

## Blurbs and praise for MLKNG SCKLS

MLKNG SCKLS is a book characterized by contemplate urgency, a story and a project that reflects on the nature of life, war, and narrative itself. Sirois, through the presentation of hallucinatory consciousness, offers an undeniably human portrait.

Spencer Dew, decomp Magazine

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A tight, spare and quietly tense gem of a book.

Brian Evenson  
Author of *Last Days* and *The Open Curtain*

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Clean and visceral like few others. Sentences like nails. MLKNG SCKLS is an intense new vision and strong argument for literature still being essential in our modern world. I can't wait for *Falcons on the Floor*.

Michael Fitzgerald  
author of *Radiant Days* (Counterpoint Press)

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"5 Books Published in 2009 that Wrecked My Brain a Little":

MLKNG SCKLS, Justin Sirois. A book about Iraq. War-torn Iraq. It provides such a complicated narrative and emotional system that the didacticism inherent in political literature falls away. But, this book has great political potential. Justin leaves his characters bare to the reader so as to create an emotional connection and shift in values in the way we see an abstracted political conflict. The balance of power and our role in it will necessarily shift after reading this book.

John Dermot Woods  
Author of *The Complete Collection of people, places & things*  
<http://bigother.com/2009/12/31/5-books-published-in-2009-that-wrecked-my-brain-a-little/>

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Sirois's prose glistens with precision. Its sparseness mirrors the parched desert through which Salim and Khalil travel, its lyricism one proof of how resilient we can be in the face of disaster. Clocking in at fifty-five pages, this novelette manages to pack dreamy reveries, juvenile taunts, gorgeous descriptions of landscape, gothic depictions of vultures circling, lapidary views of blood, and doses of humor (like Khalil's tall tale about a man with a crippled hand whose life was saved by a cigarette) that spell the reader through a harrowing trip to a place that's, with any luck, safe, or, at least safer. If MLKNG SCKLS's excised texts are any indication of the quality of *Falcons on the Floor*, then, as readers, we have much to look forward to.

John Madera  
on *New Pages*

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The language is not dense, but it has a deep and impressive lyricism. Sirois has a gift for lyrical writing that in no way seems forced. The alliteration and internal rhymes that occur in the well-constructed sentences work in ways they don't in a lot of prose lyricism. He is restrained, picking the right spots to deploy a rhetorical figure to advantage.

The book's two main characters are walking through the Iraqi desert, journeying from Fallujah to Ramadi, one recording it all on a laptop with a slowly draining battery. It has its Beckett precedents, but instead of Beckett's surreal, placeless place settings, *MLKNG SCKLS* is played out on the great contemporary American misadventure of our war in Iraq. Absurdity and tragedy collide every day in that Middle Eastern country, and Sirois recognizes and reveals it all well.

A favorite scene of mine features a man uncooking a meal, a task as seemingly impossible as, say, unringing a bell; or uninventing a country because of faulty, cooked intelligence. The character manages his task. America, though, won't.

Mathew Simmons  
Author of *A Jello Horse*  
<http://themanwhocouldntblog.blogspot.com/2009/08/rider.html>

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In *MLKNG SCKLS*, two young men leave Fallujah to follow a river, letting its flow dictate the path of their escape. Along the way, the narrator keeps track of his thoughts on his slowly dying laptop, its fading battery power increasing the tension of his already fraught passage through this dangerous landscape. These brief entries record not just the thoughts of the refugee, the exile, but also how these two men try to understand themselves through tall tales about brothers saved from rabid dogs by mere cigarettes, through fantastical memories of uncooking meals for girlfriends, through hallucinatory visions of predatory trees and circling vultures. These are stories told first to pass the time, sure, but also to explain who they once were, in the lives they have just left behind.

Sirois' masterful creation is not just a travel narrative, not just an epistolary, not just a war story. This is desert madness made universal, a coming of age rendered apocalyptic in language as sparse and beautiful and ultimately perilous as the desert passage it describes.

<http://www.mdbell.com/blog/2009/6/2/mlkng-sckls-by-justin-sirois-available-for-pre-order.html>

Matt Bell  
Author of *How They were Found* and *The Collectors* Editor for Dzanc Book's Collagist

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Justin Sirois knows that for many Americans, the U.S. War on Iraq has been little more than one long Scene Deleted. The dynamic between what isn't seen or can't be seen or doesn't want to be seen becomes essential to *MLKNG SCKLS*, a book comprised of deleted scenes from Sirois' novel *Falcons on the Floor*. In playing peek-a-boo with the desire of readers to know all from some Cheney-style safely undisclosed bunker, *MLKNG SCKLS* wants us to recognize that in Iraq, peek-a-boo is played with disinformation, weapons, and lives.

Mark Wallace,  
author of *Haze* and *Dead Carnival*

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If Beckett's characters stopped waiting for Godot and went, walked into a sunned horizon, their feet would make the dust of *MLKNG SCKLS*. Sirois' writing is artful and slender in this beautifully sparse novella.

J. A. Tyler  
Author of *IN LOVE WITH A GHOST*  
Editor for Mudluscious Press