

How To Write About Your Cancer

By Adam Conner

Don't write it in first person. Too whiny. Ditto for second. Don't give *us* the cancer. Write it in third person. Give it to someone else. Or better yet, give it to someone who can handle it better.

Don't set it in a hospital. Too familiar and too depressing. How many times can you write about doctors and nurses and techs and chemo and x-rays and chemo and needles and chemo? Pick a place you'd want to spend your last days, like Australia, or Bora Bora, or even your own front porch that you haven't set foot on in months.

Don't add too many characters, either. It's too much suffering. Maybe blame an ex that left you after your first bout, or a friend that never called to check in on you. No husband. No parents. No children. This is already bad enough for them.

Don't forget to add in some details to make it seem more real. Like when you run your hand over your bald head for the first time, or when you see how gaunt your cheeks are and wonder if any of this is working, or when you lie in bed at night and watch how the constellation Cancer opens at the end as if it's waiting to snatch you up.

Don't tell us the thing you want most is to survive. You want something more than that. You want to be remembered.

As for the ending, well, we all know what happens at the end.

Adam Conner currently lives in New Jersey with his wife and daughter.

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