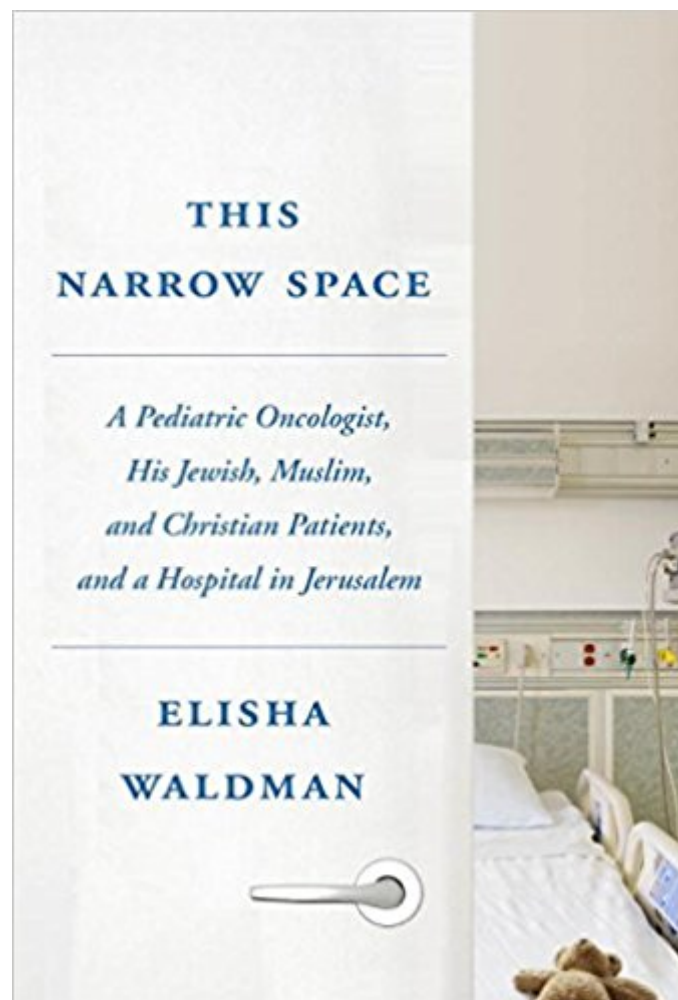




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This Narrow Space: A Pediatric Oncologist, His Jewish, Muslim, And Christian Patients, And A Hospital In Jerusalem



Synopsis

A memoir both bittersweet and inspiring by an American pediatric oncologist who spent seven years in Jerusalem taking care of Israeli and Palestinian children with one tragic thing in common— a diagnosis of pediatric cancer. In 2007, Elisha Waldman, a New York-based pediatric oncologist and palliative-care specialist in his mid-thirties, was offered his dream job: attending physician at Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center. He had gone to medical school in Israel and spent time there as a teenager; now he was going to give something back to the land he loved. But in the wake of a financial crisis at the hospital that left him feeling unsure about his future, Waldman, with considerable regret, left Hadassah in 2014 and returned to America. This *Narrow Space* is his deeply affecting and poignant memoir of the seven years he spent taking care of children—Israeli Jews, Muslims, and Christians; Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza—with one devastating thing in common: they had all been diagnosed with some form of pediatric cancer. Waldman's years at Hadassah were filled in equal measure with a deep sense of accomplishment, with frustration when regional politics sometimes got in the way of his patients' care, and with tension over the fine line he would have to walk when the religious traditions of some of his patients' families made it difficult for him to give these children the care he felt they deserved. Navigating the baffling Israeli bureaucracy, the ever-present threat of war, and the cultural clashes that sometimes spilled over into his clinic, Waldman learned to be content with small victories: a young patient whose disease went into remission, brokenhearted parents whose final hours with their child were made meaningful and comforting. As he sought to create both a personal and a professional life in his new home, Waldman struggled with his own questions of identity and belief, and with the intractable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians that had become a fact of his daily life. What he learned about himself, about the complex country that he was now a part of, and about the heartbreakingly brave and endearing children he cared for—whether they were from Me'ah She'arim, Ramallah, or Gaza City—will move and challenge readers everywhere.

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Customer Reviews

“This Narrow Space ushers in a new and important voice in the literature of medicine. Waldman, caring for children with life-threatening diseases, shows that even when hope is gone for the body, there is still hope for the spirit. This book will illuminate and inspire, as a young physician transits culture and beliefs in his search for meaning in some of life’s most trying circumstances.”
• Dr. Jerome Groopman, professor, Harvard Medical School, and author of *The Anatomy of Hope: How People Prevail in the Face of Illness*

ELISHA WALDMAN is associate chief, division of pediatric palliative care, at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. He was formerly medical director of pediatric palliative care at the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital at Columbia University Medical Center in New York. He received his B.A. from Yale University and his medical degree from the Sackler School of Medicine in Tel Aviv. He also trained at Mount Sinai Medical Center and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and at Boston Children’s Hospital. His writing has appeared in *Bellevue Literary Review* and *The Hill*. He lives in Chicago.

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