

Ashbery Publishes Girls On The Run

John Ashbery's wild, deliriously inventive book-length poem, inspired by the adventures of Henry Darger's Vivian Girls

Henry Darger, the prolific American outsider artist who died in 1973, leaving behind over twenty thousand pages of manuscripts and hundreds of artworks, is famous for the elaborate alternate universe he both constructed and inhabited, a "realm of the unreal" where a plucky band of young girls, the Vivian's, helps lead an epic rebellion against dark forces of chaos. Darger's work is now renowned for its brilliant appropriation of cultural ephemera, its dense and otherworldly prose, and its utterly unique high-low juxtaposition of popular culture and the divine—some of the very same traits that decades of critics and readers have responded to in John Ashbery's many groundbreaking works of poetry.

In *Girls on the Run*, Ashbery's unmatched poetic inventiveness travels to new territory, inspired by the characters and cataclysms of Darger's imagined universe. *Girls on the Run* is a disquieting, gorgeous, and often hilarious mash-up that finds two radical American artists engaged in an unlikely conversation, a dialogue of reinvention and strange beauty.

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