

GETTING OFFED

Ben Karlin, a behind-the-scenes force at “The Daily Show” and The Onion, apparently has a lot of friends who gleaned lessons from having their hearts broken.

The result is a compilation of essays that take a dizzying range of forms. But despite the heavy hitters involved — including Stephen Colbert, Andy Richter and even Bob Kerrey — it’s doubtful any guys sobbing on their bathroom floor from heartbreak will find comfort here.

First, very few of the writers actually talk about being dumped. Another problem is that their voices blur together. Snarky, vaguely naughty put-downs are the default mode, and with few exceptions it’s as if all the essays come from some übercomic with a really bad dating record.

Ultimately, all a reader can do is ruthlessly reject most of the pieces and go steady with the few that catch the eye. I’ll be returning the phone calls of Marcellus Hall, who drew a witty, two-page comic strip on “the lessons of a cyclical heart.” I’ll be flirting madly and suggesting drinks with Dan Savage, who tells a hilarious story about sleeping with a girl to try to avoid the fact that he’s gay. And I’ll heave a sigh of relief after reading Bob Kerrey’s sweet, poignant story of falling in love with a girl in a photograph — finally, after all these guys and their issues, it’s a pleasure to hear from an adult.

Michael Giltz



Things I've Learned From Women Who've Dumped Me

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