



# 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 lowan 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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