



The Spirit of the Place

By Samuel Shem

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Notorious for its Rabelaisian comedy, and celebrated for its humanism, Samuel Shem's *The House of God* was hailed as "troubling and hilarious...brutally honest" (*The New York Times*), a "Catch-22 with stethoscopes" (*Cosmopolitan*). Now in his most ambitious novel yet, Shem returns to dissect the complicated relationships between mothers and sons, ghosts and bullies, doctors and patients, the past and the present, and love and death. Settled into a relationship with an Italian yoga instructor and working in Europe, Dr. Orville Rose's peace is shaken by his mother's death.

On his return to Columbia, a Hudson River town of quirky people and "plagued by breakage," he learns that his mother has willed him a large sum of money, her 1981 Chrysler, and her Victorian house in the center of town. There's one odd catch: he must live in her house for one year and thirteen days. As he struggles with his decision—to stay and meet the terms of the will or return to his life in Italy—Orville reconnects with family, reunites with former friends, and comes to terms with old rivals and bitter memories. In the process he'll discover his own history, as well as his mother's, and finally learn what it really means to be a healer, and to be healed.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Samuel Shem captured the humor, the angst and pathos of medical training in that unforgettable book, *The House of God*. His new book is an incredible and heartfelt story of a physician whose life has taken the most unexpected twists and turns. *The Spirit of the Place* entertains, satisfies, and affirms; it is beautifully conceived and brilliantly executed. Shem has done it again!"--Abraham Verghese, M.D., author of *Counting for Stone*

"A deeply moving and profounding intelligent exploration of the complexities and rewards of family, profession and place. The story of a young physician returning to his small town becomes a tale with universal meaning. This book continues to resonate in the mind and heart long after it is read." --Jerome Groopman, M.D., author of *How Doctors Think*

"In this lovely novel, Samuel Shem brilliantly describes scenery from the Italian Lakes to the Hudson River Valley with vivid enchanting detail. But his real subject is the landscape of the human heart with its dangers and delights, its vertiginous cliffs and mossy woods, its comforts and contradictions. This is a wonderful book about the surprises of human connection and the infinite power of love." --Susan Cheever

"*The Spirit of the Place* is written with a large heart, a healing touch, wry and wise insight into the human condition. Worthy of the best of Samuel Shem, which is worthy indeed."--James Carrol

"[A] grand, wonderfully insightful story of love and death, mothers and sons, doctors and patients—filled with larger than life characters and told with outrageous Shem-humor and authentic humanity." --Michael Palmer, author of *The First Patient*

About the Author

Samuel Shem is a doctor, novelist, playwright and activist. A Rhodes Scholar, he was on the faculty of Harvard Medical School for three decades. Shem has been described in the press as "easily the finest and most important writer ever on to focus on the lives of doctors and the world of medicine," and it has been said that "he brings mercy to the practice of medicine." *The Lancet* called his first book, *The House of God*, "one of the two most significant medical novels of the twentieth century." Its sequel, *Mount Misery*, is about training to be a psychiatrist; *Fine* is about a psychoanalyst. His 2008 novel, *The Spirit of the Place*, about a primary care doctor in a small town, was reviewed as "The perfect bookend to *The House of God*." It won the 2008 Best Book Award in General Fiction and Literature from USA Book News and the Independent Publishers National Book Award in Literary Fiction in 2009. With his wife, Janet Surrey, he wrote the Off-Broadway hit play *Bill W. and Dr. Bob*, about the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous, which won the Performing Arts Award of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence in 2007, and the nonfiction book *We Have to Talk: Healing Dialogues Between Women and Men*, winner of the 1999 Boston Interfaith Council's Paradigm Shift Award. He has given over fifty commencement speeches on "How to

Stay Human in Medicine.”

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Donna Wood:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important normally. The book *The Spirit of the Place* seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The guide *The Spirit of the Place* is not only giving you much more new information but also to get your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your own spend time to read your e-book. Try to make relationship with all the book *The Spirit of the Place*. You never truly feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

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