

FOREWORD

There are many reasons to read this luminous collection of essays about living with terminal cancer. The essays are insightful, revealing, literate, funny, but the primary reason is to reside for a moment in the presence of Dorothy Sauber, a woman of uncommon intelligence and sparkle, a woman who saw the world straight on, a woman who observed this last stage of her life with characteristic curiosity. She was shocked by her diagnosis of stage IV lung cancer but spent not a moment in self-pity. Dorothy was interested in everything including her own process of dying and, in some ways, she valued the illumination her illness offered. She would have far preferred to have lived but, since she knew she was dying, she made the most of the experience and approached death as the ultimate event, the final marvel. That wasn't even a decision, that's just what she did. She faced her life and her death straight on and found revelation and meaning wherever she was.

Dorothy was a great teacher and a great traveler. She was an artist; she was generous; she was particular. She was a woman who was completely herself, who seemed not to need the approval of others, who was not shy about her accomplishments, but not boastful either. She was an artist who saw the world always through the lens of her aesthetic and piercing vision. She didn't have time to waste: she wrote, she read, she made art, she made friends, she collected, she taught, she nurtured. So her approach to her diagnosis was classic. She continued to live her life fully; she celebrated her survival and she got on with it, whatever it was.

Some were surprised that she took only two trips after her diagnosis because traveling the world was so much a part of her life, but she knew she wouldn't find what she needed out there. It's not that she turned inward, or more inward than the woman who filled more than 80 journals already was, but that she immediately knew what mattered to her most was her family, her friends, and the beauty that she surrounded herself with: her immaculate art-filled home, her cabin, Powderhorn Park, her life. She lived those last two-and-a-half years where it mattered most: at home with her family and her friends. She read. She wrote.

She wrote because like all good writers she had to write to know what she thought, but she also wrote these essays to be read by others.

— *Kathleen Coskeran*