

★ **The Iconoclast's Journal**

Terry Griggs

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Terry Griggs's *The Iconoclast's Journal* compels thoughts, things, places, and faces to populate its pages with their hidden stories: too outrageous to be believed yet too convincing to be doubted, and universally successful in exposing the truth, tragedy, and humor within.

From that moment in May of 1898 when a ball of fire chases Griffith Smolders from his honeymoon suite, he never stops running. Initially intent upon swiftly swelling space between himself and the “ball of lightning,” Griff eventually surrenders to the realization that the fiery ball did him a favor by forcing him to flee a self, marriage, and life so void of substance that even the hungry flames preferred a lick of the hotel's wooden floor to a bite of him. Griff's escape from a past hardly worth remembering hurls him into a present too astounding in its every detail to ignore.

Griggs's *Journal* fails at being a page-turner in the same way a journey to the center of the earth fails to circle the globe. Were the pages more easily turned, the treasures buried within them might be overlooked—treasures like a man so prone to self-parody that he can barely “keep his eyebrows from dancing off his face” or a woman whose voice has such heft, it “might hurt if she lobbed it at you.”

Griggs mercilessly cudgels and coddles each phrase into bleeding a story worthy of its own book. The plot could be anything or nothing because *The Iconoclast's Journal* is a place where nothing is ever nothing and everything is always something worth chewing on for a long, long time.

LINDA THORLAKSON (May/June 2018)

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