



At Danceteria and Other Stories

Philip Dean Walker

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In these immaculately crafted stories inspired by the 1980s, Philip Dean Walker spotlights a cast of celebrities and historical figures in situations unsettling as Day-Glo and poignant as roses while the specter of AIDS looms.

"This highly original meditation on the '80s is like nothing else you've read. Dead celebrities are brought back to life in the oddest places: Jackie O in a New York sex club, Princess Di in a London drag bar, Rock Hudson at the White House. Plus Sylvester, Halston and Liza, Keith Haring, Madonna, and, best of all, an anonymous narrator who notices that only good-looking guys in New York are getting the new gay cancer. Odd conjunctions, great wit, and the shadow of AIDS make these stories deceptively light and strangely disturbing."

--Andrew Holleran, author of *Dancer from the Dance*

"In his debut collection *At Danceteria and Other Stories*, Philip Dean Walker writes with a kind of savage nostalgia, one that knows the past was not prettier or glitzier or more fabulous--only more terrifying. Set in the early 1980s, when the word 'queer' was still an insult and when doctors and nurses invented their own names for the mysterious disease killing beautiful young men, *At Danceteria and Other Stories* brutally exposes how what we don't know about ourselves can kill us. Walker's writing is vivid, electric and devastating."

--Stephanie Grant, author of *The Passion of Alice*

"These stories--so funny and inventive, so merciless, smart, and affecting--are like no others I know, populated with American celebuitantes, like Liza Minnelli, Jackie Kennedy, and Little Edie Beale, and punctuated by an abiding American loneliness that has the power to break one's heart. Walker's stories are fully, fully alive."

--Richard McCann, author of *Mother of Sorrows*

"At a time when many young gay writers are forgetting their queer lineage, Philip Dean Walker comes along and schools us with his debut short story collection. Here is Halston, Liza, and Warhol at Studio 54; here is a drag queen who rivals Josephine Baker's star appeal; and here is, in Walker's words, the boy who lived next to the boys next door, dead during the early plague years, but resurrected through Walker's alluring prose, prose that renders the past our present. These stories are clever and do not apologize for their cleverness, like Rock Hudson, who explains here, 'Handsome men know they're handsome. There was no reason to be coy or overly modest about it--that kind of thing just reeked of phoniness to him.' Phony, these stories are not. From the Castro to Grey Gardens, I travelled gleefully alongside Walker in *At Danceteria and Other Stories*, and am only disappointed the journey had to end."

--D. Gilson, author of *I Will Say This Exactly One Time: Essays*

"Reading Philip Dean Walker is like being swept into the defiantly glittering rooms of tragedy-darkened souls. Walker's *At Danceteria and Other Stories* testifies to the tart-tongued power of language to resurrect and witness, in tales that are screamingly funny and hauntingly sad. His men and women radiate an alluring self-awareness and fallibility that touches our deepest places."

--Elise Levine, author of *Driving Men Mad*

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Neil Myers:

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Jerry Bates:

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Kathleen Duff:

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