



## More Books for Women

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From Ann Allen Shockley,  
author of the lesbian classic *Loving Her*, comes a tale of an  
Historically Black College on the brink of its One Hundredth  
Anniversary – while internal academic conflicts and a shocking  
discovery about an admired faculty member create a fascinating  
maze of gender and racial identity issues.

- January 2006 -  
Volume 2 Number 1



Welcome to the fourth issue of **More Books for Women**. This issue leads with some thoughts on books and Black History Month, then tours through some excellent books, and ends with news of feminist publications (The *Women's Review of Books* is back!), presses and bookstores.

Enjoy!

Carol Seajay,  
Publisher



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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.

### More Books for Women

covers the finest in thinking 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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### The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the

### Linda's Recommendations For the Kids



February is Black History Month and publishers use it to market books about prominent African Americans and historical events. I'm all for it, and so are most of our public schools and libraries in Chicago. This year there are some great new books in which the art is so lovely and the texts so compelling that they will be enjoyed year round, in homes as well as schools and libraries.

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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### 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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Canada.



**Mr. Williams** by Karen Barbour is a richly painted story of a Louisiana farmer, told in his own words. The combination of brightly hued paintings and simple text evoke a time and a place that most urban and suburban children will find as exotic and quietly beautiful as life in a hobbit-filled forest. Henry Holt, \$16.95.

### The School Is Not White: A True Story of the Civil Rights Movement

by Curtis James, is another stunningly illustrated, simply told story – this one is about the Carter family, Mae Bertha and Matthew and their eight children, who were committed to the integration of schools in Drew, Mississippi. This story was told by Constance Curry in *Silver Rights* for adult audiences, but Rappaport makes the Carter children's determination to withstand white hostility both understandable and heroic to children in the 6 to 10 range. Hyperion/Jump at the Sun, \$16.99.



**Rosa** by Nikki Giovanni with glowing collage paintings by Bryan Collier, is the movingly told story of Rosa Parks' decision to not relinquish her seat on the bus and to accept arrest, and how that one act became a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. Nikki Giovanni knew Mrs. Parks and captures her quiet dignity, her humanity and strength. Colliers' luminous paintings help communicate the power of her "aura", the shield of righteous determination, that protects her from police brutality. One of the best picture-book biographies I've ever seen. For ages 6 and up. Henry Holt, \$16.99.

### A Voice of Her Own: The Story of Phillis Wheatley, Slave Poet

by Kathryn Lasky, illustrated by Paul Lee, is written in short "chapters" and should appeal to the primary grade reader. Wheatley's story and that of her "mistress" who taught her to read English, is truly remarkable. This book is a good introduction for children to revolutionary war times as well as to the first published black woman poet. Lasky's sympathetic text also shows how difficult it was for a brilliant woman to find a place in a segregated society. Candlewick, \$6.99.

**Portraits of African-American Heroes**, by Tonya Bolden with beautiful, sepia-toned paintings by Ansel Pitcairn, offers three-page descriptions of twenty heroes, eight of them women, who fought for recognition in the arts, politics, sports, education, and civil rights. The portraits are arranged chronologically, so reading them in order reveals a theme of continuing work and achievement in the struggle for full humanity for African Americans. Stirring and engaging for ages 8 and up. Puffin, \$11.99.

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### ...and for Adult Readers

As a book-group leader, I always choose writing by African American women in February (as well as other months, but I insist on it in February), and this February we're discussing April Reynolds' **Knee-Deep in Wonder**, just out in paperback. To say it is the story of three generations of African American women in a deeply Southern rural setting is true, but it is a Faulkner-esque, memorable, soulful presentation, rich in story and character and unforgettable. The ending is wild and surreal - and should give us plenty to talk about. Picador, \$14.00.



Another great choice for book groups who've already read Morrison and Hurston is playwright Suzan-Lori Parks' only novel, **Getting Mother's Body**. Parks' homage to Faulkner is deliberate: it is a kind of rural black version of *As I Lay Dying*. The characters walk off the page, especially young, desperately pregnant Billie and her mother's former lesbian lover Dill, long accepted as a man by the folks in town. There's a lot of humor in this story and the politics are wonderfully subtle. Parks, as you might imagine, excels at dialogue. There's also a book group guide tucked in. Random House, \$12.95.



**What I can't wait to read:**

Marge Piercy's new novel **Sex Wars**, all about the fascinating characters of the first wave: Victoria Woodhull, Susan B., and a moralistic cop at war with women trying to take charge of their lives and their sexuality. Morrow, \$24.95



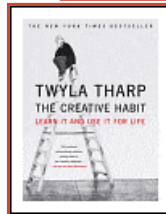
**A Plea for Eros**, essays on art and autobiography by Siri Hustvedt, because I loved her last novel, *What I Did for Love*. Picador, \$15.00.



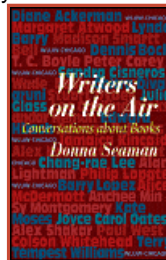
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**Ann Christophersen is reading...**

After a two-year run in hardcover (it was selling so well that the publisher didn't put it out in paper on the usual one-year schedule), Twyla Tharp's book **The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use it for Life** is now in a very affordable paper edition. What that means to me is that anyone with the slightest hankering to lead a more creative life should have a copy close by. It is a practical guide with hundreds of useful tips on how to bring a latent creativity to the fore or give a big boost to what's already going on. At the same time it is written with such intelligence and in such a lively and exuberant style that it bears no resemblance to any "do this" book I've ever read. Do yourself a big favor: read this book. You'll come to treasure it. Simon & Schuster, \$15.



A book critic, editor at *Booklist*, and essayist, Donna Seaman also hosts *Open Books* a Chicago radio show, which has been airing now for eleven years. On her show, Donna provides an opportunity for writers to talk about their ideas, their writing, and their lives. She has a superb ability to get her subjects to open up, the result of which is a level of conversation that one only gets from great interviewers: Studs Terkel and Terry Gross come to mind. In her new book **Writers on the Air: Conversations about Books**, those of us who missed her live can read about some of the writers she interviewed and "listen in" to insightful comments from the likes of Margaret Atwood, Joyce Carol Oates, Alexander Kotlowitz and many more. Paul Dry Books, \$24.95.



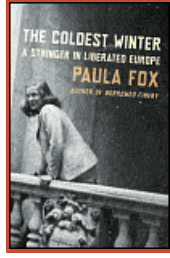
Would you like a healthy dose of theory and a vigorous exercise in thinking to usher in 2006? If so, I would suggest **Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, and Species Membership**. It is written by Martha C.

Nussbaum, Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, a brilliant scholar, teacher, writer and feminist who thinks hard and continuously about social justice. In her earlier book, *Women and Development*, she established a new theory she calls the "capabilities approach," advancing her argument that the measure of a country's development should be how well it positions women as full participants in society and full recipients of what that society has to offer. In her new book, she both applies that theory and breaks some new ground in addressing other issues of justice:

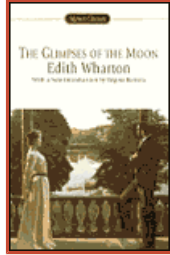


"doing justice" to people with disabilities, "extending justice" to people across political and economic boundaries, "facing" issues of justice in our treatment of animals. What I love about Martha Nussbaum's books is that they are serious and important - *and that I can (sort of) understand them*. They are challenging, to be sure, but she writes to be understood and it is an enormous pleasure to watch her thought process and see one's own moving along with it. Will I read the entire book? That depends on my intellectual stamina. Will I be strongly influenced by however much I read? Absolutely. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, \$35.

Like her remarkable first memoir, *Borrowed Finery*, Paula Fox's second installment in writing about her life, ***The Coldest Winter: A Stranger in Liberated Europe***, is a fine, refined gem of a book. I am a huge fan of economical, elliptical prose - and Paula Fox is an absolute master of the style. Working in Europe in 1946, her observations of life in post-war Poland and fascist Spain are subtle and extraordinary: she conveys more in a single paragraph than many other writers do in entire pages or chapters. It would take me many more sentences to adequately convey the brilliance of her writing: the complexity of the metaphors; the emotional distance that, paradoxically, creates forceful emotion; the beauty of the language. Just read. Henry Holt, \$18 hardcover.



In this column I will, from time to time, comment on books by classic women writers that I am reading either for the first time or have just reread.



***Glimpses of the Moon*** by Edith Wharton is one such novel and has recently been reissued in a beautiful paper edition by Pushkin Press. First published in 1922, the story of Nick and Susy, lovers who are determined to lead the good life but who don't have the personal resources for it, is familiar ground for Wharton. So are the bewildering compromises they are willing to make to get what they want. Wharton's milieu is New York society in the 20s and 30s and her novels would be interesting to read for the social and cultural history alone. But the complex pressures her characters face and the moral dilemmas they slog through are very moving, and I have never read anything by Edith Wharton (and I've probably read twenty of her novels and story collections) that hasn't been quite affecting. I liked ***Glimpses*** quite a lot, but my favorites include *The Age of Innocence*, *The House of Mirth*, *A Mother's Recompense*, and *The Custom of the Country*. Pushkin Press, \$16.



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### Pam Harcourt raves (and rants)

Michelle Tea's novel, ***Rose of No Man's Land***, is a manic valentine to the flashiness and grittiness of malls, tattoos, and instant girlfriendship. Trisha's family life sucks, and at the painful start of the story she barely tolerates being harassed by her sister into "normal" teengirl clothes and employment. A new friendship with shoplifting smoker Rose is mad exciting, and through a night of manic adventures I felt like I was watching Trisha forming herself. Michelle Tea's exhilarating punk-rock prose had me flying through this book. As always, she finds the beautiful in places no one thought to look. Due February 14! MacAdam/Cage, \$22.



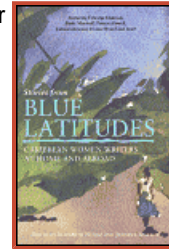
***Third Girl From the Left*** by Martha Southgate is the story of three generations of black women, each with a different, loving relationship to film. Angela is the "third girl from the left" in blaxploitation movies – not exactly the star she set out to be when she moved to Hollywood. Her mother Mildred found passion as a spectator at the movies – exactly how many times in one week is too many to walk to the theater and see *Carmen Jones*? And daughter Tamara discovered watching *She's Gotta Have It* that her love would be the view from behind the lens. Southgate perfectly captures the ache of misunderstanding between generations. The film history is fascinating and gives great texture to all three stories. I think Angela's is my favorite - the point of view of a black woman in the 70s film scene is not one I can remember ever reading. She and her complex personal relationships really came to life for me. Houghton Mifflin, \$24.



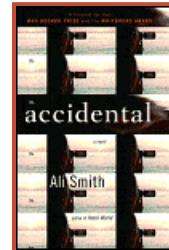
Kathryn Davis' strange, beautiful **The Thin Place** is the story of a town changed by a gift one of its residents possesses: 12-year-old Mees Kipp can bring the dead back to life. It's not only the story of the people in the town of Varennes - there are passages from the point of view of the local beavers, a dog savoring the rush of escape from her house to run around crazily with other dogs, the consciousness of the corn.... Davis tells the town's story soaring elegantly from living thing to living thing, but also using different primary documents - the schedule for a mass in a church, local police blotters, horoscopes. Odd, lovely, and full of light. Little Brown, \$23.95.



I picked up **Stories from Blue Latitudes: Caribbean Women Writers At Home and Abroad**, edited by Elizabeth Nunez and Jennifer Sparrow, thinking it would give me some insight into an area of the world (and of literature) that I find fascinating, while fully expecting to endure some typical anthology unevenness. No way! This collection was a complete treat, immensely rich, and I didn't skip one story. Edwidge Danticat, Jamaica Kincaid, Nalo Hopkinson, Andrea Levy - and none of the writers I hadn't heard of were out of place among these big names. The lives of girls and women who are in or from the Caribbean are illuminated in these stories about mothers, fathers, girlfriendship, sexual pleasure and sexual exploitation, race, class, police terror, imperialism and tourism, food, love, economics, and the connection of place and self. This book is valuable in the way anthologies of under-represented people always are, while the stories were so engaging as to transcend my idea that I "should" read it and made it pure pleasure. Seal Press, \$16.95.



Ali Smith's dazzling first full-length novel, **The Accidental**, moves between the points of view of four family members reacting to newcomer Amber, a woman who recreates all of their lives, who is herself, in many ways, created by the movies. Smith gives us many ideas about beginnings and endings, she gives us world politics and academic politics and personal politics, she gives us pages of poetry that are simultaneously hilarious and moving. Like reading *On Beauty*, I wasn't far into this book when I had that feeling that I was traveling through a story led by an author so brilliant that she could really play around, meander down different paths, and I'd follow her gratefully. I can't wait to read this a second time. Pantheon, \$22.95.



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**Tish Hayes recommends.....**

I had no idea what to expect when I picked up the newly reissued copies of Joanna Russ' **We Who Are About To...** and **The Two of Them**. Although I really enjoy science fiction and think it's an important genre (mostly for its ability to use metaphor to subvert and question social convention), I don't often hold it to the same literary standards I maintain for the rest of the fiction I read. So it was to my surprise and pleasure that I discovered within the first few pages that Joanna Russ is an extraordinary writer. Her minimalist style captures with perfect clarity settings and characters and, because the worlds are so unfamiliar to us, this style also creates a tension and anticipation for the reader: the narrative isn't a cozy one, anything could happen at any moment. Rarely do I find a writer who can tell a good story, engage me politically and philosophically, and stun me, sentence after sentence, with the skill of her craft. I am excited to have found Joanna Russ among these few.



**We Who Are About To...** begins with a crash on an uninhabited alien planet and, without hope of rescue, the group starts to think of colonizing the land and propagating the species. Of the group, only our narrator questions this plan, and the mere question earns her an outsider status and eventually threatens her safety. I hate giving away plot points, so I hesitate to say much

more, but Russ turns a common sci fi trope upside down and in doing so questions basic assumptions about what we value both personally and as a society.

**The Two of Them** might be the most satisfying feminist novel I have ever read—not because of the answers it provides (there aren't any here), but for the questions it asks. The focus of the novel is on Irene, who leaves 1950s America as a teen for a freer life as a TransTemp agent. Despite this education and the status her job provides, Irene begins to question how free she really is and begins to see her life as something always in relationship to the men around her. The particular job that she and her partner are working brings these thoughts to a crisis point. The way Joanna Russ handles the narrative in this novel is remarkable—at a critical moment she breaks the construct of story and as the author addresses the reader, pulling us out of the narrative and forcing us to confront the implications of what we have just read and our feelings about it. I cannot recommend these two novels highly enough. Thanks to Wesleyan University Press for putting them back in print and providing insightful introductions for each. Wesleyan University Press, \$14.95 each.



With **On The Ice**, Gretchen Legler reveals the coldest, most isolated and inhospitable place on earth to be full of beauty, human warmth and compassion, and the perfect spot for self-discovery. It is packed with stories of the people who work and live in this land: scientists studying the ice to predict the repercussions of climate change on our planet or looking at the light from stars billions of years past and the folks who cook the meals for the station, fix the machines, do the drilling, or maintain buildings and vehicles in the most extreme weather imaginable. It is also full of the stories of those who came before, the explorers who risked their lives to discover (possibly conquer) something new. In the midst of all of these stories, Gretchen Legler reveals her own journey—how Antarctica knocked aside her agendas and how each new experience helped her to set aside fear and pain from the past and move on to a new love. She invokes Thoreau's passionate relationship with nature as she describes the profound beauty of the ice and sky around her. Legler's descriptions are stunning and are enough to make me want to pack my bags and brave the cold. Milkweed Editions, \$15.95.



**Where Love is Found: 24 Tales of Connection**, edited by Susan Burmeister-Brown and Linda B. Swanson-Davies, looks a lot like a book I wouldn't enjoy. The pastel cover, the photo of flowers, and the title in red script suggest a kind of romance story and a caliber of writing I'm not particularly interested in. Luckily, I have a little inside info that assuages the concerns the cover might bring up for anyone with discerning taste in fiction: The collection is edited by two women from *Glimmer Train Stories*, an excellent literary journal, a quick glance at the table of contents reveals an interesting mix of established authors and writers still in the beginning stages of their careers, and the actual content is anything but light fiction. These are stories that attempt to map our complicated connections to each other, and in doing so capture the heartache of loss, bittersweet memories, and the joy found in moments shared with another. A fantastic collection full of great writing. Washington Square Press, \$15.00.



**Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel**, by Jean Kilbourne, was the Young Feminist Book Group selection for December, and although it is a few years old, I think it is the perfect antidote to that whole consumer-crazed month. Despite our ability to recognize that we all at times let food or alcohol or material goods substitute for the real personal relationships in our lives, Kilbourne clearly points out that it is someone's job to make us feel that way and make sure we continue to feel isolated and dependent not on each other but the miracle we can buy. I don't always agree with the route Kilbourne takes to get to her conclusions, but she does an excellent job of showing the insidious ways advertisers work their way into our hearts and minds, keeping us distracted from the things that would really make us happy. Free Press, \$15.00.



## Mysteries

By Nan Cinnater



African American writer Paula L. Woods has a fourth entry in her excellent series about LA cop Charlotte Justice and her extended family. In **Strange Bedfellows** (\$23.95, One World/Ballantine) Charlotte revisits an old case. A toy manufacturer remains in a coma after a drive-by attack on him, his wife, and their business associates, two African American Muslims. Woods is brilliant at combining racial politics, recent history, and character development into a well plotted, smoothly readable mystery. Her characters change over time as well, which is a good reason to read the whole series from the beginning: **Inner City Blues**, **Stormy Weather**, and **Dirty Laundry** (all \$6.99, Fawcett).

**First Drop** by Zoe Sharp (\$23.95, Minotaur/St. Martin's) begins, appropriately, on a roller coaster - and what a ride it is! Female British security expert Charlie Fox is working as bodyguard/babysitter to a Florida teenager, and they're spending the day at a theme park when her charge is attacked. Very soon, Charlie and the surly fifteen-year-old boy are running for their lives. This is a nifty female variation on the formula thriller, and Charlie's British culture shock in places like Fort Lauderdale and Daytona Beach is subtly amusing. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, just like I occasionally enjoy a well-crafted action movie. But the body count mounts, just like in the movies, to the point where the shoot-outs are, thankfully, numbing. Personally, I object much more to all those serial killer books that revolve around the psycho-sexual abuse of women, so I didn't much mind when corrupt cops and corporate bad guys - and even innocent bystanders - got wasted.

**When Secrets Die** by Lynn Hightower (\$14.00, Pocket) is another female variation on the thriller - creepier but equally compelling. Lena Padgett is a Kentucky private eye who is dedicated to righting the wrongs suffered by women in a violent male society. Here Lena takes on the cause of Emma Marsden, accused of poisoning her own child when her son dies and she disputes the clinic's right to sell his organs. The case involves hot-button medical issues usually more in Robin Cook's territory, but Hightower writes a lean, mean sentence and she builds extraordinary suspense. The previous Lena Padgett thriller, now in paper, is **Fortunes of the Dead** (\$7.50, Pocket). Lena Padgett debuted in **Satan's Lambs** (\$14.95, Felony and Mayhem Press), one of the scariest books I ever read, for which Hightower won the Private Eye Writers' Shamus Award in 1993.



You might think from the above that I'm quite bloodthirsty, but actually I prefer cozy mysteries, and, lately, historical mysteries. Here are some outstanding new ones.

Jacqueline Winspear is writing a historical series set in post-WWI London featuring a unique detective, self-described "psychologist and investigator," Maisie Dobbs. The first book in the series, entitled **Maisie Dobbs**, won the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of 2003 (\$14.00 Penguin). Working class but educated, Maisie is an independent young woman whose psyche was shaped by her experience as a nurse in WWI. The books take place in 1929-1930, when most of Britain, like Maisie herself, is still traumatized by the Great War. (When I questioned whether the war would still have such an

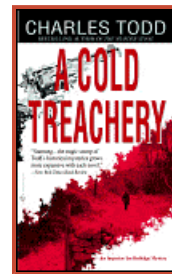


effect more than ten years after it ended, my girlfriend said, "How long ago was Vietnam?")

In **Birds of a Feather**, second in the series (also \$14.00 Penguin), Maisie is hired by a self-made grocery tycoon to find his missing daughter. Maisie discovers that three of the daughter's best friends have recently died, at least one of them murdered. Ultimately, of course, the friends' connection and the solution to the mystery go back to the Great War. In Winspear's new hardcover, **Pardonable Lies** (\$23.00 Holt), Maisie must find proof that a young aviator was really killed in France - a case which reunites her with her college friend Patricia, who also served in France. Maisie practices an eclectic mix of sharp observation and holistic techniques, including yoga and meditation. These can seem anachronistically New Age-y but probably are not, given the Twenties' enthusiasm for spiritualism, oriental philosophy, and physical culture. For instance, in **Birds of a Feather**, Maisie's mentor talks about an exercise regimen developed in a British internment camp during the war. "The physical movements incorporated in the regimen have been used to rehabilitate the severely wounded with great success.... The man whose work he has followed now lives in America. His name is Joseph Pilates."



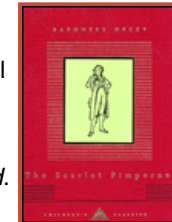
My favorite WWI series is still the Inspector Rutledge series by Charles Todd (*nom de guerre* of a mother and son writing team). Shell-shocked veteran Ian Rutledge debuted in *Test of Wills*, when he is making a comeback at Scotland Yard even though he hears the voice in his head of his fallen Scottish comrade Hamish. Hamish is still Rutledge's ghostly companion in **A Long Shadow** (\$23.95, William Morrow), eighth in the series; here, a town constable has been shot with an arrow, and someone is stalking Rutledge himself. Todd's most recent paperback is **A Cold Treachery** (\$6.99, Bantam).



In a completely different era, **The Secret History of the Pink Carnation** by Lauren Willig (\$14.00, NAL) purports to tell the amazing truth about the league of Franco-British spies dedicated to beating Napoleon - all of them code-named after flowers, like their leader, the Scarlet Pimpernel. Chick lit meets historical romance as the narrative alternates between Eloise, a Harvard grad student researching the Pink Carnation in London, circa 2005, and Amy, a French-born aristocrat raised in England who determines to return to her native country and fight the new emperor, circa 1803. As a feminist re-imagining of the original swashbuckling heroes, this is a not-so-guilty pleasure, but it's lighter than cotton candy and about as nutritious. Meanwhile, the sequel, **The Masque of the Black Tulip** is already a BookSense Pick of the Month (\$24.95, Dutton).



**The Scarlet Pimpernel**, a mysterious hero who rescued French noblemen from the guillotine, was actually the fictional creation of Emmuska (Baroness) Orczy; the original is one of the greatest adventure stories of all time (\$14.95, Everyman's Library). Baroness Orczy also wrote straightforward mysteries, and she created one of the first professional female detectives, *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*.



If you like quirky, you will love **The Belen Hitch** (\$24.95) and **The Clovis Incident** (\$14.95, both University of New Mexico Press) by Pari Noskin Taichert. Taichert's sleuth, Sasha Solomon, is a PR consultant to small towns in New Mexico that want to improve tourism; but small-town weirdness is the least of it. In **The Belen Hitch**, Sasha's best friend is a psychic who can communicate with anything living, making her, bizarrely, pest controller to the rich and famous (presumably by passing along to the cockroaches a request to vacate the premises). Sasha's alcoholic mom is in a long-term care facility, having suffered a stroke. As part of the tourism project, Sasha goes to interview her mother's old friend, a controversial artist, and finds her murdered. There's also a railroad museum and a ghost. First in the series, **The Clovis Incident**, involved a UFO abduction.





## News

### **The Women's Review of Books is back!**

After a year's hiatus to find a new publisher and a new structure, the *Women's Review of Books* is back in print. The first new issue just dropped in the mail (January 6). It features reviews by Dorothy Allison, Linda Gordon, and Farah Jasmine Griffin on Bobbie Ann Mason's new novel, *An Atomic Romance*, Vivian Gornick's *The Solitude of Self: Thinking about Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, and Julia Blackburn's oral history of Billie Holiday, and an article by yours truly on the resurgence of lesbian pulp novels. We can't wait to see it.

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or send \$33 (\$58 institutions) to Old City Publishing, 628 North 2nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19123.

### **Metaformia**

Feminist theoretician and poet Judy Grahn (*The Common Woman Poems*, *Edward the Dyke*, *Another Mother Tongue* and *Blood, Bread, and Roses*) has just launched ***Metaformia: A Journal of Menstruation and Culture***.

"Metaformic theory," Grahn tells us, "Returns women to a crucial place in cultural origin stories, histories, rituals and religions." ***Metaformia*** includes articles on race, class and caste, on violence and peace, cosmic energies and money, gender and evolution, roles of women and men in creating culture, aspects of religion and anthropology, and more. Read it online at [www.metaformia.com](http://www.metaformia.com).

Grahn is currently collaborating with Olympia Dukakis on *Lady of Largest Heart*, a monologue based on Betty Meador's book, *Inanna: Lady of Largest Heart*. Watch for it on a stage near you.

***Bitch***, one of my favorite feminist magazines ("*Á breath of journalistic fresh air blowing through the newsstands.*"-The Chicago Tribune), is celebrating ten years. [www.bitchmagazine.com/](http://www.bitchmagazine.com/)

### **Spinifex Press Celebrates 15 Awesome Years**

If you're in Australia, head for Melbourne March 3-5 for a weekend-long literary festival celebrating Spinifex's 15 years of feminist publishing. It sounds so good I'm tempted to hop a plane...

Launched in 1991 by Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein (then a senior editor at Penguin UK and an editor of the Athene Series at Pergamon, respectively), Spinifex has become a global force by publishing locally and distributing globally. Readers in the U.K., the U.S., Canada, and New Zealand, as well as Australia, can walk into any excellent bookshop and find Spinifex's pink-spined books. Co-publishing and rights sales further expand their distribution into countries as diverse as Bangladesh and Germany. Spinifex's most successful title, Betty McLellan's *Help! I'm Living with a ~~Man~~ Boy* has been published in eleven languages including Estonian, Turkish, Korean, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, and Greek.

Spinifex publishes a wide range of feminist and lesbian titles. Their list includes writers from every continent, includes particularly strong lists of Asian and Pacific writers, Australian and New Zealand indigenous writers, and African writers as well as internationally known European and North American feminist and lesbian writers.

More info at [www.spinifexpress.com.au](http://www.spinifexpress.com.au)

### **Feminist Bookstore News**

Sweet Violets, the feminist bookstore in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is closing in February. Meanwhile, long-lived **Charis** has just moved 1189 Euclid Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307. Australia's sole remaining feminist bookstore, **The Feminist Bookshop** in Sydney, just celebrated 30 years.

If you cherish feminist bookstores, spend your money there. They're definitely a "use it or lose it" proposition. Don't have one handy or don't have time to shop? No problem: it's just as easy to order online from a feminist bookstore as from any of the megalomaniacs. It might cost a few cents more, but you sure do get a lot more for your money.

**Book Collection Databases**

I recently read a review about two databases designed for book collections, Book Collector (\$39.95 from [www.collectorz.com](http://www.collectorz.com)) and Readerware (\$40 from [www.readerware.com](http://www.readerware.com)) and I'd love to hear from anyone who's used either.

**Poetry Wanted**

Submission dates for the fifth annual Lois Cranston Memorial Poetry Prize, sponsored by the always awesome *Calyx: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women*, are March 1 to May 31, 2006. Winner receives \$300 and publication in *Calyx*. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was the judge for last year's prize, which went to Patricia Hale. Submission details at [www.proaxis.com/~calyx](http://www.proaxis.com/~calyx).

**Do Feminists Order Books Online?**

Why and why not? And if we do, where do we order them? Join my informal survey and tell me what your experience is. I'm contemplating doing a formal survey, and your responses will shape the questions I'll ask.



That's it for this issue. Send letters to the editor, fan mail to the reviewers, feminist publishing news, tell me where and why you do and don't order books online, and send general comments to me, [editor@btwof.com](mailto:editor@btwof.com), or mail to the address below.

Yours in spreading the words,  
Carol Seajay  
Publisher, BTWOF

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