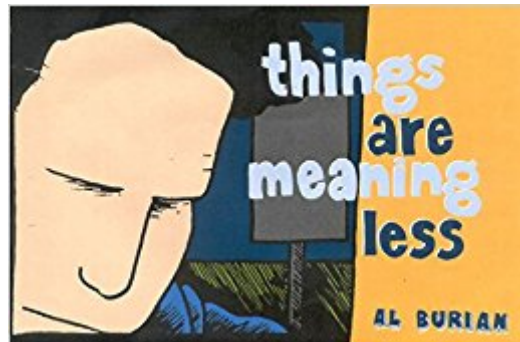




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Things Are Meaning Less (Burn Collector)



Synopsis

Opening with a telling quote from punk band Black Flag ("Drink black coffee/drink black coffee/drink black coffee/and stare at the wall"), *Things Are Meaning Less* is a tough, funny, heartbreaking look at young, disillusioned American life. You might know Al from his zines *Burn Collector* and *Natural Disasters* or from the band Milemarker or his so-true-it-kicks-your-face-off column in *Punk Planet*. This, however, is Al's collection of comics published in the late '90s by designer and fellow zinester Ian Lyman. From Portland to Providence, Al patrols his world with a dark, stoic humor. He's a Saul Bellow-ian everyman, up against the wall, suffering the blows, looking for love and loving the metal. Like Al's latest issue of *Burn Collector*, the comic-heavy #14, the drawing here is simple but it's the kind of simple that doesn't come with beginner's luck. The stuff here is the result of years of fighting and trouble-making, of mistakes made and a life scratched out among the sticks and stones. As says Al, "These are things drawn on napkins in airports, xeroxed illicitly during work." So goes the work and world of Al Burian.

Book Information

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Genres > Punk

Customer Reviews

"As a storyteller, Burian makes the trivial engaging. It must be really cool just to sit with this guy and listen to him talk." *Things Are Meaning Less* showed up unexpectedly in my mailbox one day. It's rather apt; appearing without warning, making an impression, and then slipping back off into the night could be describing the contents of the book itself as well as

the actual collection. Every time I fear for the future of zines and mini-comics, this compendium of material from that scene reminds me that there's still a lot of good work being created. You've just got to find it or have it find you." **•Read About Comics**"Is Al Burian a postmodern superhero? Probably not, but one thing is for certain: he's thoroughly straight with you. This collection of comics/stories retains all of the virtues and flaws of its source material: life as a dude in his early twenties. I can certainly relate to this one right now, as I think most of our listeners/readers might, but even I can admit (as Al does in a brief postscript) that this might seem naive to a reader some years older. It's not exactly the most comics-friendly text in history, but he pulls it off. Still, whatever the reader thinks of Al Burian's musings, it's hard not to be impressed by the passion bleeding through his sketches even if they were just scrawled on napkins in the day-to-day." **•Indie Street**"This work stands as a shining example of what can be accomplished by harnessing the considerable powers of coffee, alcohol, and existential ennui into creative projects." **•Profane Existence, #47**"An interesting little book. First comes the struggle to define exactly what it is; certainly it's a memoir, as Burian guides the reader through his travels and angst. But as to whether or not it is a graphic novel or an illustrated prose book, that's an entirely different question. The book combines both in heavy doses; many sections are carried strictly by Burian's cartooning, yet perhaps even more of the book is handwritten prose accompanying the pictures or even pushing them away completely. The confessional nature of the stories Burian tells here reminded me very much of the work of Jeffrey Brown, though I actually liked Burian's work better. Brown's work tends to be annoying and whiny, but Burian does a very good job of putting his problems on the page and not waving his dick at them. You see him, you see what's wrong with him, and he doesn't need to tell you just how big of a fuck up he might be at that moment. I really respected the way he handled those moments. I've become fairly inured to confessionals over the last few years, so it takes a lot for something in the genre to light me on fire. But if you like cartoonists like Brown, then I have no hesitations about recommending Burian for a reading experience you'd enjoy." **•Marc Mason, Comics Waiting Room**

Al Burian is the author of two collections of his zines: *Burn Collector* and *Natural Disaster*.

Al Burian is known by many for both his personal zine *Burn Collector* and his band *Milemarker*. What some people might not know is that Al is also a talented comix artist. Between 1997 and 1998,

he drew a series of comix and Ian Lynam published them in several books under the Migraine Comics label. Recently, Microcosm Publishing released this perfectbound paperback compilation of all of the comix Al did during this time period. I have a couple of the original books, so I had seen most of these, but it was still nice to sit down and read this cover-to-cover. Al wrote these while living in Portland, OR, Providence, RI, and Chapel Hill, NC. Each little story more or less reflects how Al was feeling while he was living in each of these places. Reading these after already being familiar with Al's writing is a treat, as it adds a whole new (visual) dimension to Al's obsessive self-examination and his ruminations on the people he interacts with and the places he finds himself in. Fans of Burn Collector should enjoy this book, as will most folks with a penchant for autobiographical comix.

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