



Reconstructing Illness: Studies in Pathography

Anne Hunsaker Hawkins

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Serious illness and mortality, those most universal, unavoidable, and frightening of human experiences, are the focus of this pioneering study, which has been hailed as a telling and provocative commentary on our times. As modern medicine has become more scientific and dispassionate, a new literary genre as emerged: pathography, the personal narrative concerning illness, treatment and sometimes death. Hawkins's sensitive reading of numerous pathographies highlights the assumptions, attitudes, and myths that people bring to the medical encounter. One factor emerges again and again in these "case studies": the tendency in contemporary medical practice to focus primarily not on the needs of the individual who is sick but on the condition that we call disease. Recommended for medical practitioners, the clergy, caregivers, students of popular culture, and the general reader, *Reconstructing Illness* demonstrates that "only when we hear both the doctor's and the patient's voice will we have a medicine that is truly human."

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