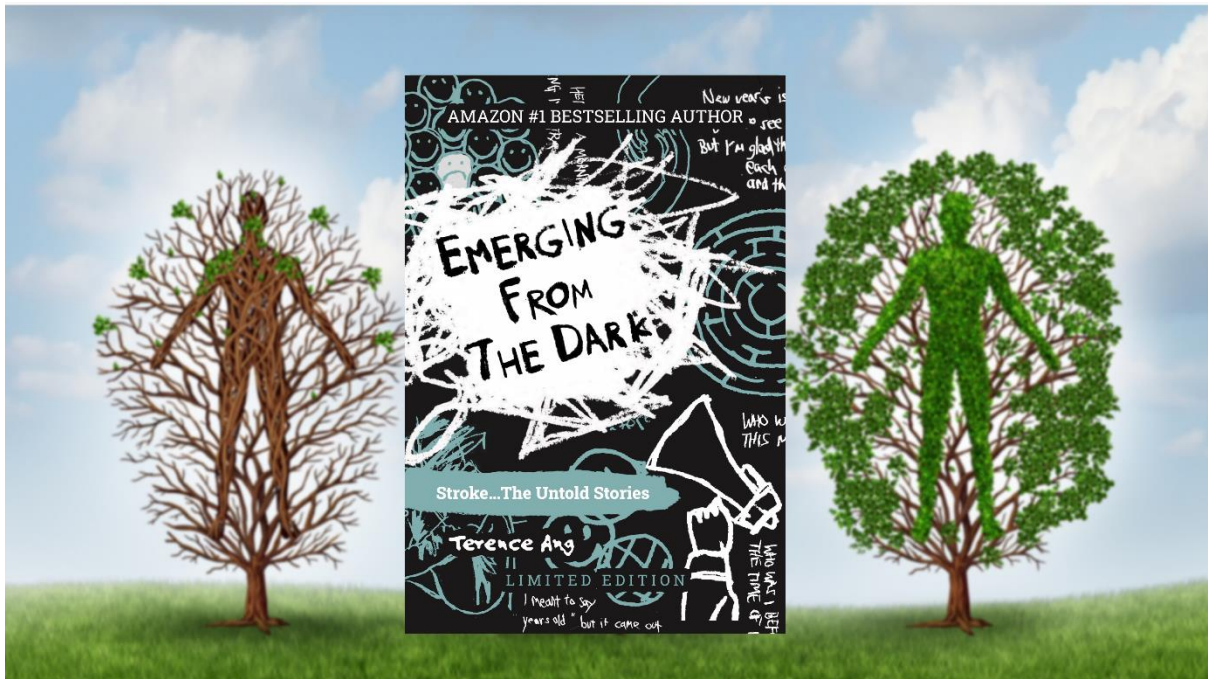


What We Don't Know About Stroke Victims: Tales of Unimaginable Strength and Courage

Contributor: Jim Alkon



Emerging From The Dark: Stroke... The Untold Stories by Terence Ang

What's it About?

In his first book, Ang shared his moving story of stroke recovery with us. In this new book, Ang has assembled a collection of moving stories from people in all stages of stroke recovery.

I startle awake in the middle of the night gasping for air, my mind racing with anxiety. My clothes, my sheets are steeped in sweat, and I don't have any idea why.

Statistics indicate that every 40 seconds, someone somewhere has a stroke. About 795,000 in the U.S. alone suffer from this condition every year.

Yet what do we really know about what stroke people are going through — on both physical and emotional levels — and do we have the proper understanding to offer appropriate support?

In his first book, *Crying in the Dark*, **Terence Ang** tells the powerful story, amid great angst, of his journey to rediscover and reclaim his voice, his dignity, and emerge stronger after suffering a stroke in 2020. Now Ang has taken the crusade a step further in his second book, *Emerging From The Dark: Stroke... The Untold Stories*, in which he has compiled a collection of real, revealing and uplifting, and at the same time disturbing stories from people in various stages of stroke recovery — what they experience and how they feel.

“They are bruised but not beaten and have emerged from the depths of despair,” Ang writes.

A Look Inside Their Lives

The interviews from the stroke people are illuminating and poignant, allowing readers to truly get inside their heads. The segments are far-reaching and diverse, with many commonalities but many unique experiences given the circumstances.

Ang offers no background on his subjects — only their first names. We know little of their lives and aspirations. One interviewee, Chandhan, says that all he wanted was a regular life — “cushy job,” climbing the corporate ladder, having kids, traveling, playing sports. But he had to rethink those expectations when it all crashed.

One can only imagine similar hopes and dreams for the others before their strokes changed everything.

“This really opened my eyes to how fragile life can be,” says one.

“I’m relearning how to be myself, both physically and emotionally,” offers another.

“It was unnerving, and my confidence inevitably took a dip.”

“I felt constantly scrutinized, like my every action was being followed.”

“Today’s schedule: ???”

“Recovery is a long and winding road that you’ll have to travel alone.”

“I was trapped inside a body that made me feel like I had no purpose or meaning in life.”

“The emotional strain was unbearable.”

“You have to pick yourself up and get on with it.”

The experience, for better or worse, gives people a different appreciation for their daily existence. “Do you ever wonder if there’s something divine about all the little things, we do every day without even thinking about them?”

Unique and Inspirational Book

Emerging From The Dark: Stroke... The Untold Stories is an unusual book on several counts. Its format is full of artistic creation vastly different from a typical book. Splashed on practically every page are unique, diverse illustrations from the author, and the typeface of text varies a number of times, sometimes simply etched out in pen by the author.

While some pages have complete narratives, others provide isolated thoughts and “free form” ideas to advance the impact. The subjects are not professional authors, so their comments might appear raw but indeed very real. Even Ang himself sprinkles thoughts and emotions generously throughout the interviews, helping to frame the situations and their accompanying confusion.

It’s hard to imagine what the subjects have gone through. Ang’s work truly brings out their fears and frustrations. But it also conveys a sense of purpose to recalibrate lives, be productive, fit in and find inner peace.

So many people remain in the dark about this all-too-common medical condition. Ang hopes his work can serve as a powerful tool for emotional recovery and inspiration for readers as well as the book's fellow contributors.

"Through this book," says Ang, "we hope to make a difference — so people can see that no one needs to be alone in their struggles to navigate everyday life after experiencing a stroke."