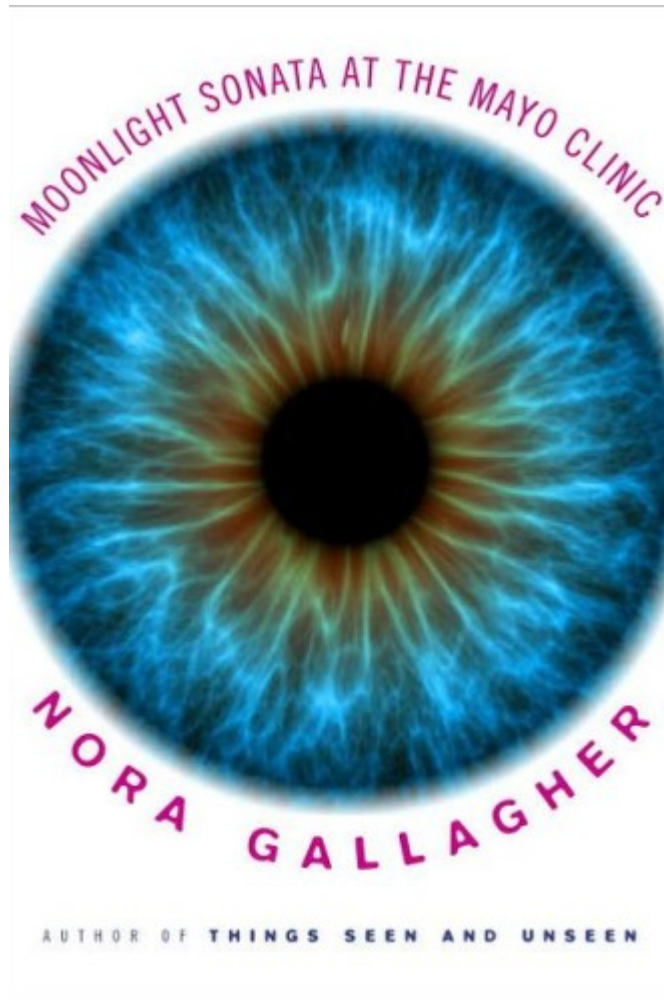


*Moonlight Sonata at the Mayo Clinic*, by Nora Gallagher

Books in the [May 15, 2013](#) issue

## In Review

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## Moonlight Sonata at the Mayo Clinic

by Nora Gallagher  
Knopf

In November 2009, the vision in Nora Gallagher's right eye went blurry. For the next two years Gallagher went from specialist to specialist trying to find out what was wrong. In the process she learned how illness can strip away not only the illusion of

control, but also one's faith, hope, and very identity. Naturally, she wrote about it. Her two previous memoirs, *Things Seen and Unseen* (1998) and *Practicing Resurrection* (2003), dealt with practicing faith in a world with more questions than answers. In *Moonlight Sonata*, terrified that she will lose her life—or everything that gives it meaning—she radically redefines what faith means to her. More open to the present moment, more understanding of others who suffer, she loses interest in church and creeds. Some readers will be uncomfortable with her conclusions, but anyone who has experienced serious illness will appreciate her journey.