



It's... **Books to Watch Out For!**TM — In your inbox —

In this issue...

- [The LBR Orphans.....1](#)
- [A Historical Loon.....2](#)
- ['Fiery' Black Gay Erotica.....3](#)
- [Best Gay Erotica: 'Honest & Explicit'.....4](#)
- [Choir Boy Got Soul.....6](#)
- [BTWOF: From the Publishers.....7](#)
- [UK's Big Gay Read, Etc.....10](#)
- [Of Interest from Australia.....12](#)
- [Bestsellers from Our Bookstores.....13](#)

The Gay Men's Edition

— this issue sponsored by —

GLB Publishing

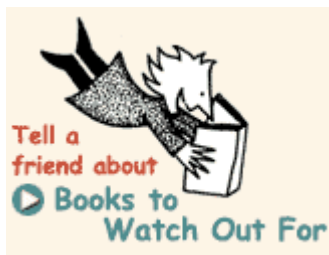
proud publisher of

Blood Warm
by Robert Burdette Sweet

&
The Paper Mirror
The 10th in the Dick Hardesty Series
by Dorian Grey



Volume 2 Number 7



By Richard Labonte

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.

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

Editorial Note: A Haven for the LBR Orphans

In the last issue of **Books To Watch Out For: Gay Men's Edition**, I featured a couple of reviews orphaned by the closing of *Lambda Book Report*. For the rest of this year, I'll be printing, with the permission of the writers, three or four reviews each issue that had been scheduled for the August and September issues. Former *LBR* editor Lisa Moore forwarded them to *BTWOF* after it was announced that the *Book Report* was suspending publication, with the hope that her reviewers' words might reach interested readers. These reviews are longer than those I write myself for *BTWOF*; I come from the school of so-many-books-let's-cover-more-more-more of them; that said, I do appreciate the depth with which these reviews (and reviews to come) dig in to the books the reviewers are thinking about. This month: D. Wayne Gunn discusses the reprint *Song of the Loon*; D. Antwan Stewart reviews *Best Black Gay Erotica*; David R. Gillespie reviews *Best Gay Erotica 2004* and *Best Gay Erotica 2005*; and Tom Dolby writes about *Choir Boy*.

I had a lot of fun reading through the thoughtful reader submissions to UK's Big Gay Read (see Internet links [below](#)) — they were a welcome reminder that relatively recent decades have produced a wealth of fine queer writing. The initiative was pretty big news over there — the BBC and several national newspapers played it prominently. Makes sense to me that someone — *Out Magazine*, the Publishing Triangle, GLSEN, gay librarians, or any combination thereof — ought to organize a similar effort for this continent...

A correction: in **BTWOF: GM#18**, I referred to the editor of the why-writing-matters collection, *Bookmark Now: Writers in Unreaderly Times* (Basic Books), as Ken. Oops. He's Kevin. Kevin Smokler. Sorry.

about the Gay Men's Edition.

Loon: 'A Historical Milestone Back in Print'

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.

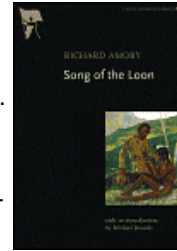
Books for the **Lesbian Edition** should be sent to the San Francisco address.



Song of the Loon, by Richard Amory, edited by Mark MacDonald, with an introduction by Michael Bronski, Arsenal Pulp Press (Little Sister's Classics #2), \$16.95, 247 pages

Review by D. Wayne Gunn

In his introduction, Michael Bronski records, "As opposed to many works that are now considered 'classics,' **Song of the Loon** started out as one." Greenleaf Classics, a San Diego house specializing in adult fiction, originally published it in 1966. Susan Stryker in *Queer Pulp* (2001) cites an unidentified "scholar of gay fiction" [Tom Norman, 1994] as estimating "that approximately one-third of all adult gay men in the United States have read the first *Loon* novel." When Spanish professor David Eisenberg compiled a list of Hispanic research topics for the MLA *Lesbian and Gay Studies Newsletter* (1992), he cited *Song of the Loon* as "the only case of direct influence of Spanish pastoral fiction on American Literature." Within nine years of the novel's publication, Hugh Honour, in his survey of the New World's impact on European art, *The New Golden Land* (1975), mentions that a German writer's depiction of Native Americans "might almost come from *The Song of the Loon*." The reference allows a knowing wink to pass between author and gay reader; it must also be the first time an allusion to a gay adult novel appeared quite casually in a serious academic study.



Until now, however, it has been difficult for new readers to judge what the excitement was about. The novel has been out of print for more than thirty years, and copies can go as high as three figures when they do appear on the market. Editor and press deserve our gratitude for bringing a historical milestone back into print in such a handsome edition. Bronski's introduction incisively illuminates the context in which the novel was published and establishes its importance to gay literary history. Appendices include a short biography of Amory (Richard W. Love, 1927-1981) by his son, Cesar Love, and an informative exchange by Amory, Dick Vanden, and Larry Townsend, published at the time, about the less-than-satisfactory 1970 movie version (the only pulp novel to receive film treatment) and the role of publishers like Greenleaf Classics in the flowering of gay fiction in the late 1960s. The reprint merits a place on the shelves of anyone seriously interested in the development of gay literature, even — because of the additional material — of someone who already owns a pulp copy.

Present-day readers, in order to enjoy the novel, must accept the Arcadian setting in which gays in the guise of 19th century white trappers and Native Americans enact the timeless ritual of learning to embrace one's sexuality and find happiness with other men. Amory also examines the problems of jealousy and, in the process, largely rejects monogamy as a natural solution. Ephraim Maclver, the protagonist, is trying to recover from a disastrous relationship with Clarence Montgomery, a handsome leech who cannot admit he is homosexual. Montgomery has fallen into cahoots with the missionary teacher Mr. Calvin (whose name is no chance christening on Amory's part), while Ephraim has fled to the wilderness in search of healing under the tutelage of Bear-who-dreams. As a result, he is initiated into the Loon Society, a loosely organized band of men who proudly and openly assert their gayness. Along the way, Ephraim encounters the trapper Cyrus Wheelwright, and the two declare their love for each other. All the characters engage in a great deal of explicit sexual play, and even the villains prove capable of redemption when they admit their deepest desires. Interspersed throughout the narrative are poems of passion in a variety of intricate forms that the characters compose extemporaneously for each other. Albeit their intentions are similar, we are not so much in the world of novels like Michael Jensen's *Frontiers* or *Firelands* as in a womanless version of Thomas Bezucha's film *Big Eden*.

The novel became the first in a trilogy, the other volumes of which have yet to be reprinted. *Song of Aaron* (1967) recounts a more conventional story of a cowboy who finds love while on the track of a villainous closet case; *Listen, the Loon Sings* (1968), though focusing on another ranch hand trying to understand his yearnings, brings all the trilogy's characters together for a Loon Society ceremony. Also in 1968, Greenleaf Classics rendered its best-selling author a dubious honor by publishing a parody, *Fruit of the Loon* by "Ricardo Armory" (Disney writer George George Davies). Recounting the horny activities of the cowboys, Indians, and a trapper belonging to the Wild Goose Club, it turns

Amory's exalted rhapsody into camp and is actually better written. In his memoirs, *Spine Intact, Some Creases* (2004), Victor J. Banis, author of Greenleaf's first gay publishing venture, laments Amory's failure to come "anywhere close to realizing the literary goals that he apparently set for himself." At the same time, Banis acknowledges the trilogy's importance: "They greatly influenced the revolution then underway and offered new themes to gay readers and writers — and in their frankness made gay men feel better about themselves, their bodies and their sex." I still treasure the sense of affirmation they brought me in a rural Texas town when I stumbled upon two of them on a rack of paperback books in a convenience store. May this reprint find a whole new generation of readers for Amory.

(Next issue: Gunn interviews pulp pioneers William Lambert & Victor Banis.)

D. Wayne Gunn is professor emeritus at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

.....

Best Black Gay Erotica: 'The Fiery Erotic Truths'

Best Black Gay Erotica, edited by Darieck Scott, Cleis Press, \$14.95, 231 pages

Review by D. Antwan Stewart

When Fabian Thomas wrote in his poem, "This Snap's for You!" that: "I will write words of fire / that tell the truths you dare to deny / that speak of faggotry / that herald brothers loving brothers / sisters loving sisters / fiercely, (proudly) / without remorse," writer Darieck Scott must have had his ear to the page. Excluding the part about "sisters loving sisters," Scott, in compiling the eighteen stories in **Best Black Gay Erotica**, paid admiral homage to Thomas's edict. And, perhaps, many will be snapping their fingers after reading the stories in *Best Black Gay Erotica*, an endearing and undaunted collection written from the singular voices of eighteen black gay men. In only 225 pages, these stories expand the condition of black gay sexuality: sometimes rollicking, sometimes masochistic, sometimes sensual, but always bravely told with such sincerity of heart.



As I frequently do when reading anthologies, I flipped randomly to a story. It was Shane Allison's "Miracle 5." The story is about two black men (Collin and Darryl) who work in a movie theater. The story immediately reads much like a porn script: when Darryl yells at Collin to tell John (who is perhaps the theater manager or projectionist) to turn the sound down in the theater because of a complaint, stating: "Man, will you go tell him, dang! Why you always gotta be such a dick," we think we know what is going to happen. Only Allison toys with the reader, quickly transitioning the story so that we enter the consciousness of its protagonist, Darryl. And by doing so, Allison invites the reader into the world that both men inhabit — one that is brimming with sexual tension. In fact, when another minor character, Kendra, fed up with their constant bickering, yells to both of them: "Why don't ya'll just fuck and get it over with," Allison uses this plot point to slowly unravel the threads of Collin and Darryl's sexual tension. What ensues is pure sexual fantasy, as we get the graphic details of their carnal romp in a utility closet, and Allison, in a tongue-in-cheek move, leaves the reader satisfied that the saga of Darryl and Collin's relationship will continue.

Yet, after reading Allison's story, I turned to the title page and my eye caught the name of one of my favorite writers: Thomas Glave. His story, "The Blue Globes" is an intricately laced narrative about two lifelong friends who are remembering the rendezvous they've had with each other over many, many years. In a style at once Woolfian and Faulknerian, coupled with his deployment of poetic devices, Glave weaves a wonderful tale of secrecy between two age-old friends in love with one another — unbeknownst to their wives and children. However, what is so striking about Glave's story is his form and style: he breaks the line of a sentence as if it were poetic verse to emulate the breathing one makes during sex. For example, Glave writes:

*I am calling
his name. I am looking up and calling
his name. I am calling his name as he looks down at me and
then*

"Oh, Jesus!" I say. Yes. As he pulls that part of me closer to his (yes) and I am O I am and I am and O.

How erotic and how brilliantly Glave conveys this taut, sexual moment! There are other scenes such as this in which Glave opts to suggest the sexual rather than reveal it explicitly so that the reader can imagine for himself what they are doing. And how refreshed and rewarded we are for this choice.

Furthermore, because the protagonists of Glave's story are nameless, and coupled with the implied sexual acts, he enriches the story's theme of secrecy, thus making "The Blue Globes" more than just erotic, but it transcends to be a story of many things: namely what it means to be a closet homosexual who fears being found out.

I highly recommend reading all these stories (particularly Domingo Rhodes's "Stank," Reginald Harris's "The Gift," Robert F. Reid-Pharr's "Horse Philosophy," Canaan Parker's "One for the Road," and Samuel R. Delaney's "The Sleepwalker's"), along with Belasco's titillating illustrations, because what the reader will encounter is fiercely arousing. But more importantly, what the reader may feel is what I have I felt: after reading this anthology I have become subsumed by the fiery truths of black gay sexuality — truths that are not burned by the fires but are celebrated by them.

D. Antwan Stewart's manuscript, *The Terribly Beautiful*, was a finalist in the *Main Street Rag Poetry Chapbook Series* and is forthcoming from *Main Street Rag Press*. He is working towards his M.F.A. in *Writing at the Michener Center for Writers*, where he is a *James A. Michener Fellow* in poetry. His poetry appears or is forthcoming in *New Millennium Writings*, *The Seattle Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Bloom Magazine*, *Cider Press Review*, *Paper Street*, *storySouth: The Best of the South 2005*, and others. He is poetry editor for *Bat City Review*: www.batcityreview.com.

.....

BGE '04/'05: 'Mirroring & Expanding Erotic Desire'

Best Gay Erotica 2004, edited by Richard Labonte, Introduced by Kirk Read, Cleis Press, \$14.95, 240 pages

Best Gay Erotica 2005, edited by Richard Labonte, Introduced by William J. Mann, Cleis Press, \$14.95, 252 pages

Review by David R. Gillespie

Erotica can be difficult to review. Anthologies can sometimes be difficult to review. Anthologies of erotica? Tough indeed. What criteria should one use? Literary merit? Affect on the reader? Do you say something like, it was very well-written, but it really didn't do anything for me? Or vice versa?

Difficulties aside, here's a peek at two wonderful collections, both edited by the seemingly omnipresent and clearly talented Richard Labonte — the latest two installments of the series he's guided so well for many years now: *Best Gay Erotica*.



Best Gay Erotica 2004 is a fascinating collection. It is, in the words of Kirk Read's introduction, "a testament to the creativity and endurance of queer people... grant[ing] one another access to honest, explicit depictions of the erotic impulses that drive us."

Therein, perhaps, are our criteria. That erotic stories should be so: honest and explicit, mirroring and expanding our own erotic desires.

The twenty-one stories included in this collection range wide on the erotic landscape and are provided by some authors we know and love and by some we may be meeting for the first time.

For example, I'd never read anything by Dominic Santi before. His very well-constructed contribution "Corncobs," narrated by an unnamed young man who has a thing for anal play and older men, was straightforward, and often hot, writing which made me laugh, made me think of some guys I knew when I lived in a farming community, and changed forever my view of agricultural products. And just when I thought the old hired hand, Tuck, was about to replace corn on the menu, the narrator quickly corrected me: "No matter how much I like other toys [including Tuck], though, I'm farmer enough that corncobs will always be my favorites." He and Tuck are going to try growing some hybrids next season.

Quite possibly the most moving piece in *Best Gay Erotica 04* is "Wounded," by Bill Brent. This is definitely a literary effort before anything else, and a successful one at that. Strong passages of inner thought are interspersed with erotic encounters that serve to illustrate the "woundedness" of either the participants or the world in general. Whether the ruminations and sexual encounters are in fact biographical or simply the creations of a powerful mind is really not important. What is important is that the story is moving, disturbing, and seductive — and that's a good thing.

Trebor Healey's piece, "Fishers of Men," and that of Jameson Currier, "What You Learn," are both — and no slight is intended toward any other author collected here — simply put, great writing.

Healey's economy in presenting a part-theological, part-sociological, part-philosophical discussion that takes place in "the holy triangle of desire: sauna, steam room, shower" is, while by no means the "hottest" of the stories, a thrill just to read.

It's regrettable that Labonte initiated this rich, varied, and pretty damned hot collection with what seems to be the weakest piece, "Straight Boy," by James Williams. The second work, "Genuflection," by Lana Gail Taylor would have made for a much stronger opening.



Labonte's return gig in **Best Gay Erotica 05** brings back four authors from the previous collection: Greg Wharton, Jay Neal, Andy Quan, and Jonathan Asche, who's nailed poor white trash sex with precision in "Doll Boy."

The collection starts strongly, with Mike Newman's "Wake the King Up Right," the tale of young Kevin's night in a motel room with his slightly older sailor boy whom he'd picked up on his way from Louisiana to California. Jerry, the sailor, seems as if he'd fit the chat room profile of *Masc.*, *Str8acting*, *discrete*, but get him in the motel room and all gay hell breaks loose. Newman's writing is straightforward, concise, and hot. Just ask the maid who walked in on our two travelers.

I had some interesting, and pretty erotic, adventures of my own at summer camp back in the days of my youth, but none, I think, can compare with the erotic treatment of foot massage Jim Gladstone provides in "This Little Piggy."

Alexander Rowson's contribution, "Pink Triangle-Shaped Pubes," is short, taking up only three pages of text actually, but it very ably gets us into the mind of its closeted, questioning narrator who sneaks out to the ubiquitous "park" to spy on a fellow classmate getting and giving a blow job and masturbates while watching. Rowson's economy may seem unwise at first, but at the end, we realize he needed write no more.

For me, the most disappointing piece in the book was D. Travers Scott's "Get on Your Bikes and Ride!" And I'm not quite sure why; after all, I'd thoroughly enjoyed his *Execution, Texas: 1987*. Perhaps it was the avalanche of cultural references. It was humorous, to be sure, but in a fat gay guy meets *American Psycho* sort of way.

As with any anthology, one cannot expect one totally perfected story after another. Labonte has done a great job, however, year after year, of providing us with good writing, hot encounters reflecting the varieties of gay experience and some mental images that make us laugh, cry, cringe, and often breathe a little harder.

David R. Gillespie is the author of numerous nonfiction essays, reviews, and articles, and he contributed to the anthology, *My First Time*, Vol. 3. His fiction has appeared in *ByLine*, *Lonzie's Fried Chicken*, and *Open Hands*. He is the editor of *Out in Asheville*, a monthly newspaper serving the GLBT community of western North Carolina, upstate South Carolina, and northeast Georgia.

.....

Choir Boy: 'A Mix of Boyish Shyness & Breasts'

Choir Boy, by Charlie Anders, Soft Skull Press, \$16.95, 256 pages

Review by Tom Dolby

Even in an era that has seen the groundbreaking work of artists such as J.T. Leroy and John Cameron Mitchell, it's still not often that one encounters a novel about a transgendered pre-teen. In **Choir Boy**, Charlie Anders tells the story of Berry, a sweet Peter Pan-like 12-year-old who wants to stay young forever. Berry's journey begins with the desire to preserve his voice, an angelic, lilting soprano that has made him the centerpiece of the boys' choir at his church. In desperation at the prospect of his changing vocal chords, Berry takes a knife to his genitals, a bloody act of self-mutilation that lands him in the office of a doctor who, fooled by Berry's fake ID, prescribes him regular doses of female hormones. Soon, along with a set of B-cups that he carefully bandages each day before school, Berry's got an identity crisis that even a visit to the local GLBT center won't solve.



In **Choir Boy**, Anders demonstrates that while the world of junior high is a cruel one, it pales in comparison to the inner turmoil of a maladjusted 12-year-old. As Berry experiences the various permutations of gender identity, it's never quite clear if he truly feels like a girl in a boy's body, if he simply wants to save his voice, or if his gender confusion is a rebellious reaction to the hormonal chaos that all teenagers, queer, trans, and otherwise, feel. As a character, Berry is a mix of boyish shyness and breasts, an adolescent who, even more than figuring out his own gender and sexuality, is trying to find his place in the world. "The more people tried to figure out what was going on with Berry," Anders writes, "the less he could explain it to himself."

In her debut novel, Anders presents a bizarre world in which gender is not the only dysphoric element. **Choir Boy** is an amalgamation of religious references, pop culture allusions, teenage slang, and New Age self-help jargon. Berry's parents are neglectful and his fellow classmates are beastly, so he finds comfort in a ragtag assortment of adults, including a pre-op transsexual hooker, a teen advice columnist-turned-weekend pagan, and a clueless career guidance counselor. The characters who populate **Choir Boy's** suburban wasteland are cleverly drawn, in the comedic tradition of writers like Armistead Maupin and Paul Rudnick. Whether it's his friend Lisa's parents performing underwater discipline on her in their backyard swimming pool or his visit to a tranny nightclub called the Booby Hatch, Berry's story will appeal to those who like fiction that bounces right up against the edge of reality.

This disjunction is a matter of taste, and for the most part, it works. Occasionally, **Choir Boy's** details strive too hard to be off-kilter; in the end, however, Anders shows that there's a gray area between the real and the absurd, a fitting message for a novel in which the lines of gender and sexuality are blurred.

More than coming to terms with his identity as a man or a woman — a tricky prospect at such an early age — young Berry wants to be loved and accepted. Anders deftly succeeds at this high-wire act, balancing between the sensitive and the outrageous, creating a completely original coming of age tale. At its heart, **Choir Boy** is a story not only for those who have felt at odds with their gender, but for anyone who has ever been uncomfortable in his or her own skin.

Author's blog: <http://charlieanders.com/blog.html>

Tom Dolby is the author of the San Francisco Chronicle bestselling novel *The Trouble Boy* (Kensington Books). He can be reached at www.tomdolby.com.

5 Publishers: Their Books To Watch Out For

From Suspect Thoughts: Greg Wharton & Ian Philips Blurbs...

Toilet, by Tom Woolley, foreword by D. Travers Scott, \$12.95 (Sept.)

We're more than fortunate to have a revised version published of Tom Woolley's **Toilet**. Amped up with two new stories ("Piss Bottle" and "Citizen of Chaos"), **Toilet** is far from some nostalgic I



[heart] the Queer '90s. The narrator in "Fuckoff.com" writes that, "I look at shock as armor in a life that is essentially one brutal offensive strike." Originally published in 1998, those words ring even truer in today's era of Bush II, Iraq II, and 9/11. Woolley's stories break through that state of shock.

A Scarecrow's Bible, by Martin Hyatt, \$16.95 (Oct.)

In a house trailer in the rural South, a married Vietnam veteran, addicted to pharmaceuticals and haunted by memories of the past, is on the brink of collapse. Just when he thinks the dream of another life is over, the unspeakable happens. He falls in love with a frail, ghostly younger man who reminds him of youth, beauty, and the possibility of a life beyond the prison he has created for himself. **A Scarecrow's Bible** is about what happens when love occurs at the most unexpected moment. It is the story of how working-class men and women in a small town adapt to changes that somehow seem impossible. It is a novel of hope and transformation that challenges our ideas about diversity and social change, all the while breaking our hearts.

Sugar, by Martin Pousson, \$12.95 (Oct.)

Martin Pousson takes the hard-earned wisdom he's gained as an American outsider three times over — Southerner, Cajun, and queer — and lets it dissolve on his burning poet's tongue. This cycle of short, but far from syrupy sweet, poems begins with a fey boy's odyssey through the labyrinths of masculinity, race, desire, and family tragedy in his childhood home of Louisiana. It follows the man as he escapes the South to find himself confined anew in the gay ghettos of New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. It ends with the man reborn a fierce writer who embraces No Place as his home and himself, and other enlightened misfits, as his family.

Out of Control: Hot, Trashy, Man-on-Man Erotica, edited by Greg Wharton, \$16.95 (Nov.)

A collection about love gone wrong: love with the wrong man at the wrong time and the wrong place that takes you places you never dreamed you'd go — not even in your hottest, wrongest wet dream. All you wanted was a drink, some conversation, and a little attention, perhaps the warmth of another body pressed to yours. Preferably a sane one. But the weight of his hand on your cock silenced the alarm buzzing loudly in your brain. Contributors: Cary Michael Bass, Tristram Burden, Patrick Califia, Rusty Canela, M. Christian, Wayne Courtois, Moses O'Hara, Trebor Healey, Debra Hyde, Reuben Lane, Jeff Mann, Sean Meriwether, Ian Philips, Thomas S. Roche, Steven Schwartz, Simon Sheppard, Mel Smith, Matt Stedmann.

The Forgotten Ones, by Douglas Ferguson, \$16.95 (Dec.)

...a contemporary fantasy, a novel of appropriated myths and legends, where Creationism gets a new twist, and where the gods never died, but learned to survive in a world that has stopped believing in magic.

Sodom & Me: Queers on Fundamentalism, edited by Greg Wharton and Ian Philips, \$16.95 (Dec.)

With the success of the Lambda Literary Award-nominated anthology *I Do/Don't: Queers on Marriage*, Suspect Thoughts Press has launched the "Queers On" series. Like its predecessor, **Sodom & Me: Queers on Fundamentalism** includes essays, poems, short stories, novel excerpts, performance piece excerpts, cut-ups, epigrams, zingers, comedy monologues, sermons, rants, diatribes, and jeremiads, from an amazing and incredibly diverse group of

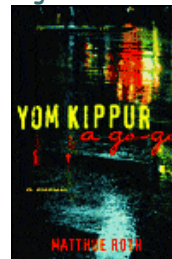
authors, poets, and activists. Queer Muslims, Jews, Christians, Two-Spirits, pagans, Buddhists, atheists, and agnostics write about how we can make our way — even stay alive — in a world where, to the majority, we are the children of the damned: the children of Sodom and Gomorrah (that's several billion believers right there) — or the cultural equivalent. Queers have their say on what "moral values" mean to them.

From Cleis Press: 6 from the Winter-Spring Catalog

Boy in the Middle, by Patrick Califia, \$14.95 (Sept.)

Califia's characters are people who can't get a cab at night: vampires who prey on drug addicts on the Lower East Side, self-hating Mormon missionaries, baby butch dykes searching for worthy dyke daddies, hermaphrodite

private investigators, transsexual streetwalkers... sex radical, writer, and provocateur Califia returns with 11 erotic stories, from tender initiations to raunchy role play to welt-raising, hardcore S/M scenes. There's no safe word at this "black leather pajama party" of a book.



Yom Kippur-a-Go-Go, by Mattheue Roth, \$14.95 (Oct.)

Mattheue Roth is an American original: an Orthodox Jew who cites Outkast and Michelle Tea among his influences, who won't touch a light switch on Shabbos but mimics a screaming orgasm onstage while reading his paean to Orthodox girls. From the World Bank riots (what can you do when the revolution starts on Shabbos?) to Thursday night tranny basketball in San Francisco's Dolores Park, Roth takes readers on a journey through the queer and hip streets of urban America in his exuberant memoir. With humor and insight, Roth describes the tension between contemporary life and the demands of faith.

The Merry XXXMas Book of Erotica, edited by Alison Tyler, \$14.95 (Oct.)

Naughty or nice? Either way Santa has a treat for eager readers who just can't wait till Christmas morning. Replete with visions of sugarplums, big juicy candy canes, and stockings eager to be filled, **The Merry XXXmas Book of Erotica** is a blazing-hot feast of holiday erotica sure to jingle your sleigh bells and curl your mistletoe.

Queer Encyclopedia of Film, Theatre, and Popular Culture, edited by Claude Summers, \$29.95 (Oct.)



How did Liberace's costumes almost kill him? Which lesbian comedian spent her high school years as "the best white cheerleader in Detroit?" For these answers and more, fans can dip into **The Queer Encyclopedia of Film, Theater, and Popular Culture**. Drawn from the fascinating online encyclopedia of queer arts and culture, www.glbtc.com — which *The Advocate* dubbed "the Encyclopedia Britanniqueer" — this may be the only reference book in which RuPaul and Jean Cocteau jostle for space. (The answers: from the dry cleaning fumes; Lily Tomlin.)

Best Gay Erotica 2006, edited by Richard Labonte, introduced by Mattilda a.k.a Matt Bernstein Sycamore (Nov.)



The winners this year: "In Bed with Allen," Marcus Ewert; "Stephen," Kirk Read; "They Can't Stop Us," Tim Doody; "Fucking Doseone," Ralowe Trinitrotoluene Ampu; "Site 1" from *The Sluts*, Dennis Cooper; "All the Creatures Were Stirring," Andrew Spieldenner; "Gender Queer," Patrick Califia; Excerpt from *Sexile*, Jaime Cortez; "Best Friendster Date Ever," Alexander Chee; "Marcos y Che," Simon Sheppard; "Garlic," Bob Vickery; "Electrical Type of Thing," Sam D'Allesandro; "The Pancake Circus," Trebor Healey; "DogBoy and the BetaGoth," Nadyalec Hijazi and Ben Blackthorne; From *What We Do Is Secret*, Thorn Kief Hillsbery; "Lizard Killing," July Shark; "Too Far," Kevin Killian and Thom Wolf; "Jailbait," Darin Klein; "Depression Halved Production Costs," Sam J. Miller; "Now Fix Me," Duane Williams; "Half-Eaten Lollipop," Blake Neme; "Trouble Loves Me," Steven Zeeland.

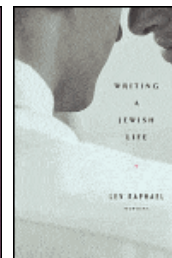
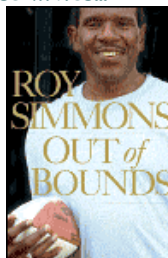
Love of a Master, by John Preston (Jan.)

The third in the late author's memorable Master series (*I Once Had a Master*, *Entertainment for a Master*) joins *Mr. Benson* in the Cleis reprint catalogue.

From Carroll & Graf: Don Weise writes...

Out of Bounds: My Life in and out of the NFL Closet, by Roy Simmons, \$26 (Dec.)

Black gay football player, heavy drugs, lots of sex, second player after Kopay to come out, first ever to disclose HIV+ status.



The Boys and the Bees, by Joe Babcock, \$13.95 (Dec.)

Very adorable novel about a gay 12-year-old who vows to kiss a boy for the first time (from the author of *The Tragedy of Miss Geneva Flowers*).

Writing a Jewish Life: Memoirs, by Lev Raphael, \$15.95 (Dec.)

Previously published material from an old, OP essay collection mixed with new pieces about growing up the gay son of Holocaust survivors, coming out in Israel, launching his writing career, raising a family, and getting married after 21 years with his partner.

The Days of Good Looks: Prose and Poetry of Cheryl Clarke, 1980-2005 (Dec.)

The best of Cheryl Clarke plus 25 new, never-before published poems and essays.

Spring

Drag King Dreams, by Leslie Feinberg

Her first novel since *Stone Butch Blues*; a knockout, very political without being tiresome. Very "now" in terms of gender/queer stuff.

Tush, by Jaffe Cohen

A comic romance novel about a gay astrologer looking for love in Provincetown.

My Undoing, by Aiden Shaw

Memoir of the gay porn industry with side stories about looking for romance, doing lots of drugs and sex, and the crazy sex scenes in SF, NY, and London.

Hard, by Wayne Hoffman

Tales of the City meets *Faggots* in this highly sexed novel about a group of gay friends in 1990s NY. Looks at the pro-sex vs. anti-sex faction in the gay world. I love the sex-positive politics, too.

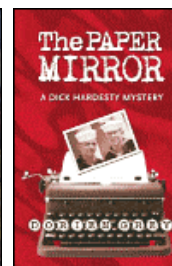
Gay Power: A History of Gay Liberation in New York, 1965-1980 by David Eisenbach

I think this is the first history devoted to the gay lib movement from Stonewall to AIDS. It chronicles GLF, GAA, and the rise of mainstream gay visibility and integration into American politics. Young author from Columbia, his first book.

From Bill Warner of GLB: two new for the fall...

Blood Warm, by Robert Burdette Sweet, \$15.95 (Sept.)

"Fleeing to the Caribbean in the 1950s, a closeted gay American writer contends with a gorgeous, affectionate widow, her mysterious maid, an expensive American prostitute seeking her soulmate, a charismatic native man, movie stars on location, and a primal island mambo. Freshly drawn and quirky, **Blood Warm** is a funny, sexy, insightful book," says June Rachuy Brindel, author of *Phaedra and Ariadne*, St. Martin's Press.



The first chapter of **Blood Warm**: <http://www.glbpubs.com/blpreview.html>

The Paper Mirror, by Dorian Grey, \$15.95 (Oct.)

In the 10th of the Dick Hardesty gay mystery series, Dick and his young lover Jonathan settle into a new life parenting Jonathan's nephew... and figuring out, of course, whodunit.

Green Candy Press: One From Andrew McBeth...

Speeding: The Old Reliable Photos of David Hurles, edited and designed by Rex, \$36.95 (Nov.)

For over 40 years, Hurles documented the hidden world of rough trade and rent boys posing, masturbating, wrestling, or boxing. His models ranged from drifters and grifters to hustlers and ex-cons — men who came to Los Angeles, and Hurles's studio, to make it big, but mostly landed in Hollywood's gutter. More Weegee than Weber, these images vibrate with youthful male power and edgy sexuality. Chosen from Hurles's vast archive by noted homoerotic artist Rex, they comprise an amazing photographic history of a sexuality that society has rarely acknowledged.



.....

Big Gay Read & Bookstore News & Who Killed Pasolini

British queers are voting for their favo(u)rite queer books:

http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1551263,00.html

The BBC reports also on Britain's Big Gay Read search; check out the long list of reader recommendations after the news story:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/4162178.stm>

And here's the recommended reading list of 21 titles, from Jake Arnett and Amanda Boulter to Colm Toibin and Jeanette Winterson (and there are a few American authors). Also be sure to click on the "Other Recommendations" link — Mike Albo likes Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*, Sarah Waters likes Isabel Miller's *Patience and Sarah*, and Elizabeth Sharp likes David Wojnarowicz's *Close To The Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*, three of a couple of dozen well-informed choices:

<http://www.biggayread.com>

About Dennis Cooper: Alex Mars in *Salon* gags at *The Sluts* and sighs about *God Jr.* while the NYT says *God's* pretty good:

"Often compared to William Burroughs, Jean Genet and Kathy Acker, Cooper now seems, with this novel, the unlikely spawn of Flannery O'Connor; his damaged souls are the kind of people she might have written about had she lived through the punk era. By now, however, Cooper is his own stylistic wizard, appropriating teenspeak, chat-room cadence and the expansive imagery of cyberspace."

<http://www.salon.com/books/review/2005/09/09/cooper/index.html> (site pass needed),

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/books/review/11todaro.html>

British novelist Adam Mars-Jones weighs in on a topic explored in *BTWOF:GM#18*:

"The question of whether gay writers should occupy separate sections of bookshops and libraries, or have separate reading lists devoted to them, comes round fairly often. It's our own little subcultural version of 'Is the novel dead?' Of the hard-line positions — 'I write only for my community' and 'Good writing is good writing whoever produces it' — the first has lost any political value it may once have had, and the second always sounds pious and evasive. The middle ground is the place to be, but not in some on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand sort of way. I'm delighted to be filed in any gay section anywhere — delighted to be in print, come to that — but I'd like to be strictly alphabetized in the fiction or essay department too."

The full article:

http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1551431,00.html

Alexander Chee wants y'all to support the Asian American Writers' Workshop online auction:

"Tea with Barney's Creative Director Simon Doonan? Rick Moody critiques your short story? Edmund White and you, eating cream puffs and giggling a bit over the men on the streets of the West Village? Imagine having a Saturday where you get breakfast at Balthazar with Monique Truong, head for a private tour of

MoMA with curator Tricia Paik, have your face transformed by make-up artist Jason Paulson, and afterwards, drinks with porn superstar and writer Aiden Shaw.”

Full details:

http://www.aaww.org/event_auction.html

Three queer books are in this year's Top 10 of the *Banned Books of 2004*:

<http://ec.gayalliance.org/articles/001230.shtml>

Brent Hartinger assesses the boom in teen coming out titles — “catch the wave”:

<http://www.afterelton.com/columns/2005/9/biggaypicture.html>

Queer cartoonist Justin Hall takes on uncanny trannies, flaming punks, and “the death of paper,” writes Marke B.:

http://www.sfbg.com/39/48/art_tranny.html

Bear-book editor Ron Suresha vents about not making the cut for a small-town literary festival:

<http://www.shorepublishing.com/archive/re.aspx?re=95a0a0fc-e4ab-42e0-a289-0b2ce2d72590>

“The pink side of punk”: *Homocore* (Alyson Books) reviewed by Van Gower:

<http://www.newyorkblade.com/2005/8-26/arts/books/punk.cfm>

John David Hinkle got tired “of cleaning up drag queen puke” in Chicago, so he moved back to Lansing, MI, and opened John David's Lightly Used Books, with a mix of used gay and straight titles, something for Will and something for Grace:

<http://hub.lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?>

[AID=/20050824/NOISE09/508240304/1104/HUB](http://hub.lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050824/NOISE09/508240304/1104/HUB)

A novice bookseller's blog:

<http://www.john-david.blogspot.com>

BTWOF's publisher **Carol Seajay** is quoted in AlterNet's astute survey of the state of women's bookstores in the U.S.:

<http://www.alternet.org/story/24067/>

And a Seattle book-lover laments the closing of two independents, including *Beyond the Closet*:

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2002425247_brodeur07m1.html

Boy George goes *Straight...* after celebs — his new book, co-authored by Paul Gorman (Random House Canada but not, to date, Random House in the U.S.) is reviewed:

http://www.metronews.ca/books_review.asp?id=10173

“In the canon of gay literature, Scott Pomfret and Scott Whittier's novel *Hot Sauce* (Warner Books) doesn't share obvious shelf space with Alan Hollinghurst, though there is a grander plan behind this frothy love story.” Yet more ink for the *Men of Romantics*:

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,1072-1732880,00.html>

Restoring Pasolini: Thirty years later, new questions arise about who murdered the Italian cultural giant, says journalist Doug Ireland in this extensive report on the gay filmmaker, novelist, poet, and playwright (with a useful bibliography of his books available in English):

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/05/37/news-ireland.php>

The persistent founder of the queer literary journal *Gertrude* is planning to start publishing books:

<http://www.portlandmercury.com/portland/Content?oid=34596&category=22127>



Hares & Hyenas: Politics, Crime, Memoir, Coming Out

Australia's two major gay bookstores (Bookshop Darlinghurst in Sydney and Hares & Hyenas in Melbourne) both list work by Aussie writers in separate sections of their websites — books that seldom find American publishers, and that are rarely imported. Here are five intriguing titles as they're described by Hares & Hyenas:

Defying Gravity: A Political Life, by Dennis Altman



Altman reveals the personal in the political.
"I was filled with a strong desire to recount the interwoven story of the two major changes in consciousness I have lived through during the past thirty years, namely the creation of a 'gay nation' and the simultaneous re-imagining of Australia as a multi-cultural society... The great challenge for Australia, as for many other countries, is to find a balance between the recognition of diversity and the need for social cohesion based on more than merely preserving the privileges of a dominant group."

(In the late '70s and early '80s. Altman was among the major intellectual contributors to the gay liberation movement, and, through the late '80s and onward, to the AIDS-awareness struggle.) His books:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/socsci/staff/altman/altman-pub.htm>

The Uncle's Story, by Witi Ihimaera

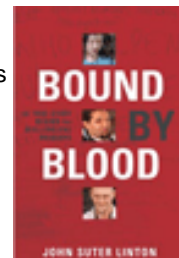
This may well be one of the queer novels of the year (2001). Michael is a Maori activist whose Pakeha boyfriend, Jason, pressures him to come out to traditional family. At his sister's wedding he spills the beans and is quickly disowned. His boyfriend leaves him the same weekend. The turmoil of this situation leads to the disclosure that Michael's Uncle Sam, hitherto unspoken of, was also gay and similarly disgraced from the family. The book reconstructs Sam's life in Vietnam and his tumultuous and erotic relationship with Cliff, an American helicopter pilot, while following Michael's life and gradual pursuit of queer Maori family values. Highly readable and totally engrossing, this is a fitting continuation of the Mihana family saga familiar to Ihimaera's many fans. His other books (including *Whale Rider*):



http://www.nzbooks.com/nzbooks/author.asp?author_id=witihimaera

Bound By Blood: True Story of the Wollongong Murders, by John Suter Linton

Why would a 17-year-old youth be driven to bash, dismember and mutilate the body of the 68-year-old former Mayor of Wollongong? Mark Valera stripped the victim, stuck pins into his eyes and kicked and beat the corpse for several hours before discarding his own clothes for those of the dead man's. Two weeks earlier, the body of a 60-year-old shopkeeper was discovered in his suburban Wollongong home, his severed head jammed in the kitchen sink. Again, Valera's handiwork. When Valera walked into a Police Station four months later and confessed to the murders, he pleaded childhood sexual abuse and family dysfunction as his defense... a chilling tale of blood lust, homophobia and the sinister world of satanic rituals.



Case of Knives, by Peter Rose

A striking first novel of contemporary life and manners from award-winning biographer (*Rose Boys*) and poet, Peter Rose. The cast — Julia Collis: a brilliant but unconventional publisher, more than a little controlling of her image; Candy Collis: an opera singer with a bright future and a dark mother; Matthew Light: a young actor, taken under Julia's wing as a teenage boy, obsessively in love with Roman Anthem; Roman Anthem: the 21-year-old grandson of a legendary Australian prime minister, renowned for his good looks, despised by Julia.



A review:

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/reviews/a-case-of-knives/2005/07/15/1120934403904.html>

Little Black Bastard, by Noel Tovey



This is an amazing story of survival and a moving testimony to the power of the human spirit. Noel Tovey, an indigenous Australian, was born in the slums of Carlton, abandoned at the age of six, spent several years in the 'care' of an abusive foster father, and then managed to get by as a street kid in 1940s Melbourne. Yet, while on the streets and buffeted by neglect, poverty and sexual abuse, Noel continued to pursue his dreams and hold on to the hope that he would realize his potential as an actor and dancer. Today, Noel Tovey is greatly admired and respected for his contribution to Australian theatrical and

cultural life.

A review:

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/07/07/1089000219377.html?from=storyrhs&onclick=true>

Find more Australian titles:

<http://hares-hyenas.com.au/books.asp?Type=au>

Bookstore info:

<http://hares-hyenas.com.au/default.asp>

One title lauded in Australia when it was published in 2003 by then-20-year-old Alasdair Duncan did find a US publisher — *Sushi Central* was released earlier this year by MTV/Pocket Books. Here's how the University of Queensland Press pimped the 2003 edition:

"Go out. Take a pill. Meet a boy. Dance.

Recover. Repeat. Calvin is sixteen and out of control. Experienced but naïve, he and his friends feel disconnected from their safe, suburban world of private schools and four-wheel drives. They inhabit a world of their own design — a world of saccharine club anthems, where fun comes by the milligram and fashion is all that counts. Then Calvin meets Anthony, and the two boys form an obsessive bond. But as Calvin deals with the confusion of first love, he discovers pictures of Anthony on a website, and is drawn into a world more adult than he could have imagined."



The title of the US edition? *Dance Recover Repeat* (\$13). Good to see that publishers read each others' catalogue copy — and the US title is catchier, though I find the angular Australian cover more appealing — and gayer — than the in-your-face American cover.

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

An excerpt: <http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?sid=33&pid=505541&agid=2>



Bestsellers From Our Bookstores — And Not One the Same!

Little Sister's

Vancouver, BC

(60 days previous to Sept. 9)

1. *Song of the Loon*, by Richard Amory, Arsenal Pulp Press
2. *Six Positions*, by Andy Quan, Green Candy Press
3. *Jackson Square Jazz*, by Greg Herren, Kensington Books
4. *Killing Me Softly*, by Francisco Ibanez-Carrasco, Suspect Thoughts
5. *Nasty*, by Mel Smith, Alyson Books
6. *Almost Like Being in Love*, Steve Kluger, HarperPerennial
7. *The German Officer's Boy*, by Harlan Greene, University of Wisconsin
8. *Dream Boy*, by Jim Grimsley, Touchstone
9. *Faggots*, by Larry Kramer, Grove Press
10. (There was no #10 — but *Geography Club*, by Brent Hartinger, was #10 on the bookstore's General Books list.)

Interesting bookstore fact: Little Sister's is choosing and helping edit the Little Sister's Classics series for Arsenal Pulp Press; the Amory title is number two in the series.

A Different Light Bookstores

San Francisco & West Hollywood

(Week of Sept. 2)

1. *The Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Gay Men*, by Bill Brent, Cleis Press
2. *Dieux Du Stade: '06 Photo Calendar**
3. *Exercise for Men Only*: November issue
4. *Meatmen 2*, edited by Winston Leyland, Leyland Publications
5. *You Can Say You Knew Me When*, by KM Soehnlein, Kensington Books
6. *Around the World With Auntie Mame*, by Patrick Dennis, Broadway Books
7. *Blood Lust: Erotic Vampire Tales*, edited by M. Christian and Tom Gregory, Alyson Books
8. *Butch Bear – Muscle and Fur 2006 Calendar*
9. *Eating Out*, directed by Q. Allan Brocka, Ariztical Entertainment
10. *Men's Fitness*: October issue

*Not bad for a \$37.95 calendar that won't ship until October.

Interesting bookstore fact: *A Different Light* has "opened" (online, at least) a "bookstore" called *A Room of Our Own* ("a lesbian- and gay-owned bookstore serving the lesbian community.") For info:

<http://www.aroomofourown.com/index.cfm>

Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse

Atlanta, GA

(As of Sept 12)

1. *Mad Love*, by Darrious D. Hilmon & Javaki Hilmon, Author House
2. *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, by Daniel Helmniak, Alamo Square Press
3. *Cattitude: The Feline Guide to Being Fabulous*, by Christi Montaquila & Kim Levin, Stewart Tabori & Chang
4. *In Search of Pretty Young Black Men*, by Stanley Bennett Clay, Atria Books
5. *Tom of Finland: The Comic Collection*, edited by Dian Hansan, Taschen Books
6. *Center Square: The Paul Lynde Story*, by Steve Wilson & Joe Florenski, Alyson Books
7. *Bliss*, by Fiona Zedde, Kensington Books
8. *How I Paid for College: A Novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship, & Musical Theater*, by Marc Acito, Broadway Books
9. *Best of Best Lesbian Erotica 2*, edited by Tristan Taormino, Cleis Press
10. *Ten Smart Things Gay Men Can Do To Improve Their Lives*, by Joe Kort, Alyson Books

Interesting bookstore fact: *Outwrite* notes at the top of its Top 10 list that *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* is its "bestselling gay book of all time."

Lambda Rising Bookstores

DC/MD/VA/DE

(August sales)

1. *Secrets of a Gay Marine Porn Star*, by Rich Merritt, Kensington Books
2. *Scrub Match*, by Bill Eisele, Kensington Books
3. *Bites*, by Giovanni, Bruno Gmunder
4. *Tales from the House of Morecock*, by Joe Phillips, Bruno Gmunder
5. *Specimen Days*, by Michael Cunningham, FSG
6. *All American Boy*, by William J. Mann, Kensington Books
7. *A House is Not a Home: A B-Boy Blues Novel*, by James Earl Hardy, Amistad Press
8. *Tangled Sheets: Tales of Erotica*, by Michael Thomas Ford, Kensington Books
9. *Mother of Sorrows*, by Richard McCann, Pantheon Books
10. *Light Before Day*, by Christopher Rice, Hyperion Books
11. *Freshmen: The Best Erotic Fiction*, edited by Jesse Grant, Alyson Books
12. *Best Gay Erotica 2005*, edited by Richard Labonte, Cleis Press
13. *Fratsex: Stories of Gay Sex in College Fraternities*, edited by Greg Herren, Alyson Books
14. *Major Conflict: One Gay Man's Life in the Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell Military*, by Jeffrey McGowan, Broadway Books
15. *Looking for It*, by Michael Thomas Ford, Kensington Books

.....

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.