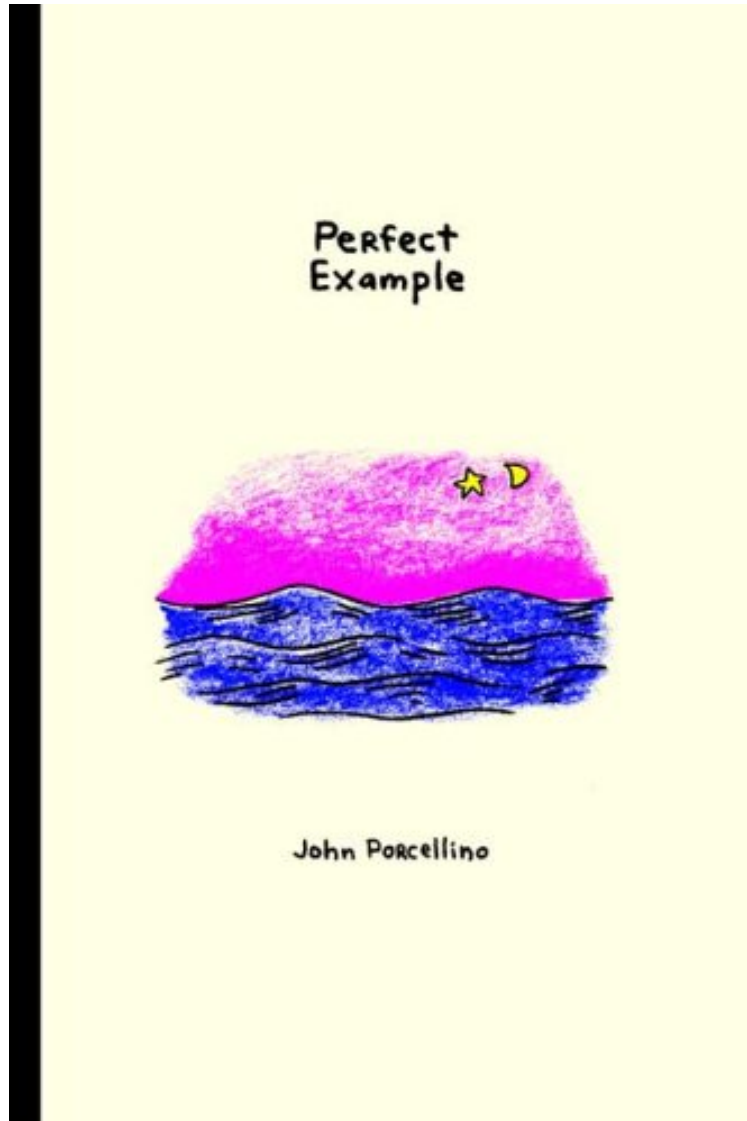


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## Perfect Example

*John Porcellino*

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#2062692 in Books 2005-10 2005-10-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.91 x .47 x 6.321, .62 #File Name: 1896597750144 pages | File size: 42.Mb

**John Porcellino : Perfect Example** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Perfect Example:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I was there.By Robert BeveridgeJohn Porcellino, Perfect Example (Highwater Books, 2000)I'm going to open this with a comment that's going to strike a lot of people as odd: I'm getting kind of sick of the graphic-novel-as-memoir thing.I don't expect people will find it odd that I am (I rather suspect a lot of people are), but that I use it to open this particular review, as Porcellino's book predates just about every graphic-novel-as-memoir I've reviewed in the past two years. I only stumbled across it in 2005 because (a) a much larger distro

company picked it up, and (b) Porcellino has been getting a lot of press for his second book, *Diary of a Mosquito Abatement Man*. When I saw the title on this one, I asked myself if it could possibly be related to the Husker Du song of the same name, and immediately placed it on hold. When I get it, I open it up, and there's a Bob Mould lyric staring me in the face. I was as close to genetically predisposed to liking this book as I could possibly be; Porcellino is roughly the same age as I am (a few months younger, if memory serves), and we grew up listening to the same music, suffering the same growing pains at the same time, all that sort of thing. I mean, in the world of memoirs, this is something I should really have identified with. And I rush to add that I don't blame John Porcellino for my not really connecting with it (nor my own upbringing). Drawn and Quarterly picked this up and reprinted it in October of 2005-- well after many of the big names in graphic-novel-memoir had published (Satrapi, David B., Clowes, Pekar, Thompson, etc. were all quite well established) and right on the heels of the best of the bunch to be published to date (Charles Burns' superlative *Black Hole*). Instead of being in the vanguard of the movement, it feels as if Porcellino is a very small fish in a very big pond. It's not his fault. His drawings are almost shocking at first, given their (for lack of a better term) naivete, but once you get used to it, his characters (who often echo Charles Schulz, and if you're going to copy a master, you might as well copy the master) come off the page quite nicely; in fact, they have as much of an emotional resonance, at times, as those in any of the other, bigger-name memoirs. Where Porcellino stumbles is that he fails to sustain the emotional pitch; the showing is too often broken up by stretches of telling. It's a good book, just not a great one. I'm still looking forward to *Diary of a Mosquito Abatement Man*. \*\*\*2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of the best things around

By Sean Duncan John Porcellino's *Perfect Example* is exactly what comics need. It's got a sense of emotion and angst and beauty and fun that I frankly wish more people would aspire to instead of trying to be clever. *Perfect Example* isn't clever -- it's funny, it's genuine, it's beautiful, and it's moving. Check it out if you've ever been (1) sad and didn't know why (2) into skateboarding (3) on an impromptu road trip (4) into Husker Du (5) a teenager. Plus, I can't speak highly enough of Highwater Books' presentation of the material, originally printed in black and white in John P.'s excellent *King-Cat Comics and Stories* zine. It's gorgeously put-together with fine paper and multi-colored inks (as with Highwater's also excellent presentation of Brian Ralph's *Cave-In*). Highwater makes gorgeous books and this is certainly one of their best. One of my favorite comics, I can't speak highly enough of it. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. great, naive, zenlike coming-of-age book

By A. Bucknam If you've ever been an angst-ridden, depressed teenager with out-of-touch parents, this book will resonate with you. Even if you've only experienced tinges of these things, or had friends who did, Porcellino's book will say something special. It is charmingly illustrated, and nicely written. A well-crafted book. His *King-Cat Comics and Stories* are worth a look too, if you can find them. Listening to his old Denver band *Felt Pilotes* while reading this book provides the compleat Porcellino experience.

A melancholic memoir of saying goodbye to the familiar Road trips, drunken concerts, and late-night make-out sessions all swirl together in this coming-of-age graphic novel by King Cat cartoonist John Porcellino. Tackling the pain and uncertainty of the pivotal summer before college, Porcellino's sad and beautiful story is drawn in his sincere, minimalist style. Deceptively and charmingly simple, *Perfect Example* is a collection of Porcellino's self-published King Cat comics, which have won over thousands of readers with their honesty, empathy, and sincerity.

From Publishers Weekly Porcellino, the longtime and, one imagines, long-suffering publisher of the zine *King-Cat Comics and Stories*, has come out with an autobiography covering his final days of high school and the following summer in Hoffman Estates, a Chicago suburb. Porcellino has a deliberately simple style of drawing. His childish images are emotional almost without effort. It's 1986, and Porcellino is a severely depressed teen who doesn't know what to do with his life. He hangs out with friends, chases two girls, goes out to the lake and finally falls into suicidal thoughts: the world feels bland and dead. The story suffers when Porcellino abandons the sweet, meandering plot to discuss his state of mind. These interior episodes feel tacked on: "I was a little boy. Now I'm grown. People places... things come and go. But they're no more real than shadows on a wall." With the work of Dan Clowes, Harvey Pekar and French artist David B., the graphic novel is proving to be an excellent venue for describing the 20th-century everyman. Porcellino's work is a minor, flawed but still worthy example of this rising genre. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *Library Journal* This quiet and ferocious novel qua memoir in comics format focuses on the period between graduating from high school and entering college. The spare, simple drawings illuminate and enlighten the text, which aptly depicts youthful depression and aimlessness. Writer/artist Porcellino articulates the difficulties of feeling good about belonging to a peer group while not feeling good about oneself. Of all the graphic novels in the last few years, *Perfect Example* may be the most individual. It is not a story for everyone and may be better placed where books about teenage issues circulate than in any general collections, but it will find an audience. For larger public libraries, undergraduate collections, and universities where adolescent studies flourish. Stephen Weiner, Maynard P.L., MA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Gr. 10-12. With a narrative sensibility and a graphic novel style reminiscent of Ted Rall's 1999 *My War with Brian*, Porcellino revisits the highest and lowest points of his last year of high school and

the summer before he left his suburban Illinois home for college. The spare prose, from the characters themselves and in panels beneath their actions, reflects typical emotions of a 17-year-old boy--hope, despair, infatuation, confusion, certainty, and the thrill of risk taking, provided in this case by skateboards, adult-free houses, and illegal camping. Unlike the tumultuous and violent socializing in Rall's book, Porcellino's is restrained, calmer, as it credibly re-creates the Everyteen of 1980s American suburbia. The angular, unshaded artwork is unsophisticated but expressive, elaborating on the unfinished feel of the author's own life during a pivotal year. This will be an easy book for high-school boys to consume, and it has the potential to stimulate new storytellers to put their realizations on paper.

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