



# **A Few Months to Live: Different Paths to Life's End**

*Jana Staton, Roger W. Shuy, Ira Byock*

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*A Few Months to Live* describes what dying is like from the perspectives of nine terminally ill individuals and their caregivers. Documenting a unique study of end-of-life experiences that included detailed conversations in home care settings, the book focuses on how participants lived their daily lives, understood their illnesses, coped with symptoms-especially pain-and searched for meaning or spiritual growth in their final months of life. The accounts are presented largely in the participants' own words, illuminating both the medical and non-medical challenges that arose from the time each learned the "bad news" through their final days of life and memorial services.

Describing the nationwide crisis that surrounds end-of-life care, the authors contend that informal caregiving by relatives and close friends is an enormous and too-often invisible resource that deserves close and public attention. By incorporating not only the ill person's but also the family's perspective, they portray the nine participants in the contexts of their daily lives and relationships rather than simply as patients. Addressing such issues as palliative care, quality of life, financial hardship, grief and loss, and communications with medical personnel, the authors identify how families, professionals, and communities can respond to the challenges of terminal illness and the need to confront life's end.

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