

★ **Nervosa**

Hayley Gold

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Hayley Gold's beautiful graphic memoir *Nervosa* covers the artist's life through her eating disorder.

When Gold was ten, she went to get ice cream with her father while he ranted about her mother. Her cholesterol was high, some blood work said, so they switched to frozen yogurt. And thus began Gold's obsession with numbers—not on the scale, but on food packages. At twelve, she went to an in-patient facility for disordered eating; there, she learned “Anorexia for Dummies” from other patients—how to trick the orderlies and keep them from noticing patients hiding food or adding weight to the scale. She and others sought ways to fight against the medical system that found them to be a nuisance.

After some time in the hospital, Gold was joined by another character: the “night” version of herself, which is what she called her eating disorder. It lived in the same body as her (represented as being filled in all blue); it kept her company in her various hospital stays and into college. This version of Gold was more acerbic toward doctors; it egged her on in her nefarious activities, like collecting all the free condoms from the health center and hot-gluing them into the shape of the United States.

The art style of *Nervosa* is direct and sterile, using thick lines and few colors—a teal for accent, a navy blue for Gold's eating disorder, a peachy red for hallucinations—throughout. There are later bursts of color and detail as when, in a dream, Gold enters a Monet painting to find quiet away from the hospital.

A vibrant graphic memoir full of dark humor, *Nervosa* is an insightful look into the torment of disordered eating that will be a source of comfort to others who struggle with their mental health.

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