

[PDF] The Blood Of Heaven

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Author: Kent Wascom
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Description:

From Fueled by whiskey, vengeance, warped religiosity, and wild revolutionary zeal, a golden-haired ruffian and his two adopted brothers aim to fight their way to nation-building glory. Wascom's language, gorgeous, expressive, and raw, flawlessly matches his vision of the unruly southern frontier before it latched onto the U.S. The son of a Baptist preacher from Upper Louisiana, Angel Woolsack inherits his father's biblical eloquence and violent tendencies and not only wields them with equal dexterity but liberally intertwines them. From Mississippi River flatboats to a Natchez whorehouse, his picaresque travels shape his mind-set and introduce him to Samuel and Reuben Kemper, his partners in crime. His wife, Red Kate, a young woman carved from the same mold, is a similarly powerful presence. For Angel, the West Florida territory, nominally ruled by the Spanish, is

an opportunity to be grabbed, as are Aaron Burr's dreams of forming an independent country. Seeing early nineteenth-century America through the eyes of an ambitious, trigger-happy renegade makes for an exhilarating yet brutal ride. Wascom imbues this underexplored era with visceral authenticity. --Sarah Johnson

Review □One of Publishers Weekly's Best Summer Books of 2013
□A *Spirit* Summer Reading Pick

□When you read as many contemporary novels as I do, it's easy to get jaundiced, because we're awash in hype, and almost nothing ever seems quite as good as it's cracked up to be. So please know that I'm not just giving this young author a pass. I truly can count on the fingers of one hand the number of first novels that have ever excited me this much. Wascom made me think at times of Cormac McCarthy, Charles Frazier and William Gay, but his vision is very much his own, as is his extraordinary voice. He's left himself a hard act to follow. This book is pure gold."□**Steve Yarbrough**

□The young Master Wascom arrives at our gates wielding a narrative broadsword, speaking in a monstrous voice, a Louisiana visionary in command of an army of bones and by God he comes to conquer. It's been more than a decade since the literary world has seen such a portentous debut from a novelist prodigy, equal parts savage and savant, and what else is there to say but *All hail the future*□this boy king has fifty more years of writing to feed our hungry souls."□**Bob Shacochis**

□Young Kent Wascom went down to the crossroads and there he made his deal. Or maybe he was just born spirited for this kind of work. Either way, I cannot name such a stunning debut as this one. It reads as not written, but lived and remembered□and how impossible is that? Whoever may own Kent Wascom's soul, *The Blood of Heaven* will forever be ours."□**Robert Olmstead**

□The Blood of Heaven is a brilliant comic rant that, with its twisted religious fervor, holds on to the reader and does not let go. Kent Wascom takes a nugget of colonial history□the Aaron Burr Conspiracy□and imbues it with a fiery life. His is a singular, important, and utterly vital voice."□**Sabina Murray**

□In the present age of cultural strife and national re-definition, a brilliantly resonant novel blooming from America's ever-thus history is just what the zeitgeist deserves. And *The Blood of Heaven* is as achingly beautiful in its personal story as it is savagely clear-headed in its national story. Kent Wascom has arrived fully-formed as a very important American writer."□**Robert Olen Butler**

□Oh America, heart-broken and constantly fought over! *The Blood of Heaven* is a dark hymn to the ruthless and ruinous early days in the Louisiana fringes of our republic. In the tradition of *As I Lay Dying* and Flannery O'Connor and *Blood Meridian*, idiomatic and far off into transgression, this one, from Kent Wascom, bless his genius, is the real deal."□**William Kittredge**

□Wascom is a craftsman, and each of his lengthy, winding sentences shimmers with the tang of blood and bone and sweat, and the archaic splendor of his language."□**Boston Globe**

□Rendered in lurid, swamp-fever prose swollen with biblical imagery (Burr first appears in the book on horseback, □hailed like Christ Himself'), the South of Mr. Wascom's imagination is an inferno of plague, vice and slave trafficking. . . . It's that dizzying pace, especially as Angel sets off on a Tarantino-esque rampage of revenge killings, that makes the book so compelling. Mr. Wascom's writing rolls from the page in torrents, like the sermon of a revivalist preacher in the grip of inspiration. You can't help listening, no matter how wicked the message."□**Wall Street Journal**

□Though he's not yet 30, Mr. Wascom has the gift, the elusive "it" that tells you on the first page that here is someone worth reading. . . . In its best moments, and there are many, you will slip completely into Wascom's fictional world. . . . You will also be in the presence of a young writer whose talent is obvious, whose sense of narrative is classical and clear, whose understanding of the craft is deep and well-formed and will only get better." □**New York Journal of Books**

□[*Blood of Heaven*] entertains with its energetic language and fast-paced action, and the love story between Angel and his wife is moving in its you-and-me-against-the-world naïveté. Wascom's research is put to good use as the gargantuan forces of history squash Angel and his associates." □**New York Times Book Review**

□*The work of a young writer with tremendous ambition, a bildungsroman of religion and revolution set during an obscure chapter of American history. . . . [Wascom] creates a first-person narrator who speaks with fire-breathing eloquence, tormented by God and the Devil and equally conversant with both. . . . Wascom writes with a fire-breathing, impassioned eloquence. Angel's voice compels our trust from the beginning and echoes all the ghosts of the dark Southern past.*" □**Washington Post**

□*If you thought the Wild West was wild, wait until you read about West Florida. In Kent Wascom's stunning debut novel that territory serves as microcosm of a nation's dark and violent infancy. . . . With its setting, its violence-driven plot and its resonant and often harshly beautiful language, *The Blood of Heaven* evokes comparison to the work of Cormac McCarthy. Its mordant humor and its exploration of slavery and violence as the tragic flaws at the heart of American history—as well as its awareness of what hellish danger awaits those who are sure God is on their side—recall such writers as William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and Mark Twain. Angel is a terrifying and irresistible narrator, and Kent Wascom is a striking new voice in American fiction.*" □**Miami Herald**

□*Wascom's West Florida makes the Old West look like a Disney resort in comparison, and his protagonist is a fitting emissary for this harsh and unforgiving land. . . . Whether describing a tender moment between husband and wife or a brutal revenge killing, there's no question of Wascom's range. . . . There is plenty here to applaud in this grim portrait of a dysfunctional frontier family caught up in a forgotten American war.*" □**NPR Books**

□*Kent Wascom, a 26-year-old Louisiana native, has produced an astonishingly assured debut. . . . He is more knowing than a writer his age has any right to be and displays a virtuosic command of biblical cadence and anachronistic vernacular without striking any false notes.*" □**San Francisco Chronicle**

□*Wascom's setting fascinates, while the veneer of violence makes us eager spectators in this narrative of American conquest and survival. . . . Ultimately, Wascom skirts around Faulkner's Mississippi, O'Connor's Georgia, and McCarthy's divided interests of Tennessee and Texas to firmly plant his stake in America's Deep South. It is a wise move. In *Blood of Heaven*, Wascom paints a fuller portrait of the American South. Though he makes strong overtures to these Southern writers and their territory, Wascom makes it his own.*" □**Washington Independent Review of Books**

□*Kent Wascom has written a rollicking historical thriller, a juicy love story, religious symbolism, a tale of woe, adventure, lust, manhood, money-chasing, nationhood, and religious and racial bigotry in early 1800s America. . . . Early American history was raw and gritty, and Wascom deals in that hard-boiled reality, but it's balanced by a polished and eloquent prose style that has a certain Old Testament quality to it, which gives the tale its unique flavor and gravity. . . . Wascom engages America's original sin with real force and seriousness; indeed, there are brutal passages that detail this incredible evil as the real-life horror show it was, and truly show America's complicity in a moral*

abhorrence.” □ **Tallahassee Writers Association**

□ *Sweeping themes of good and evil □ along with colorful, visceral language and breakneck action □ combine in this earthy tale.* □ **The Asheville Citizen-Times**

□ *Angel Woolsack forsakes life with his itinerant preacher father to follow a daring highwayman, then ends up wending his way from on-the-edge West Florida to the bordellos of Natchez, the plantations of Mississippi, and finally New Orleans, where Aaron Burr is leading efforts to create a new country. It’s a brave and bloody new world, captured with energy.* □ **Library Journal**

□ *The Blood of Heaven is sharply intelligent □ extremely violent, constantly profane, darkly comic and very angry. . . . [But] the anger is rooted in moral outrage, so it’s on the side of the angels.* □ **Columbus Dispatch**

□ *Though it says nothing good about America’s progress that we can still be seduced by a killer and slave-merchant with a coal-burnt silver tongue, this is precisely Wascom’s point. The myths of the founders are our myths, too, and they are myths that I hope Wascom continues to aim at.* □ **KGB Bar Lit Magazine**

□ *In elegant, lucid prose, fiction newcomer Kent Wascom brings the frontier, in all its violence and disorder, to stunning life in *The Blood of Heaven*. . . . Wascom is not yet 30, but he infuses his story with a wisdom, awareness, and clarity well beyond his years. . . . Angel’s hold on us never wavers but intensifies. *The Blood of Heaven* proves Wascom is a trailblazer whose brilliance is not a one-off but a true and rooted fact.* □ **BookMagnet**

□ *Set in the early part of the 19th century, Kent Wascom's debut novel is an evocative and searing read despite being bleak and peppered with scenes of extreme violence. . . . His voice is his o...*

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