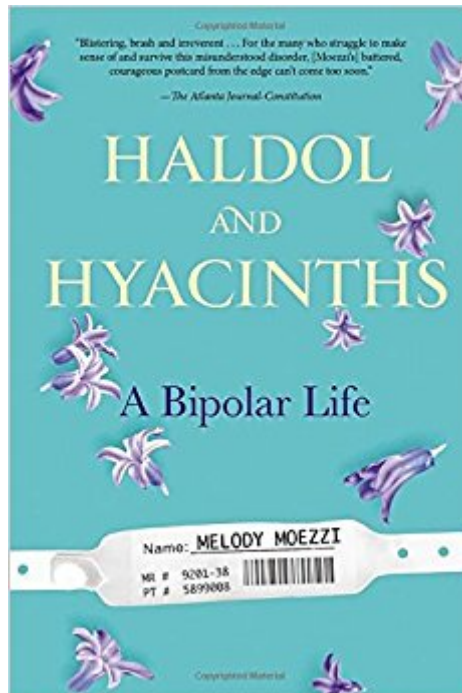




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# Haldol And Hyacinths: A Bipolar Life



## Synopsis

With candor and humor, a manic-depressive Iranian-American Muslim woman chronicles her experiences with both clinical and cultural bipolarity. Born to Persian parents at the height of the Islamic Revolution and raised amid a vibrant, loving, and gossipy Iranian diaspora in the American heartland, Melody Moezzi was bound for a bipolar life. At 18, she began battling a severe physical illness, and her community stepped up, filling her hospital rooms with roses, lilies and hyacinths. But when she attempted suicide and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, there were no flowers. Despite several stays in psychiatric hospitals, bombarded with tranquilizers, mood-stabilizers, and anti-psychotics, she was encouraged to keep her illness a secret by both her family and an increasingly callous and indifferent medical establishment. Refusing to be ashamed or silenced, Moezzi became an outspoken advocate, determined to fight the stigma surrounding mental illness and reclaim her life along the way. Both an irreverent memoir and a rousing call to action, *Haldol and Hyacinths* is the moving story of a woman who refused to become a victim. Moezzi reports from the frontlines of an invisible world, as seen through a unique and fascinating cultural lens. A powerful, funny, and moving narrative, *Haldol and Hyacinths* is a tribute to the healing power of hope and humor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this funny but unsettling memoir, 34-year-old Iranian American lawyer and activist Moezzi vividly describes her swings between mania (she disrobes in a lobby) and deep depression (she attempts

suicide). She is the daughter of an ob/gyn father and a pathologist mother, who tells her that vertical cuts cause more bleeding than horizontal ones, knowledge she uses when she slits her wrists. Like so many memoirists, Moezzi fictionalizes parts of her story, changing names and creating composite figures while weaving insights and humor into her expletive-laced book (titled after a medication and a flower "signifying the start of spring"). One example: "Losing your mind is indeed traumatizing . . . it's not like getting cancer. No one rallies around you or shaves her head in solidarity or brings you sweets." Moezzi is also critical of most mental-health facilities. She ends on a realistic note, pointing out that she takes daily medication and is "not cured" though she hasn't been hospitalized in more than four years. In all, a passionate first-person account of mental illness. --Karen Springen --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"An excellent read, no matter what your level of familiarity (or lack thereof) with mental illness." "Bitch Magazine" Blistering, brash and irreverent... [Moezzi's] courageous postcard from the edge can't come too soon." "Gina Webb, The Atlanta Journal Constitution" "[W]hipsmart but whimsical" "Moezzi's fierce honesty and comic self deprecation bind together winningly." "Kate Tuttle, The Boston Globe" "[A] defiantly frank memoir." "Parade Magazine" A captivating autobiographical account of [Moezzi's] struggle with bipolar disorder." "Brian Mossop, Scientific American MIND" At times moving, unsettling, and funny, Moezzi's brash, barely filtered memoir is a fascinating glimpse into a tumultuous mind." "Teresa Weaver, Atlanta Magazine" "Moezzi is brutally honest...[and] biting funny in her narrative." "Cliff Bellamy, The Herald-Sun" Iranian-American story with a feminist bipolar twist." "Tyler Cowen, New York Times Magazine "One-Sentence Book Review" "[A] must-read autobiography... informative and uplifting." "Atiya Hasan, Brown Girl Magazine" "A big brain and a big heart inform this courageous and often hilarious memoir." "Lee Smith, author of The Last Girls" "Intelligent, accurate, entertaining, culturally relevant, and a little sassy..." "New York Journal of Books" "Captivating . . . a powerful narrative." "Scientific American"

I like the word "Life," in the title of Ms. Moezzi's book. How fitting, especially when the first sentence of the book starts this way: "There are plenty of reasons to kill yourself, but I've never had any." The remarkable personal story of the author, her appreciation of life, the struggle to live it, and the journey along the treacherous windy road to get to safety and comfort makes this book a gem. For

people who have bipolar, this is a must read manuscript. For those who don't, this is eye-opening, fascinating, and a personal journey into the uncharted world of bipolar disorders. For those who work in this field, this is a reality check and a practical how-to-manual. The author's unassuming and humble contribution to the bipolar society is immense. The author's daring and unselfish contribution to understanding minorities with diverse cultural background is unique and laudable. The book reads like a novel. Every page sets you up to expect more from subsequent pages and the subsequent pages will not disappoint; hence, you will find yourself engaged and unable to put the book down. The most remarkable quality of the author is the depth of her observation of her surroundings. Nothing skips her. Nothing. And that's what made this book interesting, captivating and compelling for me. When reading this book, I became Melody Moezzi. Her struggle became mine. I hoped the best for her as if I needed hope myself. I walked the journey with her. I was by her side in every page of the book, And isn't a great writer one whose writing let's you feel, see, smell, taste and touch what she is writing about? Ms. Moezzi's *Haldol and Hyacinths* did for me. I highly recommend this book.

I bought this book to help a friend who has a bipolar afflicted son, but decided to read it first. I found Melody's life story an eye-opener, as it gave me a much clearer insight into the devastating cycles of suffering this illness produces. It also became clear, in a way, why sufferers are reluctant to give up the extreme and addictive highs of manic experiences by using Lithium to soften their heights, in spite of their guaranteed crashing into deep and black depression with suicidal thoughts afterwards. I was deeply affected by her suffering. It is clear that support from close friends and relatives is vital in the truest sense of the word, and I believe that such friends as well as the people who have manic depressive illness would benefit from reading this book, one to understand it, and the latter to feel that they are not alone, and that the sickness can be managed with medication, as long as it is taken every day for the rest of their lives.

I came to know Melody when she was a little girl. I found her to be a very bright, inquisitive, thoughtful, and happy youngster at that time. Few years ago I attended one of her book presentations (*War in Error*) in a bookstore in Dayton Ohio, Wow what an excellent storyteller melody has become. I bought the book right away, read it overnight! She tackled a very controversial subject in that book, but her writing kept me up all night. Then recently I heard of her new book (*Haldol and Hyacinths: A Bipolar Life*), got my hands on it as soon as I could! This was Melody's second book and I was able to read it in a short period of time! I found it to be a very easy

read, but also a painful read, I cried and felt every pain that melody was going through while reading it. I had number of friends with bipolar disorder like Melody, Melody's story made me aware of their excruciating pain, and suffering.. I believe the genius of melody is in her truthfulness. The youngster I knew years ago suffered so much, now she is a brave woman who is able to reveal her soul through writing of this book. What a talented writer! Haldol and Hyacinths is a must read for every one with or without mental illness.

First, I'd like to address one of the reviews that gave this book two stars. Citing reasons such as the book being written in a manic state, foul language, and addressing the author's "vanity"- anyone who is bipolar, in the mental health system, or a friend or family member of someone with Bipolar, the way this book was written very much reflected the disorder itself. That being said, Ms. Moezzi didn't pull any punches. This is a VERY accurate account of what many Bipolar 1 patients go through. The one thing that makes this book stand out from the rest is how relatable the author is to people who have this illness. Unlike many Bipolar resource books that family, friends, and people with this disorder can read, she accurately describes the symptoms as well as indirectly citing resources and how important it is to have a support group (in her case, it was family, her husband, and friends). It isn't a resource book and doesn't have the kind of material that a resource book may have. However, reading her experience really provides a good account for people who know someone with bipolar and can't make sense of their actions and moods. I highly recommend this novel for everyone, especially those in the mental health field or those who are going into the mental health field. The problems cited about misdiagnosis run rampant with this disease as well as the questionable treatment by many doctors. It really is a great "What to Expect When Your Planning Your Future Career" manual in that sense. It is very hard for people who do not have this disease or are very close with someone with this disease to understand it and her memoir really helps make that connection at the author's own expense. Above all, this book is somewhat of a memoir. It is very well-written and it is also written in such a witty way that many people would enjoy reading it, along with family and friends of people with bipolar.

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