



## Snapshots of a Girl

*Beldan Sezen*

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## Snapshots of a Girl Beldan Sezen

In this autobiographical graphic novel, Beldan Sezen revisits the various instances of her coming of age, and her coming out as lesbian, in both western and Islamic cultures (as the daughter of Turkish immigrants in western Europe)—to friends, family, and herself. Through a series of vignettes, she navigates the messy circumstances of her life, dealing with family issues, bad dates, and sexual politics with the raw honesty of a young woman looking for happiness. *Snapshots* is an amusing, thoroughly modern take on dyke life and cultural identity.

**Beldan Sezen**'s previous graphic novels were *Zakkum* and *#GeziPark* .

## Snapshots of a Girl Details

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## From Reader Review Snapshots of a Girl for online ebook

### Melle says

This is sort of a cultural "crazy quilt" -- lesbian daughter of Turkish immigrants learns about herself amidst the backdrops of Germany and the Netherlands -- but, at its heart, it's a story of a young woman looking for acceptance from herself, her family, and her world. The illustrations are pretty unflinching, and the whole thing feels like looking in on someone's diary.

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### Kay says

"Snapshots of a Girl" by Beldan Sezen was a quick but fun read.

As a qwoc, I love finding books about other qwoc. Especially graphic novels! Sezen's book includes a variety of moments from her life (hence the title) interwoven with commentary about an array of topics. She speaks about her grad years - a time of navigating her sexuality and footing in antifa organizations while in male-dominated spaces. She speaks about coming out to her family. My favorite story involved a phone call to her mom about an upcoming family gathering. I'm not Turkish but I definitely heard her mom's words in my aunts' and grandma's voices lol. I digress. She also speaks on her romantic past with men to highlight the questioning and longing queer women experience in the face of heteronormativity. So relatable!

Didn't know what to expect from "Snapshots of a Girl" but maybe going in blindly worked in my favor. There's nothing groundbreaking inside but the relatable (for me) commentary made this a good read. Definitely a book I'd recommend to other qwoc. Especially those interested in non-US queer history since majority of the book takes place in '90s Europe.

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### Roberta says

Vita da pendolare: un Becco Giallo all'andata, un Becco Giallo al ritorno.

Ormai sono abbastanza addentro al mio proposito di leggere tutti i volumi presenti nelle biblioteche del milanese, anche quelli il cui argomento non mi interessa tanto quanto i temi dei volumi di cronaca.

Questa graphic novel racconta il coming out, in più tappe, di Beldan Sezen, artista turco-tedesca. Io non so chi sia né se sia famosa, tantomeno so cosa voglia dire scoprirsi lesbica e rivelarlo al mondo. L'autrice tenta di spiegarcelo, scoprendo per prima che molte volte ha più remore lei stessa che le persone a cui va a rivelare il suo segreto. Probabilmente per chi la conosce come artista il fumetto ha un impatto emotivo più forte di quello che ha avuto su di me.

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### Jill says

I wanted to love this one, based on everything that i've heard about it, but it didn't quite click. The story felt scattered and lacking in a strong thread to hold it together, but mostly i was distracted by the actual text.

Some of the handwriting was indecipherable at times, and the portions of the book where neat printing or block letters were featured felt like an oasis.

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### **Rod Brown says**

I guess the author decided to stay true to her title, because I am given only frustratingly small, random snapshots of her life from here and there instead of a woven tapestry of who she is and how she got there. And that's a real shame, because I really would have liked to get to know her better.

This "graphic novel" is too unstructured for me and too often veers toward giant pages of text with spot illustrations. The book only really comes alive for me during the few pages where the creator uses a traditional comic book format of panels and word balloons; she shows a real talent for dialogue and pacing on those pages.

And, to get real petty and peevish, her lettering irritated the hell out of me. It varied from page to page and even on the same page from cursive to printed, from mixed case to all-caps, from free-form hand lettering to an imitation of typeset. And often, to be quirky I guess, on pages with mixed-case lettering, she would capitalize every letter "L" regardless of where it appeared in a word. On other pages, be it mixed-case or all-caps, every "i" would be lower case. AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHH!

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### **Michelle says**

I really wanted to like this as it's an #ownvoices work about a lesbian woman. I try to read and support as much of this work as I can (especially in comics). Sadly, I think the format of this is what didn't work for me.

*Snapshots* is written as more of a diary/journal than a proper memoir (though it has memoir elements). It chronicles Sezen's life as she comes to realize that she's a butch lesbian, but due to pressure from her Turkish parents, she decides to remain closeted and dates men until she finds a lesbian community in Germany where she comes into her own.

Normally, this is something I would love to read about. However, due to the truncated style of Sezen's writing, I didn't ever really connect with the narrative. Her art oscillates between photorealistic and rough, thick-lined sketches - it lends a sort of realism and immediacy to her story, but it was ultimately not to my taste. Likewise, her lettering is rough and scribbly and it was actually quite hard to read.

I can appreciate what this comic is doing and I think it's incredibly important that we have a diverse selection of queer comics out in the world. I always feel weird assigning star ratings to someone's lived experience, but I have to be honest that the telling of her experiences didn't jive with me, which is too bad.

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### **Sarah says**

While the authors journey might resonate for lesbian readers, it just never thrilled me. The overall impression of the art and story is meh. There is no depth or resolution for many things, and feels more like a collection of vignettes than a cohesive story.

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### **Raina says**

Notable particularly for the depiction of coming out and queer life in Europe. Sezen has lived in several different countries over the course of her life.

Feels very journal/sketchbooky, and not particularly polished. All black and white, and several different styles of drawing/storytelling. I wish an editor had worked with her to pull things together. There's definitely potential for something great in her story.

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### **Mihaela Precup says**

I suppose what I disliked about this book was the fact that it is not, in fact, a comic, but a series of illustrated autobiographical texts where the writing overpowers the drawings. The narrative is not exactly coherent (but then, the title does indicate that these are just snapshots). However, the fact that Sezen occasionally demonstrates that she is perfectly capable of doing comics and of telling a coherent longer story is even more frustrating and makes the book appear lazy. Also, and again this may just be my taste, but the tone of the book could have done with a bit more humor and self-deprecation. Oh, and I also found it frustrating that she appears to have written this book for an audience who is already familiar with the intricacies of the various cultures she mentions: for instance, she does not explain how her own family's (generally positive) reaction to her coming out fits into the more general Turkish or German Turkish understanding of non-normative sexuality.

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### **Anne says**

Read it. 3.5. The last portion was surprisingly touching. I had no idea what to expect with this graphic memoir. It was slow for a while, but the ending held several unexpected moments and some spots that really made me think. I'm glad I read it. How many graphic novel memoirs of Turkish lesbians are out there?

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### **AJ says**

I suppose I always have high hopes for lesbian graphic novels, probably because it's my favorite genre of book. This one just let me down. The artistry was not my style (messy, but complicated; I prefer understated and simplistic) and the text (handwriting) was difficult to read and gave me a headache. The story itself was captivating but too short. Indeed, each little snapshot was just a brief look into the author's life. Ultimately, it fell short of anything satisfying. (In fact, the author spends more time talking about her boyfriends and her failed attempts to act straight than her girlfriends and life as a lesbian.) The best vignette is the one in which the author comes out to her dad. That vignette alone is worthy of the two stars I'm giving to this book.

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### **Elizabeth Willis says**

Lacks coherency overall, but an emotional honesty shines through in places.

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### **David Schaafsma says**

A coming out graphic memoir by Sezen, not that engaging or coherent or interestingly done. EXCEPT that she is coming out in both western and Islamic cultures. So that aspect is a little interesting. She's the daughter of Turkish immigrants in the west. But the cover makes it look like it is colorful and maybe light and amusing, but it's black and white, pen and ink, with lots of writing in it, lots of different styles and effects. I just thought it wasn't all that insightful or original or interesting. It was all right. But maybe if you are a young glbt person, and want to read a culturally-based coming out story, it will be comforting and relatable.

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### **Ame says**

"Snapshot" is definitely accurate. This semi-bio/semi-journal graphic novel is like someone selected their more significant memories/favorite sketches out of their sketch journal and placed them together. Sezen's book shows her experience realizing she's queer while living in Europe. The being queer and Muslim cultural significance of it all was lost on me, because the book implies the only real turmoil she suffered was internal. And that's okay! It's completely okay that her family mostly shrugged and said, "alright!" though I admit I didn't expect that given their background, and the fact that it's the late 80s/early 90s (news of AIDS had to be going around there). I did find it interesting that Sezen spent more time profiling 5 boyfriends than any girlfriends she had later on. Perhaps the author wanted to focus more on coming to terms with her sexuality in place of 5 girlfriends during her "baby dyke" phase? This is definitely worth a read if you're into Alison Bechdel's work, but it's such a \*quick\* glimpse into European/WOC/Muslim queerness that you will crave much, much more either from this author or others.

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### **Maggie Gordon says**

I think I've read too many memoirs of queer folk coming out in the 1990s to be able to look at *Snapshots of a Girl* with fresh eyes. I also wasn't a fan of the art style used. There is a significant amount of prose in this book for a graphic novel, and the art is stylistically all over the map, made worse by the fact that the page layouts seem haphazard. Overall, not particularly enjoyable for me, but I do appreciate it represents a new voice from a racialised woman in the queer movement.

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