

Diamond BookShelf

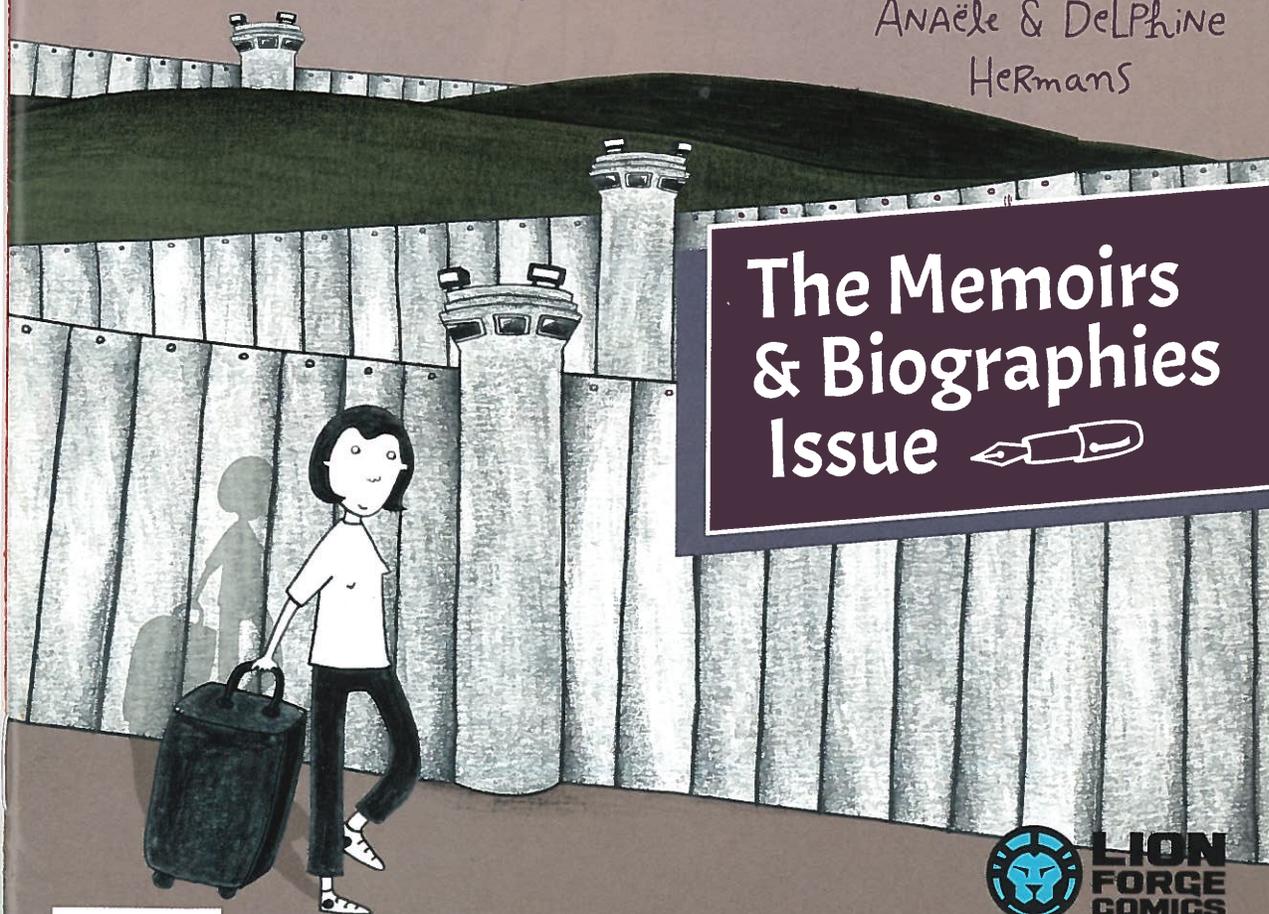
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The Graphic Novel Resource for Educators & Librarians

GREEN ALMONDS

Letters from Palestine

ANAËLE & DELPHINE
HERMANS



The Memoirs
& Biographies
Issue 



LION
FORGE
COMICS



PLUS:

- Past Lives: Using Congressman John Lewis' MARCH In the Classroom
- Graphic Medicine: Healing Through Comics
- Tips for Planning Free Comic Book Day At Your Library
- Graphic Novel Reviews and Lesson Plans from Professor Katie Monnin
- And more!

GRAPHIC MEDICINE: HEALING THROUGH COMICS

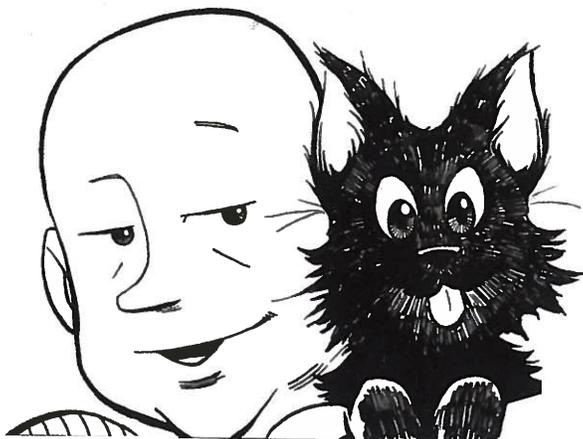
BY BRENDA FAY

Superheros, villains, and fantastical characters are all well represented in comics. But what about us regular folks, where do we show up? One of the “human” areas of comics and graphic novels is the growing genre of *graphic medicine*.

First used by Dr. Ian Williams, being a practicing physician and comic artist himself in the late 2000’s, graphic medicine aims to draw back the veil at the “intersection of comics and healthcare.” It’s about you and me. More specifically it deals with the health issues people face from infertility to cancer to Parkinson’s disease and everything in between. It deals with aging and having to put parents in nursing homes; it tells stories of nurses, doctors, and other health care providers learning how to cope with the ups and downs of taking care of others. It deals with the nitty gritty of an abusive family and sudden death of a child.

Some people mention Jack Kirby and the part he took in creating Steve Rogers (Captain America) as planting the seed for graphic medicine. Steve returned from war with what we would recognize today as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Graphic medicine is as much about what our minds go through as it is about what our bodies go through. Others point to Brian Fies’ **Mom’s Cancer** as a catalyst to piquing readers (and publishers) interest in comics about everyday people. Fies deftly portrays what his elderly mother, himself, and his adult siblings are put through when she is diagnosed with both lung and brain cancer. From unexplained symptoms, to seemingly heartless physicians and nurses, to the struggle of being a caregiver, his work is readable, important, and unforgettable.

It’s not just readers and publishers who are interested in these titles, more and more medical schools are using comics and other humanities writings to help round out



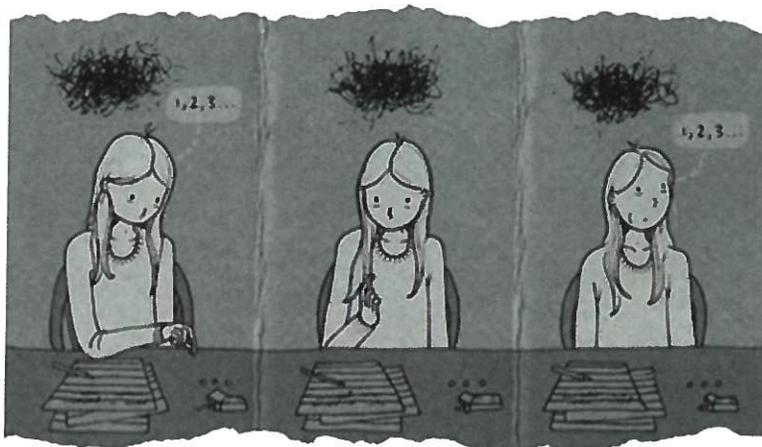
future and current health care providers’ training, self-awareness, and compassion. Those students and practicing physicians are encouraged to tell their own stories via comics. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a highly respected medical journal, publishes a monthly “graphic medicine” series with comics submitted by patients, students, and health care providers. Penn State University Press took their interest to the next

level this past May, when they published eleven graphic medicine titles on everything from Alzheimer’s and infertility to the HIV/AIDS picture in the 1990’s and zombies in medicine. Additionally, the **Graphic Medicine Manifesto** is about a group effort from five individuals using this format to teach or analyze this form of literature; and it especially interesting for those thinking about bringing graphic medicine to their institutions, universities, or schools.

Medical schools aren’t alone in bringing this storytelling format and genre front and center; more and more, veterans are becoming involved as well. The Center for Cartoon Studies in White River Junction, Vermont has partnered with their local VA Medical Center to pair up comic artists with veterans to tell their stories. **When I Returned: A Cartoonist and Veterans Project** is

the first to come to fruition from this project.

But these comics aren’t just for health care providers. Graphic medicine helps patients cope in crisis and provides comfort by showing them they are not alone in their experience. Imagine being diagnosed



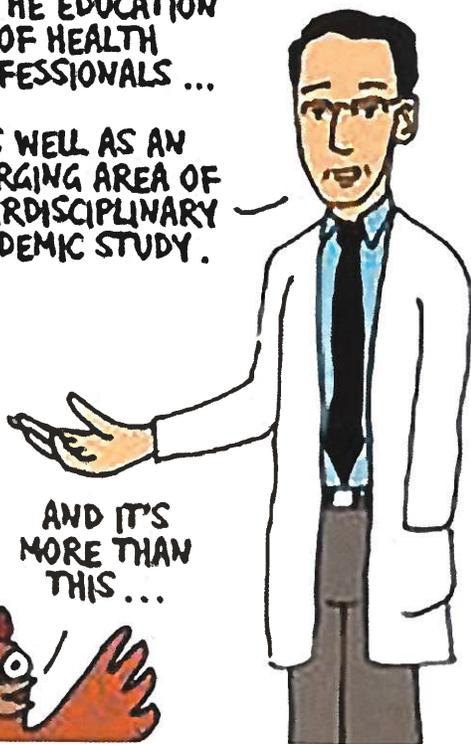
with a serious medical condition, but instead of being handed a 100-page book with charts and medical jargon, you were given a comic written by someone who found themselves in the same uncertain place. Having that connection to not only art but an experience only helps educate a person about their own situation and can help guide them through it as well.

I worked with a young college student who had picked up Katie Green's **Lighter Than My Shadow**, a graphic novel about eating disorders, abuse, and recovery. After reading, my student came to me and said "Finally, a comic I can relate to." As someone with a history with an eating disorder, Green's graphic memoir meant more to him than all the superhero stories in the world. If that isn't a testament to the power of graphic medicine, I don't know what is.

Like any genre, knowing where to start can be a daunting task. Check out my short list of suggestions to help get you on the right path.

IT'S AN APPROACH
TO THE EDUCATION
OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS ...

AS WELL AS AN
EMERGING AREA OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY
ACADEMIC STUDY.



AND IT'S
MORE THAN
THIS ...

About the Author

Brenda Fay is a Librarian Specialist at the Aurora Health Care Libraries, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Fay has worked in public, academic, and medical libraries. Her favorite things to do are read comics and historical mysteries, travel with her family, and sign along to "Science is Real" by They Might Be Giants. She taught a graphic medicine class to undergraduate students at Marquette University in Fall 2017.



Mental Health

Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me: A Graphic Memoir
by Ellen Forney

Forney details her struggles with mental health and wondering, on the flip side, it makes her a better artist.

Psychiatric Tales: Eleven Graphic Stories About Mental Illness
by Daryl Cunningham

Cunningham's experience as a UK psychiatric nurse reads like a mental health 101 guide to conditions from bipolar disorder to schizophrenia.

Lighter Than My Shadow
by Katie Green

Green's account of her intensely personal struggle with sexual abuse and eating disorders has been receiving award after award. She deserves them all.

When I Returned

download at www.cartoonstudies.org/cartoonist-veteran-project-release-of-when-i-returned-2/. Sobering, this collection of veteran and comic artist's collaborations is an important new work in voicing contemporary veterans' stories.

Aging, Neurological Disorders

Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me
by Sarah Leavitt

Leavitt illustrates both the big and small ways her family copes and even finds moments of happiness after her mother is diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?: A Memoir
by Roz Chast

New Yorker cartoonist Chast, portrays her aging parents with humor even while her father's mind is slipping away from Alzheimer's.

For more graphic medicine reviews and recommendations, visit diamondbookshelf.com