



See A Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody

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The long-awaited, full-force autobiography of American punk music hero, Bob Mould

Bob Mould stormed into America's punk rock scene in 1979, when clubs across the country were filling with kids dressed in black leather and torn denim, packing in to see bands like the Ramones, Black Flag, and the Dead Kennedys. Hardcore punk was a riot of jackhammer rhythms, blistering tempos, and bottomless aggression. And at its center, a new band out of Minnesota called Hüsker Dü was bashing out songs and touring the country on no money, driven by the inspiration of guitarist and vocalist Bob Mould. Their music roused a generation.

From the start, Mould wanted to make Hüsker Dü the greatest band in the world - faster and louder than the hardcore standard, but with melody and emotional depth. In SEE A LITTLE LIGHT, Mould finally tells the story of how the anger and passion of the early hardcore scene blended with his own formidable musicianship and irrepressible drive to produce some of the most important and influential music of the late 20th century.

For the first time, Mould tells his dramatic story, opening up to describe life inside that furnace and beyond. Revealing the struggles with his own homosexuality, the complexities of his intimate relationships, as well as his own drug and alcohol addiction, Mould takes us on a whirlwind ride through achieving sobriety, his acclaimed solo career, creating the hit band Sugar, a surprising detour into the world of pro wrestling, and most of all, finally finding his place in the world.

A classic story of individualism and persistence, Mould's autobiography is an open account of the rich history of one of the most revered figures of punk, whose driving force altered the shape of American music.

See A Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody Details

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Scott says

One big self-congratulating laundry list with hardly any (meaningful) details. If I had been a bigger fan, I would have been disappointed.

RandomAnthony says

Bob Mould's *See A Little Light* is a substantial, revelatory memoir. I can say, without hyperbole, I hope, that the author is one of my most enduring music heroes. At sixteen I stumbled upon *Flip Your Wig* and I've followed his career ever since. Mr. Mould might be the only artist I've seen in concert so many times I've lost track of the total. His *Workbook* tour performance at Chicago's Metro ranks as one of the best concerts I've ever seen.

Bob Mould was important to me, I think, because he appeared to be a plain, homely intense guy from the upper Midwest but played guitar with awe-inspiring intensity and wrote songs that never, ever let up. Husker Du was a guy's band, and Mould's songs in particular (I was very much a Mould guy, although I didn't hate most of Grant Hart's songs) articulated the rage, hope and anger I couldn't put to words or music. He was also smarter than most of the other musicians from the SST and DIY cultures. "Real World", off *Metal Circus*, for example, was the first hardcore song I ever heard with the balls to take punk culture to task. But he wrote personal songs, mostly, and I analyzed them like scripture. Bob Mould was fear and promise and honesty and loud enough to wash away the pain. If Morrissey was the clever, refined, British "heads" side of the coin, Bob Mould was its intense, American, in your face "tails" companion. I've always admired his integrity. And now, with Mr. Mould past fifty, and me past forty, I find myself listening and reading Bob Mould's work in a different light, one more authentic because he's embraced change, struggled to grow, and stared in the mirror with an eye on finding out exactly who he is behind all those emotions. On that level I've needed Mr. Mould more than ever and read this book at the perfect time.

If you're reading *See A Little Light* for Husker years dirt, well, you'll find some, but this book is so much more than a "and then we fought in the van and snorted cocaine off a groupie's tits" cliché. Mould skims over topics (e.g. *Zen Arcade*) of which a reader might expect a chapter. He speaks naturally, conversationally, about his early small town upstate years and the move to Minneapolis that preceded the formation of Husker Du. He outlines, without growing overbearing, his desire for safety and belonging in the context of the underground scene in connection with his difficulty trusting people and need for control over his musical direction and band financial business. Many names mentioned don't come off well; if he can, ten bucks Grant Hart sues the *fuck* out of the book's publisher. But Mould embraces his own negative behavior and seems to understand how his actions could lead people to think he's an asshole. I'm sure others have their stories, but this is his, and the Husker Du years function as a prelude for the self-discovery that makes up the book's soul. His exploration of his sexuality, relationships, and the way he needed to move away from others' expectations to find his own path, if you will, makes this book *way* more than just a bunch of tour stories. *See a Little Light* is a close cousin to Mark Oliver Everett's *Things the Grandchildren Should Know* and a distant relation to the work of Henry Rollins.

Fanboy observations that don't fit naturally in the review:

Mould marks *Flip Your Wig* as his favorite Husker Du record. I can't pick a favorite but his dismissal of *Workbook* bothered me. That's a great record. Same with *Black Sheets of Rain*, although I can understand the how some might see that album as overproduced.

I forgot about Sugar's commercial success. I regret never seeing them live; the night they played the Aragon I moved apartments, and their 2.5 album stretch coincided with my first teaching years. Also, I've never paid that much attention to *Beaster*, but Mould places it as a Sugar centerpiece, so I'm re-checking it out.

I also didn't know Mould was involved, however slightly he describes his involvement, with Vic Chesnutt's *About To Choke*. That's a great album, an underrated American classic.

Mould's foray into writing professional wrestling storylines is way cool and unexpected. You don't hear about rock stars' other careers, mid-stream, very often.

Ok, someone I know (I don't want to mention his name here without his permission, maybe I'll check with him and revise this part of the review later) recently listed, as part of a review, his favorite Smiths/Morrissey songs. I'm going to do the same here with Bob

Mould/Sugar/Husker Du, focusing exclusively on the Mould material. I've been listening to these tracks over and over again lately. I wouldn't be the same without them. Thank you, Mr. Mould, for the music that made up such a big part of my life.

1. Chartered Trips
2. Perfect Example
3. Whatever
4. Celebrated Summer
5. Sacrifice/Let There Be Peace (This is an important Bob Mould song; in some ways it's the distillation of many of his themes.)
6. Real World
7. Flip Your Wig (This seems to be more of a Mould/Hart song, but I'm including it, same with New Day Rising)
8. Hardly Getting Over It
9. Egooverride
10. New Day Rising
11. The Act We Act
12. Wishing Well
13. The Last Night
14. Explode and Make Up
15. Up in the Air
16. 59 Times the Pain
17. If I Can't Change Your Mind
18. No Reservations
19. Plans I Make
20. Poison Years

Dave Hill says

Come for the punk rock stories. Stay for the big hairy gay dudes.

Jason Lewis says

I should know better, I really should. In fact I do know better. Any time you dig too deeply into the life of one of your heroes you are bound for disappointment-burg. No one can really live up to the pedestal you put them on over 20 -plus years of fandom. And also the nature of writing about music and music personalities is one that begs for distortion and and bloviation. And Bob Mould's autobiography does not, unfortunately, escape these pitfalls.

I blew through the first half of the book, staying up late, reveling in learning about phases of Mould's career that I've long wanted to know all about. And the book promised to deal with aspects of that career (the breakup of Husker Du specifically) in never-before-told fashion. And maybe that's the case, but every time the book reached one of these moments the prose itself seemed to become vaseline smeared and the events as related didn't seem to add up. But at that point, I didn't really care. I'm an astute reader, I can read between the lines, fill in the blanks. I was pretty comfortable with the idea that this bio was going to paint Mould in the best possible light and for the most part he was unwavering in his cold, hard eye for the past and its inhabitants. I admired the character being developed in that first half of the book.

It wasn't until about 2/3 the way through that I started to waver in my enthusiasm. What I started to see was a man who was completely insecure, and had no idea how to have any kind of give and take relationship with another person, not his band mates, not his partners, not his business associates, not his family. And to Mould's credit, he recognizes this and the exploration of these character flaws is central to the movement of the book. The only problem is, as the book rounds the corner to the home stretch he's a man who continues to make the same mistakes over and over again, continues to roadkill the people in his life and continues to be clueless as to his own culpability in the carnage he leaves behind.

But what really set me off my feed in this narrative was the tone Mould took on about his work in the Sugar and post-Sugar years. Sugar was a very successful band, a success I do not begrudge Mould or the band, but in his description of this time Mould seems to become spiteful about his career prior to Sugar and there seems to be an agenda in the writing. And after Sugar he has money and it seems to make it even easier for him to obfuscate the problems he has in dealing with the people around him.

So ultimately, I had to stop reading. All of this unhealthy, blind emotional death dealing was just too depressing for me. I still very much admire Mould and very much appreciate his music. I didn't expect him to be perfect and I applaud him for making an effort toward an honest, uncompromising biography. In the end (or about 20% of the way to the end) I just lost interest in seeing him make the same mistakes over and over. You want your heroes to be perfect, or at least show you the way toward something you want in your life. When I realized I wasn't going to find anything like that here, I cut my losses.

Jodi says

Reading Bob Mould's autobiography, *See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody*, is a little like indulging someone you adore as they tell you about a dream they had about you last night. You listen patiently as they meander through the purple unicorns and how Michael Cera was Bruce from accounting

until they get to the good stuff about you.

Of course, you would not put up with such bullshit unless it was someone you really, really adored. Because seriously? Life is too short for such meandering. The same could be said for Mould's book. There's a lot of meandering to get the good stuff. But when you get to the good stuff, it's so good you forgive him for the exhausting and endless paragraphs about playing some place somewhere with some people whose names you will not remember.

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Steven Matview says

Bob Mould started out so starry-eyed, full of hope and wonder.

At an early age, he realized he had an ear for music and a love of performing. But little did anyone know that this kid from rural New York would grow up to discover the Ramones, leave his dysfunctional family behind for the greener pastures of St. Paul, Minnesota, and front one of the best punk rock bands of all time - Hüsker Dü.

"See A Little Light" is Mould's own recounting of his growth from that kid into a hardcore frontman, with about half the book detailing the rise and crash/burn of Hüsker Dü. The second finds him as an indie rock darling, a singer/songwriter and sometimes, even a DJ.

There's sex. There's addiction. There's missed opportunities, bad record deals and even professional wrestling.

It's a rock n roll story, what did you expect?

As songwriter, Mould has few peers. When it comes to prose... the writing can be a bit dry at times, especially in the latter half that lacks the Hüsker Dü drama.

So without his usual musician tricks – a good hook here, an interesting vocal melody there – a lot of the fun in reading this is watching him become the ultimate curmudgeon, offering up frank portrayals of Twin Cities punk band the Replacements, REM frontman Michael Stipe and his various ex-bandmates, among others.

I appreciate the candor he displays when painting one-time friends in a negative light (i.e. Grant Hart). Thankfully, he doesn't paint himself as a saint either. Though I'm pretty sure he feels he's better than everyone, but that's the bravado that's led to so many great songs over the years.

"We all live and die for the stories and the sounds. Sometimes we find them, other times they just happen upon us. We don't always get a choice."

Bonus! Here's me and Bob:

kit: [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#)

"You're gonna make it after all."

Mark Desrosiers says

There's something to be said for remaining an ambiguous mystery. Any time you open your yawp to digress upon personal discovery and your "roots" you're risking the hearts of countless fans and critics, who are liable to turn sour and recontextualize your entire body of song after you've apparently gone simple. So goes it with Bob Mould's memoir, where a gay man, a major musical talent, finds himself stumbling down the same tedious paths of self-discovery that countless mere humans have traveled, with similar snooze-inducing results.

It goes without saying that the most riveting moments in this book focus on his Hüsker Dü years – though he's bizarrely dismissive of Greg Norton and very nasty to Grant Hart, who wrote damn near half of their classics. (Plus: what publisher would bother advancing money to Grant for his side of the story?) The memoir's highlight is its darkest moment – the end of Hüsker Dü on January 26, 1988, around the kitchen table at Grant's parents' house in South St. Paul, with Grant's mom driving in the final nail: "I think if you just played on weekends and weren't working so hard..." And yes, it was Bob that walked out on what he portrays as two desperate men hoping for more money. (Though I love the detail where, even after storming out in a huff, he has to drive back down to Red Wing to grab his stuff from Greg.)

From there, we're off to his various solo careers, his WCW scenario-writing job (which is surprisingly the duller chapter by far – takes something special to bore us with pro-wrestling anecdotes), his coming-out struggles, the bear community, etc. At one point he's strongarmed by his therapist into believing that he was sexually abused as an infant, and after I regained use of my eyes (which had rolled into the back of my head), he goes on to theorize that this incident-he-doesn't-remember has much to do with everything... I mean, here he is, a fiftysomething man (!), still blathering on about how his parents were fucked up, an abusive drunken father (though it's clear this same father bought him guitars, drove Hüsker Dü tour vans out to St. Paul for him, encouraged him to blast tunes in his room etc.). I just don't get it – it's like Bob's been trapped by "therapy-talk" and even when his yesterdays outnumber his tomorrows he can't find a self that walks outside of all the catharsis. Throughout the book he tells us he's "journaling" – in parks, on the bus, you've seen this same shit from Henry Rollins – yet he doesn't give any indication that he reads books or has any intellectual influences whatsoever. In other words, he underscores the biggest danger of the "journaling" mindset: you end up becoming a solipsistic, autofellating mushbrain.

There is one element of unintentional hilarity to be found here though. His earliest sexual crush was his barber: "I can look back and say, 'Yeah the barber was sexy, his crotch used to touch my forearm while he was cutting my hair,' and I still remember the smell of the shop." Then flip forward to the grid of twelve school photos after page 116, all terrible haircuts. Even better is the twelfth photo in that grid, where he's pimped out (quite accurately!) as Gene Simmons for his high school KISS tribute band -- 'cause he totally took on the humorless bean-counting Gene Simmons role in Hüsker Dü (though Bob reversed Gene's straight-edge groupie-hunting, as he was a drunken trucker-speed monogamist).

Still, while reading this I constantly had to slap on side two of Zen Arcade, just to blow all his "personal growth" and psychobabble out of my skull, and to remind myself that he was once a mysterious and strange talent, a rupture in the serene veil of music. This is a disappointing memoir, and I daresay his current robust physical and mental state may have diminished any future musical efforts to fan-cult oblivion.

SarahJayn says

I just finished reading Bob Mould's autobiography *See a Little Light*. I started it a long time ago, but his alcoholic childhood and closeted adolescence really bummed me out, so I had to put it down.

I'm glad I picked it back up.

I was interested in reading the book because I love the band Hüsker Dü. I first heard Hüsker Dü three years after they stopped making music together. I was sitting on the floor at a local record store. I remember it really well because I was wearing a skirt and my eleven-year-old thighs were all sore from riding my bike to the store. That banana seat was a real challenge sometimes. Anyway, the floor was feeling awesome as I was rooting through milk crates stuffed full of "forgottens." Forgottens were records and cassettes that hadn't sold in a long time, and were put away under the tables as sort of a bargain bin. No one ever saw them - it was a marketing strategy gone way wrong. The store owner put a sign on the crates acknowledging his failure while still not correcting it. Personally, I think that it was always a strategy on his part to be able to hoard these records while still appearing to be making an attempt to sell them. Most people that came into the store were not as young as me - I was the only little kid that wasn't wandering around with an older sibling. I was most often alone when I went there, so there was no one to stop me from getting on the floor and spending hours digging through the forgottens. There was no organization to the forgottens, and - mostly - it was just an area where scummy teenagers would try to slip records they'd peeled off the price tags from to get for a cheaper price. It never worked, though, because the store owner knew every record in the place. Anyway, I picked up a copy of *Candy Apple Grey* and asked the store owner to play it for me. He was messing around with his dogs - he was always messing around with those dogs when no one was there. He shuffled over to me, muttered some sarcastic question about whether or not I had parents, and then took the record from my hand. I remember he looked at the album cover, asked me if I had ever heard the band before, and then gave me his hand to help me off the floor. I could always tell if he thought the music I was interested in was good or not because if it wasn't that great, he'd throw it on the store's tiny audio system. He'd let it spin for a little bit, let me publicly see the error of my ways, and then he'd dismiss it for something else. If it was good, though, he'd put it on the stereo system that had these giant headphones. I'd sit on this wooden stool he had that was all soft and worn from years of use. The cracks of the wood were filled with years of grime and dirt from other listeners' hands. I loved sitting on that stool. When I first started sitting on that stool, my legs would dangle. (When I visited the store right before it closed some years later, they were planted firmly on the fucking ground.) He put it on, smiled, and left me with the headphones on. I listened the the whole record. The only time I got up was when I went over to the counter to ask him to flip it for me. (After a terrible, record-scratching, needle-breaking incident, we came to an agreement that I was to be less of a do-er and more of an asker when it came to playing records.) I bought the record and played it all the time. The next time I was in the store, I asked the owner where I could see them play, and he told me to, "go buy a fucking *Delorean*." Those were the days before the Internet. How was I supposed to know? Anyway, that crusty bastard was kind of a soft-heart on the inside and in the coming months when I went to visit the store he may have picked up a copy of *Zen Arcade* and *Flip Your Wig*. You know, they just happened to come up when he was looking for stuff in the store, and, you know, I could listen to them if I wanted.

Anyway, that former me sitting on the stool with the giant headphones on was super-psyched to be getting just a little peek at the back story of a band that might have some coherent explanation. Next to listening to the music, it is as close as I'm ever going to get to being there, which is especially poignant in the screw-you-if-you-weren't-there culture of rock n' roll. (I bought this book at a record store a few years ago and could not get into it. The editing is so bad that whole sections of the book are repeated - word-for-word - in multiple chapters. I plan to try it again someday, but not today.) Want to know something weird, though? The Hüsker Dü section was the part that ended up holding my interest the least. I mean, it was pretty good to hear from

the artist the meaning (or lack of meaning) behind the songs, and all that nonsense, but in the end it was the same ugly story that always kind of turns me off: great band, great potential, potential realized, personal problems, things fall apart, they argue about money. It's not that I am so overly romantic that I think that contracts and money are not part of releasing music. However, it's kind of like when you're friends with a married couple and their marriage falls apart. You don't want to hear the ugly details of who got what and why. You don't want to see the contents of the settlement. However, I'd be down-right hypocritical if I didn't accept that as part of Mr. Mould's story because I loved the candid nature of his story in all other instances. The way that he recounts his childhood without bitterness but brutal honesty is refreshing. He points out his parents' downfalls without painting them as monstrous. He lays bare inner conflicts that are both shocking and disturbingly relatable. His post-Hüsker Dü life is captivating, too. He explores some aspects of gay culture that everyone seems aware of but no one seems to talk about without being all rainbow about it. I could relate to this. Some people think being queer is one of two things: nipple rings and feather boas or in the proverbial closet. Mould is neither (though he does spend some time being scandalous - like all (well, most) people do when fully taking the helm of their own sexuality). There is one theme throughout the book that seems to fall into the 'human nature' aspect of being irritating. He often will list one of his personal story-comings, say he's not making any excuses for himself, but then continue to list the reasons that lead him to make whatever bad choices he made. I think I only find this annoying because I do that same fucking thing, and I am disappointed with myself every time I do it. Also like me, Mould is a worker. Being a worker is largely a cultural thing. There are some people I've met who aren't workers and I am always fascinated by them. They can go for stretches without devoting large chunks of their time to a project or job. I can't do that - it is not in my blood. I've had a job as long as I can remember, and when I have my job I do it well. The thing I liked most about this book, though, is that Mould is sentimental without being mushy. I appreciate that. You get the feeling that he's not just bullshitting you through enough pages to fill a book, he's not explaining or bragging. He's telling a story that turns out to be a pretty good one. I highly recommend it.

Jenn says

I understand why Bob Mould named his blog "A Quiet, Uninteresting life." That is very appropriate. I want the two nights I spent reading this back. Truly the most banal autobiography I've ever read, I feel sorry for Michael Azzarad, I can only imagine the pain of editing this book. Do not expect to find any worthwhile anecdotes, or insights into a musician's creative process, as this is mostly a list of dates and self-aggrandizing complaints about whoever was around. This book is unnecessarily long. You'd have to be a huge fan to put up with this. I believe it merely serves as some kind of revenge for those who dared to wrong Bob Mould.

Adam Wahlberg says

I read this in three sittings -- god, what an interesting man -- I've always loved the music -- it's rare to see punk rock delivered with such depth -- and the answer is now clear -- because the artist has such depth. Wonderful, fascinating, propulsive read. Big enjoyment.

Christian Olson says

I enjoyed this book. As a fan of the music, I think the book is best when discussing the music, either technical aspects or emotional inspiration. I also enjoyed the stories of early touring and the wrestling foray.

There is a larger portion of the book that deals with failing relationships, family dynamics and being comfortable with his sexual identity, which I think is not as well paced. Biographies in general lack a degree of perspective, I kept thinking how little Mr. Mould values the input from those around him, although there are a couple moments where he recognizes this to a degree. Overall, I think this is a solid book about a conflicted artist, I went back and listened to songs again, enjoyed them a little more with the backstories.

On a side note, I can't help being a little disappointed reading artist biographies, often the thing I like the best, is the same thing the artist is not that proud of. The album I really liked was mentioned in passing, which felt like a mini-punch to the gut.....but I still enjoyed the book.

Brendan says

Bought at deep discount whilst picking over Borders' corpse...

I tore through this in a couple of days. Fundamentally, this is the story of how a deeply screwed up young man grows to become a functional and happy middle-aged man. As such, the focus throughout is not so much on the music itself, but on Bob's personal growth. There is some stuff about the music, especially the recording and playing of the music, but Bob pretty much draws a veil over his creative process. I probably would have liked more, but I still found this a compelling read. There's a fair amount about making a career as an artist that I found interesting--just the nuts and bolts of how one makes a living doing creative work. And, I mean, the guy went from postpunk legend to WCW wrestling writer. So that's interesting.

I definitely recommend this for anyone who's a fan of Bob Mould's music. A couple of qualms: as might be expected in an autobiography, he's a little easy on himself--his biggest flaw, according to this book, is his difficulty communicating when things aren't going his way, which leads to blowups when he gets fed up. I'll bet other people he's worked with might have some other insights, but, hey, it's not their book. The only other problem I had with the book is the same problem I have with Bob Mould's music. The high points are freaking awesome, but he's a very intense dude who doesn't have much of a sense of humor. This can make prolonged encounters with his work kind of draining. It's a bit relentless at times, and I'll be reading something a bit lighter for a palate cleanser.

Chazzbot says

Bob Mould has had anything but a stereotypical life, which makes his memoir refreshingly free of the usual rock cliches. Sure, there is substance abuse, lots of sex, and a falling out with the band(s), but Mould has more to offer than a 400-page VH1 Behind the Music transcript.

Mould is a sharer--at times, too much of one, in fact--but this is, again, a surprising quality in the rock memoir writer. Mould is up front about his bad choices, but rarely apologizes for them, reasoning that these choices were, in some ways, necessary steps on a larger path. This memoir is infused with that attitude--the perspective of a 50-year old man who is appreciative of his experiences and hungry for more. Mould stays "curious and active," which he admits is due in large part to his freedom from burdens other men his age carry. But this quality rewards the reader, because this is not only a story of Mould's life as a musician.

The final third of the book is where Mould recounts other aspects of his life: coming out as a gay man, writing scripts for professional wrestling, experimenting with electronica and DJing, ending a 14-year

relationship. If you are primarily interested in Mould as the songwriting force behind Husker Du and Sugar, you will get much more than you expected here. (I certainly did.)

One frustration I had with the book is Mould's tendency to mention certain incidents without much detail. One gets the sense that there are more stories to be told, but Mould has curiously decided to leave them out. The book's index becomes useful for finding references to people who have gone unmentioned for many pages that Mould will then reintroduce as major players in his life.

But Mould's voice here is consistently interesting. Like his many albums, I did not always find every insight vital or necessary, but they were never boring. Mould takes on a more reflective tone in the final chapters that suits the book well. The reader is thankful that Mould is still out there, gathering more stories, creating more work. I've found a renewed interest in his solo albums, and if a memoir compels one to both revisit old favorites and explore new work, Mould can consider his memoir a success.

Jesse says

A strange reading experience, largely because I'm really only a Husker Du fan and didn't know much about Mould's existence beyond that band. As a result, I was rapt through the chapters about HD, but kind of snoozed through the solo-project and Sugar material. Much more interesting to me was the autobiographical searching and the story of Mould's self-discovery not so much as a gay dude but as a non-self-hating gay dude who wanted to be part of a greater gay community after spending most of his life not closeted but just quietly doing his own thing, cohabitating with his boyfriend, and doing indie music. At times he comes across as arrogant and self-congratulatory, though I believe his stories about other people's shittiness, particularly Grant Hart's. He regained my interest toward the end of the book with his stories of going full-bore into celebration of queerness, finding himself in the bear community, and learning to embrace his family of choice. Still, I'd have enjoyed the book much more if it had been mostly about Husker Du--however, I'm sure he'd rather write about his whole life, rather than the part of his life I'm most interested in. Overall, this is well-written and engaging, and has a bunch of really great anecdotes in it.

Tommy Carlson says

Bob's autobiography reminds me a little of the Clash's Rude Boy. Decades ago, when I saw Rude Boy, it struck me how the movie made them look like assholes. And I always wondered whether this was a mark of integrity on their part, or whether they were just clueless about themselves. I feel the same way reading about Bob. (Upon checking the Wikipedia page for it, it appears the band didn't much like the movie.)

Bob is apparently the kind of guy who insists on doing everything himself, because he's the only one he thinks will do it correctly, and then whines about no one giving him enough credit for doing everything himself.

That said, it's still an interesting read. If you're looking for trash talk about Grant and Greg, yeah, you'll get that here. If you're looking for trash talk about other punk bands, you won't find it. Bob is unfailingly polite in his praise of other bands. (Except Bad Brains, who deserve the derision, being the homophobes that they are.)

If you're looking for tons of info on the rivalry between Husker Du and the Replacements, you won't get much. Basically, Husker Du built a midwest DIY punk community from the ground up. All the Replacements ever did was make great records. And that rankles Bob. There's also some complaining about Twin/Tone rejecting Husker Du's demos while giving the Mats a full album right away. Of course, there's a reason for that. The Replacements' demo tape was shit-tons better than Husker Du's.

Subject-wise, this book isn't just about Husker Du. The time spent on those years feels appropriate to me. He didn't gloss them over. Nor did he dwell on them. It's also obvious that he enjoyed the Sugar years a lot more. (And he says as much, too.)

Bob's writing style is exhausting to read. It all comes out in a rush. At first, I thought this might be on purpose, that the earlier sections of the book would be written to mirror early Husker Du. And the later sections would be written more maturely, to mirror his musical development. That would have been really cool.

But, that wasn't the case. It's just his writing style. I'm not saying it's bad writing. It's not. But it really lacks nuance.

There's one chapter dedicated to his experience writing pro wrestling scripts. I really wish he had intertwined his love of pro wrestling throughout the book, rather than cramming it all into one chapter. Instead of flowing into the book, it interrupts the narrative.

My favorite parts of the book are where Bob is embracing being gay. They're really the only sections where I liked the guy. He's neither pornographic nor coy about his sex life. I'm truly happy for him that he's accepted himself to the point that he can write about it so frankly. Interestingly, he seems much more self-conscious about returning to the Catholic church.
