



Roses in December: A Story of Love and Alzheimer's (Literature and Medicine)

Tom Batiuk, Chuck Ayers

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Since its debut in 1987, Crankshaft has engendered reader loyalty and affection with its wry wit, engaging storylines, and identifiable characters. Created by Tom Batiuk and drawn by Chuck Ayers, the strip offers plenty of humor but also tackles serious issues like adult literacy, school violence, and the challenges of aging. *Roses in December* is a touching collection of two Crankshaft storylines of characters who find themselves dealing with the incurable condition of Alzheimer's disease. First, Ed Crankshaft's best friend Ralph is confronted with the trauma of his wife Helen's worsening Alzheimer's. He never knows if the love of his life will recognize him on those days that he visits her at Sunny Days Nursing Home. Ralph and Helen's love story unfolds with humor and heartbreak. In the second story arc, Crankshaft's neighbor Lucy McKenzie also exhibits symptoms of Alzheimer's and eventually is moved to Sunny Days Nursing Home by her sister Lillian. The fourteen-year struggles of Lucy, Helen, and their loved ones are elegantly told, preserving their dignity and reminding us that sometimes a sense of humor can be our greatest possession during life's trials. Through the deceptively simple medium of the daily comic strip, Tom Batiuk and Chuck Ayers address the profound effects of Alzheimer's disease in a thoughtful and occasionally humorous way. *Roses in December* includes a resource guide for caregivers, patients, and practitioners.



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