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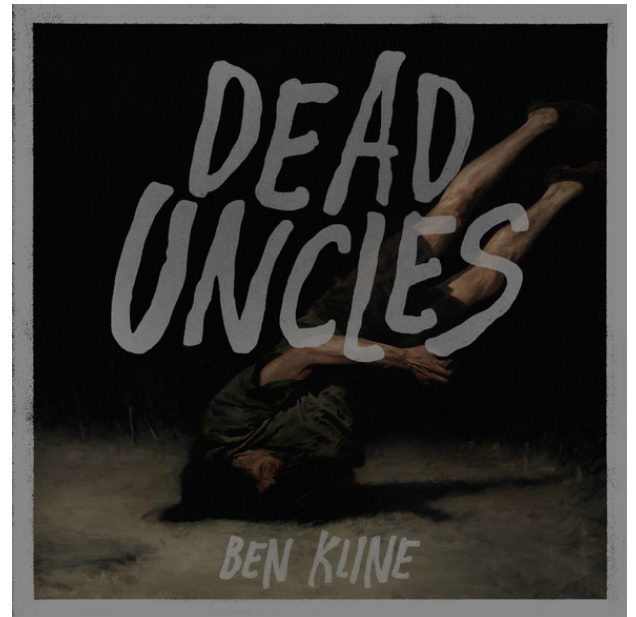
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Ben Kline's  
**DEAD UNCLES**

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**MAY 25TH 2021**

EQUAL PARTS HUMOROUS AND DEVASTATING, THIS CHAPBOOK  
INVESTIGATES THE LINGERING IMPACTS THAT FORMATIVE FAMILY  
EXPERIENCES CAN HAVE YEARS LATER



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"A great chapbook drills deep, yielding such vibrant detail that we cannot help but inhabit the world built before us. That's the case of the bracing, strangely beautiful *Dead Uncles*, which proposes a reality (and sur-reality) of a sprawling, intergenerational family whose bonds are inflected by sexual transgression. One dead uncle casts a spell for killing barn mice; another keeps his hold on local office thanks to votes tallied from the 'Cemetery Precinct.' Material that could seem grim in another poet's hands is set a-glimmer here by formal dexterity, bold humor, bright images, and musicality of phrasing."

— Sandra Beasley, author of *Count the Waves*

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Ben Kline lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is the author of *Sagittarius A\** and *Going Fast in Loose Direction*. His poetry and prose have appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Hobart*, *The Cortland Review*, *A&U Magazine* and elsewhere.

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**Dead Uncle, 1979**

Hail Marys lobbed at the altar  
from the last pew. Only twenty-five.

Light sentence mumbled fast. No beads.  
No sweat. I knew Father heard the grin

inside the sleeves of my white tee  
rolled like James Dean, cool

red vinyl of the kneeler seeping  
into my torn jeans, the sizzle

of votives, naked Jesus. Amen.  
He never looked me in the eye

outside the dark booth. I squinted  
like Brando in the woods

full of tall, graceful tamaracks,  
grateful men. He insisted *You believe*

*and behave as if eternity can be that easy*  
*with repetition.* Blessed art thou

among men who want to in ways  
they've been told they shouldn't.

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