



Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me: A Graphic Memoir

Ellen Forney

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Cartoonist Ellen Forney explores the relationship between “crazy” and “creative” in this graphic memoir of her bipolar disorder, woven with stories of famous bipolar artists and writers.

Shortly before her thirtieth birthday, Forney was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Flagrantly manic and terrified that medications would cause her to lose creativity, she began a years-long struggle to find mental stability while retaining her passions and creativity.

Searching to make sense of the popular concept of the crazy artist, she finds inspiration from the lives and work of other artists and writers who suffered from mood disorders, including Vincent van Gogh, Georgia O’Keeffe, William Styron, and Sylvia Plath. She also researches the clinical aspects of bipolar disorder, including the strengths and limitations of various treatments and medications, and what studies tell us about the conundrum of attempting to “cure” an otherwise brilliant mind.

Darkly funny and intensely personal, Forney’s memoir provides a visceral glimpse into the effects of a mood disorder on an artist’s work, as she shares her own story through bold black-and-white images and evocative prose.

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