



AL GIRL DAPHNE GOTTLIEB

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FINAL GIRL
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FINAL GIRL
DAPHNE GOTTLIEB

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MORE PRAISE FOR *FINAL GIRL*

"In *Final Girl*, Daphne Gottlieb brainily, bloodily, erotically, amazingly makes connections between people that seem as disparate as seventeenth-century heretic Anne Hutchinson and Patty Hearst, as Sojourner Truth and Kerouac. She twists the material of American captivity narratives, babysitter horror stories and slasher films and then some, into both a warning about and an embrace of just how really truly scary it is to be female at the start of what could may well be our final century. Not since Roky Ericson's band The Aliens recast horror flicks as rock songs has such a perfect reappropriation of a great American pop art form taken place."

—Rebecca Brown

"Daphne Gottlieb writes in the dark with an Exacto knife. Whatever your fantasies, fears or vulnerabilities, Gottlieb will feed them to you off the points of a smashed bottle while she sips from the other end. This is a delicious autopsy of culture, genre, gender and so much more, which puts you right in the voyeur's seat. Eat it, eat boiling, oily popcorn and mortician's make-up until you wake up speechless and alone and ecstatic on the floor of the projection room. Sensational."

—Diane DiMassa, author of *Hothead Paisan: Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist*

"Daphne's machete take on life leaves no one standing except us, for it's us she aims to elevate, the fucked over and the fucked up, and for that we thank her, pointing and laughing at fuckers."

—Lynn Breedlove, author of *Godspeed*

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This book owes a huge debt to the feminist film theory of the Final Girl created by Carol Clover in her essay, "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film," first published in *Misogyny, Misandry and Misanthropy*, edited by R. Howard Bloch and Frances Ferguson (University of California Press, 1989; originally published as *Representations* No. 20, Fall 1987), as well as her book, *Men, Women and Chainsaws* (Princeton University Press 1992).

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Poems in this collection have been published in earlier versions in *A Gathering of the Tribes*, *The Birth of Verse*, *The Blue Fifth Review*, *Cherry Bleeds*, *Colombia Poetry Review*, *Freedom to Speak*, *GotPoetry.com*, *Gothic.Net*, *Invisible Ink Radio*, *Jazz Shack Teabags*, *La Petite Zine*, *Nerve.com*, *Other Magazine*, *Problem Child*, *Suspect Thoughts*, *Short Fuse: A Global Anthology of Performance Poetry*, *6500*, *Thirteen Feet*, *SpokenWar.com*, and *Urban Spaghetti*.

For my mother, Anne Catherine Gottlieb, 1937-2002.

Thank you for the party.

I had a wonderful time.

The image of the distressed female most likely to linger in memory
is the image of the one who did not die:

the survivor, the Final Girl . . .

She . . . is chased, cornered, wounded;
whom we seem scream, stagger, fall, rise,
and scream again . . .

She alone looks death in the face;
but she alone also finds the strength
either to stay the killer
long enough to be rescued (ending A)
or to kill him herself (ending B).

She is inevitably female.

—Carol Clover, "Her Body, Himself"

FINAL GIRL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

final girl: reel to reel.....	1
dial x for girl	2
slash.....	5
in a name	6
final girl II: the frame	8
name that tune	11
final girl III: five things.....	14
vamp.....	15
female trouble	20
the last temptation of semiotics.....	23
liability	24
sentencing the alphathreat	26
lucky 13.....	28
anne's neck.....	30
speak truth?	32
whisky tango romeo	33
final girl IV: the weapon.....	38
cavity	39
final girl V: tits and scream (Mary Rowlandson)	42
my mother gets dressed	44
night of the dead living.....	47
final girl VI: the killer.....	49
bikini killer.....	51
autopsy of a love letter	53
the frightening truth about desire	56
the war between the states	57
the babysitter.....	59
living proof.....	61
the other woman	63
i knew it was over.....	65
the exes	68
owed.....	70
the rough rider pulls it tight	71
bride of reanimator	74
pornography	75

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

final girl VI: tits and scream (Patricia Hearst):.....	77
don't fall for pretty	78
for suicide girls who have considred extensions/when manic	
panic is enuf	82
slut.....	83
dirty.....	85
kicks	89
final girl VII: the terrible place	92
final girl VIII: the victims	93
final girl IX: 180 degrees (the heroes)	93
transcendental housewife	94
manifest destiny (great american novel remix).....	96
looking for the area code for bali on the day of the dead.....	99
final girl X: the final girl.....	102
gone to static	104
ashes.....	107

FINAL GIRL: REEL TO REAL

Intrusion: Evidence:
Something left behind:

The story.

The first mark begins
it, something enters the white
box.

We control the horizontal.

We control the vertical.

We control the abduction.

It goes like this:

Don't do it. Don't go in there.

It's *Halloween*. It's *Friday the 13th*. It's *Prom Night*.

It's pages 343 to 366 where

the narrative runs like a girl:

16 mm.

24 frames.

90 minutes.

It goes like this:

DIAL X FOR GIRL*

when you solve for x
it drops out
there's nothing there
and there's no one here
just an x marking the spot
of the xx-genetically coded girl
who signs her letters in xs and os
who is triple-x without her clothes
to x-ray see underneath
when you make sure she's pretty girl
like mostly girl
like looking up close
for something you'd want
a technology
of erotics
which is always
marked by absence—
the x drops out:
a see-through
girl through
technology like
reproduction
without contact
like test-tube babies
or the xerox machine
or scud missiles
made possible through
technology like
a recording
of a voice
that sounds almost like a girl—
“for oral sex, press one.

*The information regarding the composition of the body of a female is from *The Book of Strange Facts and Useless Information*, Scot Morris, Doubleday & Co., 1979.

for all-girl action, press two.
for pretty girls who want to talk to you, press
three—”
and there’s nothing there—
if a girl falls in the woods
running for the phone,
you’ll get her machine,
a recording of a voice that
sounds pretty
much like a girl
made of xs and ohs
on a digital recording made of
zeroes and ones,
something that stands
for something else
a code
like an x
standing for a history
of the master’s name
of the hand
forbidden to write
more than an x
like the voice
of a girl
on a recording
made of zeroes and ones
who says
i’m sorry
i can’t
i’m sorry i can’t come to
i’m sorry i can’t come to the phone right now
but it’s not a girl speaking
just a recording
of a body
made of

sugar
chlorine
oxygen
carbon
sulfur
enough iron
to make a nail
enough phosphorous
for 20,000 matches
and enough glycerine
to explode a hand grenade
but no spice
inside the girl
in a flickering video image
on a screen made of bits
of colored light
like a pretty sunset
that disappears
when you try to keep it
when you try to touch it
like a girl
like a spot
on a map
marked by an x
like a recording
of a voice that
sounds like a girl who says
i'm sorry
there's no one here
i'm sorry
there's no one here
i'm sorry
but when you solve
for x, it always
drops

SLASH

(after David Trinidad's "Monster Mash")

Friday the 13th/Blood Feast/Halloween/
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre/Prom Night/
Sleepaway Camp/Angel of Vengeance/Queen
of the Damned/The Bad Seed/Night/ //

mare on Elm Street/Evil Dead/It's Alive/
The Leech Woman/I Spit on Your Grave/The
Eyes of Laura Mars/Jaws/The Stepford Wives/
Mother's Day/Frankenhooker/Carrie//

Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town/Peeping Tom/
I Dismember Mama/Psycho/True Lies/
Killer Nun/Caged Women/Serial Mom/
Rabid Grannies/ // /The Hills Have Eyes//

The Exorcist/ //\\// /
// /American Nightmare/ // //

IN A NAME

When he yells
Get on your Back!
Call me Lord!
Call me Master!

I laugh so hard
I drop my banana.

Go name things,
I tell him,
walking away.

Her eyes stop me
at nightfall.
We stand dumb as does
until touch moves us,
opens our bodies
to little deaths, first
breaths, come
back panting
shallows.

Oh, woe
for the man
who can't tell
a kiss
from a hiss:

When he yells *SNAKE*,
we run.

We know the sound
of vipers.
He catches her
by the spring, yells

LIE DOWN!

shoves something
round and hard
into her mouth
to stop her screams.

There was no mercy
like this
for me.
Nothing stopped me
from screaming
except pride.

Now, I grow wings
and rage.
I learn
how to kill.
I steal what was his,
suck breath
from babies,
take them with me.
I leave him this lullaby,
this dead parade
of tears.

It's fall.

The fruit
on the tree
is rotten.