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Herbert Weinberg's father is striking a blow for freedom. Implanting a nuclear device within a garden gnome in the front yard of their Long Island home, he's declared independence from the U.S. The household is understandably in an uproar. Mother's gone, the local weatherman has moved in, and 12-year-old Herbert is simultaneously a hostage and the Minister of Information. A daring raid plucks the lad from his ancestral home, but even while troops surround the belligerent house-state of Weinbergia, the call to freedom has been sounded. The house is rapidly filling up with American refuseniks. Can the refrigerator hold out? And will Herbert's telepathic powers defeat imperialism and reunite him with his father? Based on Aristophanes's *Archonians*, *Under My Roof* is funny, ambitious novel.

## **Under My Roof Details**

Date : Published January 23rd 2007 by Soft Skull Press

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Author : Nick Mamatas

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## From Reader Review Under My Roof for online ebook

### Bob Rust says

Under My Roof (2007) set in the Long Island suburbs of Near Future New York and narrated by an adolescent Telepath is of sf interest for its strongly Satirical depiction of modern American political Paranoia as the country retreats into demented isolationism (both Canada and the whole of Latin America have been defined as hostile powers); the protagonist's father builds a nuclear device and secedes from the United States.

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### Craig says

This is short novel that seems to lampoon nearly everything, perhaps including the young-adult fiction genre in which format it is presented. It's a very funny read with engaging characters, and is quite different in tone and style from most of his other work. It unfortunately has about the most boring cover I've seen on a book, so, as the saying goes, don't judge it by that.

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### Jacob says

This book asks the question that we are all constantly asking ourselves, "What would happen if, in the near future when unchecked American aggression is responsible for starting wars all over the globe including with Canada "the white menace", a Long Island man decides that in order to protect his family and his home he must build a nuclear bomb, put it in a lawn gnome, and declare his suburban home a sovereign nation?"

The answer, as told to us by the telepathic-twelve-year-old Herbert Weinberg is poignant, cutting and hilarious.

This book also belongs to the category of "books I lent to girls and never got back." The girl in question is my ex-girlfriend. She's an idealist and a progressive. She lives in the mountains in Southern California and teaches science to fourth and fifth graders at a camp. She hangs out with hippies and a man who is deathly afraid of cherry tomatoes. When she moved out she took my coffee grinder, my measuring spoons, and measuring cups. She took these things by accident but now they are sitting in a storage locker in Fresno serving no one. I have yet to replace any of these things. I think about all of the storage lockers sitting there in cities and towns and each one is a repository for things that are unused. Under My Roof makes me think about things like this. It makes me think about box stores and corporate America. It makes me want to type phrases like "the blanding of American life" or "equal parts insanity and banality." But that's not really the point.

What's the point then?

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## **Richard says**

Under My Roof, based on Archonians by Aristophanes, is the story of telepathic tween Herbert Weinberg, whose father Daniel decides to strike a blow for freedom by building a nuclear device, planting it in the lawn jockey in his front yard, and declaring independence from the United States.

The Long Island household is predictably turned upside down. Mother is out, a local weatherman is in, and he becomes both a hostage and Minister of Information. Though troops surround the belligerent ranch house-state, the appeal of independence becomes too much for many. A daring raid to kidnap Herb and bring him back to his mother snatches the boy prince from his ancestral home. Meanwhile, the house is filling up with former American refuseniks. Can the refrigerator hold out?

However, the seed has already been planted. All over America, people are declaring their independence, and simply by traveling from lawn to lawn across "the country", Herbert is able to reunite with his father and defeat American imperialism with a final burst of his telepathic powers.

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## **Dylan says**

I honestly don't really know what to think about this book. I thought the first half was great but the second half was pretty boring. Not once did I think to stop reading it but I also wasn't enjoying it either. I'm willing to check out more books from the author but won't be in a hurry.

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## **Amy says**

My husband said this was a fast and good read. To each their own I suppose. The story is set several years after 9/11. The US has become embroiled in wars with 40-odd countries. In protest, some guy decides to build his own nuclear bomb in a garden gnome and declare his home, property, and family independent from the USA. The man's kid (who is telling the story) is telepathic. The army ends up at their house and they end up on the news. And that's about it. The end. Really, this summary tells you almost all that happens in the entire story. Interesting premise, but nothing happens. Luckily, it is only 151 pages long.

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## **Ross Lockhart says**

Under My Roof is narrated by a smart-assed telepathic twelve-year-old whose father builds a nuclear weapon in a lawn gnome and declares his home a sovereign nation. If that doesn't draw you in, nothing will. Part biting political satire, part humorous YA novel, Under My Roof invokes a rare sense of optimistic anarchism while daring to imagine a better future. Pick up a copy for the smart-assed twelve-year-old in your life.

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## **Elizabeth Arritt says**

Interesting idea with so much promise. The idea of breaking away from the nation/government, as a

storyline, peaked my interest. Unfortunately this book does not deliver. It was BORING! Thank goodness it was only 155 pages!

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### **Chris "Stu" says**

In the near future, a man scours dumps, finding discarded fire alarms and such, and builds a small nuclear weapon from the radioactive materials he finds there. He then declares himself an independent country, and blunders through the consequences.

This is not his story.

This is his son's story. His son who happens to be psychic.

Along the way, they take hostages. By accident. More or less.

It gets weirder from there.

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### **Judi sampson-young says**

Normally i wouldnt continue a book if i wasnt enjoying it cut being as it was 151 pages I decided to stick with it. The best thing about this book is Herbert, whose voice is the book in its entirity. The stuff this 12 year old thinks is very funny, but it gets a little much after a while. I just didnt get the point!

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### **Mollymillions says**

This is the book that made Nick Mamatas one of those authors I'll keep an eye on. I read Under My Roof in a single afternoon. As fast paced as it is, this book isn't bubble gum. It raises an interesting question about what happens when enough people decide that they don't feel like playing the same game anymore.

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### **Paul Fergus says**

Middle class dude goes nuts, builds a cheap nuclear bomb out of spare parts, declares his house an independent country, and madcap hilarity ensues. All through the narration of the dude's 12 year old son who has telepathy.

I figured this would be a supernatural thriller, but it's actually supernatural farce. It's a mad mad mad world!

At times the narrative is insightful and interesting, other times it dissolves into fast-track jive. The author's action scenes zip through conflicts without any sense of limits or how events unfold. At times I couldn't tell what was going on. It's as if astute observations via the senses aren't able to bridge the gap between reality and imagination.

Hard to take any of this seriously. Just when you get a clear idea of how dangerous and out of control the situation is, how stupid people really are, the satire, the mockery comes shining through and we're relieved of tension. The story needs a direction, a stance; it's all over the place.

The 12 year old kid breaks the fourth wall to communicate to the reader. I like that, it's a good technique. He makes an effective omniscient narrator. In a more developed story he'd be incredibly exciting, but here he's just floating along with the plot.

In a way, the story's main strength is also its biggest problem. Everyone in this book's world is insane, nuts, crazy. Even the kid. They're all in varying degrees of having lost their sanity, which is realistic considering exposure to a mad mad mad world will do that to humans. It's a vitally relevant topic for today--all of us have lost our way, maybe for good.

However, the book provides no concrete answer other than a vague disintegration into autonomous micro countries, spurred on perhaps by suicide or guided by a new telepathic elite who will rule the morlocks below. Atomization of the dumb meets the New Mutants? Sounds kind of like 'later is now' by DEVO: "Tomorrow's just a replay."

If we're to "grow up" as the book suggests, we need a stronger center than this.

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### **Printable Tire says**

I like the dimensions of this volume, the texture and thickness of its pages, and its approachable and readable font. Cover and Text designers Jim Goodman and Luke Gerwe (respectively) have made an altogether well-fashioned and stylish book.

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### **Alan says**

OK, this is a post-9/11 book I can fully endorse. You've got a telepathic kid who's dad decides to build a nuclear bomb and secede their house from the US (new name: Weinbergia), setting off a flurry of micronations across the country. Its a dumb enough premise that this could be a stupid, silly book, it isn't. They live in a world not far removed from Chris Bachelder's Bear V Shark.

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### **Casey says**

A little gem of a dark comedy. Unfortunate cover, it looks like a debut short story collection by a female author (it's been brought to my attention that I should clarify that statement. For the tone and themes of the book, the cover just doesn't work, I very much enjoy a lot of debut short story collections by female authors). People building nuclear weapons and threatening the U.S. tends not to be a comic subject, especially in YA, but Under My Roof takes nuclear proliferation to a brilliant and funny level. Plus it's under 150 pages. That always impresses me.

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