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## **2014 Alison Bechdel**

### **"Drawing Lessons: The Comics of Everyday Life"**

For much of Alison Bechdel's thirty-year career she has skulked on the cultural margins, writing, drawing, and self-syndicating the comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*. That generational chronicle, "one of the preeminent oeuvres in the comics genre, period," (*Ms.*) ran regularly in over fifty LGBT publications in North America and the UK. Many award-winning collections of *Dykes* were published in book form by an independent feminist press, and were translated into several languages.

Bechdel gained wider recognition for her work with the publication in 2006 of her groundbreaking graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. *Fun Home* was a National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist, and in a great moment for graphic narrative, was named Best Book of 2006 by *Time Magazine*. *Time* called the tightly architected investigation into her closeted bisexual father's suicide "a masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debts to each other."

After setting aside *Dykes to Watch Out For* in 2008, Bechdel began devoting herself full-time to autobiographical work. A second graphic memoir, *Are You My Mother: A Comic Drama*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in May 2012.

In her work, Bechdel is preoccupied with the overlap of the political and the personal spheres. *Dykes to Watch Out For* was an explicitly community-based and politically engaged project. But in her deeply intimate memoirs about her father's life before the gay rights movement and her mother's life before the women's movement, she turns a microscopic lens on the internal mechanisms of oppression and liberation.

Bechdel edited *Best American Comics 2011*. She has drawn comics for *Slate*, *McSweeney's*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *Granta*. Her work is widely anthologized and translated.

Bechdel is the recipient of a 2012-13 Guggenheim Fellowship.