

(Mobile ebook) Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction

Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction

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From Seven Stories Press : Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Live Through This: On Creativity and Self-Destruction:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Make a third edition please!By matty creenI just reread this for the third time and it's desperately in need of a new edition. I think people like Kate Nash and the gals from Bleached could make some great contributions.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book with phenomenal insight into ways talent fights (and ...By John-Aaron RuddickGreat book with phenomenal insight into ways talent fights (and sometimes brawls) to balance the struggles and impetus behind massive creativity with the need for functionality and balance in the lay world. Interesting. Includes practical applications interspersed with the art of contributors.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. How Women Survive via Creative, Not Always Pleasant, MeansBy Rachel Kramer BussellLive Through This is a revolutionary, powerful, and potentially life-saving book. It's not just that editor

Sabrina Chapadjiev has collected the work of some of the most creative female artists and writers, but that they in turn bravely take us behind the scenes to moments often before they became the bold-faced names they are today and share their darkest times and coping mechanisms. The fact is, it's often hard to reconcile the women writing these pieces with what I know of them. Exhibitionism for the Shy and Live Nude Girl author Carol Queen was really once going to kill herself? And yet of course it all makes perfect sense. These women give readers an outlet not just to hear their stories, but to claim our own coping mechanisms without judgment. It's not that they are encouraging cutting or eating disorders, to name two examples, but that they've been there, done/heard that, and have moved on. Nicole Blackman writes of the power she unwittingly tapped into, becoming the keeper of her fans' secrets, and not knowing how to deal with such pain in their lives. Elizabeth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle write of turning cancer, a deadly disease, into art, in one of the most powerful pieces in the book. Within these pages, everything is okay, if that's what you need to do to survive, as Kate Bornstein so eloquently points out: "Cutting, starving yourself, drugging, drinking... these are all rituals some of us develop in order to deal with pain. Each of these solutions to pain is in itself painful, so each solution/ritual contains a very personal lesson on how to handle the experience of pain." Her journey took her through Scientology and into art, among other things, and the stark examples of her artwork say so much about the pain she was living through. I don't think it's a coincidence that as I read this book while I was going through a very dark time, dealing with depression and anxiety. I read part of it during a medical crisis as I sat in the waiting room. Because that's another thing: even though this is a book about getting past those self-destructive, self-defeating, awful mental (and physical) struggles, these authors don't hold out any panaceas or claim to be completely "over" these issues. They have certainly learned and matured, but this is not just an "and I lived to tell the tale" book. It's much more than that, because one gets the sense that though they may have stopped drinking, getting high, and outright harming themselves, the challenges continue. Inga M. Muscio's essay is the kind that grabs your heart and holds tight until the end as she rights about the death of her brother. She concludes, "Most always, healing is not a destination or an objective. Healing is a daily thought process, a series of infinite questions and choices, a kill that is not taught, much less revered, in our culture." I don't mean to end on a depressing note, because I do believe this book is well worth reading for anyone, whatever gender, who has ever felt not all there, who has wanted art to save them but isn't sure it will do the trick, who has felt, even if they were surrounded by people who care, all alone. These authors get that and go there, to those places so many would rather avoid or pretend do not exist. By acknowledging that they do, sharing their stories, and, most of all, perhaps, not pretending to have all the answers, they prove themselves not "experts," but real, flawed, passionate, yet still brilliant, bold and creative people who have learned not everything, but something they can pass on to others.

A visceral look at the bizarre entanglement of destructive and creative forces, *Live Through This* (a finalist for the 2008 Lambda Literary Awards) is a collection of original stories, essays, artwork, and photography. It explores the use of art to survive abuse, incest, madness and depression, and the often deep-seated impulse toward self-destruction including cutting, eating disorders, and addiction. Here, some of our most compelling cartoonists, novelists, poets, dancers, playwrights, and burlesque performers traverse the pains and passions that can both motivate and destroy women artists, and mark a path for survival. Taken together, these artful reflections offer an honest and hopeful journey through a woman's silent rage, through the power inherent in struggles with destruction, and the ensuing possibilities of transforming that burning force into the external release of art. With contributions by Nan Goldin, bell hooks, Patricia Smith, Cristy C. Road, Carol Queen, Annie Sprinkle, Elizabeth Stephens, Carolyn Gage, Eileen Myles, Fly, Diane DiMassa, Bonfire Madigan Shive, Inga Muscio, Kate Bornstein, Toni Blackman, Nicole Blackman, Silas Howard, Daphne Gottlieb, and Stephanie Howell.

“The 21 artists, who share their stories of madness, trauma, addiction, abuse and self-destruction, and their relationship to art, leave no vulnerable detail unwritten.”—Shameless
About the Author
SABRINA CHAPADJIEV is a playwright, spoken word artist, and singer-songwriter originally from the suburbs of Chicago. She is founder of the all-woman songwriter series *Chicks that Kick*, and editor of the zine *Cliterature: 18 Interviews with Women Writers*. Her plays, including perhaps merely quiet, have been produced in the United States and Europe.