



TOM LUTZ

Author · Professor · Editor · Humanist · Gadabout

MEDIA KIT



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Short Bio



Tom Lutz is a writer of books, articles, and screenplays, the founder of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and is now Distinguished Professor at UC Riverside. His books include American Book Award winner *Doing Nothing*, New York Times notable books *Crying* and *American Nervousness, 1903*, the travel books *And the Monkey Learned Nothing* and *Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World*, and coming on January 14, 2020, *Born Slippy: A Novel*.

He has written for television and film, and appeared in scores of national and international newspapers, magazines, academic journals, and edited collections. He is working with a Los Angeles-based production company on a television show set in the 1920s, is finishing a third collection of travel pieces, a book on the 1920s (*The Modern Surface*), and is in the early stages of a book on global conflict along the aridity line.

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Long Bio

Tom Lutz is an award-winning author of books, articles, reviews, screenplays, and radio programs. After a decade as a musician, cook, and carpenter, he began his formal education at a small college in the Midwest and went on to a PhD at Stanford University. He has taught at University of Iowa, Stanford, University of Copenhagen, and CalArts before joining the faculty at UC Riverside in 2006, where he is Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing.

Lutz is the author of *Doing Nothing: A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers and Bums* (Farrar Strauss Giroux; American Book Award, *NY Times* and *LA Times* Bestseller), *Cosmopolitan Vistas* (Cornell University Press; *Choice* Outstanding Academic Book), *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears* (Norton; *NY Times* Bestseller and *NY Times* Notable Book), *American Nervousness, 1903* (Cornell University Press; *NY Times* Notable Book), two books of travel narrative: *And the Monkey Learned Nothing: Dispatches from a Life in Transit* (Iowa University Press) and *Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World: Wandering the Globe from Azerbaijan to Zanzibar* (OR Books), and the forthcoming novel, *Born Slippy* (January 14, 2020, Repeater/Penguin Random House).

He is the editor of *These 'Colored' United States: African American Essays from the 1920s* (Rutgers University Press). These books have been translated into 12 languages and published in dozens of countries. He has published in the *Black Music Research Journal*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New Republic*, *Salon.com*, *ZYZZYVA*, *American Literary History*, *American Literature*, *Die Zeit*, *ASAP*, *Black Clock*, *Iowa Review*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Santa Monica Review*, *Electric Literature*, *Hermano Cerdo*, *Belifenet*, *Connotation Press*, *LALA*, *Exquisite Corpse*, dozens of other literary and academic journals, and in many books from major university (Columbia, Oxford, NYU, Stanford, Cambridge) and trade presses.

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Long Bio Continued...

He is finishing a third collection of travel pieces, and a book on the 1920s (*The Modern Surface*), and he is in the early stages of a book on the global conflict along the aridity line. He hosted and produced *The LARB Radio Hour* for two years and remains an executive producer on the show. His film work has included an adaptation of an Edith Wharton novel (with Laurie Winer) for Curtis Hanson (*Custom of the Country*), a feature about the young Mark Twain (*Mark Twain Remembers*) for Crystal Springs Productions, a documentary on a lost city in the Honduran jungle for Benenson Productions, a thriller (with Laurie Winer, *Playing Dead*) for Meg Ryan's Prufrock Pictures, a documentary on Los Angeles literature (*LA Lit*) for KO Pictures, and a historical drama (with Laurie Winer, *Jonestown*) for producers Trevor Macy and Cari-Esta Albert. He is working on a historical drama series pilot and bible, set in the 1920s, for a Los Angeles production company.

Lutz is founding Editor in Chief and Publisher of *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, which has grown over seven years from a basement-office dream to a million-dollar nonprofit business and one of the handful most important book reviews in the world. At *Los Angeles Review of Books*, he has produced over 60 e-books, 30 print magazines, 100 hours of short film and 150 hours of radio and podcasts (with guests Salman Rushdie, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Matthew Weiner, Walter Mosley, Norman Lear, Sandra Tsing Loh, Terry McMillan, Frank Gehry, Jonathan Gold, James Ellroy, Sam Harris, Eric Bogosian, Michael Tolkin, Nikki Giovanni, TC Boyle, and many others), and over 3000 daily editions of *Los Angeles Review of Books*, featuring over 7,500 longform pieces of literary journalism. He has just launched LARB Books, which has its first ten titles in production, three of them classic texts written in Los Angeles in the 1920s, one by a Mexican newspaper man, and two Hollywood novels, one by screenwriter Harry Leon Wilson, and one by Edgar Rice Burroughs of Tarzan fame. Other titles include books by Yxta Maya Murray, Henry Giroux, Brad Evans, and Colin Dayan.

Lutz has served as chair of the department at UCR, director of MFA programs and other graduate programs, and has directed UCR's Writers Week for the last five years. He created and directed both the low-residency MFA program at UCR Palm Desert and the LARB-USC Publishing Workshop.

He has appeared as an expert and author on ABC, CBS, PBS, and NPR, on television and radio in a dozen other countries, and he has given talks, readings, and seminars at hundreds of universities, conferences, and bookstores here and abroad.

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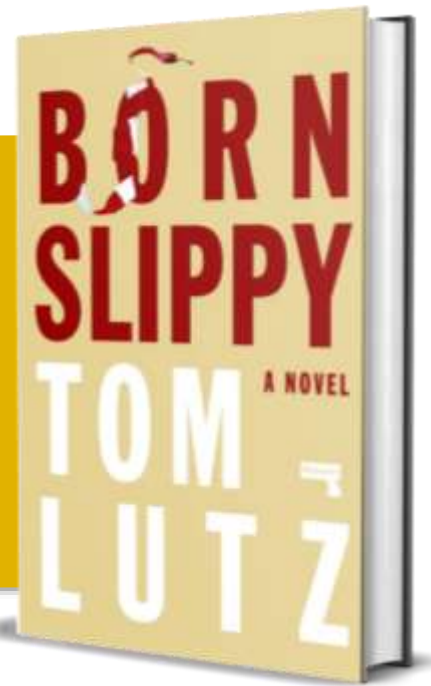
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BORN SLIPPY

A Novel by Tom Lutz

Publisher: Repeater Books
US/CAN Publication Date: January 14, 2020
(embargoed)
ISBN-13: 978-1-912248-64-3
Paperback \$16.95 / 296 pages

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Praise for *Born Slippy*

“An instant, finely wrought story of friendship, ingenuity, and blithe evil. Lutz has the seven deadly sins nailed and rethought for our 2020 world. You’ve got to dig this book!” —*James Ellroy*

“A highly literary and always engaging 21st century noir. Careening between New England, Jakarta, Taipei and beyond via Los Angeles, *Born Slippy* confronts contemporary questions about the relativity of evil that no one can dodge.” —*Chris Kraus, author of I Love Dick*

“An entertaining neonoir about the wages of greed.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

Frank Baltimore is a bit of a loser, struggling by as a carpenter and handyman in rural New England when he gets his big break, building a mansion in the executive suburbs of Hartford. One of his workers is a charismatic eighteen-year-old kid from Liverpool, Dmitry, in the US in the summer before university. Dmitry is a charming sociopath, who develops a fascination with his autodidact philosopher boss, perhaps thinking that, if he could figure out what made Frank tick, he could be less of a pig. Dmitry heads to Asia and makes a neo-imperialist fortune, with a trail of corpses in his wake. When Dmitry’s office building in Taipei explodes in an enormous fireball, Frank heads to Asia, falls in love with Dmitry’s wife, and things go from bad to worse.

Combining the best elements of literary thriller, noir and political satire, *Born Slippy* is a darkly comic and honest meditation on modern life under global capitalism.

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A Q&A about *Born Slippy* with Tom Lutz:

Q1: At the heart of the novel is a complex relationship between two very different men. One is bookish and sensitive, the other arrogant and amoral. How much is this a novel about different forms of masculinity?

There may have been a time when a book like this could be read as primarily a story of male friendship, a coming of age tale, or of male angst. But in our era, I hope, it is impossible to read it as anything (save a ripping good yarn) but an examination of the idea of toxic masculinity. Where does it come from? How is it transmitted? What kind of self-delusion is involved? I remember watching *Carnal Knowledge* as a young man and realizing that the flagrant sexist (Jack Nicholson) and the sensitive new-age man (Art Garfunkel) were equally misogynist, just in two different styles, one more up-to-date than the other.

I think Dmitry and Franky both want what the other has—Dmitry would like to be less of a pig, Franky wonders if he wouldn't like being more of one. And I'm playing with the fascination we continue to have, no matter what else we believe, with horrible men: think for instance of quality TV — Tony Soprano, Walter White, Don Draper, whoever those guys are in *Game of Thrones* — or the novels of Edward St. Aubyn or, more to the point, Patricia Highsmith, Stieg Larsson, James Ellroy, or any thriller or crime fiction in any era....

Q2: Intersecting with the theme of toxic masculinity is that of a toxic global economy, with its huge inequalities and out of control financial speculation. Are you drawing a connection between a certain kind of economy and a certain kind of masculinity?

Well, it would be a bad novel if the morals to be drawn were this easy to discern, but of course yes, rapacity can be expressed in many forms, exploitation can be expressed in many forms, violence takes many forms. It makes sense that rapacious, exploitative people can be found committing both financial and sexual crimes—Jeffrey Epstein is in the news right now, and of course Donald Trump. Predatory sexuality, predatory lending, predatory finance—they are related in many ways. It is true that we can always find historical examples of predatory women, of women behaving badly—Imelda Marcos, Winnie Mandela, Leona Helmsley, Griselda Blanco, Squeaky Fromme—but you run out of examples pretty fast, and it's hard to find a female Vlad the Impaler or Jim Jones. My gender has a near monopoly on big-time sociopathic behavior.

In *Born Slippy*, I am more interested in the way narcissism—the ultimate enthronement of the radical individualism of advanced capitalism—can prove attractive, and thus get passed, like a virus, to new hosts.

Q3. The idea of narcissism spreading like a virus seems very pertinent in the social media age. Does Frank’s character in some way offer a way of combating this virus, when he devotes himself to carpentry and books?

I guess it’s up to my reader to decide to what extent Frank avoids or succumbs to the virus. Yes, carpentry, building things, building shelter, is often presented as the opposite of the financial “services” the big investment banks provide, but as Dmitry points out, Frank is providing a service to the wealthy, too, with his high-end projects. Like the books that Frank reads, which, rather than providing him with clear answers, tend to confound him, I hope *Born Slippy* remains a bit slippery—it sets up these oppositions in order to complicate, not resolve them.

Q4. That reminds me of the line from the song ‘Born Slippy’ (by Underworld) which features in the book, “She was a lipstick boy, she was a beautiful boy”. This is a book which messes with binaries and neat divisions, right?

My book *Cosmopolitan Vistas* is an academic essay on literature and the rejection of binaries—it’s something I’ve thought a lot about. And the specifically sexual binaries—we seem to rediscover fluidity every other generation: think of the 1930s or the 1970s, for instance. I definitely wanted to have a more subtle representation of sexual fluidity than, say, David Bowie or Miley Cyrus, something that is interested in the way we all are a bit fluid.

Q5. This is your first novel. How do you feel now it is soon to be launched out into the world?

I always thought it would be such a relief to write fiction, after many books of nonfiction, that it would provide a mask, a buffer, plausible deniability. Instead I feel much more exposed than I ever did writing nonfiction, even when, occasionally, I’d be writing directly about myself. There’s a little bit of me in each and every one of these characters, male and female, and well, gee, that’s kind of embarrassing—there are some very bad people involved, and some very clueless ones, and even the best of them we can’t really be sure of...

Published Works



Author Name: Tom Lutz

Book Title: And the Monkey Learned Nothing: Dispatches from a Life in Transit

Publisher Name: University Of Iowa Press; Sightline Books

Publication Year: 2016

ISBN: 1609384490

No. of Pages: 241



Author Name: Tom Lutz

Book Title: Drinking Mare's Milk on the Roof of the World: Wandering the Globe from Azerbaijan to Zanzibar

Publisher Name: OR Books

Publication Year: 2016

ISBN: 9781682190562

No. of Pages: 236 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz

Book Title: Doing Nothing: A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers, and Bums in America

Publisher Name: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Publication Year: 2006

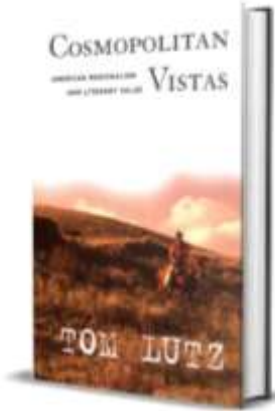
ISBN: 0865476500

No. of Pages: 388 pages

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Published Works



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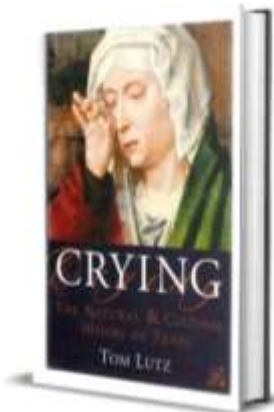
Book Title: Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value

Publisher Name: Cornell University Press

Publication Year: 2004

ISBN: 9780801489235

No. of Pages: 240 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz

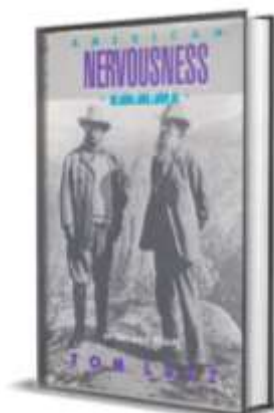
Book Title: Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears

Publisher Name: W W Norton & Co Inc

Publication Year: 1999

ISBN: 9780393047561

No. of Pages: 352 pages



Author Name: Tom Lutz

Book Title: American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History

Publisher Name: Cornell University Press

Publication Year: 1993

ISBN: 9780801499012

No. of Pages: 329 pages

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