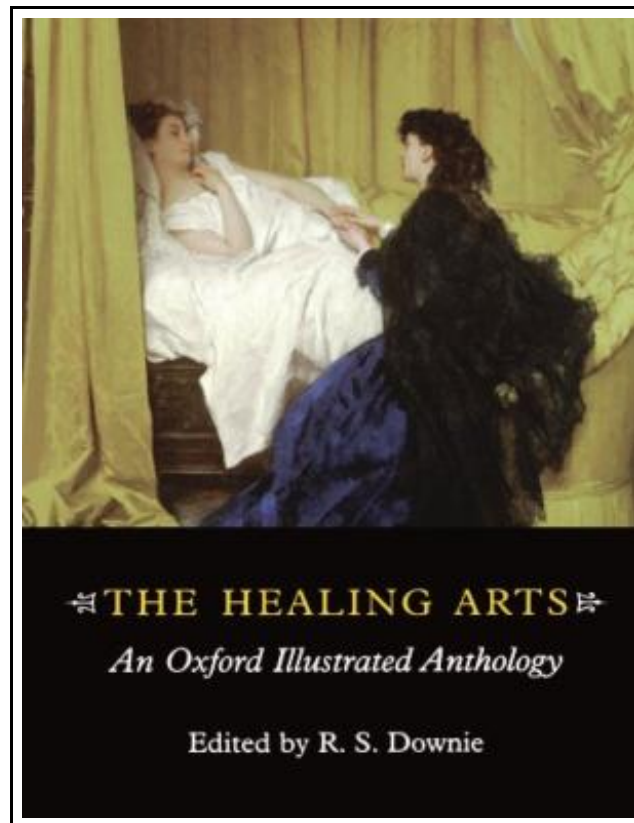


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Oxford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 352 pages. Dimensions: 9.7in. x 7.5in. x 0.8in. From birth and adolescence through maturity and old age, our lives are punctuated by sudden medical emergencies and by chronic illnesses, and by encounters with doctors, nurses, and other care-givers. Physicians and patients, operations and cures, suffering and compassion--all are part of the reality of human existence. Now, in a beautifully illustrated volume, R. S. Downie offers a vibrant, kaleidoscopic look at the healing arts, bringing together eclectic and engaging excerpts from fiction, poetry, drama, and letters, and by writers as diverse as Paracelsus, Francis Bacon, and Joseph Heller. Here are celebrations and laments, such as in Sylvia Plaths Morning Song (Love set you going like a fat gold watch, The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry Took its place among the elements); in Hippocrates From Epidemics; in Franz Schuberts eloquent last letter to Franz von Schober, telling of his illness; in Susan Sontags Illness as Metaphor discussing TB and cancer as diseases of passion; or in Philip Larkins acerbic verses on birth, aging, and mourning. Caretakers and caregivers share their thoughts, as in Walt Whitmans From the Wound-Dresser, Florence Nightingales Notes on Nursing, and William Carlos Williams Tract. And of course there is great need for humor and a lighter touch in healing, which Downie reflects in many offbeat and witty entries, ranging from Stephen SONDHEIMS Gee, Officer Krupke, to Richard Ashers Why are Medical Journals so Dull (Many of the titles are unattractive. . . . Titles such as A Trial of 4. 4-Diethyl-hydro-balderdashic Acid in Acute Coryzal Infections are far better changed to A New Treatment for Colds). And the anthology is rounded out by paintings and drawings. The arts can be entertaining, moving, disturbing, consoling, and rich in insight,...

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