



## Though This Be Madness (Kindle Single)

*Steven Poser*

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By day, Forrest Bess ran a one-man bait camp on the Gulf of Mexico. By night, in his two-room shack, Bess was haunted by terrible visions of ancient bulls, abstract symbols, and desolate, primeval landscapes—which he translated into one of modern art's most extraordinary bodies of painting, on canvases often smaller than a sheet of paper. Bess and his paintings were discovered in 1949 by renowned art dealer Betty Parsons, and his work would eventually be displayed alongside that of Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and other abstract expressionists. But Bess struggled his whole life with the fear of madness, and obsessed over becoming a hermaphrodite, which he thought was the key to immortality. Bess's art and his extensive correspondence bear fascinating witness to this struggle.

This groundbreaking biography by psychoanalyst and author Steven Poser—featuring dozens of Bess's letters and including eight of his acclaimed paintings—explores that narrow line between insanity and creative genius where so many brilliant artists and visionaries have walked.

## About the Author

Steven Poser is an author, NYS-licensed psychoanalyst, and exhibiting painter in New York City who brings his considerable psychiatric expertise to bear in writing biographies of artists and actors who have led distinctive lives. He is the author of *The Misfit*, a best-selling biography of Marilyn Monroe. He has also served as manager of the John Gibson Gallery in Soho, a consultant to the Whitney Museum, Programming Director of the Artists' Television Network, and Visiting Critic for the New York Semester on Contemporary Art at Drew University.

Poser is also an accomplished painter. His work has been displayed at the Weatherspoon Gallery at the University of North Carolina; White Box in Chelsea; and the Carrie Haddad Gallery in Hudson, New York. He achieved the Gradiva Award in Painting from the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis in 1997.

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