

Babel

Patti Smith

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Babel Details

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From Reader Review Babel for online ebook

Bradley says

Published only as a first edition in 1978, "Babel" is a collection of poetry, prose, and stream of consciousness writing. With inspiration drawn from Rimbaud and the Beats, Smith paints a unique portrait of late 70s New York City.

Rock music, sex, and Smith's life are graphically and beautifully illustrated. Smith's first album "Horses" was just three years earlier. Some of the writing in this book later appeared as spoken word monologues on her albums including "Babelogue" which appears on her 1978 release "Easter."

Smith is undeniably the Godmother of Punk. While this book truly encapsulates the essence of her life and struggles in New York during the 70s, it isn't a very polished collection. With lowercase text, misspelled words, and improper punctuation, the writing can be challenging at times. However, perhaps that's the point. What could be more punk in the literary world than defying all literature's conventions?

Jamie Ruiz says

Wicked!

Jennifer says

Patti Smith is a true American artist and though her poetry tends to be more like an American Rimbaud, crude, poignant, and funny, she is not for everyone. The godmother of punk she is now in her 60's and still remains articulate and true to her artform.

Giuseppe says

Upon finding this book tucked away in a dusty antique store many years ago, it felt like I had struck gold. A first edition, out of print, collection of Patti Smith's poetical works. I devoured **neo boy**, *the son of a neck rilke*, and the pseudo epic **munich**, but was unsatisfied by the overall collection. At least, initially.

Recently I picked Babel up again and began to appreciate her work in the written form. I was unsatisfied initially by the way her words laid lifelessly on the pages, but this could not be further from the truth. My younger self simply could not appreciate Smith's written verse as my younger self had fallen head over tail in love with Smith performing these works on the stage.

While yes, Smith would dazzle with the electrically charged words performed on stage she accomplishes the same feat here! Her unconventional presentation (consisting of lower-case titles in bold with sub-titles italicized and block paragraphs tied together with odd punctuation) strike the reader hard and fast; characterizing her words with this fantastic feeling of triumph and raw power. This collection *is* a triumph. The words that comprise her works are alive. One need only learn to read it in such a way

She dedicated this book to the future, I wonder if the future let her down.

Marissa says

I checked out this book because lately I've been really obsessed with Patti Smith. It's practically cliché to say so at this point, but her music really does capture a certain NYC feeling in a way nobody else does. And of course, her lyrics are often really great. Lately, I've been really into the lyrics of her song, "Piss Factory," which was originally a poem and one of the first she read after she moved here. It's really long so I won't post it here and it definitely has a lot of flaws in it, vague classism and sexism not the least of them, but it's nice as a kind of raw, teenage soliloquy and it has a great rhythm to the language. There really isn't the same energy and easy imagery in most of the poems in Babel and it's hard to read the words on the page without thinking how much better it would be to hear her say them. The quality of her voice is very important to the emotions and tone of her songs and without it her poems read a little flat.

Creolecat says

I remember seeing Patti Smith in person at the Licorice Pizza record store with my high school boyfriend and then seeing the Patti Smith Group at the Hollywood Palladium. Such great memories and this is an amazing read from a gifted poet.

Dan says

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.(not hurt)
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again.

The Tempest, Act III, sc. ii 135-43

Daniel Iván says

Not sure I had the best translation available, but I got to say the neo kid adventures and the general sense of experimentation on this book just got me. I truly dig how many moments and voices from the late 60's and the early 70's are present on Babel. Exciting poetry, images, art.

Stacy Fetters says

Patti Smith is a punk rock goddess and an idol of all girls wanting to be a badass. She opens up a piece of my brain and heart that I didn't know existed. Like hitting a brick wall of realness. She makes me love in an entire new way.

Gusmenary says

There's something strangely magical and wreckless about Patti Smith's writings. An eclectic grouping of phrases and themes from space to a kind of sandherin/arabia/morroco type feel- with the brazen indecency of her music. It's lyrical, beautiful and sad. I highly reccomend it.

Jim says

Read this book when it came out. I carried this around with me all the time it seems. I remember it being beautiful, magical prose/poetry. I was a huge patti fan at the time, and have still not totally deserted her music. horses is brilliant rock overflowing with poetic entergy, which overflows into this, book. I really should get this off the shelf and re-read it to see if it holds up.

Rebecca McNutt says

This book has everything, quite literally *everything*, from drawings and sketches to vivid, nostalgic prose and poetry. I'm a huge fan of Patti Smith's music (I've got her album *Horses* on vinyl), but I hadn't read this book until now, and I'm glad I did.

Dalal says

Sublimely mystical.

Dana Jerman says

P is a wordplay artist. This doesn't come across so much in her music. There's only enough room(s) for art every place.

Ellen says

favorite book of poetry.

Dave Naz says

I've always loved this book. Got me through some tough times.

Maureen says

This is a kooky book of poetry by Patti Lee Smith, embellished with family photos, drawings, and at least one Robert Mapplethorpe picture that I think I recognize. *Stream of consciousness* is probably the best way to describe most of her poetry. This book is of interest to fans of her music, particularly because of the many references to ideas that became song lyrics. I don't think everything she does is art, and sometimes I lose patience with her, but I admire Smith for her unabashed enthusiasm and willingness to let it all hang out.

Jayne Ryan says

The language of the ecstatic - she's iconoclastic and never afraid of her own emotions - had this book for years and still love it! Must get a copy of Just Kids

marie monroe says

nice. especially nice if you like her music. the images are a little punk-dated now perhaps, but fun.

Perry Whitford says

Short poetic works about friends and freedom from the high poetess of punk Patti Smith, highly indebted to William Burroughs in both style and content, only without the buggery.
Plenty of energy and spirit but ultimately a collection of sounds and furies signifying nothing much without the additional benefit of the band.
But then she did call it 'Babel'.
