

*Mystery of a serial killer
roaming Manhattan and
the chase to apprehend.*

REFLECTIONS IN RED

by ALVIN WANDER

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An abstract artwork featuring a central, stylized red figure, possibly a person, set against a dark background. The figure is surrounded by vibrant, textured shapes in teal, orange, and yellow. The overall composition is bold and expressive, with a focus on color and form.

REFLECTIONS

IN RED

ALVIN WANDER

Wander

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ALSO BY ALVIN WANDER

The Silent Lion

Deadly Ambitions

The Lizard With Golden Feathers

Prologue

When it's summer in New York City, the streets take on a perfume of their own. The asphalt becomes soft and its pungent, heavy aroma like burning coal fills the dense air. Raindrops that fall on the dry, hot pavement are quickly absorbed and they clean the air, make it cooler, and when the hot summer air is suddenly fresh, people lean back and enjoy the feeling. The imperceptible drumming of rain on roof tiles, on pavements, and on the hoods of parked cars plays like soft night music. When the rain falls, the darkened sky makes all the lights of the city clearer.

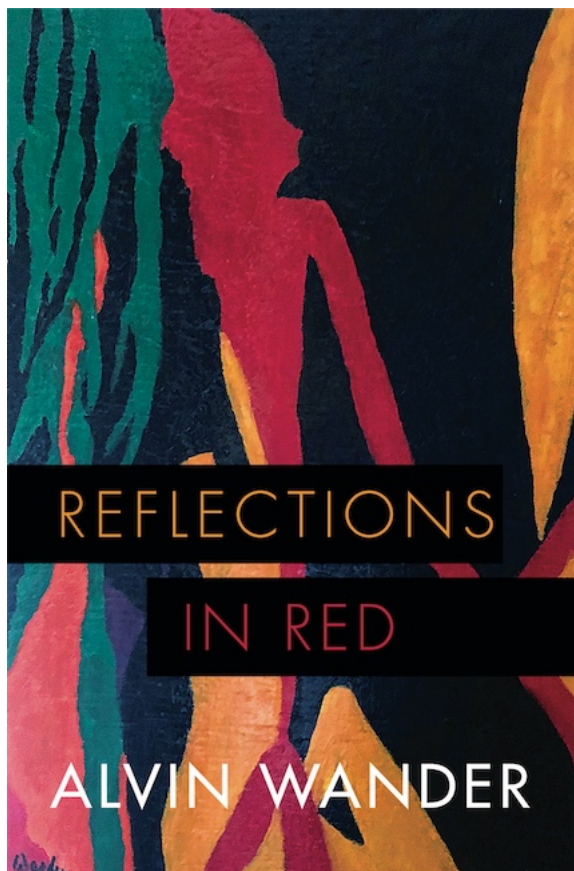
The killer at large this summer isn't able to capture any part of the feeling of power and exhilaration when the skies open and the air becomes clear and the lights shine so brightly. But he needs to satisfy an urge that must be assuaged, he will not be distracted from the work that must be done. He seduces the innocents into a sense of safety. Each incident satisfies him for a time and then the urges begin anew.

He didn't know any of them. He never knew anything about them - old, young, pretty, plain.

And it was always about location, Manhattan, his canvas. It wasn't as if the street hadn't seen death. He strikes in the early hours of the morning when, for most, the city sleeps. He always leaves his victim partially clothed, though seeing them that way was never part of his routine. The colorful, bright red ribbon tied around their necks as if they were mannequins always gave him satisfaction. The ribbon had to

be tied so that the bow was not askew. It had to look as if they set the bow perfectly themselves, carefully and without creasing the ribbon.

When he is ready, he chooses the area and the time. He walks the streets, sometimes for hours, until he meets the woman he wants. He relishes the moments before the kill when his heart thumps against his chest. Before he strikes, he fantasizes the kinds of things that will excite him --the look on their faces when he's killed them, placing the ribbon perfectly around their necks, the thrill of meeting them and making them feel secure, the moment when he feels life ending. Every step is a clear picture. He has time. Time to enjoy the anticipation. He doesn't leave the scene right away. He enjoys spending a few minutes looking at them, making certain the bow is perfectly centered. After that, he can return home. Even the damp sweat from his hair on the pillow does not prevent him from quickly falling into a restful sleep.



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