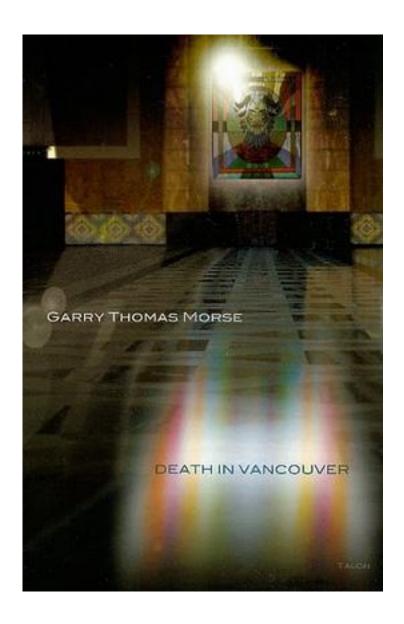
Death in Vancouver



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Garry Thomas Morse deploys his prodigious classical repertoire to compose the edgy new voices that reflect the cultural simultaneity of our everyday - a transnational, ahistoric cosmopolitanism: an idealized Helen is confounded by Molly Bloom's monologue from Joyce's "Ulysses"; a Dostoyevskian character parodies the libidinal excesses of William Burrough's with 'the stone that drives men mad' from Pauline Johnson's "Tales of Stanley Park"; an incident from "The Book of Judges" answers one of Gogol's riddles; an acidic response to the recent fascination with 'speculative fiction' introduces a punch card system from the year 2088 in which future language facilitates only business transactions in a completely monetized world; and F. Scott Fitzgerald's alcoholism hits rock bottom in the unfulfilled desires of a dry pub crawl. All of these stories seem to sketch the details of immediately recognizable places, but reveal a luminous interiority we never dreamed might be (re) discovered there. Transparently rooted in the work of other authors, including his contemporaries, they nevertheless defy critical terms such as 'intertextuality' and 'authenticity'. Since his mother's people (the Kwakwaka 'wakw) became disconnected from their traditions there has been a great deal of forgetfulness of the "dream-time" that used to exist in our everyday lives - this forgotten 'theatrical madness' of the human condition is what Garry Thomas Morse seeks to re-present. The title story of this brilliant collection of avant-garde fiction, loosely based on "The Picture" of Dorian Gray, Thomas Mann's "Doctor Faustus", and the movie "Death in Venice" inverts the post-modern textual convention that only the author's voice can be considered authentic. Its main character - the artist Padam, who is no more 'fictional' than the author - constantly interrogates the accuracy of his representations, whereas we know almost nothing about the narrator, who exists merely as the 'subject' of the Padam's portrait and an 'object' of his reflection.

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