

Reigning Champs: A Message From the Editor of Cancer Health's Fall 2025 Issue

When it comes to improving your health and fighting cancer, you never know where inspiration will arise.

September 8, 2025 By [Trent Straube](#)

Breast cancer survivor and visual artist Pauline Decarmo was scheduled to present a solo show of paintings made after her treatment, but then lymphedema—swelling caused by the buildup of lymph fluid—struck her dominant right arm. Undeterred, Demarco learned to paint with her left arm and met the gallery's deadline. Emily Rubin, an author and writing coach in upstate New York, happened to catch the show. As a fellow breast cancer survivor—15 years cancer-free at the time—she was drawn to Champion, a painting that depicts a victorious female boxer with a prominent mastectomy scar (view the painting [here](#)).

Soon after, Rubin received unexpected news: Breast cancer had returned. Champion took on deeper meaning, and she ended up procuring the artwork and hanging it in her writing studio for inspiration. She also befriended Decarmo and shared her cancer experiences with two other newly diagnosed women she knew.

Rubin recounted these stories when I interviewed her about her Write Treatment Workshops for the Can Heal column in a previous issue. I was struck by the organic connections and community these artists formed. Lucky for us, they were willing to share their experiences in this issue.

You never know where inspiration will arise. Personally, I adhere to a magpie philosophy—collect those shiny objects wherever they appear, whether biblical scripture or South Park, though as a journalist, I'm partial to the wit and wisdom of wordsmiths like Epictetus, Mark Twain, James Baldwin, Dorothy Parker and Doechii.

You'll find inspiration and helpful information throughout this issue, including the latest treatment news, [exercises to help you breathe better](#), [ways to get more Black men screened for prostate](#)

[cancer](#) and first-person advice on [overcoming scanxiety](#). You'll also meet an athlete with [chronic lymphocytic leukemia](#) and a [lung cancer survivor](#) whose condition led to type 1 diabetes. Sharing our experiences remains a potent form of advocacy and community building. Everyone who does so is a world-class champion!

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