



Black Neurology
Kadrey, Richard

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About Kadrey:

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco. Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnies' *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical." Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A." Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*. The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories. His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*. Source: Wikipedia

Also available on Feedbooks for Kadrey:

- *Metrophage* (1988)
- *Butcher Bird* (2005)
- *Zombie* (2002)
- *A Cautionary Tale* (2002)
- *SETI* (2002)
- *Mudrosti* (2002)
- *Second-Floor Girls* (2002)
- *Bad Blood* (2002)
- *Ubiquitous Computing* (2002)

- *Chronalgia* (2002)

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Using my pull with an acquaintance at the city morgue, I convince the attending Medical Examiner to let me watch your autopsy.

He begins with a traditional Y incision, cutting two diagonals across your upper chest until they meet at your sternum, then a single long, straight slice down to your crotch. He opens you with a crack, snapping ribs and connective tissues, laying you open and bare, more exposed than you've ever been in a lifetime of extreme and perverse exposures. I stand quietly, a little behind the Medical Examiner, clicking away with the disposable camera I picked up at a 7-11 on the way over.

This Examiner is a real professional, experienced and respected for both his precision and the speed of his work. But now that he's opened you, he's just standing there, looking down, his head craning slowly up and down the length of you. He reaches forward and pushes a finger into your abdomen, scooping out what he finds and pressing it quizzically between his fingertips. Your body appears to be packed with a pinkish-yellow clay. The Examiner makes a face and scoops out more with his hands, trying to find his way through the muck to your organs. He lets out a little yelp and pulls back his hands. The right one is bleeding. He reaches tentatively into you and pulls something free—one, two, then three feet of coiled razor wire.

After replacing the torn glove, he examines your insides further, this time using scissors and a metal probe. He hits a pocket of what looks like black tar. It oozes up through the clay, darkening it. The Examiner's probe drags new things from your gut. Rosaries. Straight razors. Antique medical bottles labeled LAUDANUM and STRYCHNINE. He finds your baby teeth; the soft cords the hospital used to bind your hands when you had that fever as a child; the hand-stitched belt your daddy used on you when you needed a whipping.

With a pair of forceps, the Examiner digs into the thick clay and pulls out your heart. Instead of a fist of muscle, what he holds in the forceps is a glowing red coal, sprouting a steady flame from the top and wrapped with barbwire, like a miniature crown of thorns.

He turns and looks at me, holding up the glowing coal as if I might have an explanation. I shrug and snap a picture. "What's that?" I ask, nodding at your body. The Examiner turns to look and I reach around from behind, slicing his throat from the jugular to the carotid artery in one smooth motion, using the scalpel I nicked from his instrument tray. He burbles once and I let him drop, bleeding into the cavity from which he'd just extracted your burning heart. Snapping another quick photo, I go to the other end of the table and kiss your cold lips.

New scanning techniques developed in the late 1990s led to brain studies which revealed that our minds and bodies are all utterly unique. The neural pathways that mean pain and discomfort for some equal pleasure and contentment for others. The chemical compositions of our cerebral and spinal fluids can vary widely from person to person, perversion to perversion. Our desires are defined by our brains and our bodies are shaped by our desires. As William Blake once said, "Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained." The unrestrained, I wonder, watching the last of the Medical Examiner drain into you, who knows all the unrestrained could do?

There's a bubbling in the bloody clay. I kiss you more insistently now. Something rises from the muck. A hand. Then an arm. Another hand beside them. I slide down and bite your throat. Your body begins to convulse, as if in orgasm. You pull yourself free from the clay, up and out of your corpse. Covered in blood and muck like a helpless infant, you're reborn from your own body, this stranger's blood and our overwhelming desire. You rise up to your knees, breathe in with your new lungs and open your mouth, searching for your voice. Finding it, you touch my cheek and say, "I told you I'd never leave you."

I wrap you in the Examiner's lab coat and take you home.

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