



# Sex, Drugs, and Schizophrenia

*Jonathan Harnisch*

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"The author of this deeply moving portrait of a schizophrenic is afflicted himself with schizo-affective disorder, Tourette's Syndrome and a few other things. Jonathan Harnisch even calls himself "the king of mental illness." Given those obstacles, it's a wonder he can write anything, much less a semi-autobiographical novel as fiercely intelligent and finely crafted as this one.

The protagonist, a disturbed trust-funder named Benjamin J. Schreiber, who has a self-destructive alter ego called Georgie Gust boiling inside his head, may be the most compelling character in the literature of madness since A Beautiful Mind's John Nash. Unable to cope with dark childhood traumas, reclusive Ben transfers his fears and obsessions to his extroverted creation, Georgie, who falls into the clutches of a cruel sado-masochist lover, Claudia Nesbitt. That means Ben suffers too, of course, and Harnisch's depictions of inner torment are harrowing. When Ben tries to hang himself, the scene reverberates with authorial knowingness.

Ben descends into drug addiction. He tries to rob a bank in Pasadena. He spends years in a mental ward as "everything I don't want to be." Luckily, he also comes under the care of a gifted psychiatrist, "Dr. C," who unlocks the secrets of his past and gives Ben hope. All he's ever dreamed of--what the author obviously wants, too--is some "seemingly impossible peace of mind, through complete honesty and self-love, by any means necessary."

For Harnisch, those means seem to have included writing this powerful, heart-wrenching and clearly self-therapeutic book, even though his alter ego, Ben, feels obliged to apologize to the reader "for all the utter confusion, chaos and inconsistencies here within." No apology necessary."

-- BlueInk Review

The collected writings of Jonathan Harnisch mark a magnificent contribution to the public's understanding of mental illness through a masterpiece of transgressive fiction with a heart. The general reader is finally able to see mainstream literary author Jonathan Harnisch at his best. *Sex, Drugs, and Schizophrenia* contains the works of 2014, *Jonathan Harnisch: An Alibiography* and *Second Alibi: The Banality of Life*, in one complete streaming narrative. The monumental scale of Harnisch's achievement through adversity flourishes and can now be appreciated in this diverse, invaluable, and thought-provoking collection of fragmented fiction, which will make your brain spin as the author's sense of the inner machinations within the human experience spring into life through the written word. It forces one to question reality and step into another world, where one wants the protagonist and his alter ego to get it together and be okay. The author reveals himself through a series of alibis in the day-to-day meetings of multiple personalities, a corner of psychiatry that is hardly understood, and shedding light on the experiences of schizophrenia in a language that the non-sufferer can understand, albeit from the author who suffers himself. Not for the faint of heart, this fictionalized account of a disparate mind triumphs.

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