

Evil twin of embryos: The tumor

During her first encounter with cancer, Susan Sontag described a tumor as a “demonic pregnancy.” “This lump is alive,” she wrote in “Illness as Metaphor,” “a fetus with its own will.” She could hardly know that the comparison would become more than a figure of speech.

Since the book was published in 1978, scientists have been finding that the same genes that guide fetal cells as they multiply, migrate and create a newborn child are also among the primary drivers of cancer. Once the baby is born, the genes step back and take on other roles. But through decades of random mutations, old embryological memories can be awakened and distorted. What is born this time is a tumor.

Read the full, original story: [A Tumor, the Embryo's Evil Twin](#)

Additional Resources:

- [The genetics of healthy ageing and cancer](#), Medical Xpress
- [Unbreakable: do superheroes, impervious to cancer, walk among us?](#), Guardian
- [Age-Related Epigenetic Changes Up the Cancer Risk](#), Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News