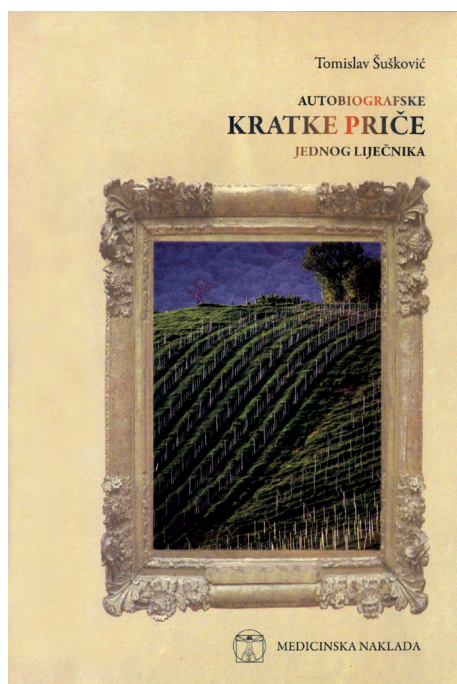


BOOK REVIEW



**AUTOBIOGRAFSKE KRATKE PRIČE
JEDNOG LIJEČNIKA
(DOCTOR'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIC
SHORT STORIES) by Tomislav Šušković**

Medicinska naklada, Zagreb, 2008; 66 pages,
8 illustrations; price 70,00 HRK
ISBN 987-953-176-398-1

I had a pleasure and honor to work for years with Asst. Prof. Tomislav Šušković, MD, PhD, at University Department of Medicine, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital. When I started my residency in 1985, Asst. Prof. Šušković was head of the Department of Pulmonology, University Department of Medicine. While being fully devoted to his profession as a physician, he was a dedicated hill walker and a jovial and convivial fellow, always radiating optimism, even when all endeavors to save the patient were unlikely to succeed. As an excel-

lent clinician with great knowledge and rich experience, he used to solve mysterious medical cases with ardor. It is therefore no surprise that many of his renowned fellow doctors frequently sought his advice and assistance.

Upon construction of the new wing of the University Department of Medicine in 1989, the then head, Academician Mladen Sekso appointed Asst. Prof. Šušković as head of the newly formed Department of Emergency and Intensive Medicine. And he did it with good reason. Excellent clinical observation, fast and target diagnosis, and decisive therapeutic approach were the main characteristics of Asst. Prof. Šušković. He enriched his brilliant career with arduous scientific research and numerous papers published in Croatian and international journals. His lectures illustrated with examples from daily routine always had a key message to remember. Upon retirement in 1996, he continued providing his precious consultation to Department of Emergency Medicine and visiting as a dear guest the University Department of Medicine and Vinogradska Hospital.

During the years of working with Asst. Prof. Šušković, I had an opportunity to listen to most of the anecdotes told in this booklet. Each of these short stories had an intriguing beginning, a riveting and complicated plot and, of course, a Sherlock Holmes-like yet not always happy ending resolution.

After years of work, every physician probably has plenty of happy and sad moments and situations to recollect. Yet, only few of us decide to write them down in full form and spirit to share them with a wide circle of fellow doctors and other audience. With its smooth, breezy and trenchant style, comprehensible to everyone, which Asst. Prof. Šušković always used, this booklet will stir memories to some similar events in many of us. It will bring all the past back, urging us to reconsider some decisions made long ago and to compare them with current judgment. Touchy stories from his childhood and adolescence point to the hard but certainly defined Asst. Prof. Šušković's way toward the great and noble goal, i.e. to become a good physician. These stories vividly

demonstrate that all the worthy in one's life can only be achieved by sacrifice and hard work. The notes made by Asst. Prof. Šušković as a hill walker and regular visitor to the Medvednica Mountain, where he had to engage as a physician during a tornado, offer a highly refreshing reading.

His humane and friendly personality is maybe best presented in the anecdotes entitled "Two months of futile struggle" and "How we lost our good friends", where emotions and professional approach to patient are deeply intertwined.

However, like his life, this book is predominated by serene, jocular and instructive adventures, of which I would like to mention some, e.g., "Freud and psychoanalysis", "Encounter with Bednja dialect" and "Non-operated but literate", radiating with scintillating humor and happy ending spirit. What else do we need for good mood?

Those prone to nostalgic trip down the memory lane will find pleasure in the stories like "My uncle Brcko" and "Sunday mass at home". These stories illustrate the atmosphere of poverty but also of personal happiness, good old traditional habits and customs and mutual respect.

This collection of varied reminiscences will bring delight to every reader, from those very young to those very old. If he could be reborn, I am sure that Tomislav Šušković would choose the same profession again; he loved it very much and remains devoted to it completely even now when retired. After all, why has he decided to write "Doctor's autobiographic short stories"? He has done it because memories enable us to dwell on the things we love, that make us what we are, and that we do not want to lose ever.

Željko Vučičević