



Medium Hero

Korby Lenker

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Korby Lenker's first book features 27 stories culled from his 15 years as a solo touring indie artist. The stories are as colorful as his titles suggest-- "Rat's Dude", "Manboy and the Mafia Table", "Catlady"-- and flourish under his descriptive, empathetic pen. From a romantic-encounter-turned-family-crisis, to a humorous eulogy for his recently deceased piano teacher, to an unlikely visit with a convicted felon in a California desert, he has distilled an unusual life into a few potent vignettes that you will read more than once.

Up to this point in his life, Korby has been a professional singer-songwriter, traveling around by himself, playing songs for small audiences, selling CDs out of a suitcase. Occasionally there have been moments where the light shined particularly bright, but mostly it's just been him and a guitar, making music in living rooms and clubs and the occasional concert hall.

He has met a lot of people, most of whom leaned—like him—toward the fringe side of the social spectrum. He's written some of them into stories—hunched over a laptop in the backseat of a touring van, or in the lobby of a Best Western, or on the cracked vinyl couch of a rock club's green room, poking a keyboard with a pair of sweaty pointer fingers.

Medium Hero Details

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Author : Korby Lenker

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From Reader Review Medium Hero for online ebook

Karolyn Sherwood says

MEDIUM HERO, by Korby Lenker, is a book you want to hug. It's 215 pages long, but they're tiny pages. Seriously, the book is about four inches by seven inches. It begs to be read in a single afternoon. Comprised of 27 short stories, Medium Hero is a raw, intimate, apparently-fictionalized accounting of a young man's life, though it feels a bit like you've picked up his private journal. Lenker, according to the book jacket, is a musician of some acclaim who has traveled around the country performing and observing life, and turned those observations into funny and/or poignant stories.

With a deep online presence, Lenker seems to be a Renaissance kind of guy. He sings, he writes, he reads. I imagine he can make cocktails and a surprisingly delicious pasta dish in a pinch, if need be. In this collection, he has turned intimate situations into universal stories that resonate with a broader audience. Reading it, I felt I knew the characters personally—or someone quite similar. And that is a true talent for a writer.

Four Heartfelt Stars

Carol says

This is a collection of 27 short stories (some very short). I did like the writing, the titles are very clever, and many refer to Nashville and actual locations. But for me many of these started out well enough but ended rather abruptly and didn't stick with me.

I noted in other reviews that this author is also a singer/songwriter/storyteller and seems to really engage those who have met him--perhaps I'd have to meet him to appreciate him more.

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

Jim Esten says

A delightful bunch of short stories from a guy who is equally delightful on stage as an indie folk singer and guitarist.

Rachel says

I feel like I don't possess the right vocabulary to adequately describe this lovely book. I just really, really liked it lol. I picked up a copy because I was familiar with Korby Lenker's music, it was autographed, and if you emailed him a copy of your receipt he would send you a little personalized song. Isn't it great going into a book with no expectations and being completely blown away? The stories on the surface are about rather mundane things and events. There's a sense of familiarity in each, and yet they push slightly past that into

something deep and beautiful (okay, maybe not "Peeing My Pants At The Hipster Coffee Shop" but the others definitely). I think I cried twice. So much of that can be attributed to his wonderful writing style. I'm a mediocre writer on my best days. This will be added to my list of books to study to try and improve my skills. I now look forward to when he posts stuff online and I can't wait for more books.

Jack Leitmeyer says

After attending a show by this terrific singer-songwriter, I decided to purchase his book- for no reason other than the book cover matched his CD cover, I figured a matching pair. This wonderful collection of 27 short stories was a pleasant surprise. Some sad, some funny, some thought provoking- each story presents a colorful perspective of a unique point in time in the author's life. I had a hard time putting it down, always wondering where the next story would take me. The title story, along with "Pro Wrestling", "Bird Crush", "Bus Stop" and "Peeing My Pants" were a few of my favorites- all very captivating, each for a different reason. I have never read a book twice, but this will be an exception- the next time I want to slow down to take in every beautifully crafted word.

Donna says

What an exquisite little book. I'm quite partial to books written by and about musicians, and this one didn't disappoint. Korby Lenker is a talented musician, and like many other musicians, he is talented in other arts as well, apparently. His writing style is gorgeous; his stories are quirky and beautiful, some are laugh-out-loud funny in places, some call out for a nearby box of tissues, and I finished this book in one sitting. Some, or even all, of the stories I will go back and read again for the sheer pleasure of feeling the words curling and unfolding in my head. A sweet surprise.

Audrey says

Quirky.

Patricia says

I laughed out loud (or maybe it was a guffaw) when I read the title story, although I'm not sure that was appropriate considering what it was about. No matter. That is what Korby Lenker does to you with his stories. They are clever, surprising, fresh and fun. I laughed a lot.

Medium Hero is a collection of twenty-seven short stories that are actually short, and not drawn out over fifty or one hundred pages as are some other books of stories. There is something about the format that requires a special talent in order to make so much happen with so few words. Korby is a natural. Perhaps it is part of his talent for writing his music. Even his songs are short stories. ("Book Nerd" is a favorite of mine.)

Thank you Turner Publishing for this gem.

Liz says

A cheerful (mostly) thoughtful book of musings and observations.

Jerry Oliver says

My sister down in Florida gave me this book for Christmas. She thought I would appreciate it. Although I could be Korby Lenker's father she is right. I can relate. My indie music career began when I was the age Korby is now so we are in similar trajectories but with the publication of this book I'm sure Korby will have an easier time paying the rent than me. We really need to do a show together since we both live and work in Nashville. These stories are great and I feel like I've been there... as a matter of fact I've tread much of the same ground. Anyway, if you're a searcher, a musician, or just love good stories you should give this debut a try. Thanks Korby, I'm looking for you around town.

Michael S says

This is a great collection of short stories. They play beautifully on the line between fiction and essay making you believe that each one really happened, or could have happened, to a real person, and you care about that person even as he makes terrible choices. The stories move back and forth between playful and serious, first person and third, sad and funny. They are well-crafted. They stand alone, and they work together. I read the entire book straight through and enjoyed every minute of it. Keep writing, Korby.

Rebecca says

(3.5) Lenker is an indie musician, and the 27 stories in his debut collection are about the everyday challenges of being on the road versus trying to pay the bills. “Somewhere along the way, something caught your eye – some small detail – and you’ve spun it like a pizza dough into some universal truth about the nature of being alive in the twenty-first century,” one character says, and that’s what Lenker does here, in cutely tongue-in-cheek fashion. Many of the autobiographical stories feature “Korby” or “Simon” as fictional stand-ins, and recurring locations include his hometown of Twin Falls, Idaho and his adopted home of Nashville, Tennessee.

As the title suggests, Lenker has no illusions about being famous, successful or out of the ordinary in any way. He’s only a “medium hero,” if that. Most of the time he just tries to be a decent guy, the kind who prays for family members in distress even though he’s not sure he believes in God. “On my gravestone, please inscribe the phrase ‘he meant well’ in arial font. Bold type.” My favorites were the title story and “Angel’s Envy,” in which the narrator expounds a Christian–Buddhist doctrine of denying the ego. Lest that sound too serious, though, there are also stories about peeing his pants and the perils of being a metrosexual.

I’d recommend this to fans of *Quality Snacks* by Andy Mozina and *White Man’s Problems* by Kevin Morris.

Favorite passage: (documenting disparate thoughts)

I should write a book about spiritual depravity in modern life.

That girl at the coffee shop is hot.

Is it too early to watch *30 Rock* on Hulu?

I haven't written a good song in three months.

I need to recycle more.

Cass says

I would echo Michael S.'s review. I wanted to just sit and reread it all over again.

Carol says

This book is about my life - and yours. It's about all those oddball moments of happiness, despair and wonderfulness that bump into our lives. I thoroughly enjoyed the stories and will reread this many times. Very nicely written!

Veronica says

Funny, delightful, thought-provoking, insightful. It will make you laugh; it may make you cry. It will leave you wanting more. Great job Korby! Book nerds unite!
