



# B & Me: A True Story of Literary Arousal

*J.C. Hallman*

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## **B & Me: A True Story of Literary Arousal** J.C. Hallman

A funny, frisky, often outrageous book about love, literature, and modern life—and a wink of the eye to *U and I*, Nicholson Baker's classic book about John Updike—by an award-winning author called “wonderfully bright” by *The New York Times Book Review*.

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Nicholson Baker published *U and I*, the fretful and handwringing—but also groundbreaking—tale of his literary relationship with John Updike. *U and I* inspired a whole sub-genre of engaging, entertaining writing about reading, but what no story of this type has ever done is tell its tale from the moment of conception, that moment when you realize that there is a writer out there in the world that you must read—so you read them. *B & Me* is that story, the story of J.C. Hallman discovering and reading Nicholson Baker, and discovering himself in the process.

Our relationship to books in the digital age, the role of art in an increasingly commodified world, the power great writing has to change us, these are at the core of Hallman's investigation of Baker—questions he's grappled with, values he's come to doubt. But in reading Baker's work, Hallman discovers the key to overcoming the malaise that has been plaguing him, through the books themselves and what he finds and contemplates in his attempts to understand them and their enigmatic author: sex, book jackets, an old bed and breakfast, love, Monica Lewinsky, Paris, marriage, more sex, the logistics of libraries.

In the spirit of Geoff Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage* and Elif Batuman's *The Possessed*, *B & Me* is literary self-archaeology: a funny, irreverent, incisive story of one reader's desperate quest to restore passion to literature, and all the things he learns along the way.

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