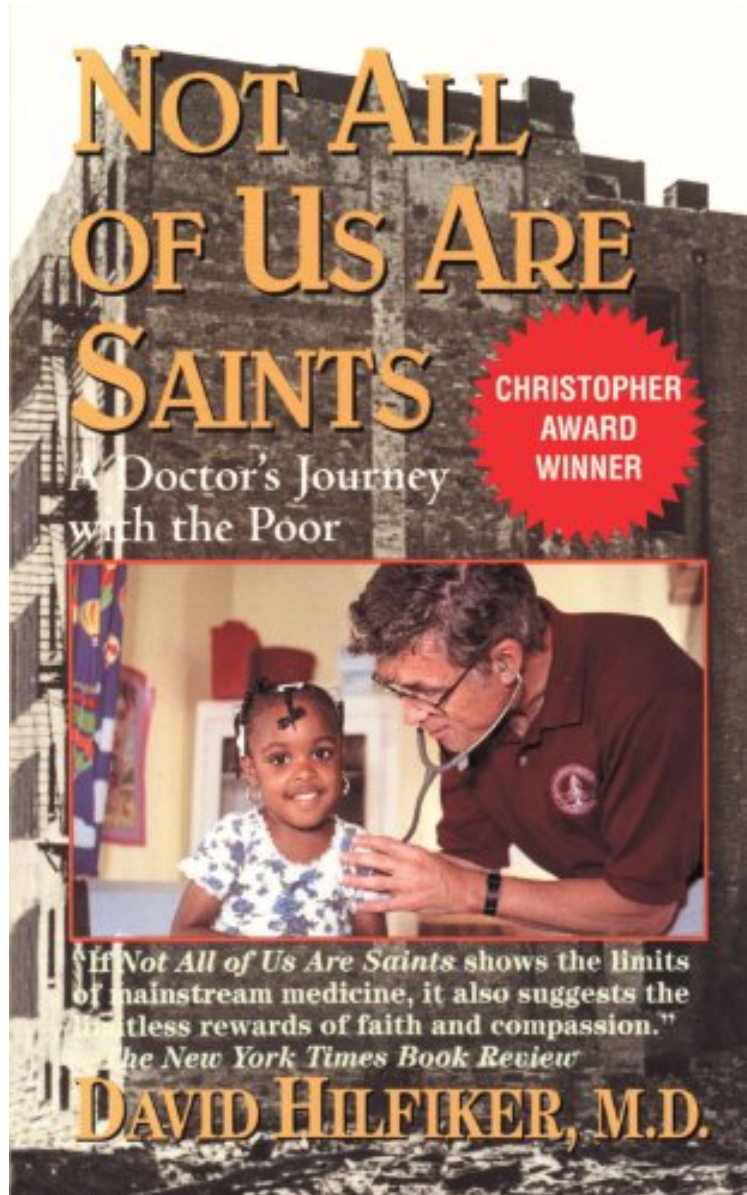


Not All of Us Are Saints: A Doctor's Journey with the Poor

David Hilfiker M.D.

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David Hilfiker M.D. : Not All of Us Are Saints: A Doctor's Journey with the Poor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Not All of Us Are Saints: A Doctor's Journey with the Poor:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I could relate to all of this and highly recommended the book to anyone.
By Linda J Sloan This is familiar territory, since I am a doctor, but on a scale of hopeless poverty and difficulty of access to services which I have not had to negotiate. It was written quite a few years ago (published 1994), but the same issues exist, as progress towards equal access to quality education and health care have (in my opinion) deteriorated in the last 20 years. It is a very personal account, that reflects on the authors own background and reasons for tackling this enormous task of improving health care for the most vulnerable in our society. There were very interesting informational sections on the causes of poverty and inequality in our country. It also included portraits of several of his patients to illustrate the difficulty faced in providing health care. I could relate to all of this and highly recommended the book to anyone.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hope and Despair
By Customer By depicting a doctor's battles with and for the poor in Washington D.C., this novel is unabashed in its honesty. Not only does it bring to light the many injustices that society has placed on the homeless, but it exposes the demons we all have in ourselves. Many say they want to help, but what will they say when their help seems to change nothing? When it seems as though the world does not care about the poor and chooses the least painful narrative, that poor "brought it upon themselves," or they could just "go get a job?" This book shows that reality is not that simple, yet even among mountains of despair there is reason to hope.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I was hooked from the first page.
By Jean Neitzke This is among the top five books I have EVER read. The author is brutally honest about his own failings as a physician practicing "poverty medicine" in inner-city DC. He is a true hero, all the more so for his very humanness. It is very thought provoking and profoundly moving. I have shared it with my family and friends as a "must read".

In 1983, Dr. David Hilfiker left his practice in rural Minnesota and began to practice poverty medicine in a ravaged community not far from the White House. Fascinating and deeply affecting, this is his elegantly written true story of that time. Previously published by Hill and Wang.
From the Paperback edition.

From Publishers Weekly Although he broods that he falls short of the selflessness of Mother Teresa, Hilfiker's perceived lacks make his questing need for service, his humanity, comprehensible to those who find saintliness unnatural. For seven years the author (*Healing the Wounds*) practiced "poverty medicine" at Christ House, a Washington, D.C. medical recovery shelter for homeless men sponsored by the Church of the Saviour; he left in 1990 to found an AIDS shelter. Rarely have we been so powerfully forced to confront the plight of those who have been battered by homelessness, lack of education, poor nutrition and addiction; rarely have we been made to see how grossly inhospitable to the spirit is poverty. Hilfiker does not allow us to disregard the helplessness of those who are unable to climb out of their own histories, even as he himself becomes frustrated that his patients often do not--sometimes cannot, under the conditions of their street lives--cooperate in their medical care. Along with case histories of his patients and accounts of his bouts with public welfare organizations, Hilfiker presents his well-reasoned criticisms of a society in which justice is procedural rather than distributive: "Wealth, opportunity and a good education are not equally available to all." Earning \$34,000 a year at Christ House, and given a comfortable rent-free apartment at the shelter for himself, his wife and their three children, Hilfiker questions whether his privileged life compromises his integrity. He provides the answer with this journal of what happened when he lived and worked among those whose poverty results--as he makes us aware--from the very societal structures that gave him affluence.
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From Library Journal Believing that poverty in our country is a matter of injustice and that justice is possible, Hilfiker (*Healing the Wounds*, LJ 11/ 1/85) gave up a private Minnesota practice in 1983 and moved his wife and three young children to Christ House, a Washington, D.C., inner-city medical shelter for homeless men, most of whom are black alcoholics or substance abusers. He finds that "coming face-to-face with unpleasant, ungrateful, and manipulative poor people is a misery all its own" and that the needs of Washington's homeless are for all practical purposes infinite. Telling what it is like for a middle-class doctor and his family to really live with the poor, Hilfiker clarifies the nature of poverty and its awful power to break the human spirit. His plain-spoken account of his following the "Mother Teresa Model" of poverty medicine radiates a certain nobility from which readers can draw hope and the recognition of humanity's oneness. An uncommon read.
James Swanton, *Albert Einstein Coll. of Medicine*, New York
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From Booklist Hilfiker tells of the six years he and his family spent in Christ House, a church-based clinic and shelter for the poor in inner-city Washington. He describes the various medical and social problems the men he treated and let live in the house for up to a month presented, and he reports how a brief trial with women residents failed. The medical parts of the book are relatively easy to take; the unsettling parts are those questioning self, society, and life. For Hilfiker worries that he simply projects his own self-destructiveness, indecisiveness, rage, and guilt on his patients and his family. A good example of such ruminations comes in his account of his daughter Laurel and her dental braces: Should she be given money for this essentially cosmetic device when the poor don't have even the basic essentials? This is not a comfortable book, but it is an important addition to the literature of contemporary life in the rich global power that the U.S. is. William

Beatty