

## DISPATCHES FROM THE LAND OF ALZHEIMER'S

Daniel Gibbs is a retired neurologist in Portland, Oregon, with early-stage Alzheimer's disease. Having spent 25 years caring for patients, many with dementia themselves, he is now an active advocate for the early recognition and management of Alzheimer's. He has written previously about his experiences as seen from two points of view, doctor and patient, in *A Tattoo on my Brain: A Neurologist's Personal Battle against Alzheimer's Disease* (Cambridge University Press, 2021 and 2023 [revised edition]).

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“Dr. Daniel Gibbs taught me neurology when I was in training, and he continues to teach me thirty years later. In *A Tattoo on my Brain* and in his speaking and advocacy, he turned the bad luck of his Alzheimer’s disease into gifts for the rest of us: rare insights, thoughtful analysis, and an inspiring example of how to live and thrive in the face of great challenges. *Dispatches from the Land of Alzheimer’s* is his latest gift, weaving together personal experiences, reasoned commentary on “pop science”, analysis of cutting-edge research, good advice on a brain-healthy lifestyle, and through it all the reminder to “live in the moment”.

*Joseph Quinn, MD, FAAN Ericksen Endowed Professor for Neurodegeneration Research, Parkinson’s Center Director, Department of Neurology, Oregon Health and Science University*

“Daniel Gibbs is a warrior. And that’s a blessing to him and to the world!

We are members of a club that neither of us wanted to join. I met Daniel over the phone a few years ago; we both had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. I encouraged Daniel to write about this serpentine journey, as I have done. Over time, Daniel has inspired me to make lemonade without the lemons – the bittersweet of life. Those on this trek are best to write and talk about it, to tell their own stories, as Daniel has done as a neurologist who has been on both sides of this aisle; first as a doctor, now as a patient. As scripture notes in Luke 4:23, “Physician, heal thyself.” The only conundrum is Daniel cannot – the plight of millions diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and other dementias, as the experts race for a cure. *Dispatches from the Land of Alzheimer’s* delivers in all ways as a soulful, edifying roadmap into this prowling demon of a disease.”

*Greg O’Brien, author, On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer’s*

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“What is it like to be a person living with Alzheimer’s disease? In his collection of essays, *Dispatches from the Land of Alzheimer’s*, Dan Gibbs provides a detailed, clear, vivid and candid account. Detailed and clear because he’s a retired neurologist with a keen understanding of science. Vivid and candid because he’s a person living with the disease. These poignant essays recount his experiences with loss of smell, changes in empathy, face blindness, making sense of the biomarkers of the disease as they misfold in his own brain, and day-to-day challenges like carrying on a conversation and working. Dan Gibbs has a notable talent to feel both sides of an experience – the losses and the gains. This book ought to be required reading for anyone who wants to live well with Alzheimer’s disease.”

*Jason Karlawish, author of The Problem of Alzheimer’s: How Science, Culture, and Politics Turned a Rare Disease into a Crisis and What We Can Do About It*

“Dr. Gibbs’ book is an honest, upbeat, moving and informative story of his journey through an Alzheimer’s diagnosis and its aftermath. His indomitable spirit permeates every page.”

*Professor Adriane Fugh-Berman, Director, PharmedOut, Georgetown University Medical Center.*

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# Dispatches from the Land of Alzheimer's

DANIEL GIBBS  
Emeritus of Oregon Health and Science University



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 histories are drawn from actual cases, every effort has been made to disguise the identities of the  
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Dedicated to the memory of my parents,  
Zack Edward Gibbs and Elizabeth Martin Gibbs



## LOST IN THOUGHT

What was that plan I made in the shower?  
It slipped down the drain just out of my grasp,  
Long gone by the time I toweled dry.

What was that story on the radio today?  
I know it was good and I'm trying to remember.  
Maybe I'll recall if I drive by the place where I heard it.

What are the names of the neighbors next-door?  
They've lived there for years, but I just can't remember.  
Their names might return in a flash, in a minute,

A few hours,  
A few days . . .

I stand around lost in thought  
But too often the thought is lost.

Damn, what was I thinking?

*November 23, 2013*

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<sup>1</sup> The Alzheimer's Foundation of America is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide support, services, and education to individuals, families, and caregivers affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias nationwide and to fund research for better treatment and a cure. Its services include a National Toll-Free Helpline (866-232-8484) staffed by licensed social workers, the National Memory Screening Program, educational conferences and materials, and the "AFA Partners in Care" dementia care training for healthcare professionals. For more information about AFA, call 866-232-8484 or visit [www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org). AFA holds the Charity Navigator's top four-star rating for its commitment to fiscal efficiency, transparency, and accountability.