



Body Music

Julie Maroh

David Homel, Translator

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Julie Maroh examines relationships of every sort in the fictional graphic novel *Body Music*.

Across a variety of settings and characters, French author Maroh turns her eye to love—its physical aspects, which seem to have inspired the book's title, and emotional ones, as well. The sensual side of love is well represented, explicitly (though not gratuitously) and in nearly every manifestation imaginable: women loving women, men loving men, polyamory, and a transgender relationship, among others.

Described as a full-color book, *Body Music* uses a soft, muted, limited palette; in many ways it's closer to a black-and-white offering. But Maroh's lines, and the way she uses color selectively, effectively evoke mood and emotion throughout.

Most of Maroh's characters are uncertain and fearful of commitment, and the overarching message that love comes in many forms sometimes supersedes the characterization. But Maroh shows what all these people are seeking, in a moving vignette in which a woman and her son clean out the apartment of her son's recently deceased father. The woman muses, sadly:

We weren't just in love, we were good friends. We had twenty good years together.

The scene demonstrates the power of a complete, full love, even one that has since been broken; perhaps it's this paradigm of powerful, but not necessarily permanent, love that Maroh wishes to illustrate. The scene that follows, featuring two children who feel a deep connection to each other despite uncertainty about gender identity and the future in general, is also exemplary.

Moving and modern, *Body Music* is a tribute to the ability of humans to care deeply for one another.

PETER DABBENE (November/December 2017)

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