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## No Future

### **No Aloha: The Friendly Happy Music of the Past**

by *Deran Ludd*

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Paper, 197 pages, \$8.95.

### [Beth Henson](#)

*No Aloha* is the story of the future as barbarism. The friendly happy music of the past appears as chapter headings; the unheard melodies evoke a time of blind self-indulgence. The United States has broken apart; the midwest has become a giant factory hog farm; the political fragmentation of the east has been exacerbated by a devastating earthquake, and the west has seceded. Ronald Reagan is in his seventh presidential term; Nancy and the Drug Enforcement Agency are running the country. Colorado, the site of our story, has elected Televangelist Kingston "tyrant of the state on his promise of full employment through the mass murder and/or vivisection of sinners."

The Surgical Mind Jesus Project, administered by Team Jesus, has subjected 178,000 sinners to experimental brain surgery, implanting bioplastic Jesus-loving bits in place of evil-inducing parts. Not one of the experiments has been successful.

Finally, the United Nations' North American Arbitration reluctantly intervenes, led by ex-South African President Nelson Mandela, and sends the tyrannical pastor into gilded exile. The ineffective UNNAA troops are now preparing to pull out, leaving the field to Kingston's former lieutenants, Team Jesus paramilitaries, armed with iron club crucifixes; Golden West Guards, a private army; and the Tribbers, members of the Secret Rapture Movement, who wear sashes inscribed with the names of sinners they have dispatched to the Last Four Things.

In the ruined city of Denver, four teenagers armed with daggers scrounge and steal, squatting in abandoned buildings. They scramble through broken windows to board the few surviving metrotrains (the conductors of which shoot at the mass of would-be passengers). The teenagers rob anyone with anything left to take, ripping the clothes from other children, stomping on the weak and infirm. They share cigarette butts and roaches and quarrel over food. They argue about which smells worse, burnt plastic or dead flesh.

The four teenagers are slowly making their way on foot across the blasted city to a suburb where they hope to find refuge and food. Gus has a bad stomach; he has trouble keeping down the UNNAA rations. He amuses the others with tales of his sexual experiences with a middle-aged accountant who wants to be called "daddy" at the moment of orgasm. Maude lost two fingers of her right hand when a landmine exploded. Gladys is the youngest; she carries a treasured Ultra Playdeck 8220, which requires precious batteries to function. Walter, the oddest of the lot, insists on wearing girls' clothing and may be the messiah.

In this sundered and self-destructing world, the bourgeoisie has solved the race question: everyone is multiracial, so the political meaning of race has been erased. The war is all against all. Five-by-ten-kilometer LCD screens functioning as stratospheric billboards patrol the skies. The children tramp through the dying town with nowhere to go and no future.

In *No Aloha*, Deran Ludd presents us with a chilling illustration of Marx's formulation: Socialism or Barbarism.

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