



L-vis Lives!: Racemusic Poems

Kevin Coval

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FROM THE POET the *Chicago Tribune* calls “the new voice of Chicago,” comes *L-vis Lives!*, a bold new collection of poetry and prose exploring the collision of race, art, and appropriation in American culture.

L-vis is an imagined persona, a representation of artists who have used and misused Black music. Like so many others who gained fame and fortune from their sampling, L-vis is as much a sincere artist as he is a thief. In Kevin Coval's poems, L-vis' story is equal parts forgotten history, autobiography, and re-imaginings. We see shades of Elvis Presley, the Beastie Boys, and Eminem, and meet some of history's more obscure “whiteboy” heroes and anti-heroes: legendary breakdancers, political activists, and music impresarios.

A story of both artistic theft and radical invention, *L-vis Lives!* is a poetic novella on all of the possibilities and problems of “post-racial” American culture—where Black art is still at times only fully accepted in a white face, and every once in a while an “L-vis” comes along to step in to the void.

*i am a hero
to most. the great hope
of something other.
a complex back-story.*

*something other than
the business of my father.
bland's antonym.
jim crow's black sheep.
the forgotten son
left to rise in the darkness*

*among the dis
carded in the wild
of working class, single
mother hoods. a hero
who transcends
who translates the dis
satisfactions of the plains;
kids of kurt cobain,
method man amphetamine,
the odd Iowan who digs dirt
and lights beyond the pig yard,
spits nebraskan argot,
hero to the heart
land, middle brow(n) america*

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