



Clickety Clack: My Bipolar Express

Joy S. McDiarmid

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Clickety Clack is Joy McDiarmid's self- portrait of bipolar mental illness and one of the most ambiguous sexual identities imaginable for a woman coming of age in the 1950s. Amidst gender and sexuality confusion, this Winnipeg woman began to look for romantic love and sexual fulfillment: sometimes wanting to dress as a man, sometimes as a woman, sometimes attracted to men, sometimes to women.

In candid accounts of this paralysing complexity, which McDiarmid tried valiantly to understand and express despite oppressive social stigmas and parental strictures, her insights about human sexuality and "living the lie" are startling even in this age of open commentary about sex.

Along primitive frontiers of treatment for bipolar disorders and dramas of shock therapy in psychiatric wards, entire years of McDiarmid's life would slip by even as earlier years were being erased from her memory. Yet there came triumphant accomplishments in her competitive and stimulating world of advertising, university work, private enterprise, photography, travel, touring in her MG sports car, skilful tennis, and love.

Such juxtaposed experiences of despair and defiant courage, supplemented at the end of each chapter with medical commentary by Joy's psychiatrist Dr. Frances Edye, make *Clickety Clack* a rare road map to life.

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