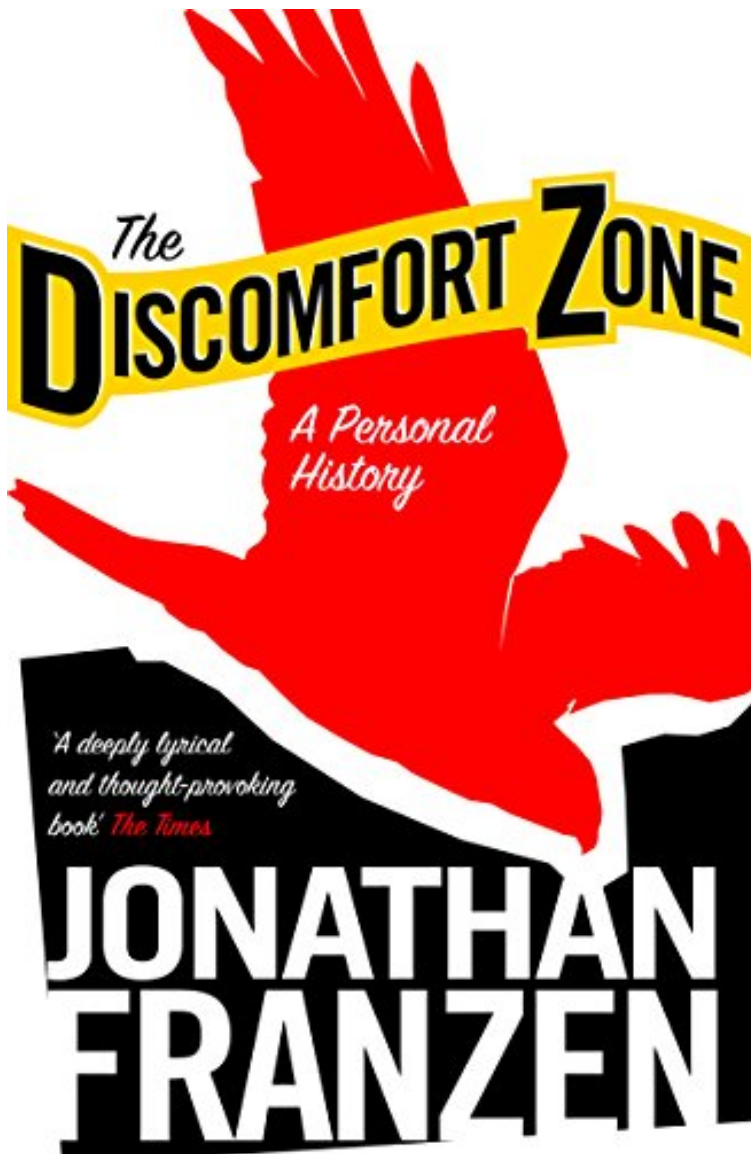


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# The Discomfort Zone: A Personal History



Par Jonathan Franzen  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA brilliant personal history from the award-winning author of The Corrections.Jonathan Franzen, bestselling author of Freedom and the highly acclaimed The Corrections, arrived late, and last, in a family of boys in Webster Groves, Missouri. The Discomfort Zone is his intimate memoir of his growth from a small and fundamentally ridiculous person, through an adolescence both excruciating and strangely happy, into an adult with embarrassing and unexpected passions. It's also a portrait of a middle-class family weathering the turbulence of the 1970s, and a vivid personal insight into the decades in which America took an angry turn away from its mid-century ideals.He tells of the effects of Kafka's fiction on Franzen's protracted quest to lose his virginity, the elaborate pranks that he and his friends

orchestrated from the roof of his high school, his self-inflicted travails in selling his mother's house after her death, the web of connections between his all-consuming marriage, the problem of global warming, and the life lessons to be learned in watching birds. Sparkling, daring and arrestingly honest, *The Discomfort Zone* is warmed by the same combination of comic scrutiny and unqualified affection that characterize Franzen's fiction. It narrates the formation of a unique mind and heart in the crucible of an everyday American family. From Publishers Weekly Starred . National Book Award winner Franzen's first foray into memoir begins and ends with his mother's death in Franzen's adulthood. In between, he takes a sarcastic, humorous and intimate look at the painful awkwardness of adolescence. As a young observer rather than a participant, Franzen offers a fresh take on the sometimes tumultuous, sometimes uneventful America of the 1960s and '70s. A not very popular, bookish kid, Franzen (*The Corrections*) and his high school buddies, in one of the book's most memorable episodes, attempt to loop a tire, ring-toss style, over their school's 40-foot flag pole as part of a series of flailing pranks. Franzen watches his older brother storm out of the house toward a wayward hip life, while he ultimately follows along his father's straight-and-narrow path. Franzen traces back to his teenage years the roots of his enduring trouble with women, his pursuit of a precarious career as a writer and his recent life-affirming obsession with bird-watching. While Franzen's family was unmarked by significant tragedy, the common yet painful contradictions of growing up are at the heart of this wonderful book (parts of which appeared in the *New Yorker*): "You're miserable and ashamed if you don't believe your adolescent troubles matter, but you're stupid if you do." (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School In this entertaining portrait of the artist as a young geek, Franzen is as offhand about his geekdom and failures as he is about his talents and successes. He retraces his childhood resistance to his parents' way of life as he became a rebel in his own cause. He confesses that he has become a bird-watcher as an adult; he is like an interesting variety of one of the birds that he enjoys finding. Even while describing his personal oddities and those in the people around him, he finds awkward beauty in their quirks and imperfections. The book begins and ends with the death of his mother. Their difficult relationship is one of many he examines. He is a human watcher willing to report in detail on behavior, whether that of his parents, loved ones, or himself. As he studies who he has been and who he is now, Franzen discovers truths about the world around him. This is a world in which many teens find themselves, and seeing the ways the author navigates and survives can entertain and comfort while offering assistance in the process of self-discovery. Will Marston, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.