

BOOK REVIEW

Hope on the heavy road : Learning to live with cancer

Michele Smith

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(Available from St Theresa's Hospice, Harewood House, 14 Harewood Hill, Darlington, DL3 7HY)

Reviewed by Millie Hare

Michele Smith discovered she had cancer in 1986 and is now a patient of St Theresa's Hospice. In a series of articles, written over the years, she shared thoughts and experiences concerning her illness, treatment and the support she received. These articles, interspersed with deeply spiritual poems, have been collected together and reflect her experience of ten years of learning to live with cancer.

She wrote 'It was a time of shock and crisis, made worse by the feeling of being 'in the air'. It took me a long while to gather the information that eventually helped me to find my way about the maze of my life. In this short book, I try to make that task easier for others afflicted with cancer'.

The beginning is very religious but later the book is informative about the support available for sufferers from cancer and the value they derive from it. A chapter on support and self-help groups is very useful and a short list is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B gives some helpful literature on understanding cancer.

The holistic approach is emphasised and complementary therapies are mentioned. The value of certain therapies, eg aromatherapy, art therapy, visualisation, is described very well.

A useful addition to a hospice library, it will be of value to patients. Nurses will find it useful as a personal account by a patient. The message that patients need INFORMATION comes through clearly and, hopefully, will get through to all who read this short book..

Millie Hare is Librarian at St Helena Hospice, Colchester Essex.