Here’s what we have for you this time: Why Doctors Think They’re the Best … an introduction to the beautiful writing of Robert McFarlane … a nod to Dr. Aaron Carroll and the fight to debunk bad healthcare claims … and finally, considering two views of climate change: the "gradualist" and the "catastrophist."

As a physician, how could I resist this title? Why Doctors Think They’re the Best [2]. Obviously, I couldn’t. It is a quick discussion of how your practice and its patients result in bias that makes it abundantly clear, that you are among the best. That still leaves the thorny predicament of explaining why 90% of all physicians feel they are above average – but that evidently is a statistical anomaly.

“Eventually, and terribly, Mallory’s yearning for mountains would prove stronger than his love for his wife and family. Three centuries earlier he would have been cast into Bedlam for his obsession with Everest. In 1924, his death on the mountain cast a nation into mourning; and Mallory into myth.”

And from here Robert McFarlane writes the last chapter of Mountains of the Mind, Adventures in Reaching the Summit, his exploration of our cultural history with mountains. He writes achingly well and brings a generalist’s perspective to what is all around us, our geography. I came to his
work through his most recent work, *Underland*, his musings on the worlds beneath our feet. In both, he traces a path through our shared culture and geography. He is a very special observer of nature and his writing is well worth the time.

I love the work of Dr. Aaron Carroll who vlogs, writes and tweets from his website, *The Incidental Economist* [3]. He is a healthcare policy wonk, but his mid-West roots show through on his down to earth evaluations of medical literature. Here is one of the current ones, *The Diet Soda Myth and Barriers to Good Research* [4]. It is well worth the few minutes time. And while I am at it, a shout out to Dr. Tiffany Doherty, who provides research assistance and writing for the website.

“The divergent outlook of the future is like the old geological battle of gradualism versus catastrophism. Gradualists asserted that it was slow and steady processes like erosion that shaped the earth. Catastrophists pointed to extinction events in the fossil record as evidence for episodic events that punctuated the status quo and completely altered Earth’s bio and geospheres—events like asteroid impacts or volcanism-induced carbon catastrophes. Both, it would turn out, were right. They were just pointing to different periods in Earth’s history—different slopes on the graph—adamant that they had the proof to back up their claim.”

When framed on these terms it is not necessarily a discussion of what to do, but how much time we have to do anything at all. From Nautil.us, *The Climate Learning Tree* [5]

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