



Cabin Fever

FEELING A LITTLE EDGY WITH **HUNTER S. THOMPSON**
 NO LONGER KICKING AROUND? THEN HOLE UP WITH A LIBRARY-LOAD OF NEW AND CLASSIC
 BOOKS BY AND ABOUT THE LATE, GREAT DOCTOR OF LETTERS. BY JEFF JOHNSON

For 300 bucks you can be one of 3,000 people to get a posthumous Hunter S. Thompson fix in a prissy cloth slipcase. Call it HST porn in the art book equivalent of a brown paper bag. Upstart L.A.-based publisher Ammo Books uncovers the artier side of Thompson in *Gonzo*, a project begun before the Doctor's suicide in early 2005. Fans of Thompson will be happy to learn that the book does not provide a look at an as-yet-undocumented passion for sculpture or oil portraiture. Rather, it serves as a sort of a colorized version of the *Fear & Loathing Letters*, offering biography via the type of self-mythologizing ephemera for which the man is famous: photos of the author passed out amid empty cans of Schlitz beer, a press release on the official Eglin A.F.B. letterhead declaring himself a "morale problem," and

Gonzo by Hunter S. Thompson (Ammo Books, \$300), and *The Mutineer* by Hunter S. Thompson (Simon & Schuster, \$32)

Polaroids with trophy marlins, among them.

There are many photographs taken by Thompson—at least one of them is of a naked woman overlooking the Pacific Ocean—and book buyers will also receive a limited edition print of a Thompson photograph.

For all that has been written about him (quite a bit of it excavated by Thompson himself) one does not yet hear the bottom of the barrel scraping. But we must be getting close. In addition to *Gonzo* and a wave of Thomsoniana in recent months comes a third gigantic collection of his letters, *The Mutineer: Rants, Ravings, and Missives From the Mountaintop 1977-2005*, covering dispatches penned from Thompson's Woody Creek, Colorado compound.

An introduction penned by Johnny Depp may not be overly enlightening, but the last couple of years in the book should shed some insight into Thompson's failing health, and unpleasant, much-speculated-upon demise.

The Hunter S. Thompson Reader

Grab a case of Jack Daniels, a carton of smokes, a thirty-ought-six and plenty of ammunition if you plan to peruse the oeuvre of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, the godfather of Gonzo reporting. With a spate of new books on the shelf by and about the wild-card journalist, a look back on the free-wheelin' works that made him a legend:

Hell's Angels (1966)

Thompson's first book recounted the year he spent living and riding with the notorious outlaw biker gang.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1972) The Dr.'s most famous work made him an instant celebrity; it's the Great American Novel on acid.

Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 (1974) Who better than HST to tackle the odious Richard Nixon?

The Curse of Lono (1983) Could just as well have been titled *Fear and Loathing in Hawaii*.

The Rum Diary (1998) Set in Puerto Rico and written in 1959 when Thompson was only 22. Johnny Depp is set to star in a movie version next year.

The Gonzo Papers Four volumes of Thompson's articles and essays: *The Great Shark Hunt* (1977), *Generation of Swine* (1988), *Songs of the Doomed* (1990) and *Better Than Sex* (1994); and two volumes of letters: *The Proud Highway* (1997) and *Fear and Loathing in America* (2000).

Kingdom of Fear (2003) Something akin to a memoir, although Thompson mostly wrote about himself anyway. Brilliant but typically fragmented.

—Jared Paul Stern