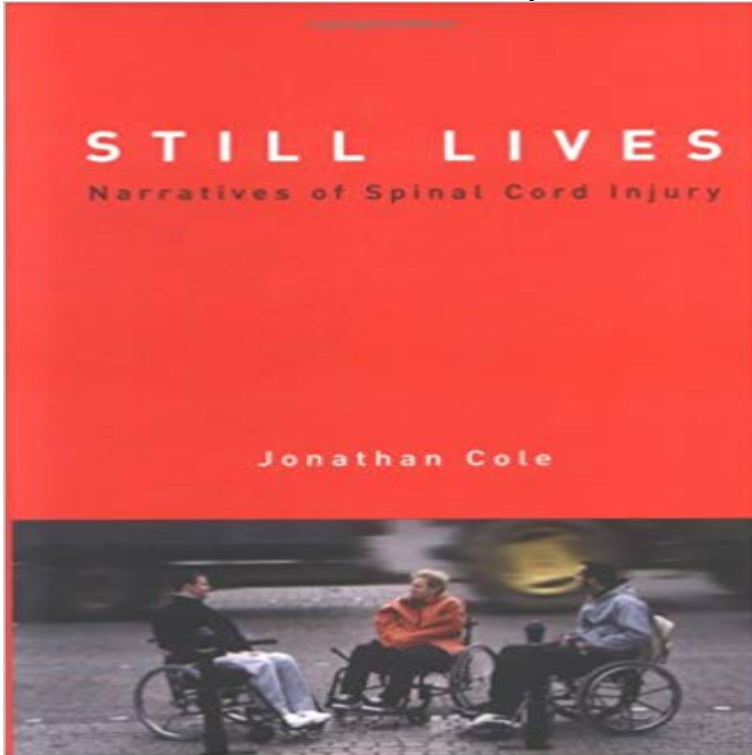


Still Lives: Narratives of Spinal Cord Injury (Bradford Books)



In writing *Still Lives*, Jonathan Cole wanted to find out about living in a wheelchair, without having what he calls the doctor/patient thing intervene. He has done this by asking people with spinal cord injuries the simple question of what it is like to live without sensation and movement in the body. If the body has absented itself, where does the person reside? He describes his method in the first chapter: I have gone to people, not with a white coat or a stethoscope...[but] to listen to their lives as they express them, and it is the candid and powerful narratives of twelve people with spinal cord injuries that form the heart of the book. Asking his simple question, Cole discovers that there is no single or simple answer. The twelve people with tetraplegia (known as quadriplegia in the US) or paraplegia whose stories he tells testify to similar impairments but widely differing experiences. Cole employs their individual responses to shape the book into six main sections: Enduring, Exploring, Experimenting, Observing, Empowering, and, finally, Continuing. Each concludes with a commentary on the broader issues raised. *Still Lives* moves from a view of impairment as tragedy to reveal the possibilities and richness of experience available to those living with spinal injuries. More universally, it offers new perspectives on our relation to our bodies. In exploring the creative and imaginative adjustments required to construct a still life, it makes a plea for the able-bodied to adjust their view of this most profound of impairments.

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