

Praise for Meghan Daum's *The Quality of Life Report*

"There are layers of social commentary here that take a page straight from the Tom Wolfe playbook. . . . Social satire in these oversensitive times is the devil to pull off. Poking fun at anyone other than the rich and ridiculous may work for stand-up comedians but is tricky for the novelist. Daum manages the near impossible: to make fun of people without judging them."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

"If *The Quality of Life Report*, a comic, caustic first novel by essayist and National Public Radio regular Meghan Daum, were any less honest, her story could have ended on page fifteen. But Daum's bittersweet deconstruction of Lucinda's illusions reads like *The Bridges of Madison County* etched in acid."

—*Time*

"In this winning debut novel . . . Daum manages to present, then explode, a motley crew of American stereotypes. . . . No one escapes Daum's wit or criticism; ultimately, each earns her respect. . . . If the premise sounds a bit stale—big city girl searches for happiness, love and better life in small town—*The Quality of Life Report* is anything but. Daum's humor and humanity have seen to that."

—*The Nation*

"Daum's sharp eye for the cultural quirk makes for a compulsive read."

—*Time Out New York*

"In bringing off this credible story in a novel that also features high humor, Daum displays a talent as true as it is new."

—*The Boston Globe*

"Meghan Daum has written a stunner of a book—outrageously perceptive, unexpectedly poignant, and most of all incalculably funny. I found myself chortling aloud in my bed as I read it, amazed at its take-no-prisoners attitude to all that passes for a hip inhabitation of the world. *The Quality of Life Report* is everything that touted novels by young urban women are supposed to be but generally are not: original, wise beyond its years, and absolutely true to itself. Daum's is a glistening talent, one that leaves most of her contemporaries—male and female—in the dust. What can I say? Here's a novel for the ages."

—Daphne Merkin

“It’s an absorbing read, a literary page turner brimming with witty dialogue and compelling narrative turns.”

—*The Hartford Courant*

“Daum’s essay collection *My Misspent Youth* established her as a thoughtful and terrifically gifted writer, and her first novel lives up to that promise. . . . Daum raises big questions in her bracing, funny novel. At once hilarious and wistful, it’s such a pleasure to read that after you turn the last page, you want to start over from the beginning and read it again.”

—*Booklist*

“I cared deeply about Lucinda Trout, Meghan Daum’s winning, hilarious, Chardonnay-seeking narrator. Lucinda and Ms. Daum herself share a flair for chic satire, plain truth, and, most impressively, a rare, wise forgiveness.”

—David Schickler, author of *Kissing in Manhattan*

“Though the love story occupies center stage, this is not mere chick lit, and men will enjoy it, too. It is a confident first novel, full of wit and deft social criticism, often very funny and frequently wise. Daum is a rising star.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“With a keen eye and trenchant wit, Meghan Daum skewers the obsessive narcissism and sense of entitlement that passes for real values in our media-driven culture. Always funny, often painfully so, *The Quality of Life Report* is more than simply satirical. It is an intelligent and heartfelt tale of a young woman, making radical choices and waking up to her life.”

—Ruth Ozeki, author of *My Year of Meats* and *All Over Creation*

“An often brilliant comedy of overturned expectations.”

—*BookPage*

“A wry and witty novel.”

—*Omaha World-Herald*

“As hilarious as this novel is, its core is hard-won wisdom. Writing that appears this effortless can only be accomplished by the rigor and magic of a truly gifted novelist.”

—Melissa Bank, author of *The Girls’ Guide to Hunting and Fishing*

The Quality of Life Report

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MEGHAN DAUM

Foreword by CURTIS SITTENFELD

The
Quality
of Life
Report

* * *

A Novel



University of Texas Press

AUSTIN

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