

The seemingly simple but telling detail. Word choices that are lyrical but not bizarre. A narrative thread that pulls the reader in. Those are among the characteristics that distinguish good writing from workaday prose.

But to my mind the quality that really sets a piece of writing apart is an ability to make me think, "You know, that's right—that's *exactly* what such-and-so looks/feels/acts like," even though it had never occurred to me to express it quite that way. Or, on the other hand, an ability to make me think about something I've never experienced, "Wow, so *that's* what it's like to do/be/have such-and-so." Truly memorable writing, in other words, lets you see something familiar through new eyes or see something brand new as though it were familiar. You the reader almost become one with the writer when that happens—you can't read fast enough, and yet it hardly seems like you're reading.

DARTMOUTH MEDICINE has been lucky to have the work of many wonderful writers grace our pages over the years. We still get requests for some articles that we published five, even 10, years ago. Now *that's* a memorable piece of writing.

Sigmund Freud, who knew a little bit about memory, called great writers "valuable colleagues [whose] testimony is to be rated very highly, because they have a way of knowing many of the things between heaven and earth which are not dreamed of in our philosophy. . . . They draw upon sources that we have not yet made accessible to science."

Interestingly, good doctoring requires a similar sort of ability to encompass the known but also to transcend it. The best doctors draw on science, of course—on the technological marvels of pharmacology and imaging and surgery. But they also help patients in ways that involve the imagination and feelings and emotions.

Perhaps that's why doctors sometimes take up writing, to help them process and share the wonder of their work. One of the features in this issue is by such a doctor—a 1996 graduate of DMS, Emily Transue. She's just had a book of short stories published by the prestigious St. Martin's Press; the feature starting on page 58 was excerpted from that collection. We've been periodically sharing Emily's poignant stories with our readers ever since she was a student. She turned to writing after the death of

a patient during her first clinical rotation at Dartmouth. Soon, she explains in the prologue to her book, "writing became a part of the practice of medicine for me, a guard against numbness and burnout, a reminder to listen closely to each patient and to my feelings as I interacted with them. . . . By the time I started internship, medicine and writing were intertwined for me."

This issue's cover feature, which starts on page 32, is the flip side of that coin—an intertwining of medicine and writing from the patient perspective. Its author, freelance writer Mary Daubenspeck, has also contributed many articles to DARTMOUTH MEDICINE. But her piece in this issue was not something she wrote for publication. It is excerpts from the journal that she kept her whole adult life, up until a month before her death in 2001 of colorectal cancer. It's clear that writing helped Mary to process the tumble of emotions that attend being diagnosed with and treated for cancer. It's clear, too, that our readers owe a debt of gratitude to her brother Andy Daubenspeck, a physiologist on the DMS faculty, for his willingness to let us publish his beloved sister's innermost musings.

We also have some wonderful writers on the magazine's staff. We just got word that Associate Editor Laura Carter's cover feature for the Summer 2003 issue, about the Department of Medicine's weekly morbidity and mortality conference, won the highest national writing award of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)—the Robert G. Fenley Award of Excellence. And the magazine as a whole won an Award of Distinction from the AAMC, which is a tribute to the efforts of many people.

This issue, for example, includes the work of about 30 writers, photographers, and illustrators—including (in addition to Emily and Mary and Laura) Matt Wiencke, our multitalented assistant editor; our new senior writer, Jen Durgin, a terrific addition to the staff; and many others. Publishing a magazine involves some science—scaling photos, preparing press-ready electronic files, putting ink on paper. But it also calls for some art. For imagination and feeling and emotion. For people like these valued contributors and colleagues.

DANA COOK GROSSMAN

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