



My Brain is Hanging Upside Down (Pantheon Graphic Novels)

By David Heatley

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

One of the most promising young talents in cartooning makes his debut with a dazzling collection—part freakish dreamlife, part quirk-o-rama autobiography, all genius.

Long a fixture in comics anthologies, David Heatley's deceptively crude, wickedly observant drawings have begun showing up on the *New York Times* op-ed pages and the cover of the *New Yorker*, introducing him to a vast new audience. Now, in *My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down* (title courtesy of the Ramones song), we are treated to the full range of Heatley's remarkable, wildly unique voice and vision.

My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down is Heatley's life story told in six different but connected narrative threads. "Sex History" describes every sexual encounter dating back to kindergarten, with details that would make a therapist blush. "Black History" is an unflinchingly honest meditation on his own racism. "Portrait of My Mom" and "Portrait of My Dad" are beautifully paced vignettes, skewering and celebrating his lovably dysfunctional parents. "Family History" tells the story of his family from his great-great-grandparents' lives and closes with the birth of his own children. Woven in and around the larger pieces are "dream comics" that expand on the same themes with a baffling unconscious logic. Every inch of *My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down* is filled with visceral art and emotionally resonant storytelling at once stunning, truthful, and uncomfortably hilarious.

Amazon Exclusive: David Heatley's *My Upside Down Brain*

David Heatley's book is on Amazon...but what does David Heatley think about that? See Heatley at ages 8, 15, and 33 in this comic, *My Upside Down Brain*, drawn exclusively for Amazon.

MY UPSIDE DOWN BRAIN...

written and drawn by

DAVID HEATLEY, DAVID HEATLEY & DAVID HEATLEY



AGE 8



AGE 15



AGE 33

SEPTEMBER 2008



END?

From [Booklist](#)

Autobiography, particularly of the self-lacerating variety, has been a staple of alternative comics since such groundbreaking 1970s and '80s works as Harvey Pekar's *American Splendor* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. Heatley presents his life thematically. He opens with his entire "Sex History," from prekindergarten explorations to postmarital attempts to kick his addiction to masturbation and including vividly disquieting pages from a dream journal. Subsequent sections depict a life's worth of encounters with African Americans and relations with Mom, Dad, and other kin. From it all, we acquire a comprehensive portrait, from mildly troubled youth and conflicted sexuality to recent religious conversion and fatherhood. Like Chris Ware, Heatley uses postage-stamp-sized panels to cram a massive amount of narrative onto each page. But his naive, slapdash drawings couldn't be farther from Ware's neurotically meticulous style; their lack of sophistication implies an unshielded honesty. Although more conventional prose memoirs may be the ones ensconced on best-seller lists, it's hard to imagine Heatley's story being told as effectively in any other medium than comics. --Gordon Flagg

About the Author

David Heatley played the Baby Jesus at a Christmas pageant in 1974, months after he was born. A few years later, his family moved to Teaneck, NJ, where they became disenchanted with Catholicism and joined an Episcopal church which might have had the worse liturgical music in the country. Heatley was confirmed at the age of 13 and stopped going to church the following year. After a decade-and-a-half of self-destructive behavior, he had a spiritual awakening while visiting California in 2001—about which, more later. Heatley now lives in Jackson Heights, NY, with his wife Rebecca Gopoian (an agnostic, Jewish-Armenian poet), and their two awesome children. This is his first book. Go easy on him.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Heather Goodson:

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Clinton Whitten:

Typically the book *My Brain is Hanging Upside Down* (Pantheon Graphic Novels) will bring that you the new experience of reading a new book. The author style to explain the idea is very unique. Should you try to find new book you just read, this book very suited to you. The book *My Brain is Hanging Upside Down* (Pantheon Graphic Novels) is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from your official web site, so you can quicker to read the book.

Matthew Gregg:

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