



## The Lesbian Edition

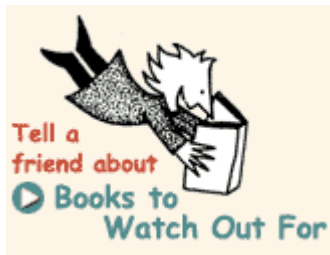
### Print It Out

- [Books reviewed in this issue](#) (printable list)
- [PDF of this issue](#)
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### About BTWOF

Books To Watch Out For publishes monthly e-letters celebrating books on various topics. Each issue includes new book announcements, brief reviews, commentary, news and, yes, good book gossip.

### The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the whole range of books lesbians like to read. It covers news of both the women in print movement and

-- This Issue Sponsored by --

Alyson Books

The proud publisher of  
[Daughters of an Emerald Dusk](#)  
by Katherine V. Forrest.

The stunning conclusion to Katherine V. Forrest's  
Daughters trilogy is the most electrifying,  
suspenseful, and sexy chapter yet.

### Volume 2 Number 2

Dear Lesbian Edition Subscribers,

Here's the Book Section of this double issue. Enjoy!

Do you Yahoo? If you have a Yahoo (or Tribe, or Friendster) profile, or if you have a personal, organizational, or business web site, please add *Books To Watch Out For* to your list of favorite web sites. This will help us increase our "Googleability" so that more people will find us. Increased visibility for BTWOF and our literature helps all of us. Thanks!

Yours in spreading the words,  
Carol

P.S. We were also sorry to learn, as we went to press, of Andrea Dworkin's death. While Dworkin, like perhaps the pope and Ronald Reagan, had both admirers and detractors, it's been a bit sad to see the same media that fawned over both of them when they died, take potshots at Dworkin on the occasion of her death.

Here's a link to an early obituary:

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1457224,00.html>

And a memorial site:

<http://www.andreadworkin.net/memorial/>

And a link to essays by Dworkin and her partner, John Stoltenberg, on

Dworkin as a lesbian and John on living with Dworkin:

<http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/OurBloodII.html>

<http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/LivingWithAndrea.html>

### Book of the Month

Finally published in the U.S., Jeanette Winterson's long awaited **Lighthousekeeping** is (with all due respect to Virginia Woolf) as elegant a love story as any woman has ever penned to another. Of course Winterson's mind never moves on only one track, so here we have stories within stories: the townsfolk dispose of recently orphaned Silver by apprenticing the bastard child to old Pew, the lighthouse keeper who, as the years pass, tells Silver stories – of the town, the people, the building of the lighthouse – stories that fill in for the lack



mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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### The Gay Men's Edition

announces and reviews new books by and about gay men as well as other books of interest and gay publishing news. Written and compiled by Richard Labonte.

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### More Books for Women

will launch in 2005.

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**Q.** How does BTWOF define "a lesbian book?"

**A.** We think that any book that belongs to a lesbian is a lesbian book, just as any bike that belongs to a girl is "a girl's bike."

### BTWOF: The Lesbian Edition

covers a wide range of books likely to be of interest to our readers as well as books with lesbian content and books by lesbian writers.

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### Advertising & Sponsorships

BTWOF is financed by subscriptions, rather than advertising or book sales. Publishers and individuals who wish to help launch BTWOF are invited to sponsor any of the first 12 issues. Write to [Mozelle Mathews](#) for sponsorship information.

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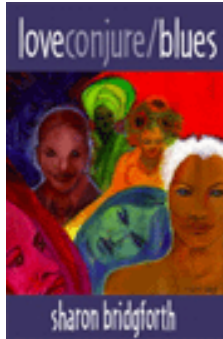
[www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com](http://www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com)  
Email: [Editor@BTWOF.com](mailto:Editor@BTWOF.com)

of other parenting, but eventually apprentices, even this one, must go out into the world and write their own lives out of the narratives they know. Ah! A girl's coming of age tale? Well, yes perhaps, with faint echoes of *To the Lighthouse*, a little Darwin, a little Robert Louis Stevenson, some Tristan and Isolde, a parrot or two, and a Greek island – it would be all too much in lesser hands than Winterson's. Women who loved her earlier books more than her later novels may find this one a good place to reenter the lyrical, surreal, complex vision of Jeanette Winterson. \$23, Harcourt.

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### More Fiction

Sharon Bridgforth's **love conjure/blues** is a performance novel – a tale told in the voices of a dozen or more butch bullydikes, pretty ladies, sissy boys, and various gender-bending folk as they sort out their lives and loves, survive the legacy of racism, and generally tell one another what they need to know to get on.... It's not as accessible as poet/performance artist Bridgforth's *Bull-Jean Stories*, but her mix of fierce strong women, life-sized emotion, and her portrayals of proud women's lives make it well worth a stretch. It's a great book to read aloud with friends and perfect for date night. Want to come over Friday night and read some **love conjure/blues**? \$14 paper, 92 pages, RedBone Press.



And check out RedBone's other recent publication: *Nothin' Ugly Fly: Poems* by Marvin K. White. \$14.

After publisher Lisa C. Moore's apartment burned down a couple of years ago RedBone Press (*Does Your Mama Know* and *The Bull-Jean Stories*) went on hiatus while she reassembled everything it takes to run an excellent publishing company. What a gift to have RedBone publishing again! Lisa is also the primary organizer for the Fire & Ink Conference. Interview with Sharon Bridgforth:

<http://www.nghosibooks.com/pages/sharon2.htm>

Sharon's website:

[www.sharonbridgforth.com/resume.htm](http://www.sharonbridgforth.com/resume.htm).

Read what BTWOF said about the Fire & Ink Conference in the [Booking Your Travel](#) section of our last issue.

Learn more about Fire & Ink: <http://www.fireandink.org/index.html>.

What makes a book a lesbian book? What makes a book edgy? What makes a book contemporary? Maggie Dubris' **Skels** was nominated in the Lesbian Fiction category of the Lammys. I hadn't reviewed it for BTWOF, so I went back to take another look. Lesbian content? Just about zip – unless you count that the drag queen keeps telling our heroine's (straight) roommate (and the drummer in his band, until he fires her), that, if he were a lesbian, he'd date her. Hmmm.... Contemporary? Well, it's set in 1979 – and reads to me much more as a dyke's adventure of the era, the heyday of women first breaking down barriers and getting jobs as ambulance drivers, 911-paramedics, cops, et al., except that there aren't any lesbian characters. Edgy? Well, that's easier. Any ride on the seamy, seedy side of town seems to qualify, and this is an excellent tale of getting bounced around the Hell's Kitchen, Harlem, and morgue assignments of NYC's emergency response bureaucracy, of days – and more often nights – rescuing NYC's indigent, of being dead broke and trying to hold it together, and of too-many and not-enough. Best of all, *Skels* resolves into something of a mystery when frustrated-writer/medic Orlie realizes that the cop she broke rules to rescue is, one-by-one, knocking off the rest of the men and women she spends the rest of her time trying to save. It's a juicy page-turner as she resolves poetry, hunches, and a lot of foul play into a plot to save that one last targeted guy. I guess the ex-boyfriend's hangout was essential to the plot, but I kept wondering where all the lesbians from this era were. Maybe they weren't out yet? Maybe Orlie is going to be a lesbian as soon as she gets all this other stuff settled? Or maybe there's a community consensus that *any* really gutsy, barrier-breaking woman driven by a fierce sense of moral justice is a lesbian? Don't get me wrong – it's an excellent book if you like edgy books or compelling mysteries, I'm just not sure what makes it lesbian fiction. \$14.95, Soft Skull Press.



PO Box 882554  
San Francisco, CA 94131.

## Of Kids and Moms and Moms Day

Send books for review consideration for the **Lesbian Edition** to the San Francisco address above.

Send books for review consideration for the **Gay Men's Edition** directly to Richard Labonte at 7-A Drummond St W Perth, ON K7H 2J3 Canada.



**Antonio's Card** by Rigoberto Gonzalez, illustrated by Cecilia Concepcion Alvarez. Antonio loves words and he loves his mother and her partner Leslie.

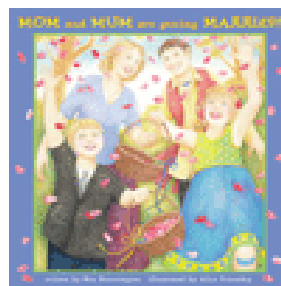


But when the other kids start making comments that Leslie looks like a guy when she comes to pick him up after school, he just tries to get her to leave quickly. But then there's the question of who and what to put on the Mother's Day cards they're making in school... In **Antonio's Card**, Antonio comes to grips with his feelings and his commitment to his family. Hopefully the next book will also give kids some ideas about how to deal with the harassment from other kids, too. Bilingual with text in English and Spanish. \$19.95 hardcover,

Children's Book Press. Publication date is April, but it should be in stores now.

This is Children's Book Press' first book with specifically gay/lesbian content, but the Press has a long and wonderful history of doing bilingual, multicultural picture books for kids and young readers. They're wonderfully colorful and dynamically illustrated books. I'm especially fond of their titles by Gloria Anzaldua: *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y la llorona*.

Another new book for the read-to and young-reader sets: **Mom and Mum Are Getting Married!** When Rosie's two moms decide to get married, Rosie hopes for a big, fancy wedding and wants to be a flower girl – not exactly the scenario her moms had in mind. But family is about compromise and everyone – including Rosie's grandparents and little brother as well as Rosie have their own special places on the joyful day. Written by Ken Setterington, illustrated by Alice Priestley. \$11.95 hardcover, Second Story Press.



### Coloring Books for Large and Small

Coloring books never go out of fashion – especially when they smash gender- and sex-role stereotypes. And who could resist **Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Girls Will Be...**? Great for coloring but also a great book to read aloud to early grades to start discussions. It features girls who decide for themselves what girls can be, grandfathers knitting, dads cleaning, aunts



fixing tractors, moms who don't do dishes anymore, and bits of strategic advice: "Don't let gender box you in" (illustrated by a fort made of boxes with "Boys Only" crossed out). The grand finale: "When we all get together, there isn't anything we can't be." I especially liked that it features kids who change their own worlds, rather than depending on adults to get around to it. Created by Jacinta Bunnell (*Girls Are Not Chicks* coloring book) and Irit Reinheimer with pages by 20 artists whose illustrations work marvelously well together. 44 pages with a few stories, real-life

experiences, and questions to think about. \$9.95, Soft Skull Press. Check out Rapunzel in *Girls Are Not Chicks*: "This time, she had some power tools, duct tape, a Tina Turner album, and a bus pass." \$5.95.

Look for pages from both books at: <http://www.girlsnotchicks.com>.

### And for New Moms (and Dads)

Traditional baby's-first-year books are obnoxiously heterosexist so Two Lives Publishing created a baby journal for LGBT families to track the milestones of their child's first year. In **Welcome to Our Family: A Baby Journal for LGBT Families** the parents, when coupled, are same-sex, the families are multiracial, yellow replaces the traditional pink and blue book covers, and, perhaps best of all, from the baby's perspective, the cover is padded – perfect for teething. And the illustrations that portray all those family/baby traditions – first haircut, favorite read-aloud book, family trip to the beach, baby's first holiday – also feature diverse



parents and kids... Written by Sally Lindsay, illustrated by Laura Shepard. \$24.95 hardcover. Two Lives Publishing focuses on creating books for children in alternative families.

See some pages here:

<http://www.twolives.com/images/welcome.pdf>.

More about Two Lives:

<http://www.twolives.com>.

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### Moms for Grown-Up Kids

In **The Milk of Human Kindness**, edited by the popular Lori L. Lake, lesbian writers use both fiction and memoir to address that delicate relationship between mothers and their dyke daughters. I found the nonfiction essays to be the most moving, including essays by Ellen Hart, Katherine V. Forrest, J.M. Redmann, and Therese Szymanski – or perhaps mystery writers are uniquely qualified to plumb mother-daughter relationships? But romance and adventure writers Karin Kallmaker and Radclyffe also weigh in with insightful memoirs. But sometimes the invented mothers offer more hope? Consider the cheeky advice-giving stand-in mom from the long-time not-heard-from Caro Clarke, the author of *The Wolf Ticket* (one of my five favorite lesbian novels the year it was published). And perhaps fiction is the best medium for the complex family drama of aging parents offered by Lori Lake, the quintessential closeted family visit described by Julia Watts, or Jennifer Fulton's certainly-not-legal daughter-mother collusion. In any case, it's a fine collection that addresses a wide variety of experiences. It's a fine and generous follow-up to Lake's short story collection *Stepping Out* (\$13.95, Regal Crest). \$18.95, 250 pages, Regal Crest Enterprises.



And if you're looking for a Mom's Day gift for your mother, consider **In the River Sweet** by Patricia Henley, a wonderful novel about a woman walking through a midlife crisis, who, in learning to face her own demons, also finds a better way to relate to her lesbian daughter and her partner. There are some great Dad scenes, too, which also make it a good Dad's Day present. Here's [BTWOF's original review](#). \$14, Anchor/Random House.

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### The Collective Perspective

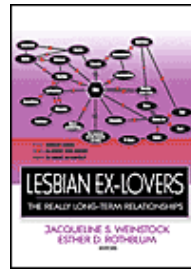
**Leaving Home, Becoming Home: Girls and Women Write About the Search for Self**, edited by Linda Bryant and Asha Khalia, was published as part of Charis Bookstore's (Atlanta) 30th anniversary celebration. It features



work by members of Charis' [High School Women Writers Group](#) side by side with contributions from older writers, many of whom also met and worked with the young writers group. Contributors include Emily Saliers, Alix Olson, Jennifer Baumgardner, Amy Richards, asha bandele, Pearl Cleage, Rosemary Daniell, Merrill Mushroom, bell hooks, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Alice Walker, Shay Youngblood and others. All of the essays address some aspect of finding one's self and making a home of one's own in the world. The younger women's contributions shine as brightly as their mentors and address issues of identity, sexuality,

gender, race, coming of age in difficult times, and more. Every young writer should have such a group. Failing that, this collection makes an excellent gift for any young woman completing a school year or embarking on any other journey to find herself. \$14.95, Inner Light Publishing.

The myth is that lesbians almost always stay friends with our ex's. And the fact is that we do so at much higher rates than heterosexuals (something that, hopefully, legalizing lesbian relationships, with the attendant polarization generated by divorces and divorce lawyers, won't change). But it turns out that we stay friends with less frequency than our mythology suggests. When editors Jacqueline S. Weinstock and Esther D. Rothblum (*Lesbian Friendships: For Ourselves and Each Other*), sent out the call for contributions for **Lesbian Ex-Lovers:**



**The Really Long-Term Relationships**, they were hoping for more research studies than they received, but this collection's focus on personal experience serves the general reader well. Memoir, journal excerpts, essays, poetry, and cartoons describe the good, the bad, and the occasionally ugly of our wide variety of relationships with ex's. Some describe wonderful support, some the high cost of losing – or maintaining – connections with ex's, and others consider the impact of good (and bad) relationships on our communities and our communities' impact on our relationships. Some stories are competently told, a few are lyrical, but all bring insight. The final section reviews the few lesbian-specific ex-lover studies and considers how research done on heterosexual relationships does or doesn't apply to lesbian relationships. It's an interesting and insightful read for any lesbian with an ex-lover – or many – under her belt. And a good reminder that our post-breakup relationships will vary as much as our relationships did. \$19.95 paper, Harrington Park Press.



## Making Change

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards' definition of an activist is "as close as your mirror." In **Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism**



veteran activists Baumgardner and Richards (*Manifesta*) insist that "activism can be an organic, pleasurable, satisfying part of your daily life" and then share their considerable experience and insight about how women young and old can generate change in a way that's both meaningful and satisfying. What a relief from the deadening "write a letter, donate, volunteer" cliché that leaves women passive agents in someone else's vision. Real world examples, thoughtful commentary, and a host of resources make it a dream tool for teaching activist skills to new circles of women. A perfect birthday, holiday, bat mitzvah gift for any young woman – and great rejuvenator for older, slightly burned-out types, too. Think of it as an *Our Bodies Ourselves* for activism. \$14, Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

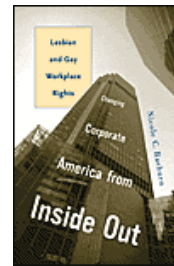
**Gay and Lesbian Rights Organizing: Community-Based Strategies** is a reprint of a special issue of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*. Aimed more at experienced organizers than *Grassroots* and much more academically oriented, it features case-studies of grassroots organizing campaigns, coalition building, and community building for GLBT youth, as well as strategizing for the future, GLBT think tanks, health and social service needs, transgender organizing, GLBT-oriented congregations, and GLBT organizing in Mexico City. Edited by Yolanda C. Padilla, PhD. \$24.95, Haworth Press.

Also on the academic side, **Governing NOW: Grassroots Activism in the National Organization for Women** considers the organization's 35 year history and finds that "the most representative and participatory voluntary association may also be among the least politically powerful and the least well equipped to increase civic engagement or political participation more generally." OK, we already knew that – but Maryanne Barakso's careful study tells why that's so, where and how the passionate organization got stuck, and how the organizing principles do and don't work. NOW boasts 500,000 members and 500 chapters. \$18.95, Cornell University Press.



## More Resources for Change

Nicole Raeburn's **Changing Corporate America from Inside Out** looks at the mobilization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employee networks in a hundred Fortune 1000 companies, at their successes at winning domestic partner benefits, at the strategies that have been most effective, and at the characteristics of companies most willing to adopt egalitarian policies for their GLB employees as well as the impact of larger social and political changes on corporations' openness to gay-inclusive policies. \$22.95 paper, University of Minnesota Press.



In **Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market**, Katherine Sender foregoes the “Are we a movement or are we a market” debate to look at how the “gay market” emerged, at how it works, and at its cultural consequences. She contends that the gay community is a social construction – an imagined community formed by both political activism and a commercially supported media. She argues that mainstream “gay” marketing has been both formative in the construction of the GLBT community and identity and that it has played an important role in increasing GLBT visibility. While the bulk of the “gay” advertising dollar addresses gay men, Sender addresses the (lack of) attention to lesbian markets throughout the book and in one (short!) chapter. Published in the *Between Men – Between Women* LGB Studies series. \$35 cloth, Columbia University Press.



**The Long Arc of Justice: Lesbian and Gay Marriage, Equality, and Rights** by Richard Mohr looks to be a great addition to the literature of rights. Here he makes a case for legal and social acceptance, applies widely held ethical principles to same-sex marriage, AIDS, and gays in the military, and relates the struggle for gay rights and acceptance to mainstream American society, history, and political life. \$22.95 cloth, Columbia University Press.

**City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia 1945-1972** by Marc Stein looks at gay and lesbian life in Philadelphia from the post-war days through the early 70s. Highlights include some of the country's first gay-rights demonstrations, Daughters of Bilitis, early gay liberation, radicalesbiana, women's liberation, and interactions with and influences of other revolutionary and social justice organizations. \$22.95 paper, Temple University Press.

Those into Bibles may want to check out **Good as New**, a new translation of the New Testament that bills itself as “Women- gay-, and sinner-friendly” and uses “partner” instead of husband or wife, etc..., to increase its relevance for gay readers. Translated/updated by retired Baptist minister John Henson, with a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. Published in the UK by O Books, £13.99.

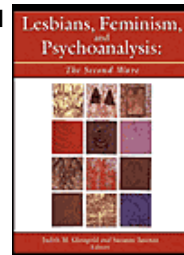
Eva Sweeney's **Queers on Wheels**, subtitled, “The essential guide for the physically disabled GLBTQ community” is just that. Spiral bound for easy reading, it covers hiring GLBTQ-friendly aides, maintaining personal yet professional relationships with aides, adapting sex to your body, adapting sex toys, sex with lovers, and assisted masturbation. \$10, 31 useful pages. Illustrated by Teresa Tunaley. *Queers on Wheels*, 1235 Charles St., Pasadena, CA 91103; 629.578.0140. More info at: <http://www.queersonwheels.com/>.

**Reclaiming Self**, edited by Leslie M. Tutty and Carolyn Goard, offers issues and resources for women abused by intimate partners and includes a lengthy (well, lengthy in the context of this slim, 140 page volume) section on responding to lesbian relationship violence. The third book in the *Hurting and Healing Series* on intimate violence, it will be of more interest to care providers and academics than women in crisis. \$14.95, Fernwood Publishing.

## A Few More Walks on the Academic Side

### Lesbians, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis: The Second Wave

edited by Judith M. Glassgold and Suzanne Lasenza, "examines recent changes in psychoanalysis that have opened the door for new perspectives on same-sex desire. Authors from a variety of disciplines and theoretical orientations combine feminism with psychoanalytic and postmodern theories to celebrate diversity in gender and sexual experience. Lesbian-affirmative writings address transference and countertransference, gender subjectivities, privilege and racism, therapist homophobia, and violence in lesbian relationships." \$19.95 paper, Harrington Park Press.



**Same-Sex Cultures and Sexualities: An anthropological reader** edited by Jennifer Roberson. Readings from four subfields of anthropology: cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological, "demonstrate the centrality of the complicated relationship of sex, gender, and sexuality to theories of human behaviors and practices... This landmark collection moves beyond other lesbian and gay studies readers by presenting a broader view of the significance of studying same-sex cultures and sexualities and presenting the lives of a range of individuals across cultural and temporal domains," says the cover. \$29.95 paper, Blackwell.

**Gay Religion** edited by Scott Thumma and Edward R. Gray offers "a straightforward presentation of the spiritual lives, practices, and expressions of LGBT people. New and established scholars explore the range of gay religious expression in denominations, sects, and other recognized religious institutions. The contributors ask what these religious innovations mean to the continually evolving religious environment of North America." \$28.95 paper, Rowman & Littlefield.

### A New Journal

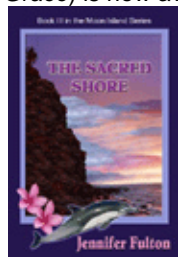
**Journal of GLBT Family Studies: innovations in theory, research, and practice**, a peer-reviewed academic journal, addresses family issues of both family-of-origin and families formed in adulthood, as well as gender roles, adoption issues, work issues, couple and relationship issues, same-sex marriage, sexual identity, et al. Edited by Jerry J. Bigner, PhD. Haworth/Harrington Park Press. More info at <http://www.haworthpress.com/web/GLBTF/>.



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## Friday Night Reads

Bestselling lesbian romance writer Jennifer Fulton is back and writing and publishing like mad. Her Moon Island series (*Passion Bay* and *Saving Grace*) is now available from Yellow Rose Books, both books in expanded



"author's cut" editions, as well as the third volume **The Sacred Shore**, another goes-down-easy romance – centering on Moon Island. Romance, adventure, lesbians contemplating the errors of relationships past, anthropologists in ethical conflicts, ecological consciousness, biological clocks, the odd homophobic family and cousins who need a hand. Fulton wraps it all up seamlessly. For readers who've been waiting for the next installment – well, it was worth the wait – but it's also fine to plunge into the middle of the series and start with **Sacred Shore**. The fourth volume in the series, *A Guarded Heart*, will be published in May. \$15.95, Yellow Rose Books.

Fulton also writes mysteries as Rose Beecham. Look for the next book in her Jude Devine series, *Grave Silence*, from Bold Strokes Press at the end of this year and *Sleep of Reason* in 2006.

More info on her web site: <http://www.jenniferfulton.com>.

Even when Karin Kallmaker tries to whip up some bit of frothy dessert – as in **Sugar** – she still spins out a sweet – but not saccharine – story. Our dessert chef, “Sugar,” has just launched her own independent dessert catering company in the heart of Seattle’s competitive foodie-industry when her house goes up in flames. But crisis can bring opportunity – for growth, for romance, and for finding one’s own, truest self. But what – or rather who – does Sugar really want? That’s the dilemma in the drama – but what I really want to know, at the end of the book, is how they’re going to communicate. Maybe that’s the next novel? \$12.95, Bella.



In **Love Speaks Her Name**, Laura DeHart Young (*Forever, Love on the Line*) takes us to Alaska’s Denali wilderness to test the limits of friendships, co-worker loyalty, and the good intentions in a relationship, all while supporting a friend with cancer. And then there’s this small matter of international espionage. Sometimes life – and commitments – aren’t as clear cut as they seem. \$12.95, Bella.



**Shared Winds**, from debut novelist Kenna White, offers another kind of adventure – two women reaching for their career dreams: Lan Harding needs to rebuild her beloved marina after a tornado does its damndest to destroy it; Emma Bishop needs to prove to her father that she’s got what it takes to take over the family construction business when he retires. Sometimes going it alone isn’t the only alternative for independent women – and sometimes it isn’t the answer at all. Newcomer Kenna White offers a good look at the importance of community – a form of love that turns out to be as important as romance in the part-Cherokee marina owner’s life. \$12.95, Bella.

The ever-prolific Radclyffe publishes cliff-hanging adventure/romances faster than we can read them:

Cameron Roberts and Blair Powell are back in **Honor Guards**, the latest in her Honor series about the feisty, independent daughter of the president and the Secret Agent sworn to protect her. Of course, being lovers makes everything more complicated. Look for the pair in Paris, hanging out on the Left Bank – until an international plot threatens their lives, their love, and national security... \$18.99 paper, Bold Strokes.



**Justice in the Shadows** is the latest in her Justice series. In this installment, Detective Sergeant Rebecca Frye takes on a pornography ring and traitor in her own department with the help of her lover, Dr. Catherine Rawlings; JT Sloan, a cybersleuth committed to revenge; a young officer with an unforeseen talent for undercover work; and a prostitute who develops an unexpected passion for cops... \$18.99 paper, BookEnds Press.

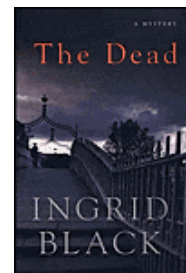


## The Crime Scene

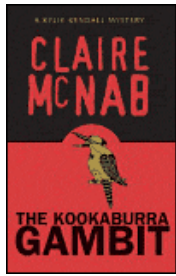
By Nan Cinnater

It’s March 3 and there’s six inches of fresh snow on the ground on Cape Cod where we’ve had a record 91 inches this winter! I’m a little crazy from cabin fever, and I’m having trouble making it clear when the main characters in these books, strong women though they may be, are not lesbians. I always identify the lesbian-themed mysteries, and I hope the reader will assume that, when I don’t mention lesbian content, the book does not have any.

Thanks to the Publishing Triangle’s Notable Lesbian Books list (see [BTWOF #12](#)), I just discovered **The Dead**, by Ingrid Black (\$23.95, St. Martin’s), a superior serial killer thriller set in Dublin. Our heroine is an FBI agent turned true crime writer known simply as Saxon (in the tradition of great one-named and unnamed fictional detectives). Saxon is involved in a lesbian affair with chief superintendent of police Grace Fitzgerald when a serial killer who disappeared years ago apparently resurfaces. Having thoroughly researched the suspect, Saxon is the



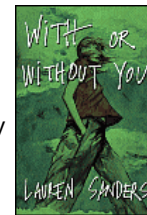
only one who realizes that this must be a copycat. British critics were wowed when **The Dead** was published there last year.



**The Kookaburra Gambit** (\$13.95, Alyson, April) is the latest in Claire McNab's bonzer (that's Aussie for excellent) new series featuring lesbian Kylie Kendall. Australian Kylie inherited half of her late father's L.A. detective agency in **The Wombat Strategy** (see [BTWOF #6](#)), and now she has a case of her very own. Hunky twins Alf and Chicka Hartnidge are bringing their hit children's TV series to the U.S., and someone is using the opportunity to smuggle opals inside their trademark line of stuffed toys. McNab has a wicked sense of humor, which she unleashes here on Australian stereotypes and Hollywood pretensions alike, resulting in another fast-paced, eminently enjoyable romp – and that's fair dinkum.

Meanwhile, McNab has not been neglecting her long-standing, bestselling series about sexy Australian top cop Carol Ashton. In **Fall Guy** (\$12.95, Bella Books) Detective Inspector Ashton investigates the death of a wealthy practical joker who died while sky diving. In addition, Bella Books has brought back McNab's non-mystery, **Under the Southern Cross** (\$12.95).

In Lauren Sanders' **With or Without You**, baby dyke Lillian Ginger Speck is in jail for murdering the object of her obsession, soap opera star Brooke Harrison. More an edgy, literary novel with murder than a mystery, this is the second foray outside the box for Sanders, who won a Lambda Literary Award for her first novel, **Kamikaze Lust** (both \$14.95, Akashic Books).



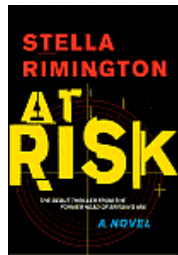
Strong Latina heroines are hard to come by in any genre so I was happy to find out about **Most Wanted** by Michele Martinez (\$23.95, Morrow) featuring a (heterosexual) Latina DA working to solve a brutal, high-profile murder in New York. However, two new suspense/adventure novels by Yxta Maya Murray look even more intriguing. In **The Queen Jade** (\$23.95, Rayo), California bookseller Lola Sanchez must rescue her archaeologist mother who disappeared in the jungles of Guatamala on a quest for the ultimate jade artifact. In **The Conquest** (\$12.95, Rayo), a Latina rare book restorer becomes convinced that the supposedly fictional story of Helen, a sixteenth-century Aztec woman captured by Cortes, is really true. Helen's manuscript tells of her many female lovers and of her plot to assassinate Cortes, the Pope, and the Holy Roman Emperor!



Leslie Silbert's **The Intelligencer** (\$14.00, Washington Square) is another historical mystery that depends upon a centuries-old manuscript. Silbert follows two stories – that of Christopher Marlowe, Elizabethan playwright and "intelligencer" or spy in the service of the Queen, and that of contemporary grad student turned private eye Kate Morgan, who is consulted by a London financier about a sixteenth-century manuscript written in code. No lesbian content, but nevertheless the right stuff for feminist book lovers.

For years now Nevada Barr has been delivering masterful mysteries with great wilderness sequences and great action writing. In **Hard Truth** (\$24.95, Putnam) she also gives us a wonderful new character, a woman named Heath Jarrod, a former rock climber now in a wheelchair. Sadly, although Barr brings a bit of refreshing feminist perspective to the cliché, she resorts to that hackneyed plot device, the psycho killer – at one point even admitting that her heroine, Park Ranger Anna Pigeon, got most of what she "knows" about the psychology of serial killers from novels and movies. Barr is too good a writer to put down; if it had been anybody else, I would have thrown the book across the room. **High Country**, Barr's last novel, set in Yosemite, is now out in paperback (\$7.99, Berkley). For more on Barr's other books, see [BTWOF #4](#).

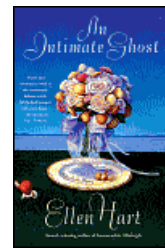
Mother-daughter team P.J. Tracy burst on the scene a couple of years ago with an outstanding thriller about the quirky gang at Monkeewrench, a computer gaming company in Minneapolis. (For more on **Monkeewrench**, \$6.99, Signet, see [BTWOF #1](#).) Their second novel, **Live Bait** (\$7.50, Signet) which brought back some of the same characters, will be out in paperback in April. (See [BTWOF #7](#).) In their third outing, **Dead Run** (\$23.95, Putnam, April), the focus is on our favorite female characters from the Monkeewrench crew, enigmatic Grace McBride and woman-of-size Annie Belinsky, along with FBI agent Sharon Mueller. On their way to a consulting job in Green Bay, the three women are stranded in a tiny northern Wisconsin town that's completely dead – literally.



Fans of spy fiction will be happy to discover that indeed M is female in real life – and she bears some resemblance to Judy Dench! Author Stella Rimington was director general of MI5 in the Nineties, and she has put her insider's knowledge to good use in a new spy thriller, **At Risk**. Intelligence officer Liz Carlisle is an espionage heroine for the twenty-first century, battling people-smugglers and Islamic terrorists in Great Britain. Rimington's style is crisp and compelling and her plotting, of course, extremely plausible. Good job, M! \$24 cloth, Knopf.

#### Now in Paper:

**An Intimate Ghost**, by Ellen Hart (\$13.95, Griffin). With a plot turning on homophobia and teenage gun violence, this is one of the most ambitious in Hart's consistently great series featuring lesbian restaurateur Jane Lawless and her sidekick Cordelia Thorn.

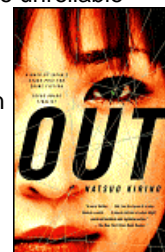


**The 37th Hour**, by Jodi Compton (\$6.99, Dell). Expert in missing persons cases must search for her own husband.

**Out**, by Natsuo Kirino (\$12.95, Vintage). Japanese feminist *noir* about four women factory workers who conspire to cover up murder.

**Deception**, by Denise Mina (\$13.95, Back Bay). The ultimate unreliable narrator novel, by a Scottish master of psychological suspense, author of **Garnethill** and **Exile** (both \$14.00, Carroll & Graf).

**Birth Marks**, by Sarah Dunant (\$12.00, Scribner). First in an odd but interesting series featuring London private eye Hannah Wolfe, by the author of the historical bestseller **The Birth of Venus** (\$13.95, Random House). Also available in the Hannah Wolfe series: **Fatlands** and **Under My Skin** (both \$12.00, Scribner).



#### Books To Watch Out For

Here are a couple dozen books from my to-read stacks:



**A Thread of Grace**, by Mary Doria Russell is high up on my list of fiction treats. Her first two novels, *The Sparrow* and *Children of God*, used science fiction to explore the impact of colonialism in general and the Jesuits in particular on “new worlds.” (See [BTWOF #1](#).) In **Thread of Grace** (“an extraordinarily complex historical novel”), Russell uses fiction to look at the period between Mussolini’s fall and the end of World War II when Italians, somehow, prevented 40,000 Jews from being sent to the death camps – and at what makes ordinary people take extraordinary risks to help others – and at what, in a culture makes that the norm, rather than the exception. Her novel-in-progress looks at the Cairo

Agreement, how it evolved, and how it set the stage for the war(s) in the Middle East. \$25.95, 448 pages, Random House.

You might have already known, but I just discovered that Leigh Richards is a pseudonym for much-loved mystery writer Laurie King (think both the Kate Martinelli and the Mary Russell/Sherlock Holmes series). And so I missed her science fiction debut, **Califia's Daughters**, a paperback original inspired by the Califia myth about a small enclave of women in a post-apocalypse future. The a-virus-killed-all-the-men thing has been used before – but never in these hands. Spectra, 496 pages, \$6.99.

Check out Laurie King on feminism, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and the inspiration for *Califia's Daughters* at:

<http://www.laurierking.com/whateverfeminism.php>.

And her website at:

<http://www.laurierking.com/>

**The Curious Feminist: Searching for women in a new age of empire** by Cynthia Enloe (*Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*).

Enloe is one of feminism's most lucid – and accessible – writers. Here she looks at globalization and international politics through the lens of the lives of women most affected by them and offers a perspective to balance the daily madness being perpetuated by both our government and our economic system. "With her logical, unadorned style, she makes the argument that the U.S. is a militarized nation where "commander in chief" is the essence of the U.S. presidency" and "manipulations of manliness often shape foreign policy decision-making." This preoccupation with asserting masculinity, she contends, plays a role not only in U.S. foreign policy, but in economic strategies of American companies," says *Publishers Weekly*. In autobiographical essays she also reflects on the gradual development of her own "feminist curiosity" and maps the everyday obstacles placed on the path to feminist consciousness. \$19.95, University of California Press.

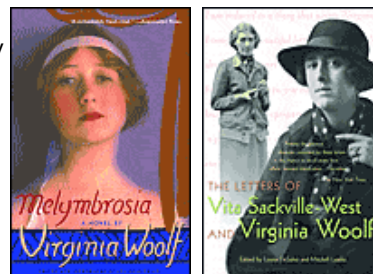


**After Mecca: Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement** by Cheryl Clarke (*Living as a Lesbian, Experimental Love: Poetry*).

The politics and music of the sixties and early seventies have been the subject of scholarship for many years, but here, finally, is a look at the black women writers of the times: Gwendolyn Brooks, Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Jayne Cortez, Alice Walker, and others. Clarke looks at the ways these poets were turning away from white, western society to create a new literacy of blackness, at their contributions to the development of feminism and lesbian-feminism, and at the legacy they left for others to build upon. \$21.95 paper, Rutgers University Press.

**The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf** edited by Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell Leaska was originally published in 1985, but the Cleis Press paperback publication is a great excuse to dip into them again – and it offers a wonderful treat for those who have never read them. 500 letters detail their love affair from its beginnings in 1922 until Woolf's death in 1941. \$16.95, 375 pages, Cleis Press.

**Melymbrosia**, Virginia Woolf's long lost first novel. Uncovered and recompiled by Woolf scholar Louise DeSalvo, it "concerns the emotional and sexual awakening of a young Englishwoman traveling abroad... [and] bristles with social commentary on homosexuality, the suffrage movement, and colonialism." Friends and colleagues warned Woolf that publishing such an outspoken novel could prove disastrous to her fledgling career and she revised it and published it as *The Voyage Out*. \$16.95, 350 pages, Cleis Press.



**Visa for Avalon** – another rediscovered classic– this one a cautionary tale about the creeping loss of liberty under an increasingly totalitarian government and an increasingly homogenizing culture written by Bryher

(Annie Winifred Ellerman), published in 1965. Bryher and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) were partners from 1919 until H.D.'s death in 1961. Introduced by Susan McCabe. "A stark reminder of all that we stand to lose if we don't protect our civil liberties. Thank you, Paris Press, for bringing this long-neglected novel back into print. We need it today." –Barbara Ehrenreich. \$15, Paris Press.

In **February House**, Sherill Tippins uncovers a mad experiment in communal living. In 1940, as the world was degenerating into war, George Davis, Auden (and his composer-friend Britten), Carson McCullers (who was beginning *Member of the Wedding* and a lesbian crush that ended her marriage), Jane Bowles, Paul Bowles, Gypsy Rose Lee (who was writing a novel as well as doing burlesque), the activist siblings Erika, Klaus and Golo Mann, and more than a few others wrote books, poetry, operas, smoked, drank, and pursued relationships of all descriptions, kept a curfew (!), and made the rent. "Enlivened by primary sources and a dishy story, [*February House*] masterfully recreates daily life at the most fertile and improbable live-in salon of the twentieth century." \$24 hardcover, 317 pages, Houghton Mifflin.

### On Trans-Gendering

#### **From the Inside Out: Radical Gender**

**Transformation, FTM and Beyond** is descended from that proud feminist tradition of needing a book that doesn't exist, sending out a call for first-person stories, and creating an anthology about the topic at hand. Morty Diamond wanted to read about gender explorations that weren't stuck in the traditional male/female dichotomies presumed by most of the existing literature. All of the writers in *From the Inside Out* were born female, came to realize how little they identified with that gender, and explored – and often invented – other options including transgender, genderqueer, third gender, and gender variant... Nominated for an ALA Stonewall Award. \$13.95, Manic D Press.



In **a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives**, Judith Halberstam's essays on the significance of the transgender body, the mainstream and alternative meanings of "masculinity," lesbian drag king cultures, the media frenzy surrounding Brandon Teena's death, *Boys Don't Cry* (and the absence thereof for the equally brilliant *By Hook or By Crook*), the lesbian/queer subcultures that launched musicians from Cris Williamson and Ferron to The Butchies and The Backstreet Boys, and the ambiguous embodiment in the art of Del LaGrace, Volcano, Jenny Saville, Eva Hesse, Shirin Neshat and others... \$19 paper, NYU Press.

**The Riddle of Gender: Science, Activism, and Transgender Rights**, by science writer Deborah Rudacille, offers a journalist's review of history and perspective on the trans movement(s). The book features interviews with contemporary FTMs and MTFs, and a look at the likely connection between DES and other estrogen-mimicking hormones and non-conforming gender identities. \$26, Pantheon/Random.

### Lesbians in Sports and the Out of Doors



**The Life of Helen Stephens: The Fulton Flash** by Sharon Kinney Hanson. Helen Stephens went from being a Missouri farm girl to a record-setting Olympic runner (100 meters in 11.4 seconds, Berlin 1936, a record that stood for 24 years) by the time she was 18 – and that was just the beginning. Excelling as a runner, a discus thrower, and in the standing broad jump, she turned professional in 1937 and played with the barnstorming All-American Red Heads Basketball Team, playing men's rules and men's teams. The next year she started her own team, The Helen Stephens Olympic Co-Eds, becoming the first woman to own and manage a

basketball team which toured before and after WW II.

Continually harassed for her athleticism, she generally gave back as good as she got: When hecklers taunted her with *Hey, tomgirl, where's your beard?* she'd respond with her characteristic lip, *Same place as yours – you're sittin' on it!* When harassed by a drunk for "masquerading like a woman," she decked him, and she and her girlfriend threw him out of the bar.

When *Look* magazine insinuated that she was a man, she sued and won. All while living actively as a lesbian. Hanson conducted 70 interviews with Stephens between 1987 and her death in 1994, and this biography promises Stephens' insights into Olympic boycotts, gender-testing of female athletes, the women's movement, gay rights and on running in the Senior Olympics at 65. \$29.50 hardcover, 262 pages, Southern Illinois University Press.

When nature writer Catherine Reid (*His Hands, His Tools, His Sex, His Dress: Lesbian Writers on Their Fathers and Every Woman I've Ever Loved: Lesbian Writers on Their Mothers*) and her partner moved back to western Massachusetts she re-discovered the coyotes that are moving into every suburb and city east of the Mississippi. In **Coyote** Reid writes about coyotes, about the experience of returning, after decades away, to the small town where she grew up, and the uncertain reception both face. It promises to be "one of the most dramatic wildlife stories of our times." \$18 cloth, Houghton Mifflin.

**Now Go Home: Wilderness, Belonging, and the Crosscut Saw** by Ana Maria Spagna. "With candor, wit, and hard-earned wisdom, Spagna reflects on the journey that took her from a childhood in the suburbs of LA to a trail crew in the North Cascades where she falls in love with a place and, unexpectedly, with a woman. With days spent laboring as the only woman on a trail crew and evenings in a cabin no larger than Thoreau's she has world enough and time enough to wrestle with the compromises and contradictions of making 'life in the woods'." \$17.95 paper, Oregon State University Press.

And this one is way out of doors: **The Mercury 13: The True Story of Thirteen Women and the Dream of Space Flight** by Martha Ackmann. In 1961, just as NASA sent the first man into space, a group of women underwent secret testing in hopes of becoming America's first female astronauts. All crackerjack pilots and patriots, some sacrificed jobs and marriages for a chance to participate in the space program. \$13.95, Random House.

**Savage Summit: The True Stories of the First Five Women Who Climbed K2, the World's Most Feared Mountain** by Jennifer Jordan. The author mentions only once that one of them climbed with her female partner, so read between some of the lines in, what I'm told, is an interesting and readable story about the five women who climbed the second highest mountain in the world, and all perished. \$24.95, Morrow.

#### And Back in Inner Space:

Isabel Allende, Maya Angelou, Vivian Gornick, Germaine Greer, Susan Griffin, Grace Paley, Alix Kates Shulman, Terry Tempest Williams and other contributors in **Breaking Free: Women of Spirit at Midlife and Beyond**, edited by Marilyn Sewell, grapple with what age and life have taught them, contemplate their experiences, and reflect on where they have arrived. And discover not only what time has taken – but also the gifts that come only with age and experience. Whew! And it also reprints Baba Cooper's "On Being a Rebellious Old Woman." What a wealth of experience! \$16, Beacon Press.

But look for the other side of that story in **Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflicts and Third-Wave Feminism** in which Astrid Henry looks at the ways younger feminists claim the movement as their own by distancing themselves from the past and how that works – and doesn't. "She also shows how 1970s lesbian feminism is represented in ways that are remarkably similar to the puritanical portrait of feminism offered by straight third-wavers." \$19.95 paper, Indiana University Press.



The contributors to **That's Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation**, edited by Matt Bernstein Sycamore, aka Mattilda, look askance at the gay mainstream's focus on civil rights and insist that assimilation simply isn't enough. Here a new generation of pissed-off queer visionaries of a variety of genders, along with some early gay liberation rabble-rousers, counterculture demons, fringe artists, renegade academics and other freaks, fruits, perverts and whores, offer their visions for reframing, reclaiming, and reshaping the world. I'm particularly enamored of diatribes Gay Shame posts on San Francisco telephone poles and am glad to see some of these attitudes and visions in a format that will reach a wider

audience. \$16.95, 300 pages, Soft Skull Press.  
An interview with Mattilda on the intersection of “queer” and “politics”:  
[http://www.sfbg.com/39/04/lit\\_interview\\_mattilda.html](http://www.sfbg.com/39/04/lit_interview_mattilda.html)



### Back in Print



The last two of Paula Christian's pulp-era novels, **The Other Side of Desire** (which includes the novel *Amanda*), are now back in print, thanks to Kensington. Kensington started reprinting the Paula Christian novels two years ago with *Twilight Girls* and *Another Kind of Love*. The title novel starts with a restless but well-behaved suburban housewife, but you know *that* won't last. *Amanda* features a sophisticated, “straight” New Yorker who writes lesbian novels under an assumed name, “but when young housewife and aspiring novelist Amanda Richardson asks for help on her own novel and comes to stay for 10 days” with the experienced lesbian writer... Now there's a familiar sounding tale... Christian was one of the writers who fought to give her pulps positive endings. She died in 2002. \$15.00, Kensington.

Lesléa Newman's short story collection, **A Letter to Harvey Milk** from the Library of American Fiction series/Terrace Books/University of Wisconsin Press. Nine wonderful tales of Jewish heritage and lesbian identity from the eighties, including the much-anthologized title story. \$17.95 paper, University of Wisconsin Press.



### Now in paperback

**Name All the Animals: A Memoir** by Alison Smith, \$13, Scribner.

**Fanny: A Fiction** by Edmund White, \$13.95, Ecco/HarperCollins.

White's Victorian tale imagines Frances Trollop writing a memoir of her old friend, radical feminist Frances Wright, decades after they jointly wrote and published “Domestic Manners of the Americans,” about their travels through America in the 1820s.

**Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin** by John D'Emilio, \$20, University of Chicago Press.

**Gay Marriage: Why It is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America** by Jonathan Rauch, \$12, Owl.

**Long Life: Essays and Other Writings**, Mary Oliver, \$16, Da Capo/Perseus.

**Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women's Changing Lives** by Anna Fels, \$14, Anchor.



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