

Your Hearts, Your Scars

Adina Talve-Goodman

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Reflective and forthright, Adina Talve-Goodman's posthumously published essay collection *Your Hearts, Your Scars* discusses chronic illness, the corporeal body, and the privilege of being alive.

Talve-Goodman was born with congenital heart issues, went into heart failure at the age of twelve, and was put on the transplant list at seventeen. Two years later, she received a new heart. She had eleven years of good health and no complications before being diagnosed with a rare lymphoma caused by her post-transplant immunosuppressant drugs. In her essays, she muses on disabilities, the fallibility of the human body, intimacy and vulnerability, faith, health, medicine, and love—and the intersections between these factors. Acutely aware that she is alive because someone else is not, she tries to untangle the threads of what this means while also remaining aware of how others in the transplant community cope.

Some of the essays represent separate drafts that were combined after Talve-Goodman's death. As a rule, their prose is sharp and incisive, if occasionally overly self-aware. Talve-Goodman avoids self-pity and pandering for sympathy to relay events in matter-of-fact, wry terms. Still, despite their personal nature, the essays don't betray much of Talve-Goodman's personality. They are shared from a distance and seem almost wary of the impact that their words might have.

Illustrating the complex experience of organ transplantation and chronic illness, the essays of *Your Hearts, Your Scars* exist in the liminal spaces between health and sickness and between living and dying. They explore what it means to be alive, to have a body, and to come back from the brink of death.

JAIME HERNDON (January / February 2023)

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