

People

Books



Ian, now 57, with partner Patricia Snyder (right) at their '03 wedding.



Society's Child

by Janis Ian | ★★★☆

REVIEWED BY KIM HUBBARD

MEMOIR

"Sad girl music," as a man I know uncharitably calls female folk-rock, just may have reached its self-pitying apotheosis with "At Seventeen," Ian's '75 hit bemoaning her own bad skin and social unease. Turns out she had more reasons to complain than we knew: sexual abuse by her dentist (!), a breakdown after "Society's Child" made her a star at 16; later, a husband who nearly killed her. Yet there's no poor-me feel to this engaging memoir, just memories of a thrilling, perilous era (being propositioned by Dylan, trying cocaine with Hendrix) and gratitude that she survived.