



Detour: My Bipolar Road Trip in 4-D

Lizzie Simon

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A finely wrought memoir of mental health, *Detour* takes a genre explored by Susanna Kaysen and Kay Redfield Jamison and propels it in a revelatory and rebellious new direction.

Detour is the extraordinary first book by Lizzie Simon, a twenty-three-year-old woman with bipolar disorder. We meet her as she is set to abandon her successful career as a theatrical producer in New York City, with plans to hit the road and find other bipolars like herself -- young, ambitious, opinionated, and truth-seeking. Her goal: to speak with them candidly without judgment, fear, or the slightest trace of anything clinical or jargon-laden. She wants their stories in *their* words.

But after falling in love with her first interviewee, a troubled millionaire, the truth and the path become increasingly difficult to find.

She indeed finds inspiring bipolars. Marissa, a twenty-something African-American adoptee; Jan, a popular rock 'n' roll radio deejay and mother of two; Matt, a quiet college student from the South. Each is resilient, wise, healthy, and hopeful. Yet each harbors stories of mania and depression that defy the limits of human experience and survival.

But if she's achieving what she set out to do, then why does she feel more alien and alone than ever? Part road trip, part love story, part mystery, Simon has created a heartbreaking narrative of her cross-country quest.

With brave humor, Simon writes guilelessly about herself, her past, and her search for "a herd of her own." She explores that shifting gray area where illness and identity intersect and blur, with the eye of an insider and the heart and soul of a survivor. Accessible and unique, *Detour* not only opens an intimate window on the day-to-day condition of living with a mood disorder, it also speaks to our universally human struggle to become whole.

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