Contents

Foreword by Howard Markel and Alexandra Minna Stern	
Preface	XI
Acknowledgments	xvi
The Midnight Meal	1
The Biomolecular Revolution	3
Can You Teach Compassion?	12
Coughs, Clouds, and Ice	20
Treating Chronic Illness	23
Patients as Teachers	30
Reassurance and the Warning on the Label	35
Defending the Common Cold	40

Contents

×	Asymmetry	44
	On Drawing Blood	52
	The Vital Signs	56
	The Dummy and the Standardized Patient	60
	Holding the Blood Gas Report	65
	The Narrative Instinct	69
	The Weight of Shared Lives: Truth Telling and Family Caregiving	76
	AIDS	83
	A Marriage Without Divorce	<i>87</i>
	Shaky Evidence	90
	A Critical Incident	97
	The Homeless Man on Morning Rounds	100
	Numbers, Numbers	104
	Alternative Medicine	108
	Bellevue Hospital	113
	Where Have All the Giants Gone? Reconciling Medical Education and the Traditions	
	of Patient Care with Limitations on Resident Work Hours	120
	Afterword	131
	Notes	133
	Index	141