



On Strawberry Hill And Other Croatian-American Tales

By James Marinovich



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Settled in the early years of the Twentieth Century by Eastern European immigrants, the Kansas City, Kansas community of Strawberry Hill provides not only the locale, but also the heart, for this collection of tales from James Marinovich, author of *The Psychedelic Symphony*, and *1975, A Horror Fantasy*. In "The Feast of St. Cecilia," the dreams of sleeping Hill folk become a nocturnal battlefield wherein the titular saint battles with the Devil, while an early 20th-Century Croatian immigrant and practitioner of Slavic magick faces his own adversary in "Tom Tintinillic and the Minotaur of Strawberry Hill". Inventor of robots and steamboats, the historic Mathias Splitlog experiences divine revelation in "The Strawberry Vision of Mathias Splitlog". A family takes an autumnal outing to a bizarre carnival in Kansas City's West Bottoms in "A Short, Happy, History of a Family on Strawberry Hill," while the traditional Serbian "grateful dead" tale of 'The Vampire Brother' is transplanted to Strawberry Hill of the 1920s in "Rajko and Janko, A Serbo-Cro Fairy Tale." Inspired by a Croatian-American's series of paintings, the collection's title story presents a rich mural of life on Strawberry Hill in the latter part of the 20th century, as viewed by a drug-addled third-generation immigrant. These and other stories merge magic realism with an ethnic history spanning over 100 years, making *On Strawberry Hill* an unique kaleidoscope of Croatian folk and American popular cultures.

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