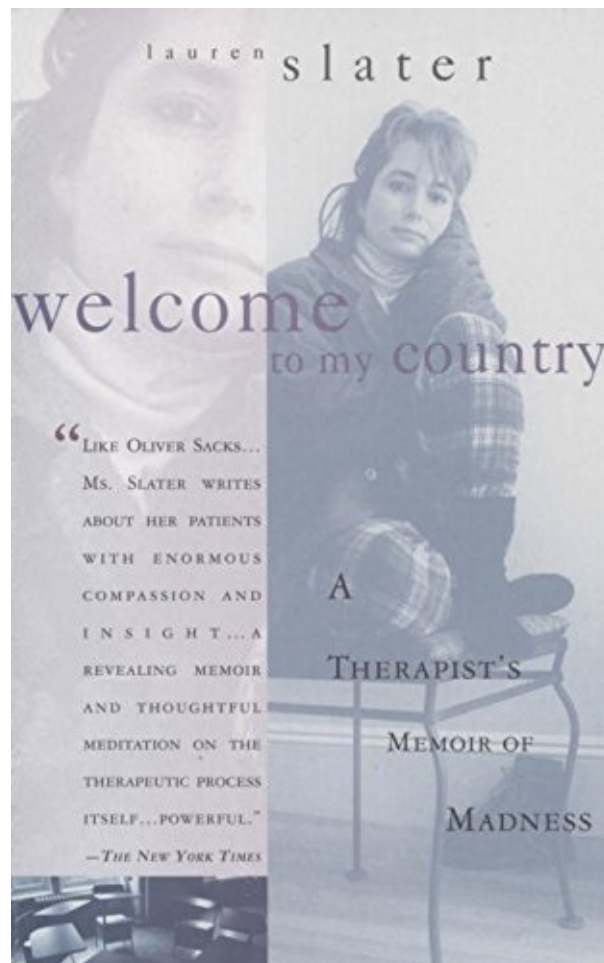
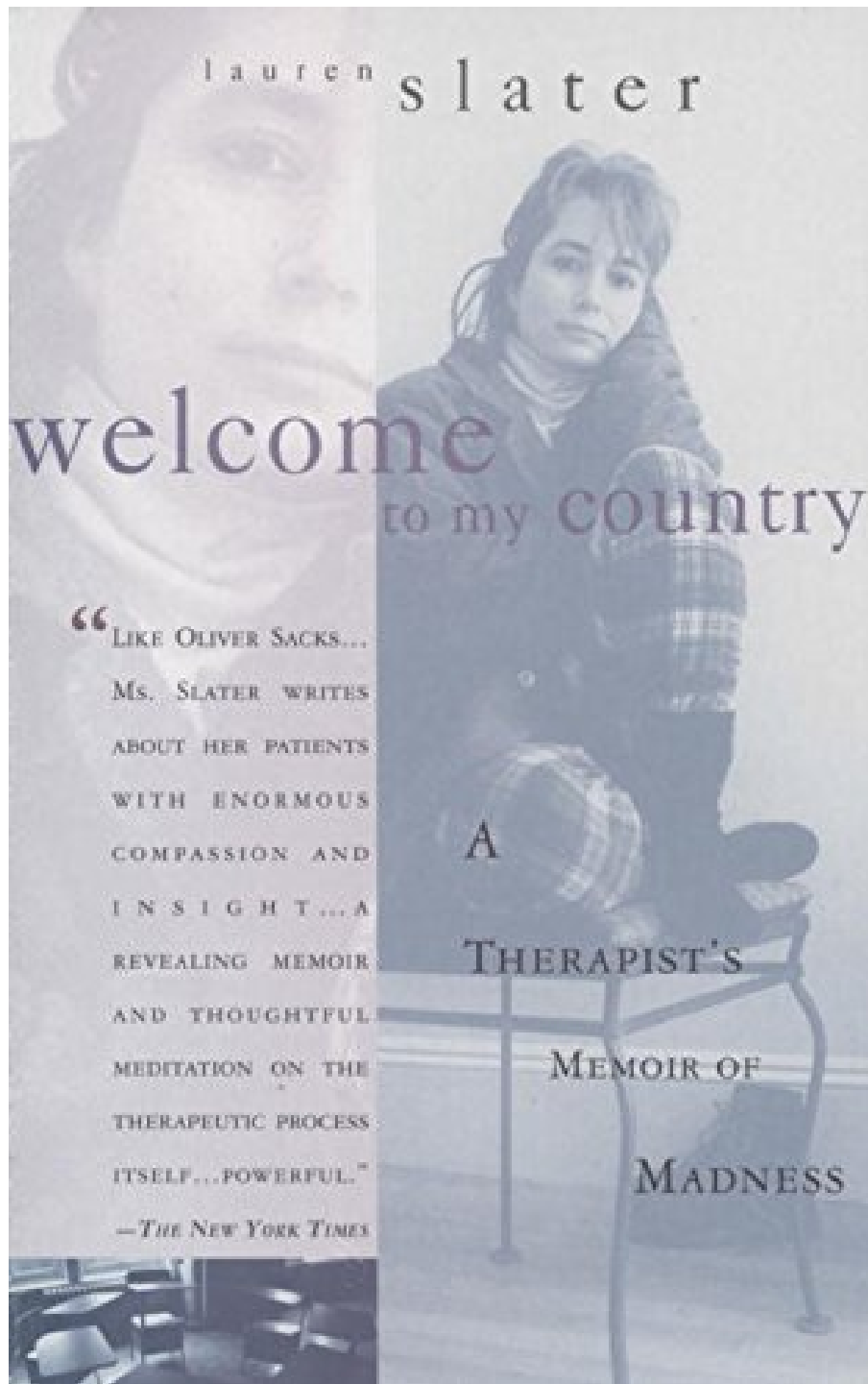


WELCOME TO MY COUNTRY: A THERAPIST'S MEMOIR OF MADNESS BY LAUREN SLATER



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From Publishers Weekly

A psychologist whose empathy with her patients is tempered by her own bout of treated mental disability takes readers into encounters with her dysfunctional clients. With disarming candor, she allows her voice to mingle with those of her patients' schizophrenics, borderline personalities, bulimics and others in an inner-city residential unit. Slater traces the early years of her career, expressing her belief in the transforming power of love, and she shares with readers the almost imperceptible changes in her patients' feelings that her intimacy with them brings about. As she interviews a patient in the very place where she herself was once incarcerated, the author ponders anew the mystery of why she "managed somehow to leave behind at least for now what looks like wreckage, and shape something solid from life," while others have not. This debut book opens a vista on emotional and mental distress. First serial to Harper's; author tour.

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From Library Journal

For many, the world of the schizophrenic, the suicidal, or the depressed is foreign and unpleasant. The apparent gap between ourselves and the sufferer often seems insurmountable. That is not the case, however, for psychologist and award-winning author Slater. Telling her patients' stories of emotional and physical suffering allows her to connect with the essence of the human spirit. According to Slater, the connections necessary for human life must be achieved through language. Those connections occur on a variety of levels and make use of the entire range of human communicative skills. She describes how one patient's embrace of a flower in a garden speaks volumes about his state of being, or how a woman's daily struggle with depression teaches us about having faith in what tomorrow brings. Along the way Slater delivers some harsh judgments about the failures of many contemporary therapies. In these essays the author's tender and poetic treatment of her patients' struggles is both heartwarming and wrenching. Highly recommended for all public libraries.

David R. Johnson, Fayetteville P.L., Ark.

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From Booklist

Psychologist Slater recalls the experiences with which she began her career. Mostly she worked at a Boston home for six chronic schizophrenics, memorably including Oskar, who had suffered child abuse and forced

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WELCOME TO MY COUNTRY: A THERAPIST'S MEMOIR OF MADNESS BY LAUREN SLATER PDF

Lauren Slater, a brilliant writer who is a young therapist, takes us on a mesmerizing personal and professional journey in this remarkable memoir about her work with mental and emotional illness. The territory of the mind and of madness can seem a foreign, even frightening place-until you read *Welcome to My Country*.

Writing in a powerful and original voice, Lauren Slater closes the distance between "us" and "them," transporting us into the country of Lenny, Moxi, Oscar, and Marie. She lets us watch as she interacts with and strives to understand patients suffering from mental and emotional distress-the schizophrenic, the depressed, the suicidal. As the young psychologist responds to, reflects on, and re-creates her interactions with the inner realities of the dispossessed, she moves us to a deeper understanding of the complexities of the human mind and spirit. And then, in a stunning final chapter, the psychologist confronts herself, when she is asked to treat a young woman, bulimic and suicidal, who is on the same ward where Slater herself was once such a patient.

Like *An Unquiet Mind*, *Listening to Prozac* and *Girl, Interrupted*, *Welcome to My Country* is a beautifully written, captivating, and revealing book, an unusual personal and professional memoir that brings us closer to understanding ourselves, one another, and the human condition.

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Most helpful customer reviews

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Best Psychology Book I've Read

By A Customer

This book is one of the best books on mental health problems I have ever read. Each chapter introduces and describes a different type of mental illness (depression, personality disorder, etc.) through anecdotes from the author's clients and treatment situations. The author has a beautiful writing style, and the descriptions of the clients and their problems make them understandable not just intellectually but emotionally by the reader in a way that few books about mental health problems ever do, as few authors write this well or can empathize with the patients as Ms. Slater does. One can actually understand and feel what the patient does; this is not just a dry clinical book, which is frequently the case with topics such as this. Aside from understanding and feeling with the patients, it also helps one appreciate life and the human mind and soul better. I wish the author had written more books; I only hope she does in the future, as I will read them all.

20 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

6 stories of mental health patients

By Cassandra

"I have learned that the only way to enter another's life is to find the vector points where my self & another self meet...There is no way, I believe, to do the work of therapy, which is, when all is said & done, the work of relationship, without finding your self in the patient & the patient's self in you. In this way, rifts within & between might be sealed, & the languages of our separate lives might come to share syllables, sentences, whole themes that bind us together".

This comes from the preface of "Welcome to my country". And, if the whole message of the book had to be put in one paragraph, this is the one. Never in this book does Lauren Slater write from a position of power, of "me versus them". Through her own recovery, through battling her own problems (see "Three Spheres") she knows what it is to reach out & touch that dark part within ourselves: the fact that she keeps the access open to that part of herself, the "sick" part, open to be used for understanding & relating to patients...this shows a great sensitivity, is not very common, & makes the book interesting & different.

Apart from this, the book contains 6 stories of therapy, the first in a group setting, the rest on an individual, one on one basis. All take place in the Boston mental health clinic where the author worked, early in her practice. The stories are not the most original in the world, what makes the book original is Slater's personality & her writing, which often comes close to literature. I'm looking forward to more of her work.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Compelling memoir of working and healing in a mental clinic

By A Customer

I have to admit to a bias as I review this book. Lauren Slater was both my English student and, subsequently, my ³foster² daughter; in fact, her time living with my family in our seventeenth-century house comprises part of the moving last chapter of her book, a chapter in which she talks of healing, her own and that of a patient¹s. The majority of the book, which she terms ²creative non-fiction,² is her account of working with psychotic patients in a clinic in East Boston. Her descriptions of these patients, her ability to identify with them no matter how desperate their circumstances might seem, combined with her lyrical, metaphoric use of language makes this book compelling reading. The only question I asked myself as I read it was the extent to which I was reading ³fictionalized fact². If the last chapter is typical, I can personally vouch for the fact that Ms. Slater took almost no liberties, except to disguise names and some identifying details, suggesting that the rest of the book is largely true to life, albeit more beautifully expressed than one would expect the messy lives of the psychotic and neurotic persons who inhabit the pages to be.

I recommend it!

See all 35 customer reviews...

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