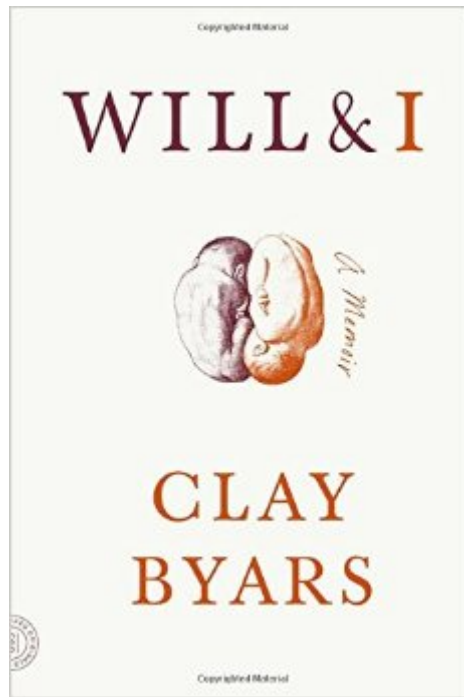


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# Will & I: A Memoir



## Synopsis

Clay Byars was recovering at home from a near-fatal car crash when he suffered a massive stroke. He was just eighteen years old. He awoke, back in the hospital, and was told he would be paralyzed from the eyes down for the rest of his life. Determined to defy the odds, Clay quickly and miraculously began to recover his mobility but discovered just how different his life would be—a disparity embodied by his identical twin brother, Will. As Will went on to graduate from college, marry, and start a family, Clay carved out a unique existence, doing the seemingly impossible by living on his own on a remote farm in Alabama. With haunting clarity and heartrending honesty, Will & I tells the unlikely story of Clay's life and his coping mechanisms, including weekly singing lessons that not only teach him to use his voice but remind him of his will to exist. In this singular and striking meditation on vulnerability and vitality, we're invited to see how Clay sees the world—and how the world sees him—as he bravely challenges himself and his abilities at every turn.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this in one sitting. I can't stop thinking about it. Byars' writing style is so unique for a memoir. Flowery prose and tear-jerking moments are replaced with raw and real words that draw you into the story not as a cheerleader, but as a participant. You won't find platitudes or clichés. What you will find is reality. The detachment Byars seems to have might throw some readers, but it likely will draw most readers even further into his story. I too felt locked-in, or as much as I could without actually being that way. The interactions between Clay and his twin, Will, feel real, not contrived or

made-for-TV. His sister and parents provide a stable and supportive background to the unbelievable story as it unfolds. The main reason I find this book so thought-provoking is not the conclusion. It is the unapologetic way in which Byars presents it. The non-linear style he employs makes you see his life and struggles as moments out of time, much like I assume he remembers, or better yet, lives his story. Well done and real!

I felt this book could have been better. It is an interesting memoir. However, the author often spoke about looking "different" than normal, but through the book there was never a real explanation of how so. Also, the story ended very abruptly, without the reader expecting this. A better "wrap-up" would have been appreciated.

Clay Byars book brings the best of a good memoir: nuggets of universal truth wrapped in an unflinchingly honest package. It is altogether appropriate that the eloquence of the material ("It was the season of brochure pictures"; "I feel like a human sculpture he's working on") is framed in the unexpected location of a voice lesson studio since his book is a hymn of recovery, and redemption. Put in on your short list of summer reading.

This such a clearly-written and unsentimental look at Byars' recovery from a car wreck and then a stroke following a surgery to correct nerve damage after the accident. Interspersed throughout are interludes with Byars' vocal coach, as his voice gets stronger with effort over time. A less unflinching author might have been tempted to gloss over the more difficult parts of his story, a more melodramatic one to wallow in them, but Byars tells his story honestly and with determination.

I am so glad a friend recommended this book to me. I do not personally know Clay or Will but I have lived in their hometown all my life and I love reading books about people from and about my hometown. This book did not disappoint and was very well written. It is so unique dealing with identical twins going through a horrific tragedy and coming out the other side different yet still identical twins. thank you for telling your story

This memoir's perspective is fresh, rare, and sensitive. Byars takes us on a journey inside the mind of a brain-injured patient who articulates thoughts and emotions that are transfixing, inspiring, and sometimes frightening. His story soars and even sings.

Remarkable story. Unsentimental but deeply moving memoir; strongly recommend.

I wish I was still teaching (I'm retired) to have the opportunity to use this book in my language arts classroom. Clay Byars is a talented writer; His memoir is unfalteringly real and deep, unique--yet universally human. The story lingers after the last page and is likely to stay with me. This is a writer to watch.

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