



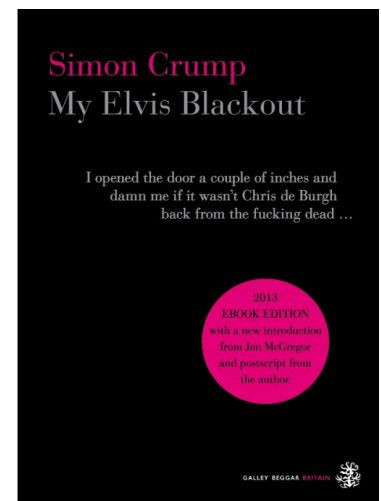
**GALLEY BEGGAR
BOOK CLUB**

My Elvis Blackout **By Simon Crump**

I opened the door a couple of inches and
damn me if it wasn't Chris De Burgh
back from the fucking dead...

Background

The Galley Beggar version of *My Elvis Blackout* is a re-release of a classic first published by Bloomsbury more than ten years ago. During that time, instead of conquering the world as it should have, it has all but disappeared from the minds of the lucky few that have read it. If there's any justice, that will change this time around. As Dan Rhodes says, every home should have one.



Synopsis

We witness the King of Rock 'n' Roll as he wreaks crazy havoc with the Memphis Mafia, murders huge numbers of groupies, destroys televisions, sabotages Led Zeppelin gigs with great big bags of pig's blood and somehow also breaks your heart. In these 37 short stories, the King and – “hero and model to teenagers the world over” – joins a choir in order to torture and murder Christians, labours under the delusion that he's a major rock star and kills both Barbara Cartland and Chris De Burgh. And then he does some bad things too.

Discussion Points

- Do you see a particular importance in Crump's choice of Elvis Presley as the central character of his stories?
- Do you feel that in presenting Elvis as a homicidal maniac, Crump is effectively stripping a cultural icon of his 'halo'?
- Despite having been written in the 1990's, is there still a relevance to the grotesque in today's celebrity culture? The Guardian put forward that on this point it feels "...new and fresh". Could Elvis be any one of our contemporary pop stars?
- In '*High School Story*', we are exposed to the (marginally) less violent side of the protagonist, do you feel there is a level of empathy to be had with him in stories such as this? As his girlfriend states, "Elvis looked so handsome that my aching heart began to bleed".
- Do you think that the recurring theme of the ultra-violent may remind us that we are occasionally afraid of seeing the darker side of people we hold up as idols?
- What, do you feel, is the relevance of bringing other celebrities into the world of *My Elvis Blackout*?
- Do you attach any significance to the choice of presenting these as short stories and not a plot derived novel?
- Do you think it is important that the stories are provided from different narrative viewpoints? For example we see from his henchman in *Lady In Red*, his Mother in *Gladys* and an ambiguous narrator in *Elvis: Fat Fucked Up Foetus*.
- Does this book err more on the side of uncomfortable or humorous for you as the reader? Is there a place in fiction for violent humour?

The Author

Born in Leicestershire, **Simon Crump** studied philosophy at Sheffield University and has lived in Sheffield for the past twenty years. An internationally exhibited artist, he has lectured in fine art and photography at various universities. His stories have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies and he is the author of *My Elvis Blackout*, *Monkey's Birthday*, *Twilight Time* and *Neverland*.



Recommended Texts

- Inherent Vice by **Thomas Pynchon**
- Motherless Brooklyn by **Jonathan Lethem**
- Let's Wrestle by **David Shrigley**
- Kill Your Friends by **John Niven**

Resources

- <http://www.galleybeggar.co.uk/simon-crump/>
- <http://www.sunday-guardian.com/bookbeat/of-celebs-gone-rogue-elvis-and-led-zepp-amidst-aliens-zombies/>
- http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/My_Elvis_Blackout.html?id=0nyVGwAACAAJ&redir_esc=y

Galley Beggar Book Club notes compiled by Rory Hill – Contact rory@galleybeggar.co.uk for more information.