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Not since Paul Theroux's *Saint Jack* has a book painted such a vivid picture of 1970s Singapore and the dangerous carnival that was Bugis Street.

Singapore Girl

A MEMOIR

James Eckardt



SINGAPORE, 1 SEPT 2006 — *Bugis Street Blues*

This is the true story of a long-vanished Singapore and the dangerous carnival known as Bugis Street.

After four years of romping around West Africa and the Brazilian Amazon, James Eckardt cut a raffish figure as he stepped off a sailboat at Clifford Pier in Singapore on March 30, 1975, en route from Manila to Jakarta. Little did he know that he would become enchanted by a fun-loving Singaporean nymph named Milly who would take him in hand to explore the exotic wonders of her city.

The fun would turn into hopeless love, one Eckardt would desperately chronicle in a 36-hour, drug-laced writing spree and entitle "Singapore Girl". The yellowing carbon copy would sit in an envelope for thirty years as the author went on to become Thailand's most famous expat writer. And then on December 19, 2004, an email arrived that would lead Eckardt to discover what had happened to the

Singapore girl, who, at the time he had loved her, had not technically been female!

Eckardt eventually settled in Thailand where he has lived for thirty years with his Thai wife, and four children. He is the author of two novels, four collections of stories, and a bestselling book of profiles called *Bangkok People*. He is also a former editor at *The Nation* newspaper in Bangkok and, for several years, has been the paper's chief book reviewer.

This honest and revealing book is a compelling account of one man's enduring love for, but eventual loss of, a very special person in his life. It is both happy and terribly sad, funny in part and tragic elsewhere. Milly wanted her story to be told but her surname has been changed in the book to protect both her husband (who wanted the story told but still lives in Singapore) and her original family.

The author, James Eckardt, lives in Bangkok and is available for interview by email (jameseckardt@hotmail.com) or phone.

***Singapore Girl* is available from leading bookstores in Singapore from 3 Sept 2006.**

About the Author

Ex-seminarian and ex-civil rights volunteer, James Eckardt joined the Peace Corps in the West African country of Sierra Leone, better known as “The White Man’s Grave”, after which he embarked on a trans-African motorcycle trip with two other hardy idiots. After a second stint in the Peace Corps, planting sugar cane in the Brazilian Amazon, he joined a friend in Manila for a two-thousand-mile sailboat trip to Jakarta. A stopover in Singapore led him into the bawdy spectacle of 1970s Bugis Street – a world long vanished today. Eckardt settled in Thailand where he’s lived for thirty years with his Thai wife and four children. He is the author of two novels, four collections of stories, and a bestselling book of profiles called *Bangkok People*.

About the Publisher

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By James Eckardt

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