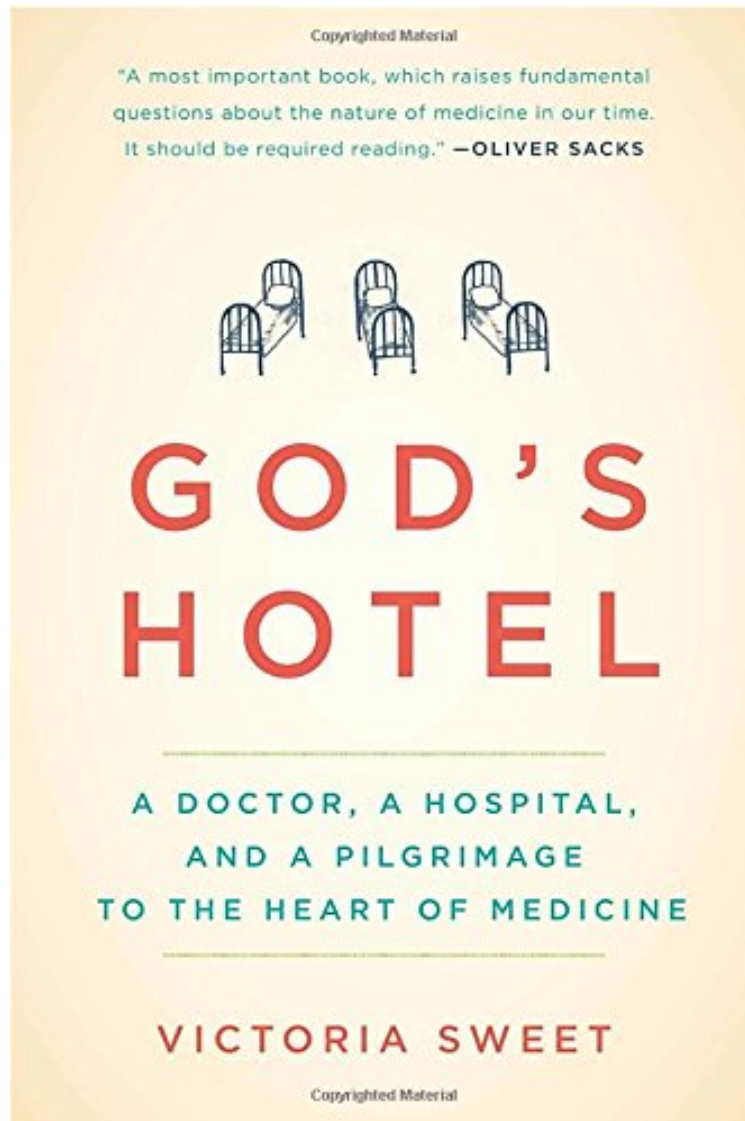


God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine

Victoria Sweet

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Victoria Sweet : God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Super read for those of us in health care By Chris This book hit all aspects of health care. All of us who work in long term care and of special needs and have the day to day government

mandated crap made by those that aren't even working on the floors to be real. Our frustrations..We went into health care for people not paper. The time for the 1:1 patient contact is so much more. ...Those of us who still care do the extra from time to picking up clothes, snacks they love etc...this doctor who told the story of the way the New Health Care system hit it on the head. Us old time care givers are into the people not computers and worrying about covering our tails....A must read. I wish those that are making our new rules in health care really had to work for months in the rules they are making us follow. Get a clue.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A profoundly human bookBy Dr Ali BinazirA book that can delight you through its entertainments or instruct you with useful knowledge is a good book; one that does both is a great book. Rarely, a book comes along that not only instructs and delights but also deepens your humanity, carving out extra space inside us to carry even more compassion. 'God's Hotel' is such a book. [A hat-tip to Jesse Kornbluth of Head Butler for introducing me to it.]There were many reasons I enjoyed the book, which is really many books at once:-- The author, Dr Victoria Sweet, who has a PhD in medieval history as well as an MD, shares the ancient Latin and Greek etymologies of many terms used in patient care today. Hospitality, community, charity - what do they really mean? Through her stories about her time taking care of patients, Dr Sweet shows how those formed the three foundational principles of Laguna Honda Hospital.-- Dr Sweet interweaves the account of her doctoral research on Hildegard von Bingen in the story. Von Bingen was the original 11th century superwoman: head cleric, builder, farmer, physician, author *and* composer at a time when women weren't allowed much power at all. Dr Sweet applies some of the premodern principles from von Bingen's healing framework to her patients, with encouraging results.-- Dr Sweet describes in great detail and without spite the encroachment of modern medicine with its "efficiencies" into the cozy, personable and strangely effective ways of Laguna Honda, even though there is much to provoke the reader's dismay. The personal, health and financial consequences of cost-cutting, both on patients and staff, turn out to be much higher than the dollars that those measures purport to save. It's a cautionary tale about what medicine can be vs. what it has become, and should be required reading for every medical student.-- And most of all, the stories of the patients. Laguna Honda being a hospital for the care of the indigent - the last almshouse in the US - its patients are people that the good life left behind. The poor, the mentally ill, the unlucky, those with nowhere else to go: these are the patients that Laguna Honda treats equally and without prejudice. Sometimes the patient goes to the brink of death, the 'anima' already halfway in ascent, and turns back. Other times, the patients make miraculous recoveries only to succumb to alcohol or neglect once discharged. These case histories are at once invigorating, enlightening, infuriating and heartbreaking. They are the human heart of the book.One of the side effects of reading any book is to become partially imbued with the spirit of its author. Reading 'God's Hotel', you get a sense that Dr Victoria Sweet is a deeply thoughtful and compassionate person, and one of the very best kind of caregivers one could hope to have. As a result, this book will not only delight and instruct you, but is also likely to leave you a better human being.-- Ali Binazir, M.D., M.Phil., author of [...], the highest-rated dating self-help book on 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A new (old) way of doing medicineBy Brie ParkerThis was a lovely, well-written story about what the practice of medicine can look like given time to percolate. The patients of Laguna Honda had nothing but time, and their doctors and nurses did as well. They had time to think about what they were seeing, think about what might be the problem, think of what might be the solution. They had time to try those treatment ideas with the patients they'd built relationships with. The end of the book seems to mark a moving-away from what was, but the lessons taught via slow medicine are useful for any time and place.

Look out for Victoria Sweet's new book, SLOW MEDICINE, coming October 2017For readers of Paul Kalanithis When Breath Becomes Air, a medical page-turner that traces one doctors remarkable journey to the essence of medicine (The San Francisco Chronicle). San Franciscos Laguna Honda Hospital is the last almshouse in the country, a descendant of the Htel-Dieu (Gods hotel) that cared for the sick in the Middle Ages. Ballet dancers and rock musicians, professors and thievesanyone who had fallen, or, often, leapt, onto hard times and needed extended medical careended up here. So did Victoria Sweet, who came for two months and stayed for twenty years.Laguna Honda, relatively low-tech but human-paced, gave Sweet the opportunity to practice a kind of attentive medicine that has almost vanished. Gradually, the place transformed the way she understood her work. Alongside the modern view of the body as a machine to be fixed, her extraordinary patients evoked an older idea, of the body as a garden to be tended. Gods Hotel tells their story and the story of the hospital itself, which, as efficiency experts, politicians, and architects descended, determined to turn it into a modern health care facility, revealed its own surprising truths about the essence, cost, and value of caring for the body and the soul.

PRAISE FOR GOD'S HOTELTranscendent readable chapters go down like restorative sips of cool water, and its hard-core subversion cheers like a shot of gin Gods Hotel [is] a tour de force Others have written about the relationship between time and medical care with similar eloquence and urgency, but the centuries of perspective that Dr. Sweet brings infuse the point with unforgettable clarity. The New York TimesA radical and inspiring alternative vision of caring for the sick. Vanity FairEngaging You might not expect a book about San Francisco's most downtrodden patients to be a page-turner, but it is. With its colorful cast of characters battling the tide of history, God's Hotel is a

remarkable journey into the essence of medicine. San Francisco Chronicle "Victoria Sweet writes beautifully about the enormous richness of life at Laguna Honda, the chronic [care] hospital where she has spent the last twenty years, and the intense sense of place and community that binds patients and staff there. Such community in the medical world is vanishingly rare now, and Laguna Honda may be the last of its kind God's Hotel is a most important book which raises fundamental questions about the nature of medicine in our time. It should be required reading for anyone interested in the 'business' of healthcare and especially those interested in the humanity of healthcare." Oliver Sacks, M.D. author of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and *The Mind's Eye* Victoria Sweet has written the best non-fiction book I've read this year The qualities that make her a great doctor are the same qualities that make her book so powerful, original and relevant For a very long time, a gang of renegades got away with practicing medicine the way it should be: sitting with patients, watching, listening, often doing nothing more than being present. And then Victoria Sweet, a candidate for sainthood, wrote a book that is a beacon in the darkness. Jesse Kornbluth, Huffington Post A beautifully written and illuminating book [Sweet's] metaphors are poetic and hint at the mystical, but then she pulls back with the educated eye of a scientist For both the agnostic and the believer, Sweet pinpoints the element of medicine that makes it a calling rather than a job: the unique and sustaining love that is sparked between a doctor and patient. Jerome Groopman, *The New York of Books* "Remarkable [Sweet] would appreciate that it took time for me to journey to and through her work since that may be one of the many compelling messages she so eloquently, yet simply by storytelling, conveys permitting tincture of time to also do its job." The Huffington Post Sweet writes fluidly and well She weaves a fascinating account of the historical forces that transformed our view of the body It's high time that someone gets medieval on modern medicine's morass, and Victoria Sweet is just the woman to do it. Cleveland Plain Dealer Captivating with this humane and thoughtful work, Sweet joins physician-authors such as Oliver Sacks, Jerome Groopman and Abraham Verghese. The Dallas Morning News Sweet's tone in *God's Hotel* nicely matches her subject. Her writing has a lovely, antique quality This hospital, with its chronically ill patients, crumbling buildings, and never-ending budget woes, was 'a gift.' In this beautiful and unique book, she shares that gift with us generously. The Boston Globe "Intelligent and moving In this often lyrical book, Dr. Sweet reveals a deep spirituality and unsentimental compassion." Minneapolis Star-Tribune "Sweet paints a dynamic portrait [which] is at its core testimonial to the body's remarkable ability to heal when it is provided with the simple ingredients of time and care." Utne Reader Visionary thoroughly subversive in all the best ways Sweet proposes ways that we might reimagine our way forward by looking into the distant past This book's lessons and conclusions should challenge doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, and policy makers to stop and rethink their core beliefs. Journal of Health Affairs "Containing no medical jargon nothing too gory or gut-wrenching; just descriptive stories of patients, unusual treatments, a hospital in transition, and a doctor on a journey, learning to practice 'a beautiful art.'" East Bay Express "By braiding historical searches with her time at Laguna Honda, [Sweet] arrives at a compelling critique of modernized health care and a vision for transforming it." Books Culture [Our] healthcare system might function a lot better if every single American citizen, healthcare professional, politician and legislator would read Victoria Sweet's insightful, beautifully written and moving book. Bookpage About the Author Victoria Sweet has been a physician at San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital for more than twenty years. An associate clinical professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, she is also a prize-winning historian with a Ph.D. in history and social medicine.