

## ABSTRACT

*No Stars in Jefferson Park* is a memoir about the beginnings of an Equity Chicago theater company, The Gift, which is now considered one of the most vital storefronts in the city. I helped to start this company just out of college with a group of other working-class kids who didn't quite realize the extent of their competition. A few seasons in, our artistic director suffered a rare spinal stroke which left him mostly paralyzed. The memoir is the story of us (I eventually left acting) and our little theater that kept on growing. The memoir becomes an investigation of the literary tradition of actress narratives but it's also a simple coming of age story, an exploration of the nexus of art and love, and a character-based study of social class.