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Queen of the Oddballs
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Why did you tell your life story through the unusual format of *Queen of the Oddballs* — replete with photos, clippings, journal entries, and other documentary evidence?

I couldn't see writing a book about doing things in an unconventional way, and put it into a conventional format. I've been an avid documentarian, keeping journals and date books for decades. Since I'm also an artist, they've all been incredibly visual. So it seemed like a totally natural match up. Also now, after the whole James Frey controversy, it's pretty cool that all these things validate everything I write about.

Do you have regrets about any of your many encounters with celebrities over the years?

Not at all. But I'm actually much more interested in the "minor" celebrities. The offbeat oddballs. I've hung out with some really famous people but I don't go into that in my book. I'd rather share stories about Jaye P. Morgan, Kristy McNichol and the Home Shopping Network saleslady.

For someone who has led a life of extreme extroversion, you seem to identify more with being an introvert. Can you explain this dichotomy?

For my sake, I really wish I could! It continues to be a challenge and I really can't explain it. All I can do is try to accept that that's just the way it is.

You founded a website, www.freshyarn.com, which focuses on the literary genre of the personal essay. How would you describe this form, and what attracts you to it?

To me, personal essays are just mini-memoirs. I began writing them because I felt like I had stories to tell. Then I started performing them at Spoken Word events, and what really struck me was the overwhelming reception from the audiences. They were hanging onto every word each reader spoke. I saw how much people love self-revelation. They love humorous, moving, confessional work with universal themes that evoke and invoke each of their own foibles, flaws, strengths and insights. Our humanness.

What advice do you have for readers who believe themselves to be "oddballs"?

EMBRACE your oddballness! Know that being different or odd isn't something to try to hide or to fear; it's actually something to be celebrated.