

[Necrophilia Variations by Supervert](#)

Book: *Necrophilia Variations*

Author: [Supervert](#)

Type of Book: Fiction, short stories, necrophilia

Why I Consider This Book Odd: Well, the author goes by the moniker Supervert. That is what I like to call a clue. Also, necrophilia. Yeah. Necrophilia.

Availability: Published by Supervert, Inc. in 2005, you can get a copy here:



Comments: Finally! A book that I consider *eros* and *thanatos*. All the books recommended to me as being *eros* and *thanatos* were all *thanatos* and no *eros*. Or the *eros* was so bizarre that I had no chance of relating to it. I am thrilled to finally read a book that contains both to equal degrees. I am surely no necrophile (which it annoys me even to have to say but if I don't, I will get e-mails from people wondering if I am because I read this book and am talking about it) but I spend a fair amount of time photographing cemeteries, so in many senses, I understand the appeal. Death holds a quietness and a comfort – remembrance and the very real sense that the worst has happened and you have nothing left to worry about.

You pick up a book that is called *Necrophilia Variations*, and it is safe to assume all the stories are going to be about having sex with the dead. But *Necrophilia Variations*, while it does include tales of sex with dead people, is more a collection of stories of people dealing with the confluence between sex and death. The notion of *le petit mort* is an idea that is not new, yet the idea that the sex impulse is closely linked to death is hard for many to swallow. Though visionaries and poets, like Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mirbeau, have tread this ground before, it is refreshing to see these sorts of ideas written by a modern for moderns.

Heartbreaking, sickening, humorous – this short story collection pushes boundaries, and does not just push them for the sake of pushing, as I felt was the case when I read [Bataille's Story of the Eye](#) (a book I am willing now to say I simply did not get and likely never will).

The stories have merit, the ideas are intriguing. This really is intellectual *eros* and *thanatos*, not grotesque splatter for those who like lots of excessive violence with their sex (not that there is anything wrong with that, but too often it comes off clownish, an attempt by certain authors to one-up each other in the gross out factor – this book is not that sort of thing).

The book begins with a quote from Baudelaire: “It is one of the considerable privileges of art that the horrible can be transformed, through artful expression, into beauty.” I am unsure if it is because I have been

immersed in the *outré* for so long that I don't consider this book to be much in the way of horrible, or if *Supervert* managed to make the horrible so beautiful that I did not see it for what it was, but there is a lot of beauty, emotion and depth to these short stories. Overall, this is an excellent collection.

Here are some of the stories I liked best:

“Death and the Dilettante” was one of the more humorous pieces in the book. Marisa is a death-goth poseur who wants a coffin, which her boyfriend provides for her in a rather *outré* fashion. He has no illusions that she is little but a worthless pain in the ass, but she is beautiful, with gorgeous hair and an aloof, imperious manner, intoxicating to him. Her comeuppance in the story is fabulous.

“How Would You Like It” is one of the few stories in which sex with the actual dead is contemplated, suggesting that perhaps there are those among us who, when dead, would not mind becoming the object of the necrophile's attentions, and would, perhaps, arrange their deaths and burials to accommodate such desires. As someone who has on more than one occasion made it clear that I could not care less what happens to me when I die because if souls exist, mine would be gone at death, this story was intriguing. Donation to medical science, cremation or necrophilic relief, it makes little difference to me with my beliefs. I am a heterosexual female who, despite my interest in the non-normal, have no desire to have sex with the dead but what would it matter what happened to my body when I am dead? Yet all sex has a philosophic and moral nature – necrophilia brings up this interesting point:

Would it bother me to think of my body having sex without me... In a way this is a funny question for a necrophile to pose himself. A pedophile cannot become a child, a shoe fetishist cannot become a shoe, but a necrophile can and does flip over to the other side.

Perhaps it is only fitting that the true necrophile avail himself or herself to those with the same paraphilia, given that this is one of the few paraphilias that can ultimately be a two-way street.

“Graveyard Survival Training” is an overtly hilarious story of what happens when a drunk egoist visits his dead girlfriend's family vault only to have everything that can go wrong go wrong.

“Suicide by Strumpet” is exactly what it sound like – a man wants to die at the hands of a prostitute. He just has problems finding a willing hooker.

“Ars Moriendi” is the story of a man and a woman looking at art in a museum and talking about odd things, causing the man to combine the death and beauty impulses in a way that has happened so often in art and poetry but is still nice to read. As they look at paintings, the woman, Muriel, says:

“You know what I find creepy?” she said, straightening up. “It's the thought of a man painting a woman like that and then living with the painting for so many years. Imagine getting old while the woman stays young and healthy up there on canvas... It's like dying slowly beneath the gaze of a beautiful woman.”

The woman, Muriel, does not understand the appeal, insisting beauty only exists in the physical realm, seeing beauty as something that can only exist in life. The man stops trying to explain how appealing it would be to die under her gaze, but thinks about it:

It would be exquisite to die in front of you, I thought. Not that I want to die, exactly. It's just that, when I go, it would be sharper and sweeter to do it in front of you. You could be a sort of cheerleader for my demise, easing me into non-existence, distracting me with your beauty while I slip into the abyss. My fingers, twisting in your hair, might tether me to the earth for a few moments more. The very sight of you would make me loathe to go, My heart would beat wildly

and stubbornly in my fading flesh. My very last thought would be, “How lovely! How beautiful.”

Then there is the story that hit me the hardest and is with me even now. “Diary of a Sick Fuck” is of a man who is at war with his base instincts, his love of the macabre and disturbing. His girlfriend, a psychology student, is studying a theory by which people selecting images will tell you their most hidden impulses, all the while he is looking at horror after horror on the computer. He edits horror stories, and tries to fix himself by moving to romance stories but ends up just editing the books into horror books themselves.

He begins to suspect that his girlfriend, Vivian, is confronting him with images for he finds pictures on his computer that he has no memory of searching for and saving. One day he finds on his computer screen a picture of a Nazi taunting an old Jew with a match, about to set his beard on fire, to the delight of the other Nazis present.

The picture itself showed nothing terrible – I mean the terrible thing, the burning of the old man’s beard, had yet to happen, and so in that sense, the picture was not particularly repellent. And yet, there was indeed something horrid about the picture. It was the spectacle of the strong brutalizing the weak, the young exploiting the old, the group terrorizing the individual. You could not help but have a moral reaction to the image, and yet at the same time, I *liked* looking at it, so that a tension ensued between the two sides of my person, the moral and the morbid.

The story goes on and it ends and the violence he sees online enters his life in a sort of twist that I could have done without, but I had to remember that these are stories, not essays on the human condition. But even so, as a story it was excellent, as are most of the stories in the book. Some might see the message of this story to be that to submerge one’s self into horror can lead to violence. I see it far differently. I see the message being that it is the failure to recognize the duality of man’s soul, the act of stifling that duality, that makes us go mad.

I am old enough to recall a time when one could not dredge up the worst one could imagine with a click on Google, back when rotten.com and worse submerged me into a world of horror and numbed me to it for a while, when the Internet was nothing but sex, horror and Usenet. In seconds, I could be confronted by the sorts of pictures that ‘zine makers had to rip out of history books and copy for their transgressive writing. The Internet changed what it meant to be a voyeur and what it meant to be sick. For a year or so, I felt like a sick fuck, too. But there are those of us who have no choice, who look at pictures of kittens and love it but follow it with a dose of atrocity and I understood the narrator in this story all too well, the feeling of being a monster, the feeling of being an outcast for simply what goes on in my mind, yet knowing that I looked because I could not *not* look. It was that looking that urged me to vegetarianism, towards certain politics. Looking was not the base voyeuristic act that many moral purists like to make it out to be. Looking confirmed my humanity.

This book weaves beauty and death, horror and anticipation, and an excruciating look at the human condition, that results in at times what can only be described as poetry. Therefore, this book may not appeal to those who want to read about the visceral interaction with decomposition, though there is a little of that in this book. This is not a short story collection for someone who wants Cannibal Corpse lyrics told in prose form. It is a book for those who see the beauty of death, for those who know that all acts of love and sex will ultimately end in some form of death. It is a book for those who know that ceasing to exist can be a form of ecstasy for the dying and those who love the dying and later dead. People who can look at a lovely person and wonder, “What would it be like to die at your feet?” People who can look at the worst humanity can wreak and still find beauty. For people for whom death is not such a great mortal fear.

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