

Welcome to Afton Zapata-Scow's

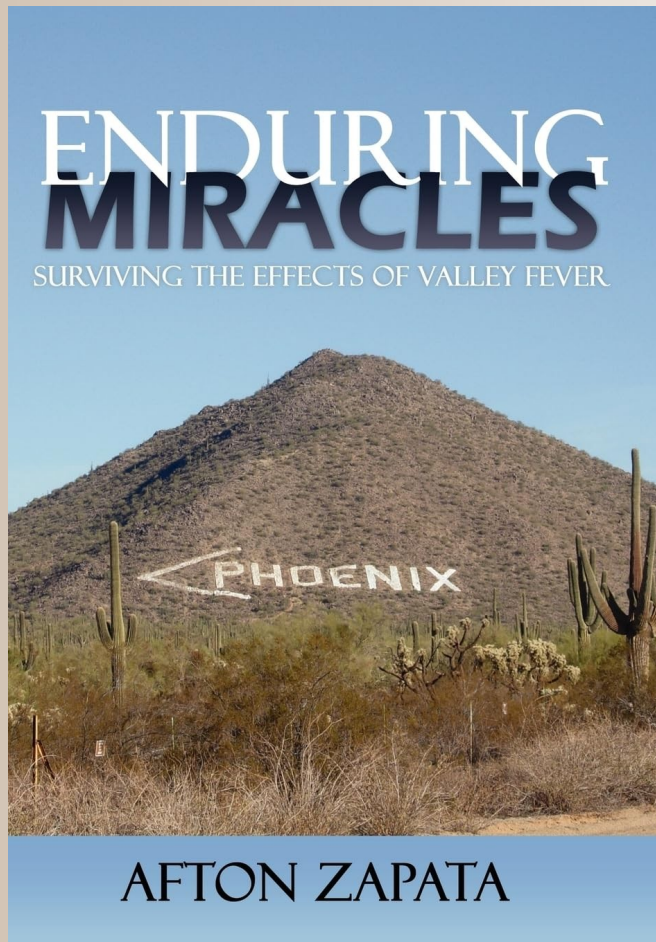
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Afton Zapata-Scow



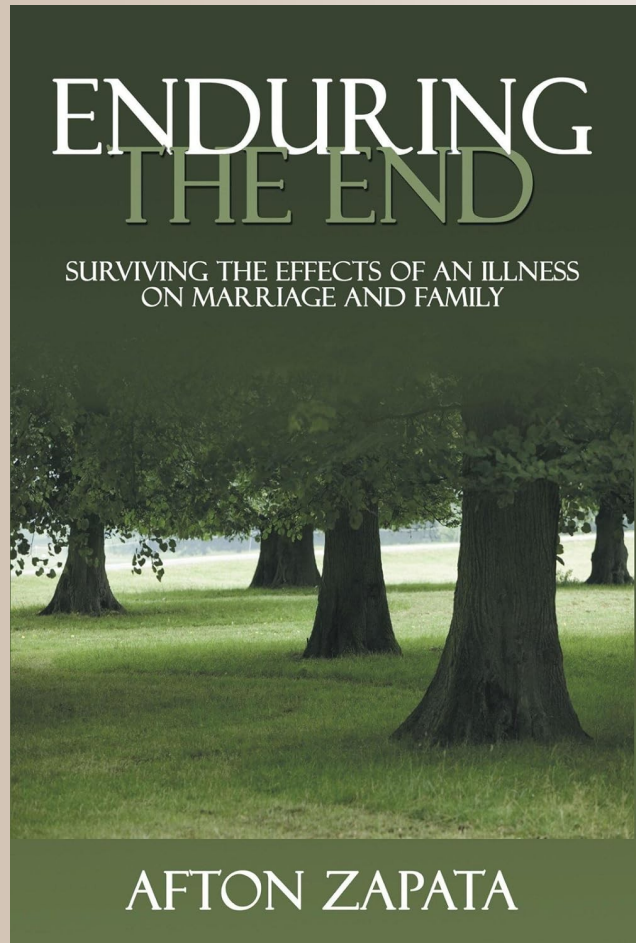
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Valley Fever is endemic to the southwest region of the United States. Few people realize that the very soil they live upon contains a life-threatening disease. When soil becomes stirred through the process of economic development, farming, and monsoon storms a fungal spore called coccidioidomycosis becomes airborne and inhaled into the body of humans and animals causing harm to vital organs. Valley fever breeds a multi-cellular structure reproducing lethal cells inside the lungs, bones, and most deadly brain tissue. Unfortunately, my husband, Juan, contracted valley fever which disseminated into the spinal fluid attacking the central nervous system and meninges causing fungal meningitis. Hydrocephalus, spinal fluid trapped in walls of scar tissue on the brain rejected much needed absorption for brain tissue to function normally.

After ten years of marriage, we built a new home in Mesa, Arizona, had three young children, and found the greatest test of our lives. Juan was classified as one of the worse cases ever seen from the devastation of valley fever. His mortal existence was an extraordinary miracle and Juan and I wondered if we could physically and mentally endure the requirement of long hospitalizations, harsh medication and treatment, and inconceivable surgical procedures. We wondered if our family and marital vows to love and honor through sickness could endure such a catastrophic experience. With a high risk of mortality, unknown medical outcomes, and the deterioration of my husband's body, we put our faith to the test.

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No one grows up saying, I think Ill get sick, and spends the rest of their life trying to survive a constant battle between life and death. Instead, we grow up believing were invincible. We believe nothing bad could ever happen to us because we have hopes and dreams to fulfill. Theres never a good time to have poor health.

In 2002, my husband, Juan, contracted valley fever which disseminated into fungal meningitis, causing irreparable scarring on his brain. For nine years, our time was primarily focused on my husbands illness and disability. Our three children lived with the uncertainty of their fathers mortality. As a family, we learned to live as if each day was the last, but to have hope for the future. We made memories and made plans. There were times we didnt know if we could survive, but as a family we found the strength in God to stay together. We were blessed with many tender mercies from the Lord as we traveled what appeared to be an endless road.

We understood that even though our trials seemed long, they were merely a short segment of mortality, and that our lives will continue to exist beyond the grave. Most importantly, we learned that love heals all and serving one another is truly a blessing for ourselves. As a married couple, Juan and I witnessed countless miracles touch our lives as we exercised faith for enduring the end.