



Photo credit: Connie Miller

FREE LECTURE

Wednesday, April 30

7:00pm

Wesley College's
Wells Theater, Dover

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

The Delaware Humanities Forum presents a free lecture and community discussion with Anne Fadiman, award-winning author of [The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down](#). The lecture will focus on the collision of healing and medicine, as illustrated in the true story of a Hmong child's illness. The Western treatment for her epilepsy was at odds with her family's spiritual belief that her seizures were caused by *quag dab peg* — the “flight of her soul from her body.”

Ms. Fadiman tells the story of the Hmong family and the doctors with compassion and fairness, and the audience will have an opportunity to ask the author questions about the book and the topic.



DELAWARE **Humanities** FORUM
Connecting people, cultures and ideas.

Delaware Humanities Forum
100 W. 10th St., Ste. 1009
Wilmington, DE 19801
800.752.2060
302.657.0650



Connecting people, cultures and ideas.

www.dhf.org

Contact
JulieAnne S. Cross, DHF Programs
jacross@dhf.org
302.657.0650 x14 (office)
302.657.0655 (fax)
302.588.3266 (cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When Healing and Medicine Collide: a Hmong Child's Illness and Treatment Delaware Humanities Forum Welcomes Author Anne Fadiman on April 30

(Wilmington, Delaware-April 7, 2008) As part of its Literature and Medicine program, the Delaware Humanities Forum announces a free lecture and community discussion focusing on how illness and medical treatment practices are perceived across cultural boundaries. The event takes place on Wednesday, April 30, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Wesley College's Wells Theater in Dover. Lecturer Anne Fadiman, winner of the National Book Critics' Circle Award for her book [*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*](#), will chronicle the trials of an epileptic immigrant child and her family in Merced, California whose Hmong traditions were at odds with the treatments offered by Western medicine.

"The Forum is pleased to introduce its Literature and Medicine program to the general public in this way because we believe the humanities are at the heart of health care," says Delaware Humanities Forum Executive Director Marilyn P. Whittington. She adds, "Ms. Fadiman tells the story of the Hmong family with compassion and understanding, and tells the doctors' side of the story with an equal measure of sensitivity. The careful balance of perspectives she creates is an excellent example of the type of reflection we in the humanities work hard to facilitate."

The lecture is free and open to the public. Medical professionals as well as lay people and students are encouraged to attend. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions at the conclusion of the lecture.

Says Dr. John Goodill, Christiana Care Health System, of the Forum's Literature and Medicine Program: "We want to get to know [a] patient as a person. It is then that we have the best chance to bring about 'Healing' in whatever form that may take. This is the real business of medicine."

Fadiman's sensitive, incisive treatment of the unbreachable gulf between the Hmong and American medical systems has earned her awards and critical praise. *The Washington Post* called the book "an intriguing, spirit-lifting, extraordinary exploration." The book continues to be taught at universities both as literary journalism and as a casebook for cross cultural sensitivity in general; it is also widely read by medical practitioners who wish to offer more effective care to patients from other cultures.

-more-

Anne Fadiman is a Yale University English professor and the inaugural Francis Writer-in-Residence (Yale's first endowed appointment in nonfiction writing). Her best-selling essay collection, [*Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*](#), is a book entirely about books—from the purchasing of them, to the reading of them, to the handling of them—and has been or will be translated into thirteen languages. Her work has appeared in *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*.

About the Delaware Humanities Forum

The humanities—subjects which include literature, ethics, political science and history—help people make a connection between their own lives and other people, cultures, and ideas. Through grants and public program offerings, the Delaware Humanities Forum builds bridges to connect the daily life and work of people to the universe of human experience, thought, and imagination. The Forum brings the public together with cultural, educational, and civic institutions statewide, and focuses on issues of public interest and concern.

As a state division of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Delaware Humanities Forum supports organizations by awarding grants and implementing project initiatives such as lectures, symposia, exhibitions, classroom programs, and media projects. Your non-profit organization, school, library, or government agency may qualify for funding from the Forum.

To learn more about our programs, funding opportunities and the other resources available through the Forum, visit our website at <http://www.dhf.org> or call (302) 367-0650 or toll free 800-752-2060.

IF YOU GO:

Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2008, 7:00pm

Location: Wesley College's Wells Theater, in Dover, DE
Located in Slaybaugh Hall on Cecil Street (between State & Bradford Streets)

Description: Free lecture and community discussion with Anne Fadiman, author of [*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*](#), which chronicles the trials of an epileptic immigrant child and her family in Merced, California whose Hmong traditions were at odds with the treatments offered by Western medicine.

Price: Free

Contact Info: www.dhf.org, 302-657-0650 x14

###