

EVERYDAY MONSTER

by Alan May



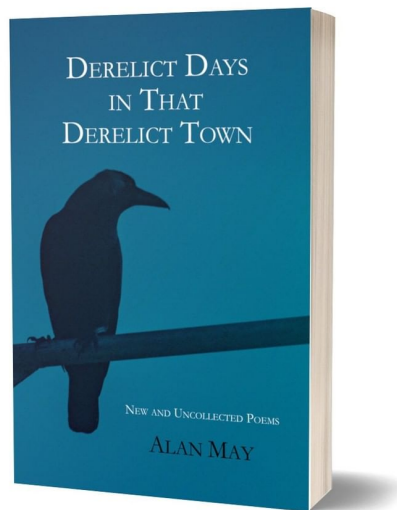
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Watch for the forthcoming audio/video version of *Everyday Monster* at alan-may.com (thanks to Knoxville Community Media and Ian Henderson).

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Everyday Monster

The steel machete in your paw,
deer running scared across the lawn,
across the park toward that magenta

horizon. Couples dance to a love song
from some other era. I suggest
you lay low, play it cool. In each toy house

hangs a loaded AR-15. For each street
on this grid, some minor disaster awaits.
Some might mistake you for a hoax.

Others might want to dress you in a bowtie.
I see you, lank and lonely. My ears prick
and swivel. My whiskers twitch. The family

has bedded down in an abandoned car.
No one fears the new war, though some kid
slips out into the night to hang a black flag.

There are rodents to fill the belly.
Dark clumps of trees off the interstate.
A small creek for water. Tiny pools

of bright sky where you can gaze
into the eyes, a little too lost, a little
too lethal, for such a fine beast.



The Boy and the Monster

Prologue

A boy and a monster walk
into the woods. The sun sets
on the pines, on the maple's blood-red
leaves. From a distance, we see
the boy's pale skin and the claws
at the end of the monster's furry arm.

Cautionary Tale

The boy leaves his parents,
wanders too far,
and is torn apart
by the monster.

Becoming

The boy walks into the woods
and becomes a monster. He lives

happily ever after.
He cradles fledgling birds

in his hairy arms and then
carefully returns the peepers

to their nests. He pats squirrels
on their furry, little heads.

Horror Story

A boy wanders into the woods,
becomes a monster, and then

returns to the village. He kills
and eats 100 villagers.

Tanka

Lonely road. Strong wind. / The boy w/ monster huddle / together under / a bridge
for warmth. There are dreams. / There is fire. Oh, brilliant stars.

Waiting for the Monster

All alone, the boy
falls asleep on a pile
of children's bones.

Everyday Monster

After a hearty breakfast,
the boy and the monster

become one. They disguise
themselves as an office

worker. They tie
their shoes and button

their spiffy cardigan.
They take the bus to work.

They sit at a desk
beside the water cooler.

Conflict Resolution

The villagers gather
with their torches, machetes,

and assault rifles.

They follow the monster

into the woods. The monster
kills several villagers.

A man fires two bullets
into the center mass

of the monster, stopping the beast's
heart. The villagers chop

the monster into pieces.
Among the many pieces,

the villagers find
a bright-eyed boy.



Cherub. Firing Squad. Dawn

I played chess with the red
monkey, said goodbye to the red

monkey. The chain whip in Milwaukee.
I banished Milwaukee, Wisc.

Fallen to find the pale coyote.
Minor killing. To shoot up.

To shoot at. Falling, I fell
into a pattern with the pale

coyote. Pawn to bishop. Yield:
the beautiful red fabric

of my empty hood, empty
jacket hovering in a field.

War Monster

Sanctity night special high as a warplane

Quicker than an electron rat-a-tat

The cows that star in a protest film about cattle

I am one with the bovines you shot down with your warplane

I am one warplane a deep sea driver of the war machine

That kills fascists an A-bomb in summary you're

A clown whose daddy didn't love him

All out of tears in the fabric of our being

You are one with the gun of a preacher man

Tired of sun bombs of the sweet saccharine Jesus

We all burn if we don't die first the sun

A bomb a conflagration a cowtown

A son I sing for nobody

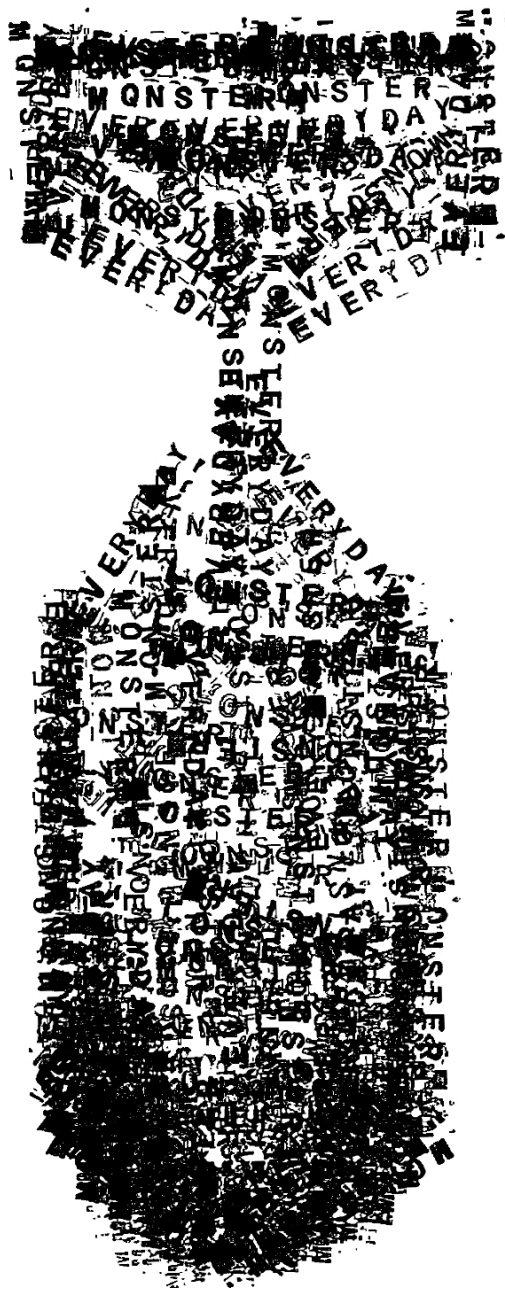
We surround the industrial complex

In protest my millions of bodies can love

You to dearth why not? linger

In the hillside beside the murdered warmachine

In our lily pad on our warmonger's stagnant lake



Crow

And so the story goes:
the farmer walked the fields
to look for doves, UFOs,

or something like that. He heard
the rough cries of the crows
and decided to wing one.

The bird fell to the ground.
The farmer scooped up the crow
in a bag and took it to his farm,

where he picked the bits of shot
from the crow's blue-black wings.
Then the farmer locked the crow

in the loft with the hay. The crow
learned to say, "Corn." Learned
to say, "Water." It learned

to pull nails from the floor-
boards and steal grain and eat
the hen's eggs right before

they hatched. Then the crow
learned to flip the latch
on the loft door. Then it learned

its secret word. The bird
leapt from the loft and landed
hard on the ground. It picked

itself up, shook
the dust from its feathers,
and slowly limped away.

