



A Heart for the Work: Journeys through an African Medical School

Claire L. Wendland

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Burnout is common among doctors in the West, so one might assume that a medical career in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, would place far greater strain on the idealism that drives many doctors. But, as *A Heart for the Work* makes clear, Malawian medical students learn to confront poverty creatively, experiencing fatigue and frustration but also joy and commitment on their way to becoming physicians. The first ethnography of medical training in the global South, Claire L. Wendland's book is a moving and perceptive look at medicine in a world where the transnational movement of people and ideas creates both devastation and possibility.

Wendland, a physician anthropologist, conducted extensive interviews and worked in wards, clinics, and operating theaters alongside the student doctors whose stories she relates. From the relative calm of Malawi's College of Medicine to the turbulence of training at hospitals with gravely ill patients and dramatically inadequate supplies, staff, and technology, Wendland's work reveals the way these young doctors engage the contradictions of their circumstances, shedding new light on debates about the effects of medical training, the impact of traditional healing, and the purposes of medicine.

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