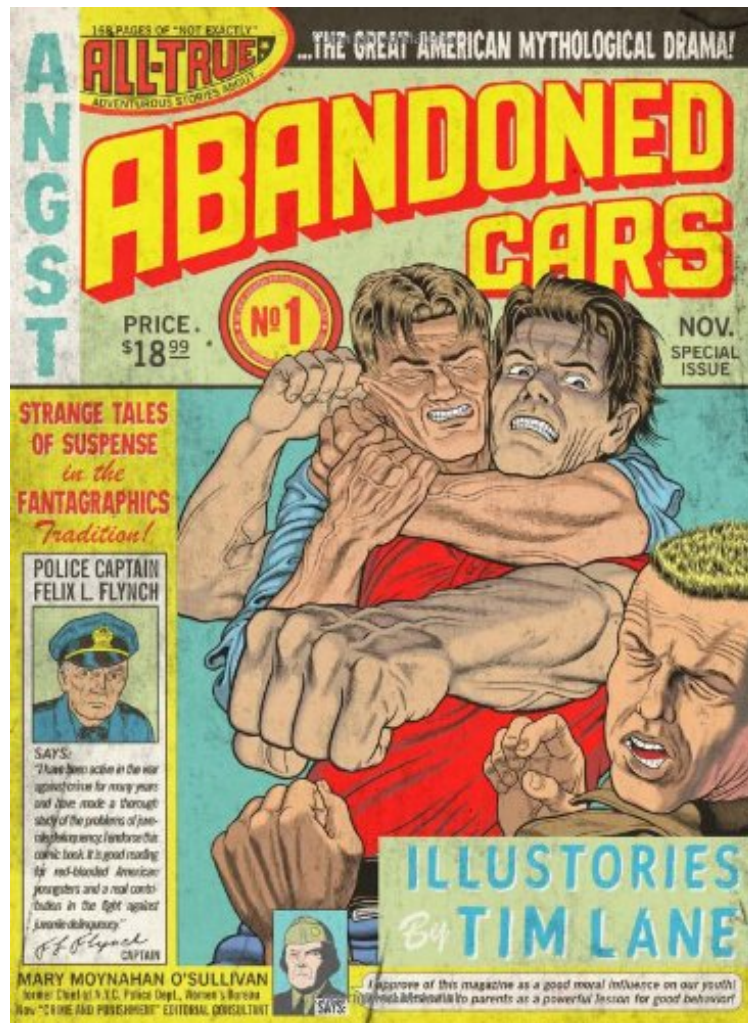


## Abandoned Cars

Tim Lane

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**Tim Lane : Abandoned Cars** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Abandoned Cars:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Meticulously rendered tales of Blue Collar Angst and Existential Despair By J. Higgins Abandoned Cars compiles black-and-white comics Tim Lane published from 2003 -2008; some of these appeared in various indie comics, and others, in the St Louis, MO tabloid The Riverfront Times. In his Afterword, Lane remarks in very earnest prose that the works in Abandoned Cars represent his interpretation of The Great American Mythological Drama. The Drama, in Lanes mind, is a sort of grand mlang of pop culture and sociological tropes, such as Elvis; cars with fins; eating hotdogs on the Coney Island boardwalk along with other members of the lumpen proletariat; and the unsettling knowledge that, deep down, the American Dream has its Dark

Side. There's hardly anything novel in this approach; it's one already well-tapped not just by indie comics artists like Harvey Pekar, but by authors like Charles Bukowski, and rock musicians like Bob Seger. So when Lane crafts comics about blue-collar types who are struggling with Existential Despair, and the need to overcome their own failings, it's more or less like reading Bob Seger songs. set to graphic art. If you think that *Like A Rock*, *Main Street*, and *Night Moves* are the epitome of Blue Collar Angst as an artistic expression, then Lane's work with its images of goateed bikers mourning Failed Relationships, and Alienated Graduate Students seeking the meaning of life among the bleak, existential landscapes of urban America - will appeal to you. What if, however, you're not a fan of determinedly poetic expositions on Blue Collar Angst? Well, *Abandoned Cars* still is worth a look, mainly because of Lane's art. Its meticulous linework, shading and stippling, and the use of (what apparently is) scratchboard for some works, calls to mind the work of indie comic greats like Thomas Ott and Charles Burns. Lane's skills as a draftsman are particularly noticeable in the *Spirit* series of comics, about his own Hobo-style adventures at riding freight trains across the Northern Plains in Winter. Summing up, Tim Lane's artistic skills are the best thing about *Abandoned Cars*. If you're a fan of good graphic art, with an emphasis type of draftsmanship that is increasingly being lost as the comics industry places greater emphasis on PC-generated artwork, then you may want to get a copy. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Brilliant Debut By GraphicNovelReporter.com To simply call Tim Lane's *Abandoned Cars* a collection of short stories on a particular theme is a bit misleading. While the book is presented as a collection, Lane's first as a matter of fact, it is rather a well orchestrated set of stories--likely conceived together--that return in multiple parts, are sometimes strips split and scattered throughout the book, and often framed by recurring ideas. Lane deals with what he calls the "Great American Mythological Drama," closely associated, but not to be confused with, the American Dream. His characters are mostly on the younger side of middle-aged and dealing with what can best be described as an emptiness related to the realization that the something--a feeling sold through the collective promise that is America--they were expecting to find later in life just is not there for a variety of reasons. It deals with the time when expectations and dreams meet reality and examines the rift between them. They are mostly introspective characters, wandering in a noirish blur, staring down decrepit alleys, contemplating what life means without that feeling and how it got away, or if it ever existed. Some, as in a tale billed as autobiographical, are still trying to find a trace of it by any means necessary--in the case of the author, that means seeking the rush of hopping freight trains. The characters travel separate paths but deal with nearly identical feelings. By its nature, some of the book's tales can be downright gloomy, and fittingly *Abandoned Cars* doesn't arrive at a clear-cut solution to the American Myth, but Lane's effort to understand it for himself is beautifully presented. Each tale is drawn in greatly detailed black-and-white evocative of Charles Burns, and the characters, the action, and the environments (much like the stories themselves) are exaggerated, creating a surrealistic tone. Lane also takes small cues from Chris Ware and uses the medium of comics extensively. Readers are presented with cutout pages of American archetypes, fabricated advertisements that play into the theme and several panels Lane arranges out of traditional order and occasionally requires readers to turn the book to follow. The Ware-esque devices, far from being gimmicky, successfully serve the purpose of actively including the reader in the process of self-examination. The reason it feels misleading to call *Abandoned Cars* a collection is that every last detail of the book seems perfectly devised by Lane to bring the stories together and make the reader join the inner dialogue on the subject of the Great American Mythological Drama. It is a brilliant debut.-- William Jones 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Ruminations on Lost America By Jesse Sneva An unironic loss of innocence, a blind curve, a chance encounter that changes everything (for better or worse), past mistakes distorting future plans, melancholy blues, surreal slapstick, the "true" story of Stagger Lee and an abiding sense of careless adventure...these are the overtones of *Abandoned Cars*. Many of these drawings and stories seem drawn from the inner eye through real experience. I wish more graphic novelists would take the risks that he takes. A serious and funny debut.

The acclaimed 2008 debut now in softcover noirish, existential short comics. *Abandoned Cars* is Tim Lane's first collection of graphic short stories, noirish narratives that are united by their exploration of the great American mythological drama by way of the desperate and haunted characters that populate its pages. Lane's characters exist on the margins of society alienated, floating in the void between hope and despair, confused but introspective. The writing is straightforward, the stories mainstream but told in a pulpy idiom with an existential edge, often in the first person, reminiscent of David Goodis or Jim Thompson's prose, or of films like *Pick-Up on South Street* or *Out of the Past*. Visually, Lane's drawing is in a realistic mode, reminiscent of Charles Burns, that heightens the tension in stories that veer between naturalism on the one hand and the comical, nightmarish, and hallucinatory on the other. Here, American culture is a thrift store and the characters are thrift store junkies living among the clutter. It's an America depicted as a subdued and haunted Coney Island, made up of lost characters boozing, brawling, haplessly shooting themselves in the face, and hopping freight trains in search of Elvis. *Abandoned Cars* is an impressive debut of a major young American cartoonist. 168 pages of black-and-white comics

The real comic book event of the summer... breathtaking... The book signals the arrival of a major new voice on the

American literary landscape, with or without the illustrations. - PrintThe stories take place along a vaguely defined stretch of scenery haunted by the ghosts of Kerouac, Marlon Brando, and Elvis, where visitors can probably hear the distant strains of a Tom Waits song or The Magnetic Fields Charm of the Highway Strip playing in the background... Heres one to watch. - The Onion A.V. Club[An] apt literary comparison might be to Raymond Carver... Abandoned Cars establishes Lane in the first rank of todays emerging comics artists. - Step Inside DesignLanes beautifully crafted pen-and-ink drawing combines a master artists eye for detail with a predilection for the grotesque to produce a superb blending of unforgettable images and poignant meditation on lifes tragic undercurrents. - BooklistWhen you put all the pieces together, you dont simply get a story or a group of stories, you get a book that pulls back the curtain on the collective unconscious of a nation. ... Like the myths that it is inspired by, Abandoned Cars lingers long after reading and grows in stature as you re-live and re-tell it. - Chad Derdowski, ManiaIts the modern equivalent of the Raymond Chandler yarns that fill up the more exciting portion of your bookshelf a string of police chases and back-alley fist fights with a surprisingly introspective thread running in the background. - KemptThe spirit of the Beats imbues the debut collection by Tim Lane The stories are united by their sense of longing and melancholy. His pen and ink style, reminiscent of Charles Burns, is extremely detailed and noirishly evocative. - Mike Sebastian, Campus CircleAbout the AuthorTim Lane lives in St. Louis, MO.