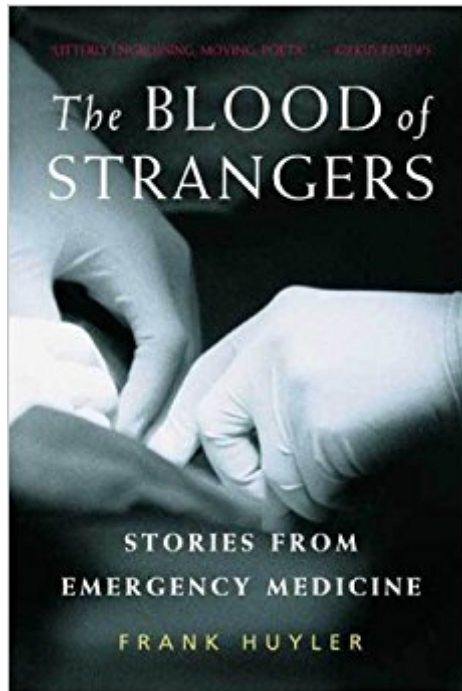




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# **The Blood Of Strangers: Stories From Emergency Medicine**



## Synopsis

Hailed by The Boston Globe as "a compact, faceted gem that shines with intelligence," this remarkable and fascinating book offers an honest, startling, deeply moving depiction of the modern emergency room. The twenty-eight vignettes in *The Blood of Strangers*, all written by a young E.R. physician and writer based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, seamlessly juxtapose visceral portrayals of real and unedited hospital situations with perceptive and lyrical meditations on the world of medicine--and the world at large. All students, scholars, and practitioners of emergency medicine will find this stunning account of life, death, work, and reality in the E.R. both haunting and instructive.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Forget the niceties of plot development and the easy moralizing of the television shows. There's nothing glamorous about a hospital emergency room, that arena where every human flaw and frailty is exposed. Frank Huyler, a physician and poet, offers a sharp view of life-and-death realities. The emergency room, he writes in these affecting vignettes, is a place where the dominant mood is numbness, where doctors and patients alike have seen too much bloodshed and death. As a defensive reaction, Huyler writes, some doctors become addicted to drugs and other pastimes, while others assume arrogant, cavalier, or aloof airs. This is eminently understandable, and Huyler recounts the growing distance in his relationship with patients as "the earlier intimacy I had felt ... began to recede into the task." A fine storyteller, Huyler doesn't shy away from tales in which he comes up short, just as he shakes his head in bemusement at the ways of administrators and

chiefs. In one episode, for instance, he writes of treating a comatose patient with aggressive measures under one attending physician's orders, then doing almost nothing under another's instructions. The patient "was gone from the waking world, as nearly dead as a human being can be, lying at the edge but never quite crossing over"--but, amazingly, he survived both his injuries and the conflict between the two doctors. Reminiscent of the surgeon-essayist Richard Seltzer's best work, Huyler's memoirs take readers behind the surgical screen. --Gregory McNamee

This haunting, exquisitely observed collection of medical vignettes is much more than a compilation of odd cases from the emergency room. Huyler probes beneath the surface to reveal the marrow of his encounters with patients, such as when, after making a swift diagnosis and saving a life, he later looks in on the patient and pauses to sit "in the dark for a while, watching the red and blue lights of the monitor, savoring him, taking something for myself." Inviting the reader behind the drape, he recounts his personal journey from his first days as a medical student in gross anatomy lab through the harder, lonelier days of his internship and residency before he finally stepped into the coveted role of attending physician, vested with full authority. With a poet's economy, Huyler dismantles the myth of the privileged doctor's life, revealing the long hours and loneliness that are too often requisites for the job. His character studies of the often quirky, sometimes tragic colleagues and patients who pass through the ward are quite poignant. From the murderer whose beating heart Huyler holds in his hands during a life-saving surgical procedure to the head of the trauma service who "looked remarkably like Lee Harvey Oswald" and seduced scads of nurses until one very efficiently took her revenge. Though this slim collection ends just as one has settled into it, it marks Huyler as a writer to watch. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

The stories in this book are frequently not about emergency medicine which I found difficult to excuse because of the fact that this is a short book which was stretched to 154 pages only by the use of tiny pages, acres of white space, and w-i-d-e line spacing. However, I don't value books based upon their weight or word count; I judge them by whether or not they're filled with intriguing stories and are well-written. This book has a few poignant or interesting stories (the best of which was about a kinky, drug abusing female neurosurgeon), but many of its stories left me muttering to myself things such as "So what?" or "What is so interesting about that?" or just plain "What?" One of the reasons I was so perplexed by some of the stories in "The Blood of Strangers" is because Huyler occasionally displays a true gift for writing but at other times uses such awkward, almost

incomprehensible phraseology that his writing is about as readily understood as an instructional manual written in English by a technician from China who received a D- in his one and only class in English. As you will quickly see if you read this book, Huyler loves to flitter back and forth from one element in a story to another. At times his use of this literary technique is superb, while at other times it appears almost scatterbrained.

I was looking for another book on medical stories and after the last few fell flat I just randomly searched and found this one. I have never seen it the my book recommendations, knew nothing about it, so I bought it. This book was great! The stories are short and are very well written that this book is hard to put down. I found the stories moving Frank Huyler has chosen stories that cover a wide range of emotions.

The book is short and to the point, telling a series of short stories from medical school, residency and beyond about people the author knew. Most of them are quirky colleagues: the medical student who accidentally kills his roommate, the trauma surgeon on drugs, the other trauma surgeon who womanizes all the nurses, etc. Loads of fun but not for people who do not understand medical jargon.

Beautiful writing. A good read for anyone in healthcare. A quick read as well- Finished it in an afternoon on the porch.

great book

I just want to write a quick recommendation of this slim but stunning work, which mixes poetry and drama, emotion and restraint, wisdom and elegance. I can't urge you enough to read this--whether or not you have ever seen the inside of a hospital.

what more can i say. this is a FANTASTIC work of non-fiction that should rank with all time classics. seriously. and i don't even know the author. though i wish i did. frank--if you read these reviews contact me through my site, would love to thank you in person.

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