

Delve Deeper into *Seven Songs for a Long Life*

A film by Amy Hardie

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon of Princeton Public Library and Hanna Lee of Batesville Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Seven Songs for a Long Life*.

Hospice care is rarely associated with singing and laughter, but at Strathcarron it's different. At this remarkable Scottish hospice center, patients face pain, uncertainty and the possibility of life's end with song and humor. Official Selection of the 2016 SXSW Film Festival.

ADULT NONFICTION

Gawande, Atul. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Happens in the End*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2014.

Surgeon, professor and author Atul Gawande explores how medicine can enable not only a good life, but also a good end.

Groopman, Jermoe E. *The Anatomy of Hope: How People Prevail in the Face of Illness*. New York: Random House, 2004.

The author shares what he has learned about hope while caring for patients with cancer, blood diseases, HIV and hepatitis C, discusses his personal experience with hope, and whether there is a scientific basis for believing hope contributes to recovery.

Kalanithi, Paul. *When Breath Becomes Air*. New York: Random House, 2016.

When Kalanithi, after years of medical training and on the verge of becoming a neurosurgeon, is diagnosed with cancer, he suddenly must confront questions of life and mortality as a patient.

McKissock, Nina Angela. *From Sun to Sun: A Hospice Nurse Reflects on the Art of Dying*. Berkeley: She Writes Press, 2015.

As Nina Angela McKissock, a highly experienced hospice nurse, goes from home to home and within the residential hospice, she shares her journey of deep joy,

humorous events, precious stories, and heartbreaking love.

ADULT FICTION

Chiarella, Jessica. *And Again*. New York: Touchstone, 2015.

Four previously terminally ill patients grapple with reentry to their lives when they are given genetically perfect copies of their former bodies. Given a second chance, what changes will they make?

Coleman, Rowan. *We Are All Made of Stars*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2015.

A dedicated nurse, Stella finds comfort at the hospice where she works the late shift, especially since her husband returned from Afghanistan—cold, distant, and shattered by painful memories he refuses to share. The hospice at night is another world, where the dying receive closure by creating the letters that Stella helps them write.

Haruf, Kurt. *Benediction*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

As a cancer patient nears his end with his wife and daughter tending to him, the joys and struggles of life continue in their Colorado town.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Earl, Esther. *This Star Won't Go Out: The Life and Words of Esther Grace Earl*. New York: Dutton Books, 2014.

This Star is a collection of journal entries, letters, stories, and drawings by Esther Grace Earl, a young woman who is diagnosed with cancer. She inspired John Green's novel, *The Fault in Our Stars*.

Mellonie, Bryan. *Lifetimes: a Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*. New York: Bantam Books, 1983.

Mellonie's text and images provide children a gentle introduction to life and death.

Raschka, Chris. *The Purple Balloon*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2007. With simple, straightforward text and illustrations, Raschka offers a

discussion of terminal illness and loss for young readers.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Andrews, Jesse. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. New York: Amulet Books, 2012.

Greg starts his senior year of high school committed to his strategy of remaining sane: keeping his distance from everything and everyone – that is, until his mother makes him be friends with Rachel, a girl with leukemia.

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. New York: Putnam, 1977.

The star of her school's running team, Sadako is lively and athletic...until the dizzy spells start. Then she must face the hardest race of her life—the race against time. Based on a true story, Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes celebrates the courage that makes one young woman a heroine in Japan.

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton Books, 2012.

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

Hutchinson, Shaun David. *The Five Stages of Andrew Brawley*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2015.

Bound by guilt following an accident that killed the rest of his family, 16-year-old Drew now lives in the hospital, hiding from employees and his past. But perhaps the patients he befriends can help him find a life worth living.

Lowery, Lois. *A Summer to Die*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Meg has always been jealous of her sister. When Molly is diagnosed with a fatal disease, the sisters find peace and happiness over the summer in a small, remote town.

