



Echoes of Heartsounds: A Memoir of Healing

Martha Weinman Lear

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This *New York Times*—bestselling author’s memoir of her own heart attack is “a refresher course in handling life’s meanest challenges with grace” (*Library Journal*).

It begins late one afternoon in her kitchen. There is no collapse, no massive pain. Just a slight fluttering sensation in her chest, then chills, and finally, nausea. Probably nothing to worry about, the doctor assures her on the phone. It doesn’t sound like a heart attack.

But it is. Heart attacks in women can look and feel dramatically different than they do in men, which is why they often go undiagnosed. But heart disease is the number-one killer of American women—greater than all forms of cancer combined.

When the doctor examines Lear the day after her episode, the verdict is shocking. So begins an account, filled with grace, humor, and ferocity, of her hard-won return to good health, beset by mysterious postsurgical complications and haunted by memories of her late husband when she finds herself in the same coronary unit in which she lost him all those years ago.

Echoes of Heartsounds: A Memoir of Healing Details

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From Reader Review Echoes of Heartsounds: A Memoir of Healing for online ebook

Kris says

Not bad story.

Linda says

Quite a recovery story

Heart attacks happen. Was interesting to read about all the ailments that cropped up after her surgery but became bored with the story. Dragged on & on.

Christine Zibas says

This is a sequel to the author's earlier book, "Heartsounds," but it's not necessary to have read that first book to understand or relate to the current one. In the first book, Author Martha Weinman Lear addressed the issue of her husband (a doctor himself) and his death from heart disease. Years later, remarried and well settled into a new life, heart disease strikes again, this time to her.

For anyone who has dealt with a serious illness, it's all there. One day you're fine, and the next you're in the hospital, undergoing surgery, complications (in the author's case), and it seems your whole life has turned upside down. Trying to make sense of your illness, what you think you know about it, and what the doctors tell you (a constantly revised diagnosis or worse, a lack of clarity) is challenging to say the least.

In the author's case, one must add in the factor of reliving her first husband's illness and death in the very same unit at the very same hospital years earlier. Past and present seem to intersect, and old wounds are reopened. It's a very intimate, revealing book, in which the author allows others to see just how humbling being ill can be. She lays bare her experience, and readers are the beneficiaries of her shared experience

NaTaya Hastings says

I received this book through First Reads Giveaways, and I really enjoyed it. I actually entered the giveaway so that I could give the book to my grandmother because it looked like something she'd enjoy reading, but then I remembered hearing the name Martha Lear in my feminist studies course in college, so I thought, "Hmmm..... I wonder if this is the same woman..."

So I picked up the book and began to read, and I'm very glad that I did. This book is not AT ALL my type of reading material, but it was such a good book. The writing was brutal at times. I know this is ridiculous -- and it can't have actually happened beyond my brain making me think it was happening -- but I swear that while reading some of the more graphic parts of this memoir of a woman's battle with heart disease, that at

times, my left arm and chest started hurting. Again, I know that it was totally a psychosomatic thing, but the writing was just THAT good and THAT honest and open and THAT brutal.

My only complaint about the book is that the ending takes a bit of a detour into the author's life in her first marriage -- which is nice and illuminating -- but is also a bit ill-placed in the scheme of things.

Still, overall, a very enjoyable -- if sad -- read.

Clanmckenna1me.com says

Most depressing book ever.

Karen says

Too much of a reiterations of Heartsounds.

Denise says

I was very disappointed in this book. I thoroughly enjoyed the previous book, Heartsounds by this author, so decided to read this one as well. My impressions are that the author wrote this book to capitalize on the success of her previous book, and there was no comparison. At least 1/3 of this book was devoted to retelling the story that was covered in Heartsounds. Not worthy of the great review I gave to the first Heartsounds.

Stuart Smith says

Told with humor and grace, Lear is both parts feisty and fraut. She narrates her grief and questioning beautifully, and invites the reader in on her personal journey to rediscover a disease with a new first hand approach. She wriggles through the irony and paints a medical picture with shades of disbelief, doubt, breaking points and grief. From bedside talks with her deceased husband, to contemplating the program for her own funeral to the devastating news that she has contracted a hospital acquired infection – Lear chronicles the roller coaster medical journey that will endear you, educate you, scare you and ultimately leave you feeling vastly more informed on a womens experience with heart disease. This book is for every woman looking to make sense of what has been stereotyped as a mans disease. It is not so much prescriptive as it is a narrative that many will identify with. But this is also for the partner looking for solace or guidance as they question and ponder what could be going on inside the body. It's for the child of an aging parent who cannot identify with their struggle but is looking for some guidance. It is for the medical professional looking to get a patience perspective. But mostly, it's for fans of anyone who can really appreciate a fantastic writer. Experiencing Lear's illness and challenges in Echoes of Heartsounds will not only tantalize a new audience but will also update fans of her 1980s bestseller.

Yak says

Nowhere near as good as her first book -- in this one we're not even sure she HAD a heart attack!

Cindy says

My review will be posted closer to the publication date of this book.

* I received this book from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Rebecca Foster says

Longtime New York City journalist Lear's first husband, a doctor named Hal, died after a series of heart attacks. Ironically, 30 years later she was admitted to the same hospital for a heart attack – an event that presents completely differently in women. As a sequel to her previous memoir, *Heartsounds* (1980) (which I haven't read but would like to), this explores life's odd parallels and repetitions. It's about her shambolic five-week stay in the hospital – infections and conflicting diagnoses abounded – but also about how she survived Hal's death and later built a new relationship with Al, a widower. It's short and punchy, and I enjoyed Lear's wisecracking yet heartfelt voice.

Related reading: *The Sanctuary of Illness* by Thomas Larson is another heart disease memoir, while *The Light of the World* is Elizabeth Alexander's devastatingly beautiful account of her husband's sudden heart attack death (my favorite nonfiction of 2015 so far).

Barb says

I read heart sounds years ago and enjoyed that, coming from a cardiac nursing background. This was also enjoyable, hearing how the author went on with her life. How frightening for her to go through a similar experience in the the same place, but with a different outcome. From my point of view I'm glad she found the medical profession more responsive to their patients.
