



WHORES FOR GLORIA

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With his first three works of fiction—the novels *You Bright and Risen Angels* and *The Ice-Shirt*, and the collection *The Rainbow Stories*—William T. Vollmann announced himself as a writer of rare and ferocious talent, with critics comparing him to William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, and T.C. Boyle.

His new novel is the story of Jimmy, who has been deserted by his lover, a prostitute by the name of Gloria. In the despair of his loneliness, and his drunken grief, he reassembles Gloria's presence out of whatever he can buy from the hookers on the street—the fragments of their lives and dreams, and locks of hair they are willing to share for a price. In his search for these snatches of intimacy he meets the hustlers, drunks, and prostitutes of San Francisco's Tenderloin district: Candy, who beats her customers when they ask for it but refuses to let them call her a bitch; Snake, who pimps his wife; Nicole, whose job it is to give men AIDS; Jack, who shoots his woman's earnings into his arm but still likes Chopin even though he doesn't have a record player; and Gloria, who may or may not be a figment of Jimmy's imagination.

Vollmann writes with explosive power of the inner city, unflinching in the way he confronts the solitude of the homeless and unloved, the insulted and the injured of skid-row America. His exhilarating, high-voltage style and lyric language touch the heart and retrieve a jubilant integrity from the harsh struggles of his characters. Here is a world of harrowing truth, beautifully expressed by a writer of prodigious gifts.

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