



In this issue...

- Two Small Press Treasures...1
- Recasting the Past, Twice...2
- Two in Your Ear...3
- One Book About Bikes...5
- A Dozen 'Net Connects...5
- Two Busy Writerly Blogs...7
- Killian Part 1: One-A-Day...8
- Buncha News Bits...13
- Letters: You B*tch...14

The Gay Men's Edition

— this issue sponsored by —

Alyson Books

publisher of
Back Where He Started
 by Jay Quinn

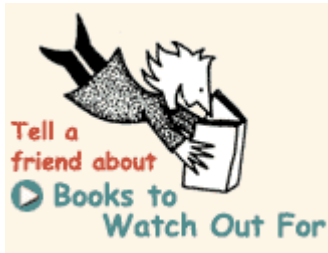
Red state values meet a blue state hero
 in Jay Quinn's heartfelt new novel
 of love, family, loyalty, and starting over.

Print It Out

- [PDF of this issue](#)
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

By Richard Labonte

Volume 2 Number 4



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 mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

- » [Click here](#) to **subscribe**.
- » [Click here](#) for **more info**.
- » [Click here](#) to **tell a friend** about the Lesbian Edition.

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.

Two Books Not To Wait For: Lush & Gritty, A Small Gem

Our Napoleon in Rags by Kirby Gann, *Ig Publishing*, \$14.95.

Haycraft Keebler, the seriously bipolar scion of a once-prominent family, has a cockeyed idealist's mission: to save the world. Or at least the skuzzy other-side-of-the-tracks neighborhood of the grimy Kentucky town where he lives, supported by a disability check and the proceeds of a donation jar at the Don Quixote Tavern, a boisterous *Cheers*-like hangout for assorted goodhearted rascals and embittered rogues. Queer writing's own Edmund White praised Gann's first novel, *The Barbarian Parade* (Hill Street Press, \$14.95): "A novelist of daring creativity and passion...sensual, carnal, tender and brutal," he said — words that work just as well for this second novel, which isn't gay like an Edmund White novel is, but which is of gay-interest. That's because the most important relationship in *Our Napoleon* is between Keebler and a 15-year-old street hustler. It's not an overtly sexual thing; it is an older-man-rescuing-the-lost-boy-he-loves thing — in much the same way that Keebler, in his lucid moments, is trying to invoke tenderness and compassion everywhere in his wake...a tilting-at-windmills thing, but surely something worth pursuing. Gann's prose is lush and dark and romantic and gritty and always graceful, a gift for readers who love the words that tell a story. Thank goodness there are small presses around to give quirky, textured novels like this a home.

Author info: <http://www.kirbygann.net/index.htm>

An excerpt: <http://www.kirbygann.net/work1.htm>



In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot by Barbara Adair, *Jacana Media*, \$19.



A first-time writer tackles, in fictional form, the inner lives and public loves of Paul Bowles and Jane Bowles in the late 1940s — pretty daring, given the hallowed place of both in the pantheon of expatriate romanticism and Beat mystique. But South African Adair — a human rights law lecturer — pulls it off. "In the course of writing this novel the dead have always been close to me," she writes. Inspired by seeing an aged Paul Bowles sitting alone and content at an outdoor Tangier café in 1993 — her first trip outside of South Africa, after travel restrictions were lifted in the post-apartheid era — she set out to glean facts, insight, and perspective from the books of Jane and Paul, and from their crowd,

- » [Click here](#) to **subscribe**.
- » [Click here](#) for **more info**.
- » [Click here](#) to **tell a friend** about the Gay Men's Edition.

More Books for Women

will launch in 2005.

- » [Click here](#) to be notified when it launches.



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.



Housekeeping

If you want to change your BTWOF email address or other contact information, [click here](#) to update:

- » your subscriber profile
- » whatever has changed.



Finding BTWOF

BTWOF is published by Carol Seajay and Books To Watch Out For.

www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com

Email: Editor@BTWOF.com

PO Box 882554

San Francisco, CA 94131.

415.642.9993.

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.

Books for the **Lesbian Edition** should be sent to the San Francisco address.



Burroughs and Ginsberg and Capote and Genet and Mrabet and Choukri, compressing volumes of possibilities into a compact story that moves through mood with lithe tension. Paul's relationship with teen hustler Belquassim is the core of the narrative; the boy is both active participant, physically and sexually, in Bowles' life, and also omniscient observer of how Paul and Jane's complex dance of loving codependence played out. Burroughs is the most present cameo character, and from the boy's perspective a somewhat sinister fellow; one chapter, based on a visit to Morocco by Gertrude and Alice, is unexpectedly and rewardingly, comic. It's hard to imagine anyone drawn to *In Tangier We Killed the Blue Parrot* who hasn't immersed themselves in Bowlesiana — or, at the very least, seen the 1990 film *The Sheltering Sky*. But if you come cold to this small gem of a novel, you'll be inspired to read beyond it.

An excerpt: Paul and Belquassim have left Tangier, driving into the mountains to record Moroccan music for the Library of Congress. They have stopped in a small café...

In Moghrebi, Belquassim heard one say to the other, "arse-fucking foreigner and his sell-out whore." The other man glanced in their direction and made a crude gesture with his thumb and forefinger. Then he got up and walked towards them. The chained gold eagle let out a cry that hovered in the air above the room. The monkey laughed excitedly. Belquassim got up slowly; he wanted to leave. As the man got close to them he took a knife out of his pocket, as sharp as a snake's tongue. The monkey stopped his laugh. The eagle became still. The man was tall. He leaned over Belquassim. Belquassim could feel his hot breath on his skin, it smelt of boiled eggs. Slowly the man drew a line with the silver sliver of metal across Belquassim's face. The sound of moving flesh rattled in Belquassim's ears, it was slow and rasping. The knife moved down across his eye and over his mouth. There was no sound except the laughter of the blade.... The man then went back to where he was sitting and continued to drink his tea. The blood dripped across the table, it filled the cracks of the name in the carved out heart and then fell to the floor. Drip drip drip. It was like rain, red rain, nourishing the cold stone floor.



Two Books To Watch Out For, From a Certain Time and Place

Godlike by Richard Hell, *Akashic Books*, \$13.95 (July).

Poet and punk pioneer Hell's lyrically melancholy second novel (after *Go Now*), set primarily in the East Village's grungy poetry scene circa 1972, honors decadence and dissolution and celebrates art and angst. Against a backdrop of cheap beer, acid highs, flammable egos, and sometimes exuberant, sometimes desperate sex, Hell tells the compelling if unsettling story of 27-year-old married poet Paul Vaughn's ("I'm not a faggot. I just have a queer streak") transcendent affair with a teenage poet. Randal Terence Wode ("T") is "a rampaging adolescent" whose "bony boy's buttocks" become, for a brief time, the core of Vaughn's physical desire, and whose brash spirit is, for 30 years, the center of Vaughn's emotional universe. The wrenching narrative is far from linear: the novel's emotional account of a memorable love, peppered with poems (some original, others drawn from the work of Rene Ricard, Edwin Denby, James Schuyler, and Ron Padgett), skips somewhat erratically between the months of the older poet's affair with the cocky young Kentucky runaway and, decades later, the month of his own most recent institutionalization for psychiatric observation. But Hell's prose, explosive here and tender there and always charged with rewarding humanity, ably propels the story. By no means a mainstream effort, this gritty novel will nonetheless find readers in the demimonde of poets and people who read them, and of those who appreciate how artistry and sexuality fuel each other. (From an 'anonymous' *Publishers Weekly* review)

Author info: <http://www.richardhell.com>

An excerpt: http://www.akashicbooks.com/godlike_excerpt.htm



Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982

by Jack Fritscher, *Southern Tier*, \$34.95 (September).

The San Francisco of the '70s, chronicled with cinematic intensity in *Some Dance To Remember*, was still recent history in 1990 when Knights Press first published this brilliant record of gay life before the shattering ground zero

of AIDS. Fritscher's mythic panorama of plot and character gazes with a steady eye across an astonishing, astounding spectrum of queer lives: it's about obsessive muscle worship and proud Irish identity, about heady gay liberation politics and searing gay-leader assassination, about the bold choreography of Castro cruising and the intricate semantics of South of Market leather, about the transcendence of sexual freedom and the glory of sexual decadence, about ephemeral quixotic romance and gritty redemptive love. Fifteen years on, Fritscher's sprawling fictional (but memorably factual) saga, set in and exploding from the heady, headstrong, headlong decade-plus of 1970 to 1982, has lost not a whit of its muscular passion, its punchy immediacy, or its transformative literary impact. (From a solicited Harrington Park Press pre-review.)

Author info (including online access to a muscular collection of Jack Fritscher's work for the early days of *Drummer Magazine*; look under "new work"): <http://www.jackfritscher.com>

An excerpt from *Some Dance to Remember*:

Men, accustomed to meeting at bars and baths, gathered at the massive bronze door in small groups unsure exactly what to do. Death was new to them. This was the first grand gay funeral. "At least he doesn't have to grow old," they whispered. The majority of the mourners wore full leather gear. They were Folsom Street men, good-looking and gruff, a decade or two older than the boys on Castro. Leather for them was an attractive saving grace. Leather transformed aging bodies. Leather was tighter and smoother than skin. Leather cinched and corseted and disguised bodies which rarely, if ever, darkened the iron-pumping, designer-muscle gyms on Castro. Leather was a fetish that extended a mature man's sex appeal for another dozen years.



Audio Treats: Hot Stuff for Adults, Wise Words for YA's

Back in the day, when cassette tapes were the cutting-edge audio technology, *Manifest* magazine — a kind of print-heavy, *Drummer*-lite quarterly — produced a series of audio porn tapes. (I think it was *Manifest*; I didn't take notes...). They were hardly literary — heavy breathing, cum-fueled yelps, lots of dirty talk: your basic one-handed pornography, except there were no pages to turn. The Old Reliable folks, famed for rough-trade wrestling videos, also produced a line of solo dirty-talk tapes, most featuring the stream-of-consciousness sexual fantasies of mostly straight boys:

"BANDANA DOUG: Doug is a seriously dangerous street person...a fearless hustler who will do anything to anyone! At times he can be lovable and extremely desirable, yet he is one to be very wary of, since he survives, after all, at the expense of others, and claims he doesn't feel anything for anyone but himself! He overflows with the ambiguity of a youth whose body and mind are still developing. This tape is pathological and extremely cruel direct talk in the jargon of the street."

The OR audio philosophy:

<http://models.badpuppy.com/archive/or/audio/audintro.htm>

The OR audio archive:

<http://models.badpuppy.com/archive/or/audio/audiosolos.htm>

Which brings us to 2005, and: **Manjack: Gay Audio Erotica** by Bob Vickery, *QuarterMoon Press*, \$16.95

This two-disk, six-tale set doesn't have much in common with the audio offerings, from 15 to 25 years ago, of Old Reliable and *Manifest* — except that it's hot. Vickery is among the more polished and imaginative of gay-erotica writers: he stitches sentences together with literary rhythm and grammatical grace; his narrative style is direct and punchy; and he infuses his sexcapades with both overt man-on-man physicality and subversive good humor. All of which means that his written tales translate well into audio storytelling, particularly when professional production values are part of the mix. *Manjack's* six stories — more than two-and-a-half hours of narration total — are arousing enough to listen to with eyes closed and clothes off; at the same time, they're entertaining enough to pop into your car's CD player for background sound on a long drive — as long as you keep your hands on the wheel.

I'm not sure if the four readers (Mark Masters, David Wilder, Richard Chicceron, and Samantha Campbell) are professional (or even amateur) actors; in any case, they certainly "act" out the stories with energy and flair. The most complex of the offerings is "Phone Sex," which uses three voices

(Masters, Wilder, Campbell) for multiple characters: a young man looking to get off over the phone beeps his way through several men before connecting with the right fantasy — though in the middle of their heavy breathing, his mother interrupts with call-waiting to make sure he's picking up the cake for his aunt's birthday party. The reader's switch from "I'm chewing on those fireplug nipples of yours" to "hey mom this isn't exactly a good time to call" is hilarious, and Campbell's three turns as an exasperated mom adds comic relief to the other kinds of climax.

Mark Masters is the solo reader on three of the stories: "Mine," a straightforward porn tale about a traveling mine supervisor hitting it with hot men everywhere he goes; "Gamblers," a slightly more complex tale about a traveler who picks up a cocky kid in a casino, gives him a ride when he craps out, and lets him share a motel room, with inevitable consequences (this story appears in *Best Gay Erotica 2005*, and like the rest first appeared in the collection *Play Buddies*); and "Brother John's Traveling Salvation Show," about a young hitchhiker who falls in with some holy rollers, and in bed with charismatic, and hunky, Brother John. And Chicceron is the solo reader on "Helping Rufus," about a hillbilly kid ("not a butcher's ounce 'a fat on me") who goes out for the high school wrestling team; his Southern twang suits the story perfectly. And David Wilder's reading of "Queer Punk" nicely captures the youthful, nasal cadence of a stoned slacker — with a big dick, a muscled build, and a pent-up need for a good fuck — in the most energetic of the narrations. It's the steamiest, most hardcore of the stories, with almost nonstop sex: save this one for when you're out of the car and back in the house...I'm not aware of any other gay-erotic audio material, and certainly nothing of this quality.

Publisher info/audio sample: <http://www.quartermoonpress.com/>

And for an audio experience of a quite different sort:

The Misfits by James Howe, *Full Cast Audio, unabridged, \$31.*



There's a reason that the audio company run by Bruce Coville and Daniel Bostick is called "Full Cast": there are 28 readers — in truth, actors — performing Howe's (controversial) YA novel...every word except for the "he saids/she saids." The total running time is about five hours, but this captivating production is certainly worth the commitment of time — I listened to it over a couple of afternoons while writing reviews, a welcome diversion from NPR, Air America, and CBC Radio chatter over the Internet (I compose better to words than music, perhaps because I learned to write in a busy daily newspaper newsroom).

While the voices on *Manjacked* are definitely adult — even the slacker lad's — one of many charms of *The Misfits* is that the kids (a group of misfit teens banding together as the No-Name Party to run in the school's student council elections) sound just like kids — their voices are a bit high-pitched, sometimes on the edge of breaking, with that unmistakable huskiness of adolescence. In truth, I have no idea how old the readers really are; but they sound close to their proper age, 12 and 13 or so. The core of *The Misfits* is its call for a No-Name day, a day in school when there would be no name-calling — no "fairy faggot fatty stinky dork" hurled thoughtlessly by the jocks and the princesses at "the misfits" — feisty freedom-loving Addie, overweight Bobby, gay Joe, and punk Skeezy. In print, the sentiments are pretty powerful. And the voice of one of the seventh-grade teens — when Bobby gives his speech at an all-candidate's meeting of Paintbrush Falls Middle School — is truly moving: "We have a total of 72 names we've been called since kindergarten... 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me'... anyone who believes that has never been called a name," he says.

Why was Howe's novel controversial? For the usual reason: some progressive high schools and some Gay/Straight Alliances borrowed the idea of espousing tolerance by holding real-world No-Name Days; the usual bigoted yahoos yelped that organizers were thus "promoting homosexuality." Please...

Solely as entertainment, *The Misfits* is a treat. But it never hurts to add some thoughtful fiber to the sweet stuff; James Howe does just that, in a 12-minute interview about what inspired the book (his daughter's own seventh-grade experiences); how editors and critics responded to having a 12-year-old out

gay character (pretty positively); and why he wrote it: "When we're called names, we feel the power of that in a negative way, but here it's turned around...I wanted to create characters that are fun to spend time with...I didn't write this book to necessarily change anyone's thinking, but I did write it to open thinking and to open hearts." That he did, in the 2001 book; this 2002 audio version gives full voice to those sentiments.

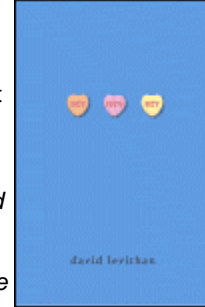
Scroll down for three audio samples:

www.fullcastaudio.com/tek9.asp?pg=products&specific=jnmdop0

Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan, *Full Cast Audio, unabridged, \$37.*

The print edition of this YA novel was a total charmer: I haven't heard Full Cast's audio version, released in April — but based on my experience listening to *The Misfits*, it comes highly recommended as instructive entertainment for adults as much as for teens.

"What if you went to a school where it was actually all right to be who you really are? That's the enchanting place David Levithan has created in his highly acclaimed first novel. But even if the gay kids and the straight kids all get along just fine, even if it's all right for the quarterback to be a cross dresser named Infinite Darlene and the cheerleaders to ride Harleys into the pep rally, the road to true love is still a strange and winding path — as Paul discovers when he meets the boy of his dreams. Charming, funny, delightful, and utterly heartwarming, this YA novel speaks with clarity and depth about our need to love and be loved."



.....

Men (and a Boy, and Some Women) and Their Bikes

Me and My Bike: An Ontario Motojournal by Megan Hughes, *General Store Publishing House, \$19.95.*

BWW R60/2 (1969). BSA Gold Star Catalina Scrambler (1959). Can-Am 250 TNT (1977). Harley Davidson Military 45, WLH (1942). Honda 90 (1965). Kawasaki Vulcan (1993). Phelon and Moore Engineers Ltd. Panther (1929). Triumph Bonneville 650 (1971). Velocette Venom Clubman, Mk. II (1969): a delicious few of the several dozen bikes (with riders attached) profiled in this passionate, amiable anthology of one-page interviews juxtaposed with full-page photographs — a perfect quirky book for the biker Daddy in your life. Hughes, who loves to ride herself (among her rides: a home-built electric bike crafted by Bill Bak), scoured the small villages and big cities of Ontario in her quest to capture vintage and contemporary motorcycles and the men (and a few women) who ride and rhapsodize about them. Of his 1990 Suzuki DS80, 14-year-old Michael Crawford of Gananoque says, "This is just my bike, I love it, and it's great to ride around on. Driving around the trails, I feel like I'm one with the bike." Of her 1941 Indian Sport Scout, Marilyn Crawford of Lyndhurst says, "I like to think of this bike as my little American stud, because it's flashy and fast." And of his 1974 BMW R90S, Keith Glass of Perth (hey: I know him - he's my landlord...) says, "This...was a present to myself for Mother's Day, though I'm not a mother. I'm a father. I've had it since 1992...I grew up with nothing but English bikes. I had a 350 Ariel, a BSA Thunderbolt, and a 1968 Triumph TR6B, which is a British cop model called the Saint. That was my main bike, until I put it through the side of a taxicab." *Me and My Bike* nicely distills what Hughes calls "the unearthly quality of the excitement and energy" of the bikers — young, old, urban, rural, men, women — in her book.

Publisher info: www.gsph.com

.....

'Net Connect: Cuban Queers, Queer D.C., That Darn Kramer

*From the home of "Marxist Thought Online," a contented review of **Havana Red** by Leonardo Padura:*

"*Havana Red* is a beautifully written crime story that compares well with the works by other detective writers like Walter Mosley, Sara Paretsky, James Lee Burke, and Andrea Camilleri. *Havana Red* is a thriller through and through, but it is also imbued with insights into Cuban society readers aren't likely to find elsewhere. It is an honest accounting that details a history of

homophobia in a traditional society mixed with a ruling ultra-left ideology that regarded homosexuality as an intolerable bourgeois deviancy. As a result, gay and lesbian cultural workers and activists were isolated and marginalized in Cuban society. An underground of gay and lesbian Cubans was unfortunately closeted for decades in one of the most advanced societies on the planet," writes Joel Wendland.

The full review:

<http://www.politicalaffairs.net/article/articleview/1116/1/32/>

Publisher info:

<http://www.bitterlemonpress.com/back-cover2005.htm>

*Writer Scott Heim and director Gregg Araki discuss how the 1995 novel **Mysterious Skin** became a film a decade later:*

"What Araki finds so refreshing — and many viewers might agree — is the fact that Heim gave one of the young men who survived child sexual abuse a rich and active sex life. Some may pathologize Neil, finding his promiscuity a way to act out, and perpetuate his childhood trauma. Still, there is no denying that Neil refuses to live as a passive victim, nor does he see the need to apologize for his insatiable sex drive. 'Neil is the gay character, and usually, people think of gay characters as confused victims, the kids that everybody bullies in the playground,' Heim said. 'He is the opposite. He is the bully, he is the one who's good in sports. He is still an outsider, but someone that other people, at least some of them, are fascinated by and afraid of.'" (Ronen Tall, *Gay City News*)

The interview:

http://www.gaycitynews.com/gcn_418/gaynovelssuccessful.html

Scott Heim blogs about the movie, life, and tall, slim Dolphinboy Ian from *Survivor*:

<http://www.etherweave.com/scottheim/weblog>

6 May Matinee: Actor Joseph-Gordon Levitt's one minute-12 second "impression of the very first showing of *Mysterious Skin* last Friday afternoon in New York at the Film Forum," & Sugartown Traders, a short film (three minute-29 second) made by Levitt, Heim, and their friends, in Lawrence, Kansas, with a cute fella carrying a cross:

<http://www.hitrecord.org>

The movie site:

www.mysteriousskinthemovie.com

*Egyptian dentist Alla Al-Aswany's 2002 novel **The Yacoubian Building** is now available in translation from American University in Cairo Press; in an interview with Monica Eng, the author says:*

"I went to very poor and sometimes risky gay bars in Cairo just to see what's going on," he says with an elegant French-Arabic lilt to his English. "When the police picked me up they were astonished to see that I was a doctor on my ID. They told me I shouldn't be drinking in places like that." It is just these kinds of social barriers that he hopes to slice through with his book's intersecting tales of a gay newspaper editor, a sexually harassed shop girl, a pious magnate who takes a secret second wife, a disillusioned student turned suicide bomber, an aging Casanova and a servant who dreams of one day having his own shack on the roof of the title building.

Full interview:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/lifestyle/chi-0505040150>

[may04,1,1370494.story?coll=chi-leisuretempo-hed](http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/lifestyle/chi-0505040150)

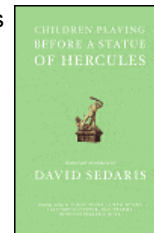
Publisher/book info: <http://aucpress.com/aucpress02/aucstore.htm>

*David Sedaris tells why he wanted to edit a collection of his all-time favorite short stories, **Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules** (Simon & Schuster, \$14.95):*

"Sedaris says he gravitated toward short stories when he was young and working at a packing plant, where he would read during breaks. 'A good (short story) would take me out of myself, and then stuff me back in, oversized, now, and uneasy with the fit. This led to a kind of trance that made the duller work, the duller life, bearable.'"

The review:

http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2005-05-11-bchat-sedaris_x.htm



*Penguin's 'lil book reprinting Larry Kramer's incendiary Cooper Union speech (**The Tragedy of Today's Gays**, \$9.95) provokes mostly disdain from young 'un David Kim (with a swipe at Andrea Dworkin):*

"AIDS activist and playwright Larry Kramer has a lot in common with the late

Andrea Dworkin: a Manichaeon worldview, a penchant for hyperbolic speech and dowdy dress, a murky relationship with empirical truth, a quixotic tribalism that manifests all at once as genuine love and venomous contempt for their respective kin: gay men and women. Like Dworkin, whose screeds against



pornography were so laden with pornographic content and style that they were banned by the very anti-porn ordinances she helped author, Kramer possesses an uncanny ability to mime the putative object of criticism - in his case, homophobia."

<http://www.salon.com/books/review/2005/05/07/kramer/index.htm> (to access for free, sit through a short "site pass" ad)

And a flood of letters to *Salon* in response:

<http://www.salon.com/books/letters/2005/05/11/kramer/index.htm>

*Praise, in an interview, for Richard McCann's **Mother of Sorrows**:*

"Beautifully written, McCann's pedigree as a poet clearly shines through in the terse, intense diction, brevity of subject matter, and emotionally heightened prose. This isn't a book many will be reading at the beach, but it is a gem that should be passed from friend to friend like an heirloom," writes Brian Moylan:

<http://www.washblade.com/2005/5-6/arts/books/sorrow.cfm>

And what is McCann writing next, after a book that took 20 years to cohere?

From a perceptive interview by Gregg Shapiro in *AfterElton*:

AE: Have you started work on another book length manuscript?

RM: Yes, yes. In 1996 I had a liver transplant. In the last few years I have been writing a series of sort of short memoirs or autobiographical narratives about what that experience was. Not just as an event, like "I was cut open. I was in surgery for twelve hours." But what that event also has meant. What it means to walk around, as I do, in a body that is kept alive by the fact that a stranger has died, that I have part of that stranger inside me. I have been working on these essays, an almost phenomenological look at the experience of what it was to receive part of a dead person and be resurrected, however temporarily (laughter) and look at those from all different angles. Also, in the broader context of what means to live with both a very strong and cherished and hated awareness of mortality.

The full interview:

<http://www.afterelton.com/print/2005/4/mccann.html>

*Paul Robinson's **Queer Wars: The New Gay Rights and Its Critics** (University of Chicago, \$25) is reviewed — anonymously, oddly — at GFN.com:*

We are all aware of the division in the gay world between the "assimilationists" and "gaycons" on one side, and those who see attempts to try to fit into straight culture, who see gay marriage as buying into the very heterosexual world that wants to discriminate against us, as a capitulation to the powers that be. Whatever side one takes, one must realize that the advances which have been made in securing basic human rights for gay folks owe a lot to the early actions of those drag queens, fairies and go-go boys.

The full review: <http://www.gfn.com/features/story.php?sid=16985>



Scroll down, down down, past the briefs on China, North Korea, Brazil, Kirk Kerkorian, Coco Chanel, (pause briefly to skim the item on the book **The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent**, where queers are said to be good at giving towns and cities some class), past fashion film, and music, and there it is: "Out of the Closet and Onto the Shelves," a brief item about an increase in the number of gay and lesbian books for children and teens. By the way, it seems to have appeared only in *Newsweek International*, not the U.S. edition:

<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/7775724/site/newsweek/>

.....

Cole and Marshall: Two Busy Bloggers To Watch Out For

Technically, this is not a blog, a point C. Bard Cole (*Briefly Told Lives, St. Martin's, \$13.95*) makes somewhere in his weekly Alabama Diary entries. But keeping up with 145-and-counting weeks of reflections on what grad school in Tuscaloosa is like, after living in NY's Soho for a long spell, is pretty bloggy/bloggish — as well as being brisk and insightful; recent — does "Done With It!" mean last? — entries discuss Saints & Sinners, the New Orleans literary gathering. Tucked behind the Friends button are some genial profiles c

a few of Cole's fellow writers:

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

By the time you read this, Marshall Moore (*The Concrete Sky*, *Southern Tier*, \$16.95) will be in Seoul, Korea; the process of getting there is described with almost-daily diligence at either or both of his LiveJournal blogs; he also writes at length about a pre-relocation vacation in Europe, about stories he's working on — fascinating to read a good writer's inner monologues on his craft — and about leading a peripatetic life, all in "msminpdx":

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/msminpdx/#top>

http://www.livejournal.com/users/articulate_ink



Kevin Killian: A Review a Day Every Day of the Month

Not long ago I stumbled across an amazon.com review for Ali Liebegott's novel *The Beautifully Worthless* — I was just checking the price, honest — and noticed a) the only review of the book was by Kevin Killian, a writer I've long admired; and b) next to his name, there was a "see all my reviews" link. So I clicked — into a universe of more than 600 irresistible reviews Killian has submitted to the site since 2001, more than half of them since the start of 2004. Books. Music. Movies. Even Tootsie Rolls, a perfume, and a picnic basket:

(http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/B0000DH8IB/sr=1-5/qid=1116533666/ref=sr_1_5/002-8888824-5650467?%5Fencoding=UTF8&n=3580501&s=gourmet-food&v=glance)

His range of interests takes "eclectic" into several other dimensions. The reviews are compiled on amazon.com 10 to a page: reviews on page 32 — halfway through the compilation of his submissions — are for: *Shelby Foote: A Life*, by C. Stuart Chapman; the mystery *An Unthymely Death*, by Susan Wittig Albert; *Eggs in the Coffee*, *Sheep in the Corn: My 17 Years As a Farmwife*, by Marjorie Myers Douglas; *Dylan Thomas: A New Life* by Andrew Lycett; *Girls Who Wore Black: Women Writing the Beat Generation*, edited by Ronna C. Johnson; *For Sylvia: An Honest Account*, by Valentine Ackland (Ackland's lesbian love for Sylvia Townsend Warner); the movie *The Incredibles* ("the good sport — that's me, dragging my feet initially when my wife suggested seeing this movie, and I had something else in mind. Finally I decided to be a good sport and you know something, sometimes karma wins"); the DVD of Elvis Presley's *The Roustabout*; *The Girl from the Fiction Department: A Portrait of Sonia Orwell*, by Hilary Spurling ("for a short book it has many longueurs"); and *The Anthropology of Turquoise: Reflections on Desert, Sea, Stone, and Sky*, by Ellen Meloy. This fellow has range!

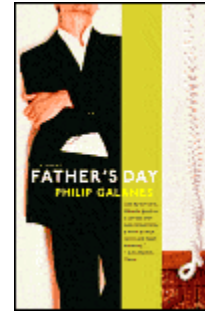
What sets these amiable and enormously informative reviews apart from the usual amazon.com mean-spirited axe-grinding and repetitive burbling and reviews-written-by-friends is the erudite-slash-entertaining way Killian connects what he's writing about to any number of worlds — academic, historical, intellectual, pop-cultural — and how he respects each one of them. The reviews are quirky, personable, intelligent, and fun; their tone of colloquial conversation masks an astute critic's busy mind connecting all sorts of compelling cultural dots.

I asked Killian about his review-a-day habit of the past year. He emailed this: *Ha, this made me laugh to think about someone noticing those silly reviews. You're right, I don't struggle much about thinking of things to say. Of course I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings either, I've been wounded by bad reviews just like the next man. I started writing these little squibs as a way of making myself write when I found my mind wandering with Wellbutrin (after I was in the hospital...) and I couldn't put pen to paper (or whatever). I said to myself, well, write down what you think about something, anything, and so writing these little paragraphs has been therapeutic for me...*

So here are 10 of his more queer-interest reviews — for fiction — culled from hundreds of deliriously diverse amazon.com entries: read one a day — they're vitamins for a reader's mind...and look for part two—mostly nonfiction—next newsletter.

Father's Day by Philip Galanes, *Vintage*, \$13
Judge Not By the Cover, March 8, 2005

Some friends of mine said I would like this book, yet one who knows me better predicted I would despise it. He was going by the cover, not one of Chip Kidd's masterstrokes, and maybe by the author's photo, not one of Marion Ettlinger's best either. In fact he looks a little frightening, as though he had lived through something horrid like the Rwanda massacre.



But anyway as it turns out the book is an insightful one, and for all its complicated time structure of multiple flashbacks and its weighted load of interior monologues, it's refreshingly straightforward. Matthew is all caught up in trying to figure out if his father's suicide is the result of his mother's long ago lesbian affair. Indeed the plot is rather like that of Hamlet, turned sideways. In the meantime, and during his therapy, which isn't that interesting, he is now addicted to \$.15 a minute phone sex lines, and occasionally to a bathhouse called the Downtown Club.

The scenes of Matthew addicted to anonymous sex aren't as arousing as one would hope. Maybe Knopf (hardcover edition) asked Galanes to tone them down because they just kind of lie there, flatly, like jellyfish. When he meets Henry he complains that Henry is too perfect for him and that the "rockets red glare" isn't happening between them. Towards the end of the book when he has his catharsis about his mother, Henry starts to look better and better and somehow he realizes that maybe he isn't such a sexual person after all.

All of this is balanced pretty nicely. It's not a book which takes in a whole lot of the world, and all the characters have lovely clothes and go to nice restaurants, and no one is poor, and Matthew has some kind of gallery job that is almost a cliché of the disaffected consumerist art queen — but these are minor defects in a novel which isn't trying to be a Zadie Smith or David Wojnarowicz. It's about money, class and privilege and in the long run, the novel is a bourgeois structure isn't it? This book just re-inscribes that status with some chuckles thrown in, and a lot of introspection into the human heart.

I enjoyed it and would recommend it to friends.

Leave Myself Behind by Bart Yates, *Kensington Books*, \$15



Good as it Gets, May 10, 2005

Noah York is the only son of a talented poet, Virginia, whose husband has recently died. The two of them wind up in Oakland — not the famous city, some other Oakland — where Noah helps his mom restore the many-roomed house the two of them share. He's a smart, acidulous, sarcastic young buck with real issues about his sexuality. As the novel begins, he doesn't know if he's gay or not, but matters clear up when he falls violently in love with a classmate at the local high school, J.D., a straight jock with a steady girlfriend.

The Yorks discover many Mason jars in the crevices behind the walls and ceilings of their house, and soon they are caught up in the maelstrom of history as both of them, but particularly the mother, flighty, impulsive Virginia York, grow more and more obsessed with the previous owners of the house to whom something mysterious happened way back in the early 1950s.

Meanwhile J.D. isn't as straight as he seemed at first and before long Noah is taking J.D. in his mouth and then grappling with coming out issues. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this novel, and the story of Noah and J.D. brought me right back to the days when I was seventeen and intensely aware of how gorgeous some of the other guys in school were.

When the story sticks with their attraction to each other, and its inevitable consequences in provincial "Oakland," the narrative arc is streamlined and crackles with energy. When the book goes Gothic and Twin Peaks, it's not so good. It's one thing to have these weird Mason jars all over the house, but

then to find out that one's own mother has her buried secret too, and then on top of that to find out one's boyfriend's mother has a secret which, at bottom, is only a variation on Mom's secret, why it all starts seeming "overdone." Both secrets are easily discovered, laughably so, all Noah has to do is ask and two extremely unlikely informants spill everything in a way that would never happen in what we otherwise call "real life."

But so great is the power of Bart Yates' writing that we hardly even notice these little improbabilities. He makes you believe in youth and he makes you believe in the power of starting over, and he makes you feel love.

Grab Bag by Derek McCormack, *Akashic Books*, \$14.95
Wish There Were Six Stars. Or Seven. July 16, 2004

That New York's Akashic Books has had the wisdom to publish these stories by Derek McCormack is a happy gift to U.S. readers. He has been a national treasure of Canada for some years, and now he can be ours as well. The stories are sharply told, fables crafted to within an inch of their lives by a stylist so obsessive he reminds me of one of those crotchety perfectionists who builds the London Bridge out of toothpicks over sixty years. At least it's a bridge.



At any rate, McCormack's writing is so precise it burns a hole right through you. These little sentences, pared down to stilettos that pierce the heart. When I compile a short list of the writers whose work means most to me, he's usually on the list someplace. The stories in "Wish Book" are uniformly nasty but varied otherwise in tone, intention, mood. The older stories, from *Dark Rides*, have, I think, a bit more melancholy and a different conception of formal experiment. Which you will prefer depends on your mood. As the French say, especially in Canada, "*c'est bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet*" (half a dozen of one, six of the other). I wish Amazon gave out more stars than 5. Let's see.

Belmondo Style by Adam Berlin, *St. Martin's Press*, \$23.95
Ow, September 26, 2004

Belmondo Style is an accomplished novel of a young teen grappling with family issues and the fact that he thinks he's gay. Like many modern novels the characters are more cartoon-y than anything in real life and few readers will actually believe the "reveal" about what Jared Chiziver does for a living, for it was invented solely to make a movie out of it. I say that "few readers will care" because Adam Berlin, despite himself, is a poet of New York, like a modern day Lorca, and can make you read about and care about people far distant from oneself. "The World Trade Center had once broken the view, holding solid, looking like two steel pillars thrust into Manhattan to keep it from floating away, but they were gone. The horizon became both more open and less open and my father continued to meet women."

He is a wonderful writer. The scene where the boy, Ben, meets another teen boy and has sex with him on the street is extremely powerful and one of the sexiest scenes of its kind ever written. But like the old days, their moment of ardor is punished by a terribly brutal beating and from this point on, the book becomes a sort of male version of the old rape revenge plot of '70s horror movies. Reading what happens to poor Ben, and then reading what Jared does to Ben's attacker, leaves the reader feeling sick in an almost physical way. No male reader can read those scenes without feeling that he's been punched in the balls. And still we read on, hypnotized, like cats somnolent in the heat of Adam Berlin's wonderful prose style.

Half-Life: A Novel by Aaron Krach, *Alyson Books*, \$14.95
A Diesel in the Future, February 22, 2005

I don't know much about Southern California, but the world of *Half-Life* jumps up at the reader fully installed. There are the two high school friends, Adam and Dart, both of them cute and Dart newly so, so he's not used to being cruised or indeed any kind of attention at all. There's the gay cop Jeff, in his mid-thirties, who takes a shine to Adam a week before Adam's graduation day. Adam's dad is a piece of work who needs more watching than any baby, and his mother has abdicated her place in the family in search of a hot career.

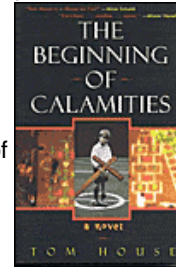
The book is too long and some of the gay boys' banter is truly uninspired. Dart complains of getting a B in English: "I hate Jane Austen. She can take

her pride and her prejudice and keep 'em." But Krach has the power to keep you reading along despite every lapse in taste or sense. He has the old standby of the novel, narrative drive, and he plays this card in unexpected places. The unlikely love affair between Jeff and Adam plays itself out in a truly sexy way, so you're rooting for them both to score, and Krach plays with your expectations in this regard like a master puppeteer. Only his puppets breathe and quarrel and drive fast just like real boys do.

I don't believe in June 1999 (when the novel is set) that any one, except maybe a casting agent, would admire another character's looks by saying he's "built like Vin Diesel." Vin Diesel wasn't known to the movie-going public in general for another couple of years. *Pitch Black* and *The Fast and the Furious* were only lustful anticipations in the Hollywood dream factory. But that's just a movie queen talking, and it's the only mistake in chronology I could see in Aaron Krach's complicated, rewarding novel of manners.

The Beginning of Calamities by Tom House, *Bridge Works*, \$15.95
Superbly Funny and Sad, September 8, 2004

I had always enjoyed Tom House's short stories, indeed I think of him as one of the masters of the field, and it would be nice in the future to have, as a follow up to this book, a collection of his short fiction, which makes that of most writers look stupid. He has the finer feelings of the writers of the Enlightenment, plus wedded to them he has passion, like a modern-day Federico Garcia Lorca. His stories always tell of something new, or something that hasn't yet been born.



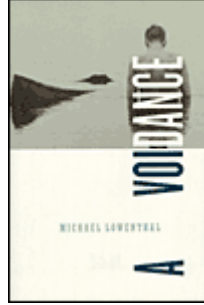
And yet when I heard he was writing a novel I wasn't sure what to expect, because we all know of fine short story writers whose novels are duds, somehow the writers overextend themselves and their talents turn out to be spectacularly ill-suited to longer forms. Oh, you know, something like *Bullet Park* by John Cheever. But as you have guessed by now Tom House's novel is the exception to the rule, and it is one of the great things to happen to writing at the beginning of a new century.

Other reviewers have told you the plot, a little boy in the godforsaken town of East Islip (Suffolk County), attending an awful parochial school, who decides to write himself the starring role in a passion play. Same impulse as Mel Gibson must have had. But in little Danny's case, he lacks Mel Gibson's social skills and he definitely came up short on looks. He, his mother, and his teacher Liz, play out an unholy game of misunderstanding and pride that turns into a debacle for all concerned. It's like watching an accident in slow motion. From page one you know something terrible will occur, and you just don't know how or when. Boys who have grown up to survive great shame will identify with Danny Burke and his propensity for being his own worst enemy. You want to shake him on every page, to reach into the pages of the story and tell him, no, no, no. But at the same time you know he's on his own irrevocable collision course and that his failure is predetermined. And yet, through some mastery of tone and technique, the story is hilariously funny even when it's at its most painful.

Danny develops an imaginary friend from out of the pages of his family's illustrated Bible, a young olive-skinned, naked boy who delights in playing mischievous sex games with him. Little by little Arram takes over a large chunk of Danny's personality, convincing him to go nude too, outside his parents' suburban house and through the lawns and gardens, again like Cheever in *The Swimmer*, but with even more delicious possibilities of detection and apprehension.

Your face will be hurting from laughing so much by the time you're on chapter three. From there on in you won't be able to contain yourself, nor will you be able to give up reading. The book isn't very long, but it's written in sharp, excruciatingly observed paragraphs that amount to a rough Long Island poetry. House has set the whole story back to the days of the early 70s, for what reason I'm not sure, perhaps to accentuate that mythic feel of something that happened so long ago it has attained the status of a gospel all its own. If you liked *A Confederacy of Dunces*, you will be sure to enjoy this look at a very different sort of misfit. Good for you, Tom House, long may you reign as our King of Discomfort!

Avoidance by Michael Lowenthal, *Graywolf Press*, \$16



Beyond the First Person, August 23, 2004

I felt for Jeremy, as through expert characterization Michael Lowenthal has brought him off of the page and into reality so that you feel that he's a living person, one you know and understand. The other characters were a bit more murky. I wondered if we were ever supposed to question whether Max, the young Tadzio boy on whom poor Jeremy is so crushed out, is actually telling the truth or lying when he accuses another counselor, Jeremy's friend Charlie, of molesting him. Jeremy accepts Max's word on this awfully quick. I expected a few more Kobe Bryant-style defenses from Charlie (and from Jeremy for

that matter, who accepts this shattering revelation awfully quick for such a purportedly good "friend.") But, as Lowenthal cleverly reveals, Jeremy has had a long-ago buried grudge against Charlie from the days when they were both boys. Thus the question is moot (whether Charlie is guilty or innocent) and I would just say, look, if you don't want people to think you have an unholy interest in young boys, get a job somewhere else, not in a boy's camp.

At the end of the book, Jeremy is a sadder but wiser individual, implicated in the very machinations of society he had hoped to avoid. Every sentence, every paragraph of *Avoidance* is alive with lived experience and with the joy of metaphor and seeing. Lowenthal has a poet's eye and can condense what one is seeing and feeling into a single enduring and striking image, so that at every turn we are diverted, thrilled and seduced by his language. Some readers may be put off by the ambiguity of a storyline that seems to contradict what its first person narrator seems so anxious to convey, but I applaud its daring and the courage of its author.

Hot Spot: A Mark Manning Mystery by Michael Craft, *St. Martin's Minotaur*, \$13.95

Craft Hits One Home, December 21, 2004

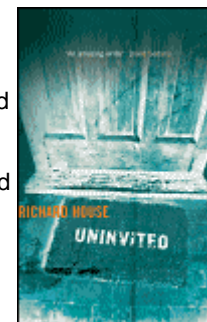
Mark Manning is a detective not to everyone's taste, and if you start the series by reading *Hot Spot* you will have missed some of the pertinent information and you'll wind up wondering how on earth Mark became the ward of Thad. But if you have read the previous five books, you won't mind that some if not all of this information is being fed to you again — the series dilemma, I suppose. Mark is the editor of a smallish city newspaper and usually gets involved not because he's a snoop but to try to extricate someone who's dear to him who's being suspected of a crime.

This crime is particularly difficult to solve and frankly, when I found out who the criminal was, I threw the book to the ground in disgust. I don't think even Michael Craft knew the answer to this one till he pulled the solution way out of left field. But it is a shocker! What a pity that poor long suffering Mark has only one more "case" after this one, in the fantastically written final volume of the series. I remember meeting the late, great, venerable old Joseph Hansen, author of the Brandstetter novels, and asking him if there were any younger writers whose work he would recommend. "Michael Craft," he said without missing a beat.

Uninvited by Richard House, *Serpent's Tail*, \$15

A New Classic, March 30, 2005

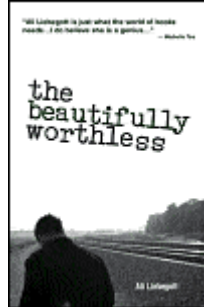
If you liked *Bruiser* you'll like this book even more, because despite everything I think Richard House is an Englishman at heart, and the descriptions of Chicagoland crime in *Bruiser* always seemed a little false, if wonderfully so, like Michael Powell talking about America. In *The Uninvited* he is on his own home turf and the advantage is decidedly his. That said, naming his hero "Procter" made me think all the way through the book that he, Procter, should have been a proctologist, but instead he has one of the world's ghastliest and seediest occupations, rent boy, that is, one who collects



rent, and then when that falls through, he takes up the more romantic job of bike messenger. It's still seedy, but as House describes it, it's wonderfully sexy and makes a man forget his troubles, in Procter's case a withered sort of arm — really an affliction out of Nathaniel Hawthorne — an affliction of the soul, symbolically transmuted to his body.

It wouldn't be Richard House without a strong gay sex plot, and here it is again, as Ian Procter falls for a fellow biker called Peter. The two of them have at it as though the Wolfenden Act was just signed on Tuesday. Born in Cyprus, House has a sensual languour and challenge that escapes many of his UK colleagues, and when Ian's friend Malcom winds up dead, his body at the bottom of a staircase, readers with long memories may call up to mind the Gothic splendors of the old Paramount ghost classic *The Uninvited* (1944) in which swift deaths were dealt out as impartially as Fate. House's book is a splendid addition to the bookshelf of crime, fear, and the f-kedupness of things in general.

The Beautifully Worthless by Ali Liebegott, *Suspect Thoughts Press*, \$12.95



Hosanna, April 15, 2005

I remember going to see David Wojnarowicz reading from *Close to the Knives* and thinking that never again would I experience a reading of such power and such vast seismic changes of mood and register. And until two weeks ago, I still thought so. Then I went to see Ali Liebegott and had the same kind of earthquake experience all over again. She's insanely talented, it's mad.

If any of you enjoyed Anne Carson's "novel in verse," *Autobiography in Red*, I imagine you will like this book too. It is coming out of the same impulse, to find the lyric heart lurking inside narrative and to display it, to glory in it, to foreground that which is ordinarily hidden. *The Beautifully Worthless* crisscrosses the USA, like *Close to the Knives*, like Kerouac, desperately seeking out everything occluded and driven, a frenzy of seeking frozen into poetry. The sequences late in this book are written in language as stately and magnificent as the Psalms (King James version).

Before this reading I wasn't very aware of Ali Liebegott and now I'm like Saul after Tarsus, I've seen the light and I'm here to spread the word. Whatever we were looking for, all the basic reasons we are drawn to reading, for escape, for commitment, for pleasure, for passion, she's got them good, like fever.

Here are all 640-plus of Killian's reviews, from late in May this year back to somewhere in 2001:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A30TK6U7DNS82R/002-8888824-5650467?%5Fencoding=UTF8&display=public&page=1>

Killian has his own books: here's a link to some of them:

<http://www.suspectthoughts.com/killian.html>

.....

Triangle Winners/Cunningham's Summer/Berendt is Back

The Publishing Triangle named its literary winners for 2005 at a May 10 ceremony in NYC. Three of the six books honored, as it happens, are not finalists for a Lambda Literary Award this year: *Belmondo Style*, by Adam Berlin; *Venus Examines Her Breast*, by Maureen Seaton; and *The Lavender Scare*, by David K. Johnson. Nice to have so many worthy books...

The Ferro-Grumley Awards for Fiction: Men

Adam Berlin, *Belmondo Style* (St. Martin's Press)

The Ferro-Grumley Award for Fiction: Women

Stacey D'Erasmus, *A Seahorse Year* (Houghton Mifflin)

The Randy Shilts Award for Gay Nonfiction

David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (University of Chicago Press)

The Judy Grahn Award for Lesbian Nonfiction

Alison Smith, *Name All the Animals* (Scribner)

The Publishing Triangle Award for Gay Male Poetry

Carl Phillips, *The Rest of Love* (Farrar Straus Giroux)

The Audre Lorde Award for Lesbian Poetry

Maureen Seaton, *Venus Examines Her Breast* (Carnegie Mellon University Press)

Michael Cunningham's new novel, *Specimen Days* (Farrar Straus Giroux, \$25), has been tapped by *USA Today* as one of the breakout novels of Summer 2005, joining books by the likes of John Irving, Terry McMillan, and Cormac McCarthy as fiction for which readers are lusting.

But then there is (or will be, come September) the long-awaited new novel by John Berendt. *The City of Falling Angels* (Penguin, \$25.95). *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* had a first printing 11 years ago of 25,000 copies but went on to sell more than 2.5 million in hardcover. Penguin's new fall catalogue suggests that in Venice (as he did in Savannah, where *Midnight* was set) Berendt found another rich source of eccentrics and dreamers to rivet his curiosity. "Arriving in Venice three days after the fire, the 1996 fire that destroyed the city's historic Fenice Opera House, Berendt becomes a kind of detective, inquiring into the nature of life in this remarkable museum-city while gradually revealing the truth about the fire," according to the Penguin catalog. "In the course of his investigations, Berendt introduces us to a rich cast of characters: a prominent Venetian poet whose shocking "suicide" prompts his skeptical friends to pursue a murder suspect on their own; the first family of American expatriates that loses possession of the family palace after four generations of ownership; an organization of high-society party-going Americans who raise money to preserve the art and architecture of Venice, while quarreling in public among themselves; a contemporary Venetian surrealist painter and outrageous provocateur; the master glassblower of Venice; and numerous others: stool pigeons, scapegoats, hustlers, sleepwalkers, believers in Martians, the Plant Man, the Rat Man, and Henry James.

From Defamer, the saucy online blog about Hollywood: *Augusten Burroughs* (Running With Scissors, Dry, Magical Thinking: True Stories, Sellelevision) sells the movie rights to yet another memoir, *this time a still-unwritten one about his fucked-up relationship with his father. Don't worry, this will probably be the last one — we think he's finally out of parents.*

Edmund White was named in May as one of 15 new Scholars & Writers at the Dorothy & Lewis B. Cullman Center at the New York Public Library — an honor that gives the newly anointed Cullman Center Fellow a \$50,000 stipend, a room (and a computer) of his own, and full access to the research facilities of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library. Over the September-May appointment, fellows give a talk on current work-in-progress to the other fellows and invited guests over lunch (White will be researching and writing a novel about Stephen Crane, *Hotel de Dream*) and each presents an evening program (a reading, a lecture, a symposium, a conversation), open to the public, at the Library. More news from White's web site: "In August White will be at the Edinburgh Festival, where his memoir, *My Lives*, will be launched by Bloomsbury Press. The book will be published by Ecco/HarperCollins in the U.S. next January. A chapter of it was just bought by *The New Yorker*..."

Tomes & Treasures, the 18-year-old Tampa gay bookstore, gift shop, and coffeehouse, closed June 1 after a six-year decline in business. The store, which relocated eight years ago from an 800 square-foot location to a 2,700 square-foot space — incorporating A Different Grind, for sandwiches and coffee "transcended its retail function and became a social hub for the gay and lesbian community...but the mainstreaming of gay culture, a mission owner Bill Kanouff sought to achieve with Tomes and Treasures, ironically has brought about the business' demise," according to an April 29 *St. Petersburg Times* story. Kanouff said megabookstore chains, along with the Internet, gave his clientele other places to buy the sorts of books and videos he specializes in — and longtime customers who moved away as his SoHo neighborhood yuppie haven't been replaced by younger ones.

Meanwhile: Boston's gay bookstore Cuttyhunk—it used to be We Think the World of You, after the JR Ackerley novel, but the name was changed in 2004 — is closing later this summer. Not because of falling sales or failing health, say the owners, but from a desire to do something else. "It is difficult to close a business, especially a financially successful one that has given back personal rewards as valuable as the monetary profits generated," says owner Paul Rehme. "But just as our community has matured and changed, the bookstore's success has afforded me with an opportunity to seek new challenges, including the creation of an exciting new real estate company." (And the reason for the name change? Cute: "After ten years many customers, particularly those not living in Greater Boston, had trouble

remembering our store name. We have a list of "near hits" which include: *We Think So Much of You* and *You Think the World of Us*, and perhaps best of all, a Sally Field *You Really Like Me*. While these names are all true in our book, we are distressed that directory assistance operators often can't find even our real listing because they sometimes believe that when the caller begins "We Think," the operator thinks that the customer is unsure of the store name, that it must be something like "World of You." After the closing several years ago of Glad Day Books, Calamus Books will become Boston's only gay bookstore.

Cuttyhunk: <http://www.cuttyhunk.us>

Calamus: <http://www.calamusbooks.com/index.shtml>

.....

Letters: Sorry About That, You B*tches

Thanks so much for the stellar review of *the NYCGMC Journal*. We have already received an inquiry — so at least you know the column is working. Just one note: we have a Chorus Queen and a Chorus Butch — not a Chorus Bitch — there are many of them. Many of the current royalty are getting a kick out of this typo.

Jim Vivyan, *Editor, NYCGMC Anniversary Journal*

Just found the link of upcoming books that includes a listing for the *New York City Gay Men's Chorus 25th Anniversary Journal*. Thank you. I did want to mention that your listing mentions the chorus queen and bitch. That is actually queen and BUTCH. Thought you should know...funny and probably true sometimes, but would appreciate a correction.

Jim Williams, *NYCGMC Marketing Committee*

Dear Jim and Jim:

Oops—well, apologize to the butches and slap the bitches for me, thanks...I'm not sure if it was a typo (I am a two-fingered typist, and the 'u' and the 'i' are next to each other on the keyboard) or if I misread the text of the anniversary journal — and it's not the type of error that either a spell-check program or the BTWOF proofreader (who is in San Francisco and so didn't have the journal nearby) would catch. Sorry — consider this a correction! —RL

Richard:

Thank you for your kind words about my book, *The Beginning*. If you can, could you change the links you provide after your review of my book? Here are the two I'd prefer:

<http://www.troysoriano.com>

<http://blueyearinredstate.blogspot.com>

Troy Soriano

.....

Richard can be reached at tattyhill@gmail.com, at 613.264.5409, or at 7-A Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 2J3 Canada. Books for review, author news, interesting links — all appreciated.

