



A MEMOIR OF
AN ARCHITECT'S DAUGHTER

ELIZABETH W. GARBER

Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter

Elizabeth W. Garber

Download now

Read Online →

Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter

Elizabeth W. Garber

Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter Elizabeth W. Garber

Elizabeth Garber's father, visionary architect Woodie Garber, had already built his masterwork—the family's glass-walled house—when he received the commission to create Sanders Hall, a glass tower dormitory at The University of Cincinnati. At the time, Elizabeth was still impressed with her brilliant father and his taste for modernism, jazz, art, and race cars. But as she grew up, her adoration faded. Woodie became more controlling. Belittling. Inappropriate.

As the late 1960's and early 1970s culture wars and race riots reached Cincinnati, and when Elizabeth started dating an African-American student at her high school, Woodie's racism emerged. He became more volatile. His abuse splintered the family, and unexpected problems with the design of Sanders Hall precipitated a financial crisis that was exacerbated by a sinking economy. In the end, not only was the family torn apart, but so was Sanders Hall, which the university razed only twenty years later.

In this powerful memoir, Elizabeth Garber describes Woodie's deepening mental illness, the destruction of her family, and her own slow healing from his abuse. Beautifully written and heartbreaking, Garber's memoir is also a survivor's story—about a young woman trying to rescue her family and herself. Now a mother and a healer, Garber's story offers the hope that we can process trauma and move on, that we can each become the architects of our own lives.

Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter Details

Date : Published June 12th 2018 by She Writes Press

ISBN : 9781631523519

Author : Elizabeth W. Garber

Format : Paperback 343 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Mental Health, Mental Illness

 [Download Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter Elizabeth W. Garber

From Reader Review Implosion: A Memoir of an Architect's Daughter for online ebook

Jan P says

Multi-faceted memoir by the daughter of a prominent architect of the mid-century. It chronicles his career and mania, their family life and dysfunction, all told in a loving and compassionate way. I am fascinated by memoirs and dysfunctional families and this is one of the best I have read. Elizabeth Garber is a gifted writer.

Linda says

It was well written, but very painful to read.

Susan says

No more reviews, just ratings. Total strangers are sending me friend requests because of my reviews. Frankly, I find that creepy. But the book was good.

Sian Lile-Pastore says

Really enjoyed this memoir about growing up with a modernist architect for a father. Loved the stuff about architecture, and found the bits about how the rise of civil rights and feminism in the 60s and 70s gave the mum and the author the space to grow away from the abusive authority of the dad.

Rebecca says

Like Tara Westover's *Educated*, my other favorite memoir of the year so far, this one is stuffed full of incident and charts a heroine's survival through almost unimaginable psychological oppression. The author grew up in a glass house designed by her father, Modernist architect Woodie Garber, outside Cincinnati in the 1960s to 70s. This and Woodie's other most notable design, Sander Hall, a controversial tower-style dorm at the University of Cincinnati, serve as powerful metaphors for her dysfunctional family life.

The glass house (which I reckon would make a better title for this memoir, but was probably considered too similar to *The Glass Castle*) was a status symbol to match Woodie's racecars and wine cellar filled via the Jergens estate sale; it was also a frame for Woodie's exhibitionism: he walked around the house naked and forbade his three children from closing the bathroom door. He said he wouldn't allow prudery and wanted his children comfortable with their bodies. Fair enough, but he also photographed them nude to log their development and gave them front and back massages – even after Elizabeth went through puberty.

Woodie is such a fascinating, flawed figure. Elizabeth later likens him to Odysseus, the tragic hero of his own life. Manic depression meant he had periods of great productivity on designs and landscaping for the glass house, but also weeks when he couldn't get out of bed. He and Elizabeth connected over architecture, like when he helped her make a scale model of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye for a school project, but it was hard for a man born in the 1910s to understand his daughter's generation, or even his wife's desire to go back to school and embark on her own career in criminal justice. His standards were impossibly high; he railed at his kids for having no integrity or work ethic.

It's no wonder the marriage and the father-children relationships fell apart, just like Sander Hall, which after a spate of arson was destroyed in a controlled explosion in 1991. Several of the most memorable memoirs I've read this year have focused on the contradictions of a larger-than-life father – Blake Morrison's *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, Rebecca Stott's *In the Days of Rain*, and *Educated* – and that's a major theme here, too.

Mixed feelings towards a charismatic creative genius who made home life a torment and the way their fractured family kept going afterwards are reasons enough to read this book. But another is just that Garber's life has been *so* interesting: she observed the 1968 race riots and had a black boyfriend back when interracial relationships were rare and frowned upon; she was briefly the librarian for the Oceanics School, whose boat was taken hostage in Panama; and she dropped out of mythology studies at Harvard to become an acupuncturist.

Don't be fooled into thinking this will be a boring tome only for architecture buffs. It's a masterful memoir for everyone. I especially loved the photographs of the family and of Woodie's buildings.

(Releases June 12th.)

Tom says

Closer to 4.25/4.5. The gripping yet disturbing story of Modernist architect Woodie Garber and the family he controlled, manipulated, abused and ultimately lost, as told by his daughter. A tough but ultimately satisfying read, though it is completely understandable if one doesn't think they can handle the subject matter and passes on it.

David says

Takes a while to get going -- I almost gave up in frustration at the many hints that things were about to go seriously wrong with her idolized father the superstar architect. But she is an excellent writer and kept me engaged well enough and long enough to carry on to the more eventful part. And ultimately it was quite eventful and sad -- her volatile, sexually abusive, explosively angry father's inadequately treated bipolar disorder comes to rule the family until everyone finally leaves him.

Fascinating subplots about what it's like to try to forgive and reconcile with aging and infirm Dad when your siblings and mother don't want to, about getting tremendous flak in the late 60s for her relationship with an African American boyfriend, about controversial 27-story dorm her Dad designed for U. of Cincinnati that was eventually demolished in a controlled explosion, being sent off to work as a teen on a boat sailing

around the world, dropping out of Harvard in the 70s, becoming an acupuncturist and more.

You might get more out of it if you know something about or have an interest in architecture. I have relatives in that field and certainly respect the hard work and creativity it requires, but i don't know anything much about it (example: why is the Dad's style called "modern"? wouldn't that be a time-limited descriptor guaranteed to make no sense eventually?). Nonetheless, the main issue in the book [her relationship with her father] is fully comprehensible to non-architecture buffs.

Ladoiya says

An excellent memoir. The story of a young girl growing up under the influence of an abusive and mentally ill father.

David Estey says

Elizabeth beautifully and courageously describes her loving but painful devotion to a brilliant but manically abusive father, and thus dysfunctional family, in a cathartic memoir late in life. As a gifted poet, she draws you in to relive her life and times, with detailed, sensitive descriptions of art, architecture, characters, events, places and complicated relationships that make for a bittersweet and gripping story. *Implosion* is a must read. David Estey

Kathleen Pooler says

In *Implosion: A Memoir of An Architect's Daughter*, Elizabeth Garber tells the story of growing up in a glass house designed by her famous father, Woodie Garber, who was referred to as "Cincinnati's most extreme, experimental and creative Modern architect". The story is set against the backdrop of the turbulent 60s in Cincinnati and explores the impact this tumultuous time has on this family.

Garber skillfully reveals the complexities of this man through the eyes of a young girl who is in awe of his knowledge of modern architecture, his accomplishments as an architect and his love of teaching. As a reader, I was a little stymied in the beginning by the technical language but the further I got into the story, the more I appreciated the intricacies associated with his thought process which serves as a trigger for his subsequent mental illness and abuse.

This is a multilayered story about a man who quickly rose to fame with his radical beliefs about modernism but then became a victim of major social change. We see this brilliant man unraveling and embattling himself against his wife and two children. He made his family his enemy and became impossible to live with—demanding them to follow his strange and unconventional rules such as constant work, walking around naked, not allowing the bathroom door to be closed and photographing his children in various stages of puberty. His rules included no boundaries and no questioning the rules.

The author describes going from a young girl who cherished the experience of living in a light-filled modern house that was different than anyone else's home to a tortured teen who was being held hostage to this man's delusions eventually escaping to establish a life of her own. Despite her abusive childhood, the author shares

how her father's enthusiasm and passionate creativity for his work remain an inspiration to her.

A well-written and engaging story that not only sheds a light on modernism but also shows how the love between a father and daughter can endure even through the challenges caused by mental illness and abuse.

Shirley Glubka says

When I finished reading the final page of "Implosion" and closed the book and sat and felt the impact, my first thought was of Greek tragedy. The drama of Garber and her father, the drama of this family, felt that intense, that complex, that large, that important. I am not usually a memoir reader. I read novels, poetry, philosophy. I have no patience for mediocre writing. Elizabeth Garber is good: she caught me, and she kept me. Her writing is clear and clean, her thinking is complex and mature, and she can tell a story. I often felt as if I were reading a good novel as event followed event. A good novel: subtle and intense, understated and vivid, unafraid of ideas, unafraid of truth. As a retired psychotherapist I was impressed. Garber reaches around the whole thorny terrible beautiful and ultimately tragic reality of her big, brilliant, mentally ill, and psychologically blind architect father and embraces the entire reality. She does not spare herself, calmly and carefully telling of her own complicated responses to being this man's daughter. Nothing is over-dramatized, nothing is, it would seem, glossed over. This is not a story about murder, suicide, rape, or unrelenting physical violence. It is a story about powerful subtle insidious family experiences that can be similarly challenging and often more confusing, especially when mixed with so much that is grounded in beauty and creativity in a family life seemingly meant to be altogether extraordinary.

Monika says

SW Recommendation
