



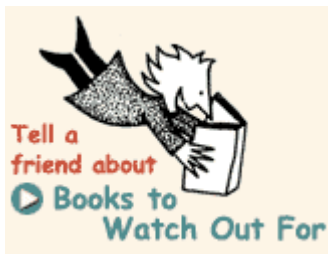
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The Gay Men's Edition

Volume 3 Number 4

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.

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

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More Books for Women

covers the finest in thinking

Didn't I apologize a couple of months ago for being late with the **Gay Men's Edition** of Books To Watch Out For? Yeah. So now I'm repeating myself. Recuperating from several months of medical ups and downs is one thing; catching up with life, and emails, and reading, and finally writing, is another. This and the next installment will be catch-up issues, and by late July I hope to be back on schedule. Thanks for your patience, and for *BTWOF* publisher Carol Seajay's forbearance...

Several of the titles I tout here have been out for a couple of months or more, as I catch up with the books that have stacked up on the floor around my desk. I'll be more *au courant* eventually. One section does look ahead, though - to the new Alyson catalogue of books. With new editors in place, new digs in New York, and even new owners, the venerable publisher is taking on a new tone with its tomes. The men's-interest list for 2006 and into 2007 is an eclectic mix of genre mysteries and erotic novels, a gusher of erotica anthologies, a handful of literary reads, some standard self-help and reference books, and two interesting new endeavors: a run of fetish collections and a smart-looking new pop culture series. There are almost 50 books in all published or planned for April-December - it's an ambitious program.

Luscious Essays, a Cross-Dressing Pioneer, a Zippy Mystery

***Strange Ghosts*, by Darren Greer, Cormorant Books, \$24.95**

The first essay in this remarkably fine collection of essays by Canadian novelist Greer (*Tyler's Cape*, *Still Life With June*) is about how, as a recovering cocaine addict in 1996, he would traipse from his recovery house to the nearby National Gallery of Canada with a crew of other scruffy addicts, relieving the boredom of a treatment-free Sunday by roaming the exhibitions; that's where, he writes, he developed an appreciation for art. And that's also where, not long after an unexpected HIV diagnosis and a serious consideration of suicide at age 27, he came across a work by Felix Partz of the Toronto art collective General Idea - three giant AZT capsules. They - the image, not the drug - he suggests, saved his life. Years later, back in the Gallery, he came across a haunting photo of Partz, taken on his deathbed. "I cried over what I saw: the strength it took Partz to chronicle his own death in art." It's an evocative start to this luscious, lucid, liquid-language collection of 16 essays, a chronicle of Greer's own life - about his family and how they reconciled in the years after he first came out, and then came out positive, about his travels to Cambodia and Venice, about NYC in the aftermath of 9/11, about his own "beginning of gay," when he was cast in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and about falling out of love in Paris. Every one is an exemplary fusion of the personal and the universal, a memoir in miniature that's impossible to put down. (1-896951-63-5)



women's reading, plus mysteries, non-sexist children's books, and news from women's publishing. Written by the owners and staff at Women & Children First, and friends.

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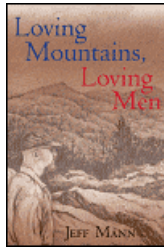
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Canada.

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



Loving Mountains, Loving Men, by Jeff Mann, Ohio University Press, \$19.95

Much the same - mini-memoir, luscious language, a life's chronicle - can be said about Mann's collection of prose and poetry. He writes in his first essay about Hinton, West Virginia, a small town of 3,500 in the Appalachians where he grew up, about how even now, burly and bearded and booted, he's cautious about being queer when he goes home, even though he's an openly gay writer and teacher in the Internet age, and even though his father has editorialized against homophobia. Boyhood, teen years, young adulthood, first crush, first love, first heartbreak - every articulate, literary gay man goes through them, and all these internalized realities are recalled in a couple dozen brief pieces, one- and two- and three-page vignettes, eye-blink reads with a universe of revelations in each, about growing up and coming out and discovering how good life can be. (0-8214-1650-2)

Virginia Prince: Pioneer of Transgendering, edited by Richard Ekins & Dave King, Haworth Medical Press, \$19.95

My connection with this slim biography is personal, but not because I'm a cross-dresser. It's because Virginia Prince - 92 when the book was written - tracked down A Different Light Bookstore not long after it opened in the Silverlake neighborhood of L.A. in 1979, bearing a box of back issues of her pioneering magazine *Transvestia*, of her own books (including *The Transvestite and His Wife* and *How To Be A Woman Though Male* - "If you are going to appear in society as a woman, don't just be a woman, be a lady"), and several booklets by herself and other writers, fiction novellas aimed at heterosexual cross-dressers: *Fated for Femininity* (a boy becomes a beauty queen and then the bride of another "pretty" girl); *I Am A Male Actress* (a reporter impersonates a star, gets contract, marries the star); *Tales From a Pink Mirror* (a boy becomes a girl in a special school); *From Martin to Marion* (a transvestite story in three books); *The Turnabout Party* (George goes to a party as Sally, finds a new life and friends); *His and Hers Equals Theirs* (wife borrows Steve's clothes, he does the same, becomes Stephanie). Virginia was far from gay; she wasn't even particularly queer, in the expansive contemporary sense of the word. She was a he who decided, very early on in life, to be a she, though she eschewed transsexualism as a choice. By the time we met, hormones had given her nice pillowy breasts, and electrolysis had removed all signs of a beard; she was living 24/7 as a woman. As far as her business went, she was astute and aggressive: payment in 30 days - she often came to the store herself to collect - and she restocked her own inventory with dispatch. Her titles sold well, too - word of mouth brought in a steady stream of male cross-dressers, sometimes as women, sometimes as men, almost all of them zeroing in exclusively on the shelf where the titles were stocked. I loved chatting with Prince about the business side of her Chevalier Publications and admired her absolute comfort with her style. Ekins and King contribute a couple of chapters about Prince to this book; but it's Prince's own writing that demonstrates what a real pioneer she was in those pre-queer days. (0-7890-3055-1)

An irascible icon:

www.myhusbandbetty.com/?m=20060607



Mardi Gras Mambo, by Greg Herren, Kensington Books, \$14

Herren's Scotty Bradley mysteries (*Jackson Square Jazz*, *Bourbon Street Blues* before this one) are by no stretch traditional mysteries; there's a death, someone did it, and puzzling out who flickers through the plots. But that's not where the charm of these zippy novels lies. Herren loves New Orleans and its rowdy, off-kilter realities with a passion that pours off most every page of this fast-paced story: it's Mardi Gras week, and former exotic dancer and personal trainer Scotty is set to party hearty (heavy on the ecstasy, but I won't get judgmental - this is fiction, after all) with his two lovers. Yes, two lovers, former FBI agent Frank Sobieski and - well, nobody knows what Colin Cioni's real backstory is, which gives *Mambo* something of an in-your-face curveball ending. The trio have set themselves up as private eyes, though they don't do much sleuthing here; in fact, Scotty is a suspect in the murder of his muscle-bound drug connection, Russian émigré Misha. This third novel reveals a bit more about Scotty's quirky 60s-era mother and father and, surprisingly, his grandfather's secret second family, and expands on

Scotty's spooky psychic abilities, an endearing affectation for a P.I. hunk to exhibit. This fun novel's effervescent personality and exuberant atmospherics, more than its cheerfully but occasionally implausible plot, provide the real reading pleasure. (0-7582-0830-8)

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A Grade A Memoir, 7 Years in the Writing - and Drawing

When it comes time to do my Best Books of 2006, leading the list will be Alison Bechdel's graphic (in the comic sense, not the sexual sense - but not entirely in the funny sense, either) memoir, **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic**. It's about her closeted dad's bifurcated life, about her own coming out, and about growing up in a family that ran her small town's funeral parlor - and so much more. I'm sure fans of Bechdel's long-running *Dykes to Watch Out For* comic strip have glommed on to the book; if they haven't, get cracking. And if you're a gay man who thinks that a cartoonist who draws stories about dykes doesn't have anything to say that's relevant to his life, well, bad fag, bad: this book is a stellar example of how powerful the marriage of the spare written word and the well-crafted drawn image can be, and its story is dazzling in its universality. I reviewed it for my Book Marks column, where I praised it as "the searing but dignified story of a family where truth was an elusive commodity." (0-618-47794-2)



Here's the full review (along with reviews of Stephen McCauley's *Alternatives to Sex*, Mark Tewksbury's *Inside Out: Straight Talk from a Gay Jock*, and Mary Jacobsen's *Blood Sisters*:

www.gmax.co.za/feel/books06/060522-bookmarks.html.

From Powell's Books in Portland: "Let's start here: The most acclaimed book of 2006 is a graphic novel. *Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel's illustrated memoir, has been showered with starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, and *Booklist*, and breathless raves from *Entertainment Weekly* ("Grade: A"), *Salon.com*, and the *New York Times Book Review* besides... When a coworker called it 'easily the best original graphic novel since Craig Thompson's *Blankets*,' a bright bulb suddenly lit up our office. See, Thompson lives here in Portland, and his groundbreaking autobiographical novel, published in 2003, was the rare graphic work that crossed over to mainstream readers. (*Time* magazine called it "achingly beautiful.") What if, when Bechdel visited Powell's in June, we brought the two authors together for a conversation?" The result is a long, long interview, filled with technical observations, mutual praise, and some doubts about the pleasures of the San Diego Comic-con:

www.powells.com/authors/bechdel.html.

"It took Bechdel until she was almost 40 to write her book, 'right at that weird midpoint in my life where my father had been dead for the same number of years he'd been alive. I knew that this project would have to be more ambitious and revealing, more literary, than what I'd been doing in my comic strip. That meant confronting my father's artist fixation head-on. I had to dismantle his inhibiting critical power over me before I could tell the story. But telling the story was the only way to do the dismantling. It was like trying to vacuum under a rug while you're still standing on it.'" The story behind the book:

www.pridesource.com/article.shtml?article=18948.

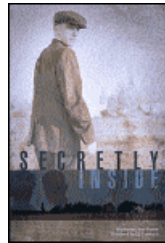
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English is just one of the gay-lit languages

There really isn't enough foreign-language gay fiction available; were I a rich man, I'd love to underwrite a translation imprint bringing gay-themed fiction to English-reading, um, readers. City Lights, Terrace Books, Serpent's Tail, and Dalkey Archives have made six titles available in the past few months; my *Publishers Weekly* reviews of three books are below. In addition, the gay-inclusive Terrace Books imprint of University of Wisconsin (part of a Library of World Fiction series) and the more gay-specific Southern Tier Editions of Harrington Park Press have published two fine titles. But there are dozens more out there, from Spain and Germany, France and Italy, Mexico and who knows where else, that it would be great to have on my bookshelf... or yours.

Sweet Tooth, by Yves Navarre, translated from the French by Donald Watson, Dalkey Archive Press, \$13.95

Before much of gay fiction was commodified - splintered into coming-out and coming-of-age novels, into crime capers and quirky romances - there were harsh novels like this one, a bit of John Rechy at his most sexual, a bit of Charles Bukowski at his most slovenly, a bit of Tennessee Williams at his most moody, raunchy, literary writing that exults in emotional brutality and physical indulgence: unrepentant about sex, rich with scruffy characters and their self-destructive desires, oozing decadent atmospherics, set in a milieu that's dire and darker than "noir." Published in 1973 in France as *Les Loukoums*, and in Britain and America in 1976, it's structured as a series of mostly anonymous sexual encounters involving three central characters, moving through a leprous pre-hippie, pre-guppie Manhattan where a French journalist has come to bid his dying former lover adieu. It's a classic that anyone with any interest at all in daring gay narrative and impolitic queer fiction ought to read. Navarre, who died of AIDS in 1994 - though the stated cause of death was a drug overdose - also wrote *Little Rogue in Our Flesh*, *Our Share of Time*, and *Cronus' Children*, all available in translation, all memorable novels. "I am a writer. I am gay. I am not a gay writer," he is said to have said. But he's a gay must. Quirky fact: he was also said to be French President Francois Mitterrand's favorite writer. (1-56478-444-4)



Secretly Inside, by Hans Warren, translated from the Dutch by SJ Leinbach, Terrace Books, \$16.95

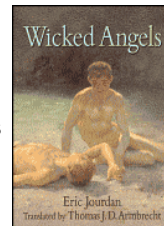
Fully 25 per cent of this short but memorable book (23 of 97 pages in the galley) is given over to a fulsome introduction by Jolanda Vanderwal Taylor. My advice: skip the intro until you've read the novel itself. Taylor's historical and sexual contextualizations are generous and useful, but he gives away far too much of the story - about a young Jewish man in Nazi-occupied Holland who finds refuge in the countryside home of a sort-of sympathetic family of farmers. The threat of capture and a concentration-camp future is palpable in the novel (published in Holland in 1975), and Warren (a prominent Dutch writer who died in 2001) re-creates the aura of Second World War hardship and paranoia with spare (and nicely translated) prose. But it's the fraught and unformed relationship between refugee Eduard, 25 years old, and farmboy Camiel, 22, that gives *Secretly Inside* its emotional, brooding oomph; revealed, too, ever so gradually, is that the young boy, conflicted and closeted and brutalized by life, was in love with a Nazi soldier. (0-299-20980-6)

Another review:

www.ebar.com/arts/art_article.php?sec=books&article=139.

Wicked Angels, by Eric Jourdan, translated from the French by Thomas JD Armbrrecht, Southern Tier Editions, \$12.95

This haunting 1955 novel, published in French as *Les mauvaises anges*, was apparently banned for three decades for being "subversive" - which I guess means queer, and, even more perverse, being queer about two teenagers happily, if ultimately tragically, in love. The two lads, Pierre and Gerard, are schoolboy cousins whose physical connection and emotional confusion crest during one tumultuous summertime together. Though the romance and its frankly sexual components are pretty tame by today's standards, the book would certainly have been something of a sizzler 50 years ago, contemporaneous with the American gay-themed fiction of, for example, James Barr's *Quatrefoil*, James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, or Fritz Peters' *Finistere*, which were far less overt. Interesting factoid: Jourdan, still living in Paris, was the adoptive son of American writer Julien Green... (1-56023-548-9)



Blood on the Saddle, by Rafael Reig, translated from the Spanish by Paul Hammond, Serpent's Tail, \$16

When several genres collide, a singularly fascinating novel can result. The first of Reig's acclaimed-in-Spain titles to be translated into English (and shortlisted for the 2003 Premio Fundacion Lara, said to be the Spanish equivalent of England's Man Booker prize), is first of all a witty, thrill-a-minute detective story. It opens with sadsack private eye Carlos Clot - hardboiled but softhearted, in a style most

"noir" - hired to sleuth out what's up with three women: a teenage runaway; a wife whose husband suspects her of cuckolding him; and, most quirkily, a voluptuous bombshell character missing from the pages of a bestselling but alcoholic author's Western novel-in-progress; without her, he has massive writer's block. Then there's science fiction: the hyperkinetic novel is set in a vaguely futuristic Madrid, where mysteriously venal Manex Chopeitia heads a genetic-engineering firm that rules the city and, in some vague way, a U.S.-Iberian Federation. Next, flashes of the classic Western: Carlos' detecting sidekick is laconic cowpoke Spunk McCain, another escapee from that novel-in-progress. Add romance: Carlos remains wistfully but hopelessly hung up on his ex-wife, but by story's end has fallen in love "like a schoolgirl. And with a schoolgirl." Though this is mostly a mystery, there really aren't enough elements of that genre - or any other - to satisfy purists. Readers of stylish metafiction are the novel's best market. From *PW*. (1-85242-870-8)

***A Cock-Eyed Comedy*, by Juan Goytisolo, translated from the Spanish by Peter Bush, City Lights, \$13.95**

Spanish literary trickster Goytisolo exhibits devastatingly fine satirical form in this bawdy tale of a Catholic cleric's sexual wanderings and rough trade predilections through time and space. Father Trennes, the determinedly priapic novel's oft-incarnated subject (who shares his name with a priest in a Roger Peyrefitte novel who is over-friendly with the boys), lives in present-day Spain as a leader of the church's profoundly conservative organization, Opus Dei - but in this wickedly faith-perverting story by the author of *State of Siege* and other fabulist delights, the good father is a very bad boy. One exultant chapter recounts his encounters with a series of swarthy immigrants, who are in turn "firm as a steel spigot," blessed with an "infallible instrument," and endowed with "a lethal jack-in-the-box." In another, he's savoring the delights of "secret dwellings" - among them the movie palace loos of Paris and the hothouse bathhouses of Manhattan. The author - who pops up frequently as a character, as do the likes of Jean Genet, Manuel Puig, and Severo Sarduy - is mindful that sexual pursuits can lead to "the one-syllabled monster," his apt appellation for an epidemic that has killed friends and fellow writers. But beyond that poignant lament, Goytisolo's hyperbolic frolic through a ribald sexual landscape is an awful lot of fun, if often quite confusing. This certainly ranks among the acclaimed Spaniard's most overtly lusty gay-themed fables, and Bush's playfully colloquial translation adds plenty of zest. From *PW*. (0-87286-450-2)



***Koula*, by Menis Koumandareas, translated from the Greek by Kay Cicellis, Dalkey Archive Press, \$11.95**

Dimitri, a handsome 21-year-old attracted to older women, sometimes sleeps with them for pocket money. But in this first of acclaimed Greek writer Menis Koumandareas' novels to find an American publisher, insistent desire trumps calculated commerce. Dimitri encounters Koula, a mature married woman, sitting across from him one evening on an Athens subway car. In the course of their scant twenty-minute journeys together, his furtive gaze meets her faltering smile. Soon they are flirting openly. Finally, their tumultuous physical and turbulent emotional affair takes wing - a bare few weeks of lust encompassing a seedy gay taverna, several discreet tearooms and, most centrally, a rundown one-room apartment plastered with photographs of nude women. Koumandareas chronicles the mix of a young man's boldness, an older woman's desire, and their urgent need for each other with elegiac precision and subtlety, packing a full novel's worth of drama, passion, and sex into what is essentially a novella. The author has won three Greek National Book Awards in his 40-year career; work includes the novels *The Glass Factory* and *The Handsome Lieutenant* and, most recently, the epic novel *Two Times Greek*, a mosaic about Greek society from 1949 to 1990 - all bestsellers in his native land which, based on the sublime excellence of this slim book, could well be worthy of American publication. (P.S. to the review - I've looked online for gay info about Koumandareas, and there are clues: in one interview about *Koula*, he says, "It's not insignificant that women and gay people could see themselves mirrored in that relationship, and be relieved to find their concerns addressed.") From *PW*. (1-56478-406-1)

The *Koula* interview:

www.centerforbookculture.org/interviews/interview_koumandareas.html

Some Spanish titles from Berkana in Madrid:

www.libreriaberkana.com/fichalibro.php?isbn=84-88052-03-0

www.libreriaberkana.com/fichalibro.php?isbn=84-88052-05-7

www.libreriaberkana.com/fichalibro.php?isbn=84-95470-51-9

Check Dutch titles from Intermale in Amsterdam, including *En Ik Schrijf In De Hemel*, by Arnold Spauwen and *Ons Derde Lichaam*, by Edward van de Vendel (Annie Proulx's book, by the way, has the charming title *Twee Cowboys!*):

www.intermale.nl/nl-nieuw.html

Check French titles at Le Mot A La Bouche in Paris: www.motsbouche.com

Spanish-language titles from ASP Wholesale, a mix of translations and original Spanish books: home.earthlink.net/~asporders/id17.html

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New Books To Watch Out For, From Alyson

A lot of the information here is late, partially because of my own sluggishness, but primarily because the Alyson publicity people never got around to sending the **Gay Men's Edition** a catalogue of forthcoming books (I'm working from a photocopy someone else sent me), and have sent me only two books for review this year, both because the authors - Jay Quinn (*The Good Neighbor*) and Alex MacLennan (*The Zookeeper*) - asked them to; earlier this year, M. Christian was kind enough to send me a copy of his own innovative vampire novel, *Running Dry*. I really can't figure out why one of our most important gay publishers isn't interested in sending information on their titles and copies for review, but that's how it is. Alas. (A mid-production update: the June 30 mail brought a copy of the mystery *L.A. Heat* - look for a review next issue!)

I'll be reviewing MacLennan's novel next issue. In Book Marks, I said that Quinn's novel was "the good gay novel about suburbia and its torments that John Updike won't ever write"; the full review, along with reviews of *ManBug*, by George K. Ilsley, *The Way Out*, by Christopher Lee Nutter, and *Between Mom and Jo*, by Julie Anne Peters, is here:

www.gmax.co.za/feel/books06/060619-bookmarks.html.

I called Christian's novel "a brisk combo of decades-arcng romance, contemporary suspense thriller, and original horror story"; the full review, as well as reviews of *Alone in the Trenches: My Life As A Gay Man In The NFL*, by Esera Tuaolo with John Rosengren, Michelle Tea's *Rose of No Man's Land*, and Lori Soderlind's *Chasing Montana*, is here:

www.gmax.co.za/feel/books06/060424-bookmarks.html

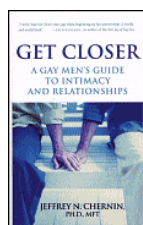
The Forthcoming Gay Titles from Alyson:

JUNE

***L.A. Heat*, by PA Brown, \$14.95** - "LAPD Detective David Laine finds himself falling for the prime suspect in a series of grisly murders." It's an old reliable plot for a queer mystery, this combination of not so by-the-book cop and hunky party boy getting hot and bothered about each other; Brown's twist is that it's set not in West Hollywood, but in Los Angeles' more gritty and less glamorous East Side. (1-55583-948-7)



***Filthy: Outrageous Gay Erotica*, edited by M. Christian, \$14.95** - The Alyson website says: "A smart, sexy, and fun collection of sizzling short stories that include some entertaining takeoffs of famous movie classics, plays, and literature," but it doesn't list the book's contributors. (1-55583-951-7)

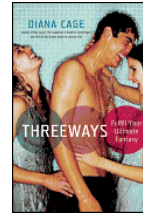


***Get Closer: A Gay Man's Guide to Intimacy*, by Jeffrey Chernin, \$14.95**

There's certainly no shortage of guides to romancing for gay men, but the self-help genre is prone to recycling itself; this one takes the tack that there's no "one-size-fits-all" format when it comes to relationships. Chernin, like many intimacy authors, is a psychotherapist. (1-55583-865-0)

JULY

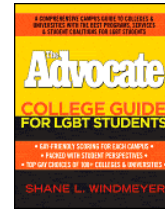
Threeways: Fulfill Your Ultimate Fantasy, by Diana Cage, \$15.95 - "Being in a threeway is the ultimate fantasy for many people, but whether that fantasy is girl-girl-girl, boy-boy-boy, girl-girl-boy, or boy-boy-girl, most boys and girls have no idea how to even propose having a threeway, let alone how to ensure that everyone has a hot time." This guide's helpful tips are based on interviews and the author's own experience. (1-55583-939-8)



Secret Slaves: Erotic Stories of Bondage; Ultimate Undies: Erotic Stories About Underwear and Lingerie; Sexiest Souls*: Erotic Stories About Feet and Shoes, all edited by Rachel Kramer Bussel & Christopher Pierce, \$14.95 each - Three fetish-specific anthologies from a new Fetish Chest series; the titles describe them pretty well, and I assume that, unlike most queer erotic anthologies, the books aren't gender-specific, with the emphasis more on the fetish than on who's getting off on it, which is a nice change for the genre. (1-55583-962-2, -961-4, -960-6)
*Should be *Soles*, I assume, though the title as rendered in the catalogue adds an interesting spiritual dimension!

AUGUST

The Advocate College Guide, by Shane L. Windmeyer, \$21.95 - The catalogue copy says this is the first-ever guide for gays to colleges and universities: not quite; the first, *The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools*, by Jan-Mitchell Sherill & Craig Hardesty, was published in 1994 by New York University Press - so long ago, of course, that it's totally out of date. But publishing history must be honored.



Windmeyer, author of *Brotherhood* and co-editor of *Out on Fraternity Row*, profiles more than 100 institutions and "ranks them on such crucial issues as queer studies classes, housing for LGBT students, gay-affirmative policies, out professors, local gay hangouts, campus services, and gay-friendly fraternities and sororities." (1-55583-857-X)

Hustlers: Erotic Stories of Sex for Hire, edited by Jesse Grant, \$14.95 - Again, the title is self-defining. (1-55583-94-X)

Tales of Travelrotica for Gay Men: Erotic Travel Adventures, edited by Brad Nichols, \$14.95 - Cleis Press has done it already, in three anthologies edited by Mitzi Szereto; Harrington Park Press has done it too, in Michael Luongo's *Between the Palms*, and I think he's working on another. But lusty queers do have a lust for travel, so why not another one? (1-55583-959-2)
And there's also **Tales of Travelrotica for Lesbians**, edited by Simone Thorne, \$14.95, -958-4.

SEPTEMBER

Love, Bourbon Street: A Celebration of Gay New Orleans, edited by Greg Herren & Paul J. Willis, \$24.95 - "The people of New Orleans have always enjoyed a love affair with their city, and only when they came close to totally losing it - in the wake of Hurricane Katrina - did they truly give voice to their love. Now, two noted editors have called upon their friends from the Big Easy's literary establishment to pen this remarkable book - a 'love letter' that takes us into this crazy and wonderful patchwork quilt of a city." Contributors include Poppy Z. Brite, JM Redmann, and Victoria Brownworth. (1-55583-981-9)

Sweet Lips, by Mel Smith, \$13.95 - A cowboy romance: "Ranch hand Deke has fallen in love with young Wyatt, dubbed "sweet lips." But Wyatt is also the boss' son. When both men are caught making love, Deke realizes they must go on the run - or face a certain lynching. Setting off on a grand adventure, they must fight their enemies by day, but at night they can indulge their passions." (1-55583-984-3)

Adventures of a Bird-Shit Foreigner, by Sulayman X, \$13.95 - From the author of the Lammy-nominated *Bilal's Bread*: "Isa is the product of a GI from Kansas City and a prostitute mother, and Thai society can be cruel to those not of pure breeding - they are called "bird-shit" foreigners. Tossed out by his family, the struggling gay teen learns to live on the street with a local gang before ultimately finding refuge with a local clergyman and his family.

Beautifully written, evocative of setting, here is fiction that truly touches the heart." (1-55583-982-7)

The first of another new Alyson series debuts in September - ***The Q Guides*** to pop culture. The books have a snazzy standard look, a standard price (\$12.95), and catchy, if lengthy titles. The first three are: ***The Q Guide to Soap Operas: Stuff You Didn't Even Know You Wanted To Know... about divas, hunks, and the best kept closets in daytime***, by Daniel R. Coleridge; ***The Q Guide to Broadway: Stuff You Didn't Even Know You Wanted To Know...about the bars, hotspots, and theatres on the Great White Way***, by Seth Rudetsky; and ***The Q Guide to the Golden Girls: Stuff You Didn't Know You Wanted To Know...about Dorothy, Blanche, Rose, & Sophia***, by Jim Coluccii. (1-55583-986-X, - 993-2 -985-1). Coming in January, ***The Q Guide to Oscar and Other Awards Parties***, by Joel Perry; and, next March, ***The Q Guide to Fire Island***, by Steve Weinstein, and ***The Q Guide to Amsterdam***, by Dara Colwell.

OCTOBER

***The Fame Game*, by Charles Casillo, \$24.95** - "Aspiring actress Mikki Britten meets hustler/writer Mario DeMarco at an exclusive party that neither has any business being at. But they become instant friends and fellow conspirators in their quest for fame. Carla Christaldi is the less-than-pretty daughter of famed movie director Jonathan Christaldi, and has ridden her father's coat tails her entire life. When Mikki and Carla meet at the offices of up-and-coming photographer Justin Landis, they realize they can help each other. But in a moment of betrayal, Mario steps in with a shocking plan that will forever alter their lives. Who will achieve fame? And who will meet their violent end?" Sounds delightfully trashy. (1-55583-977-0)

The Dying Gaul & Other Screenplays: With Commentary by the Author, Mary Louise-Parker, Norman Rene, and Others, edited by Steven Drukman, \$14.95 - Scripts for *The Dying Gaul*, *The Secret Lives of Dentists*, and the early AIDS film classic *Longtime Companion*. (1-55583-967-3)

Triptych of Terror: Three Chilling Tales by the Masters of Gay Horror, \$14.95 - Novellas by John Michael Curlovich, Michael Rowe, and David Thomas Lord. Brrr. (1-55583-974-6)

Working Stiff: True Blue-Collar Gay Porn, by Bob Condron, \$13.95 - It's not clear whether this is an anthology or a one-author collection, but here's the gist: "Whether your fantasy is the UPS man in hot shorts, the cable man with the extra-long cable, or the plumber with a hard power tool, this anthology has them all." (1-55583-949-5)

NOVEMBER

Paws & Reflect: Exploring the Bond Between Gay Men and Their Dogs, edited by Neil Plakcy & Sharon Sakson, \$24.95 - Aww. Hubby Asa and I will read this one out loud to our four-legged Percy and Zak. Includes interviews with Edward Albee, Greg Louganis, and Charles Busch, with contributions from Jay Quinn and others. (1-55583-957-6)

Confessions of a Mormon Boy: Behind the Scenes of the Off-Broadway Hit, by Steven Fales, \$13.95 - "Recounts his story of being excommunicated from the Mormon church for being gay, leaving his wife and children, and his subsequent descent into the dangers of sex and drugs." (1-55583-978-9)

Untangling the Web: Sex, Porn, and Fantasy Obsession in the Internet Age, by Robert Weiss & Jennifer Schneider, \$15.95 - "With personal stories from addicts and their significant others, this updated essential resource offers realistic healing strategies for anyone experiencing the devastating impact of Internet pornography and sex addiction on intimacy, relationships, career, health, and self-respect." (1-55583-968-1)

DECEMBER

Shakespeare's Sonnets, by Samuel Park, \$24.95 - This one has great appeal: "First developed as a one-act play at Stanford University, this literate, intimate novel introduces a fresh new voice in gay fiction. The time is 1948. Adam Greenhurst is a student at Harvard with dreams of becoming a literary scholar. He's from a rich and influential family and has become

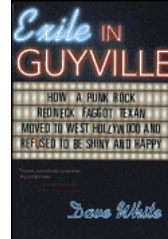
engaged to the perfect girl. His life plan is set, until he's busted by campus police for having sex with another man in a public place. Threatened with expulsion, Adam refocuses his energies on a new class about Shakespeare's sonnets. There he meets Jean Hoffman, a man with whom Adam shares much: love of language and love of men. As their relationship grows, Adam realizes he will have to make a choice: the life his family planned for him, or the life his heart wants." (1-55583-955-X)

***On Picking Fruit*, by Arthur Wooten, \$12.95** - And this one sounds delightfully larky; it was originally published last year as an iUniverse book: "Although he was born gay, Curtis Jenkins has trouble picking fruit. Now a successful middle-aged New York City writer, he is still searching for that elusive man of his dreams. Unfortunately, Curtis has already formed a self-destructive pattern of choosing all the wrong men in all the wrong places. After a bizarre yet comical attempt at suicide Curtis becomes a reluctant patient of the aging and eccentric psychiatrist Dr. Magda Tunick. Eager to help Curtis on his quest to find his true soulmate is his irreverent and unpredictable mother, Mrs. J., and his incorrigible best friend and soap opera writer, Quinn." "If gallantry in our day is defined as facing adversity with screams of laughter, then this is the most gallant book I know of," said Edmund White. (ISBN not yet available)

***Hot On His Trail*, by Zavo, \$14.95**, Dec. - Western historical erotica by an author with one name: "Ranger Jake Slater is bent on trapping the outlaw Ben Masters, who is wanted for murder. On the trails of the Old West, these two men will come together through a common bond: their unbridled, driving desire for each other. With Ben proclaiming his innocence, Jake's duty-bound instinct is overridden by his growing feelings for his new lover. Saddle up." (1-55583-975-4)

ALREADY PUBLISHED

***Exile in Guyville: How a Punk Rock Redneck Faggot Texan Moved to West Hollywood and Refused to Be Shiny and Happy*, by Dave White, \$13.95** - The title alone is worth the price; in



fact, the next time I get to a city with a bookstore, I may even buy it (yeah, I could order it online, but I'm not that kind of former bookseller). White is a natural-born crank, a temperament he showcases to hilarious affect on his daily blog, early installments of which proved the basis of material for this collection of mordantly hilarious (hilariously mordant?) observations on life in WeHo. If there's one title

from the Alyson list I miss not receiving and writing about, this is the one. (1-55583-932-0)

White's blog, Dave White Knows, worth a daily read:

<http://djmrswhite.livejournal.com>

***Blood Prophet*, by John Michael Curlovich, \$14.95** - The sequel to *The Blood Of Kings*, in which a 21-year-old college student, initiated into queer vampirism by his Egyptologist mentor and lover, heads to Egypt to track the missing man down. The first novel was imaginative genre fiction, with plenty of interesting Pharaoh lore. (1-55583-930-4)

***Anthony Perkins: Split Image*, by Charles Wincoff, \$16.95** - Updated 10th anniversary edition of the biography that conclusively outed the actor whose depiction of Norman Bates overshadowed the rest of his acting career. (1-55583-950-9)

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A Gay Pride Gay-Lit Roundup, Giovanni's Room at 50

There's a gay-lit renaissance going on, declares Grand Old Man Edmund White in the *Village Voice's* pride issue, singling out Alan Hollinghurst, Michael Cunningham, John Weir, Patrick Ryan, Keith McDermott, Vestal McIntyre, and Barry McRae:

www.villagevoice.com/nyclife/0625.white,73585,15.html

The Seattle Times takes pride in books by Andrew Holleran, Emma Donoghue, and one of my faves, Hans Warren:

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/books/2003061634_gaylesbian18.html

"If a cold atheist is the best person to read the Bible as literature, I suppose a heterosexual prude like me is the best person to review *Inside Him: New Gay Erotica* as literature. In brief: It sucks." Ouch. *The Stranger* asks a really snarky straight dude to review Joel Tan's anthology from Carroll & Graf:

www.thestranger.com/seattle/Content?oid=37585

The rest of *The Stranger's* gay pride issue, including Kate Bornstein on No Child Left Behind, and a plea for a ban on abs in queer photo books:

www.thestranger.com/seattle/Content?oid=37651

Scott Heim really, really, really likes what Suspect Thought Press is doing - see his June 26 entry:

<http://heim.etherweave.com/weblog>

The Bay Area Reporter recommends some (mostly last-season) queer reading:

www.ebar.com/arts/art_article.php?sec=books&article=142

But Robert Julian quite likes James Lear's comic mystery - "*The Back Passage* is so much fun you don't really care when, or how, the mystery will be solved. Lear provides a great ride, and the specifics of the plot are simply the glue that connects one amazingly erotic scene to the next. Although the entire affair is just about as believable as *The DaVinci Code*, it's twice as much fun and half as long."

www.ebar.com/arts/art_article.php?sec=books&article=146

A sports desk editor at the *Philadelphia Daily News* (a dyke) celebrates Giovanni's Room at 50, with the ubiquitous Mr. White weighing in smartly - "I leave the final word to Edmund White, who knows a thing or two about gay literature: 'It is a book that is sublimely beautiful, a work that is nearly perfect aesthetically - and the gift of beauty is the greatest any author can give his readers':"

www.philly.com/ml/dailynews/news/opinion/14858280.htm

Edward Field reflects on 50 years of queer Bohemianism. Read his profile and excerpts from *The Man Who Would Marry Susan Sontag and Other Intimate Literary Portraits of the Bohemian Era* here...

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5449777

...and listen to his National Public Radio interview at the "Interview" button...

...and gaze at six of Field's photo galleries here:

www.edwardfield.com

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Letters:

In Praise of William Haywood Henderson

Dear BTWOF:

I wanted to say thank you, thank you, thank you for writing about the novels of William Haywood Henderson, an amazing author whose works are sadly not very well known. The other week when I was at my local bookstore looking at the latest releases, I saw Henderson's new novel, *Augusta Locke*, had just come out. I gasped, clutched it to my chest, and ran to the cashier. Henderson is one of a handful of authors whose new books I will buy without even caring if I can afford it or have time to read it. He's that good. I was so happy to see his works recommended and described in **Books To Watch Out For**. I hope this brings a whole bunch more readers to him, even if they have to scrounge in used book stores to find his novels (which is the way I find most of my favorite writers and books anyway). It's worth it. Maybe the success of *Brokeback Mountain* will lead someone to make a film of Henderson's first novel, *Native*. Thanks for providing an enlightening and fun

way to keep up with the latest and greatest in gay-related books.
- Jim Tushinski, San Francisco

Dear BTWOF:

I'm so glad you wrote about WHH's *Native*. I reviewed it for *Echo Magazine* when it was published, and it's one of the titles I kept for my personal collection. I wrote that "With *Native*, Henderson instantly joins the company of Edward Abbey, Tom Spanbauer, and Larry McMurtry as a writer with a unique and compelling vision of the modern West and a talent big enough to put that vision into words." Although the novel is out of print, it is widely available used for only a few dollars (see bookfinder.com).

- Ken Furtado, Phoenix

Dear BTWOF:

Thank you for devoting so much space to our upcoming books in the new *BTWOF*! One small error: You note the author of *The Illusionist*, Françoise Mallet-Joris, lives in San Francisco. This is incorrect. She actually lives in Paris. It's Terry Castle, who is writing the introduction, who lives in San Fran. I certainly know how hard it is to keep track of so many details on so many books! But we would like to set the record straight. Could you run a correction in the next issue?

- Diane Levinson, Marketing & Publicity Director, Cleis Press



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.



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