Beth Lisick started out as a homecoming princess with a Crisco-aided tan and a bad perm. And then everything changed. How exactly did this suburban girl next door end up as one of San Franciscos foremost chroniclers of alternative culture, touring as the only straight woman with a band of punk rock lesbian poets and living in illegal warehouses -- all while managing to get married, buy a house, and have a baby? Lisick explains it all in her hilarious, irreverent memoir Everybody into the Pool. Plunging headlong into Americas deepest subcultures, while keeping both feet firmly planted in her parents Leave It to Beaver values, Lisick makes her adult home on the fringe of mainstream culture and finds it rich with paradox and humor. On one hand, she lives in Brokeley with drug dealers and street gangs; on the other, she drives a station wagon with a car seat in the back, makes her own chicken stock, and attends ladies luncheons. Among Lisicks true tales are My Way or the Bi-Way, in which a series of girl-on-girl fiascos from UC Santa Cruz confirm her suspicions that shes just a straight girl with a positive attitude whod give anything the old college try; The Lowly Hustle, in which she takes on a litany of odd jobs to make ends meet (I was like a college student designing my own major, except I was thirty-five and designing my own minimum-wage job); and the endearing story of her courtship with her now husband Eli, who impresses her with a spastic rendition of a song called The Wack-Ass Caucasian Two Step Chicken and invites her to his Mission District warehouse space -- a world of feral raccoons and exploding sewage pipes. (Its clear to Lisick that hes The One.) Fans of David Sedaris and Sarah Vowell will relish Lisicks scathingly funny, smart, and very real take on the effluvia of daily living. No matter what community shes exposing to the light, Lisicks hilarious perspective always hits the right chord.

My Personal Review:
Youd never believe that a story about stealing money from nuns to pay for an abortion would be boring, but Beth Lisicks amateur writing effort makes just those sorts of edgy, post modern topics less exciting than eating oatmeal and reading USA Today.
Beth Lisick seems to be suffering a classic amateur writers dilemma--you've lived through something-abortion, drugs, sex, the Holocaust, so you think you can be a writer. I call it the Hemingway syndrome. Some writers even throw themselves to the four corners hoping they'll live through a Spanish-Civil War and it'll give them some profound topic to write about.

The trouble is just having lived through something does not make you a good writer. It gives you a ghost of a story, but you've got to work hard to bring that story out on the page. Listick seems too immature to have bothered with the sort of self-actualization that might have made her experiences into good stories.

I expected more of this book since the cover said Lisick had been an integral and high profile member of San Franciscos art community for the last ten years. Believe me, there is no way San Franciscos arts scene is going to fall apart without this integral writer. If she's high-profile in San Francisco it has to be because she is a relentless self-promoter. The cover also said Lisick is a contributor to This American Life. I love this American Life and can't believe this sort of trash ends up anywhere near the broadcast.

Ill say that this is a light read and that may be just what you're in the mood for. Granted I'm into David Foster Wallace and the like these days. I guess if you were drunk and thought Candace Bushnell was the empress of literature, you might be talked into thinking Lisick was her dumb unfortunate cousin who needed consideration because she was family. But I think you should put about as much effort into reading as a writer does compiling. That means you might pick this unfortunate book up from the bargain bin and read an essay or two for free in the store cafe while you down a $3 latte. And I'd be telling you good choice-better to spend your money on coffee than this poor effort.

If you are interested in some essays and short stories but want good writing too, try New Kings of Non-Fiction edited by Ira Glass, Best American Essays edited by David Foster Wallace, or one of the excellent literary journals out there-McSweeney's or Landfall for instance.

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