

A Review of

## ***Organ Transplant: The Music of Life***

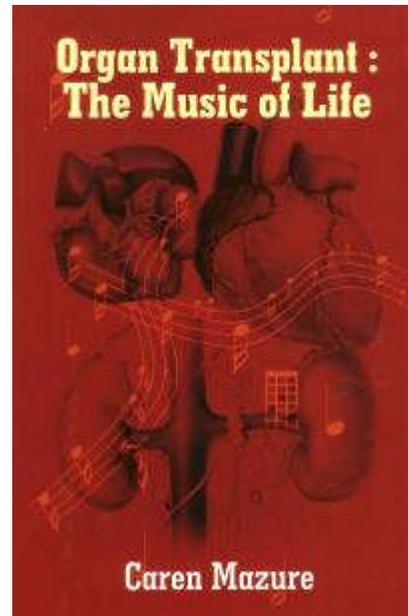
Author: Caren Mazure

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

Everyone's need for an organ transplant has its root cause in some other medical challenge than the transplant itself. In Caren Mazure's life, her double lung transplant has its root cause in a diagnosis of "tuberous sclerosis" when she was yet a teenager. Later bouts with epilepsy are traced to that same condition. Her book traces life from that diagnosis, a disease that takes her mother's life shortly before she receives her own life saving transplant.

As is the case in many such books, the story is book material because it has so many life threatening complications and medical challenges. The average transplant patient might understandably be overwhelmed in reading about so many issues associated with the transplant as we follow Caren's insightful monthly diary. While all such complications are certainly possible, the typical transplant patient's story is seldom published because things leading up to the transplant and their recovery lack the elements of interest that come from such challenges and Caren's strong will to overcome, not to mention the writing skills to tell that story. Hopefully your own transplant story is so uneventful as to make your book uninteresting and thus not worthy of sale. That said, read Caren's potpourri of transplant related experiences and collected insights (often quoted from interviews with professionals during her research) by way of gaining a fuller understanding of the process and what can be expected in the normal course of such uneventful experience. But on the other hand, can any organ transplant really be an uneventful experience, adding the miracle of life to one's answered prayers? Obviously I'm trying to put into perspective her many sharings that are unique to her and individually, relatively few others – i.e., they are not the "norm" but serve your broader education of organ transplantation as you face your own waiting, eventual surgery and recovery. While she covers material on various organ types, it is her direct personal lung experience and its unique challenges that carry the deepest weight in my reading.

Along with the story of her heroic adventure of disease and double lung transplant, she offers many resources in the form of charts and tables anyone can use to deal with the routine post transplant of tracking medications, insurance and medical expenses, physical and occupational therapy, etc. Caren also offers a simple goal setting exercise to help focus one's direction in the post transplanted life. She has many allergy related challenges in her life that are further complicated with the meds and dietary restrictions that are often imposed after a transplant. With such expertise, she shares not only dietary insights, but also several home recipes that sounded delicious yet very healthy (but I have yet to try them myself, but plan to shortly ...). One caution I would offer the reader is to read her recommendations carefully in this area. They sometimes come across as "mandates" that are such given her unique needs whereas to the average patient, they would be more good practices than a "must." Be assured your transplant team will give you the guidance needed in your own unique life situation.



In conclusion, Caren's message of hope to patients of all types of organ transplants can best be summarized in her own words from the opening page:

*"Ever since I pulled through, I believe in happy endings, starry skies and dreams come true. You can hear me breathe. I've got wings to fly; I feel that I'M ALIVE."*

I hope and pray that you too will be able to join Caren in singing such joyful music in your own transplanted life.

Note: **Organ Transplant: The Music of Life** is available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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**Brief bio:**

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired from Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.