

I am alive. A stage four cancer survivor—alive, in part, because of you, dear oncologists. And in part, because of the divine.

I begin this letter this way, as it is intertwined on a road that is part medicine and part mystical.

Mystical in the sense that I truly got through this dance with cancer because of mental grit grounded in deep faith in God, the universe, the divine, and the knowing that my mind had to remain steadfast and strong in order to devour the chemo-elixir healing my body—the science of staying alive.

It was a deep balance of the two worlds that sustained me through one of the most challenging battles I've ever faced on both a physical and mental level. But, if I had to choose which battle was harder, the cancer or the mind, I would, without hesitation, say: the mind...

...Because the mind in itself can be a cancer of troubles if left unmet without presence, faith, and love on the arduous path.

I wrote my book, [*Cancer Ramblings*](#), while beginning this cancer journey, born within the hospital walls, while I walked with my chemo-friend on wheels. It served me a mental sanctuary to digest the absurdity of cancer, and of life itself.

My book was the raft I needed in order not to drown in the many moments of aloneness, the unknown, and the need for comfort and connection when the science of healing felt cold.

Chemo's cold hand is not enough if the warmth isn't felt in the heart's spot.



All this to say, dear oncologists, that the need is greater than ever for multi-layered healing, multi-modality mastery, so that we, the patients, can thrive beyond the medicine and the mundane into the world of the sane, while overcoming the insane, the absurdity that cancer is, during, and even after, into remission and rebuilding.

I was fortunate enough to be treated here in one of LA county's hospitals, Olive View Medical - UCLA, where my team brought their brilliance and allowed my heart space to thrive with eastern influences, from supplementation to sound healing bowls and meditation. I felt connected as a

human to real, kind-hearted staff on every level, who shared with me their stories, their experiences, their challenges, their pieces of home to make me feel at home, in the coldness that a hospital can be, these human connections were the hugs I needed. A piece from my book, *Rambling 62: Hugs Are Free*, touches upon the importance of the psychology and the physiology of human contact, of the power and sweetness that a hug and being held can bring, to the mind and heart when one feels afloat, away from home, from family (mine was in Canada, so I didn't have my family nearby), and fog from chemo brain.

"Cancer equals connection. Connection feeds the soul of your cells, your mind, and your heart. And hugs are free. Chemo's cold hand of healing is melted with the touch of a hug. I have never needed it more. This cancer experience can be challenging on the mind, the emotions, but the trauma of the experience, I feel, is held deep in the soul of your physical form. It requires much grounding, compassion and a lot of self-soothing. Hugs play a big part, especially a long-held hug of 30 seconds or more. You're lucky if you get one for a minute. To be held so sweetly and intimately in your friend's arms, your family, your somebody, is an immediate raft safely carrying you to sand under your feet. Hugs are free, hugs are healthy, hugs are a real thing. So, hug more during your journey. Let it surprise you if you're not a hugger.

Melt into it. Let it heal you. Ground you. Let it love you.

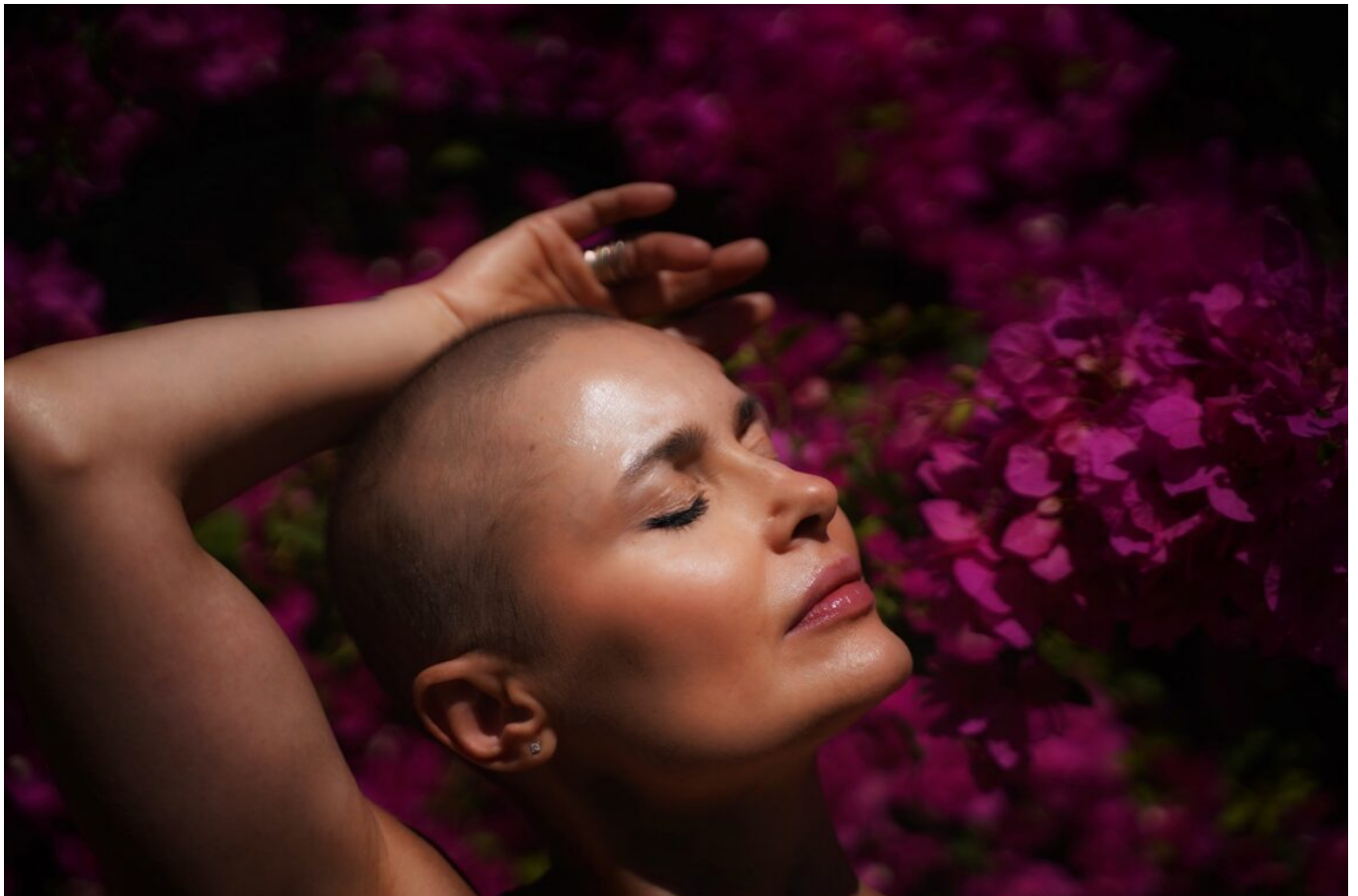


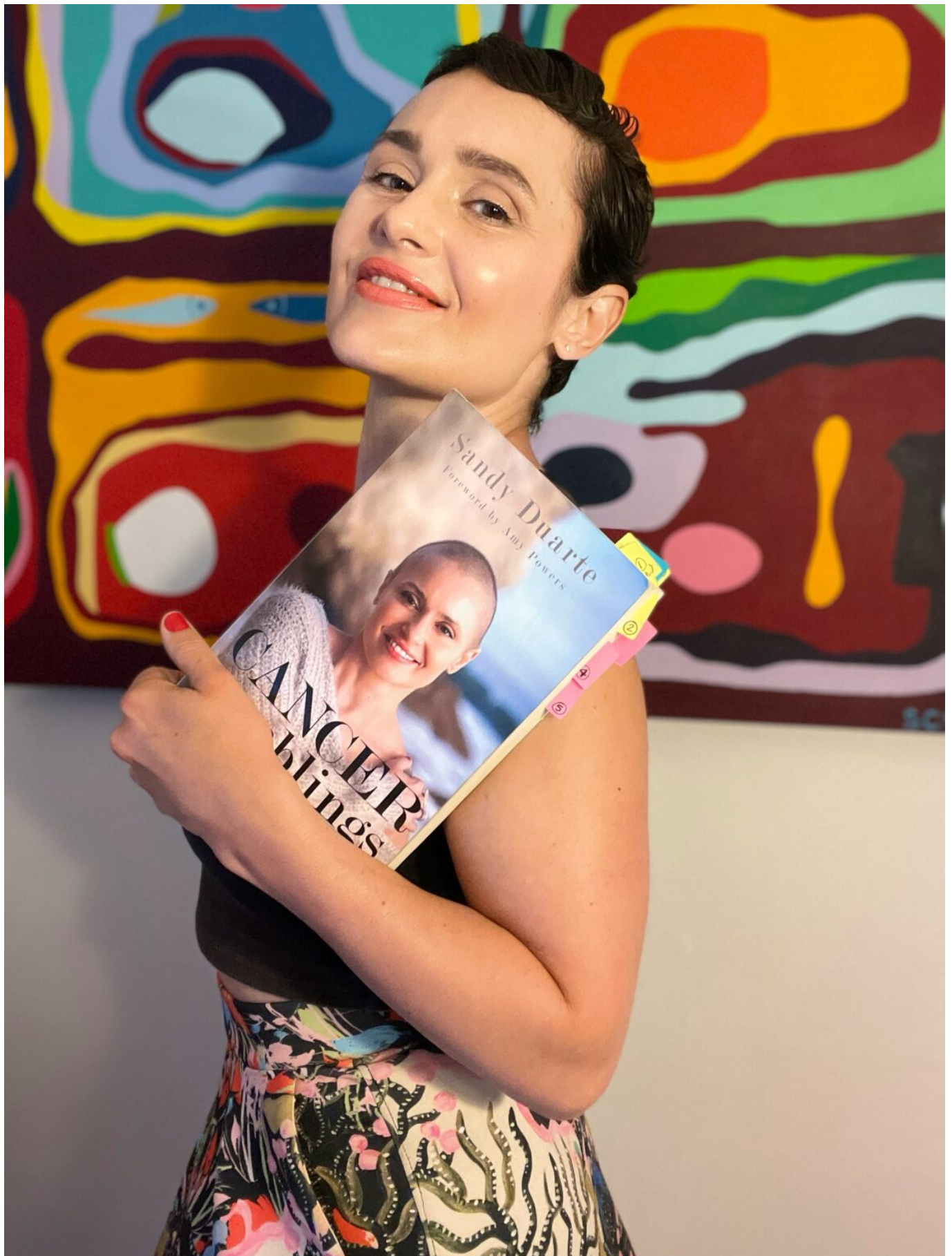
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It takes strength to be strong. It's exhausting to carry on. But carrying on is what we got, and you deserve a hug.

If you know someone who's going through it, hug them. Hug them seriously. Hold them as though their life depended on it. As though yours did too. Hugs are free."

If there's one thing I could offer to every oncologist, it's this: never underestimate the power of a

simple human gesture. A hug, a warm look, or a moment of genuine presence can speak louder than any diagnosis. It reminds us — patients and doctors alike — that healing isn't just medical, it's emotional. We need science, yes, but we also need the soul.



I am alive, dear oncologists, thank you for healing my body, now let's not forget the heart too —I believe the future of healing lies where medicine meets meaning. Where hands heal, and hearts hold.

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