



The Bruise

Magdalena Zurawski

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Bruise

Magdalena Zurawski

The Bruise Magdalena Zurawski

Winner of Ronald Sukenick Prize for Innovative Fiction

The Bruise is a prize-winning novel of imperative voice and raw sensation. In the sterile dormitories and on the quiet winter greens of an American university, a young woman named M— deals with the repercussions of a strange encounter with an angel, one that has left a large bruise on her forehead. Was the event real or imagined? The bruise does not disappear, forcing M— to confront her own existential fears and her wavering desire to tell the story of her imagination. As a writer, M— is breathless, desperate, and obsessive, questioning the mutations and directions of her words while writing with fevered immediacy. Using rhythmic language, suffused with allusions to literature and art, Magdalena Zurawski recasts the bildungsroman as a vibrant and moving form.

The Bruise Details

Date : Published August 10th 2008 by Fiction Collective 2

ISBN : 9781573661447

Author : Magdalena Zurawski

Format : Paperback 174 pages

Genre : Fiction, Lgbt, Novels, Glbt, Queer

 [Download The Bruise ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Bruise ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Bruise Magdalena Zurawski

From Reader Review The Bruise for online ebook

MJ Nicholls says

A prize-winner from FC2. Narrated in a somewhat autistic or obsessive voice (take no offence please) with lyrical repetitions and emotive, instinctual language. No surprise whatsoever to learn Stein, Bernhard, and Proust are the writer's influences. The prose is more or less the novel since the plot, setting and first-world problems are flat and whatever, and the innovative aspect of it all somewhat escapes me. But the voice is damn striking and fresh.

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

review of
Magdalena Zurawski's The Bruise
by tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE - November 17, 2013

Yadda, yadda. This review is too long, yadda, yadda. See the whole thing here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/...>

I was in Boston, at the beginning of January, 2013, w/ my girlfriend of the time, for what was probably the 128th annual MLA (Modern Language Association) convention. The g-friend had been desperately seeking high paying professorial poetry-related employment for over 2 yrs - almost the entirety of the time we'd been involved w/ each other. To say that this was wearing on our nerves is an understatement. The MLA convention is one of the main places where prospective university employers interview applicants & the g-friend was there for 2 or more such interviews.

We were staying in a hotel. I wanted to go to the hotel bar but g-friend was afraid one of her prospective employers wd see her there w/ me & that her chances for being hired wd be ruined in advance by her obvious association w/ *an actual creative person* instead of the 'more respectable' university facsimile thereof so she stayed in our rm while I went to the bar alone. Sitting at the bar, I attempted to get the bartender to serve me a beer. Apparently, I was too 'disreputable' looking for him b/c he completely ignored me despite the fact that he was standing directly in front of me, that I was displaying cash, & that there were only something like 2 other people at the bar.

Then Magdalena Zurawski sat down 3 stools away from me & soon thereafter initiated a friendly conversation. She, apparently, looked much straighter than I do so once she started talking to me the bartender began treating me like a customer & filled my order. Does anyone wonder why I support Jack Abbott's murder of the waiter who denied him use of the restaurant's Men's Rm?

It soon came out that Magdalena had written a novel & that it was published by FC2 (Fiction Collective 2) - something that interested me. We talked about the Fiction Collective & I mentioned Raymond Federman to her b/c I've always strongly associated him w/ the original FC. I was surprised she'd never heard of him. I told her that if she'd send me a copy of her novel I'd review it. I was happy that we'd talked b/c the reason why I wanted to go to the bar in the 1st place was to seek out other writers for conversation & Magdalena very pleasantly fit the bill. I liked her.

Several mnths passed & I hadn't rc'vd the bk so I was beginning to think she'd forgotten about me. THEN

The Bruise finally arrived w/ an interesting post-card w/ images of "*Pluripotent Stem Cells*" & "*Mouse neurons generated by direct reprogramming of astrocytes*" & w/ a note on it that read: "As promised at the MLA. Better Late than Never? - MZ" & I liked her all over again.

I procrastinated on reading her bk for mnths b/c I have so many things to read. I started reading it, put it aside, read it fitfully. I found the beginning somewhat off-putting b/c it's a 1st person narration of a college girl, a world too cloistered & privileged for me. Then, in October, I got an email from a girl purporting to be a student at a local university who'd decided to take a yr off from school b/c she's uncertain whether she wants to continue along the artist's path she'd pursued so far. She claimed that she contacted me b/c 2 professor friends of mine had recommended that she do so to discuss her uncertainty. She proposed that we meet at a coffee shop or a bar & I agreed to either. She chose the bar.

At the bar, she proceeded to tell me a somewhat labyrinthian story about being a assistant to an artist that I'd never heard of & about how she's created a narrative inspired by this experience in wch she created an alternate persona of sorts for herself. The relationship allegedly turned violent & it was ambiguous as to whether she provoked &/or desired &/or enjoyed the violence. The whole time, she was sheathed in a long coat. It wasn't completely clear whether she was a girl, a drag queen, or a trannie - although the claim was that she had a vagina. She identified herself as "queer" but admitted to being in love w/ the male artist she'd had the violent relationship w/. In the midst of all this story-telling I was reminded of The Bruise & mentioned it to her.

Later that evening, I recorded the last hr of our 5 hr conversation. During this, she told me that "there's no persona" - contradicting the previous 4 hrs of story. I found her fascinating but had to wonder what I was getting myself into. She told a story that implied a fear of her being perceived as a schizophrenic. I asked her if she *is* a schizophrenic or a narcissist & she sd NO to both.

We stayed in somewhat minimal contact after that during wch time we both became annoyed w/ each other. I proposed various collaborations - w/ the 1st & foremost one being that we cooperatively write a review of The Bruise & edit our reviews together. She agreed & immediately bought a copy of the bk. Our friendship in potentia deteriorated & I eventually decided that I didn't want to 'hang' w/ her anymore but that I still wanted to collaboratively write the review. Her half of it has never materialized my way.

As w/ so many of my reviews, this tangent may seem excessively irrelevant but it's possible that any reader of The Bruise will recognize a pattern here. While I was reading The Bruise I felt like I was somewhat interacting w/ a parallel plot in 'real life'. But before I explain that to those of you who *haven't* read The Bruise, I found the following interesting:

"The paper on which this book is printed meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984". - p 4

"And much gratitude for daily inspiration to Immanuel Kant, Bruce Springsteen, and Eileen Myles." (p 5) & on p 9 there's a quote from Lyn Hejinian's "Elegy" poem & one from Bruce Springsteen's "State Trooper" song. I've never read any of the works of the philosopher Kant (altho I've run across mention of him many times), what little I've heard by Springsteen has always been too musically 'normal' for me, & I've criticized what little I've read by Myles (perhaps unfairly). The quote from Hejinian is somewhat predictable for a student since probably very few people read Hejinian w/o having her taught to them 1st in a university context - but the quote from Springsteen seems more 'normal' for a working class teen. Regardless of whether I'm stretching things here or not, the Hejinian quote cd very well've been an inspiration for the majority of the novel. Here're the 1st 3 of the 6 lines given:

"

Many frantic cruelties occur to the flesh of the imagination

And the imagination does have flesh to destroy
And the flesh has imagination to sever
"

The 1st 2 pp, while not marked specifically as a "Prologue" or such-like, seem to follow a prologue-ish convention insofar as they're written entirely in *italics*. I'm reminded, very vaguely, of the 1st 3 pp of Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree* not b/c the writing style's similar but b/c the italicization sets this beginning text apart as 'setting the mood'. My initial impression is that this 'mood setting' is intended to be tedious, perhaps the tedium of a trapped person, the tedium of obsessive-compulsive behavior. Zurawski begins thusly:

"If I had actually spent any part of that first night asleep, it is difficult for me to know now, though no more difficult than it was for me to know then. I had believed, I think, for a long time, and perhaps I still do, that I had not slept at all that first night of my final year. I had not dozed, or at least believed that I had not dozed, even a tiny bit, but only lay there in my bed, looking out into the darkness inside the four walls." - p 11

I know this feeling well, this insomniac feeling, laying in bed, awake too much of the time, if not all the time, & so tired it's hard to be sure whether one has slept or not b/c, if one has slept, it seems entirely too similar to being awake, to being exhausted, etc.. Whether it's exactly Zurawski's intention to simply set a feel for insomnia or not, it does seem to be to set the mood of a yr spent in borderline alienated, but still mostly functional, delirium.

While I cdn't really identify w/ the 1st-person perspective of the college girl narrator, the 'persona' that's both the stand-in for the author & someone not quite the author (in much the same way that the uncertain sleep of the insomniac is not quite being awake either), I cd identify w/ other aspects: "The closet was deep enough that I could take one step into it and turn right. And it was wide enough for me to still walk three paces to the right" (p 13) reminded me of my own relationship to the smaller closet in the small bedrm that I grew up in but that nonetheless became a whole world unto itself by virtue of my detailed organization of it. Zurawski's descriptions border on OCD (or, perhaps, I 'shd' just say: OC - there's no 'need' to call it a 'disorder' necessarily) but there's a writerly carefulness to this that functions as an organizing principle beyond the OC of the subject:

"The bucket was white so I was careful to purchase only white cakes of soap white washrags a white toothbrush white tubes of toothpaste and shampoo that came in white bottles. Occasionally though my scalp would begin to itch and its skin would flake and for this reason I was forced to purchase a tar shampoo that had an amber color and came in a clear plastic bottle. In order not to disturb the arrangement of white that I kept neatly on top of the dresser which was oak I kept the tar shampoo in my sock drawer the top drawer of my dresser which was a fine decision since most of my socks were dark colored browns or blacks or grays." - p 14

"I ate European style as my mother had taught: with the knife in my right hand and my fork in my left hand. The two worked simultaneously and I never put one implement down without putting down the other. The fork was in my left hand with its bubbled back towards the ceiling. I pushed its teeth into the edge of the ham steak and cut it with my knife so that a piece of meat extended forward from the teeth of the fork. This I used as a ledge onto which I would next push a bit of the mashed potatoes with my knife and on top of the potatoes which now rose in a mound off the back of my fork I would then push a number of peas that would stay on the back of the fork due to the stickiness of the potatoes and the gravy." - pp 25-26

My mom had a rule that if we didn't use a butter knife to put the butter onto the edge of our plates & then use our other knife to move that butter onto the target foodstuff we'd be fined a nickel. I revolted. Regimental OC as enforced by the mother.

This is a literary novel, but b/c the writer is writing as a college student I don't 'know' if the literary

references are ones that the author wd've searched out on her own or if they're just the ones force-fed to her. At any rate, Zurawski writes: "I had become very interested in the first stanza of the first poem of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* the entirety of which I was supposed to read for my German literature course but since my German was fairly poor I could only plod my way through the text by rendering a tedious translation for myself which required much dictionary work." (p 15) The opening line then becomes: "*Who if I cried out would hear me among the order of angels?*" (p 16) The character, or "M—", as she becomes 'known', muses: "I thought about the sound for quite a while and concluded that it could not be a name. It could never be a word of any sort but only a sound. An unplanned unknown sound." (p 16) "And I took my finger and made circles on my stomach dipping just under my navel and staying just inside the ribs. I made these circles slowly. That was the loudest call I could bear to make. / "And when I began to feel the angel pressing on top of me—when I knew she had come I kept calling not with my fingers but only through my breath moving in and out of my mouth beneath her ear." (p 16)

M—'s Rilke-inspired cry, her making of circles on her skin, summons an angel w/ whom she begins to have sex - but this is not idyllic, it quickly becomes oppressive, bestial, like being raped by a pig: "She had grown so heavy that it was impossible to pull away from her. I could feel her hairy swine breasts pricking my skin and her body pushing the breath out of me. Her wings flapped rapidly up and down thrusting her hips hard against mine. I felt the springs of the mattress pressing painfully into me from underneath." (p 17) M— goes to the communal bathrm of the dormitory where she lives & finds the angel in the mirror:

"It's difficult to say how I brought her here or how she had fallen into the mirror because when I turned around to look in the stall she wasn't standing behind me but was just there in front of me in the mirror. She was trapped in the glass though in my bed she had been able to fall on me in sleep. Poems make it easy to dream of angels but the girl she had no wings so she couldn't have been the angel. I thought that I knew that I didn't know her so I thought it best not to move. And even though she was someone very much like me still she was strange and I was scared and I couldn't have been looking at myself and been so scared. And then I moved closer to the mirror because I wanted to make sure she wasn't me. And she followed me to the mirror so I thought for a second I was right. She was me and I didn't have to be scared and I moved my eyes to the right and then to the left and she did the same but then I thought I saw her lip curl about to smile but I was too nervous to smile so I knew she wasn't me." - pp 19-20

M— attacks the angel by swinging at the mirror & falls against the glass & cuts herself & gets the bruise of the title. Now, it's easy enuf to psychoanalyze this & say that M is an insomniac stressed out by her last yr of school & that she injures herself in the midst of delusional behavior. Such an interpretation is all well & good but it doesn't do justice to the care w/ wch Zurawski tries to describe this state. M— sees a friend & "asked her if she thought the bruise was bad and she said *No M—. It doesn't look too bad. It will probably go away in a few days.*" (p 21)

The use of "M—" as the main character's referent & the use of other initials followed by an em dash 'inevitably' reminds me of Kafka's "Joseph K." in *The Trial* & "K." in *The Castle* but it seems to me that I've run across the use of an initial followed by an em dash as a semi-anonymizing abbreviation in other, earlier, probably 19th century, novels as well. Be that as it may, my 1st impression of Zurawski's writing is that it's derivative of that of Maurice Blanchot, a writer that I've read a few bks by w/o every growing to appreciate him. Then, 2ndly, I was reminded of Kafka. SO, again, negative 'college girl' associations: derivative rather than original, taught rather than inspired.. & Lo & Behold!, my initial impressions were confirmed on p 28 by this: ""But I had read that semester in a book by Maurice Blanchot who had written about Franz Kafka that that was the problem with writing. No matter how hard Jozef K tried to be Franz Kafka in the book it was still Jozef K standing at a window with his papers waiting for a clerk and not Franz Kafka sitting at a desk with a pen in his hand."

Wch isn't to say that Zurawski isn't a good writer & that this isn't a good bk. But getting there will take a while. Zurawski gives the reader every opportunity to psychoanalyze her stand-in as having a mental

breakdown. As she's finger-fucking an acquaintance, she starts having disturbing & distracting fantasies:

"So every time in my thoughts I thought I was putting my finger in G—'s wound I thought instead that she was Jesus and I was doubting Thomas and that by putting my fingers in her wound I was saving myself and this thought would make me push my fingers deeper inside of her and it would make her groan louder but each time she groaned louder I got scared that I was hurting her and then I began thinking again that I wasn't doubting Thomas and she wasn't Jesus and I was just sticking my finger in the cut in her thigh and I was just hurting her." - p 36

But by p 39, w/ the chapter entitled "The Bridge", the tone changes somewhat. Perhaps Zurawski wrote this at a different time than she'd written the preceding, perhaps the change is a writerly strategy. Whatever the case, the narrator seems more 'sane'. Her description of a cruising spot is poignantly straight-forward: "I would see in many of these cars a man sitting alone at the wheel and I would wonder why so many men were sitting in cars alone along the river but then Nate said possibly if I waited long enough I would see one of the men maybe get out of his car and walk over to another car and get into the car with another man." (p 40) "And the man told the boy that if his wife was only willing to do to him what the boy was willing to do to him along the river he wouldn't have to come and park down by the river." (p 41)

By p 45, I had the impression that Zurawski had moved away from Blanchot & Kafka: "And then we moved onto L— who had written a story about a woman lying in a bathtub dreaming about having a baby. And in the dream the baby was born with a wooden leg and I thought this was a great story because I liked thinking about a baby born with a wooden leg". But, now, as I write this review, that seems precariously close to Kafka's "The Metamorphosis".

What made this ultimately a strong work for me is the intensity w/ wch Zurawski apparently tries to accurately observe the 'unreality' of the way her imagination permeates her 'reality':

"And so for this reason I believe that in some strange way my own ghost was trying to save me by forcing me to ingest these books that it hoped could show me how to live finally through example. The problem my ghost did not foresee was that even though each passage I memorized showed me how something that had a body could also have a spirit inside it in order for the words to teach me this lesson I had to let them fill up the empty space where my own spirit should have lived so that the books and parts of books that lived inside me both taught me what it would be like to live with my spirit inside me and left no room for my spirit itself." - p 53

Is this revealing? Or just fantasy? Sometimes it seems that Zurawski's anguish is all too substantial. Starting w/ "The Bridge" the bk has meandered a bit but it returns to *the bruise* on p 55: "even though she looked at me while I spoke I knew it wasn't the words I spoke that made her look at me but rather the bruise because the bruise was the only part of me that I knew was real and a person like L— could only bear to look at what was real." Throughout this review, I'm resisting the urge to say: 'Ok, this is paranoid schizophrenia, *the bruise* is a metaphor for her wounds from alienation', etc, etc.. *even tho such an explanation is almost 'screamingly obvious'*. I reckon I'm giving Zurawski credit for being both 'screamingly obvious' & *more subtle* at one & the same time.

To see the entire review go here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/story/show/...>

Carrie says

mystical sad sweet and erotic. I prolonged finishing this one as long as possible...

desiree says

The Bruise was a hard book to read, for the first half. The main character is laid bare throughout her growth process. The narrator's voice is very stream-of-consciousness, and overly-analytical. However, once I got used to the spiral logic, it was an easy read, and, while not quite enjoyable, it was definitely interesting to be so completely introduced to someone's emotional and logical state.

Edit: Hear Magdalena Zurawski on NPR's The State of Things: <http://wunc.org/tsot/archive/the-brui...>
excellently done!

K.B.L. says

This took a lot out of me to read.

The writing style took forever to get used to, and the repetition it used was tedious, despite the repetitious rambling being a main character attribute-- but I suppose the style at least made the author's novella into a short book, and that can be its purpose? Hm.

Overall, I enjoyed the themes and trains of thought, but it was hard to get past the style to really appreciate the book as other readers have.

Jenny says

Another creatively-written book; entirely inside the head of a young woman in college who is either mentally unbalanced or severely embracing her poetic/literary leanings. The writing was refreshing, challenging, beautiful, and (be warned) stream-of-consciousness. A great balance with the storytelling of her senior year of college.

Roz Ito says

This is a beautifully written bildungsroman that revolves around what Michel Foucault talks about here:

"How has sexuality come to be considered the privileged place where our deepest 'truth' is read and expressed? For that is the essential fact: Since Christianity, the Western world has never ceased saying: 'To know who you are, know what your sexuality is.' Sex has always been the forum where both the future of our species and our 'truth' as human subjects are decided."

For M, the semi-anonymous college student narrator of Zurawski's novel, sexuality (homosexuality and genderqueer identity in particular) becomes the open field through which she seeks answers to relentless

existential questions about her self, her world, and others. It's fitting that the novel is set in a university, because its central question is "How can you know?" How can you know what is real, what is imagined? How can you know what is true for yourself? How can you truly know or love another person? Zurawski's compulsive, looping, at times claustrophobic style calls to mind Franz Kafka and Thomas Bernhard, but hers is the story of a young woman who must ultimately learn how to rescue herself through the generative eros of experience, knowledge, and art. I thought it was eerie and fantastic.

Jimmy says

I went to a CAC Conrad reading because I had heard many good things about him but had never read much except a poem here and there online, and it was at this reading that another reader also impressed me and her name was Magdalena Zurawski. She brought her dog with her, a little white thing who she placed on a chair while she read, and afterwards I bought her book and she signed it. When I came home and added her book on Goodreads, I realized that it was already on my to-read shelf, along with several hundred others that I routinely forget about, and that I had become interested in her book a while back when I read one of her blog entries that made me curious about her voice.

Immediately, I was captivated by the voice of M-- who doubts herself at every turn, but not in the way that Bernhard's characters do, with all that dizzying semantic motion, and all that excess that produces involuntary guffaws in me, though there is an obvious stylistic reference there, but more perhaps like Lydia Davis in its neuroticism, yet ultimately less distancing than either of them, so that its style did not become a barrier, but a way of entry, so that it reminded me a bit of Sheila Heti's book which I read in an equal amount of zeal, but like that book, it has the ability to surprisingly disarm the reader, with pure emotion and honesty, though reassuring the reader all the while with its knowingness, that this will not be some vacant gesture or icky flick.

Thus the first half of the book grabbed me with its realness though realness is a weird word for it because the narrator was struggling precisely with her realness. She was struggling with the role of her imagination, and the fittingness of her own skin to this detached occupier of the bruise, which is constantly watching herself watch herself. But I loved the angel she invents that takes a physical form in the evidence of the bruise. And how murkily that was written, so that the imagined had, if anything, more force than the real. But a messy force.

But I felt that about halfway in, the book loses a certain something. It gets tedious, and I no longer buy that it is trying to do this thing, but rather that it has started to do this thing and so it must continue. The searching becomes an empty form of the search, just there to satisfy the reader's thirst for the story of the search, and not a genuine one because the genuine search I felt was in the beginning, with the angel and the bruise and G-- and the school cafeteria and her first thoughts of L--. Maybe what made that part seem real to me was how chaotic it was, and how not at all like a search, but more just the narrator being confused about everything, and that rang true with me.

Carrie Lorig says

i thought it was a lovely thing to read while i felt torn apart. and the bruise on a woman face. i have read that before and i liked reading it again. it is the portrait of the artist as a young man except her is contemporary female voice ribbing it. i liked it. i cried a little in front of the airplane going to the dominican republic.

Andrea says

I nicely bought this as a gift and then began to read it on the plane home and I'll say this, it's really good. I was just at the AWP and having the feeling that a person can have sometimes which is where are the interesting and smart queer fiction writers, and okay so she's a poet, but still. More TK.

Tom Thompson says

Early in this novel the main character M--- is in a writing class where the prof delivers the old (not untrue) canard that stories need something to "really" happen in them, not simply possess the potential for something to happen. Zurawski tests this truism in a novel composed as the experience of a single consciousness over a period of time. M--- possesses something like an Autism of Pure Feeling, although I don't want that label to make her seem merely strange, when in fact what she's going through will be recognizable to anyone who has tested the limits of imagination and found the boundaries blur. The story stays so deep in M---'s consciousness the people surrounding her -- although she seems more or less like a regularly social college student -- seem not to exist. Or to exist only in her imagination. Which of course they do, although that doesn't settle the question of their "reality" or lack of it. With so many (all?) stories from the publishing industry built to be movie-ready packages of plot, it comes as a relief to read a novel that confronts its own existence as imagination, the active ground between reality and fantasy. What a joy to encounter a novel that is composed of words, and could only exist as words. If a movie were to be made of The Bruise it would have to translate all the activity from words to images; it would have to be something else. It is a brilliant, moving, sympathetic take on the coming-of-age of the imagination as a coming-into-selfhood.

C.A. says

The novel is not a form I enjoy, unless written by a poet, and an EXCELLENT poet at that! Next to Eileen Myles's novel COOL FOR YOU, this is MY VERY FAVORITE NOVEL OF ALL TIME!

There is a marvelous teaser excerpt available here: <http://www.fc2.org/zurawski/bruise/br...> which you should check out!

TELL EVERYONE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BRUISE!

If you're fortunate enough to hear Magdalena Zurawski read from the novel, DON'T MISS THAT READING EVENT! You'll never forget hearing her read from it! The magic THE MUSIC will stay with you for days and days, and you'll read it yourself to keep the magic, keep the music ALIVE!

ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BOOKS!

SHE'S A MASTER FOR OUR GENERATION NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!

You'll see, you'll read it, and agree!

CAConrad

<http://CAConrad.blogspot.com>

Amber says

So far this book has been really interesting. My sister's friend wrote it. It's about a girl and her imagination and what a college-aged introvert goes through. Although I don't believe she would be your "average" 20-something. I do believe this girl had a REAL problem, mentally. She was an introvert to the Nth degree, and she allowed abuse in her life because of this. The writing style is very different. Lots of run-on sentence structures, and I'm thinking the author is foreign since her references to certain things just aren't quite "american". Not that THAT matters but I'm curious to discover more about the main character.... And now that I have FINISHED the book, I can understand it a bit better. The writing style definitely is a nod to the main character's position in life and over-exemplifies her obsessiveness. The part that is hard to understand is the line between reality and imagination. It's a fine line that the reader, as well as M--, has to try to define. But they can't. And that's part of the confusion. It really is a book about "what is real". What IS real? Is "real" different to everyone even when they're in the same situation? M-- doesn't know. She knows what is real in her head. But we only see the occurrences through M--'s eyes and thoughts. Mainly thoughts because there is almost NO dialog in this book. Once I finished it and skimmed over the first chapter again, I began to get a clearer picture. But much of it is still up for debate with me.

It was hard to read at times because she is SO obsessive/compulsive that the writing become monotonous. But I suppose that is how M-- must feel about her life too. I enjoyed the ending and the way she tied it all into the statue of Daphne. A woman who is once a woman and then is turned into a tree. Somehow it makes sense for her to come to some realizations at this point. The main character comes to a resolution about herself. That is all I can ask for in a book. Even if I didn't understand it all--I think that's Ok because M-- didn't understand it all either.

If I were to go BACK and re-read it, I'm sure I would notice more of the metaphorical writing here--I believe it is enormous and would be a great thing if you were writing a paper on a character study. So, I think this is a great body of work, but a bit hard to "chew" through. At times I wanted to give up, but i didn't and I'm glad I didn't. Not for anyone who wants a "fluffy" read!

Jacob Russell says

Review on my blog here

<http://jacobrussellsbarkingdog.blogspot...>

Genevieve says

I love this book! I enjoyed the narrative style, the craft of the writing, the interior struggles of the implied author, and everything else. I just wanted it to be longer.
