

# That Demon Life

by Lowell Mick White

*Winner of the 2008 Gival Press Novel Award*

Linda Smallwood, a sometimes depressed, always difficult, Austin criminal defense lawyer, finds that her life mirrors what the Rolling Stones call **That Demon Life**. In the course of a grueling week, Linda encounters a parade of slackers, thugs, and eccentrics-hookers, cab drivers, and political fixers of various stripes—a world with echoes of *A Confederacy of Dunces*. She loses her job, falls back into a “romance” with her presently married ex-fiancé, and persuades her best friend to seduce and blackmail the judge she holds responsible for her misfortunes. Linda’s absurd, dislocated, and outlandish life reflects the rhythms and the culture of the city whose slogan is “Keep Austin Weird.” Indeed, she does. Ultimately, when Linda confronts her nemesis, whom she then attempts to rescue, she discovers that the joys of love and revenge are not all they’re alleged to be. As the Stones say, “It’s just that demon life has got you in its sway...”

*Advance praise:*

"The slacker blonde has found her muse! In the hilariously disinclined attorney Linda, a no-account Austinite whose idea of legal research is a rerun of *Law & Order*, White has given us a transgendered update of the madcap *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Indeed, you could say *Dunces* is done one better in **That Demon Life**, because this swift-moving new picaresque of work-avoidance takes us into the realm of sex. Amid the complications that flower so colorfully out of the death of Linda’s pet bird—you’ll scent a fresh and nutty bloom every few pages—we are treated to the kind of lust-besotted escapades that leave a county judge stumbling naked through the urban sprawl, poking up tabloid writers rather than Lone Star rattlesnakes. Amid all the unhinged carrying on, I’ll be darned if our Linda’s take-it-or-leave-it blasé doesn’t prove a moral center, and deliver a riotous epiphany."

—John Domini, judge for the Gival Press Novel Award and author of *A Tomb on the Periphery* and *Earthquake I.D.*

"Here is the story of success in spite of oneself, rendered with a sly and witty and wry appreciation for the ordinary horrors of everyday life. **That Demon Life** is a hoot, a virtuoso tale by a master story teller. Mr. White, where have you been keeping yourself?"

—Larry Heinemann, author of *Paco’s Story*, winner of the National Book Award

"**That Demon Life** has got Austin in its sway, or at least this novel's motley crew of characters. A horny judge, a defense attorney with an attitude, an entourage of petty criminals, a dating service maven, a self made internet porn star and a boy toy or two—they're all slouching toward Sixth Street and beyond. This is a fast-paced, hold-on-to-your-bar stool satire, a hilarious, stumbling romp through law and disorder, urban ennui and its after-hour antidotes, Texas-sized lust and doom."

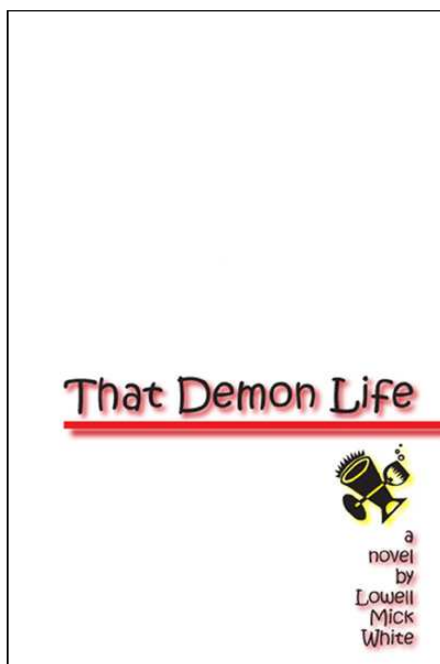
—Alison Moore, author of *The Middle of Elsewhere* and *Synonym for Love*, and winner of the Katherine Ann Porter Prize for Fiction

"Lowell White's first novel, **That Demon Life**, is hootenanny of jurisprudence, internet sex, false teeth, and box wine—all under the big skies of Texas. White's mischievous prose makes the fabulous realistic and the absurd an afterthought. Through it all, the audacity of the narrative allows us ample opportunity to laugh, even when the joke is on us."

—Adrian Matejka, author of *The Devil's Garden* and *Mixology*

"Lowell Mick White takes readers places John Grisham's novels overlook. With a keen eye for the absurd, White gives a glimpse into the lives of the hapless and dysfunctional attorneys and judges who inhabit the Capitol of Texas."

—Christine Granados, author of *Brides and Sinners in El Chuco*



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