



★ STARRED REVIEW

Wings: How Traveling around the World Freed My Soul to Fly

Kathy Wright

Balboa Press, 238 pages, (paperback) \$20.99, 979-8-7652-3907-0

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From Machu Picchu to Mount Rainier, retired nurse/midwife Kathy Wright's travels created a solid foundation for another unexpected odyssey: the journey she embarked upon with her diagnosis of ovarian cancer. This deeply personal memoir shares how world travel and cancer intertwined to support and enhance her quest to open herself to what's truly important in life.

Wright's narrative weaves travel stories with discussion of her cancer diagnosis at 72 and subsequent treatment. She shares how carefully chosen chemotherapy outfits—Superman socks and a necklace of religious medals from her trips—became life-affirming coping mechanisms. And how experiences such as the sacredness of Barcelona's La Sagrada Familia basilica or death purification ceremonies in India's Ganges River offered gifts of wisdom. She sought to create her own rituals: "Before I began my chemotherapy sessions, I would ring a Tibetan chime above my chemotherapy chair to create vibrations for positive healing energy. I would sprinkle essential oils to infuse healing aromas into the air..."

Searching out diverse myths and folklore, she learned of the survival and resilience of indigenous cultures. This gave her perspective on her own journey, as cancer, too, has its culture of survival and resilience, she notes.

The narrative isn't strictly chronological, so readers can pick up the book at almost any point to enjoy the author's warm embrace of other cultures, plus spiritual practices such as meditation and yoga. Readers who expect a romantic travel story such as *Eat, Pray, Love* or who want extensive information on ovarian cancer treatment should seek other sources. Wright's combination of heart-felt, loving travel vignettes and her cancer journey mesh well, however, and her thoughtful voice eschews the trite platitudes common in other similar books.

The French term for midwife is *sage femme*, or wise woman. Wright shows readers through examples of her interior and exterior journeys that connected to sacred moments that they, too, can find wisdom in their personal quests.

Also available in hardcover and ebook.