

The Complete Collection of people, places & things

John Dermot Woods

Summer 2009

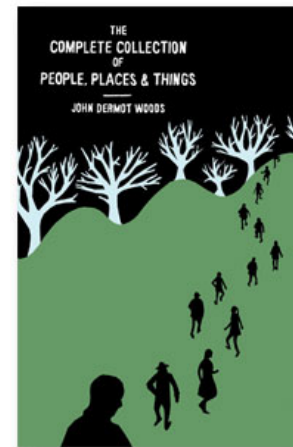
CONTACT:

Geoffrey Gatzka

Publisher, BlazeVOX [books]

editor@blazevox.org

716-873-5454



Dear Reader:

In his debut novel *The Complete Collection of people, places & things* (On Sale: late summer 2009, \$15, black and white drawings, ISBN 978-1935402466), John Dermot Woods uses his stories and drawings to tell a tale both strange and strangely familiar. It's about the destruction of a small town populated by people we think we know – people like Rainbow Brite, Slim Goodbody and Danger Mouse. And like us, perhaps, they go to dancehalls, wear stilts, and eat with chopsticks. But they also take joy in donning a shared crash helmet, worn in turn and ritualistically cleaned by all. They cherish Velcro, keeping this precious commodity hidden until a Stranger comes to town. They gather regularly in a tent and are governed by a mayor named Optimus Prime, although the town's true power broker is a shadowy, shuffling beast called simply, The Bear.

Woods' collection of tales refers to the familiar, invoking images of childhood, advertising, and folk tales. But, there's something ominous and inexplicable, exemplified by the strange nothingness that lurks in the forbidden hills outside the town. Like children, we are kept in the dark about what this is; we feel a loss and a sadness we cannot fully explain. Woods' drawings throughout the book serve to heighten the mystery behind this perplexing place. In the end, the book defies an underlying logic. Conjuring the rhythmic language of Donald Barthelme and the grotesque fantasy of George Saunders, he introduces us to a new mode of thinking in which feeling is more powerful than understanding.

The Complete Collection of people, places & things is a culmination of Woods' interests in fiction and comics, story and language, image and text. It is influenced by the places he's lived recently, like Athens, GA and Tokyo, Japan. Now, he lives in Brooklyn, NY, where he draws comics and makes single-edition art books. He is also writing a new novel which catalogues a series of atrocities that occurred in Baltimore, MD. He co-founded and edits the critically acclaimed arts journal, *Action, Yes*, and curates the popular online reading series, Apostrophe Cast.

We are excited to say that we have sold out the pre-order copies of *The Complete Collection of people, places & things*. We do have review copies available, upon request (either hard copy or PDF). John is available to do interviews and will be giving several readings in the upcoming months (dates will be posted at www.johndermotwoods.com). We hope you'll take a tour of *The Complete Collection*, and risk getting lost in the hills.

Thank You,

Geoffrey Gatzka

Geoffrey Gatzka

Publisher, BlazeVOX [books]

Praise for *The Complete Collection of people, places & things*:

“An accomplished artist and writer, in addition to being an entertaining and often an electrifying one. John Woods does something very original in his combining of the arts in this collection, and my hat’s off to him in his two-hat achievement.”

— Stephen Dixon (author of *I, Frog, Interstate*)

“John Dermot Woods’ Complete Collection thrills the daylights out of me. Every word, every image is infused with vitality. Every place, person and thing breathes and moves. It is an android’s heaven, a manikin’s cocktail party. It reminds me of the Golden Age cartoons where human departure imbues clocks, canned goods, books, statues, toys or brooms with sentience. When we close our eyes our kitchens Jitterbug, our teddy bears waltz. The thing I love most about this world is that while Woods’ imagination is opened full throttle, he provides an almost ethnographical structure to explicate it. His wonderland is so thoroughly startling because of — not in spite of — his ability to make his account as reliable as a Fodor’s travel guide.”

— Reginald McKnight (author of *He Sleeps, I Get on the Bus, White Boys*)

“John Woods’ The Complete Collection brings the small-town America of Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio into conversation with Italo Calvino’s fake travelogue, Invisible Cities, and that book’s dreamish vision of Imperial China. Like Calvino’s novel, the book evokes a kind of nearly Renaissance-like iconographic worldview of Memory and the Imagination, but one channeled through the disposable world of American children’s toys and comic books. The flat voice is disconcertingly balanced between farce, comedy and deadly seriousness.”

—Johannes Göransson (author of *Dear Ra*)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

John Dermot Woods lives with his family in Brooklyn, NY. His stories and comics have appeared in many journals, including *The Indiana Review*, *Hobart*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Salt Hill*, and *3rd Bed*. His comic chapbook, *The Remains*, is forthcoming from Doublecross Press. He edits the arts quarterly *Action, Yes* and organizes the online reading series *Apostrophe Cast*. More information can be found at www.johndermotwoods.com.

