

A powerful, genre-smashing work of auto-fiction by an acclaimed writer, playwright, and comedian.

Brilliant and heart-searing, *Mercy Gene* is about what it means to be ensnared by others' hard definitions of who you are as you desperately try to stay inside a brain, a body, a life. With the insight and charisma of a god, Derbyshire undresses language to get to the very marrow of their experience. Their wisdom is the rare kind that comes from the dangerous and costly brink-of-sanity, brink-of-death view. As I read, I wanted to slow myself down so I could spend more time inside their perfect, sonic sentences. Derbyshire writes radiantly and hilariously from the padded rooms, the crawl spaces, the edges of the known world. There is a fierce and beautiful account of what it means to be an artist, a mother, and a human when you cannot be drawn or, too often, even seen inside the lines. A supernova of a book, to read *Mercy Gene* is to be changed by it.

— Claudia Dey, author of *Heartbreaker*

Mercy Gene is an incredible book that lifted me right up off the ground and away to other places both hard and soft. It's essential reading for anyone wanting to know what the agony of psychic pain is really like, but it's also very funny. Thank you, thank you to JD for this ferocious, devastating and illuminating, tender and vulnerable, mountain peak and universal embrace of a book and for being in the world. Exquisite.

— Miriam Toews, author of *Fight Night*

The DNA of *Mercy Gene* is a dizzying double helix of creative gusto, funhouse humour, hard-won wisdom, and ferocious empathy. After reading Derbyshire's *sui generis* autofiction, I was on bended knees — not pleading for mercy but begging for more of their trail-blazing truth-telling. *Mercy Gene* will set minds and heart afire.

— Zsuzsi Gartner, author of *The Beguiling*

So much of this prose is pure poetry. Lists, quips, quotes, and micro stories cross-stitched into a shifty masterpiece that tells us the unadorned true story of one person's dance with mental health, pharmaceuticals, and themselves.

— Ivan Coyote, author of *Care Of*