

The grief that cannot speak its name

→ Raphaël Brenner

The loss of a sibling can lead to endless suffering when the loss is not given the attention it requires and when grief work is incomplete. A courageous victim of sibling loss tells how she healed her wound and re-appropriated her personal story.

When she was 14, Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn's elder and only brother, Ted, died of aplastic anaemia after having spent eight years in isolation.

At the funeral, a woman took her by the arm and whispered: "You will have to be very good now, your parents are going through a lot." The words made her feel "selfish, ashamed", writes Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn as she recalls the *omertà* (law of silence) that was imposed on her following her brother's death. "My brother's illness, his death...became a frozen lake somewhere deep inside me, one that would take me years to locate, to recognize, and ultimately, to thaw."

While her parents struggled to cope with the tragedy by evasion or immersion in work, Elizabeth sank in a pattern of self-destruction, and found herself falling apart at age 26, with no idea why. She entered therapy and her book recounts the journey she undertook to reclaim her disfranchised grief, re-form her identity, and finally summon the courage to talk to her parents about her brother's death,

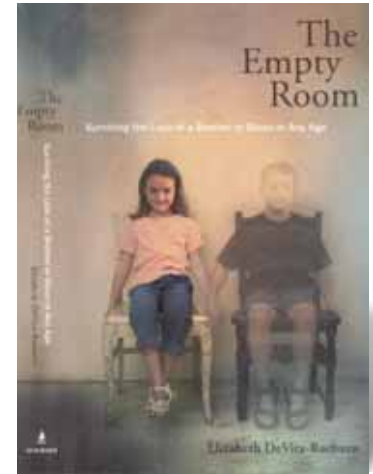
almost 30 years after the event. A journalist by profession, DeVita-Raeburn drew on the experiences of some 200 victims of sibling loss to convey in her book the powerful emotions involved in the loss of a brother or sister.

In order to heal herself, she needed first to mourn and make sense of her loss. She tells how she had to "excavate the grief" she had buried, and re-

The Empty Room: Surviving the Loss of a Brother or Sister at any Age

Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn, Scribner, 230 pp, \$23.00

claim her story. "I found this process of narration, of telling with a point of view, healing beyond all expectation." Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn gave herself permission to speak, a permission that had been denied to her for many years. She argues convincingly that sibling loss has been much neglected, not only at the familial level (overshadowed by parents' loss of their child, the sibling is not considered among the truly bereft), but also at the societal level (at least north



American), with research on sibling loss still scant.

DeVita-Raeburn vividly evokes the process of retrieval and re-appropriation she underwent, but her psychological analysis of sibling loss is less profound and ignores important works such as those of Jacques Lacan, Melanie Klein, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Török. The amazing power of sibling relationships could also have been further explored. Finally, a metaphysical or religious approach to this topic (the death of a sibling is viewed on the same level as the death of a parent or child in Judaism) would have been of great interest, but this is perhaps the material of another book.

While most victims of sibling loss choose not to talk of their loss, DeVita-Raeburn opted for the more painful route – she opened the wound and found the words to express her suffering and make meaning out of her family's tragedy. In doing so, she healed herself. "Now I have a story and it's mine" she writes at the end of her book.



Vaincre son cancer
Les bonnes questions, les vraies réponses

Thierry Philip

Milan, 406 pp, euro 22.50

Cancer: Toutes les réponses à vos questions

Philippe Jeanteur

John Libbey

Eurotext, 240 pp, euro 19.00

“Public opinion surveys as well as the experience of physicians show there is great ignorance regarding cancer... The ignorance is as great as the anxiety it helps to sustain,” writes Axel Kahn in the preface to Jeanteur’s book. Structured in the form of questions and answers – What is a PET-CT? Is cancer hereditary? – Jeanteur’s book provides a wealth of information, including practical tips such as relevant websites, on every aspect of cancer.

Containing no less information,



Thierry Philip’s book consists of short chapters on the different aspects of cancer, from diagnosis to treatment. Philip interweaves his own experience as an oncologist with descriptions of patient cases. Although at times a little pompous, Philip acknowledges his own doubts and laments the fact that oncologists remain unaware of certain aspects of the disease, unless they themselves have sat on the other side of the table. What is most important, he stresses, is “to listen to the patient and see him as a whole person.” One must hope that the human qualities evoked by Philip will help make the reality of oncology departments more amenable to patients.



Evidence-based Cancer Prevention: Strategies for NGOs
A UICC Handbook for Europe

Published in collaboration with the French and Swiss Leagues Against Cancer

UICC, 224 pp, euro 20.00

IT is a known fact that by making the appropriate lifestyle choices, up to half of all cancers can be prevented. The challenge of reducing the cancer burden lies in the ability to transform this knowledge into behavioural and societal change. Full of detailed data, useful tables and diagrams, this handbook, published by

the Union Internationale Contre le Cancer, offers a wide range of evidence-based cancer prevention strategies which European NGOs can adapt to the specific needs of their countries. Part I describes Europe’s cancer burden, with a highly readable chapter by Elsebeth Lynge on the social inequalities of cancer, and the various approaches (cognitive, contextual, etc.) for changing health behaviour. Part II is devoted to specific prevention strategies (tobacco control, diet, occupational exposures, screening, etc.), whose implementation, it is hoped, will bring about real change. Finally, the book (available also in French, German and Italian) provides recommendations for comprehensive cancer prevention programmes.

Copies can be ordered from the UICC (fax +41 22 809 1810).



Martindale: The Complete Drug Reference

34th edition

Edited by Sean C. Sweetman

Pharmaceutical Press, 2766 pp,

£275.00

First published in 1933 by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (a financially independent organisation), *Martindale* provides comprehensive information on drugs

and medicines. Thoroughly updated and expanded, the 34th edition is divided into three parts. By far the largest, Part I contains 4418 monographs on drugs (including drugs still under evaluation) and ancillary substances arranged in 51 chapters according to their therapeutic uses and actions. Each chapter begins with a short but thorough disease treatment review followed by a description of each drug. These are presented in alphabetical order according to the chemical names and in a standard format: nomenclature, pharmaceutical information, adverse effects, precautions (including contra-indications), pharmacokinetics, uses and administration, name of proprietary preparations according to country. The texts are written in a remarkably concise, clear and balanced style. As an example, in the chapter devoted to antineoplastic drugs (102 pages), the disease treatment review addresses adverse effects and their treatment, precautions, interactions, resistance, choice of antineoplastics (with a very useful table of common chemotherapy regimens for malignant diseases) and 21 pages on the management of malignant diseases.

Part II consists of a series of 926 monographs on not easily classified drugs and other substances, herbals, and drugs no longer clinically used but still of interest.

Part III (630 pages) contains brief details on proprietary preparations from 32 countries (all Western countries plus others such as India, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Thailand, etc.) and covers drugs supplied on prescription as well as those sold directly to the public.

Beyond its encyclopaedic dimension – no other work compares in breadth and depth of coverage – *Martindale* is

unique in its field for other reasons. The book provides healthcare professionals with unbiased, evaluated information on drugs used throughout the world and it is based on a huge number of sources from scientific and medical literature, including major studies, guidelines, and useful reviews. Information from pharmaceutical companies is also used, but only in conjunction with other available data.

The bibliographical references (more than 37,500) appear at the end of each paragraph and cross-references to the disease treatment reviews also appear in the drug monographs.

Despite its size, *Martindale* is easy to handle thanks to its comprehensive general index (314 pages!). Entries refer to drugs (by monograph title, other approved names, synonyms and chemical names), diseases and proprietary preparations. There is also a directory of manufacturers containing some 9,500 entries for all the products and proprietary medicines mentioned in *Martindale*.

The numerous headings, together with the new typography and layout, make this 34th edition very readable. Its uses are multiple: it enables physicians to verify specific points, it deepens their knowledge of drugs and their role in therapeutical strategies, and provides updates on ways of handling pathologies. The copious bibliographical references are also of great use both to physicians working in hospitals and those in general practice.

Reliable, comprehensive and impeccably organised, this book (also available in Spanish) is still the ultimate reference in therapeutics.

More up-to-date information from *Martindale* can be obtained from various electronic versions (www.medicinescomplete.com).

Manual práctico de hematología clínica

2nd edition

Edited by Miguel A. Sanz and Enric Carreras

Antares, 304 pp, euro 32.00

IF handbooks are intended to be highly accessible, both in shape and content, then this pocket-sized handbook of clinical haematology is an ideal companion for internists, hospitalists and family practitioners involved with haematology and particularly with malignant haemopathies.

Since it was first published three years ago, the book has been updated and revised and covers the core knowledge of haematological disorders.

Its originality lies in a clever format consisting solely of highly useful tables, informative diagnostic and therapeutic charts and algorithms. Each pathology is presented in the same format, covering epidemiology, clinical aspects, diagnostic tools, staging, prognostic features, treatment, etc.

The succinct yet detailed presentations (including a small chapter on lymphoproliferative diseases of granular lymphocytes) provide readers with a quick view of each pathology and help to orientate them in the world of haematology.

