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Around the House and In the Garden: A Memoir of Heartbreak, Healing, and Home Improvement

Dominique Browning

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Dominique Browning : Around the House and In the Garden: A Memoir of Heartbreak, Healing, and Home Improvement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Around the House and In the Garden: A Memoir of Heartbreak, Healing, and Home Improvement:

For six years, "House Garden" editor-in-chief Dominique Browning has written a monthly column that weaves together personal stories and tips about home decorating, gardening, and raising children with universal themes of domestic life. In "Around the House and in the Garden," Browning adapts and expands these well-loved pieces, adding dozens of new essays, to create an insightful and moving narrative about the solace and sense of self that can be found through tending one's home. From bedrooms and bathrooms to gardens and trees, from the importance of a couch in the kitchen to the spiritual role of a grand piano, "Around the House and in the Garden" reveals the intimate relationship between home and self. Browning illustrates the ways her domestic needs, instincts, and arrangements have reflected major changes in her family life. Considering her own divorce, she focuses on how grief inhabits a room: "When I was divorced my sense of home fell apart. And so, too, did my house." Eventually, attention to her home helped to mend her heart, and the attention to her heart helped her to tend her home. Brimming with warmth,

knowledge, and the useful decorating and gardening tips that have made "House Garden" a favorite for one hundred years, "Around the House and in the Garden" is a book for anyone who has ever felt the need to reinvent a life or a space, who has ever fallen in love with the idea of home -- the place where we reinvent ourselves, "the place where we have the final word about what goes where, ...what feels comfortable, what is life-enhancing...a place that gives us strength to go out and embrace the world."

From Publishers Weekly
When Browning and her husband of 15 years divorced, she kept the house and garden they had shared in Westchester, but for a long time she was too depressed to care about where she lived. Gradually, she begins to see that working on the house she had neglected and transforming it into a home again is a way to recover from her despondency. In these short, elegant essays, Browning, a former editor-in-chief of House Garden, muses on the aspects of domestic life that revived her and shows how she healed her heart and her home at the same time. That symbol of doomed love, the master bedroom, for example, she had abandoned. She fills the bathroom with comfortable furniture and flowers and learns to enjoy lounging in the tub while looking out the window at the moon. A garden bench, a fireplace, chairs grouped together for companionship, the long-neglected garden, impractical objects like a grand piano or ornate candlesticks, the kitchen, a place for companionship as well as "a nice place to be lonely" all these she comes to revere. Soon even the moss-covered bricks in her crumbling driveway delight her, as do ordinary rituals like weeding the garden, planting a tree and cleaning her closets so she can enjoy the memories they contain. Browning has written a warm and graceful paean to the commonplace, imbuing everything she contemplates with magic. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Browning expands on her popular column for House Garden. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. Jay McInerney author of Bright Lights, Big City and Bacchus and Me: Adventures in the Wine Cellar Anyone who has ever owned a house, planted a bulb, or lost a lover should read this book -- a collection of penses that form a striking, imaginative whole, like the rooms of a well-loved and thoughtfully decorated home. Dominique Browning has written a beautiful, haunting, and inspiring book. --