



From Student to Doctor
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To purchase:

[Room for Examination](#) • File Size: 478 KB (Kindle Only)

- **Print Length:** 246 pages
- **Simultaneous Device Usage:** Unlimited
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I have had an interest in books about medical training for many years and have read a score or so on this topic. Those that stand out are, William Nolan's "The Making of a Surgeon¹," Perri Klass' "A Not Entirely Benign Procedure²" and Fitz Mullan's "White Coat, Clenched Fist³." To this exclusive canon, I now add James Channing Shaw's new book, "Room for Examination: True Tales of a Disillusioned Dermatologist" which chronicles the path from naïf to dermatologist. It is wise, philosophical, honest, poignant, humorous, engagingly written, never self-serving and riveting. Shaw is Division Head of Dermatology at the Women's College Hospital, University of Toronto, Canada.

William Osler famously wrote, "learn to play the game fair, no self-deception, no shrinking from the truth; mercy and consideration for the other man, but none for yourself, upon whom you have to keep an incessant watch." Shaw follows Osler's advice with this account of his path from student to doctor.

"Room for Examination" does not sugarcoat this passage. The journey is difficult and sometimes demeaning. It reminds me in many ways of C.P. Cavafy's poem "Ithaca⁴." "As you set out for Ithaca/hope the voyage is a long one,/full of adventure, full of discovery⁴," Along the way, Shaw meets heroes and villains, wise men and fools (who he does not suffer lightly). A line from another poem read long ago is apt: "He lost something in the gain; his face changed in a way I can't explain." In some ways, Jim Shaw is "[a] sadder and a wiser man" at the book's conclusion. This book is a "keeper:" one I will recommend to physicians, students, trainees indeed to anyone interested in the making of a professional. Dermatologists can be proud to

have James Channing Shaw in our midst. I look forward to an epilogue in ten to fifteen years when Dr. Shaw hangs up his shingle.

References:

1. William Nolan. The Making of a Surgeon. Amazon or [ABEBooks](#).
2. Perri Klass. A Not Entirely Benign Procedure. Amazon or [ABEBooks](#).
3. Fitz Mullan. White Coat, Clenched Fist. Amazon or [ABEBooks](#).
4. C.P. Cavafy. Ithaca Full Text at: [Ithaka](#).