

MEDICAL WRITINGS | 19 AUGUST 2003

# Keeping Faith: Ethics and the Physician-Writer

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## PHYSICIAN-WRITERS' REFLECTIONS ON THEIR WORK

Writing about patients is a growth industry. While doctors have always shared detailed case histories with their colleagues, many physicians now publish stories about patients designed for a broader professional and lay public. Stories and poems written by physicians appear in medical journals, commercial magazines, and books and anthologies intended for a general audience. These stories about medical care are usually presented, either implicitly or explicitly, as the writer's real experience (hence, nonfiction), although the writers sometimes indicate that they have altered or fictionalized the work. In other cases, physician-writers produce first-person fiction (so indicated) that reads like real-life professional experience.

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