

BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 1.1



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 1.1

BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 1.1



1. THE GLORIOUS HERESIES - LISA MCINERNEY
2. LUST & WONDER - AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS
3. ME TALK PRETTY ONE DAY - DAVID SEDARIS
4. BORN A CRIME - TREVOR NOAH
5. LET'S PRETEND THIS NEVER HAPPENED - JENNY LAWSON
6. DRY - AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS
7. HOW TO RUIN EVERYTHING - GEORGE WATSKY
8. OFF TO SEA - RICHARD STINE
9. METAMORPHOSIS & OTHER STORIES - KAFKA
10. NEW BOY - TRACY CHEVALIER

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

NEW BOY

TRACY CHEVALIER



A beautifully written, timeless + poignant story, about the pain life often brings when you're an outsider.

How did the book make me feel/think?

I am not black.

I have never been a “new” boy.

I am not an outsider (except for my family – a complicated tale you may read about in my memoir).

I am not oppressed.

I was once called a “honky” – a word lacking bite.

Many reviewers of **New Boy** seem to be wrapped up in Othello + Shakespearean comparisons. For me, Shakespeare is eons away, forgotten in the past, along with school days long gone. I read the **New Boy** as a standalone; I am glad I did.

Osei, the main character of Ghanaian descent, was dropped into his fourth new school in six years in a white suburb of Washington, DC, in 1974. He was the solo-black, ostracized, and viewed as more animal than human at each school. His father was a diplomat, wealthy, moved around the world, family in tow – his children paid an enormous price for the moves. In school #4, Osei + his classmates, in Grade 6, mainly were 11 years of age – and mostly, sporting the racist parental attitudes pushed into them by the ignorance of the times. The kids were not innocent; they grew into being the same as their parents.

WORSE AOK??

The teachers did little to rise above the times and grow instead of perpetuating the same disgusting views.

Even though the story is about children in a setting long ago – with each page I read, I could not help but think this is NOW (2017). We may have moved toward a diverse society living in harmony throughout the decades – but I think we would be lying. Look at the divisiveness in the USA right now: we are attempting to build walls and trying to ban humans based on origin, the colour of skin, or religious beliefs. **New Boy** is not YA. It is not a period piece. It is an exciting story about what it is like to be an outsider – something most people can relate to, whether that being: a **NEW** job, watering hole, school, city, team...you know where I am going?

Chevalier brilliantly places race front and center in this story; no white person can (maybe one) imagine what it would be like to be **NEW** and anything but – white.

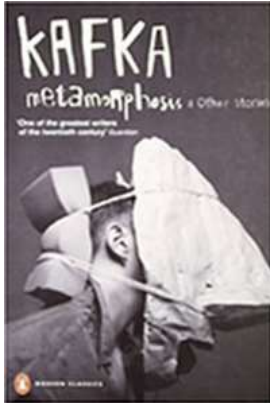
What I took from this riveting novel: just maybe, this book was not about the plight of

Osei as he tries desperately to weave his way through the thorny thickets of racism, love, betrayal, despair, and →

What **New Boy** shouts out is for humanity to come together. For each of us to stand above whom we are, looking deep inside ourselves and then open our arms and hearts to **NEW** + if we only talked to one another with kindness, we would realize we are all trying to make it through each day – primarily unscathed!

METAMORPHOSIS + OTHER STORIES

KAFKA



A literary gem: or so we are told, the next time I read it, beforehand, I'm going to lick some bufo alvarius.

How did the book make me feel/think?

I loved **METAMORPHOSIS**; I think.

I found it tiresome, with my mind wandering off the page. It's not an easy read, for me at least. It is challenging to understand the words I've consumed, often coming to me, a day or two after putting the book down.

I must love **METAMORPHOSIS** because both my brilliant editor of my soon-to-be-released meta-memoir: *My Life on the Slush Pile (My Sister is My Mum)*, and a well-read intellectual homeless man, who is a friend, have compared my writing to Kafka → they are the reasons I read this book.

Your writing reminds me of Kafka, John Barth, Jorge Borges, and Alcott; plus, others. Reading your story reminds me of "Lost in the Funhouse" and other experimental nonlinear stories in the anti-novel genre. Wild ride! I see genuine literary merit in your memoir.

This innocent inquiry opens a window into a surreal Kafkaesque past, a past rife with bizarre characters, spectral entities, and devastating family betrayal. Wincherauk, with brilliant clarity, invites the reader into his life. A life replete with tragedy, immersed in hilarity, and garnished with the intoxicating destructiveness of vice.



That's enough about why I had to read this, also the reason I will be reading **LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE** soon.

BACK TO KAFKA

Let's see, the book contains stories about three men walking on the street—are they in peril?

A two-page report that has only two sentences, the first over a page.

A man who wakes up to find he's turned into a cockroach, only to be shunned by his family—lick a toad.

A visit to a penal colony to inspect the machine used for executions; not a happy ending.

A story about an ape's perspective of being taken into captivity to become a circus performer.

And a circus performer whose skill is starvation; plus, many more.

HAPPY ENDINGS ARE A RARITY



His use of language is awe-inspiring, "radiant with intent," "wagging index finger," simple, drawn-out, but intoxicating.

He is a must-read for anyone who studies writing, the back cover states: "What Dante and Shakespeare were to their ages, Kafka is for ours."

I'm happy to have been mentioned in the same breath. One day...

What I'm considering doing now?

Picking up a mixed bag of hallucinogenic treats.

Remixing them in a bowl.

Then: rereading METAMORPHOSIS!

I think that's the way he'd like us to read it. After all, he wrote: "The Judgement" in a single night of frenzied creativity."

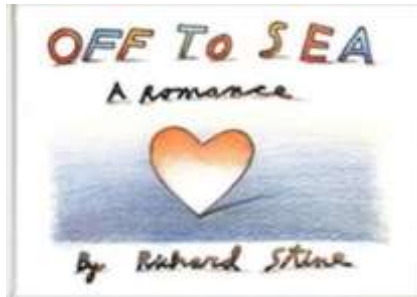


They have also compared me to Hunter S. Thompson.

I tried to read one of his books.

I made it halfway through, and fortunately, my car was broken into, and the book was stolen. Yay!

OFF TO SEA
A ROMANCE
RICHARD STINE



A beautiful story about losing love + learning to genuinely love for the first time...

How did the book make me feel/think?

The love of my life ⁽¹⁾ dumped me. Suicidal?

I turned up for my bartending shift.

An ebullient regular noticed me drowning in misery.

He recommended this book.

I picked up a copy **OFF TO SEA** – the very next day.

A children's book, I thought.

I cracked it open.

1 Three minutes later, I was done. I read it repeatedly for the next hour.

I love this book.

The story it shares is beautiful.

It may be the only relationship book anyone ever needs.

With great ease, the story weaves through the pain of failing relationships. It is a breathtaking story about finding yourself + assuring you'll embrace who you are when you do.

I resisted the book's wise guidance.

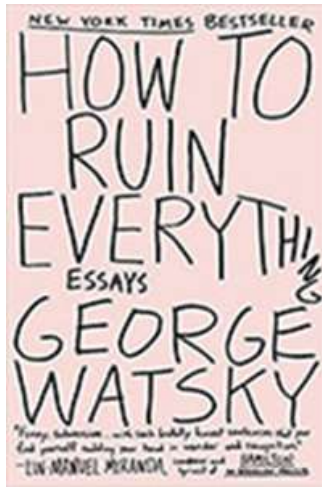
Instead, I rented a Video Recorder (VHS) and recorded me narrating the book with Extreme's *More Than Words* playing in the background. I had the tape dropped off to the *love of my life*. My incredible gesture won her back.

After being rejected again, I had a **GIANT L** tattooed on my forehead.

- 1) *Love of My Life*, much like *True Love*, is fantasy term; they must be – because they'd never dump you, unless of course →

HOW TO RUIN EVERYTHING

GEORGE WATSKY



"I support a person's freedom to orally pleasure themselves in the privacy of a dorm room. ...I also support a person's right to share that private moment with the entire world..."

– George W

I've been binge-reading lately.

EVERYTHING FROM
EVERYTHING I KNOW

Sedaris, Coupland, Kafka, Lindsay Wincherauk (me), Elle Luna, the "Freakonomics" guys, a guy from "The Onion" who wrote a parody-about-the-parody-that-is-Donald Trump, Liddell; and the hilariously "Sick in the Head" – Apatow.

Mr. Watsky's, *HOW TO RUIN EVERYTHING*, is a free-flowing wordsmith-like gem.

I picked up this book because of the cover.

It was simple.

I am confident I could design it.

It was magnetic.

I love it.

I did not know who George Watsky was.

A week after my purchase, **August 14**, I cracked it open while chilling on Third Beach, in Vancouver, on a beautiful summer day. Then, in the first few pages, I realized who George may be.

A few pages later, with the sun scorching down on me, George and his friend, Jackson, were going to Vancouver to smuggle a whale's tusk into the States. Jackson's aunt (celebrating her 100th birthday several pages later) had purchased in the Canadian Arctic. They were risking a criminal offence.

They crossed the border into Canada. Like many border crossings – the interrogation they faced felt familiar.

When we cross the border, they make us feel like criminals?

Anyway, they arrived in Vancouver. I turned the page. The section I came to was **Aug 14-15**. It made me ponder how he could author the book in real-time. Even more fascinating, they went to scale a mountain only miles from where I was relaxing. I considered once more: Do I try to join them?

The friend I was with called me *nuts*.

I turned a page and entered the future: **August 16.**

AS FOR MY REVIEW

The book's title is misleading (George suggests this in the introduction).

The book is about a young man's life experiences, primarily up to twenty-one. He's now twenty-nine—I'm aware he wasn't penning what I was reading in real time. The title suggests screwing up. I discovered on the pages a young man living life, not screwing up, just living life.

MY AUGUST 17

I Googled George Watsky.

I listened to his music.

I loved it.

Much like the book is offbeat, quirky, and voyeuristic, his storytelling is interesting and gripping with an economy in word usage.

The flow is engrossing.

He takes readers on a road trip through several states and Canada: risking criminality along the way.

He shares beautifully what it is like coming to terms with being an outsider in the various schools he attended—pecking orders—experiences which so aptly brought him to the mindset: We are all in this ball game of life together.

He opens the microphone, guiding us delicately through his battles with epileptic seizures.

And he shares a beautifully interesting story about bonding with his father, with baseball becoming the conduit between them that cemented their bond.

The essays just mentioned were worth the read on their own.

As I read on, I was waiting for the life-changing event, an event that would have made the book more than just a collection of stories, a moment where we all cheer for the author's great transformation or his strength to overcome a profound life obstacle challenging him to become a better person during the manuscript's final pages, something more significant than self.

It never came.

That was the missing plot twist I had hoped for.

It made me think: This book that I was thoroughly enjoying, it may be a generational

norm to **BRAND** everything you do – to flow with the crowd.

Write a song, write a book.

Next... a cologne?

This is one of the *most well-written* slices of literature I've read in a while. It drips with lyrical genius in the ease of his prose.

His writing brilliance deflected me away from the fact that he is a 29-year-old successful rapper, intriguing writer; that has yet (not diminishing epilepsy) to have faced tremendous life obstacles. His life seems to be blessed. I'm sure most people in his demographic haven't been lucky enough (not to discount his arduous work at his crafts) to travel the world and experience what he has.

What he, without question delivers, is a fly-on-the-wall view of what it is like to come of age, partially in the spotlight of fame.

What makes the read so refreshing, fame is coming his way – and it doesn't seem as if he is chasing it!

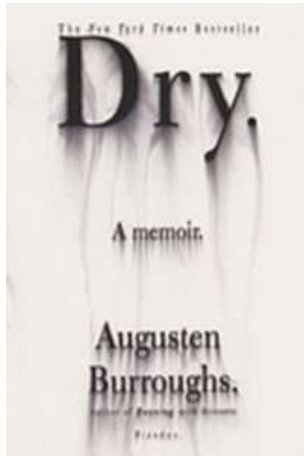
HOW TO RUIN EVERYTHING is a gem, and I'm glad he shared the gift of writing he has been given.

I look forward to reading more stories from Watsky!



DRY

AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS



*I loved **Dry**. Upon closing it: I went out for drinks.*

How did the book make me feel/think?

Augusten, Augusten, Augusten, you have lived such a tragic, fascinating life.

How could your descriptive prose be so intoxicating after years of dousing yourself in the toxicity of substance as you escape reality?

Thank you for surviving.

I read **Running with Scissors**, his first delectably disturbing memoir. It left me wanting to wet myself on more than one occasion. I didn't love it. I liked it much. Went to the movie... came away, slightly disappointed.

I found the salacious trip – draped in your incredible wit – and the self-deprecating style, leaving me wishing you'd have stripped away the effort and shown pain. I don't want you to suffer—I want you to celebrate, be vulnerable. “**Dry**” precisely brings that, coupled with razor-sharp wit.

The descriptive narrative allowed me to walk lockstep with Augusten every step of the way → on the road → from intoxication to recovery and back. “**Dry**” is real. If we allow ourselves to be honest, most, if not all, have experienced the tragedies within.

MOST IMPORTANT

It teaches us it is okay to be who you become. If you fall, try to realize you are not alone – and vitally important; never give up.

Life drowns in calamity – it finds us all.

Don't judge.

Don't hate.

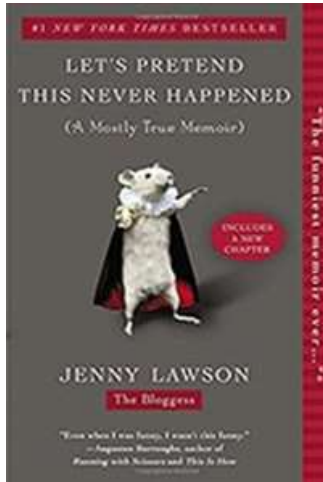
Extend a hand, offer support, hug, and love!

I loved **Dry**.

I went out for drinks after consuming the last word!

LET'S PRETEND THIS NEVER HAPPENED

JENNY LAWSON



Kitty, quit being such an asshole!

How did the book make me feel/think?

Jenny Lawson is a brilliantly disturbing comedic genius whose life gifted her disruptive tales from her collection of life experiences she had to navigate through, around, and even under. She is a delightful mess who has taught me cats can be assholes from time to time, and if a bull snake pretends to be a rattlesnake in front of a gun-toting mother, she has no choice but to shoot.

FULL STOP

I have absolutely no qualifications in diagnosing whether anyone, including the mess I am, as a mess; *delightful, mess...* no.

The only exception to this rule: If and only if, before I diagnose, I announce: "If you want my medical opinion —" which I don't have.



LET'S PRETEND THIS NEVER HAPPENED could honestly, if you'd like me to share my honest comedy reading expertise.

I'm guessing: if you read the following word (I'm), you were okay with it, anyway, this may have been the **FUNNIEST** book I've ever read!

Jenny shares. Thank you, Jenny. You're a good sharer.

Too many of us look at the cards they have dealt us and spend our lives hiding or trying to fit in, with little fanfare. *Or a fucking pulse.*

Or don't know how to share.

Or have been bombarded by... I don't even know... I know, in each of our beginnings, we're all thrown to the wolves or Foxen, except, of course, if we are born somewhere, wolves aren't plentiful if you are growing up wolves-less → select another predatory animal, lobsters?



We were all thrown to the chomping lobsters.
Some of us just look away, oblivious to the life gems being tossed our way.
How can anyone look away when lobsters are chasing them?
How slow are you?
They're lobsters, for bleep's sake?

BACK TO JENNY

Whereas the likes* of Jenny can't help but look, process, ingest the pain and absurdity, develop coping mechanisms, devour anxiety, look for someone to blame, try to think of a way out of this sentence, and before the page turns, turn it into a comedic genius... not knowing, comedy may be the only option.



2

*After typing "likes," I realized how disgusting the wording is—I don't even know what the *F* it implies—I just know it is douchey (I don't care if douchey is a word or not, I just don't want to become douchey or be douchey). All good now. I added douchey to my dictionary, so no more red squiggly line!

Anyway, the only reason I had a douchey moment was my cat was acting like an asshole and distracted me.

Douchey has now been used seven-times.

BACK TO HER BOOK

I moved in for a couple of days. I took up residence inside of her book, figuratively.

Three days.

I did not know who Jenny was. So, I moved in to find out.

It's a strange book to move into because it has a dead ⁽¹⁾ stuffed mouse on the cover, somehow appealing to me.

What does that say about me?

Don't answer.

Come to think about it, I moved into a book – sounds normal.

Thankfully, Jenny welcomed me in and then weaved me through her at-time, shoe-less childhood.

She introduced me to a magical squirrel.

She took me swimming in the cistern at a local pig rendering plant, something about a cow's vagina... I can't imagine where her anxiety issues may have come from. +++

While reading her fucked-up, inappropriate anecdotes, I busted my gut so hard I fell out of the book, quivering in a comedic comma.

Then, after complete strangers digested seeing a full-grown man fall out of a book, they either shot me a glance of concern or helped me to my feet.

"Thanks..." I would whisper and then promptly crawl back inside, blowing the kind civilians, civilian minds.

BACK INSIDE

I am thrilled for us. Jenny's normal was anything but – I think there may be a wee bit of each of us in her life insanity. I'm glad someone gifted her with an innate ability to share her disturbingly convoluted rambling stories in a concise, readable fashion, transforming it into the irreverently hilarious gem that it is.

3 My concern for her sanity waned (*not a doctor*).

Until one day, her loving husband. Victor (hero of sorts).

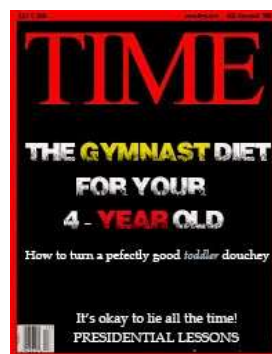
Their miracle child Hailey (a heart-wrenching story about childbirth), and her (brutal sentence structure – by Moi – I'm leaving it as-is, if you don't like it, you fix it) – they were trying to find normalcy living on the outskirts of Houston.

They enrolled Hailey in a Private School where she participated in dance, music, and gymnastics. Then one day, over one of the gymnastic mothers put their four-year-old daughters on diets →

Anyway, WTF is normal?

Jenny is a hero for sharing with us her version.

Could you imagine?



That concludes my thoughts on this side-splitting book.

ONE LAST THOUGHT

Please share your stories.

They make the world a much kinder place.

Don't worry about what your normal is — because how could any of us be expected to be normal?

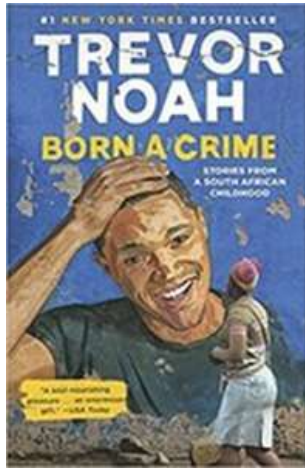
After all, a bunch of douchey politicians might be watching us through our microwaves!

LAUGH

1. I went to great effort to simplify the imagery. It wasn't enough for the readers to see a stuffed mouse on the cover → I helped out by adding "dead."

BORN A CRIME

TREVOR NOAH



Allowing many to be woke on the disease that is racism... laughter included.

How did the book make me feel/think?

I love Trevor Noah in an entertainingly brotherly ⁽¹⁾ way!

He 'kicks it' on The **Daily Show** – something many thought he wouldn't be able to do.

How could a little-known coloured ⁽¹⁾ person possibly replace the legendary Jon Stewart?

He's not only replaced him, but he's also made the show his own, bringing light to the racism that plagues America and much of the world today, despite efforts, especially in America, to convince otherwise.

Not only do I love him as a comic, but he's also a staunch humanitarian, not afraid to share beliefs. Sure, 45, becoming president has helped – but Trevor came from Apartheid – if anyone understands how screwed things can be, he certainly will have an idea. African dictatorship – 45... Ugh.

I was lucky he came to Vancouver for a comedy fest (2017).

I caught his show.

I cried in laughter for 90-minutes.

So did my friend next to me.

As a live performer, he is impressively charismatic and intensely likable.

BORN A CRIME – I loved it. It subtly cracks open what growing up in the perfect racist society was like. He shares tales of what it was like being an “illegal baby” of colour – not black or white – but simply different, born to mixed parents, a crime punishable by prison.

He shares stories of how the man, whomever the bleep the man was, worked at keeping racial divides – leaving little opportunity for ladders to be climbed. Many are born where they die.

He often sings out a big-hearted paean to his unbreakable love for his mother (deeply religious). She *had* him wanting the best for him, helping him navigate through a hatred given upon all in the South African caste system's – every African was forced to take part in. It manifested her love in harshness – she wanted him to realize she was punishing out of love – a punishment *love* doesn't condone.

Although Apartheid makes it glowingly difficult for North Americans to see, his story shares common threads with the human experiment. It is hard to write thoughts on Trevor's memoir because opinions can sometimes be misconstrued and show a tremendous lack of empathy for something impossible to relate to for most.

Saying you relate may sound ignorant. But does it?

For me, his story is relatable. It reminds me of growing up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan – bear with me. Saskatoon ⁽¹⁾ is not Africa.

Thank you, Mr. Obvious.

When I was growing up, I knew five black people – the total black population in Saskatoon. I'm sure there were a few more. Three were friends. I thought it was cool to have black friends.

Was that racist?

The rest of my friends were white, with only a few natives, who were only allowed in the bad part of town – looked down upon. Like in Africa, they were deemed second or third class – having their identities stripped from them. Sent to reserves. Considered less than human

Native friends = not cool.

It was the times.

6

Screw the times.

We all took part.

Little do you know when you are part of the majority, you may be sick.

Amazingly, under Apartheid in SA, black was the majority.

Our family wasn't immune to judgment. We lived on the wrong side of the tracks. A dark family secret led me to not belonging anywhere – but somehow: fitting-in, everywhere.

Turning dark moments into comedy became a survival tool. Like Trevor, not black or white, but grey was a blessing somehow. Survival came in the nuance of life.

1. *Seriously, you wrote → grow please → you must.*
2. *Seriously, did you compare Saskatchewan to Africa? Yes. Dude, that might be offensive. Might be? Are we having a conversation inside the same numbered point? Yes. Seriously, Saskatchewan – Africa? I'm sticking to my guns. The province of Saskatchewan shares light-years-apart similarities with the country Africa (Benin) (2). You are an idiot. No.*
3. *In fairness to the author of this Book Thought → , the author has never been to Africa, much like Trevor Noah likely has never been to Wisconsin. And the author of this Book Thought is proud of his ability to name all 54 African countries and place them in their proper location on a map. Including Benin. So, suck it.*

ME TALK PRETTY ONE DAY

DAVID SEDARIS



David Sedaris slices through cultural norms with precision leaving readers gasping for air as they laugh aloud.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Me Talk Pretty One Day is a humour-filled gem scorching new grounds, casting political correctness to the side. Sedaris tackles cringe-worthy subjects, ranging from speech impediments to mania and addiction, somehow turning them into sardonically hysterical anecdotes taken from his life. His ease of weaving language together takes the reader meandering through his delightfully bizarre life of colourful familial characters, making reading an enjoyable breeze.

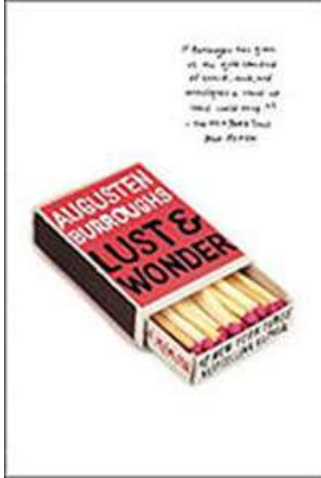
Stories that include his cat named Neal and a vacuum cleaner may leave you crying with glee: as will the story about his sister, Amy, after being named one the most influential woman in NYC, professing to a stranger, "I'm in love..."

As a writer, I can only hope to find my inner Sedaris and one day reach his level of respect.

Me Talk Pretty One Day may not be everyone's cup of tea. And some people may not find it to be funny. If you fall into either of those categories, I suggest, try harder!

LUST & WONDER

AUGUSTEN BURROUGHS



Deliciously, heart-warmingly-heart-wrenchingly honest...

How did the book make me feel/think?

Augusten Burroughs could write his way out of a sopping wet gunny sack secured with zap straps; whatever the hell that means.

I read **RUNNING WITH SCISSORS** (first memoir).

I loved it.

I laughed so hard my room shook. I mean car seat.

I read most of it while working overnight security on a construction site, much of the time sitting in my vehicle staring at a building's entrance waiting for the bad guys to show up. They were high on crack when they did, so I just pretended to be a hallucination, *which strangely*, seemed to work.

I read **DRY** (second memoir): loved it. After reading, I went out and slammed back a flight of fine scotches. That's right: scotch is served by the flight.

8 However, something was missing. Burroughs comes from the definition of dysfunction, smothering dysfunction—yet; he survived, thankfully for us. What was missing, for me at least, was he seemed to hide behind his natural wit and literary brilliance, although his life oddities were laid out for all to see, laugh, cringe and cry along with → his mad comedic skills didn't allow me entirely in.

As much as I loved those *two* books, I was hesitant to read another by this unique, famous author, whose fame arrived by sharing his life. Then, one day, I was shopping in a drugstore, for... I'm not sure what for (?) when I glanced over at the magazine rack spotted the cover for **LUST & WONDER (third)**—and *I impulse bought it*. I'm ecstatic I did. The book is... *searching for the proper adjectives...* delicious, heart-warming, heart-wrenching—honest. Augusten not only shares his life's dysfunctions in this fabulous memoir, but he also opens his heart, laying himself bare, allowing readers to fully dive in.

The wit and literary brilliance are still there, as strong as ever.

The last sixty pages may have been the most engrossing I've ever read.

The ending...

Reading **LUST & WONDER** succeeded magnificently in not only bringing awareness for Augusten, but I also think it accomplished a rare thing: it delivered self-awareness for anyone who dove into the pages of this beautiful book.

I can't wait for his next book. While reading these *three*, I think I may have grown alongside him.

Augusten, thank you for surviving!
And, Christopher, thank you for driving the jeep!

A RESPONSE TO MY THOUGHTS

Lindsay,

Thanks so much. Exceedingly kind of you

Christopher / Agent/ Selectric Artists/ Augusten Burroughs

THE GLORIOUS HERESIES

LISA MCINERNEY



A riveting story about people who think they matter more than they do. Dazzling!

How did the book make me feel/think?

Bloody hell, *The Glorious Heresies*, is like coming across mangled wreckage, un-survivable – on a dreary night, on a rain-smeared highway. Somehow, the occupants of both vehicles, broken lives in tow, claw + scratch their way out of the depths of destruction to willingly, while draped in denial, fuck each other over just because they are fucked themselves.

The characters are dark, flawed, and un-salvageable – I hated each of them. I turned another page and then another with layers of destruction being pounded and laid onto the streets lining Cork's (Ireland) underbelly – pages leaving behind terrible sadness, an emptiness that feels violent, a dark void. A twist comes. Your hatred seeps away. You find something, someone, a reason to cheer. The city folds itself upon the characters – lost in a world where they are too stunned to realize they do not matter. Their lives are only as big as they are. Another page turns, you search for hope. The book ends. You are left gasping.