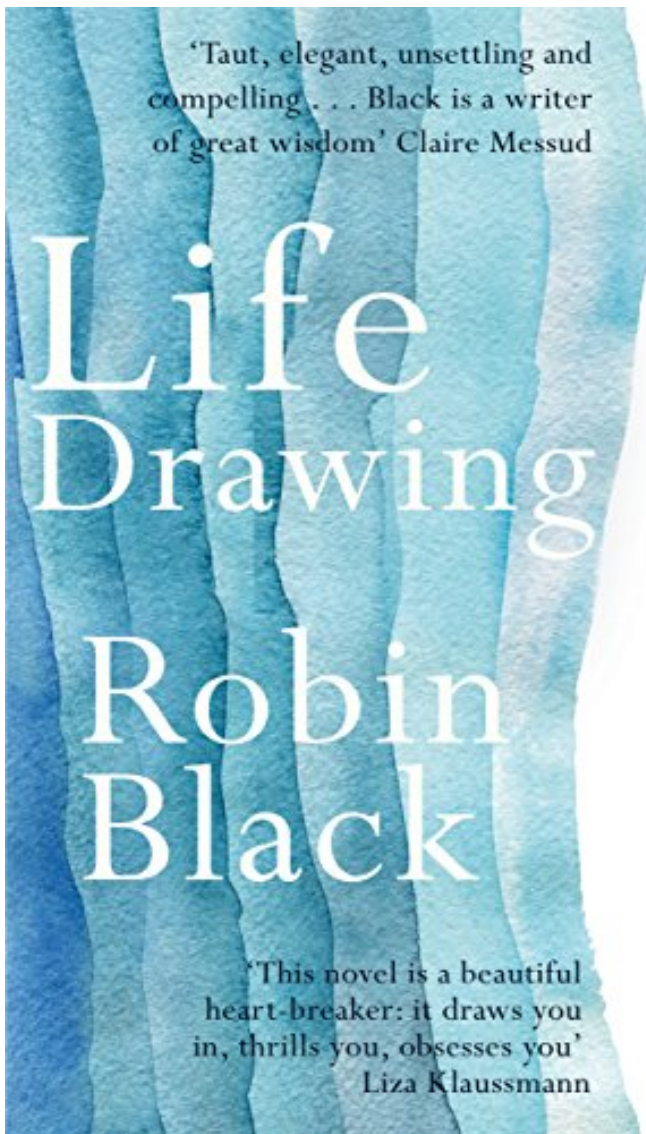


(Ebook pdf) File size: 79.Mb

Life Drawing (English Edition)



Par Robin Black
*Download PDF | ePub | DOC |
audiobook | ebooks

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #280187 dans eBooksPubli le: 2014-04-24Sorti le: 2014-04-24Format: Ebook KindleNombre d'articles: 1

(Ebook pdf) Life Drawing (English Edition)

Par Robin Black : Life Drawing (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life Drawing (English Edition):

 Download

 Read Online

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAugusta and Owen have taken the leap. Leaving the city and its troubling memories behind, they have moved to the country for a solitary life where they can devote their days to each other and their art, where Gus can paint and Owen can write. But the facts of a past betrayal prove harder to escape than urban life. Ancient jealousies and resentments haunt their marriage and their rural paradise. When Alison Hemmings moves into the empty house next door, Gus is drawn out of isolation, despite her own qualms and Owen's suspicions. As the new relationship deepens, the lives of the two households grow more and more tightly intertwined. It will take only one new arrival to intensify emotions to breaking point. Fierce, honest and astonishingly gripping, Life Drawing by Robin Black is a novel as beautiful and unsparing as the human heart. Extrait 1 In the days leading up to my husband Owens death, he visited Alisons house every

afternoon. I would watch him trudge over the small, snowy hill between our two properties, half the time away from me, half the time toward me. And I would wonder what he thought about as he went. Wonder too if Alison watched him from a window of her own, and whether the expression she saw on his face as he approached was very different from the one I saw as he came home. In the weeks that followed his death, I would stare out the same window, the one in our living room, nearest the fireplace, for as much as an hour at a time. Sometimes even longer than that. There was a huge blizzard on the day after his funeral. I watched as nearly three feet of snow fell to the ground, staying all through January, then much of February, picking up a few more inches now and then, drifting against anything in its way, flattening the landscape so the hill wasn't quite so distinct anymore and the trees all looked shorter, their trunks buried deep. It was, I imagine, very beautiful. But imagining and remembering are not quite the same thing. I don't remember thinking it anything but eerie at the time. Owen wasn't buried. I had known practically since the day we met that he wanted to be cremated. We had the sort of courtship though the word would have seemed old-fashioned to us both that included a lot of talk about the meaning of life, the prospect of death. We were young, very young, and undoubtedly neither of us believed, not really, that we would ever die, which made that sort of discussion, often late at night, often just after sex, exhilarating. There was a beauty to be found in the transitory nature of existence, we would say. There was liberation in the acceptance of mortality. Religion was for fools. Religion, along with marriage ceremonies, Thanksgiving dinners, station wagons, procreation, and so on. Burial was a perverse notion if you really thought about it, without the assumptions of the culture blinding you. All those dead bodies, taking up all that land. A peculiar, fetishistic custom. We were to be a cremation couple. It was established early on. Except that we were never going to die. I thought about so many things during those first snowy weeks, including the fact that I too was mortal, that I too would disappear one day, leaving behind such things as panes of glass through which other people could gaze, and cold that they could feel. Snow that had to be shoveled, not just contemplated. Practical issues for which I would no longer be a help or a hindrance. Relationships abandoned like unfinished thoughts. It isn't that no one close to me had ever died before. I was forty-seven years old. Few reach that age unscathed and I hadn't made it past toddlerhood before a brain aneurism took my mother in a matter of hours; then my oldest sister, Charlotte, lost a filthy battle to cancer when she was forty-six; and my father was wandering his solitary, demented way toward a graceless, profoundly unjust kind of death. But Owen was Owen. Owen was me. I was Owen. Anger and all. Betrayals and all. Owen would walk into a room and I might well want to kill him so to speak but at the same time, for much of my life, I couldn't really have told you where I left off and he began. And then he died. Leaving me standing at a window, staring into a landscape as though, well, as though he might just reappear one day. Of course. I was certain about cremation, but in fact a lot of our other opinions had softened over the years. That is what happens. There was a marriage ceremony, eventually. There were attempts to procreate, which led to discovering that Owen could not, so when we bought the minivan we had sworn we never would, it was for hauling my paintings, not children. We never did get religion, either of us, but we started to value the idea of ritual. Still, no celebration of Thanksgiving with its intimations of smallpox-infected blankets and European domination, but on the second Saturday of April we threw a big party, invited old friends out to the country, cooked an insane amount of food, drank too much, and talked appreciatively of pagan celebrations of spring. And back when we were city dwellers, we went through a phase of lighting candles every Wednesday night. Aint nobody's Sabbath but our own, Owen sang the first time that we did, so we played Billie Holiday every Wednesday after that. But softened isn't really the right word. Our opinions didn't soften. More accurately, we reacted to life. And we reacted, time and again, to threats. To us. To us being us. Why did we finally get married? Because I had broken the promise that we had never made. Owen forgave me, or anyway, we moved forward, but we did it with a vow this time. Why did we try to have children? Because there was a period in there when the possibility absurd five years before! that we needed more than just each other, crept into our thoughts. Our fabric seemed to be wearing thin. And why this desire for ritual? To anchor us. I will be here the second Saturday of every April. I will be here every Wednesday night. We never saw it that way, of course. I saw it that way later on. That's what happens when one of you dies. The clock stops. The story ends. You can make some sense of it all. Begin to see patterns. Begin to understand. Maybe you can only begin to understand. Maybe the patterns are only the ones that you impose. But the thing takes on a different shape. It takes on a shape. Or, as one of my teachers used to say, you cannot see a landscape you are in. But you do begin to see it when you step away. This is me, just before my first glimpse of Alison: I am standing, hands on hips, staring at a patch of basil that has gone to seed, peeved at myself for having once again planted so much and once again failed to

harvest it at the right time. It is one of those obscenely hot late July days when you walk outside and think theres been some kind of terrible mistake, because weather cant really be meant to be this oppressive. My hair, long and still close to entirely black, is tightly braided, pulled off my neck, clipped straight on the back of my head, so if the sun werent too high for shadows, mine would look like I had feathers sticking up. I am wearing just a bra and shorts. My body, at forty-seven, is tan from gardening, mowing, walking. And I am strong, stronger than I ever was before I became a country dweller. My face? My face is broad, my Russian forebears lending me their wide, prominent cheekbones, their heavy square jaws. And my eyes, which are dark blue, are bluer still under thick black brows. If I am beautiful, I am not classically so; but at forty-seven

I think I am beautiful. More than I ever did at twenty, at thirty. By this time I mind mirrors less. If I am honest, I will say I sometimes seek them out. I look at my face, at my body, with a kind of clinical detachment into which a strand of admiration inserts itself. I always wanted to be powerful. In this decade, finally, I look powerful. I feel powerful. And I feel alone. Standing there in front of the house, knowing the mail has already arrived so there wont be anyone close again for another twenty-four hours, I am alone in a way that is familiar to me by this day, but that I never experienced until nearly three years before, when we moved to this otherworldly place. It is a kind of solitude that continues even when Owen is standing beside me. It is a solitude that includes him. We are apart from the rest of the world. We are invisible to it. We have become by this time a single being, a being that argues with itself from time to time as a knee may ache, as a tired back might refuse to cooperate, so you say, Oh for Gods sake, could you stop being so difficult; but you are saying it to a part of yourself. While I am peering down at herbs, Owen is in the barn, writing or trying to. For months now, he has been that weary back that wont cooperate. He imagines that his prose has wandered to a distant acre of our universe, curled up and died. He still spends days inside the barn but he comes out looking grieved. I feel this ache all the time, though my own work is going well, and it is probably this that has made me wander out into the garden, into the day, so horribly hot. I am restless for him. I am restless as part of him. The basil I am eyeing with such irritation is rampant. The air smells of it and of lavender. Owen and I are enthusiastic, ignorant gardeners. We are inadequately attentive. We are perpetually amazed. We are innocents to nature, stupefied by its every trick. Even as I am annoyed with myself for letting the basil go to seed, I am also in awe of it. Magic! These beings that continue to grow, that know what to do next, and next, and next. Halloooo . . . I am not alone. First, a British voice. Then a small woman in a violet sundress. With a mop of gray curls. Alison Hemmings, she says, her hand outstretched long before I might reach it. Ive just rented the house across the way. Im so sorry if Im here at a bad time . . . A smiling face. Round cheeks. A firm grip. Startling light gray eyes, almost silver to match her hair. No one during our time has lived in the house next door, the only building within sight of our home. I have stopped thinking of it as having an interior. It has become solely a shabbily beautiful faade. Gus Edelman, I say. Augusta, really, but Gus. Welcome. My voice is riddled with question marks; and then I remember that I am only in a bra. Folded in among the thoughts of a neighbor is the thought that the bra, which is purple, may pass for a bathing suit; then the thought that it serves her right, barging in though she hasnt really barged in. Then the thought that its too late to say anything about my bra. We have absorbed the fact of it already. We have moved on. Its so lovely here, isnt it? she says. Yes, it is, I say. Can I help you out in some way? It isnt quite right, I know. I sound like a salesperson at the end of the day hurrying to close the store. She tells me she is leasing the place. At least through September, she says. Maybe beyond. Depending on how things go. I hadnt realized they were renting it out. The owners, a young couple who inherited the property from distant family, have only ever visited once, maybe eighteen months before. They walked the land, several acres, had seemed to be arguing and then had driven off, never to return. You havent seen the advert? she asks. Because youre in it. You and . . . is it your husband? I shake my head, frowning. I had no idea . . . On one of those rental sites. One of the features is the couple who lives next door. The writer. The painter. Oh. How strange. They never mentioned . . . She smiles. I promise not to be a pest, but it did make the setting more appealing. Im actually a painter too. And somehow the notion of a creative enclave . . . plus I figured if the ad mentioned you, you probably werent axe murderers. *Revue de presse* The simple facts Guss relationship with Owen, her love affair with Billare, of course, not simple. [Robin] Black is a writer of great wisdom, and illuminates, without undue emphasis, the flickering complexity of individual histories. . . . The atmosphere of their love, of this house, is one of the most powerful aspects of Blacks unsettling and compelling novel. . . . [Her] taut, elegant prose is both effective and affecting. . . . *Life Drawings* is at once quiet and memorable. This makes it far from fashionable, and all the more to be applauded. Its author pursues real and vital questions. Astringent and wise, Black is not afraid to discomfit her readers. This novel, like life, is uneasy:

what a relief. Claire Messud, *The Guardian* (UK) The page-turning suspense of Robin Black's novel comes from her beautiful, honest portrait of a marriage, of a life. . . . A novel of consequence, and a stunning one. *San Francisco Chronicle* Gripping . . . The power of this story is how it illuminates, in utterly compelling detail, the complex give-and-take of a couple trying to save their marriage once betrayal has entered the picture. *O: The Oprah Magazine* Stunning . . . [Black] is that rare writer whose gift for prose is matched by her mastery of the other elements that make a great novel. . . . Black takes us well beneath the surface of her much-told midlife story, often-analyzed marital crisis, traditional setup for a classic denouement making out of all of it a reading experience that is breathtaking, shiny and new. . . . Black's psychological prowess and incisive observations lend an edge even to seemingly straightforward scenes. . . . Truly a brilliant, novel novel. *Chicago Tribune* Races to its resolution . . . Black's writing is clear and direct [with] observations about the way people relate that resonate well after the book is closed. *The New York Times Book Life Drawing* is a tour de force, a taut, suspenseful story so beautifully written that it took my breath away. Christina Baker Kline, author of *Orphan Train* A thriller and a love story . . . a novel that will make you want to hug the person you love and never let go. *NPR* Explosive . . . impressive . . . a fine-brushed study of marriages light and shadow . . . There's truth to be found in her portrait of long-lived love, its outlines painfully vulnerable to the perspectives of others. *Vogue* [A] nuanced debut. *People* An examination of the fragility of human relationships and desires, and one of the more powerfully written books so far this year. *The Roanoke Times* Suffused with a remarkably sustained emotional intensity . . . Every intimate contour of the couple's relationship is mapped by Black with devastating accuracy. Full of insight into the fragility of marriage, this is a memorable read. *The Sunday Times (London)* A gorgeously written portrait of the intimate workings of a long-term relationship. *Good Housekeeping (UK)* Fine-tuned and exactly observed . . . With such well-rounded characters and a highwire level of suspense, the novel builds to a devastating resolution. *The Daily Mail (UK)* Black's command of the story carries us swiftly through ever more dangerous rapids. . . . She captures the various pains and pleasures of love, and how betrayal distorts and damages, with superb subtlety. *BBC* A brutal yet tender look at marriage and creative partnership that hums with thriller-like tension . . . It might be the nearest thing to a perfect novel that I have ever read. *The Bookseller (UK)* Black's characters are three-dimensional, and her depiction of their relationships, particularly between the two women, is masterly. An astute inquiry into relationships and betrayal, this novel is nerve-wracking yet irresistibly readable. *Publishers Weekly* In her debut novel, Black skillfully conveys the way a long-term relationship can so easily shift between love and affection and a petty tallying of old hurts and disappointments. In addition, she delivers a hair-raising portrait of a poisonous female friendship. Full of emotional turmoil yet subtle in its effect, this elegant novel is sure to draw in both women's-fiction and literary-fiction fans. *Booklist* Gus is known for her precision as an artist, and this quality is evident in her narration; her clear and efficient voice undergirds the novel's lack of melodrama. The focus on friendship and family will appeal to fans of women's fiction, while the role creativity plays in the lives of the characters will attract readers of literary fiction. *Library Journal* A riveting story about the corrosive effects of betrayal, and a beautifully written meditation on the delicate balance of intimacy and isolation within a long marriage. Alice Sebold *Life Drawing* is a magnificent literary achievement with a combination of wisdom and velocity that distinguishes it from any other novel I have read. An intimate revelation of love's unlikely endurance and of art's role in reviving and redeeming the past, it is also a heart-stopping, jaw-dropping thriller. Black's characters, rendered in her signature breathtaking prose, are complex and unfamiliar, yet the joys and sorrows of their days feel universal. I deeply loved Owen and Gus, the books married protagonists, and I was pulling for them from the first page to the last. *Life Drawing* will fill your head and heart with a world of real-life ghosts, of careening desire and creative inspiration, and of some inescapable truths about human fragility. Novels are only very rarely this insightful or this gripping, and *Life Drawing*, which is both, will leave you changed. Karen Russell *Robin Black's Life Drawing* is a rare and exquisitely wrought portrait of two people equally devoted to their marriage and their art, a couple striving to make sense of a dilemma in which fidelity, honesty, kindness, and betrayal all make claims. The prose is admirably exacting, tender, wise, and elegant and the story left this reader's heart aching. David Wroblewski A wise, finely observed portrait of the workings of a marriage, as compelling as it is convincing. *Life Drawing* is intelligent, clear-eyed storytelling, exploring love and jealousy and the mistakes we make in their name. M. L. Stedman