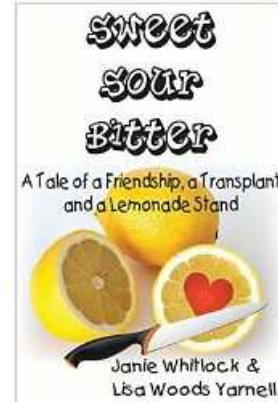


A Review of
Sweet Sour Bitter

A Tale of a Friendship, a Transplant and a Lemonade Stand
Janie Whitlock & Lisa Woods Yarnell (2014)

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient



There is not much written by and about the caregiver role in the transplant process. In this reasonably short (71 pages) autobiographical book, through chapters alternately written by Lisa, the caregiver, and Janie, the liver transplant candidate (dealing with life threatening hepatic encephalopathy), we have a unique insight into how a friend and candidate come together after a long ago college friendship at a time of need. Both authors are well written and offer a very personal balanced reading style as they share their life challenge events from both perspectives, those of a caregiver friend and the supported patient, a very interesting dual story reading.

My only disappointment was the lack of closure to the liver transplant story when the book ends before that desperately awaited 'call' that an organ is available comes for Janie. Maybe that's for another book or a revised version of this 'first edition' book. The reader, like the patient, is left waiting for that hoped and prayed for outcome, a successful transplant and recovery that will give both many more years of precious friendship. In that shared waiting between reader and the authors, maybe we have a new dimension in writing where the reader feels the uncertainty of there being no schedule for when a donated organ will be offered.

Their story makes for interesting and insightful reading for patients and their caregivers certainly, but maybe medical professionals would gain better insight into what goes on in their patients' lives in reading this quick study book. Any patient would be blessed to have the support of such a dedicated caregiver friend as they navigate the unknown waters of facing possible death or the long-term and anxious wait for that 'call' coming in time. As they share in summary of their purpose in writing: **"Our story is one of surprise, a friendship that had no particular reason for enduring other than it did. Two vastly different people who took strength in common ground and who glide through middle-age hoping it may glide a little longer."** Isn't that what we all wish for in facing the challenge of a lifesaving organ transplant?

Oh, and that "Lemonade Stand" reference in the title, that's their effort to raise needed funds for the medical expenses. You can support their cause at:

<https://www.facebook.com/WhileAwayLemonade> or
<http://www.gofundme.com/8ms4q4>

Note: *Sweet Sour Bitter* is available in soft cover and Kindle editions at Amazon.com.

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, 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 online at <http://gleasonjim.com> or on CD by contacting him at GleasonJim@aol.com.