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## Shawna Virago: Heaven Sent Delinquent



San Francisco's own transgender music pioneer and cult solo acoustic artist Shawna Virago has just released her new album *Heaven Sent Delinquent* (Tranimal Records), and it's already being called the must-hear folk-punk record of the year.

Composed of 10 solo acoustic tales, either true or spun from Virago's brilliance, the songs on *Heaven Sent Delinquent* demonstrate Virago is a formidable songwriting talent. "These are the stories of my generation—a generation of transgender people who came out long before the Internet, before transgender celebrities and reality TV stars ... before anybody gave a sh\*\* about us," she says.

Virago has performed as an out transwoman since the early 1990s. Veteran San Franciscans know this is no small feat, and Virago played to both supportive and hostile audiences in those early years—she is a true trans music pioneer.

A gifted storyteller and charismatic performer, on *Heaven Sent Delinquent* Virago delivers a fully-realized collection of songs that articulate escape—real or imagined—by a cast of outsiders, queer rebels and loners. Each song spins an odyssey by these escape artists: from stifling, oppressive, dusty towns; from the crushing weight of questionable pasts and all with punk energy and attitude.

Virago's songs are personal, but not confessional. She says, "Too many of us were runaways, survivors. But we never gave up. These songs are the stories of myself and my friends. How we managed to find each other in an unfriendly world, fought together, loved each other."

"Gender Armageddon," the first single from the album, is a powerful anthem that has some memorable lyrics, such as: "You said you were so afraid to lie in your bed/You had too many cruel strangers sleeping in your head."

"Last Night's Sugar" is dark and intimate, a longing to abandon the heartbreaking reality of economic ruin and return to a sweeter past. "Some people have no surprises in them/You can set your clock by their routines/I'm watching my baby lose his paycheck/To rigged slot machines."

The first track on the album, "Bright Green Ideas," draws from real-life events and is an ode to bad girls finding love. "Mama told me to beware of any boy who was polite/But when you said, 'May I please sit on your face tonight?'/I thought, 'What did Mama ever get right?'"

*Heaven Sent Delinquent* arrives on the scene at the perfect time, when LGBT communities are in need of inspiration and anthems to lift us up as we fight back against the alt-right's attacks on our community. Virago's songs offer us this, through her signature fusion of acoustic folk with queer, punk attitude.

Listening to this new album, you hear what Virago does so well—create skilled narratives and worlds about those living on the margins, using the magic of her lyrics and deft twang of her vocal delivery. Her songs veer from tender to the brutal. *Heaven Sent Delinquent* is the strongest collection of songs we've heard in a long time. It rewards with repeated listening.



*Heaven Sent Delinquent, the new album from Shawna Virago, is available now (Tranimal Records).*

[www.shawnavirago.com](http://www.shawnavirago.com)

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