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The Gay Men's Edition

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By Richard Labonte

Subscribers to Books To Watch Out For's **Gay Men's Edition** have been patient through a couple of transitions. By Labor Day (or, as we say up here in Canada, Labour Day) I'll be resettled from Eastern Ontario, my home for the past several years, to small Bowen Island, reached by ferry from Vancouver, British Columbia.

What this means is: another change of address.

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About BTWOF

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

Email remains: tattyhill@gmail.com.

Books sent to my former McDonald's Corners or my even more former Perth addresses will be forwarded until Sept. 30.

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 Suzanne Corson.

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Part two of my assessment of self-published books will appear in the next edition of BTWOF/GME; in this issue: how to misread book sales figures; reviews of five novels, four memoirs/biographies, three academic titles, two poetry books, and one anthology about fags and their, excuse the retro term, hags; a roundup of books to watch out for from queer publishers; a guest review from Tom Cardamone; some Internet bits; two worthy plugs, a bestseller list; and a couple of letters.

"Gay Books a Bust" Story: It's a Bust

There was a truly silly story in a recent issue of the *Washington Blade*, which worked from the premise, as the headline touted, that "Gay Books are a Bust - Hyped Tomes Failing To Drive Sales."

So much is wrong with that headline. Gay books aren't a bust - gay presses are still in business. Several of the books cited by the author of the article, Katherine Volin, aren't even "gay" - certainly not Mary Cheney's defensive autobiography, or the whiny book by the wife of former New Jersey governor James McGreevey, Dina Matos McGreevey; a book on taste and style co-written by Tim Gunn, the fussy fashion maven from TV's *Project Runway* might be of interest to some queers - but it's not a gay book. And the headline itself is not even grammatical: it would make more sense - but still be inaccurate - to write, "Hype Fails to Drive Tomes' Sales." And "tomes" is such a *prissy* word...

Volin's take is that because the books she mentions haven't sold in the tens of thousands, they're failures. For the record, from a sidebar to her story, here are the figures she cites to "prove" her thesis: *Man in the Middle* by John Amaechi, print run 30,000, copies sold 9,000; *Now It's My Turn* by Mary Cheney, print run not available, copies sold 9,000; *Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins* by Rupert Everett, print run not available, copies sold 14,000; *Include Me Out* by Farley Granger and Robert Calhoun, print run not available, copies sold 3,000...

The Gay Men's Edition

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

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415.642.9993.

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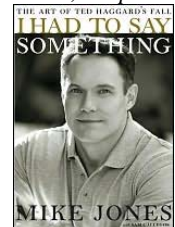
Books for the **Lesbian Edition** should be sent to the San Francisco address.



More: *A Guide to Quality, Taste and Style* by Tim Gunn and Kate Moloney, print run not available, copies sold 15,000; *Tab Hunter Confidential* by Tab Hunter and Eddie Muller, print run not available, copies sold 6,000; *I Had to Say Something* by Mike Jones with Sam Gallegos, print run 40,000, copies sold 1,000; *Here's What We'll Say* by Reichen Lehmkuhl, print run not available, copies sold, 6,000...

And more: *Silent Partner* by Dina Matos McGreevey, print run 85,000, copies sold 19,000; *The Confession* by James McGreevey, print run not available, copies sold, 38,000; *La Dolce Musto* by Michael Musto, print run not available, copies sold: 1,000; *There's Nothing in This Book That I Meant to Say* by Paula Poundstone, print run 80,000, copies sold 8,000; *Alone in the Trenches* by Esera Tualo and John Rosengren, print run not available, copies sold 3,000.

Fascinating to read - insider info book info is a treat for people fascinated by publishing. But. The source for these sales figures (not the publishers; they don't give them out)? "*Nielsen BookScan, which does not include sales figures from Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, food and drug outlets, or specialty stores,*" says a note at the bottom of the sidebar.



Well, yeah: does not include sales figures from SPECIALTY STORES! Where would a sensible person suppose that a hefty (albeit shrinking, because of Internet sales) portion of gay book sales might happen? How about Outwrite, Giovanni's Room, A Different Light, Lambda Rising, Oscar Wilde, and dozens more small independents, some queer and some queer friendly, that welcome queer readers and nurture queer books and whose sales aren't scanned by BookScan.

And there's one fact that Volin doesn't consider. Six thousand copies isn't bad for a gay celebrity book that doesn't have another hook. Former NBA player Amaechi's sales aren't bad, and the rule of thumb is that BookScan *at best* captures 75 percent of a book's sales; his tell-all has probably sold more than 8,000 copies, and almost certainly all to gay readers, with a few die-hard basketball fans in the mix. And the Tab Hunter bio, which was probably available at the Wal-Marts and Costcos of the world, likely sold closer to 10,000 copies than 6,000. Not bad for a book all about being a questioning gay boy, a closeted gay man, and a quietly out elder. The truth is, hardcover books that sell in the mid to high four figures have turned a profit, found an audience, and will have an afterlife in trade paper - a reality the article never considers.

That irksome headline is based mostly on two titles that are highlighted. Here's what the writer says about the first book: "*Now It's My Turn*, which promised details of Cheney's behind-the-scenes experience working on election campaigns for her father, Dick Cheney, marked the first acquisition for a new Simon & Schuster imprint," writes Volin. "It was aggressively marketed, with the author appearing on CNN's *Larry King Live*, and came with a reported \$1 million advance for Mary Cheney. Despite the blitz and best-laid plans, the book sold only 9,000 copies, according to Nielsen BookScan." Well, duh. Lesbians weren't going to buy it, since Cheney's not much of a dyke. And the right-wingers weren't going to buy it (that S&S imprint is for conservative titles) - because Cheney's a dyke. So who cares if it wasn't a bestseller! And why conflate its poor sales as a sign that all "gay celebrity" books are tanking.

The second title held up as an example of the "gay book bust"? Mike Jones's book about his three years of paid trysting with Ted Haggard. "Gay books, particularly memoirs or sensationalist works (*I Had to Say Something* by Mike Jones, the prostitute who allegedly had sex with disgraced pastor Ted Haggard, leaps to mind) get a lot of play in the gay and mainstream media, but don't always perform well," writes Volin. Duh again. At the time the *Blade* article was published (the paper dated July 27; the article, charitably, is based on figures from mid-July) the Seven Stories Press book had been on sale for... less than a month. Sure, its sales might top out at a few thousand. Point one: that's not terrible for a gay book. Point two: it's odd to accuse a book available for just a few weeks of contributing to that darned "gay book bust."

Articles about gay publishing are few and far between, and raw numbers are always fascinating. But thin research and apples-and-oranges extrapolations aren't of much use. Here's the full article, best read with some grains of salt:

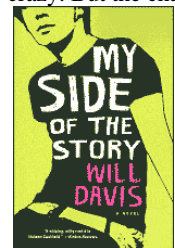
www.washblade.com/2007/7-27/arts/feature/10975.cfm.

.....

Five Very Different Novels

My Side of the Story, by Will Davis, Bloomsbury, \$14.95, 9781596912946.

The prose-style tics of this, like, coming-out story may well, like, drive older readers, like, crazy. But the charms of Davis's hilarious novel - about a rebelliously precocious sixteen-year-old gay British boy's tempestuous family life and fumbling sexual entanglements - more than compensate for its obsessive use of "like" (which is, after all, how a lot of teens speak). Jarold - called Jaz by his best friend Al (a straight girl) - is slick enough to slip into gay clubs in his search for romance, or at least sex, even though he's underage. He finally scores - but the man who picks him up is horrified to learn how young he is. Jaz is equally horrified when he encounters one of his teachers, a particularly stern fellow, at a gay bar, even more so when it turns out his teacher is dating the male therapist Jaz's parents take him to when they decide his sexuality must be controlled. Most young adult coming-of-age novels, no matter how



sincere, are pretty rote. This one, the debut of an author still in his twenties, is a wiseass pleasure.

"Am I a Gay Writer," muses Davis:

http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/07/am_i_a_gay_writer.html.

"Why I've Got to Plug My Book":

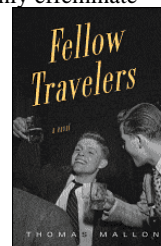
http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/04/why_ive_got_to_plug_my_book.html.

"Gay Men: Literary Heroines in Disguise?":

http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/03/how_many_literary_heroines_are.html.

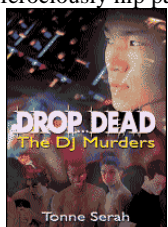
Fellow Travelers, by Thomas Mallon, Pantheon, \$25, 9780375423482.

Offbeat American history, with mere hints of homosexuality, has long been novelist Mallon's fictional playground. His 2004 novel, *Bandbox*, was a hilarious homage to 1920s magazine publishing, with attendant fops; 1996's *Dewey Defeats Truman*, with a benignly effeminate male teacher as a minor character, was set in presidential candidate Thomas Dewey's Michigan hometown during the 1948 election. But Mallon finally makes his own queerness clear in this seventh novel, noting in his acknowledgment that he is "venturing further into my own life's fundamentals." *Fellow Travelers* is about the fraught and feverish romance between a mid-level State Department careerist and a young, guilt-ridden Catholic man at the height of reactionary U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy's most frantic and furious anti-Communist, anti-fairy witch hunts. Their affair is doomed by the older man's ambitions and the younger man's self-doubts, but Mallon's account of closeted trysts in the midst of homophobic hysteria, and his evocative depiction of crass, backstabbing Washington politics, grandly fictionalizes an important slice of factual gay history.



Drop...Dead: The DJ Murders, by Tonne Serah, Southern Tier Editions, \$12.95, 9781560236351.

Circuit boyz, underground klubs, Azian fags - this wicked romp through San Francisco's ferociously hip party scene challenges spelling orthodoxy, but all those z's do add extra zip to a



campy contemporary mystery. Deejays are dropping dead - literally, from their overhead booth onto the sweaty kidz, or kids, on Klub Galaxy's dance floor below. The process of ferreting out "whodunit," amusing if not always logical, involves drug enforcement agents doing drugs, a transgender cop investigating the city's sleazy mayor, imperious drag queens, and Joey De Vera - nice Filipino boy by day, tweaked-up scenester by night. The novel's genesis was a series of weekly e-mails to the author's real-life fellow club-goers, so most chapters are just two or three pages, a format that speeds the plot right along; sixteen color illustrations are an ingenious addition. And

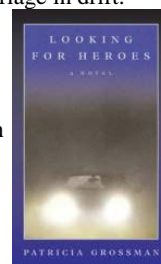
though the surface story is engagingly frothy, Serah - himself a club kid - has serious things to say about unsafe sex, harm reduction, the hypocrisy of the war on drugs, and - most interestingly - the queer lives of young Asian men.

Another review: www.reviewingtheevidence.com/review.html?id=6707.

Looking for Heroes, by Patricia Grossman, the Permanent Press, \$18 paper, 9781579621490.

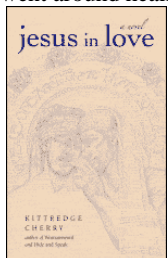
Grossman, whose previous novel *Brian in Two Seasons* won the gay-fiction Ferro-Grumley Award, sets her sights here on suburban Long Island angst and a sexless marriage in drift.

Gerald and Emma are moping through midlife crises, unable to connect sexually or emotionally. Emma, fired from her job as a social worker, is administering her dead artist father's wealthy estate, while Gerald finds release through trysts with a compassionate call girl. Neither is happy that their eighteen-year-old son, Aaron, motorcycles into Manhattan to sleep with a male fashion model, after his first boyfriend - a much older man - moved out of their basement. Subplots involving Gerald's racist septuagenarian father and Emma's wild-child lesbian sister add spice to the story, most of which is set in 1998. Jump ahead a few years: Emma and Gerald are divorced, but their son, now twenty-four and with a new lover, is the father of a baby girl born to a surrogate mother - a contemporary coda that brings the queer content of this quiet novel about life's discontents nicely to the forefront.



Jesus in Love, by Kittredge Cherry, AndroGyne Press, \$18.95 paper, 9781933993188.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have told the story already: this guy in first-century Palestine went around healing the lepers, hassling the money changers, feeding the multitudes with a



loaf here and a fish there, and spending forty inspirational days alone in the desert, before gathering around himself - or Himself - a flock of disciples. This theologically innovative novel's spin? Jesus was a man of fluid sexual appetites, aroused by John the Baptist's wiry muscles, getting off with a multi-gendered Holy Spirit, and getting down with a hot Mary Magdalene. Cherry's jaunty re-imagining of the story of Jesus casts him as a mystical erotic adventurer in the years before his crucifixion - nothing like the neutered historical Christ of fundamentalist lore. Other novelists have tinkered with the Biblical depiction of Christ: in Gore Vidal's *Live from Gogoltha*, he's a 400-pound man with a stereotypically homo-suggestive lisp.

This gay-sensitive story about the Christian big boy's explicit queer incarnation is a winsome affirmation of erotic love's sacred potential. Coming next: *At the Cross*, the sequel.

More about the book: www.jesusinlove.org/about.php.

Cherry is also editor of *Art That Dares: Gay Jesus, Woman Christ, and More*, (AndroGyne Press, \$38.95 paper, 9781933993294) a collection of eleven differing, artistic, and quite queer depictions of Christ, from F. Douglas Blanchard's twenty-four-panel gay vision of the Passion to Swedish Ohlson Wallin's photos of Jesus with contemporary LGBT people to the "notorious faggot painting" Becky Jayne Harrelson. Each author's depiction is accompanied by text that provides context for the image. Praise for the book:



"I approached *Art That Dares* with trepidation because my fundamentalist upbringing had instilled in me a distaste for explicitly sexual images or unconventional depictions of the deity. But Kittredge Cherry's wise, tender, and learned commentary calmed my fears and enabled me to behold the stunning beauty of these depictions of Jesus - as gay, as black, as the horned god, as a woman - and of his mother in a rapturous female partnership. Some of the images called forth tears too deep for words. This is an amazing, disconcerting, and sacred book, to be experienced again and yet again: a treasure," said Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, author of *Transgender Journeys and Sensuous Spirituality*.

And: "*Art That Dares* is a stunning, artistically haunting, spiritually revolutionary, provocatively honest book that is a fresh alternative to deadened religiosity. I give thanks for its passionate creativity," said the Rev. Canon Malcolm Boyd, poet, Episcopal priest, gay elder, author of *Are You Running with Me, Jesus?*

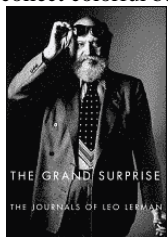
To see some of the images: www.jesusinlove.org/art-that-dares.php.



Four Stylish Queer Memoirs

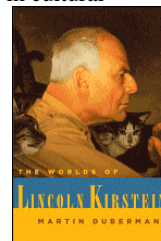
The Grand Surprise: The Journals of Leo Lerman, edited by Stephen Pascal, Alfred A. Knopf, \$37.50, 9781400044399.

For more than fifty years, Leo Lerman collected notable boldface names the way some people collect colorful butterflies. Edward Albee, Woody Allen, W. H. Auden, Maria Callas, Truman Capote, Noel Coward...Tina Turner, John Updike, Carl Van Vechten, Tennessee Williams, Franco Zeffirelli: he wrote about these celebrities, and hundreds more, for *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Mademoiselle*, or *Harper's Bazaar*. He befriended everyone who was anyone, and they came to his weekly salons and regular parties, first in the one-bedroom walk-up and then in the more expansive apartment he shared for decades with his lover, artist Gray Foy. After Lerman's death in 1994, long-time assistant Pascal discovered hundreds of notebooks squirreled away in desk drawers and stored boxes. Together with dozens of letters and scraps of a memoir never finished, he has shaped Lerman's gossipy late-night jottings and astute morning-after reflections into a Forrest Gump box of irresistible anecdotal bonbons about New York's cultural demimonde, Lerman's gay circle of friends, and his years as Conde Nast editorial director, when epochs of glitter and glam revolved around him.



The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein, by Martin Duberman, Alfred A. Knopf, \$37.50, 9781400041329.

Not so many decades ago, a long-overdue biography of a complex figure like dance impresario and ballet visionary Lincoln Kirstein might well have glossed over how very homosexual he really was. That's not the case with this impressive - even gripping - exercise in cultural reclamation. Though Kirstein was married for more than fifty years, he started sleeping with his peers at Harvard in the 1920s, and well into his sixties was surrounding himself with pretty young men. Duberman digs deeply, and compassionately, into his subject's queer core, illuminating how Kirstein's sexuality - he was "no slouch at sexual slumming" - shaped his impact on American arts, from the New York City Ballet to Lincoln Center. Dance fans will delight in Duberman's astute, unsparing critical summation of his bitchy, brilliant subject's relationship with dance choreographer George Balanchine - though even the most enthusiastic dance devotee might be overwhelmed by some of the minutiae the author includes. And anyone interested in Manhattan's gay demimonde will have great fun connecting the homosexual dots.



Brian Howard: Portrait of a Failure, by Marie-Jacqueline Lancaster, Green Candy Press, \$15, 9781931160506.

As this "portrait of a failure" makes clear, the man Evelyn Waugh once described as "mad,

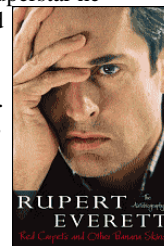
bad, and dangerous to know" well deserved his lack of a literary reputation. Surviving mainly off money doled out by his mother, he lived for years as a stylish vagabond, camping out in the homes of friends across Europe. He yearned for a man to share his days with, but two long romances were fraught with trauma. When he got around to it, he penned some of the most dazzling literary criticism in British letters. But this life story - first published in 1968, written by a friend who met him in the 1940s - makes clear why he was dubbed one of Britain's Bright Young People. More a pastiche than a formal biography, the rich portrait includes snippets of his reviews, excerpts from his letters, and remembrances by dozens of friends and contemporaries who both adored his style and deplored his substance. He was flamboyantly queer decades before gay liberation, as this delectable remembrance attests.

More on the flamboyant failure: www.glbtq.com/literature/howard_b.html.

***Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins*, by Rupert Everett, Warner Books, \$25.99, 9780446579636.**

Such a charming bitchy queen, this Rupert fellow, who's on a first-name basis with everybody from Warren and Sharon (Beatty and Stone) to Sean and Julia (Penn and Roberts), and dishes them all with brash but usually affectionate brio in this hyperkinetic showbiz tell-all. He knows a couple of one-name wonders too, most particularly Madonna; he met the superstar he affectionately refers to as Madge back before she traveled with a retinue, and gleefully shares the highs and lows of their tempestuous friendship. Anecdotes about the making of their disastrous movie, *The Next Best Thing*, include the time an aged John Schlesinger fell asleep while directing a scene. Everett, a teenage hustler before he became an actor, has no shortage of tales to tell about the men he romanced (or at least had sex with). He's had women, too, including Bob Geldof's one-time wife Paula Yates, a relationship embellished by his description of the Live Aid impresario's rather majestic endowment, seen but apparently not touched. Such juicy revelations pop up regularly in this vastly entertaining and amusingly preening autobiography.

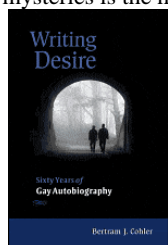
Author info, excerpts: www.ruperteverett.net.



Three Accessible Academics

***Writing Desire: Sixty Years of Gay Autobiography*, by Bertram J. Cohler. University of Wisconsin Press, \$24.95 paper, 9780299222048.**

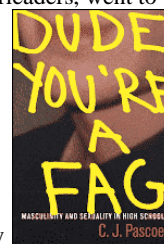
The queer writing genre that's become almost as ubiquitous as erotica anthologies or lesbian mysteries is the homosexual memoir. No surprise then that there's now a sometimes stuffy but generally engaging analysis of ten autobiographies chronicling gay lives across five decades. Cohler distills the high points of each writer's experience, then neatly knits their stories together to craft an insightful study of how queer lives - and their place in society - have evolved. For the record (and every one of their books ought to be read in full): Martin Duberman and Alan Helms are the writers assessed who were born in the 30s; Andrew Tobias and Arnie Kantrowitz, in the 40s; Tim Miller and Mark Doty, in the 50s; Marc Adams and Daniel Mendelsohn, in the 60s; and, representing the 70s and the 80s, Kirk Read and a blogger - not the author of a book - who calls himself BrYaN. Through Cohler's erudite assessment of their lives, the personal really is political.



***Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*, by C. J. Pascoe. University of California Press, 240 pages, \$19.95 paper, 9780520252301.**

For eighteen months, Pascoe prowled the halls of "River High," a racially diverse working-class high school somewhere in California. With the permission of school officials, she listened in on conversations, sat in on classes, scouted out tomboys and cheerleaders, went to sports events and dance rehearsals, and interviewed macho athletes and the school's few "out" gay boys. The result of her ethnographic fieldwork is an incisive assessment of teenage masculinity, gender conformity, and sexual confusion - and a revealing examination of the rampant but not surprising homophobic teasing to which gay students (or indeed anyone considered uncool) are subjected. Pascoe considers why hormonal schoolboys use "fag" as an all-purpose epithet, and through her interviews learns how the real fags - and the dykes and transgender students, too - cope with such pervasive homophobia. Her analysis is academic but accessible; the book is most lively when she quotes students at length. Transcriptions of their boasts, their fears, their triumphs, and their desires - cocky straights and cowed gays alike - illuminate the intricacy of surviving adolescence in a hostile environment.

Pascoe blogs about her book: <http://feministlawprofs.law.sc.edu/?p=1898>.



Proust in Love, by William C. Carter, Yale University Press, \$26, 9780300108125.

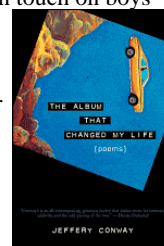
For the big picture on Proust, there's no better book than Carter's own recent biography, *Marcel Proust: A Life*. But for the homosexual skinny, he's now written about Proust in love - or, more to the point, and with just a couple of exceptions, about Proust in an ongoing condition of unrequited lust for straight men and unsatisfying liaisons with chauffeurs, tradesmen, and others from the servant class. Carter doesn't claim definitively that the conflicted author of *In Search of Lost Time* was exclusively gay in his romantic longings, sexual proclivities, and suffocating love. But this highbrow-gossipy biography leans strongly that way: the author's sense is that Proust, who lived in fear of public exposure as a queer - he even fought a duel to defend his honor - used flirtation with beautiful women to deflect suspicion. It helps to have read *In Search* to catch all of Carter's scholarly allusions, but there's enough historical dish here to both titillate and educate the "I've-been-meaning-to-get-to-it" gay reader.



Two Celebrations of Poetry

The Album That Changed My Life, by Jeffery Conway, Cold Calm Press, \$14.95, 9780978650100.

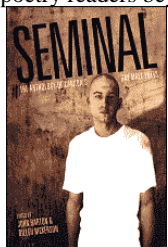
The title poem in this hybrid collection of accessible poetry and prose - a paean to the New Wave music that liberated a queer boy's soul - is a delightful distillation of Conway's concerns: it's sexy, melancholy, witty, nostalgic, and intimate. Poems in the first section touch on boys and their tattoos, the poverty of poets, time spent on Fire Island, and memories of HIV and death; those in the closing section offer intimate autobiographical glimpses. Between them is "Starstruck," a twenty-page prose remembrance of dozens of Conway's encounters, mostly as a bartender and a cater-waiter, with a galaxy of celebrities. He snatches Lauren Bacall's snot-soaked and lipstick-stained tissue for a souvenir, cruises a "hunky" but unrecognized Alec Baldwin, purloins a pair of Gregory Hines's underwear when he's changing into his caterer clothes, and swipes extra shrimp for his poetry professor - Allen Ginsberg - when Ginsberg shows up at a party Conway is working. The vignettes are a pithy pleasure, mini-essays with the same casual depth as the poems that bookend them.



Read an excerpt: www.coldcalmpress.com/Contents.html.

Seminal: The Anthology of Canada's Gay Male Poets, edited by John Barton and Billeh Nickerson. Arsenal Pulp Press, \$21.95 paper, 9781551522173.

It's probably safe to say that, of the fifty-seven queer poets collected in this authoritative anthology, the names of fewer than a dozen will be recognized by any but the most fervent poetry readers beyond Canada's borders. Among those who might be known: the late Edward A. Lacey, published by and a translator for Gay Sunshine Press, and Brion Gysin, a Beat compatriot of William Burroughs; and the still-living Ian Young, a pioneer of Canada's gay publishing scene; bill bissett, whose experimental style has foreign followers; and George Stanley, who was born American and consorted poetically in San Francisco with the likes of Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer before moving to Canada in 1971. Younger writers with a body of recognizable work include erotic and literary fiction author Andy Quan; playwright, performer, and novelist Sky Gilbert; filmmaker Ian Iqbal Rashid; and David Watmough, author of eleven semi-autobiographical novels. As for the rest? They may be unknown outside Canada, but their



presence in this volume provides solid proof that the country has a substantial queer poetic canon all its own.

Read an excerpt (pdf): www.arsenalpulp.com/excerpts/Seminal.pdf.



One Offbeat Antho About Fags & Hags

Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys: True Tales of Love, Lust, and Friendship Between Straight Women and Gay Men, edited by Melissa de la Cruz and Tom Dolby, Dutton Books, \$24.95, 9780525950172.

The fact of "fag hags" is a hoary homosexual cliché with a vaunted history, even though the term itself may have fallen into a grumpy "politically incorrect" disfavor. But smart editing by Dolby and de la Cruz, a fag and a hag respectively for more than a decade, and good writing both by ladies with gay friends and by gays with lady friends, nicely trump correctness and cliché. Some essays merely skim the topic of gal-gay friendships: Gigi Levangie Grazer (wife of movie producer Brian) writes about a fey waiter



she didn't really know well but misses since his death, and Dolby's own candid entry is about a woman psychic who doesn't seem to have had any particular affinity for homos. Others, such as the contribution from Barneys New York creative director Simon Doonan, are old school giggly about the phenomenon. But most of the contributors - equitably including thirteen women and fifteen men - write with engaging depth and much humor about the instinctive, emotional, and sometimes sexual bonds between straight women and gay men.

Author info: www.tomdolby.com.

Author info: www.melissa-delacruz.com.

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Books To Watch Out For: New Titles Spring, Fall, & Winter

Sometimes I quote publisher catalogue copy, sometimes I quote a review I've written for another outlet, sometimes I "quote" from someone else's review; and if I've read a book and can heartily recommend it, I've given the title from one (*) to five (*****) stars.

Akashic Books



Like Son, by Felicia Luna Lemus, \$14.95, 9781933354217 (now out): New York, 1990s Los Angeles, and 1940s Mexico City, *Like Son* is the not-so-simple story of a father, a son, and the love-blindness shared between them. Meet Frank Cruz: a post-punk, sardonic, thirty-year-old who unwittingly inherits his dead father's legacy. Born a bouncing baby girl named Francisca to parents tangled in a doomed love affair, Frank grows up in both the poorest barrios and poshest hills of Southern California. A defiant loner, Frank leaves home at the age of eighteen for the big city, but instead is sucked back into helping his estranged and blind father navigate an untimely death.

Publisher info: www.akashicbooks.com.

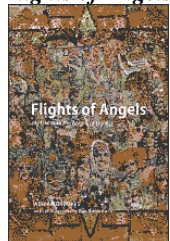
Arsenal Pulp Press

******The View from Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers***, by Matthew Hays, \$22.95 paperback, 9781551522203 (now out): Filmmakers profiled include: John Waters (*Pink Flamingos; Hairspray*), Pedro Almodovar (*Volver; Bad Education*), Gus Van Sant (*My Own Private Idaho; Good Will Hunting*), John Cameron Mitchell (*Hedwig & the Angry Inch; Shortbus*), Don Roos (*The Opposite of Sex; Happy Endings*), Randal Kleiser (*Grease*), Don Mancini (the Chucky films), Kenneth Anger, Gregg Araki, Lea Pool, Wakefield Poole, Monika Treut, Rosa von Praunheim, and Canadian filmmakers such as John Greyson, Bruce LaBruce, Robert Lepage, Patricia Rozema, David Secter, Lynne Fernie, and Aerlyn Weissman.



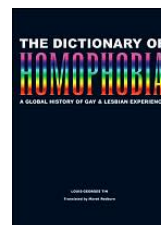
Comin' At Ya: The Homoerotic 3-D Photographs of Denny Denfield by David L. Chapman and Thomas Waugh, \$27.95, 9781551522258 (Oct.): "An amazing collection of full-color, sexually explicit 3-D photographs of men taken in the early 1950s by Denny Denfield, an amateur physique photographer in California who worked as an accountant for the U.S. Army. Denfield's photographs, never distributed publicly given their illegality at the time, display a skill, wit, and daring rarely seen."

Flights of Angels: My Life with the Angels of Light, by Adrian Brooks, \$24.95,



9781551522319 (Oct.): "The Angels of Light were more than a seminal performance troupe in the 1970s; growing out of the equally legendary Cockettes in San Francisco, the Angels were a way of life, putting on trashy, fantastical fairy tales come to life in a city and an era that was in the blissful throes of early gay liberation. Brooks was a pivotal member, author of many shows, and appeared in almost all of the productions from late 1974 to 1980. Featuring more than fifty full-color photographs by Daniel Nicoletta, a freelance photographer who worked in Harvey Milk's camera store in San Francisco in the 1970s, *Flights of Angels* is a remarkable, elegiac ode to queer life and culture before AIDS."

The Dictionary of Homophobia: A Global History of Gay & Lesbian Experience, edited by Louis-Georges Tin, translated by Marek Redburn, \$39.95 paperback, 9781551522296 (Nov.): "Based on the work of seventy researchers in fifteen countries, *The Dictionary of Homophobia* is a mammoth, encyclopedic book that documents the history of homosexuality, and various cultural responses to it, in all regions of the world: a masterful, engaged, and wholly relevant study that traces the political and social emancipation of a culture."



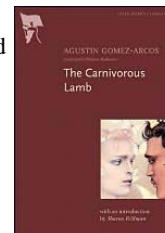
First Person Queer: Who We Are (So Far), edited by Richard Labonté & Lawrence Schimel, \$17.95, 9781551522272 (Nov.): "In this amazing, wide-ranging anthology of non-fiction essays, contributors write intimate and honest first-person accounts of queer



(gay/lesbian/bisexual/trans) experience: from coming out to "passing" as straight, to the devastation of meth addiction, to growing old to living proud. These are the stories of contemporary queer life - and by definition, are funny, sad, hopeful, and truthful. Representing a diversity of genders, ages, races, and orientations, and edited by two acclaimed writers and anthologists (who between them have written or edited almost 100 books), *First Person Queer* depicts the diversity, the complexity, and the excitement of contemporary GLBTQ life." Well, yeah, I've read it - I co-edited it - but giving this book stars would be presumptuous...

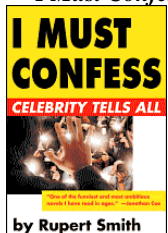
******The Carnivorous Lamb**, by Augustin Gomez-Arcos, \$16.95, 9781551522302 (Dec.): The Little Sisters Classic series brings great gay (and lesbian) books back into print for a new generation of readers. When this 1970s Spanish-set (but written in French) classic appeared in English translation in 1984, it was a quick word-of-mouth bestseller; it's a wickedly satirical allegory narrated by a thirteen-year-old boy growing up gay under the oppressive 1950s regime of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco.

Publisher info: www.arsenalpulp.com.



Cleis Press

*****I Must Confess: Celebrity Tells All**, by Rupert Smith, \$14.95, 9781573442893 (Sept.):



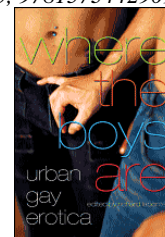
Marc LeJeune has had a remarkable career in the entertainment business. Despite the carping of critics, cruel twists of fate, and the treachery of former friends who were blind to his exceptional dramatic and musical talents, he has remained true to his unique artistic vision. From his early days as the face of Swinging London, to the late 1960s avant garde theater scene, through the sexually liberated cinema of the 1970s, to his current status as a much-loved household name and TV favorite, he comes out and tells all in this, his own astonishing story - a stinging satire of tell-all showbiz memoirs starring a self-deluded gay icon, reprinted from the 1998 British edition.

Best Lesbian Bondage Erotica, edited by Tristan Taormino, \$14.95, 9781573442879 (Sept.): It's (k)not hard to guess what this collection is all about...

Healing Sex: A Mind-Body Approach to Healing Sexual Trauma, by Staci Hines, \$25.95 paper, 9781573442930 (Oct.): The first encouraging, sex-positive guide for all women survivors of sexual assault - heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, coupled, and single - who want to reclaim their sex lives.

Another Love, by Erzsebet Galgoczi, \$14.95, 9781573442985 (Oct.): Lieutenant Marosi of the Hungarian border patrol has found the body of Eva Szalánczky, an old school friend whom he has secretly been in love with for many years. Eva was a lesbian, an outspoken critic of the communist regime, and a journalist whose stories were too hot to publish in the dangerous 1950s. Determined to find out the truth about her death, Marosi requests leave and heads for Budapest. As Marosi pieces together Eva's life, *Another Love* becomes more than a mystery about one woman, but a courageous, compassionate attempt to understand the political mystery of post-War Eastern Europe.

Where the Boys Are: Urban Gay Erotica, edited by Richard Labonté, \$14.95, 9781573442909 (Oct.): Earlier this year, Cleis published another anthology I assembled, *Country Boys*; this one is a sort-of sequel, stories about what happens when out queer meets the big city. Contributors are: Rachel Kramer Bussell, Kemble Scott, Sam J. Miller, Jameson Currier, Lee Houck, Erastes, Jeff Mann, Douglas A. Martin, Alana Noel Voth, Simon Sheppard, Alpha Martial, Dale Chase, Zeke Mangold, and Ted Cornwell.



Opening Up: Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships, by Tristan Taormino, \$16.95, 9781573441954 (Nov.): Monogamy is not the only option for creating loving, lasting relationships. Many people prefer relationships that include some form of polyamory, but lack practical information on making non-monogamy work in the real world. Woven throughout the book are interviews with real people in polyamorous relationships who candidly share their struggles, fears, hopes, and successes.

Best Lesbian Erotica 2008, edited by Tristan Taormino, \$14.95, 9781573443005 (Nov.): The series continues.

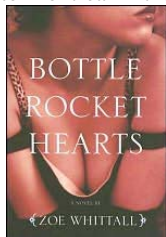
Best Gay Erotica 2008, edited by Richard Labonté, selected and introduced by Emanuel Xavier, \$14.95, 9781573443012 (Nov.): The series continues.

Best Gay Romance 2008, edited by, um, Richard Labonté, \$14.95, 9781573443043 (Dec.): The softer side of lust.

Publisher info: www.cleispress.com.

Cormorant Books

Bottle Rocket Hearts, by Zoe Whittall, \$19.95 paperback, 9781897151068 (now out): Welcome to Montreal in the months before the 1995 referendum. Riot Grrl gets bought out and mass



marketed as the Spice Girls, and gays are gaining some legitimacy, but the queers are rioting against assimilation, cocktail AIDS drugs are starting to work, and the city walls on either side of the Main are spray-painted with the words YES or NO; revolution seems possible when you're eighteen, like Eve, pining to get out of her parent's house and find a girl who wants to kiss her back. She meets Della - mysterious, defiantly non-monogamous, an avid separatist, and ten years older. Answering an ad for a roommate at the gay bookstore, Eve meets a new family of friends - Seven, homo-core sweetheart who defies all clichés, and Rachael, type-A activist and motivated poet.

Other Men's Sons, by Michael Rowe, \$18 paperback, 9781897151013 (out now): Profiles of the coming-out story of *Playgirl* magazine's 30th anniversary centerfold, Scott Merritt; Philip Ing, creative director of the legendary MAC Cosmetics AIDS fundraiser, Fashion Cares; interviews with diverse trailblazers, from openly gay horror superstar Clive Barker, to firebrand minister and gay rights activist the Reverend Brent Hawkes; personal essays that cover a range of subjects including the power of erotica, the beauty of men, the real reason for gay marriage, and the importance of the chosen family; the collection concludes with a powerful autobiographical essay, "My Life as a Girl," a meditation on the author's unique childhood.



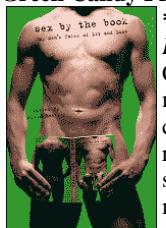
And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, by Elspeth Cameron, \$36.95, 9781897151136 (Sept.): All but forgotten, Frances Loring and Florence Wyle were



major forces in establishing Canadian sculpture and the style of Canadian national monuments. They met in 1906 at the Chicago Art Institute, where Florence was a teacher and Frances a student. Immediately forming a connection that would endure the rest of their lives, they moved together in 1910 to a studio in bohemian Greenwich Village, before relocating to the more conservative city of Toronto. Cameron reexamines their careers, from early days struggling to be recognized in a man's profession, to final days in separate rooms of a nursing home. Whatever the full extent of their relationship, the "Girls" continue to be defined as much by the bond they shared as by the works they created.

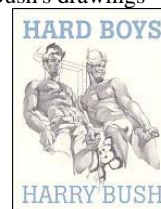
Publisher info: www.cormorantbooks.com.

Green Candy Press



****Sex by the Book: Gay Men's Tales of Lit & Lust*, edited by Kevin Bentley, \$15, 9781931160520 (Sept.): "Bars and chat rooms? Forget it. Colleges, libraries, and bookstores are the real hotbeds of hooking up. Many men find their first affirmation of gay sexuality on an obscure shelf at the campus library, so it's only natural that they return to bookish spots for further research. The original memoirs and stories in *Sex by the Book* treat books and sex as two equally vital, interlocking obsessions." Includes a short essay by me. Even so, the three stars are deserved.

Hard Boys, by Harry Bush, \$35 paperback, 9781931160544 (Nov.): Harry Bush's drawings for magazines such as *Physique Pictorial*, *Mr. Sun*, *Touch*, *Drummer*, and *Stroke* combined masterful technique, exceptionally well-endowed subjects, and a wicked sense of humor that made his work extremely popular. Despite long periods of self-imposed retirement and a fear of being outed that led him to destroy much of his own work, the reclusive artist's drawings were as recognized and recognizable as those of Tom of Finland throughout the 1960s and 1970s. *Hard Boys* examines the life and work of this brilliant, mysterious, and paradoxical gay artist.



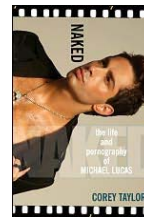
Publisher info: www.greencandypress.com.

Kensington Books



****A Secret Edge*, by Robin Reardon, \$15, 9780758219275 (now out): Reading catalogue copy between the lines suggests that this is a woman-authored YA coming-out queer novel, about a 16-year-old high school runner and his crushes on the boys among whom he lopes - a loner until his crush on a boy named Raj blossoms into something more. A delightful read, adding new charm to a familiar genre.

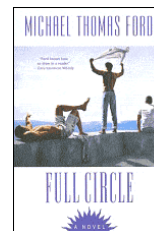
-**Naked: The Life and Pornography of Michael Lucas*, by Corey Taylor, \$15, 9780758217509 (now out): Must the bad acting in porn films be mimicked by bad writing about porn stars (and in this case, a producer and director)? Veering wildly between panting sycophancy and surprisingly bitter bits, this is an autobiography only a true devotee of video erotica could find at all meritorious. (That's minus one star, by the way.)



***Fingerprints and Facelifts: An L.A. Dolls Mystery*, by Rick Copp, \$23, 9780758209627 (now out): "Full of retro-fab fun, this smokin' first in a new series from Copp (*The Actor's Guide to Greed*) introduces the L.A. Dolls, three gutsy (and still very hot) retired female PIs. For seven years in the '80s, the Dolls made Charlie's Angels look like mere pussycats," exulted *Publishers Weekly*. Disbelief must occasionally be suspended, but this is indeed much fun, with gay guys backing up the exploits of the motherly gals reunited when it seems their children are in harm's way.

***Every Dark Desire*, by Fiona Zedde, \$14, 9780758217387 (now out): Two stars for sizzling: "Brutal. Unrelenting. Lusty. Savage. This isn't a book for the queasy reader. Zedde takes the standard fare of vampirism - sucking blood, superhuman strength, eternal life, shunning the sun - and intensifies it multifold," I wrote in a syndicated review.

****Full Circle*, by Michael Thomas Ford, \$15, 9780758210586 (Aug.): Now in paper; from my *PW* review of the hardcover: "The characters' many brushes with homosexual history - Harvey Milk trolling for votes in gay bars, the debut of Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* as a daily newspaper column, the unfurling of the first Rainbow Flag, the sexual energy of early ACT UP meetings - will resonate with gay readers, and serve as a mini-history lesson for any straight readers who might come across..." this sensual book.



****Lois Lenz, Lesbian Secretary*, by Monica Nolan, \$14, 9780758214225 (Aug.): A coup for this screwball comic novel: it was named *Entertainment Weekly's* pick of the week in early August. In a recent review, I wrote: "The 1950s. Virginal young women. Small-town values. Repressed deviant desires. Big-city temptations. No, it's not lurid new fiction from lesbian pulp pioneers like Ann Bannon or Paula Christian - though Nolan's campy novel is an exhilarating homage to their lusty novels of yore."

****Changing Tides*, by Michael Thomas Ford, \$24, 9780758210593 (Sept.): Ben Ransome is a repressed Marine biologist who knows a lot about sea slugs - but not much about people, including the angry daughter dumped on him one summer, or about bereft Steinbeck scholar Hudson James, come to Monterey to research the possibility that John Steinbeck and his best buddy, marine researcher Doc Ricketts, were lovers. Ford weaves literary and scientific fact through queer fiction to craft a warm, imaginative romance.



******First Person Plural*, by Andrew W.M. Beierle, \$15, 9780758219701 (Sept.): "One twin, Porter, is an athletic extrovert and straight. The other, Owen, is an intellectual introvert and gay," I wrote in a recent review. "They are as emotionally different as brothers can be - and, for better and often worse, inseparable from birth. That's because they're conjoined - born with two distinct (and eventually incredibly handsome) heads atop one shared (and eventually eye-fetchingly well-built) body.... From start to finish, this is a wholly original and wildly imaginative achievement, a unique exploration of the profound intricacies of human anatomy, and human love." One of the best reads of my year so far.

****When You Don't See Me*, by Timothy James Beck, \$15, 9780758216861 (Oct.): This one is fresh in my mind: I read it yesterday, as I write these "forthcoming" notes. Here's what I emailed to one of the four co-authors about the novel, which is set in post-9/11 New York, and is about a nineteen-year-old fag striking out on his own: "I sat in a quiet, small-town park today, beside a chortling, clean river, with birds swooping around me, and read a galley of *When You Don't See Me*, [which is] set in a bustling and grimy and chastened



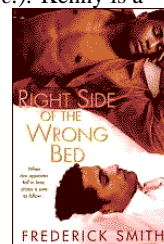
NYC. It took me out of my world and into its world quite nicely. Transported me, you might say. Very much enjoyed the experience. The book wasn't as peppy or frothy (both positive adjectives!) as previous "Becks," and I enjoyed that difference too. And the cover. Very pick-me-up-and-read-me-sexy, which is useful."

****When the Stars Come Out*, by Rob Byrnes, \$15, 9780758213242 (Nov.): Paper edition of a "sly charmer" about closeted politicians, the price paid by those who come out, and how not easy it can be to fall, and stay, in love.



Every Frat Boy Wants It, by Todd Gregory, \$15, 9780758217196 (Dec.): "At eighteen, Jeff Morgan is the quintessential all-American boy - blond, blue-eyed, and a star jock at his small Kansas high school. Enrolling at California State University-Polk, Jeff plans to become a writer. He also hopes that the macho nature of fraternity life will help him get over his lifelong attraction to other men. The reality couldn't be more different... pseudonymous erotic fiction from an author whose sizzling mysteries are set in New Orleans.

Right Side of the Wrong Bed, by Frederick Smith, \$15, 9780758219268 (Dec.): Kenny is a black man who's made it: he's got a great house, and a great job, and a great car (a silver BMW), and a great lover - until his hunky firefighter partner steps out on him after seven years, with a woman. Enter bar right: Jeremy Lopez, twenty-one, baggy jeans and plenty of bling, a club kid who won't take no for an answer. Fresh urban romance from the author of last year's *Down for Whatever*.



Suspect Thought Press

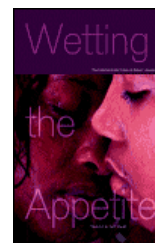
The little press that grew: its imprints now include *She Devil Press*, *Three Roads Press*, *Reverse Rapture Books*, and *Suspect Tots Books*... some publication dates are approximate.

The Forgotten Ones, by Douglas Ferguson, \$16.95, 978976341161 (Apr.): Calling all gods!

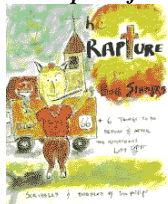


The Great God Convention is on once more - this time there's word of a second coming. But nobody wants Jesus or his gal pal Mary Magdalene around. Watch the old gang assemble in Vancouver and see the cosmic sparks fly... Those invited include the African Orishas, the Norse Aesir, the Faerie Folk, the Greek Pantheon, and the Native-American Animal Elders (after all, Vancouver is in their neck of the woods). Those not invited (but planning to crash the party): Lucifer and his gang of angels, the CEO and Board of Patriarchy, Inc. Why? Jesus and Mary are indeed preparing for the Second Coming. But this time, they're going to get it right. (Reverse Rapture)

Wetting the Appetite: The Collected Erotic Fiction of Blake C. Aarens, \$16.95, 9780977158249 (Apr.): "...explores the inner and outer reaches of sexuality from within the fertile imagination of an African American woman who survived horrific childhood sexual abuse to reclaim both her own desire and the desire she witnesses all around her... a literate sexual smorgasbord, with something for everyone between its pages. Anonymous straight sex bumps up against the first encounter between two men who will invariably become lovers, while dykes on bikes give way to a graphic fantasy of star fucking. (Suspect Thoughts)



The Rapture for Big Sinners: 66+6 Things to Do Before and After the Righteous Lift Off,



scribbled and doodled by Ian Philips, 9780978902322 (May): Philips has impish fun with the belief by Biblical literalists that when Jesus comes back to life among us, the faithful will be transported to Heaven, leaving all of us sinners behind to die horrid deaths...or leaving a nicer world for the rest of us; Philips tells us "where the Righteous are most concentrated so you can be sure to cash in on free housing"; dissects the Left Behind series of novels, and explores the Book of Revelations. (Reverse Rapture Books)

For Lack of a Better Word, by Thea Hillman, \$16.95, 9780977158201 (June): Memoir is redefined in a series of diary-like prose entries probing sex, gender, family, and community. (Suspect Thoughts)

Dying for a Change, by Sean Reynolds, \$16.95, 9780978902315 (July): Dead drag queen, hot Chicago summer, pre-Stonewall 1965...all the elements for a mad-romp lesbian murder mystery featuring Henrietta Wild Cherry. (Suspect Thoughts)

Invert(e): flagrantly queer culture, politics, sex, and dish #1, edited by Greg Wharton & Ian Philips, \$12.95, 9780978902339 (Aug.): Conversations among filmmakers, artists, authors, and activists, opinionated essays, assorted cutting-edge artwork, poetry, and memoir, all focused queerly on popular culture, politics, and sex. (Suspect Thoughts)



Corridors of Nostalgia: Poetry, by Cheryl Clarke, \$12.95, 9780978902308 (Sept.): Clarke's first volume of poetry since 1993, "with her characteristic deprecating and self-deprecating vigor... drives the reader over the landscape of remembrances and losses: from the loss of pubic hair ("bald woman") to the loss of life in the World Trade Center disaster in New York City on September 11, 2001 ("Urban Epitaphs"). (Suspect Thoughts)

TransForming Community, edited by Michelle Tea, \$16.95, 9780978902346 (Oct.): First-person narratives articulating how the queer community has been transformed by the emergence of transsexual and transgender visibility and empowerment. (Suspect Thoughts)

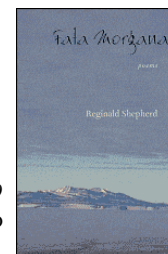
10,000 Dresses, story by Marcus Ewert, illustrations by Rex Ray, \$14.95, 9780978902384 (Nov.): For beginning readers, a 32-page picture book about Bailey, a transgendered young girl who every night dreams about magical dresses crafted from crystals, flowers, and windows through which to glimpse the world. (Suspect Tots)

Men With Their Hands, by Raymond Luczak, \$16.95, 9780978902360 (Dec.): The winner of Project QueerLit's 2006 debut fiction contest tells the story of a gay deaf man's life from 1975 to 2002 as he navigates the challenge of being a minority within a minority before finding love with an older deaf gay man with stories to tell of time, and men, passed. (Suspect Thoughts)

Publisher info: www.suspectthoughts.com.

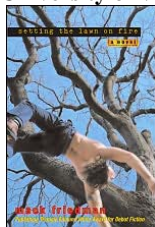
University of Pittsburgh Press

*****Fata Morgana***, by Reginald Shepherd, \$14, 9780822959519 (now out): "...mingles personal experience, history, mythology, politics, and natural science to explore the relationships of conception and perception, the self finding its way through a physical and social world not of its own making, but changing the world by its presence."



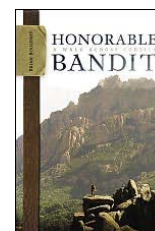
After the Fall: Poems Old and New, by Edward Field, \$14, 9780822959809 (Oct.): "*After the Fall* refers to the twin towers, and is gay poet Field's ode to the events that transpired thereafter - the war in Iraq and the attack on civil rights in America - as well as his own personal struggles over the indignities of aging."

University of Wisconsin Press



*******Setting the Lawn on Fire***, by Mack Friedman, \$17.95, 9780299213442 (Sept.): The paper edition of Friedman's mesmerizing debut novel about a young man's coming-of-age through childhood, adolescence, and young manhood as a fishery worker, an artist, and a hustler. Won the Publishing Triangle's Edmund White award for debut fiction; Friedman "has discovered the magic link between libido and humanity," says Bruce Benderson.

Honorable Bandit: A Walk Across Corsica, by Brian Bouldrey, \$26.95, 9780299223205 (Oct.): "Part travelogue, part memoir, and part lampoon...an impressionistic view...of a stunningly beautiful landscape" from the editor of *Best American Gay Fiction* and author of the novel *The Boom Economy*: Bouldrey and a friend spent two weeks walking across the island, and this is his infectiously tender account.



Sex & Isolation and Other Essays, by Bruce Benderson, \$24.95, 9780299223144 (Nov.): Eccentric street people, Latin American literary geniuses, a tranny performer, subcultures rarely explored and the rise of the Internet: the first American collection of essays by the prize-winning author of *The Romanian: Story of an Obsession*.

Coming next edition: the many, many books of Haworth Press' several imprints, what's coming from Alyson Books, and a few other publishers...

Signing in Bars, a Book Club's Demise, Up with Bi's

"Barnes & Noble wouldn't take him. Borders wouldn't take him. But DJ's Bar and Grill, which proclaims itself Colorado Springs' 'best, fun gay bar,' welcomed Mike Jones for a book signing Sunday afternoon," according to a newspaper account of an appearance by the muscular masseur who brought down fundamentalist preacher Ted Haggard, who was based in Colorado Springs. The town's one independent bookstore, Poor Richard's Bookstore, also declined to host an event for the book, *I Had to Say Something: The Art of Ted Haggard's Fall*. "Jones said he views the refusals as evidence local stores are controlled by religious groups," according to the news story. "Under the neon glow of Coors Light and Blue Moon beer signs, Jones' presence drew a small, low-key crowd":

www.gazette.com/articles/doors_24606_article.html/jones_mike.html.

Stephen Fraser likes three gay books for August, in a roundup for AfterElton: comic Bob Smith's comic novel with a romantic twist, *Selfish and Perverse*; Michael Thomas Ford's "assured" and frankly sexual new novel, *Changing Tides*, and Gwen Cooper's *Diary of a South Beach Party Girl*, a novel about a self-confessed fag hag's party-hard burnout:

www.afterelton.com/books/2007/7/augustbooks.

Canadian radio broadcaster Bill Richardson cries over Maupin's *Tales of the City* coda, *Michael Tolliver Lives*; cavils that it really, really, really isn't "gay literature" and ought not be slurred as such; and hints that there's a book eight in the series after all, even if Armistead was denying pre-publication that this book was a sequel to the six-volumes *Tales*:

www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20070728.BKMAUP28/TPStory/Entertainment.

Craig Young assesses the demise of InsightOut Book Club for AfterElton, with Ed Hermance, founder of Giovanni's Room in Philadelphia, chiming in that the dead book club was bad for gay bookstore business, and good riddance:

www.afterelton.com/Print/2007/7/insightout.

Zack Rosen found the queer spirit fiction anthology *Charmed Lives: Gay Spirit and Storytelling* kind of "schmaltzy... Gone are the oversexed party-boys, traded instead for a portrait of the gay man as a hippy-dippy victim of fate":

www.washblade.com/2007/2-23/arts/books/10078.cfm.

Heather Cassell quite likes *The Bisexual's Guide to the Universe: Quips, Tips, and Lists for Those Who Go Both Ways*, by Nicole Kristal and Mike Szymanski, from Alyson Books. "A user-friendly guide, the *Bisexual's Guide to the Universe* takes a joy ride fully equipped into the bi community. Kristal and Szymanski use their keen, politically incorrect senses of humor to slice and dice what it means to be bi in a straight and gay world, bringing everyone gay, straight, queer, and questioning along for the adventure. Packed with un-*Cosmo*-like quizzes, celebrity quotes about their bi ways, and lists such as 'You're probably bisexual if,' star bi's, and bi wannabes, it's a wild, side-splitting ride through the bisexual world, which happens to be straight and queer, but definitely not narrow":

www.ebar.com/arts/art_article.php?sec=books&article=227.

Sarah Schulman is interviewed about her new play, an adaptation of the Isaac Bashevis Singer novel, *Enemies, A Love Story*, and has this to say about the depiction of queers in her art:

"I've been frustrated because a lot of what I've written about AIDS or gay and lesbian characters has been very hard to get produced. In a way, I'm using this play as code. I began to realize that when you have a group of people who are despised, like gay people, or Jewish people, or black people, and then they have an extraordinary trauma on top of the usual trauma, the way the dominant culture can deal with representing it is to make them noble, pure, clean, and innocent. So the fact that something bad happens to them is really sad. In that way, you end up with these desexualized gay male characters who are not angry and not in any political movement, and are abandoned and then you feel empathy for them. These types of stories are based on a Christian paradigm that suffering makes you better. But actually, suffering makes you worse. People who were victimized were real people before their victimization. They were complex, some of them were nasty or did bad things. They were filled with contradictions."

www.theatermania.com/content/news.cfm/story/9993.

Clifford Chase's fabulous novel *Winkie* has been out for a while now, but it's worth highlighting again; Bookslut interviews him:

www.bookslut.com/features/2007_02_010645.php.

Doug Ireland chides Brian Whitaker, author of *Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East* (University of California Press) for failing to mention queer Arab writers - though he likes the book's political scrutiny.

"But the burgeoning fictional lesbian and gay literature written in French by Mediterranean Arab writers from former French colonies - who cannot publish in their own countries in Arabic - gets only a sentence. The talented Moroccan Rachid O, whose novels have won critical acclaim, is mentioned but not discussed; and not even mentioned at all are such interesting writers on gay themes as Algerian Aniss A., Egyptian Sonallah Ibrahim, Moroccans Kasim Nasserri and Bahaa Trebelsi, or Tunisian Eyet-Chékib Djaziri."

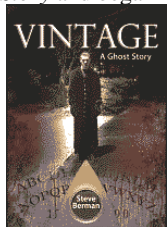
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YA for the Siouxsie & the Banshees Crowd

Vintage: A Ghost Story, by Steve Berman, Southern Tier Editions, \$12.95, 9781560236313. Review by Tom Cardamone

I am unsure what constitutes a YA novel these days; I've seen reviews and articles pointing towards some very adult themes, more so than what was available in my now very extinct adolescence. So I decided not to care and simply picked up Steve Berman's *Vintage: A Ghost Story* and began reading it on the train like any other book. I was immediately thrilled that it



was set in New Jersey. By that I mean delighted to go somewhere other than New York or San Francisco. Yes, we all escape to the big city and come out, but for those who can't or don't or won't, books like this, no matter how spectral the subject matter, are just that much more real. And a boy getting kicked out of his house for being gay, dropping out of school and meeting a cold specter who just happens to be hot is, well, *hot*. *Vintage* is a quick read and a relatively short book, but enough characters are introduced and in an appropriate context to move the story naturally (or I should say supernaturally) along, which also added an air of unexpected mystery.

Possible unsolved murders have given rise to two of the ghosts that haunt this book, and the main character's ability to see these ghosts complicates his need to connect to a real living person. I finished this very well-written book with the realization that as a youth I never cared or noticed if I were reading a book geared specifically towards kids or adults. I only knew if the story satisfied my hunger for all things dark and unknown. I was that kind of kid. And *Vintage* is the kind of book I was looking for and not finding. If you've been gobbling up the latest Siouxsie and the Banshees reissues then you know what I'm talking about and should probably read this one. Maybe even by candlelight.

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Something BTWOF Likes from the Lambda Literary Foundation...

Celebrate your favorite Literary Pioneers all year long with a new calendar, for just \$20!

The *LGBT Literary Pioneer Calendar* will be available in November 2007 and will feature: Ann Bannon, Betty Berzon, Samuel R. Delany, Martin Duberman, Leslie Feinberg, Barbara Gittings, Andrew Holleran, Audre Lorde, Paul Monette, Joan Nestle, John Rechy, and Edmund White. This will be the perfect holiday gift for the LGBT reader in your life, so place your order early! One calendar for \$20, three for \$50, or six for only \$100!

Four ways to order: Phone: 212.239.6575; fax: 212.239.6576; mail: Lambda Literary Foundation, P.O. Box 1957, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113; online:

www.lambdaliterary.org/calendar.

...and from Gay Liberation Pioneer Allen Young

Young co-edited, with Karla Jay, some of the earliest and most inspirational gay and lesbian anthologies of the post-Stonewall years, including *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, *After You're Out*, and *Lavender Culture*. Now he's dabbling in film, after a career in rural newspaper journalism:

Dear Friend of Butterworth Farm,

I recently produced a nine-minute video about Butterworth Farm, which had its "premiere" at a Rural GLBT Film Festival in Brattleboro, VT.

I collaborated with John Scagliotti and Dave Hall on this project, and am continuing

to work with them to further their gay-oriented video communications project.

You can see my film now (as "streaming video") on their website, www.gogaydvd.com. I hope you enjoy viewing it, and I welcome your comments.

Some of you will find yourselves in this film, and others of you will not; please understand this is just a very short film and the Butterworth Farm extended family is large.

This short film will be combined with other shorts on rural gay life and a DVD will be produced (for sale) sometime later this year... When you look at the website, you will also see that this is part of an ambitious program to support gay video production, one that is free of censorship.

Some of you may wish to do as I have done and join as a founding member of GoGayDVD to get this exciting new media concept for the LGBT community off the ground. At www.gogaydvd.com, a video rental plan (similar to Netflix) is available for a monthly rate as low as \$4.99.

The DVD rental business is a way in which members can enjoy movies while their support helps fund and eventually contribute ideas to this new original media concept that is being created via streaming and DVD compilations. John Scagliotti and Dave Hall are basically trying to create a new vehicle for uncensored media for the gay community - something that Netflix, Blockbuster, or PBS do not do. You can spend some time on the website and contact John and Dave if you have any questions.

Thanks, and best wishes,

Allen Young



Bestsellers From Our Bookstores

A Different Light Online, week of July 30

1. *Country Boys: Wild Gay Erotica*, edited by Richard Labonté, Cleis Press
2. *Brendan Wolf*, by Brian Malloy, St. Martin's Press
3. *Business Affairs*, by Menatplay, Bruno Gmunder
4. *Dad's Bedtime Tales: Volume 7*, by Handjobs, Avenue Services
5. *Deep Sex*, by Tom Bianchi, Bruno Gmunder
6. *Strings Attached*, by Nick Nolan, Little Eden Press
7. *Tangled Sheets: Tales of Erotica*, by Michael Thomas Ford, Kensington Books
8. *Treasure Trail: Erotic Tales of Pirates and the High Seas*, edited by Jack Hart, Alyson Books
9. *Twisted Tales from the Tank*, by Steve Geary, Nazca Plains
10. *The Bishop of Grunewald: A Tale from the Dungeon*, by Jardonn Smith, Nazca Plains

Either A Different Light (at least online) is more honest about what *really* sells, or online buyers like the smutty stuff, artistic and otherwise. The only two novels on its bestseller list (which changes weekly) are Malloy's *noirish* second novel, after *A Year of Ice*, and Nolan's accomplished self-published book (reviewed favorably in the last edition of [GME #31](#)). Malloy's book feels out of place on a list that includes, in addition to *Strings Attached* (a coming out story with benefits), two hardcore S/M titles, two thematic erotica anthologies, one author's erotic short stories, a book of daddy-son cartoons, and two pricy photobooks. It's like one of those "what object does not belong in this picture" puzzles...

"Who is Brendan Wolf? It all depends on who you ask.

* To the staff of a Minneapolis nursing home, he's the devoted partner of a much older man who's recently suffered a debilitating stroke;

* To the women of a conservative, Christian pro-life organization, he's the tireless volunteer grieving over the recent loss of his wife and their unborn child;

* To one gay activist, he's the unaffectedly charming, yet directionless and unemployed man that he's fallen hopelessly in love with;

* To his brother and his brother's wife, he's the lynchpin of a scam that will net them enough money to start their lives over somewhere new;

* To the general public, he's an armed and dangerous fugitive."

And the book really is that much fun!

For info: www.adlbooks.com.



Two Writers Writing about Writers on Writing

Dear BTWOF:

Gosh, Richard, what a *great* issue to come back to. I really appreciate what you've done re: the self-published works. Not just giving them sincere critiques as well as investing your time, but I like the ratings idea. Self-published books do need standards - if only to give pleasure to those of us who still love printed books and the whole experience of holding an attractive book. I also appreciated the coverage given to the rapidly diminishing/changing landscape of

publishers. While it doesn't make me feel any better knowing that writers everywhere are feeling the pinch and the shift, it does give me courage to know that my daily dose of career-depression is not so isolated. At age forty-seven, after twenty years of writing GLBT erotica professionally, and pretty near the top of my game, I watched most of my market (by way of PGW/Perseus) and a good chunk of my career disappear practically in an afternoon. I don't *ever* feel good when I know others are feeling bad, but it does give me a less self-involved perspective. It's all about perseverance, finding the strength to just keep going, to keep writing. For me, it's easier to persevere when I know for a fact that others are persevering, as well, and managing to keep their careers together.

- Marilyn Jaye Lewis, www.marilynjayelewis.com.

Dear BTWOF:

After reading Alexander Chee's Writer's Party Survival Guide, I was reminded of something I said at such a party years ago, a performance, I must admit, I have repeated numerous times:

Him, smugly after introduction: *"You're a writer?"*

Me: *"Yes."*

Him: *"Do you make a living as a writer?"*

Me: *"Oh, absolutely. Last year, I made (come up with a fictional answer that will knock the socks off him) \$252,000 writing. How much money did you make?"*

Usually at that point they are either so impressed with you that they hang around like flies, or they leave in disgust because "real people" are never asked either how much money they make, or if they make a living at what they do. No one would ever ask doctors, lawyers, or accountants if they make a living doctoring, lawyering, or accounting. However, a huge number of such people never practice any of these things. They make a living the hard way: clipping coupons, fleecing tenants, or waiting for rich relatives to die. It is part of the infantilization of artists in America that you are judged solely by success - and kept in this childish state until you make enough money and fame for them either to choke on it, or fear approaching you. This attitude does not prevail in most other civilized countries. So, take heart, Alexander, you are under no real obligation to impress them, only knock them off their ignorant feet.

- Perry Brass, belhuepress@earthlink.net, www.perrybrass.com.



Richard can be reached at tattyhill@gmail.com or at PO Box HP 24, Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G0 Canada. Books for review, author news, interesting links - all appreciated.



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