



# The Meat Puppets and the Lyrics of Curt Kirkwood from Meat Puppets II to No Joke!

*Matthew Smith-Lahrman*

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In *The Meat Puppets and the Lyrics of Curt Kirkwood from Meat Puppets II to No Joke!*, Matthew Smith-Lahrman interprets the words of Curt Kirkwood, founding member and songwriter of the Meat Puppets, a pioneering rock 'n' roll band of the last thirty years. Smith-Lahrman's analysis covers Kirkwood's lyrics on nine albums, from 1983 to 1995, when he wrote virtually every lyric for the band. A lyricist whom *Rolling Stone* writer Kurt Loder once rated alongside Bob Dylan, Kirkwood remains an important, yet overlooked songwriter. His often oblique "cut-up" style not only recalls Dylan but also other great lyricists, such as Brian Eno, Jimi Hendrix, and Robert Hunter, as well as poets and authors like John Milton, Arthur Rimbaud, Lewis Carroll, and William Burroughs.

The original Meat Puppets spent their early career releasing albums on the seminal indie rock label SST Records, moving on to the major label London Records in the early 1990s. Along the way they forged a unique blend of punk, country, psychedelic, and hard rock that paved the way for the grunge and alternative movements. As a lyricist, Kirkwood commonly addresses the dichotomy between individual psyche and behavioral expectations, and the problems this creates for personal agency; drug use, mental illness, and Christianity have important parts to play in Kirkwood's early lyrical visions. As the original Meat Puppets began to dissolve, Kirkwood turned to writing about personal issues: his frustrations with the major label industry, the death of his mother, the addictions of his brother, and the demise of the band itself.

*The Meat Puppets and the Lyrics of Curt Kirkwood from Meat Puppets II to No Joke!* is the perfect work for Meat Puppets fans worldwide.

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