

# Private Dick

In an early, non-sci-fi novel, Philip K. Dick explores the male psyche.

BY KEN TUCKER



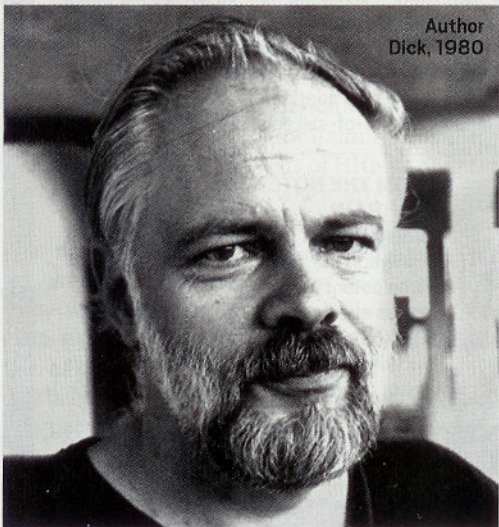
## Voices From the Street

Philip K. Dick  
Novel

Philip K. Dick (1928–82) was science fiction's prolific mind-blower. His work has inspired movies (*Blade Runner*, *A Scanner Darkly*) as well as a cult following (if you're a PKD newbie, start your Kool-Aid drink with 1969's *Ubik*). Dick has steadily attracted mainstream respect-

ability: He'll have a Library of America volume to his name this May, and now we have *Voices From the Street*, an early, non-sci-fi novel, unpublished for over 50 years.

*Voices* follows Stuart Hadley, a glum California electronics salesman in the early '50s, as he succumbs to despair and argues with his wife and friends about the purpose of life. He's drawn to an evangelist's apocalyptic rants and a mysterious woman ("Marsha was bleak and austere, with an unchanging finality"). Working in territory later mined by Richard Yates and Raymond Carver—that is, the psyche of the middle-aged white male who's guilty that his feelings of oppression and inadequacy may be undeserved but is miserable anyway—Dick acquits himself well. He makes Hadley a mope to root for. While his wife tells our nonhero, "I'm sick of your moaning and complaining; there's always something wrong with you," we become engrossed in his moans and complaints. That's because they cohere as an argument for happiness: a way to understand one's dissatisfaction and do something to end it. **B+**



Author  
Dick, 1980