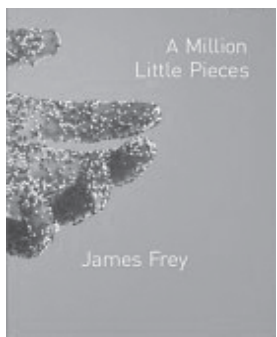


Book Review A Million Pieces

By James Frey

In writing his shattering, beautiful memoir, *A Million Little Pieces*, James Frey does away with a lot of things: punctuation, standard grammar rules, 12-step programs, belief in a higher power, and, eventually, his addiction to alcohol and drugs. In doing so, he has rewritten the rules 'Recovery Memoir' and established himself as a major literary talent.

There are brutal, startling scenes in *A Million Little Pieces* that will leave deep bruises on even the most cynical and jaded reader. What's interesting is that the most affecting scenes (for me at least) are not gratuitously violent. They're not graphically explicit. They're not emotionally manipulative. They're quiet conversations between a son and his parents. But, they are some of the most devastatingly honest, heartfelt, self-loathing, eloquent and hopeful



conversations one will come across in a book. They aren't 'Mom, Dad, I failed biology' confessions. More like 'Mom, Dad, I'm addicted to alcohol and crack. I'm wanted in several states. I hated you. I hate myself...' kind of confessions.

On and on with list of what their son has done to himself. It's heartbreaking and inspiring. James' willingness, courage to accept the burden and the responsibility of his addiction makes readers want him to get better; to get whole again.

Be prepared for a dizzyingly painful visit to the dentist's office and bloody bathroom scenes delivered in Frey's style - spare, relentless, fearless - that will doubtless overwhelm readers. Also be prepared for an amazing, if doomed, love story and an ending that feels like swift kick in the gut. As you'll see from his essay, one of Frey's goals is to shake readers any way he can. He succeeds because of his honesty, responsibility, a sense of humor and a greater sense of purpose. Thus, after seeing him hit bottom, the book has one last remarkable affect: one comes away hopeful. —Coates Bateman

Over Thanksgiving break I read *A Million Little Pieces*. It's abrupt, shocking, and compassionate. James connects to many others in rehab, including a federal judge and a hitman for the mafia. It's a great read, and I'm looking forward to reading his second book *My Friend Leonard*.

-d. ford

The Benefits of Biking

Joe Olgin, Senior

Is riding a bike better than driving a car?? Of course it is. From a health stand point, bikes are better because a person has to rely on themselves for horse power. Just thirty minutes of bike riding a day lowers blood pressure and heart rate dramatically.

Money-wise bikes are much more economical than cars. The cost of the bike ranges widely; however, on average it only costs about \$140 a year to keep a bike in top performance condition. A car, however, costs \$6,000 a year, not including hidden costs or extra repairs.

As for the environment, let's just say bicycling has the upper hand in keeping the environment

Your Friendly Neighborhood Ranter "Censorship"

Let us talk of a pet peeve on my top ten list, shall we? Being a huge Carlos Mencia fan, I am one who is all for freedom of speech. Why are so many parents and activists striving to sweep the dirt under the rug? Mainly it's the censorship of music and film that gets me. These are artists, and they're being shot down. Honestly, have any of you ever heard a bleep on an edited CD and actually wondered what they said? The word is still there. It's clearly visible. And parents: whether the CD is edited or not, we do and will sing along uncensored. There is no getting around it. Not to mention it butchers the song. I've had CDs that skipped that sounded better than an edited album.

As for movies, let's face it: some flicks aren't made for family television. That in mind I ask then; why do they still show them on TV? It's bad enough that the commercials appear every ten seconds, lengthening the movie by another two hours at least. Now, I know the motives behind it; young kids watch TV too. But that's just it - it's only TV. As a character in my favorite comic book stated so well, "**Any pile of stunted growth unaware that entertainment is just that and nothing more, deserves to doom themselves to some dank cell, somewhere, for having been so stupid! Movies, books, TV - they're all just entertainment, not guidebooks for damning yourself!**"

Parents seem to argue endlessly about that, saying entertainment can leave an impression on kids. Well, duh. Ever think of leaving *your* impression first, perhaps! Oh, I don't know, maybe telling them not to take anything that doesn't have the words "**true story**" in the description seriously? It also makes me curious as to how the kids ended up watching *Aliens* and becoming emotionally scarred in the first place. Seems to me like somebody's pointing the finger at the "**big bad**" media corporations. Either a parent lets their kid watch stuff like that or just doesn't pay enough attention to care. Either way, media is hardly the culprit here.

The FCC is the biggest slap in the face of the first amendment ever born (except for maybe Jerry Falwell). Parents and elders should quit relying on censors and sit their kids down themselves to explain to them why they don't want their children listening to <insert music band here> or watching <insert

R rated movie here>. They shouldn't need big brother government stepping in to silence the voices of artists. Granted sometimes profanity isn't necessary, and it has always bothered me that parents go after rock music while not even touching the racial slur riddled lyrics of rap. Every genre of modern music has suggestive or offensive lyrics. It's one of those all or nothing deals.

For one thing, and I realize I may be contradicting myself, it's only a word. The word *table* could mean something awful if the right meaning was put to it. What if the definitions of *table* and the "**F**" word were switched? Angry parents at dinner... "**I swear to everything holy, Jimmy, if you don't sit the TABLE down and finish your meal, you'll be grounded for a whole TABLEIN' WEEK!!**"

Ridiculous, if not hilarious, no? See what I mean? It's only a word. In fact, if you do your research, you'll find that just about every swear word is of Latin origin. They weren't curse words in the Latin language at all; simply their own names for said objects. So basically, teens around the world are getting yelled at because they can say '**poop**' in Latin. Parents also want to censor violence as well. Why is it that everyone focuses on fiction and does nothing about reality? I've seen so many fights in the lunchroom it isn't even funny - and people *cheered* instead of trying to break it up. In such a barbaric, **Lord of The Flies** stylized society; it's impossible to censor violence.

You want proof that the right parental guidance can rid us all of the need of the FCC and such similar organizations? When I was just a wee ranter, my parents laid down the rules of TV time and explained to me movies weren't real. My father, sharing my "**it's just a stupid word**" philosophy as well, bought me my first unedited CD when Blink-182's *Take off Your Pants and Jacket* was released. Has the profanity messed me up yet? No. If you teach the kids morals and common sense at a young age, they'll be fine. Don't wait until they start rebelling and buying crap you don't want them to and *then* start complaining. Unless a parent has done their best, they should have no say in the debate of censorship.

Danielle Mammano, Junior

Bad breath is better than no breath at all.

clean. Unlike cars, bicycles do not let off harmful emissions.

If you wish to remain healthy, save money, and help the environment, then cycling is definitely something you should consider.



Keep On

What a relief: a perfect pop album. In *Keep on*, Will Young continues in his quest to veer as far away from the slushy cover TV ballads, and onto critical acclaim. Co-writing most songs, reflective, non-naïf, lyrics are backed by instrumentation reminiscent of Stevie Wonder, (hear toe-tapper "Happiness") wrapped in the warm production of Steve Lipson.

Ultimately, Will's thin voice will never be the easiest listen, but he can be forgiven, since he sings so well, and so impassioned. The album falls into two genres: beautiful lush torch ballads, like "**Who am I**", "**All Time Love**" and "**Save Yourself**", whilst stand out tracks "**Madness**", "**Keep it on**" and "**All I Want**" are driven funky little numbers. If you've never had time for TV talent contest winners, here make an exception - it's the single proof that sometimes, these shows actually work to give us, the public, what we really need.

Reviewer: Lucy Davies