

# DISCOVERIES

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**Sunderland, Christine**

OFFERINGS

OakTara (276 pp.)

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This emotional tale of healing and religious discovery is set in the rolling fields of France.

Madeleine Seymour is looking for a miracle. Her husband Jack—the love of her life—has been diagnosed with a cancer-related esophageal affliction that will kill him within six painful months. The condition can be treated, however, by means of a procedure perfected by Dr. Rachelle DuPres, a gastrointestinal specialist at San Francisco Medical. However, the celebrated surgeon has recently lost a patient on the operating table and fled to Lourdes, France, to seek solace from an old spiritual adviser. Jack, refusing anything but the best treatment, decides to track the doctor down. The pursuit—if ever a leisurely trip through the French countryside could be called “pursuit”—is beautifully rendered. Sunderland’s descriptions of the landscape and its monuments are bold and precise, the type that could only be produced by someone with intimate experience of the continent. Further, the book is informed by her Christian faith and is as much about the search for God as about the search for a cure. But reflections on the spiritual are seamlessly woven together with story developments, and *Offerings* is both a fascinating medical drama and penetrating look at the nature of faith in the modern world. Occasionally, the author loses a bit of faith in her readers and tries to compensate with too much description, forgetting the creative writer’s first rule—“Show, don’t tell.” For instance, unwilling to let her readers discover that Jack is a good dad from his actions, Sunderland piles on and invents a “Father of the Year” award, bestowed upon him for his work with local charities. It’s unnecessary, but such sins are small by comparison, and don’t greatly tarnish the quality of the book as a whole.

A moving search for physical and spiritual remedies.

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