

Reading response #1

The following quotes taken from the narrative essays assigned for Session 3 reveal profound anxieties about the ability of a young doctor (or medical student or resident) to serve the needs of his or her patients. As you read through the assigned readings, examine the source of the narrator's anxiety and its relation to the larger priorities of the essay.

Be prepared to discuss all four essays in class.

“Star Material” Shin

Having recently failed to distinguish himself as a potential doctor, however, he would have preferred to spend this evening at home, away from the hospital.

“Acne” Ofri

Where did I get the absurd notion that I might be a healer?

“Incidental Illness” Ofri

Shame crept over me. How could I have been so cavalier and so utterly wrong?

I didn't want to get myself in any trouble; what would someone say if they saw I'd added extra medications just when this disease was diagnosed?

“Flesh-and-Blood Decision-Making” Groopman

I felt the weight of the cards in my pocket. Straight A's when I was a student, play-acting. Now, in the real world, I gave myself an F.

The MGH selection committee had made a mistake offering me an internship. After all the years of preparation, I ended up with an empty head and my feet fixed to the floor.

Writing assignment:

Choose one of the narrative essays assigned for today and write up a coherent response to the following questions: What is the source of the narrator's anxiety? What does the author want to say about that anxiety? Why write about it at all? (c. 300 words)

Be sure to include evidence from the narrative.

Due Session 3

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