all, these stories reveal the tenacity and strength of the authors and how they learn from their failures.

Volume II: Courage & Misfortune takes a slightly different tack from *Volume I* and makes it clear just how climbers depend on luck. Even the best-planned expedition, the best-executed route, the perfect team, the right equipment, and the most skilled climbers are at the mercy of fate and can be quickly humbled by storms, avalanches, rockfall, crevasses, and any number of other objective hazards of climbing. What shines through here is the commitment climbers have to each other and how often they rise to the situation to support those whom disaster strikes in the mountains. Here, we read of Reinhold Messner's frantic search for Fritz Jager through a stormy night on Manaslu. Joe Simpson chronicles his incredible descent of Siula Grande after falling into a crevasse, breaking both legs, and being left for dead. The mind-numbing cold of -148°F seems to creep upon me as I read about the first winter ascent of Mt. McKinley and the climbers who were pinned down by a sudden storm with 100-mph winds. David Robert's compelling account of the deaths he witnessed in the mountains and his recurrent ruminations of "is it worth it?" haunt me still. *Courage & Misfortune* contains 11 enthralling chapters drawn from contemporary and historical mountaineering literature and is very hard to put down!

Glorious Failures and *Courage & Misfortune* are not only about climbers and the incredible efforts they put forth to conquer their summits but their courage in dealing with the adversity that can strike in the mountains. In many cases they fail. People are seriously injured or die, and lives are shattered. In failing, they learn about themselves and reveal themselves to the reader, and we are left better for this glimpse of the indomitable human spirit, which is always striving for new heights. These books are fantastic collections of mountaineering literature and are definite must-reads for any who favor that genre. If you are not a fan of mountaineering literature, you may well be after perusing these volumes.

The third book in the anthology series, *Over the Top: Humorous Mountaineering Tales*, is now released and is at the top of my list to acquire. It sounds like a slightly different take—a refreshing one—and worth a read.

Rob Hamilton, MD
Palo Cedro, CA, USA

Health and Fitness in Plain English

Jolie Bookspan, PhD

Monterey, CA: Healthy Learning, 2002

US \$24.95, 363 pages, softcover

Health and Fitness in Plain English is a comprehensive and entertaining review of exercise, nutrition, and health. As promised in the title, it is clearly written and easy to understand, combining interesting facts, practical information, and humor. Each chapter opens with a quotation relevant to the subject at hand. Chapters are divided into sections that are clearly outlined in bold text followed by a discussion of the topic. Important "take-home" points are contained in shaded boxes for easy reference.

The text is divided into 3 parts. Part I, "Exercise," begins with a discussion of the benefits and different types of exercise. It explains how to design an exercise program to meet individual goals and maintain them. Techniques for warming up and exercising specific parts of the body while minimizing the risk of injury are also addressed. Finally, many exercise and fitness myths are exposed. The information provided would be useful to anyone starting an exercise program. For individuals who already exercise regularly, it will help them get the most out of their workout.

Part II, "Nutrition," opens by guiding the reader through the maze of nutrition myths that we are all bombarded with today. In the next section, the nutritional content of many common foods is presented in chart format accompanied by text that clearly explains how to interpret the information. Sport drinks and performance-enhancing/health supplements are covered in subsequent sections. Part II closes with sections dedicated to healthful eating and healthful dieting.

In Part III, "Health," the focus shifts to prevention and treatment of injury and illness. It begins with a very good section on the etiology, prevention, and treatment of back and neck pain. Other sections cover cardiovascular disease, headaches, and leg cramps. The text closes with an entertaining chapter, "Funny Physical Facts and Foibles," that tackles common but hard-to-answer questions such as what causes the popping noise when you crack a joint and why your foot "falls asleep."

Health and Fitness in Plain English is written to appeal to just about anyone interested in getting into better shape, improving his or her current exercise and nutrition program, or trying to live healthfully. The text provides a wealth of information and humor in a clear and comprehensive format that leaves the reader both informed and entertained.

David Townes, MD, MPH
Seattle, WA, USA