

**Literature and Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital
Readings Selected by Suzanne Koven MD, MFA**

Fiction

Adrian, Chris “The Sum of Our Parts”
Atwood, Margaret “Death By Landscape”
Barrett, Andrea “Ship Fever”
Bloom, Amy “Silver Water”
Butler, Octavia “Bloodchild”
Camus, Albert *The Plague*
Carr, J.L. *A Month in the Country*
Carver, Raymond “Cathedral”
Chekhov, Anton “A Doctor’s Visit”
 “An Awkward Business”
 “Ward Six”
 “Enemies”
Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*
 Slow Man
Cooper, Bernard “What to Name the Baby”
Dark, Alice Elliott “In The Gloaming”
Dubus, Andre “The Colonel’s Wife”
Eugenides, Jeffrey *Middlesex*
Faulkner, William *As I Lay Dying*
Greene, Graham *A Burnt-Out Case*
Greenidge, Kaitlyn *Libertie*
Haddon, Mark *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*
Hamid, Mohsin *Exit West*
Harleman, Ann “Thoreau’s Laundry”
Hawthorne, Nathaniel “Roger Malvin’s Burial”
 “The Birthmark” “Rappaccini’s Daughter”
Hempel, Amy “In The Cemetery Where Al Jolson Is Buried”
Hemingway, Ernest “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”
Ishiguro, Kazuo *Never Let Me Go*
Jen, Gish “Who’s Irish?”
Jones, Tayari *An American Marriage*
Joyce, James “An Encounter”
Kafka, Franz *The Metamorphosis*
Kang, Han *The Vegetarian*
King, Lily *Euphoria*
Lahiri, Jhumpa “The Treatment of Bibi Haldar”
 “The Third and Final Continent”
Lam, Vincent “Winston”
Lianke, Yan *Dream of Ding Village*
Machado, Carmen Maria “The Husband Stitch”

Makkai, Rebecca *The Great Believers*
Mates, Susan Onthank "Laundry"
Maugham, Somerset *Of Human Bondage*
Maxwell, William *So Long, See You Tomorrow*
McCorkle, Jill "Intervention"
McEwan, Ian *The Children Act*
Melville, Herman "Bartleby The Scrivener"
Morrison, Toni *The Bluest Eye*
Sula
Song of Solomon
Beloved
Munro, Alice "The Bear Came Over The Mountain"
"Friend of My Youth" "Before the Change"
Murakami, Haruki "Birthday Girl"
Nunez, Sigrid *The Friend*
O'Brien, Tim "The Things They Carried"
O'Connor, Flannery "The Enduring Chill"
"A Good Man is Hard to Find"
O'Farrell, Maggie *Hamnet*
Pearlman, Edith "Castle 4"
Porter, Katherine Anne *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*
Proulx, Annie "The Half-Skinned Steer"
Roth, Philip "Defender of the Faith"
Everyman
Nemesis
Shelley, Mary *Frankenstein*
Singer, Isaac Bashevis "Yentl the Yeshiva Boy"
Smith, Ali *Autumn*
St. John Mandel, Emily *Station Eleven*
Stevenson, Robert Louis *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
Tolstoy, Leo "The Death of Ivan Ilyich"
Vuong, Ocean *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous*
Ward, Jesmyn *Salvage the Bones*
Wharton, Edith *Ethan Frome*
Wolitzer, Hilma "The Great Escape"

Nonfiction

Anderson, Chase "Taking Back Our Voices-#Humanity is Our Lane"
Aronson, Louise "'Good' Patients and 'Difficult' Patients--Rethinking Our Definitions"
Awdish, Rana *In Shock*
Alcott, Louisa May *Hospital Sketches*
Alexeivich, Svetlana *Voices from Chernobyl*
Angell, Roger "This Old Man"
Arnold, Miah "You Owe Me"

Athill, Diana *Somewhere Towards The End*
Bailey, Elisabeth Tova *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*
Baldwin, James "Notes of a Native Son"
Biss, Eula *On Immunity*
 "The Pain Scale"
Borges, Jose Luis "On Blindness"
Boyer, Anne *The Undying*
Broyard, Anatole *Intoxicated By My Illness*
Case, Molly *How to Treat People*
Chabon, Michael "The Recipe for Life"
Coates, Ta-Nehisi "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning"
Colaiani, Alessandra "For Now, We Wait"
Dalton, Clayton "The Risks of Normalizing the Coronavirus"
Davis, Linda "Open After My Death"
De Beauvoir, Simone *A Very Easy Death*
Didion, Joan "In Bed"
 The Year of Magical Thinking
Fey, Tina "Remembrances of Being Very, Very Skinny" and "Remembrances of Being a Little Bit Fat"
Fink, Sheri "Strained By Katrina, A Hospital Faced Deadly Choices"
Franzen, Jonathan "My Father's Brain"
Gawande, Atul "Letting Go"
Grealy, Lucy *Autobiography of a Face*
Hall, Donald "Between Loneliness and Solitude"
Hanna-Attisha *What the Eyes Don't See*
Hata, Susan R. "The Ritual of the Table"
Hemon, Aleksandr "The Aquarium"
Hersey, John *Hiroshima*
Hitchens, Christopher "The Topic of Cancer"
Hodgman, George *Bettyville*
Jamison, Kay Redfield *An Unquiet Mind*
Jamison, Leslie "The Empathy Exams" "Baggage Claims"
Kalanithi, Paul *When Breath Becomes Air*
Kidder, Tracey *Strength In What Remains*
Knighton, Ryan *Cockeyed*
Kolker, Robert *Hidden Valley Road*
Koven, Suzanne "Using Humor in the Doctor's Office"
 "Empathy Examined"
 "They Call Us and We Go"
 Letter to a Young Female Physician
Lamas, Daniela "You Can Stop Humming Now"
Lepore, Jill "The Lingering of Loss"
Levy, Ariel "Thanksgiving in Mongolia"
Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*
Lopate, Phillip "Portrait of My Body"
Lorde, Audre *The Cancer Journals*

Lucretius "The Nature of Plagues"
Mairs, Nancy "On Being A Cripple"
Martin, Marlene "Crossing Borders"
Mitchell, Joseph "Joe Gould's Secret"
Mooallem, Jon "The House at the End of the World"
Moore, Judith *Fat Girl*
Mukherjee, Siddhartha "Same But Different"
Munro, Alice "Night"
Nasar, Sylvia *A Beautiful Mind*
Nealon, Mary Jane *Beautiful Unbroken*
Nimura, Janice P. *The Doctors Blackwell*
Oates, Joyce Carol "The Widow's Walk"
Ofri, Danielle "Is Your Doctor Listening?"
Patchett, Ann *Truth and Beauty*, "These Precious Days"
Provenzano, Audrey "Caring for Ms. L—Overcoming My Fear of Treating Opioid Use Disorder"
Reisman, Anna "Board Review and the Middle Aged Doctor"
Riederer, Rachel "Patient"
Rieff, David *Swimming in a Sea of Death*
Robinson, Roxana "Paralyzed: Learning To Live In Polio's Shadow"
Rosenbaum, Lisa "Transitional Chaos or Enduring Harm: The EHR and the Disruption of Medicine"
Roth, Philip *Patrimony*
Scialabba, George "The Endlessly Examined Life"
Sedaris, David "Now We Are Five"
"Why Aren't You Laughing?"
"The Happy Place"
Shapiro, Dani *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love*
Sheff, David *Beautiful Boy*
Skloot, Rebecca *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
Smith, Patti *Just Kids*
Solomon, Andrew *Far From The Tree*
Stevenson, Bryan *Just Mercy*
Strayed, Cheryl "Heroin/e"
Sweet, Victoria *God's Hotel*
Thernstrom, Melanie *The Pain Chronicles*
Tisdale, Sallie "Chemo World"
Verghese, Abraham *The Tennis Partner*
Wachter, Robert *The Digital Doctor*
Weinberg, Richard B. "Communion"
Westover, Tara *Educated*
Williams, Caroline Randall "You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument"
Williams, William Carlos "The Girl With The Pimply Face"
Zarin, Cynthia "An Enlarged Heart"
Zauner, Michelle *Crying in H Mart*

Zuger, Abigail "Moving On"

Poetry

Angelou, Maya "Still I Rise"

Bierer, Michael "My Covid Epitaph"

Bishop, Elizabeth "In The Waiting Room"

Boland, Eavan "Quarantine"

Bowe, Geoffrey "Male Nurse Washing a Nun"

Brashler, Anne "He Read To Her"

Campo, Rafael "Elegy for the AIDS Virus"

"What I Would Give"

Carver, Raymond "What The Doctor Said"

Clifton, Lucille "Donor"

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor "Kubla Khan"

Davis, Cortney "The Body Flute"

Davis, Marilyn "Song For My Son"

Dickinson, Emily "After Great Pain, A Formal Feeling Comes"

Doty, Mark "Tiara"

Frost, Robert "After Apple Picking"

Hall, Donald "The Ship Pounding"

Heney, Seamus "Chekhov on Sakhalin"

"Digging"

Homer *The Odyssey* (excerpt translated by Emily Wilson)

Jarrell, Randall "The X-Ray Waiting Room In The Hospital"

Kaur, Rupi *Milk and Honey*

Kenyon, Jane "Let Evening Come"

"Notes From The Other Side"

Dorianne Laux "Nurse"

Levertov, Denise "The 90th Year"

Masson, Venetta "Guilt"

"Passages"

Olds, Sharon "The Death Of Marilyn Monroe"

Perillo, Lucia "Poem Without Breasts"

"Second Poem Without Breasts"

Plath, Sylvia "Lady Lazarus"

Rankine, Claudia *Citizen*

Rich, Adrienne "Diving into the Wreck"

Ritvo, Max "Poem To My Litter"

Shakespeare, William "Sonnet #60"

Thomas, Dylan "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"

Turner, Brian "AB Positive"

Updike, John "Hospital"

Viramontes, Helena Maria "The Moths"

Voigt, Ellen Bryant *Kyrie*

Whitman, Walt “I Sing the Body Electric”
Yeats, W.B. “When You Are Old”
“Politics”
Young, Kevin “Ode To The Hotel Near The Children’s Hospital”

Graphic Memoirs

Bechdel, Alison *Fun Home*
Chast, Roz *Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*
Delisle, Guy *Hostage*
Pekar, Harvey and Brabner, Joyce *Our Cancer Year*
Small, David *Stitches*

Plays

Heaney, Seamus *The Cure At Troy*
Miller, Arthur *Death of a Salesman*
O’Neill, Eugene *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*
Shaffer, Peter *Equus*
Shakespeare, William *Hamlet, King Lear, Measure for Measure, Macbeth*
Shaw, George Bernard *The Doctor’s Dilemma*
Williams, Tennessee *The Glass Menagerie*

Films

A Beautiful Mind
Angels in America
Black Women in Medicine
Brazil
Fences
Frankenstein
Hilary and Jackie
Modern Times
Never Let Me Go
Rashomon
Shadowlands

Podcasts

“The Loving Choice” at *Family Secrets*
“The River Styx” at *The Nocturnists*