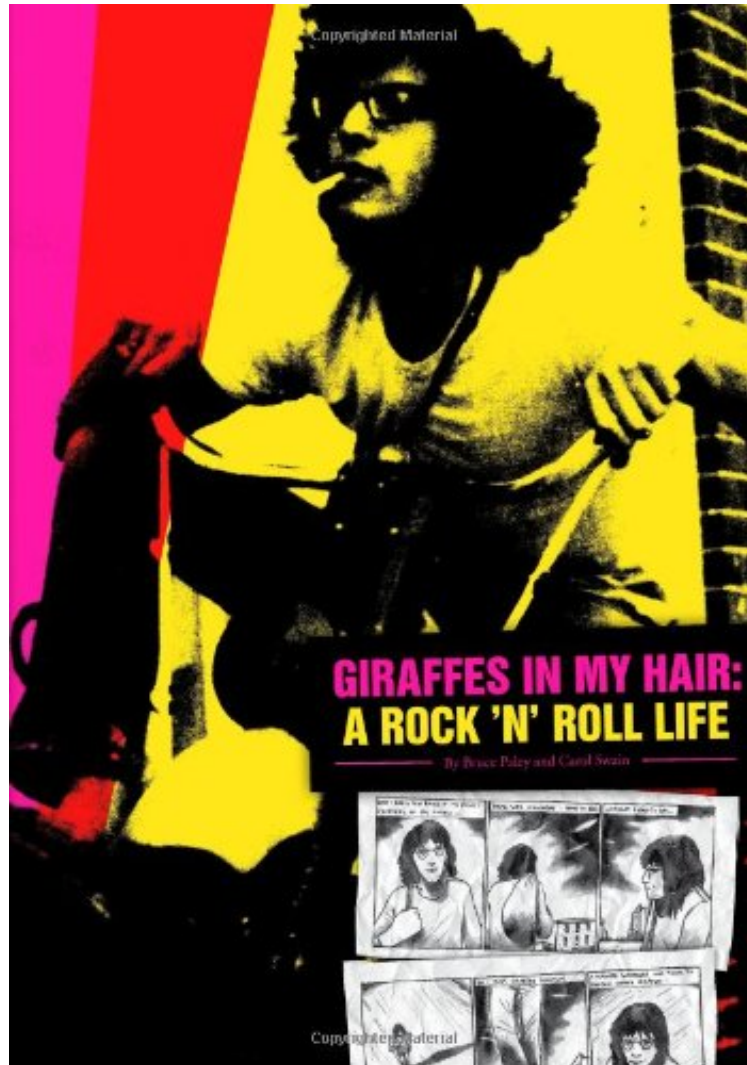


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## Giraffes in My Hair: A Rock 'N' Roll Life

*Bruce Paley, Carol Swain*  
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**Bruce Paley, Carol Swain : Giraffes in My Hair: A Rock 'N' Roll Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Giraffes in My Hair: A Rock 'N' Roll Life:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The insights are genuine and the humanity is quite bareBy GraphicNovelReporter.comIn this, the 40th year after Woodstock, there are so many recollections of the 1960s--the drugs, the music, the hair, the freedom and rebellion--that you can hardly be blamed for feeling you've had enough. Bruce Paley's memoir, which is illustrated by his partner, Carol Swain, is unique, though, and soon after you pick it up, those shackles that had been raised will be lowered and you will find yourself disarmed by Paley's simple stories and honest recollections. At least, that's how it was for me--or perhaps I have been just too jaded about stories about

the '60s. Either way, *Giraffes in My Hair* is unexpected. The book is really a collection of short vignettes of Paley's life, beginning in 1967, when he was 18. Finding himself in love, or at least infatuated, with a young girl whose mother disapproves of their having sex, he convinces her to hitchhike their way across the U.S.A., going from New York to California. Their journey actually ends in the middle, when she chickens out and stays with family while he continues on. Young love that doesn't last--the story is universal. The unsentimental approach to it is not. Paley's stories about his younger days were, it seems, all written when he was still a young man, still fresh in perspective and sometimes wistful from the experience. In regards to Paley's life, apparently the book is the thing--and the only thing. You won't find any other information on him here, no notes on what else he's done, no background to help you understand why you should know or care about Bruce Paley in any way. Does he even exist? You won't find any proof of it here, other than the meticulously crafted memoir that unfolds before your eyes. Perhaps it's better that way; the book isn't about star power. It's about the experiences of the '60s and, later, the '70s, and both decades are presented in all their freewheeling, debauchery-laden glory. If we learned anything about those decades it's that it isn't right to judge how anyone made it through them. Just give them the credit they deserve for surviving. Whatever the case may be, *Giraffes in My Hair* is a pleasure to read. The insights are genuine and the humanity is quite bare. Once I started reading, I didn't stop until the book was over. This survivor's tales were well worth the journey, once again, through two well-trodden decades.-- John Hogan

A unique take on the summer of love generation, through the eyes of an acclaimed graphic novelist and her partner, who lived it. Bruce Paley turned 18 in 1967 during the Summer of Love, putting him on the front lines of the late-1960s youth movement. Paley's tumultuous journey took him from being a Jack Kerouac-loving hippie in the 1960s, on the road with his 17-year-old girlfriend, dropping acid at Disneyland, living in a car, and crashing with armed Black Panthers at the infamous 1968 Democratic National Convention, to hanging out at Max's Kansas City, shooting heroin and cocaine with the likes of rock star Johnny Thunders, and frequenting Times Squares seedy brothels a journey that mirrored the changing times as the optimism of the 60s gave way to the nihilism of the punk years. Over a dozen years, Bruce crossed paths with hippies, violent cops, rednecks, rock stars, and Black Panthers... and ended up a heroin addict for much of the 1970s. These stories are vividly brought to life in *Giraffes in My Hair (A Rock N Roll Life)* by the compelling visual storytelling of Bruce's partner, the cartoonist Carol Swain. Swain's trademark visual approach to comics, typified by exquisitely composed panels that vividly capture both anomie and pathos, is perfectly suited to dramatizing Paley's life during that confusing, tumultuous period of American history a life lived in the countercultural margins, amidst personal chaos and social dissolution. Swain's storytelling rhythms are contemplative and breathe inner life into Paley's turbulent stories, creating a perceptive prism to view the vast possibilities and endless pitfalls as experienced by a kid growing up in America in the late 1960s and early 70s. 120 bw illustrations

[H]is remembrances are clear-eyed, vividly portraying the era in a fashion recognizable to those who shared it and revelatory to younger (or older) readers. His low-key approach to the sometimes shocking episodes finds perfect complementation in the understated black-and-white art of alt-comics veteran Swain, whose skillfully unadorned style and powerfully bold compositions starkly convey his often tumultuous story. Paley's blunt depiction of his path from 60s naiveté to 70s punk nihilism constitutes a welcome corrective to the recent wave of dewy-eyed fortieth anniversary Woodstock nostalgia. - Gordon Flagg, Booklist Carol Swain... portray[s] Paley's excursions as a sort of anecdotal graphic short story collection in many ways, albeit a graphic short story collection with a bunch of recurring characters) in a scratchy, pencil, black and white style that somehow perfectly sums up the stories just as Bruce scratches around for money, so Swain's pencil scratches around at the background detail.... [I]f you're a fan of rock'n'roll, if you dig the Beats, if you like grimey tales of excess and the underbelly of success, this is for you. - Bookmunch A pleasure to read. The insights are genuine and the humanity is quite bare. Once I started reading, I didn't stop until the book was over. This survivor's tales were well worth the journey, once again, through two well-trodden decades. - John Hogan, Graphic Novel Reporter [A] perfect union between text (intimate and profound, a hippie version of American Splendor) and image (somber and austere). - Point magazine.fr About the Author Carol Swain is the acclaimed British cartoonist and author of the graphic novels *Invasion of the Mind Sappers* and *Foodboy*.