



My Own Country: A Doctor's Story

By Abraham Verghese

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By the bestselling author of *Cutting for Stone*, a story of medicine in the American heartland, and confronting one's deepest prejudices and fears.

Nestled in the Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee, the town of Johnson City had always seemed exempt from the anxieties of modern American life. But when the local hospital treated its first AIDS patient, a crisis that had once seemed an “urban problem” had arrived in the town to stay.

Working in Johnson City was Abraham Verghese, a young Indian doctor specializing in infectious diseases. Dr. Verghese became by necessity the local AIDS expert, soon besieged by a shocking number of male and female patients whose stories came to occupy his mind, and even take over his life. Verghese brought a singular perspective to Johnson City: as a doctor unique in his abilities; as an outsider who could talk to people suspicious of local practitioners; above all, as a writer of grace and compassion who saw that what was happening in this conservative community was both a medical and a spiritual emergency.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Indian physician Verghese recalls his experience practicing in the remote, conservative town of Johnson City, Tenn., when HIV first emerged there in 1985.

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From Library Journal

In fall 1985 Verghese--who was born in Ethiopia of Indian parents--returned with his wife and newborn son to Johnson City, Tennessee, where he had done his internship and residence. As he watched AIDS infect the small town, he and the community learned many things from one another, including the power of compassion. An AIDS expert who initially had no patients, Verghese describes meeting gay men and then eventually others struggling with this new disease. Verghese's patients include a factory worker confronting her husband's AIDS, bisexuality, and her own HIV status and a religious couple infected via a blood transfusion attempting to keep their disease secret from their church and their children. This novelistic account, occasionally overly detailed, provides a heartfelt perspective on the American response to the spread of AIDS. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 1/94.

- James E. Van Buskirk, *San Francisco P. L.*

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From [Booklist](#)

Infectious disease specialist Verghese is a Christian from subcontinental India who earned his M.D. in Ethiopia, and living in various cultures has helped him to be open-minded toward and supportive of his patients, who currently are the veterans and civilians living in and around Johnson City in east Tennessee. His book covers the five years in the latter 1980s when AIDS began to make itself felt in the area and during which he treated gays, victims of tainted transfusions, and infected spouses. Among the book's fascinating features are its portrayals of the gradually increasing impact of AIDS on the community, the changing relationships between Verghese and other health caregivers and the patients, and the frightening toll the disease took on families, friends, and society. Nor were Verghese himself, his wife, and even his children immune to those grinding forces. Few, if any, books written by someone without AIDS have offered such a perceptive and realistic perspective on this disease and its ramifications. *William Beatty*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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