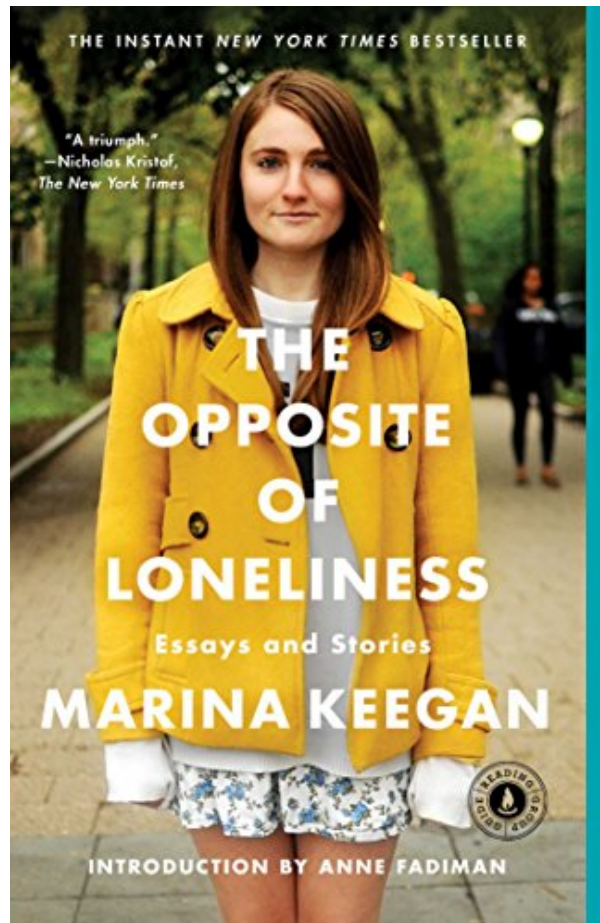
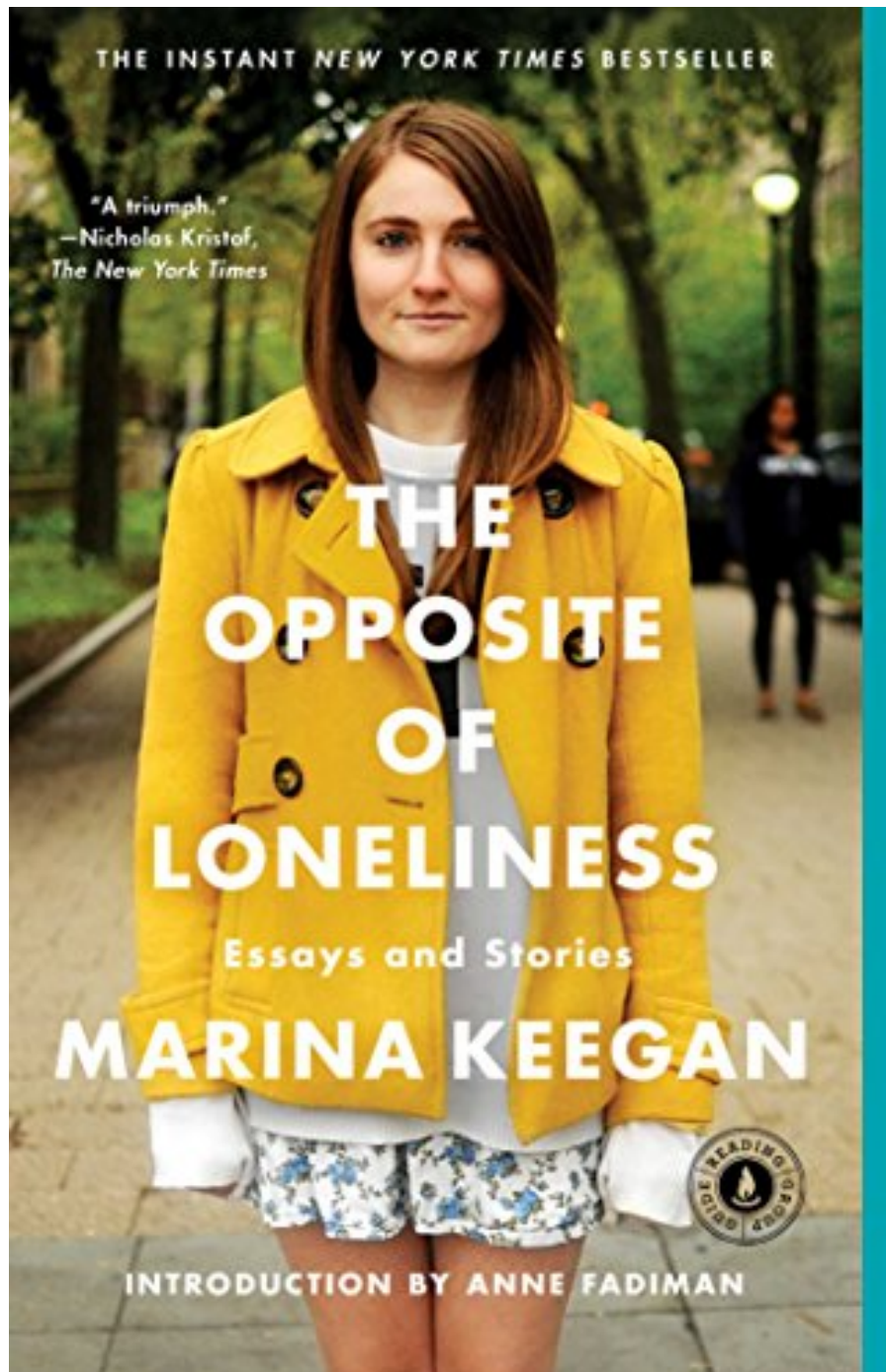


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"This posthumous collection of essays and short stories is beautiful and brilliant, young but not childish—just like the author was. Every essay is a gem you want to pick up and put in your pocket, taking it out from time to time to see how it looks in different lights—the lights of promise and potential, yearning and memory. The Opposite of Loneliness will make people cry and hope." (Rewire Me)

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The instant New York Times bestseller and publishing phenomenon: Marina Keegan's posthumous collection of award-winning essays and stories "sparkles with talent, humanity, and youth" (O, The Oprah Magazine).

Marina Keegan's star was on the rise when she graduated magna cum laude from Yale in May 2012. She had a play that was to be produced at the New York Fringe Festival and a job waiting for her at The New Yorker. Tragically, five days after graduation, Marina died in a car crash.

Marina left behind a rich, deeply expansive trove of writing that, like her title essay, captures the hope, uncertainty, and possibility of her generation. Her short story "Cold Pastoral" was published on NewYorker.com. Her essay "Even Artichokes Have Doubts" was excerpted in the Financial Times, and her book was the focus of a Nicholas Kristof column in The New York Times. Millions of her contemporaries have responded to her work on social media.

As Marina wrote: "We can still do anything. We can change our minds. We can start over...We're so young. We can't, we MUST not lose this sense of possibility because in the end, it's all we have." The Opposite of Loneliness is an unforgettable collection of Marina's essays and stories that articulates the universal struggle all of us face as we figure out what we aspire to be and how we can harness our talents to impact the world. "How do you mourn the loss of a fiery talent that was barely a tendril before it was snuffed out? Answer: Read this book. A clear-eyed observer of human nature, Keegan could take a clever idea...and make it something beautiful" (People).

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- Dimensions: 8.37" h x .80" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
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- 256 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

75 of 85 people found the following review helpful.

An excellent first book.. and last

By Frank A. Julianano

It's poignant enough that this gifted writer died at 22. Such promise. But Keegan writes about death -- her own, the planet's -- and her drive to do something meaningful with her life. It's a beautiful book, astonishingly insightful and ultimately heartbreaking.

But one of Keegan's professors at Yale wrote that "Marina wouldn't want you to read her book because she is dead, but because it is good." It is very good. Please read it.

50 of 56 people found the following review helpful.

I might be too old for this book...

By Laptantidel Latuda

Based on all the good reviews, I expected a collection of stories that portrays the twenty-something generation in an original way. However, when I read this book, I felt like reading a string of essays from a college-kid (which I guess is precisely what this book is), but I searched in vain to find that special spark that I believed this book would have. I could not see originality in these texts, they felt like any other of the thousands of college or post-college writers in the blogosphere or in print could have written this - more or

less mature thoughts about first time experiences, about the uncertainties in their young lives, about weird or awkward situations their parents never prepared them for. The stories are nice enough for sure, but to me they lack any character that could not be found elsewhere. I also quickly grew quite bored of the privileged college girl perspective that permeates this book, and I did not manage to finish reading it. I think it is a very nice way to remember a young promising writer who died in an accident by publishing her writings, and I think it is great to read her prose and marvel at the endless possibilities of what may one day become of her. Keegan was only starting to explore her potential, and the book reflects that she had not really blossomed, yet. Maybe the younger readers will find the special appeal in this book that I could not. To me, Keegan portrays the twenty-something generation in a way that it has been portrayed in countless times before.

81 of 94 people found the following review helpful.

Some of the most powerful writing I've seen

By Andy Shuping

ARC provided by NetGalley

Writing an honest review for any book can be difficult, but this type of book is especially difficult. Marina was already garnering praise before she graduated: her essay "Opposite of Loneliness" went viral, she graduated magna cum laude from Yale, a job all lined up, things being published...and she died tragically five days after she graduated. It's not the type of book that you want to write and say that you didn't like, for fear of pitchforks and torches and shouts. But, here's the thing...I don't have to write that type of review. Honestly.

This book is many things: a grieving process for the family, a memorial to a friend, and more importantly a powerful monument to a writer that is able to distill the essence of humanity onto paper. The book is composed of several different parts: the introduction essay that the book takes its title from "The Opposite of Loneliness," several of Marina's short stories, and several of her essays. Intermixed in are quotes and snippets from poems that she wrote, although these are not shown in full, at least not in this galley copy. All in all it captures some of the best work of this young writer.

The first quote we see is from Marina's poem Bygones: "Do you wanna leave soon?" "No, I want enough time to be in love with everything. And I cry because everything is so beautiful and so short."

The title essay, "The Opposite of Loneliness" went viral after it was published. And you really don't have to stretch to understand why, as it's something that many of us can relate to. While it is written about graduating from college, it also applies to the leaving of home, of a comfort zone, of going off into the unknown. And while there have been hundreds of writers that have written about this topic before, Marina's take is different. She states simply, and eloquently, that the feeling of leaving the known is scary. Of walking away from having friends right next door, of structure, and everything taken care of is one of the scariest things possible. And all of these people saying "oh this is the best time of your life, cherish it" makes you afraid of what's to come. But Marina stands up and says, my life isn't over, I'm going to continue to have fun until I'm old. And while there are many things to quote this one "What we have to remember is that we can still do anything. We can change our minds. We can start over." Life isn't over because of moving on, it's just beginning.

While there are several of Marina's stories in the book, they didn't stand out to me as much. Not because they aren't good, but because her essays are that much better. In the essays that are shared, it seems obvious a couple of them are school assignments. The first one is about her first car. Now in the hands of most college students they would write about how awesome and cool the car was, or how stupid it was they were driving the station wagon that had been in the family for 10 years. Probably something with a few laughs, but not memorable. Marina's essay though...is different. Marina doesn't just write about the car, but she connects it to

her essence. We learn how the car came to her after her grandfather passed away and her grandmother wanted to only have one car. That when she got the keys for it she and her grandmother drove stopped, listened to an old tape of a favorite artist, and opened the moonroof to look out, and smiled. That the car had the scent of her grandmother's perfume in it for a long time, that it was organized like her with a spare sewing kit and other items, until gradually it became Marina's. The tin foil balls from breakfast biscuits on the way to school on the driver's side door, the dents in the steering wheel from her fingernails after crying because a boy just wanted to be friends, the smells and papers that lived in the car. Until it was time to pass it on to her brother and she wondered if she could recapture the scent of her grandmother's perfume one more time. You can't but help be entrapped by that overwhelming feeling of humanity. She paints a picture with her words and you can see it before you and get swept up in it all.

And her other essays are no less powerful. We read and nod along as she describes growing up and wanting to fit in and she could...except for her diet. Because she needed to be gluten free, before anyone else knew what that meant. And we understand and cringe at the embarrassment she felt as her mom tried to keep her healthy and safe, but made her feel singled out. We understand the constant struggle of wanting to belong, but of having to follow a diet, but balancing the needs of family, but wanting to be normal college girl and not worry about kissing a boy after he drank a beer or ate a pizza. Or in the essay where she writes about beached whales, and the tens of thousands of dollars spent in rescuing them, but we do nothing for the homeless in front of us, but the whales are special, but are fellow humans are right there. Marina makes us proud and sad of our humanity. She captures it so expertly and shows us what we're doing that is so right...and so wrong.

Marina died young and while we may mourn that, we are left with her essays and other writings that have the power to change the world. And while that may be an over used phrase, I think it accurately describes Marina's style. Her ability to capture the very essence of humanity! and to distill it onto paper, to share raw emotions with you via words and make you feel what she does...tis a rare gift and talent. While Marina may be gone, we need to read and reread what she has written and take it to heart. Let it give us chills, fear, hope, anger...whatever emotion it brings to you, let it come.

I highly recommend this book to all readers. 4 out of 5

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THE OPPOSITE OF LONELINESS: ESSAYS AND STORIES BY MARINA KEEGAN PDF

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Amazon.com Review

J. R. Moehringer About J. R. Moehringer

J. R. Moehringer, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing in 2000, is a former national correspondent for the Los Angeles Times. Author of the bestselling memoir, *The Tender Bar*, he is also the co-author of *Open* by Andre Agassi. His most recent publication is *Sutton*, published in 2012.

J. R. Moehringer on Marina Keegan

I never met Marina Keegan, but when I learned of her death I felt as if I'd known her well. We belonged to several of the same tribes. We were both Yalies. We were both from the Northeast. Both Irish, both writers. We walked some of the same paths, probably sat in the same chairs. So it was as if I'd lost a close cousin, or even a kid sister.

Then I read her work. In that terrible week, as media outlets posted her essays, as people around the world reposted them, I read every word with a sinking, quickening heart. The first news reports, I felt, had been wrong - this wasn't simply a promising young writer, this was a prodigy, a rare rare talent, still raw, still evolving, but shockingly mature. From the few things she'd published in her brief life I could project a remarkable career, a line of words stretching far into the future, words that would have thrilled and enlightened, words that might have changed people's lives. As I grieved for her family, her friends, her boyfriend, I also grieved for the global community of readers who would never know the pleasure and excitement of a brand new book by Marina Keegan.

Marina Keegan

All of which made me think there should be, there must be, at least one book with Marina's name on the spine. Publishers aren't eager to take chances these days, but I hoped that one would have the guts, the heart, to make a slim, posthumous collection of Marina's stories and essays and poems. I could actually see the book in my mind, stacked on the front table of a sunlit bookstore, perhaps the Yale bookstore, where I'm sure Marina dreamed about her work appearing one day.

A year later, it came in the mail, the very book I'd seen in my mind, with the only possible title: *The Opposite of Loneliness*. I studied the striking cover photo and felt a wave of sorrow and joy. Then I sat down and read it and that sorrow-joy feeling became my constant companion over the next several days.

This is a book full of wonders. This is a book full of sentences that any writer, 21 or 101, would be proud to have authored. This is a book that will speak to young readers, because it expresses some of that inexpressible anxiety of starting out, of making life's first momentous choices, of wanting and fearing and needing and hoping and dreading everything at the same time. It will also speak to older readers, because it's an inspiring reminder of youth's brimming energy, its quivering sense of possibility.

Young people get a bad rap for thinking they're immortal, and acting accordingly, but Marina dwelled on the end. Hers, civilization's, the sun's. "And time, that takes survey of all the world, must have a stop." She must have heard her beloved adviser Harold Bloom expound many times on Hotspur's line, and clearly she took it to heart, personalized it. Savor every half-second, she seemed to be saying, to herself, to her readers, and her meditations on death, once charmingly precocious, now feel breathtakingly premonitory. Describing a group of fifty whales beached near her house on Cape Cod, she laments that their songs don't transmit on land, and thus they can't communicate their final thoughts. "I imagined dying slowly next to my mother or a lover, helplessly unable to relay my parting message."

Such was her fate. And yet it wasn't, not really. This book is her parting message, exquisitely relayed.

And it's not a mournful message. There's so much light and humor here. In the title essay alone I hear glimmers of Lorrie Moore, Ann Beattie, Fran Lebowitz. For example, when Marina worries that other kids are sprinting ahead of her, embarking on fabulous careers while she's still clinging to the cocoon of Yale. "Some of us have focused ourselves. Some of us know exactly what we want and are on the path to get it; already going to med school, working at the perfect NGO, doing research. To you I say both congratulations and you suck."

My favorite passage might be this gorgeous burst of nostalgia, this prose poem about the bright college years. "When the check is paid and you stay at the table. When it's four a.m. and no one goes to bed. That night with the guitar. That night we can't remember. That time we did, we went, we saw, we laughed, we felt. The hats."

The hats. That tiny sentence was the first raindrop before the deluge, a tickling hint of all that was to come. How many 21-year-olds are capable of a line so sure-handed, so precisely and comically placed? The only other two-word sentence I can think of that had me laughing aloud and shaking my head was in *Lolita*. (Humbert summarizing his mother's demise: "Picnic, lightning.")

If I'd met Marina, I'd have urged her to keep these first hopeful essays handy, cherish their energy, refer to them whenever beset by despair and doubt. Instead I'll have to give that advice to her readers.

I also might have told Marina that we do have a word for the opposite of loneliness. It's called reading. Again, I'll have to tell her readers. This book reminds us: as long as there are books, we're never completely alone. Open it anywhere and Marina's voice leaps off the page, uncommonly honest, forever present. With this lovely book always at hand, we and Marina will never be completely apart.

Review

"In her brief life Marina Keegan managed to achieve a precocious literary mastery. Her wry, wise, lyrical voice is unforgettable, and her vital, exuberant spirit reminds us powerfully to seize the day. Though every sentence throbs with what might have been, this remarkable collection is ultimately joyful and inspiring, because it represents the wonder that she was." (J.R. Moehringer, Pulitzer Prize winner and New York Times bestselling author of *The Tender Bar*)

"I will never cease mourning the loss of my beloved former student Marina Keegan. This book gives partial

evidence of the extraordinary promise that departed with her. Throughout she manifests authentic dramatic invention and narrative skill. Beyond all those, she makes a vital appeal to everyone in her generation not to waste their gifts in mere professionalism but instead to invest their youthful pride and exuberance both in self-development and in the improvement of our tormented society." (Harold Bloom, Sterling Professor of the Humanities and English, Yale University)

"Many of my students sound forty years old. They are articulate but derivative, their own voices muffled by their desire to skip over their current age and experience, which they fear trivial, and land on some version of polished adulthood without passing Go. Marina was twenty-one and sounded twenty-one: a brainy twenty-one, a twenty-one who knew her way around the English language, a twenty-one who understood that there were few better subjects than being young and uncertain and starry-eyed and frustrated and hopeful. When she read her work aloud around our seminar table, it would make us snort with laughter, and then it would turn on a dime and break our hearts." (Anne Fadiman, Yale University Professor of English and Francis Writer in Residence and author of *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* and *Ex Libris*)

"Illuminates the optimism and neurosis felt by new grads everywhere. . . Like every millennial who's seen irony elevated to an art form, Keegan brings self-awareness to the collective insecurity of her peers even as she captures it with a precision that only comes from someone who feels it too. How unfortunate that she will never know the value readers will find in her work." (Publishers Weekly)

"Funny, poignant, tender, and fiercely alive, 'The Opposite of Loneliness' contains the keen observations of a short lifetime—and the wisdom of a much longer one." (Jennifer DuBois, author of *Cartwheel* and *A Partial History of Lost Causes*)

"The writing Marina Keegan left behind offers a tantalizing taste of a literary voice still in development, yet already imbued with unusual insight, nuance, humor, and sensitivity." (Deborah Treisman, Fiction Editor, "The New Yorker")

"Two years after a young writer's death, her words soar. . . . The Opposite of Loneliness...sparkles with talent, humanity, and youth. The prose, polished but thoroughly unselfconscious, is heartbreaking evidence of what could have been." (O Magazine)

"A bittersweet, what-might-have-been book filled with youthful optimism, energy, honesty, and beyond-her-years wisdom." (Yale Alumni Magazine)

"The Opposite of Loneliness captures in both fiction and nonfiction [Keegan's] adventures in love and lust, the weird bliss of being stoned, and, as she writes, what it's like to see 'everything in the world build up and then everything in the world fall down again.'" (Elle)

"Remarkable... a compelling literary voice... the appeal of this collection is its improvisational quality, its feeling of being unfinished but always questioning." (Chicago Tribune)

"How do you mourn the loss of a fiery talent that was barely a tendril before it was snuffed out? Answer: Read this book. A clear-eyed observer of human nature, [Keegan] could take a clever idea...and make it something beautiful." (People Magazine)

"A triumph...Keegan was right to prod us all to reflect on what we seek from life." (Nicholas Kristof, "The New York Times")

"The Opposite of Loneliness does [Keegan's] talent and memory justice, both as a picture of a generation entering adulthood and as a highly personal portrait of a gifted young woman." (Pittsburgh-Post Gazette)

"What a gift Keegan has left behind. Not only in her written words...but also in her legacy of social activism and fierce belief in leading a life of purpose, not privilege. (Joseph P. Kahn, Boston Globe)

"Keegan's fiction... is built around the kind of empathetic extrapolation that makes for all the best realism... Keegan would have been—would have continued to be—a star. She would have been famous, not quietly or vaguely, but really, really famous." (The New Republic)

"[Keegan] was one of the most present, incisive, and hopeful writers.... That's the gift and the pain of her book. How incredible, how lucky, that we get to read her words, that people who never knew her or her work can find it for themselves, that she was in some way given the chance to speak to the world the way she wanted." (Buzzfeed)

"A glimpse of a young woman who is growing as a writer and a person, someone who's thinking deeply about love and the world around her and the scale of the universe....I have no doubt she would have been great." (Bustle)

"In the little time [Keegan] graced the world she created a life's work many writers could only dream of achieving in decades." (MariaShriver.com)

"This posthumous collection of essays and short stories is beautiful and brilliant, young but not childish—just like the author was. Every essay is a gem you want to pick up and put in your pocket, taking it out from time to time to see how it looks in different lights—the lights of promise and potential, yearning and memory. The Opposite of Loneliness will make people cry and hope." (Rewire Me)

"The loveliest piece of writing I've ever seen from someone so young... Her voice is steady and often very funny, her senses of character and pace are frighteningly good, and the flow of her prose is easy to get carried away by. She wasn't just college-talented; she was talented, period." (Kevin Roose, New York Magazine)

"A new voice of her generation." (The Hartford Courant)

"Wonderful... Marina Keegan did that thing we all want to do as writers: say what everyone else is thinking, but better." (Refinery29)

"Inspirational." (The Huffington Post)

"Full of uncanny wisdom...Marina would not want to be remembered because she was dead. She would want to be remembered because she's good. No worries there, Marina. You left us aching for more." (Detroit News)

"A talented voice, silenced too soon, endures...throughout there are reminders of the talent of this forever-22-year-old." (The Improper Bostonian)

About the Author

Marina Keegan (1989-2012) was an award-winning author, journalist, playwright, poet, actress, and activist. Her nonfiction has been published in The New York Times; her fiction has been published on

New Yorker.com, and read on NPR's Selected Shorts; her musical, *Independents*, was a New York Times Critics' Pick. Marina's final essay for The Yale Daily News, "The Opposite of Loneliness," became an instant global sensation, viewed by more than 1.4 million people from 98 countries. For more information, please visit TheOppositeofLoneliness.com.

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