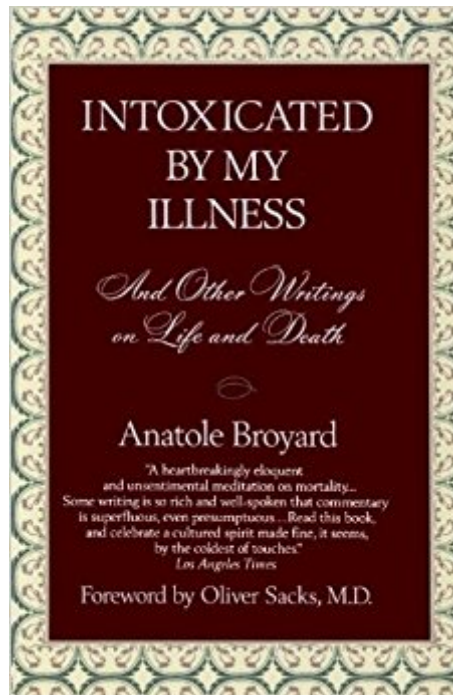




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Intoxicated By My Illness And Other Writings On Life And Death



Synopsis

"Succeeds brilliantly....He lives as a writer and we are the wealthier for it."--The Washington Post Book World
Anatole Broyard, long-time book critic, book review editor, and essayist for the New York Times, wants to be remembered. He will be, with this collection of irreverent, humorous essays he wrote concerning the ordeals of life and death--many of which were written during the battle with cancer that led to his death in 1990. A New York Times Notable Book of the Year

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Customer Reviews

In October 1990 the author, an editor at the New York Times Book Review , died of prostate cancer that had been diagnosed 14 months earlier. During that time he wrote the essays and journal entries that are printed, along with the autobiographical story "What the Cystoscope Said" and earlier pieces on dying from the early 1980s, in this slim, affecting volume. Broyard's unflinching, consistent and somehow credibly upbeat observations of his responses to his illness derive from his belief that he could--must--die with style. Readers familiar with the critic's prose will recognize the sudden startling sentences, the unexpected metaphors with which he claims his last topic: "When the cancer threatened my sexuality, my mind became immediately erect." A valuable record, commemorative as well as brave and trail-blazing. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.
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Writer and New York Times book critic Broyard died of cancer in 1990. Here is a slender volume of

writings he produced on the subject of his illness itself, filled out with a handful of earlier pieces on "The Literature of Death," and ending with the grippingly autobiographical short story "What the Cystoscope Said," written by Broyard after his own father's death, also of cancer, in 1948. In 1981, Broyard wrote that "the vocabulary of death is anticlimactic. It seems that we die in cliché;s." In his own struggle with illness and the death that it foreshadowed, however, he summoned up an intellectual rigor that attempted to deny either cliché; or passivity. "As a patient I'm a mere beginner," he wrote: "Yet I am a critic, and being critically ill, I thought I might accept the pun and turn it on my condition." And so his effort to think his illness into submission begins. "My intention," he writes in a journal entry, "is to show people who are ill" that "[they] can make a game, a career, even an art form of opposing their illness." Broyard's own "art form" is one, as it always was, that draws on an astonishing breadth of learning and that positively bristles with aphoristic perceptions. "Soul is the part of you that you summon up in emergencies," he writes; and, on doctors and patients: "The patient is always on the brink of revelation, and he needs an amanuensis." This is not Dylan Thomas's raging against the night, but instead the consistent and steady application of the thinking mind against the awful austerities and urgencies of death. "Writing a book," says Broyard, "would be a counterpoint to my illness. It would force the cancer to go through my character before it can get to me." Courageous, vintage Broyard. The trouble is, though, that death was the winner, and the reader is left not with Broyard's "intoxication," but with regret, loss, and a certain chill and ungainly fear. -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If you or anyone close to you is going through a serious illness, this is a must read. It is a quick, beautifully written, sad but often marvelously amusing account of a man's experience with prostate cancer. It is one of my all-time favorites.

a few essays good, a few excellent, a couple meh. have just read 'just one drop' by his daughter, bliss, (overlong) and 'kafka was the rage' (excellent memoir greenwich village in the 40s). i think broyard was more conflicted than he ever dared acknowledge, interesting character...

Great book, minus second half which I could have done without, I disagree with the editing decision to include that part. However, Broyard's journal accounts of his desired relationship with his physician are powerful and relevant to today's physician-patient relationship.

Heartbreaking, and uplifting, for patients, physicians, and lay people alike

Broyard accomplishes the astonishing feat of finding beauty amid the ugly experience of cancer. His ability to describe his illness with such poetic grace lifts this book to five stars. Anyone who is suffering will find light in Broyard's words.

great

some silly ideas at the start but some excellent perceptions later on

Good condition!

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