



Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life

Amy Krouse Rosenthal

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If you're looking for quotes from newspapers and magazines, NPR, book reviews, endorsements from thousands of readers and bloggers, google *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* and just see for yourself how people everywhere are responding to this book.

In *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*, Amy Krouse Rosenthal has ingeniously adapted the centuries-old format of the encyclopedia to convey the accumulated knowledge of her lifetime in a poignant, wise, often funny, fully realized memoir. Using mostly short entries organized from A to Z, many of which are cross-referenced, Rosenthal captures in wonderful and episodic detail the moments, observations, and emotions that comprise a contemporary life. Start anywhere—preferably at the beginning—and see how one young woman's alphabetized existence can open up and define the world in new and unexpected ways.

An ordinary life, perhaps, but an extraordinary book.

Cross-section of ordinary life at this exact moment

A security guard is loosening his belt.

A couple is at a sushi restaurant with some old friends. They are reminiscing. In the back of their minds, they are thinking of being home.

A woman is trying to suck on a cherry Lifesaver but will end up biting it in six seconds.

A little boy is riding the train home with his dad after spending the day together at his office.

A man is running back into a grocery store to look for a scarf he dropped. He will leave with the phone number of a woman who will become his wife.

Words the author meant to use

Flair, Luxurious, Panoply, Churlish, Dainty, Folly

Wines that go nicely with this book

reds: Marcel Lapierre Morgon (France), Alario Dolcetto d'Alba Costa Fiore (Italy) whites: King Estate Pinot Gris (Oregon), Landmark Chardonnay Overlook (California)

Book, standing in the bookstore holding a

If I am standing there with the book in my hand, one of three things has already happened: Friend recommended it. Read a good review. Cover caught my eye. I can appreciate a cool cover. But it's like the extra credit part of a test—it only enhances an already solid grade. Getting it right won't help if most everything else is wrong. And getting it wrong won't hurt if most everything else is right. (There are countless books I cherish whose covers I don't like too much, or cannot even now recall.) The interior of the book—the terrain of its pages, where all those words took me, the tiny but very real spot it ultimately occupies in my mind—that becomes the book. Next I go to the flaps. The front flap needs to intrigue/not bore me, and the bio needs to tell me just enough about the author. I'll do my best to extract the author's entire existence from their 2-X-2 inch photo.

Off to the back cover. I'll be momentarily impressed when I see a blurb by a hot writer like _____, but I know that it is just as likely that I'll like the book as hate it regardless of these quotes. I look at them in a more voyeuristic way, like a literary gaper's delay: Wow, the author knows So and So. Bet they send each other clever text messages. Really the only thing I can gauge from the blurbs is my own pathetic jealousy level.

To get a true sense of the book, I have to spend a minute inside. I'll glance at the first couple pages, then flip to the middle, see if the language matches me somehow. It's like dating, only with sentences. Some sentences, no matter how well-dressed or nice, just don't do it for me. Others I click with instantly. It could be something as simple yet weirdly potent as a single word choice (tangerine). We're meant to be, that sentence and me. And when it happens, you just know.

Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life Details

Date : Published December 6th 2005 by Broadway Books (first published January 25th 2005)

ISBN : 9781400080465

Author : Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Humor, Biography Memoir

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From Reader Review Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life for online ebook

Ken says

THINK OF IT, WHY DIDN'T I

This book's conceit is rather novel. Clever author creates own encyclopedia of everyday things, dropping in her own thoughts on same. It seems easy. It seems to reward anyone willing to keep a journal. It seems it's too late to try the same trick, now that it's been ruined.

VOICE

This book has this in spades because boy, howdy, if you don't know Amy Krouse Rosenthal's every little notion by the end, you're thicker than Jimmy Hoffa's last pair of cement shoes.

AGREEMENT

Many of her posts you read and say, "Yeah, that's right. You nailed it there. I agree 100 percent." Like that bit about having a stranger photograph you and your friends. Everyone says thank you to the samaritan photographer once she's done, but when you go right UP to her to say a heartfelt thank you, it's the only one that really counts.

DISAGREEMENT

Many of her entries you read and say, "Nah, way off. Try again. Maybe you, but certainly not a lot of others. Get over yourself, why don't you?" For instance, under HAPPINESS, she writes about left hand turns and using your blinker and how that's all it takes to be happy. "What?" you say to yourself. "Only the H's and you're desperate for material already?"

CHICK LIT

This probably appeals more to women than men. Lots of mom entries, wife entries, what not.

RECOMMENDATIONS

AKR's book came recommended by a fellow teacher who swears by it. I must admit, some entries will make good exemplars to hand to students as models. It has just enough solipsistic joy to make it appealing to teens, I think. In that sense, even though I didn't love the book like she does, my heartfelt thanks goes out to her.

STARS

A quick read, an in-between read, a lightweight read, all of the above. Is there any more difficult type of book to rate with stars? It seems there should be different criteria.

FRATERNIZING WITH READERS

AKR writes about exchanging e-mails with readers and such. You can see why. The encyclopedia is almost

invasive at times and we feel we know her better than we have a right to know her. At least New Englanders would look at it that way. We draw greater distinctions between personal and private, ordinary and encyclopedia.

"INSTEAD"

This book has an advantage. I'm supposed to be reading *Don Quixote*, but *EOAOL* is so easy to read "instead" that it wound up getting finished first. By far. Not even close. For that escape hatch, I give Amy 5-stars.

MTV

The book reminds me of MTV as well as *Sesame Street*, both often credited with our short-attention span culture. Reading an alphabetized collection of blurbs like this is part of that phenomenon. Is Big Bird getting a percentage of the royalties? Where is he on the pecking order? And why is he everyone's least favorite *Sesame Street* character, anyway? (Clearly this should be under "S" and not "M.")

Pam says

Funny, quirky, engaging, at times poignant, and always spot on. AKR is a keen observer of details and human nature. I don't know how many times I was nodding like "YES! She NAILED IT." Especially the entry on lost items and assuming her amazing cleaning lady pocketed them. I've been guilty of that type of thing many a time.

Melody says

This didn't work for me. It wasn't so much the format as the fact that I didn't find Rosenthal nearly as interesting as she does. Her assertion that she's somehow 'normal' because she didn't have any addiction/abuse/trauma/poverty in her life got right up my nose. Lucky, sure. Normal? Fuck that.

Lisa Francine says

Amy and I agree about potato chips, prison escape movies, and much more. A delightful commentary on life and living.

kates says

I received this book as a Christmas gift from M. "Open it," she talk-whispered.

In it, a note scribbled on a piece of notepad from my most recent business trip:

"This must seem weird- not something you asked for. Powell's had Sherman Alexie write a blog about what

he was giving people for Christmas. I thought he'd send it to you if he knew. xo"

I burst into HappyChristmasTears, and she asked what was wrong. Nothing, I assured her. I just really love it.

I've just finished reading it today, 12/27/13, in one sitting. I sat down at approximately 8:15 and didn't rise except for coffee and some spare cookies, until I finished it by 11:30.

This book is smart. The author might cringe at my saying this, but I felt connected to my inner jewess/mother figure while reading. I felt like I was temporarily in on all the funniest jokes of a quirky, artist-woman. Some of her observations are blissfully simple: in *CONNECTED (VERSUS REMOVED)*, she writes: When I read a magazine, I feel connected to the world, in on everything. When I read a book, I feel removed from the world, isolated, as if I've slipped off into a soundproof booth.

Others are hilarious in their absurdity. in *SAMPRAS, PETE*, the author writes of her husband's retelling of a moment where he spontaneously played the part of a bumbling, innocently-pedestrian old-timey guy for no good reason -- and their subsequent guttural laughter about it in the kitchen. Charming and real.

Thanks, M.

Lesya says

There was something poignant about reading Amy Krouse Rosenthal's memoir, *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*. I checked it out of the library when I read her piece in *The New York Times*, "You May Want to Marry My Husband," <http://nyti.ms/2mFk0fE>. Rosenthal wrote the essay when she knew she was dying of ovarian cancer. Ten days after the piece appeared, she died.

Because Rosenthal's memoir was published in 2004, before she started publishing her children's books, it doesn't discuss them. Instead, it's very honest about her family, her feelings, her friendships, but it doesn't sugarcoat her faults. It's a clever format that I haven't seen for a memoir. She begins with an almanac that puts her life and book in context, what was popular when she wrote it, everything from news stories to children's names. She follows that with writings that led to the memoir. Then, she dives into an alphabetic discussion of her life.

Rosenthal read the entry "Encyclopedia" in an encyclopedia. One of the pertinent quotes said, "constructed like an onion, the different layers enclosing the heart". Rosenthal took that to heart, revealing thoughts and emotions. Dreams, fears, her husband and how she met him. She talks about introducing one friend to another, and feeling left out. She talks about things she's been into, such as coloring, and puts them in chronological order. Because the entries are in alphabetical order, random topics seem to come up. But, they all combine to give us a glimpse into Rosenthal's life.

At times, Amy Krouse Rosenthal's thoughts are nothing out of the ordinary. And, then there are comments that touch the heart. Under "Rainbows" she says there should be some sort of ritual associated with rainbows. "Or see a rainbow, put a dollar in a jar; then when you leave home at eighteen, your mother sends you off with your rainbow money." Just think about that - "your rainbow money". I want rainbow money in my life.

Why is Rosenthal's memoir heartbreaking while other biographies are not? Those people lived as well. Perhaps it's because her death is so fresh. Perhaps it's because of that essay about her husband, and the love she knew she was leaving behind. Knowing what we know now, that Rosenthal died on March 13 at fifty-one, the final entry is heart-breaking. It's "You". She says perhaps you think I don't matter. "But I was here. And I did things." The final line of that entry is, "I was here, you see. I was." Yes, Amy Krouse Rosenthal was.

Linda says

I read *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* after finishing a long, ambitious novel that fell short of its pretensions. The encyclopedia is quite *un*-ambitious, and that was exactly what I needed as a follow-up. Amy Krouse Rosenthal is witty, and she's self-aware enough to realize that none of what she's writing is particularly profound, and that's perfectly fine.

At the beginning, Rosenthal sets out to explain to posterity what life is like in the early twenty-first century. I find it interesting how much has changed in the fifteen-or-so years since she wrote this book--not just the news stories she mentions, which are ephemeral, but how often she mentions listening to CDs and sending faxes. She wrote this in a time when cell phones existed, but they didn't take pictures, much less connect to the internet. Social media didn't really exist, so finding out what your elementary school classmates have been up to seemed like a mystery.

I also read this with the knowledge that Rosenthal died in 2017, and before she did so, she wrote a poignant essay, "You May Want to Marry My Husband." Her love for Jason shines through this book, and knowing of her premature death makes her scattered musings about old age and death more bittersweet (or perhaps she'd consider it "wabi-sabi").

Kelly says

I really like how Amy's memoirs shift my thinking, even just a little. Fun, creative, light reading.

Ciara says

i don't know why i read this. i am annoyed by people who claim to have had "ordinary" lives due to the fact that they aren't abuse survivors or homeless or drug addicts or whatever. hey jerks, newsflash: living through a bunch of really difficult consitions & situations doesn't make a person "interesting," & having been nestled in the bosom of everything that is ozzie-&-harriet white bread middle-class american dream americana doesn't make a person "ordinary". it's pretty fucking EXTRAordinary, actually, to be so cosseted & sheltered from reality. & that is my biggest gripe with this book. it's just a book that a woman sat down & wrote at a coffeeshop over a period of several months, cataloguing her cosseted, sheltered life in the style of an

encyclopedia. the encyclopedia aspect is a pretty obvious gimmick & probably the only thing that attracted the interest of a publisher. i don't know. it bothers me when people refuse to acknowledge that we ALL live our lives in a political context, & that even growing up with the kind of cookie cutter sitcom life that rosenthal was blessed with means that she occupies a certain sphere within that context. but she is completely uninterested in considering that possibility. she says repeatedly throughout the book, "i'm not political...politics don't interest me..." etc. well, that's great, & she's sure not alone in feeling that way. but it's a privilege--a political privilege--to feel that way, & it would be nice if it wasn't constantly repeated in a tone that implies that people who DO care about politics are complete dullards, or that people who write memoirs about surviving abuse, homelessness, drug addiction, war, et al, are doing it for attention or because they are inherently interesting by virtue of being somehow tragic. bah. sometimes i hate people.

Lara Lillibridge says

This is one of my favorite memoirs. It is written as a series of encyclopedic entries in alphabetical order. Rosenthal's book starts with what she titles an "Orientation almanac," which is basically a list of facts about life in the US between 2000-2005. She lists things like top CNN stories, cost of living averages, but also, "what we call the other driver when angry" and "what we say when we bang our knee on the corner of the table, burn a hand on a hot skillet, or get frustrated trying to untangle a computer cord." Next she has a timeline, called, "evolution of this moment," that gives the notable dates of her life, and finally, we delve into section called "Alphabetized existence." The entries range from lists of what childhood tasted like, quotes, tidbits, and memories. There are charts, drawings, and copies of emails and letters. Four pages are devoted to an entry labelled, "Experiment: Contest Parking Ticket on Grounds of Karma."

It's one of those rare creatures—a happy memoir. By the end I really got a feel for her life.

Gayle says

This small book is Amy Krouse Rosenthal's commentary on life, specifically hers, organized alphabetically. Which means it's all about Amy.

It was OK. I'm not complaining about her writing skills; she has nothing to blush for. But the book itself--the content--did not work for me.

There were a few times where I said Yes! That is exactly how I feel! But mostly it was a study in not-like-ness. Oh, there were a few times when I said Ewww! or (eyebrows raised, eyes half-closed, mouth scrunched up) You Are Weird. But mostly I was saying You are not like me because you grew up in a different time and place and subculture. Not that I would dislike you, but we would not really understand one another most of the time. Other than being American and wives/mothers, we don't have very much in common. And after a whole book of that, I felt kind of aloof, because everybody gets it but me, and I don't want to get it.

And she can be a bit vulgar. Mostly it was at the beginning, but that's another not-like, off-putting thing. It's like the one scene in a movie that takes the rating from PG to R.

So...I wouldn't read it again because it's not all about me? I suppose. At some level, I read to connect to the author, to discover likeness, to find myself or validate the self I have already found. To discover a profound disconnect, then, is not satisfactory.

But at least it was organized.

Mind the Book says

Unik och underbar.

"Work must reflect randomness of life, with its incessant, merciless, almost humorous bombardment of highly contrasting emotions and experiences."

nicole says

cute idea, but it'd be much funnier if someone you actually knew wrote it. in a blog. and wasn't so cute about it.

Jules Q says

I rarely give a book a perfect 10 on the ratings scale, but I have to do so in this case. It's not that the book itself is perfect, nor the author extremely engaging in her own right, but I found the experience of reading it to be a magical one. I was thoroughly inspired at every sitting, my creativity just bursting upon reading each entry. I want to create an encyclopedia of my own life! And for that boost I applaud Rosenthal. I am viewing my world with new eyes and a notepad in hand. No other reading experience has brought me to this place, and I suspect few will ever come close again. Encyclopedia is a book tailor-made for those who seek inspiration in their surroundings, and it succeeds in bringing to life all the minutiae that seems to oppress but is actually the cocoon that shapes us into what we can become.

Dominic says

If I wanted to be cliché, I might write, "Amy Krouse Rosenthal, in her unusual memoir, turns the ordinary life into the extraordinary life." But I'd be totally wrong. There is nothing "extraordinary" about her life as it is catalogued in the encyclopediac entries that comprise this book, but that doesn't mean it isn't worth reading. In fact, Rosenthal's book isn't simply original in its approach and hard to put down, it captures the harmless (and shameless) self-aggrandizing we partake in as we make sense of our lives.

Reading *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* is at turns poignant, utterly hilarious, and painfully true. I dare everyone to read it and not think about the various entries they would write themselves. Rosenthal illuminates our moments of déjà vu, of serendipity, all those daily miracles, and makes us feel like they--and WE--mean something of real value.

I have told my students that studying literature and all the ironies and metaphors and symbols strewn across these pages enable us to make sense of the irony and metaphor and symbols of our own lives. We become the book *and* the reader, an exciting transaction that makes our lives feel even more worthwhile and interesting and rich. *Encyclopedia* is evidence of the beauty of this process.

Written almost like blog posts, the book was an easy one to soar through, and it had me smiling nearly the whole way through. But the biggest surprise came at the end when I started to cry reading this seemingly mundane passage:

I watched a celloist's bow go up and down, and adored the music he made. I picked at a scab. I wished I was older. I wished I was younger. I loved my children. I loved mayonnaise. I sucked my thumb. I chewed on a blade of grass.

I don't know exactly why, but the sentence "I loved mayonnaise" utterly wrecked me.

I have never been suicidal, but in my darkest moments, I have wondered if things would just be better if I wasn't around. I never stay with the thought very long, but for a few moments that feeling concretized. But the whole arc of Rosenthal's book, read over the course of 48 hours, led me to believe that our ordinary existence is precious and worth holding onto with all we've got. We are here. We have this. *She loved mayonnaise!* This life is my own book (because I may never publish one for real)...ordinary, mundane, a little high-blown if you were to listen to the narrator in my brain, and all mine to keep on writing, reading, and living.

Kim says

I was listening to NPR one rainy day in my car and there was, I think, a This American Life segment that mentioned this and it stuck... Amy Rosenthal gets it. And I hate her for it. I hate her and I love her. I should BE her... but that would require motivation and inspiration and for me to go back six years and kick her butt into NOT writing this so that I could.

Just from the cover... *'I have not survived against all odds. I have not lived to tell. I have not witnessed the extraordinary. This is my story.'* How cool is that? And when you actually delve into the book... wow. It's more than just a book, it's a collection. It's like scrap booking, but wicked cool (sorry scrapbookers...it's true)

There are a few things that I really really want to do but fail at miserably.

Drinking tea. I so want to be a tea drinker. It looks sophisticated and homey and everything that I want to be. I even have a shirt that says 'Make Tea Not War' What a hypocrite I am! But, I've tried the stuff and the after taste is NASTY. I want to sandpaper my tongue just to get it out of my mouth. So uncool of me.

Knit. Okay, so I'm trying to remedy this. I have an incredible knitter buying me books and good yarn and good needles and being patient with me trying to get me to remember how to actually DO it (dig under and

then AROUND then under? Behind? UGH!) I want to be the person who shows off her wicked awesome handmade socks. I want someone to comment on my incredibly comfy blanket. Yeah, I want to be freakin' Martha Stewart, okay? Sue me.

Keeping a Journal. Yes, this is the big hang-my-head-in-shame moment. Why is this such a thorn in my side? Obviously I love writing. Obviously I don't seem to have an trouble talking about myself. I think I know what it is... it's the whole rigorously punctuality of it all. Seriously. I have issues with going to the gym and it literally takes threats of death to get me there... so to ask me to log in details of my life, however easy that may seem... it's so not.

What Amy does here is take ordinary people, places, things and events and writes an entry about it that's totally subjective yet could totally be relevant to you too. (Hate Her) Her insights to everyday musings (does that make sense?) are incredible. She has a police sketch artist draw her with only the descriptions that her husband and her father gives him--what she looks like through their eyes. The entry about her husband made me weep (page 117)

This is her entry under 'Stupid Slow Driver':

"When I see a slow driver, I have to pull up alongside him to see what this person looks like, to confirm my suspicions. I am certain I will find a distinctly stupid-looking person. Ah yes, he looks totally stupid. Stupid slow driver."

And this one follows, it's for 'Sunday':

"Though this has never materialized, I still think of Sunday as the day I will stay home and make a large vat of chili for the neighbors, and also boil a sack of potatoes so we can use them in various ways throughout the busy work week."

This is exactly what good reading' is about. A story doesn't need a opening paragraph, plot, settings, summary. It doesn't have to even contain words. It has to jar you, it has to pull you in and make you laugh, cry and relate. And who can't relate to having an obsessive need for coffee and trying to balance that with raising children, listening to the radio, remembering that you need trash bags when you hit the grocery store and is it this week that your kid has yoga? I walk that line daily.

If you liked this book you should definitely visit the website.

www.encyclopediaofanordinarylife.com

Amanda says

10/6--Kim, are you out there? Are you listening?

You're Amy Krouse Rosenthal, aren't you?

Me, too!!!

10/10--In a brief half hour of stillness, I open my book. And my breath is stolen by the entry on Dying. A

sudden snap, and life as we know it is over. And not so much by our own death, but by the death of someone we love or of someone we don't even know. This entry tells me that Amy Krouse Rosenthal has a hole in her heart that can't be filled by all the funny encyclopedia entries in the world, no matter how hard she tries...

10/11--Finished. I am reminded, time and again, at each turn of the page, that we are the same person, bonded by silliness and sentiment. My god, it almost makes me feel normal.

Some of my favorite parts:

~*Tuesday Night*. Amy and her kids walk along and a woman in the neighborhood runs out her door asking for help!!! Her zipper is stuck, and can Amy help her out of her dress. OHHH! So touching and sweet.

~*Identity*. An experiment you must see!

~*Infinity*. Is infinity even or odd? I LOVE THE NUMBER INFINITY WITH UNBRIDLED PASSION, YET I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF ITS EVENNESS OR ODDNESS BEFORE!!! Really, it's both and neither, shit I really enjoyed thinking about it for a while.

~*Good to Bad Mood*. Yes, yes, and yes.

~*Catch*. The Mars symbol means "throw the ball." Ha ha ha ha!

~*Purple Flower*. Where was I at that moment? Sitting in the farmers' market at our "today only because of A&T Homecoming" location, sitting behind a display and glancing occasionally at a pile of fresh kale beside me. I considered emailing Amy (Krouse Rosenthal) my story, per her request. But then I couldn't find her email address. And then I stopped looking because I chickened out.

~On the back page, after the book is technically over. Here you will find a list of things happening *right at this moment in another part of the universe*. I love this so much because I wonder what other people are doing all the time. I sit and I close my eyes and I think, "Wow. Other people in the world are breathing right now. Sarah Michelle Gellar is probably sitting at a bar with a dear friend, just chatting. Lee Lee Tran who was my best friend when I was in 3rd and 4th grade is *somewhere* in the world, maybe hugging her daughter (if she has one). Scott, the only man I've ever loved, is on the other side of the world, sleeping. And NOT dreaming of me. I hope he never has sex again for the rest of his stupid stupid life. Ohhhhhh, but I bet *somebody* in the world is having perfect and passionate sex right now, and they will never forget this moment as long as they live. How cool is that?

~*Wabi-Sabi*. This is the new thing I learned today. I hope I remember it tomorrow.

Megan says

Memoirs have been the hot thing for a while now and it seems as if they are all trying to one up the other. "I divorced my husband and traveled to India, Bali, and Italy and found myself AND a new husband!" "Well, I cooked every one of Julia Child's recipes for a whole year!" "Well, I was stranded with my arm chopped under a boulder for days and I finally decided to amputate it myself!" (Can you guess the books?) Although I'm poking fun at them, I truly enjoyed all of these books. They inspire you, amaze you, etc. All the mushy things books like that are supposed to do.

But, at times I believe they can make the reader feel alienated. Much like the intro to this book expressed. I feel empowered but also disheartened a bit if I read too many of these. I don't rock climb. I haven't survived being homeless. I can barely cook; I haven't left the country even! It seems like there are only certain types of life stories that get published and are therefore "important". I live an ordinary life and do overall "ordinary" things, much like the author. Does that make her or my life any less important or meaningful? Does that make our story or acts of love less? No. People may find it egotistical that she wrote such random,

minute things about herself (which they are not even all about herself, but more about the world in general). "What have YOU done? Why should I care??" you may think when reading this. But I think her point is we SHOULD care, the details DO matter, and we don't have to have some huge life crisis for us to matter. I think although she is talking about herself, her story is meant to empower others to see their lives as important, to connect to others in the small ways she does.

So how does she do this?

I think the good thing about is that although she is emphasizing her ordinary life, she probably recognized it wouldn't best be told in a typical fashion. The encyclopedia idea emphasizes the little details (divided alphabetically) that honestly would never have fit together to make a typically written memoir. It also allows the reader to flip through at random and find sections or drawings that appeal to them--gasp! Just like an encyclopedia! It is a wonderful book full of humor, sadness, and reflection and the structure of it is brilliant. You must read it for yourself.

For a better idea here are two of my favorite "entries" (also some are shown at the top), since there is nothing to really "spoil" in this book:

Calling Someone's Name:

"You're calling someone's name, trying to get their attention. Perhaps you're in a crowd. Or they are across the street. Or they went to get popcorn and Raisinets and are now looking for you in the packed movie theater. You cup your hands around your mouth and repeatedly call their name, waving your arm---Here I am---but they don't hear or see you. No matter who they are---a lawyer, a surgeon, a Latin scholar---they look like an idiot searching for you, craning their head like that, and you question their intelligence."

Glue:

"I asked Jason to pick up some glue traps at the hardware store. He didn't read the list I had given him closely, so he came home not with glue traps but just glue--in fact, two kinds, Elmer's and super glue. As I was emptying the plastic bag, I pictured him at the store: She wants glue, but I don't know which kind. To be on the safe side I will get her one of each. Imagining him standing there in the aisle, thinking that, I felt sentimental, very much in love."

Debbie says

This book was so quirky and random that I couldn't help loving it.

It was rather bittersweet to read the author's insight on the ordinary after reading about her death and her article to find her husband a new wife.

I must read more of her work.

Don't expect this to read like a novel or normal memoir. It is snippets in alphabetical order. Very fun and insightful.

susie says

amy krouse rosenthal writes with the exact same flair and random brilliance as every single one of my friends -- perhaps why this book wasn't as unusual and unique as i expected. though there were some passages i was compelled to read aloud to anyone who'd listen, i mostly had the nagging feeling that i already know amy from somewhere, maybe chicago where i too grew up. she mentions names of people i'm familiar with like greg allen of the neo-futurists, and the whole concept and brevity of the chapters remind me of neo-futurist plays from 'too much light..'

things that made me want to write amy:

1. she offers to bake people pies
2. she loves mail, and i love mail, and we mail people need to stick together
3. 'alphabetized' was misspelled as 'aphabetized' early on -- how typos make it to the paperback edition is beyond me.
4. on the page where she talks about q-tips, it says "See also: french fries" and it reads as if she also sticks french fries in her ears.

reasons why i probably won't write amy:

1. i actually didn't relate to her in a lot of the book: she was popular, threw parties, was a cheerleader -- later had the luxury of writing in coffee houses constantly and dropping off her dry cleaning, has kids, is married - is she really like a friend of mine at all?
 2. i'd really just be in it for the pie.
-