

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

WINGS

How Traveling the World Freed My Soul To Fly

Kathy Wright

Illus. by Brooke Powers

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BOOK REVIEW

Wright offers an unconventional blend of travelogue and cancer memoir in this work.

The author was a world traveler before being diagnosed with ovarian cancer in May 2020. “My journeys went from outward to inward as I navigated my diagnosis and treatment,” she writes in this ambitious memoir that bridges her globetrotting and medical journeys. Each chapter applies various topics to both travel and health, beginning with “Rules for the Journey.” Other topics include curiosity, resilience, gratitude, and the power of nature. Wright takes readers to Bali, New Zealand, Japan, Tahiti, India, Egypt, and other far-flung corners of the world as she tries new experiences and learns about her destinations. At the same time, she leads readers through her cancer journey, from a fearful start to investigating courses of treatment, both conventional and not-so conventional. There’s a self-help aspect to the book; in the chapter on rituals, for instance, the author urges readers to look for repeated patterns that bring them joy, such as kissing grandchildren good night, calling a parent every Sunday night, and saying “I love you” at the end of a phone call. Wright tries to do a lot with her narrative and largely succeeds, thanks to her engaging and accessible writing style. The book is at its best when it focuses on the author’s travels around the world. Wright has been to a lot of places and has experienced much on those trips; often, her descriptions—of sitting in Barcelona’s Sagrada Familia, or marveling at hieroglyphics in Egypt, or experiencing a lunar eclipse from a cruise ship in Antarctica—beguile readers with their emotional potency. The health journey, too, is affecting—but, obviously, it’s not nearly as breezy or evocative as the travelogue portions. Still, the two strands work well together.

A narrative that takes readers on a journey through the wonders of the world and the trials of life.