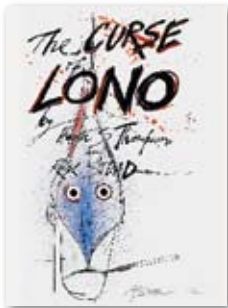


## COFFEE-TABLE BOOK

# The Curse of Lono

Hunter S. Thompson's island-style rantings and Ralph Steadman's take on the 1980 Honolulu Marathon

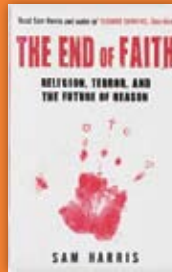


**P**ublished a month after the good doctor looked down the business end of his semi-automatic Smith and Wesson .45, this re-edition of the rare 1983 book was Hunter S. Thompson's swan song. The story is to Hawaii what *Fear And Loathing* was to Vegas, and this wild tale of a crazed journalist's 'covering' of a news event ends up as a comment on the dark side of Americana. Combining aggressive wordplay with hallucinogenic artwork, the gods of gonzo are employed to cover the 1980 Honolulu Marathon but quickly move their families into a rented house on the island. Then

Thompson catches a huge Marlin, which he beats to death with a Samoan war club screaming, 'I am Lono!' (ancient Hawaiian god) all the way back to the docks, and things turn ugly. This unclassifiable mix of fiction, reportage, myth and surrealism is told in large format with full-colour illustrations. (*Published by Taschen, R700.*)



## NON-FICTION

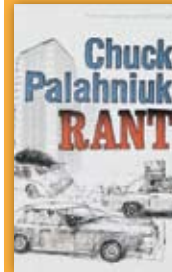


## END OF FAITH: RELIGION, TERROR AND THE FUTURE OF REASON

By Sam Harris  
(*Jonathan Ball, R140*)

At the forefront of the recent upswell in atheist theory, Harris investigates terrorism and the role religion plays in it, putting down a damning argument for, well, the end of faith. Tackling everything from the contrasting absurdity of our devotion to rational argument except when religion is involved (immaculate conception, transubstantiation, resurrection, martyrdom, virgins in heaven, et al) to the horrors of religious fanaticism, Harris nimbly negotiates the theological quagmire with admirable poignancy, eviscerating scientific acumen and remorseless intolerance. More accessible than Richard Dawkins's equally brilliant *The God Delusion*, this is a critical book and essential reading if you've ever questioned the effect of religion on mankind, but haven't quite heard all the arguments. **Read it:** to sound the Kum-buy-ya death knell for an increasingly secular society.

## FICTION



## RANT

By Chuck Palahniuk  
(*Random House, R190*)

Rant Casey's story unfolds through a pastiche of subjective snippets that are offered up by everyone but him, a device that's perfect for ADHD types. The coming-of-age tale details Rant's being bitten by as many critters as possible and highlights his sexcapades – the poisonous bites that he's addicted to result in priapism. Rant is something of a local Lothario – and documents his move to the city, which, due to overcrowding, has been divided into daytimers and nighttimers. Rant is a nighttimer, obviously. As Case Zero in a bizarre new rabies strain, Rant uses this affliction and Party Crashing – a sport where kids drive around looking for other kids to crash their cars into – as a vehicle to further his quest to save his mother. And it's here where things go all twilight zone and you find yourself rereading parts going WTF? **Read it:** Palahniuk is a master of the absurd, putting more ideas on to a page than other novelists manage with entire books.

## CLASSIC



## UTOPIA

By Thomas More  
(*Penguin Classics, R15 from second-hand book store*)

Sir Thomas More coined the term Utopia when he named his ideal island nation in this book describing its political system. First published in 1516, *Utopia* is More's blueprint for the perfect society: a welfare state with every member of the community receiving food, clothing, housing, education and medical treatment. There are six-hour work days, criminals are reformed, wives are required to kneel before their husbands, confess their sins and ask for forgiveness on a monthly basis and 'Everyone gets a fair share, so there are never any poor men or beggars. Nobody owns anything, but everyone is rich – for what greater wealth can there be than cheerfulness, peace of mind and freedom from anxiety?' More's imaginary nation allowed him to discuss political matters freely. However, he did eventually meet the axe after rejecting Henry VIII's claim to be supreme head of the Church of England. **Read it!**

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW

# Blood brothers

Richard de Nooy's novel is one of the best debuts we've read in ages. A poignant story of two brothers, the younger accident-prone and self-destructive, the older a long suffering wingman



Turn to page 82 for an extract from *Six Fang Marks & a Tetanus Shot*

**GQ: With a Q&A for a foreword and an outtakes section, your novel is quite different. How would you describe it?**

**RD:** It's as if you're watching *Jackass* and halfway down the show one of the guys gets seriously injured or killed and suddenly you're forced to re-evaluate what you're watching and why you find it funny. *Jackass* for intellectuals? Created to entertain but also denigrate people... but that doesn't really cover it. The last chapters, especially, force you to go into self-reflection. Much like a parable, it tells a simple story but has morals, symbols and god knows what. I also like the modern DVD thing where you have outtakes,

different scenes, different endings. If I had to describe it, I'd call it the autobiography of a compulsive liar.

**GQ: There's an autobiographical vein running through the novel. Do you have a psychotic, self-destructive brother? Are you a journalist with Reuters? As a compulsive liar and without giving too much away, what can you confirm?**

**RD:** I'd say it would be unwise to answer that question, but they're all linked to the idea of my being intrigued by fact and fiction and not seeing those as such distinct categories in literary terms. The crossover between them is what intrigues me. The joy is to explore that fact and fiction and how you respond to that.

**GQ: It's almost written in sound bites...**

**RD:** You can read it in almost any order, skip certain chapters if you don't want the matter on psychology and go to the accidents. My greatest concern when I wrote and pieced it together was that people would find that distracting, but people have said that they read it in eight hours and then go back to read it again. It's a book that quite honestly appeals to myself because I have so little time and often if I do read, I have the phone ringing all the time. The short bits and pieces allow you to put the book down and come back to it.

**GQ: There are several narrators – JR Deo, Rem's older brother Ysbrand de Heer, and yourself, Richard de Nooy. Are they one and the same or distinct characters, both fictional and real?**

**RD:** It's a Matrotyshkan narration, like those Russian dolls. You have Ysbrand telling Rem's story, Deo telling Ysbrand and Rem's story and me telling Deo, Rem and Ysbrand's story. The names do also have meaning. It's there to be discovered. The whole book is like that, every time you'll find something new. And that's true in the first part of a trilogy. The idea is to leave things out in the open, an open ending. It leads readers to a second and third book. Those questions will be answered.

**GQ: Will the next books have similar characters?**

**RD:** Ace and Rem will still feature, but the books will be written in a completely different way, but will again play with the back-and-forth idea of narrating stories from an original perspective to give a new take on the action.

**GQ: Describe your writing process.**

**RD:** I didn't write it quickly, it's bits and pieces that I collected over the course of about ten years. I have a day job and a lot of the stuff I did at night, hour by hour. I put it together and at the end I took two three- to four-day periods off and edited for 16 to 17 hours flat, per day, out in the countryside without anything – no phone, nothing – and got it rounded off. You need that focus. I write in a very structured way with bones and flesh because I have very little time so I have to work very efficiently. I know exactly what I'm going to write, but obviously you can change it as you're going. I write them like little short stories. That's why they read easily. A beginning, a middle and an end. Eventually I had all these chapters out on the floor, the psychological bits, the accidents to tally with the narrative chapters to get the rhythm of the story going... You then shift them around to make sense.

**GQ: The section at Rhodes University rang true for myself and a few of my colleagues. Obscene drinking, dangerous night rides, cops with grudges...**

**RD:** I studied journalism there and played water polo so I was part of the bungy set and the buggie set at 'varsity and saw it from both angles. And I did come third in the rag drag queen pageant. The macho bit really was my memory of South Africa then. My family lives in Jo'burg. Twenty years ago I left and locked a room and I've come back expecting that same room. Since I've been here I've discovered this gateway of dynamic people and been drawn back into South African culture.

□ TCD

**Six Fang Marks & a Tetanus Shot** (Jacana, R145)

'If I had to describe it, I'd call it the autobiography of a compulsive liar'

