



The Blood of Strangers: Stories from Emergency Medicine

By Frank Huyler

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Hailed by *The Boston Globe* as "a compact, faceted gem that shines with intelligence," this remarkable and fascinating book offers an honest, startling, deeply moving depiction of the modern emergency room. The twenty-eight vignettes in *The Blood of Strangers*, all written by a young E.R. physician and writer based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, seamlessly juxtapose visceral portrayals of real and unedited hospital situations with perceptive and lyrical meditations on the world of medicine--and the world at large.

All students, scholars, and practitioners of emergency medicine will find this stunning account of life, death, work, and reality in the E.R. both haunting and instructive.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Forget the niceties of plot development and the easy moralizing of the television shows. There's nothing glamorous about a hospital emergency room, that arena where every human flaw and frailty is exposed.

Frank Huyler, a physician and poet, offers a sharp view of life-and-death realities. The emergency room, he writes in these affecting vignettes, is a place where the dominant mood is numbness, where doctors and patients alike have seen too much bloodshed and death. As a defensive reaction, Huyler writes, some doctors become addicted to drugs and other pastimes, while others assume arrogant, cavalier, or aloof airs. This is eminently understandable, and Huyler recounts the growing distance in his relationship with patients as "the earlier intimacy I had felt ... began to recede into the task." A fine storyteller, Huyler doesn't shy away from tales in which he comes up short, just as he shakes his head in bemusement at the ways of administrators and chiefs. In one episode, for instance, he writes of treating a comatose patient with aggressive measures under one attending physician's orders, then doing almost nothing under another's instructions. The patient "was gone from the waking world, as nearly dead as a human being can be, lying at the edge but never quite crossing over"--but, amazingly, he survived both his injuries and the conflict between the two doctors.

Reminiscent of the surgeon-essayist Richard Seltzer's best work, Huyler's memoirs take readers behind the surgical screen. --*Gregory McNamee*

From Publishers Weekly

This haunting, exquisitely observed collection of medical vignettes is much more than a compilation of odd cases from the emergency room. Huyler probes beneath the surface to reveal the marrow of his encounters with patients, such as when, after making a swift diagnosis and saving a life, he later looks in on the patient and pauses to sit "in the dark for a while, watching the red and blue lights of the monitor, savoring him, taking something for myself." Inviting the reader behind the drape, he recounts his personal journey from his first days as a medical student in gross anatomy lab through the harder, lonelier days of his internship and residency before he finally stepped into the coveted role of attending physician, vested with full authority. With a poet's economy, Huyler dismantles the myth of the privileged doctor's life, revealing the long hours and loneliness that are too often requisites for the job. His character studies of the often quirky, sometimes tragic colleagues and patients who pass through the ward are quite poignant. Afrom the murderer whose beating heart Huyler holds in his hands during a life-saving surgical procedure to the head of the trauma service who "looked remarkably like Lee Harvey Oswald" and seduced scads of nurses until one very efficiently took her revenge. Though this slim collection ends just as one has settled into it, it marks Huyler as a writer to watch. (Sept.)

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From Library Journal

Emergency physician Huyler is also a published poet, which may explain why he offers this account of emergency medicine in 28 focused vignettes.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Inez Morales:

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Dexter Forsyth:

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Teresa Randall:

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