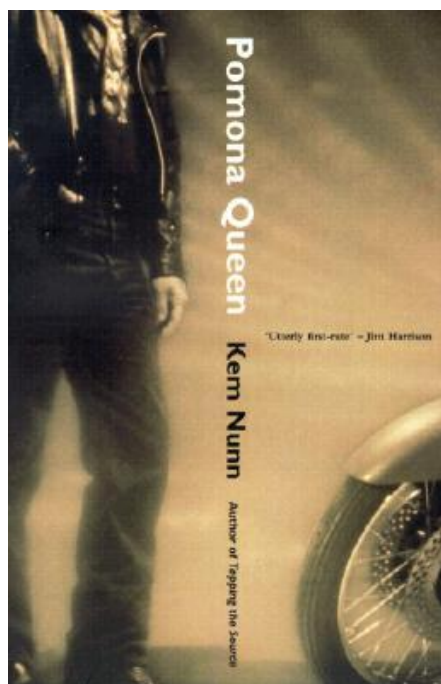




Pomona Queen

Kem Nunn

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"Kem Nunn writes directly out of the lineage of James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler. If there is a contemporary writer with a deeper sense of evil, I don't know who it would be. *Pomona Queen* is utterly first-rate"--Jim Harrison

Lost in a southern California barrio, Earl Dean has a hard time believing there is one living soul in this foul-smelling night who wants to be found by a salesman hawking vacuum cleaners. What awaits Earl in the faint glow of a distant porch light is the world of Dan Brown.

Dan Brown's brother has been killed. Dan has plans to handle the revenge, and Earl has strayed into the crossfire. Dan is the last of the road warriors, a murderous, drug-crazed biker who only thinks of laws as things to break. But more than Buddy Brown lies dead in the moonlight. From a time when the valley was the hub of the nation's citrus industry to the defoliated sorry mess of today, it has come down to one fact. Earl Dean, broken-hearted vacuum cleaner salesman, owns the last single acre of orange groves in Pomona. And like his great-grandfather before him, he must come forward to claim his inheritance.

"Kem Nunn does for Pomona what Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, and Nathanael West did for Los Angeles."--*Los Angeles Times*

"Nunn is a swift, economical stylist with a gift for the absurd."--*San Francisco Chronicle*

Pomona Queen Details

Date : Published October 27th 2000 by Da Capo Press (first published 1992)

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Author : Kem Nunn

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From Reader Review Pomona Queen for online ebook

Adam says

A vacuum salesman makes the wrong stop and gets drawn into an encounter that puts him face to face with a psychopath and in direct grappling with his past, both his own and the squandered history of the Pomona Valley. Terrifying and sad at once this is a look at American decline, a character study, and suspenseful adventure occurring on one very long night. This never goes where you expect so enjoy the ride don't try to guess what's next.

Leslie says

While I can't gush over the book, I did really enjoy it. It was a fun adventure filled with sketchy characters, depressed surroundings and good old fashioned violence. See my full review [here](#).

amiantos says

Not a very good book. I mean, I enjoyed it, but compared to Nunn's other work this one pales. The protagonist's obsession with "the one who got away", hell, with everything that he has lost in life, gets really tiresome. The history of Pomona, the orchards and all, is really interesting but I assume most of it is fiction, if not all of it, so in the end I don't think I was educated on anything. The main plot line isn't much of thriller. It almost feels like an outline for what could be a really compelling movie, but reads really poorly.

All in all I'd say you could safely skip this one unless you are a Kem Nunn diehard for some reason. Read [Tapping the Source](#) and [Dogs of Winter](#) instead.

Paul says

"Dean had, by this stage of the game, seen a number of stiffs. Most, however, had appeared in shining coffins, surrounded by freshly cut flowers and bore little resemblance to what the bikie had in his house. This body was naked and white, stretched out upon a bed of ice in a large red freezer with the words Coca-Cola, and beneath that the phrase "Things go better with Coke," in white script across the side."

Carlos says

Ken Nunn is a very good writer and zeroes in on the dysfunctional, sometimes brutal, always shortsighted elements of society. This is a very good book but it is hard to take if the reader is particularly empathetic.

Neven says

Kem Nunn's stories are supremely strange, combining the simplest and lowest cliches of Americana with bizarrely violent situations. It's all a bit hard to categorize or recommend. Above it all, however, rises Nunn's own style, gripping enough to make any story work. Here, a tale of a vacuum-cleaner salesman sharing with trailer-trash bikers a night of drunken revenge becomes a modern-day adaptation of the history of Pomona, CA. A book that's hard to like but easy to love.

Susan says

For me the story is not so important when I read Kem Nunn. It's the descriptions that get me. The tortured characters, the history of place and of less-than-perfect-but-not-defeated people caught in bizarre-but-somehow-expected circumstances in landscapes no one really sees. This one had no surf, but who cares,

"It occurred to him as well that he had, after all, been working in the realm of the incomprehensible most of his life."

Brian Mott says

Actually read this long ago but in doing some browsing just say review of it, someone rating it poorly and saying he figured most of the history of pomona in it was fiction. The demise of the orange groves, the high hopes of the Pomona Mall and its decline, the Alibi bar, the canyon life of North Clairmont, and most definitely the locally famed Midway bar (the college hang out of the 60's and the biker dive it ended as. All sadly true. I felt I must have seen Kem some wasted nights I was there.

But most important all the metaphysical questions he takes his major and minor characters into. I have bought, read and given this book away 3 times, Just found an original orange crate picture hard cover edition I plan to keep - at least until someone deserving comes around.

Peter says

Reading Pomona Queen in 2019, it feels very much a product of the 90s. Pynchon's Lot 49 mixed with Coen Brothers absurdly dark violence and Bret Easton Ellis nihilism. In maybe another postmodern touch (or just sloppiness), it's hard to pin down what decade this takes place in. I'm guessing late 80s, but there are door-to-door vacuum salesmen, greasers, nostalgia for orange groves of the prewar era, all mixed in with punk clubs and speed metal.

For a book with trappings of an epic imagining of the context of the Pomona Valley, it has a surprisingly limited perspective. Each chapter starts with an epigraph from a history of the city, chosen to ironically call out the historian's racist attitudes toward the "degenerate" natives and the worthless Mexicans and Chinese. Yet Pomona Queen does not engage at all with these populations outside of casual mentions of roadside orange sellers, prostitutes, or the "bad" black side of town. Every character in the book is white, and they travel in white spaces, bemoaning the failure of the orchard owners and city planner to avert the white flight that turned the city into an apocalyptic ghetto. Maybe that's the joke, but it doesn't hit home the way it should. And that may be giving the author too much credit.

Shoshi says

I liked the descriptions of LA, and the history, but just not my type of story.

Gregory Frost says

This was my introduction to the fiction of Kem Nunn. The book unfurls like a dusty, nasty indie film. Well worth your time if you like dusty California noirs.
