



A Lucky Life Interrupted, by Tom Brokaw
Reviewed by Cindy Kennedy, September 2015

Tom Brokaw's slim memoir, *A Lucky Life Interrupted*, is aptly titled. Brokaw, the highly respected journalist and NBC news anchor, was enjoying a comfortable retirement when his life was turned upside down. A nagging backache in 2013 prompted another medical opinion; Brokaw then was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the blood.

Well known as the author of the "Greatest Generation" books, Brokaw writes about his greatest challenge with the same poise, honesty, and determination that have been the hallmarks of his career. His book is peppered with fascinating vignettes of the important global events he had covered the past several decades. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, Brokaw focuses on the blessings of his life—especially celebrating the people who matter most to him.

It's been said that cancer is the great leveler, affecting people from all social and economic classes equally. No matter how famous he is, Brokaw encounters the same frustrations and medical stumbling blocks that other cancer patients face. Readers similarly afflicted will relate to his dealings with disinterested physician assistants and arrogant "It's my way or the highway" doctors and surgeons. Brokaw recognizes that a majority of people lack access to the good medical care which he is fortunate to have, and he makes a case for across the board improvement.

Brokaw poignantly writes about the encouraging messages he has received from celebrities, journalists, and politicians, near and far. His favorite note, he tells us, actually came from Jon Stewart. Brokaw got a kick out of Stewart's pithy quip, which I unfortunately can't repeat here. It reminded Brokaw—and his readers—that no matter what we face, life is still a joyful gift.