

MANTIDS
A NOVEL BY RON DAKRON

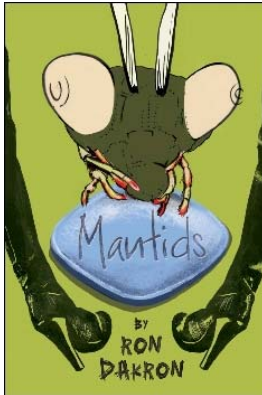
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COVER AND AUTHOR PHOTOS:

Download direct from <http://blackheron.mav.net/dakron/mantids%20presskit.html>

***MANTIDS* INFO**



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| ISBN: | 978-0930773-861 |
| Category: | Fiction, Science Fiction, General |
| Publication | September 15, 2008 |
| Pages: | 120 |
| Price: | \$20.95 |
| Size: | 5.5 x 8.5 inches |
| Binding: | Hardcover |
| Publisher: | Black Heron Press |

Short Blurb *Mantids* is an update on the world's oldest novel—Petronius's *Satyricon*—with a twist. In *Satyricon*, the hero can't get an erection; in *Mantids*, the narrator can't get rid of one. Combine his Viagra overdose with an invasion by mutant female praying mantises and a scuzzed-out, speed-tweaker Astoria, Oregon locale; add biting comedy and a warrior heroine and stir into a B-movie plot stew and you have a classic Dakron novel, chock full of sardonic prose and more fun than a barrel of junkies.

EXCERPTS

Excerpts from Chapter 5 of *Mantids* are available here: <http://blackheron.mav.net/dakron/c5.pdf>
Be sure to add *Copyright 2008 Ron Dakron* to any excerpted material.

REVIEWS

Adam Groves, The Fright Site, <http://www.fright.com/edge/Mantids.htm>

“Get this: somewhere in the skuzzier regions of Astoria, Oregon a failed musician is afflicted with a permanent erection while having to contend with human-sized preying mantises, which include the hero's own wife. She's the indirect cause of his erectile dilemma, as downing

four Viagra pills is the only way he can have sex with her. Apparently there's an alien invasion afoot that causes people to morph into cannibalistic bugs, with the protagonist one of the few remaining humans...although he's not sure if he isn't hallucinating the whole thing (neither are we!).

The guy's main objective, of course, is to find a way to make his stiffy go down before it rots off, leading to a desperate jaunt through an already trippy landscape rendered even more so by the mantid infestation. Apparently this book was patterned after Petronius' SATYRICON, the world's oldest novel, with Astoria standing in for ancient Rome and a protagonist who stands in direct contrast to Petronius' impotent hero.

I'd expect nothing less from Ron Dakron, a writer I've grown fond of over the years. His stand-out novels include the eccentric thriller INFRA, about a dreamlike trek through Europe, and HAMMERS, a satiric account of people metamorphosing into hammerhead sharks. Dakron favors heavily self-conscious, slip-streamy prose (particularly in his second novel NEWT, which I haven't been able to get through), yet his is among the very small cadre of experimental fiction whose substance actually matches its style.

MANTIDS isn't the best of Dakron's books (INFRA gets that distinction), but is the most user-friendly: it's short and fast moving, and contains a linear narrative with a beginning, middle and end.

Dakron has also lightened up on the experimentation. Yes, his prose is still quite self-conscious, and not everyone will have patience with lines like "that skin husk next to the fridge, the split splattered body that her new bug self popped out of—its ripped back still oozing gray biomuck, the limbs tangled into a skin pretzel—whoa!" But the book is lively and funny, with a spot-on portrayal of the Pacific Northwest punk subculture amid all the insanity—and really: perverted sex, punk rock, Viagra, mutant insects, cannibalism, perpetual erections...what more could you possibly want?

BIO:

Ron Dakron, 55, lives in the Pacific Northwest. He was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in the Chicago suburb of Villa Park. He studied at both Elmhurst College and Lawrence University. After college, he worked a number of jobs to support his writing habit, including street musician, house painter and IT paralegal. He was involved in the Seattle poetry performance community throughout the 70s and 80s, including such art venues as Rosco Louie and Red Sky Poetry Theater. He has read at a multiplicity of locales, including Seattle, Spokane, Portland, Vancouver B.C., and in Paris as a featured reader at Shakespeare & Co. Other notable readings include arranging a “Boxing Match” competition with Jesse Bernstein that presaged slam poetry, and a 24-hour multiple-guest reading of his entire novel *infra*. Research for his novels has taken him to Europe, the Bahamas, and underwater as a NAUI diver. His first novel *infra* was included in the 1988 Regional Writers Project for promotional assistance. His next novel *Newt* won the 1991 King County Fiction Award of \$5,000 juried by W.P. Kinsella. Research for his third novel *Hammers* involved discussions with preeminent biochemists. His upcoming fourth novel, *Mantids*, promises to spark some controversy. His literary influences range from Francois Villon to J.P. Patches.

SHORT AUTHOR BLURB:

Ron Dakron is a poet and novelist published by Black Heron Press. He is the author of four novels—*infra*, *Newt*, *Hammers* and *Mantids*, and three collections of poetry. His work runs the gamut from surrealism to sci-fi pastiche. *Publishers Weekly* deemed him “a writer with a fine ear and plenty of gusto.” *Kirkus Reviews* called his work “cartilaginous prose, soft as fishbone, sense-bending and scattershot as a Robin Williams shtick.” *Point No Point* magazine tagged his novels as “a cross between jive bullshit, hip-hop Henny Youngman, and full-tilt Rimbaudian street-smartass sublimity.” *Raven Chronicles* judged him “as sinister as a thirteen-year-old with a lighter and a keg of butane.”

PUBLISHED WORKS:

NOVELS

Mantids (2008)
Hammers (Hardcover 1997), (Paperback 2008)
Newt (1992)
infra (1987)

POETRY

Given Nightingale Sleep (1989)
What's New What's New (1981)
Medusa's Brat (1980)

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FOR RON DAKRON:

Q: What is *Mantids* about?

A: A slacker in Oregon takes an overdose of Viagra, oblivious to a world takeover in progress by giant mutant female praying mantises (mantids)

Q: Is *Mantids* science fiction or literary fiction?

A: Both. I studied and wrote poetry before I turned to prose; *Mantids* is both speculative fiction and in the literary tradition.

Q: Viagra? Bugs? Why does Ron Dakron write consistently about icky subjects?

A: Hah—I'm tame in the icky department compared to some under-30 writers. But I've always loved a certain B-movie flavor that some pop entertainment has.

Q: *Mantids* is Ron Dakron's fourth novel. Is there a consistent theme running through his work?

A: Not a theme so much as a style. I'm always interested in the poetic line and how it can be used in prose.

Q: Do you live you work like a Bukowski, Plath or Hemingway?

A: Somewhat—mostly, like any writer, my own experience colors my work. But I'm not a confessional writer per se, and I have never (I promise) turned into a woman (*infra*), a black teenager (*Newt*), a hammerhead shark (*Hammers*) or a praying mantis (*Mantids*).