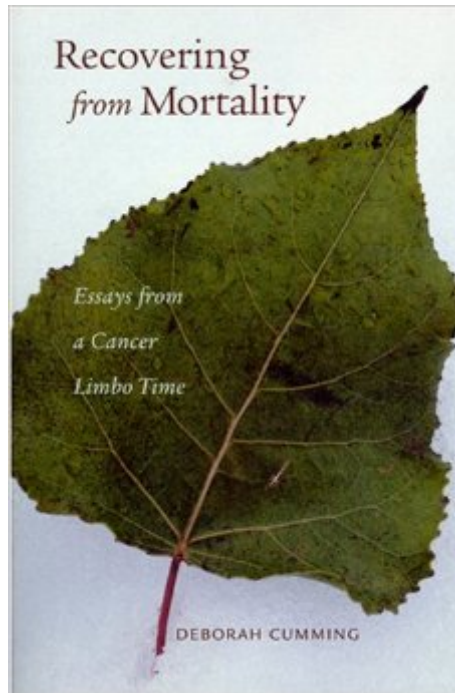


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# Recovering From Mortality: Essays From A Cancer Limbo Time



## Synopsis

At the time that Deborah Cumming wrote *Recovering from Mortality*, she was living in a situation not widely recognized but shared by many people. She knew that she might die soon, yet she was not dying now. What is a person to think in this limbo time? How is a person to act? Rather than accept formulaic answers to these questions, she decided to discover her own path. She didn't want to pass on her answers to others; she didn't believe she knew universal answers. Nor was she interested in adding another story of a cancer patient who survived heroically or died movingly. She did want to commune with others in limbo, with people who might find it a lonely or mysterious condition. And she felt increasingly that she was talking about the human condition in general, for whether we acknowledge it or not, all our lives will end in the not-very-distant future. She felt she wanted to be in communication, not just with the dying, but with the living. This poignant collection of essays examines how we live our lives, in large and small ways. Friendship, family, neighbors, community-these help define who we are and Deborah Cumming writes about them with insight, and with heart.

## Book Information

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It was only in acknowledging her mortality - in confronting it directly, and most intimately: in absorbing into her life, not only the certain knowledge that she would die, but the various uncertainties of the limbo time - that she was able to live fully, and achieve the most complete expression of her life, and of the depth and fastness of her bond with us, with all mortal beings. For

me this is because her book written on the edge of death is so charged with life, with the affirmation of all that is most holy and most central in life, and most to be treasured. At some point in the progress of her illness, Deborah came to understand that her predicament was at once an opportunity: that this limbo time had never been described, exhaustively, before: that it was a territory still partly undiscovered, not yet fully known, or absorbed into human experience, hovering, beyond her ken, like an unknown continent; and that, now, she had the chance - even the good fortune - to venture into it with her eyes fully open, with all her receptors alert. Every moment was precious, not only because there were so few of them, but because they contained this experience which might be conveyed to others, who might pass through the same place. It became her habitat: this in-between area where there were no certainties, no securities. Throughout the book the reader can feel her adapting to her new territory.

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