ 12/1/85)--is also a teacher, cardiologist, and dean of admissions at Emory University School of Medicine. In 23 essays, Stone touches on the interface between the anatomical and metaphysical hearts in each of us. "Physicians and writers draw upon the same source: the human encounter In other words, the medical ear must be properly trained to hear stories--a medical history, after all, is a short story." Health sciences librarians will be heartened to encounter the physician who twice writes that he "lit out for" the medical library in his quest for the best patient care. This book contains medicine for everyone and humanism for medicine. Highly recommended.- James Swanton, Albert Einstein Coll. of Medicine Lib., New York
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Fascinating and compelling. Hard to put down.

I read few books but found this so interesting I had a copy sent to my grandson who is working toward a career in medicine. It is like a surgical version of the history of physics presented in "A Brief History of Time - (whatever that is)". It indicates how the technology and knowledge has progressed since before the use of anesthesia; in a form that people in other professions can appreciate. Very well done...

In spite of my personal opinion (which is admittedly biased), this collection of stories will compete on anyone's bookshelf for the best work of medical lit yet written. This *is* John Stone, the physician, the human hands, the poet, the wit, it's all in here. Where to start?.... *Blue Baby* is where John started by connecting a nursery rhyme with tetralogy of Fallot; *An Infected Heart* (which I've read to my students for >10 years now.....sometimes half the class is in tears by the time I reach the end where they inevitably gasp with comprehension of their own relationships with patients); *Breath*; *Missed Signals*; *Balloon Man*, it's a long and enjoyable list. Reading and re-reading these gives you a sense of place within medicine (and reminds you exactly how grand those little events really are), it's a solid base from which to teach, it's wonder at the craft of an excellent wordsmith like Stone. If you are in medicine, if you teach, if you are human.....read this one, you'll be glad you did.

Poet and cardiologist John Stone has written a compelling collection of essays and stories from his practice regarding his care of the human heart. The two disciplines not only get equal time but are beautifully juxtaposed in his writing. His tremendous love and appreciation for his patients and for

medicine are easy to read between almost every line in the book. His warm sense of humor and keen eye for irony keep the stories from becoming maudlin, something that can happen easily in the telling of medical tales. This is a book for non-medical as well as medical people, a great traveller that can be read a few pages at a time; some of his stories are only one or two paragraphs! But even the shortest are thoughtful and provocative. Dr. Stone's deep humanism restores faith in the medical profession!

I understand that the author is drawing from his extensive life-experience to give us this book, but at the same time, it would have been nice to read about humility, but then again, cardiologists are not exactly known for being humble people...Although the book is accurate, and uses medical jargon when necessary, it still feels hard, and detached. You don't get a sense that Dr. Stone is establishing a personal connection with the reader. Out of all the stories, the one that sticks out the most, because of its true heart, is the one of "Telltale Hands". Here, we get a better idea of Dr. Stone's emotions, and his bond with this patient. The best part of the book, for me, are the little introductions at the beginning of each story, precisely because they are the one fragment of him that we get to experience; and I believe that if the book is supposed to deal with the art of medicine, from his experience, then we should all feel some sort of link to him throughout the book, but the intros are about all we get. I think the book is a good read, but it fails to inspire me, to make me feel that simple human beings are capable of transforming another life. It basically reads like a simplified text-book of case studies, entertaining, but not necessarily uplifting.

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