Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History

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Bregman, Lucy (1999-01)
treatment for men and women differed radically. While men were encouraged to go out to sea or to the open country, women were expected to stay at home, surrounded by family, to anticipate a lingering death. This look at tuberculosis allows us insight into ordinary Americans’ anti-slavery efforts, the East Coast prejudice against the Irish immigrant, America’s gender bias, and most poignant, how health panics can rob citizens of their liberty and even familial rights. Tuberculosis—once the cause of as many as one in five deaths in the U.S.—crossed all boundaries of class and gender, but the methods of treatment for men and women differed radically. While men were encouraged to go out to sea or to the open country, women were expected to stay at home, surrounded by family, to anticipate a lingering death. Several women, however, chose rather to head for the drier climates of the West and build new lives on their own. The letters, diaries, and journals piece together what it was like to experience tuberculosis, and eloquently reveal the tenacity and resolve with which people faced it. (retrieved from Amazon Thu, 12 Mar 2015 17:59:26 -0400). (see all 2 descriptions).