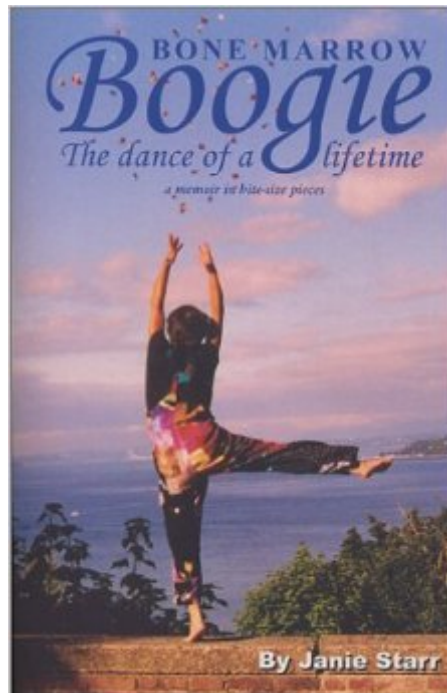


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# Bone Marrow Boogie: The Dance Of A Lifetime



## Synopsis

We all hit a brick wall at some time in our lives. Starr's rose up inside her body in the form of a cancerous tumor lurking behind her chest wall and growing fast. With rare honesty, humor, and shine, Starr recounts her early terror and ultimate triumph as she scaled that wall and danced her jig on top. Cancer has crept into most peoples lives one way or another, but we don't have to be a member of the tribe in order to resonate with Bone Marrow Boogie. It is as much about love, family, and community, and about staying full present and alive during a mid-life crisis as it is a story of illness and recovery. It could have been divorce, remarriage, building a home, or even winning the lottery. Big events call for a big response, and for Starr that included walking the talk and living to tell her story. She wrote because it satisfied her, it brought her into relationship with others, and because she thought it might make a difference to the rest of us. She got that right.

## Book Information

Paperback: 184 pages

Publisher: Kota Pr (September 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1929359160

ISBN-13: 978-1929359165

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 8.5 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,533,560 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Cancer > Bone Cancer](#) #52 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Cancer > Lymphatic](#) #4342 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Medical](#)

## Customer Reviews

In her inspiring and beautifully written book, Janie Starr takes us along on the journey that began when she found out she had lymphoma. Not only does she do battle with this very grave form of cancer, she also learns how to boogie, or rather, to boogie even better. This memoir gives some attention to the multiple and excruciating therapies that currently constitute cancer treatment, but much more attention is given to her search for self-knowledge through a variety of alternative strategies that can be as essential as radiation and chemotherapy for restoring health. She exposes a medical profession where some practice compassion, but many more project omnipotence and

omniscience for lack of the words or feelings to deal with potentially terminal illness. Relations with those from her various communities (her parents, her family, her neighbors, her exercise and activist groups) are essential to her story. Her finely turned vignettes reveal the different ways men and women deal with cancer, as well as the variety of responses one can expect from friends, acquaintances and children. When the medical treatments end, the self-exploration continues. Ms. Starr writes eloquently about the relief of having survived, living with the fear of recurrence, and the continual questioning that facing cancer inevitably brings. Finally, this book is perhaps above all about becoming a writer, a sort of portrait of the artist as a middle-aged woman confronting cancer. This should raise a question for everyone who reads this book: Why wait for illness before learning to live life fully? Janie Starr clearly emerged from her illness as a dancer and an artist.

Ms. Starr writes of her battle with lymphoma using a combination of essays, letters, emails, and recollections of her experiences. What sets this book apart is its fundamental honesty, readability and lack of preachy-ness and saccharin sentimentality. She is unafraid to bare her experiences, thoughts, and fears to give the reader a complete view of what she went through, and does so even when it does not necessarily show her in a 'good' light. This takes courage, and gives the book credibility; I felt I was inside her soul for a tour and was allowed to peek in any room I wanted. The subtitle is 'a memoir in bite-size pieces' which is in fact true, and makes the book very readable. The short chapters, emails, letters make the book easy to pick up and put down, although my friends have echoed my experience of reading it in one sitting. My fear in reading this book (which was recommended by a close friend) was that it was going to be preachy, or full of sickly sweet sentimentality. It is not. The book's honesty does not allow such license. The value I received from reading was to compare the transformation in her life to the transformations taking place in mine, giving me valuable perspective. I don't have cancer, but found the book touched me deeply nonetheless. I would highly recommend it to anyone undergoing significant changes in their lives, or who have loved ones in such a process.

BONE MARROW BOOGIE is a book for all who have had cancer touch their lives in one way or another. Ms. Starr's prose (at times, "poetry" is a better description) leaves one thinking deeply about the ramifications of hearing that cancer has entered your life. Families, friends, and caregivers for those hearing this diagnosis will benefit greatly from this book. Certainly, those who face treatment will relate far more and find this book to be a tremendous support for the experience. Ms. Starr's honesty, sense of humor, and excellent writing makes this a wonderful book to give as a

gift.....particularly when it is difficult to know what else to do!

I loved her book. I laughed with her, cried with her, and connected with her on so many levels. It is not a book only about cancer survivorship, it is a book about the human spirit and how we choose to move through our pain/suffering. I thank her for sharing her beautiful spirit with us. I gave the book to a friend who is recovering from uterine cancer and she found the book to be inspirational. This book gives hope to others.

Much more than a cancer memoir, this book will appeal to anyone who has had to overcome adversity of any kind. Janie Starr shows a determination to live life fully no matter what the circumstances. From the cult of the zapped ones - those undergoing radiology treatments - to the dolphin tube - the CAT scan machine - Janie's unique humor and perspective are wonderfully poignant. Janie is obviously a woman of great strength and character whose journey you will find compelling. Musings about the meaning of hair, wistful identification with a Madrona tree who she considers a longtime friend, and her extraordinary capacity to transform her connections with people into meaningful encounters all make for a great read. My book group is reading it now and I look forward to savoring it with other women at our next meeting. Ultimately, Janie's message is one of hope and a tenacious *joe de vivre* which you will find infectious.

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