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The Gay Men's Edition

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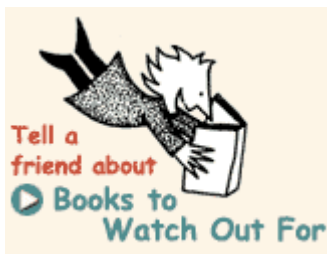
Alyson Publications

the proud publishers of
Blue Days, Black Nights
 by
 Academy Award nominee
 Ron Nyswaner

"Heartbreaking, guileless, and unforgettable,"
 - novelist Scott Spencer
"Harrowing...and very, very funny indeed,"
 - director Jonathan Demme

Blue Days Black Nights is a gripping, intimate and darkly comic memoir of an obsessive (and almost fatal) love affair.

Volume 1 Number 10



By Richard Labonte

Falling Behind & Catching Up

As I mentioned at the end of the last installment of **Books To Watch Out For/Gay Men's Edition**, I fell behind some over the summer for personal (but good) and professional (read - a contract that paid the bills) reasons. The books piled up. So though I try to shape each issue around some sort of theme - remembering editors and authors like Don Allen and Christopher Isherwood, exploring self-publishing, discussing erotica, spotlighting paper editions of notable hardcovers - this is, this time: *The Theme-less Issue*. Except for the unifying fact that there are dozens of books I liked (or that others have liked, or that I hope to like when I actually see them) mentioned. I guess that's a theme. So, here, erratically but emphatically, are an eclectic bunch of publications that recently tickled my fancy:

Moe's Villa & Other Stories, by James Purdy (Carroll & Graf, 274 pages, \$14)

I've been transfixed by Purdy's astonishing storytelling for decades - he's one of a handful of writers who never fails to blot out the world around me, whose words whoosh me away to another place. Where lonely boys find refuge at the surreal "Moe's Villa." Where two elderly, feeble ladies who love each other inherit a fortune from an idolized movie star. Where a cat lives like a king and an opera diva lives for her cat. Where a lonely old man babbles to himself every night in a bar's phone booth. Where a young man who wants most of all to steal a kiss from a boy - "No Stranger to Luke" - steals stray coins from his family instead. Purdy's prose doesn't show off: it's the epitome of polished - quiet and natural, lush and lean, echoing the melancholy and imagining the



About BTWOF

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

The Lesbian Edition

covers both lesbian books and the whole range of books lesbians like to read. It covers news of both the women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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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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More Books for Women will launch in 2005.

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impossible. These dozen stories - published in a British edition in 2000, with a cover that better suits the fairy tale-askew tone of the tales than the one on this U.S. reprint - are delicately depraved delights.

Playwright Edward Albee honors Purdy as "one of our few fine seriocomic novelists" and praises *Malcolm*, which he had adapted for the stage, as "deeply sad and terribly funny" - almost 40 years ago:

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/08/15/specials/albee-purdy.html>

A Purdy bibliography:

http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/authors/James_Purdy.htm



The Role Players: A Dick Hardesty Mystery, by Dorian Grey (GLB Publishers, 245 pages, \$15.95)



I've developed quite a fondness for Dorian Grey's Dick Hardesty mystery series. There's not much blood, there's lots of romance and love (and some sex), and there are continuing characters that have evolved and matured through the series' eight books. In this outing, Dick and his adorably wide-eyed young ex-hustler beau are in Manhattan to visit theatre friends - and, inevitably, are drawn into the middle of a messy murder with assorted suspects. Grey does a good job of darting from one likely killer to another, managing to scatter the red herrings with style. One annoyance, though: whenever did anyone in

NYC have to call for a taxi, as the players in *The Role Players* seem to do every few pages!

The first chapter:

<http://www.glbpubs.com/trpchp1.html>

And Dorian Grey has written a gay western, too - *Calico*, available in e-book format here:

<http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com/single.asp?isbn=1-55404-140-6&genre=Alternate%20Lifestyles>

Tropic of Murder: A Nick Hoffman Mystery, by Lev Raphael (Perseverance Press/John Daniel & Company, 208 pages, \$13.95)

And I've developed a crush (purely of the head, not of the heart) on Lev Raphael's witty, literate, and cheerfully satirical Nick Hoffman mysteries. This is the sixth, but the first I've read since *Let's Get Criminal* (1996) and *The Edith Wharton Murders* (1997), and enough that happened in the three intervening books crops up here to render the plot a tad confusing... all the more reason for me to go back and fill in the gaps. Raphael writes with cynical glee about the internecine blood-letting of academic politics, which is one of the delights of this book; the mystery - and the blood - thicken when acerbic Nick and his exhausted partner Stefan flee the personally bitter and bitterly cold university whirl for a Club Med getaway on the turbulent island of Serenity. Which is anything but. Author's website: <http://www.levraphael.com>



Slovakian Boy, by William Maltese (Green Candy Press, 177 pages, \$14.95)



Ravishing young Pavel has something for everyone, is something for everyone, and does most everyone in this cinematic series of erotic Czech encounters. Maltese, playing off the success of porn videos featuring lean and luscious East European lads, has written a collection of words worth a thousand pictures - 17 short stories, a constellation of characters orbiting around a goodhearted, hard-muscled student: a honeymooning "straight" man, lusty schoolmates, a horny history teacher, a bombastic German tourist, an eager-to-be-pleased farmer... young men, older men, handsome men, lonely men, all drawn to the generous sexual heat of one Slovakian boy. Story by story, this collection works superbly as after-hours reading. As a whole, however, it's also a jaunty, joyous celebration of sexual abundance featuring a likeably guileless and quite charming young fellow.

Author's website: <http://www.williammaltese.com>

Pink Steam, by *Dodie Bellamy* (Suspect Thoughts Press, 190 pages, \$16.95)

A "fragmented autobiography," says Bellamy of this collection of blazing anarchy and brilliant perception. And, also, "about the ridiculousness of the categories of truth versus fiction." Somewhere between the truth of life and the lies of fiction - that's where the essence of *Pink Steam* cavorts. Bellamy's selection of a decade's worth of essays and stories and fragments and fantasies and letters is light reading and heavy thinking, defying gender and defining the exhilaration of sexual, artistic, and emotional freedoms. And. It's. Really. Really. Fun. To. Read! Perhaps not a book for most every fan of easy mysteries and jaunty raunch - but books like this, happily and smartly, expand the spectrum of queer reading (and anyone who favors Purdy, above, and Gluck, below, will find it good.

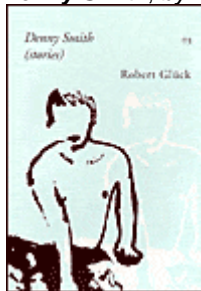


Read an excerpt: <http://www.suspectthoughts.com/spew.html>

Read an interview: <http://www.suspectthoughts.com/bellamy2.html>

A review of *The Letters of Mina Harker*, just reissued by the University of Wisconsin Press: <http://www.dhalgren.com/Othertexts/Dodie.html>

Denny Smith, by *Robert Gluck* (Clear Cut Press, 268 pages, \$12.95)



Book as object: it is a wondrous thing to hold, simple and elegant, compact and durable, with a built-in bookmark and a playful dust jacket – a tactile pleasure, rare in the book-as-commodity world. Book as subject: it is a pleasure to read, vivid and comic, subtle and sexy, the dozen stories bleeding fluidly from fact into fiction and back – articulate intellectualism and easy entertainment. "Workload" revels in pornography. "Miss American Pie" is a runaway girl and her goth lover finding refuge with a gay uncle. "Batlike, Wolflike (A Memoir)" is an unsettling fantasy of commitment and obsession. "Denny Smith"

dumps the narrator in a sidewalk café... art wrung from life? "The Purple Men" and "Purple Men 2000" are the sad arc of AIDS contaminating life and love. This is Gluck's first collection in a decade or so, some of the stories from anthologies like *Queer 13* and *Best New American Gay Fiction*, but many from lustrous journals with intense but limited readership. How splendid that they are collected here, so well.

Clear Cut Press books are available by subscription; for information on how it works: <http://www.clearcutpress.com/>

A review: <http://www.raintaxi.com/online/2004spring/gluck.shtml>

Gluck discusses the late Bruce Boone, and New Narrative writing:

http://www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/narrativity/issue_one/gluck.html

A lucid audio interview with the editor (Matthew Stadler) and the publisher (Richard Jensen) of Clear Cut Press:

<http://www.dailyastorian.com/movie/clearcut.html>

Bit of a Stadler (*Landscape: Memory, Allan Stein, The Sex Offender, The Dissolution of Nicholas Dee*) bio:

<http://www.clearcutpress.com/bios.php/matthewstadler.html>

Apathy is a Dangerous Drug: A Collection of Verse and Prose, by *Bill Brent* (42 pages)

There may be no copies available by now of this elegant chapbook, produced back in June by Bill. He was (and, in a sense, still is) the publisher of Black Books (one of the presses eviscerated financially by the implosion of its distributor a couple of years ago). Without the press as an outlet for his passion for words, he went back to his roots - the 'zine. Though in this case, the 'zine as a work of homegrown art, as "the joyous pang of inspired living," and as recovery from that drug of apathy. The first poem, written in 1977, is "meditation at 16" - innocent, overeager, and wise. The last entry, undated, is "Why I Write": Therapy, schmerapy/ I'll tough it out for clarity/ and maybe for posterity." Hmm. Maybe this wee book isn't recovery from that drug - but it does read, quite exuberantly, that way. Also included: a page of aphorisms, a parody of craigslist.com sex come-on rip-offs; "40 reasons you don't want to marry me"; thoughts "on truth." Plenty of poems. A sharp wit. A quick mind. Personality. In a recent monthly newsletter, Bill said he was working on a second limited-edition chapbook, *This Is Only A Test*, (like the first, only 100 copies, many of them given away), due in November. Contact him at verbose@comcast.net - or send him \$5-\$15 using PayPal, www.paypal.com

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Books I Haven't Read/Books Others Have Read

Women I Have Dressed and Undressed, by Arnold Scassi (Scribner) - "A dishy recollection of his experiences gussying up some of the most glamorous women on the planet, from Sophia Loren and Elizabeth Taylor to, well, Mamie Eisenhower and Barbara Bush," says Armand Limnander of this book about a Jewish kid from Montreal growing up to become an "iconic New York couturier."

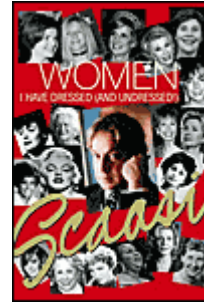
Scassi and friends party with Malcolm Forbes, 1989:

<http://www.wireimage.com/GalleryListing.asp?nbc1=1&navtyp=>

[CAL====58330&ym=198908](http://www.wireimage.com/GalleryListing.asp?nbc1=1&navtyp=CAL====58330&ym=198908)

Scassi and friends celebrate his book, 2004:

<http://www.wireimage.com/GalleryListing.asp?nbc1=1&navtyp=CAL====77921&ym=20040>



Playwright, poet, filmmaker, director, novelist, and literary provocateur Sky Gilbert is one of several Canadian writers asked in *Quill & Quire*, a Canadian publishing journal, to cite "overrated" and "underrated" writers. His overrated pick: John Irving, dismissed as a "macho, surrealist American... You just don't believe it for one moment, it's so crazy and so wacky." Underrated?

Lunch Poems, by Frank O'Hara: "He's probably not that well known because of the gay content in his work, but he's one of the greatest poets of the 20th century." Gilbert is author of four novels, including *Guilty* and, most recently, *An English Gentleman*, as well as the engagingly narcissistic memoir, *Ejaculations from the Charm Factory*.

Also from *Quill & Quire*: The first novel by Toronto writer Robert McGill, ***The Mysteries***, is touted as "an unforgettable tour through the soul of a small Ontario town, in which a pair of lesbian lovers come across as the closest thing to well-adjusted - at least compared with the pedophiles, racists, adulterers, and confused dentists who are their neighbours."

<http://www.mcclelland.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=0771055218>

How queer is this: all three respondents in a recent "Night Table Reading" feature in *Vanity Fair* pick gay-interest books. Artist Hope Atherton says she's reading ***Against Nature***, by J.K. Huysmans (Oxford): "It's hard not to enjoy a book referred to as the Bible of the Decadents." Fashion designer Peter Som is reading ***Middlesex***, by Jeffrey Eugenides (Picador): "This book has an epic scale that frames a very personal story. Anyone who ever felt they didn't fit in growing up would be able to relate." Photographer Jim Marshall (*Proof*, from Chronicle Books) is reading ***The Razor's Edge***, by W. Somerset Maugham (Vintage): "To me this is probably the most important novel ever written."

<http://www.huysmans.org/index.htm>

<http://www.bombsite.com/eugenides/eugenides.html>

<http://www.angelfire.com/electronic/bodhidharma/mentor.html>

I spotted an ad for Seymour Kleinberg's 2002 memoir ***The Fugitive Self*** (Xlibris) in recent issues of *The New York Review of Books* - a book that may well have been reviewed somewhere, though I haven't read any commentary, and a book that may even be on bookstore shelves - but I haven't found it listed in online catalogues except as a special order...the fate of self-published books. It comes with high praise from several notables, however, including Philip Lopate ("the Sonia chapter is maybe the best thing ever written about the relationship between a gay man and a straight woman"); Toby Olson ("...an important piece of gay history"); and Craig Seligman ("a reminder that gay liberation got going long before Stonewall"). And, at more length:

"When the author of Alienated Affections announced his memoir, I was certain that such a study, by such an author, would be a revision of those inner voices, the intimate relations (between son and mother, between brother and sister, between lovers and friends) which are so uncertain and indeed so unexplored by gay men in our culture. Yet what Seymour Kleinberg proposes, so tenderly and so tellingly, in The Fugitive Self, is not just a revision but, in the historical and religious sense, a reformation of these likelihoods and limitations, which in his case, so surprisingly

comprehend the erotics of parenting. In his case, of course, for his book is a true memoir; but it is also a trial map - of a territory accessible to more of us than we ever knew, of a consciousness made free to others. For in Schiller's beautiful phrase, one freedom liberates us all," says Richard Howard.

"This memoir is a profoundly intelligent evocation of the split in one man's life between the sensual and the tender: beautifully written, deeply felt," says Vivian Gornick.

"This startlingly candid, wise memoir takes us on a dramatic journey through the minefield of isolation, sex, guilt, shame, and finally, love. Seymour Kleinberg's lucid and unsparing devotion to truth turns one gay man's quest into the universal struggle of every fugitive self. And its ending is dazzling, as fulfillment comes from the most unexpected, yet inevitable source," says Lynne Sharon Schwartz.

Those are blurbs that make me want to read the book - it's a pity that Xlibris (for the most part, print-on-demand) titles are hard to find on bookstore shelves... And that Kleinberg had to publish the memoir himself.

An excerpt:

http://www1.xlibris.com/bookstore/book_excerpt.asp?bookid=14669

To order (but try your local bookstore first):

<http://www1.xlibris.com/bookstore/bookdisplay.asp?bookid=14669>

Mikel Wadewitz writes about discovering *Alienated Affections* as a 15-year-old: <http://www.echonyc.com/~stone/Contents/Edit4.html>

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Queers in Other Cultures x 2

The Quince Seed Potion, by Morteza Baharloo (Bridge Works Publishing, 256 pages, \$23.95 hardcover)

In 1928, a 6-year-old peasant boy is brutally raped by his callous uncle. That same year he becomes the indentured servant to the dashing, self-indulgent youngest son of Iran's Shirlu Khan family – a master he will silently lust after and love deeply for the next 50 years. That turbulent personal passion is one dimension of Iranian expatriate Baharloo's epic first novel set against the backdrop of historical events. Another is how *The Quince Seed Potion* tracks the relentless, inevitable decline of the Shirlu dynasty, immensely wealthy Iranian rural landowners as the story begins but reduced to humiliating poverty and self-exile by the time of the fundamentalist revolution in 1979. Their loss of power and status is an absorbing history lesson about the transformation of a feudalistic society into first a secular if corrupt oligarchy, and then into a maelstrom of Islamic fanaticism. But the poignant core of this haunting story is servant Sarveali's sadly unarticulated and unrequited love for his master, a relationship denied by both immutable class strictures and Sarveali's homoerotic self-denial.

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



My Tender Matador, by Pedro Lemebel (Grove Press, 170 pages, \$20 hardcover)



It helps to know something of recent Chilean history in order to truly appreciate *My Tender Matador*. So, briefly: in 1973 a U.S.-backed military coup assassinated Salvador Allende, the democratically elected socialist president; army general Augusto Pinochet reigned as a ruthless dictator until 1990; and in 1986, student-led resistance fighters nearly succeeded in killing Pinochet by bombing his motorcade. That sociopolitical context powers this mesmerizing novel - which, audaciously, is also a lyrical love story. The "Queen of the Corner" is a hopelessly romantic homosexual who ekes out a living embroidering linens for the wealthy wives of the ruling military elite, and Carlos is a muscular young heterosexual who befriends the aging maricon in order to stash munitions in his house. Lemebel's lush, delicate depiction of an unlikely relationship between the lonely drag queen and the impassioned revolutionary is by turns comic, tragic, and exquisite. His stirring evocation of political repression and youthful rebellion is riveting. And his depiction of dictator Pinochet as a preening, self-absorbed homophobe – rather daring, as Pinochet is still alive – is delicious.

Little Sisters likes the book:

http://www.littlesistersbookstore.com/lbreview/may2004/review_page_2.html

A (PDF download) exploration of Lemebel's gay thinking:

<http://lap.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/29/2/99>



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Quality Queer Theory x 2

Porn Studies, ed. by Linda Williams (Duke University Press, 528 pages, \$24.95 paper)

Porn is defined broadly in this unabashed academic collection. One essay explains "How To Do Things With *The Starr Report*;" another explores suburban sex, home movies, and in particular the notorious Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee honeymoon video; and another tells why the buxom girlie pinups of World War II were "An American Secret Weapon." More queer-specific essays discuss the history of dyke pornography ("What Do You Call a Lesbian With Long Fingers?"); the career of gay Asian-American porn star Brandon Lee; the pornographic avant-garde elements of Andy Warhol's seldom-seen film *Blow Job*; and how the classic straight stag film was often a point of "homosociality" for gay men, allowing them to be sexual in a nongay context. Pretty much every aspect of porn is discussed - except 19th-century naughty postcards - up to and including the Internet. No time is wasted on whether there is "good" erotica and "bad" porn. Williams' bold thesis is that porn exists, has value, and deserves to be both studied and taught.



Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children, ed. by Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley (University of Minnesota Press, 338 pages, \$22.95 paper)



With its conflation of "queerness" and "children," odds are this sober collection of essays assessing sexual childhood energies will become a flashpoint for hysterics who equate homosexuals with pedophiles. Odds also are that those same critics won't actually read the essays in *Curiouser*, none of which advocate child sex. The contributors do acknowledge that children are sexual beings - thereby challenging the dominant narrative of American culture, which is that kids are (or darn well ought to be) asexual until they reach a magic age of majority. That nonsexual assumption is contradicted by a wide range of cultural markers, several of which are discussed here: the novels of Horatio Alger, Djuna Barnes, and Guy Davenport; the heroin-chic underwear ads of Calvin Klein; girlish giggling under the covers at Girl Scout camp; punk tomboy attitude; even the repressed frenzy of religious fundamentalism. The analytic cant, references to Freud, and academic footnoting are at times daunting, but essays by Judith Halberstam, Richard D. Mohr, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Michael Warner - on his religious roots - are among the most engaging.



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Pop Culture x 2 (-1)

The Drag Queen Anthology: The Absolutely Fabulous But Flawlessly Customary World of Female Impersonators, ed. by Steven B. Schacht with Lisa Underwood (Harrington Park Press, 251 pages, \$24.95 paper)

You can't always judge a book by its cover. You certainly shouldn't judge a book by its title. And this book's provocative title screams camp. In truth, however, the anthology is a serious overview of the world of drag queens and female impersonators. There are playful moments: in "Chicks with Dicks," Verta Taylor and Leila J. Rupp capture the over-the-top personalities of performers at the 801 Cabaret in Key West; in "Let the Drag Race Begin," Steven J. Hopkins is engagingly anecdotal and anthropological about the drag queen scene in Roanoke, Va. But most of the heavily footnoted and relentlessly well-sourced essays skew scholarly - more *Journal of Homosexuality*, where, in fact, they first appeared, than *Instinct*. That said, several pieces, stodgy prose aside, are fascinating: Jeffrey Q. McCune on the intersection of drag queens and gospel songs, Laurel Halladay on the drag queen performance troupes that entertained the Canadian military in World War II, and Sandip Bakshi on the overlapping worlds of India's Hijras and America's female impersonators.



One More Kiss: The Broadway Musical in the 1970s, by Ethan Mordden (Palgrave MacMillan, 264 pages, \$16.95 paper)



It's really too bad this tangy analysis of a decade of Broadway musicals doesn't come with a play-along CD. Sure, even a superficial show-tune queen can hum along to Mordden's trenchant dissections of *Chicago*, *Annie*, or *Evita*. But, really: who knows the songs from *Dude*, *Via Galactica*, or *Look to the Lilies* - all '70s musicals that bombed. Only an obsessive, that's who, and that certainly includes the author of *One More Kiss*. In four previous books, Mordden has honored, revered, and savaged Broadway musicals, one decade at a time, from *Make Believe*, his history of the 1920s, to this erudite, bitchy, and bittersweet tome about the 1970s (a last book, assessing the '30s, is forthcoming). Why bittersweet? Because, argues Mordden, the decade under discussion marked the end of "the golden age of Broadway musicals." His very opinionated queer perceptions embrace lead players, chorus boys, directors, producers, backers, lyricists - everyone! - as well as several hundred tunes. Even when he's mean, his adoration of musicals illuminates this intelligent treasure trove of Broadway lore.

An interview: <http://www.parterre.com/mordden.htm>

I'll Cover You in \$20 Bills: The Male Body Beauty Business, by Michael Rivers (Southern Tier Editions, 165 pages, \$14.95 paper)

This is the (-1) title: a worthy subject subverted by undisciplined scholarship. Friends and friends of friends make up a good number of the interview subjects in this survey-lite assessment of the "ideal" male image, so the sample is certainly suspect. And Rivers is no master of either the well-turned phrase or the startling insight, so there's neither much entertainment value nor a profound learning experience in *I'll Cover You in \$20 Bills*. The 17 interviews are at best perfunctory, following a rigid format and a stilted script. The usual suspects are rounded up: "Image Makers" include a personal trainer, a male-nude photographer, a talent scout (for strip clubs!), and an adult-film director; "Performers" include two bodybuilders, a model, two female impersonators, two male escorts, and a porn star. Only two interviews go much beyond shallow - or in the case of one of the male escorts, the spectacularly narcissistic. The first is with a straight plastic surgeon, who is quite sensible about why a nip and tuck might transcend vanity; the other is with a professional masseur who comes across as quite a complex, fascinating character.

Read an excerpt (PDF download):

<http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5102>

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Cosy Reads x 2

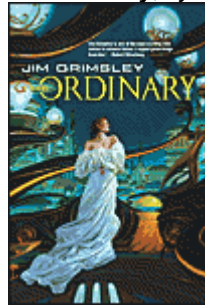
Looking For It, by Michael Thomas Ford (Kensington Books, 312 pages, \$23 hardcover)

One hunky bartender, Mike. One aging queen, Simon. One unhappy gay couple, John and Russell. One conflicted priest, Thomas. One unattached queer, Greg. One closeted accountant, Stephen. All living in one small town, with one gay bar, their lives overlapping by choice and by chance. That's the cozy premise of Ford's adept second novel. Its serious mien - two are bashed by a self-loathing gay mechanic, the couple bore each other after seven years together, the older man mourns his lover of decades - may surprise readers who come to the book through the author's four previous caustic and hilarious essay collections. They ought not be disappointed. *Looking For It* is a warmhearted story about the importance of friendship and the miracle of connection. By book's end, John and Russell reignite their passion and everybody else is paired up – even the over-60 "widow" of the group, Simon, finds a new man in town to love. Pat, yes, and very predictable – but Ford's fluid prose and strong storytelling deliver charming credibility.

Author website: <http://www.michaelthomasford.com/>



The Ordinary, by Jim Grimsley (Tor Books, 368 pages, \$24.95 hardcover)



In the queer universe, Grimsley writes literary gay novels - among them, *Boulevard*, about a young man's homosexual adventures in New Orleans, and *Comfort and Joy*, about a grown man coming out to his parents. In an alternate universe of words, he writes entrancing SF/fantasy novels - *Kirith Kirin*, and now *The Ordinary*, a textured blend of audacious science and imaginative magic that is not quite a sequel to the first novel, though it shares its characters and worlds. The plot: the Twil Gate, a portal of unexplained origins, links two planets - Senal, a tech-savvy land bursting with a population of 30 billion, where natural resources are scarce; and Irion, a sparsely populated land rich in wood and water, where wizards once ruled. When the armies of Senal invade Irion, massive military might meets the mysterious powers of magic and myth. This is a mind-stretching epic true to classic SF style, infused by Grimsley with vivid characters - including two women whose passion, spanning thousands of years, combines the author's two literary universes with extraordinary harmony.

Author website: <http://literati.net/Grimsley/>

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Subjectively Speaking, The Best Book of the Month

I Do/I Don't: Queers on Marriage, ed. by Greg Wharton and Ian Philips

(Suspect Thoughts Press, 384 pages, \$16.95 paper)
With 132 contributors, from Allison (Dorothy) to Wolfson (Evan), this collection of romantic fiction, goopy poetry, intense rants, dry legal defenses, witty wedding-day memoirs, and deeply personal vows takes a gander at queers and marriage from every possible perspective. This is good: for all the giddy hoopla and happy tears of individual ceremonies, an anthology honest enough to explore many sides of an issue that does indeed divide queers is overdue - and certainly a standout from the current deluge of wedding books. On the "I Don't" side, Cheryl Clarke declares, unambiguously, "Marriage trivializes our partnerships." On the "I Do" side, Jim Gladstone writes: "Every wedding is an exquisitely awkward marriage of idealism and acceptance... which in and of itself is a case for same-sex couples, isn't it?" And Christopher Bram straddles the middle ground with grace and eloquence: he



and his partner of 25 years have no desire to wed, but what he loves "about gay marriage, without reservation, is how the very idea of it infuriates Christian conservatives."

The contributors:

<http://www.suspectthoughts.com/pressido.htm>

Ian Philip's Mary Daleyesque foreword/forewarning:

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

One "I Do" <http://www.suspectthoughts.com/reed.html>

One "I Don't": <http://www.suspectthoughts.com/queen2.html>

One "I Differ": <http://www.suspectthoughts.com/swayne.html>



A History Book To Watch Out For

Academic Lillian Faderman and journalist Stuart Timmons are collaborating on *Gay L.A.*, the first book-length history of the gay culture that took root on the Western frontier in the mid-19th century and evolved with the growth of the film industry.

"Due to the relatively large amount of gay memoir and Hollywood queer scholarship, there is a vast amount now to assess for such an account," says Timmons. "We feel that, indeed, Los Angeles remains oddly missing in action for a careful historical treatment."

It is indeed a long-overdue history, and puzzlingly so: New York was historicized by George Chauncey's 1994 book *Gay New York* and Charles Kaiser's 1997 book *The Gay Metropolis*. Gary Atkins published *Gay Seattle: Stories of Exile and Belonging* (University of Washington Press) in 2003. *Gay By the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area*, by Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk (Chronicle Books, 1996), took a lightheartedly scholarly look at San Francisco; Winston Leyland's *Out in the Castro: Desire, Promise, Activism* (Leyland Publications, 2002) focused on the history of SF's queerest neighborhood. And Marc Stein's 2003 book, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves*, is a history of Philadelphia from 1945 to 1972.

All of these are pretty accessible books, more populist history than heavy-slog scholarship. There is a book about gay Los Angeles - Moira Kenney's *Mapping Gay L.A.: The Intersection of Place and Politics* (Temple University Press, 2001) - but it's more queer theory than a gay history, and it only reaches back to the late 1960s; *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), by Dudley Clendenin and Adam Nagourney, has a fair bit of L.A. history - but it's more national in scope.

Faderman is the author of *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* and *Surpassing the Love of Men*, and, most recently, of the Lambda Award-winning memoir *Naked in the Promised Land*. Timmons, former executive director of L.A.'s ONE Institute, is the author of *The Trouble With Harry Hay*, a 1990 biography of the founder of the Mattachine Society. Publication is scheduled for Spring 2006, from Basic Books.

Timmons on Harry Hay:

<http://www.counterpunch.org/timmons1025.html>

Faderman on her first encounter with the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~mazercoll/who.html>



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15 Other BTWOFs

LAUD HUMPHREYS: Prophet of Homosexuality and Sociology, ed. by John Galliher, David Patrick Keys, and Wayne Brekhus, profiles the pioneering sociologist, Episcopal priest, and gay activist, best known for his provocative study of washroom sex, *Tearoom Trade* (University of Wisconsin, \$18.95, Oct)...

WHY I HATE Abercrombie & Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality, by Dwight A. McBride (possibly the best title of the season) tackles subjects from black gay media representations to racist ad campaigns. (NYU Press, \$19, Feb)...

THE VELVET RAGE: What It Really Means to Grow Up Gay in a Straight Man's World, a book by psychologist Alan Downs that looks at the connections between shame and success and shame and creativity in gay men, coming from Da Capo Lifelong Books in Spring 2005...

BOTH SIDES NOW, by Dillon Kosla, about the transsexual journey from female to male of a highly successful attorney - while maintaining both his dignity and his high profile position within the federal appeals court system - is another Spring 2005 title, from Tarcher/Putnam...

GAY PRIDE: A Celebration of All Things Gay and Lesbian, by William J. Mann, cites reasons to live proudly through the example of well-known figures from Alexander the Great to Ellen DeGeneres (Citadel Books, \$15.95, Nov)...

NO FUTURE: QUEER Theory and the Death Drive, by Lee Edelman, disdains the notion that queers should form families - definitely a controversial proposition in a community that proclaims the "found family" (Duke University Press, \$21.95, Dec)...

HOW TO DO YOUR Own Divorce in California and *How to Solve Divorce Problems in California* are new editions of do-it-yourself guides with updates pertinent to gay and lesbian couples - those Nolo Press legal eagles are sure on top of a potential new market (\$29.95/\$19.95, Jan)...

QUEER CONSTELLATIONS: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City, by Dianne Chisholm, juxtaposes thoughts by contemporary queer writers - Neil Bartlett, Samuel Delany, Robert Gluck, Alan Hollinghurst, Gary Indiana, Eileen Myles, Sarah Schulman, Edmund White, and David Wojnarowicz - about walking, seeing, and remembering urban spaces (University of Minnesota, \$19.99, Dec)....

THE QUOTABLE QUEER, by Minnie van Pileup, celebrates the wit and wisdom of a bevy of high-visibility gays, from Rock Hudson and Liberace to k.d. lang and Ellen DeGeneres, plus...Whitney Houston and Tom Cruise? (Fair Winds, \$9.95, April)...

SOME NIGHT MY PRINCE Will Come, by Michel Tremblay, the newest novel from one of francophone Canada's most nationally celebrated writers - who, paradoxically, is also a committed Quebec separatist - features a narrator intent on losing his virginity in Montreal. (Talon Books, \$13.95, Oct)...

Tremblay's books:

<http://www.vehiculepress.com/montreal/writers/tremblay.html>

http://www.talonbooks.com/Books/Some_Night_My_Prince.html

REPRINTS OF TWO of the best books of 2004: *Queer Street: Rise and Fall of an American Culture, 1947-1985*, by James McCourt (\$17.95, Jan.); and *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century*, by Graham Robb (\$15.95, Feb.), both from W.W. Norton...

TANGLED SHEETS: The Erotica of Michael Thomas Ford, by Michael Thomas Ford, is a first-ever collection of the popular novelist's stiff stories - Ford was editor of the first edition of *Best Gay Erotica*, back in 1996. (Kensington, \$14, Jan)

THE BROKEN GLASS of Night, by Harlan Greene (*Why We Never Danced the Charleston*, 1985, and *What the Dead Remember*, 1991 - two of the best novels of their decade) is set in the period before Nazi Germany's Kristallnacht (Crystal Night), when Jewish synagogues and businesses were torched. (Terrace Books/University of Wisconsin, \$26.95, Feb)...

BEST GAY EROTICA 2005, ed. by Richard Labonte/selected by William J. Mann, is a swell collection of queer writing: contributors and their stories this year are - Wake the King Up Right by Mike Newman; Yang-Qi by Teh-Chen Cheng; Pink Triangle-Shaped Pubes by Alexander Rowlson; Face Value by Scott Pomfret; Gamblers by Bob Vickery; The Thanks You Get by Simon Sheppard; Wrestler for Hire by Greg Herren; This Little Piggy by Jim Gladstone; Kindled by Vowels (An Epistolary Seduction) by Ian Philips &

Greg Wharton; Old Haunts by Jay Neal; The Strange Château of Dr. Kluge by Drew Gummerson; My Place by Alpha Martial; Get On Your Bikes and Ride! by D. Travers Scott; excerpt from *Voodoo Lust* by M. S. Hunter; The Bad Boy's Club by Michael Huxley; Derelict by Steve Berman; Surf by Andy Quan; excerpt from *My Name Is Rand* by Wayne Courtois; All at Sea with Master E by James Williams; Doll Boy by Jonathan Asche; Romulus by Bruce Benderson; The Bigg Mitkowski by Davem Verne (Cleis Press, \$14.95, Nov).



Anne Rice Bites Back

Is Anne Rice as iconic a writer for young gay men in 2004 as she was in 1984 and perhaps even in 1994 - before Tom Cruise sullied the fantasy image we all had of Lestat de Lioncourt? I bet not. (If I'm wrong, let me know).

I crossed paths with her several times in my bookseller days - she never did a signing for *A Different Light*, but she did come by several times to sign stacks of books, most notably one day in, I think, 1991; the comfy town car driving her around Los Angeles pulled up outside *A Different Light* Bookstore in West Hollywood the same afternoon that we were hosting another book-signing. She could have driven on; she could have swept in, done a diva turn, and stolen the spotlight; instead, she sat in the back seat of the car and - using her knees for support - signed dozens of copies of *The Witching Hour* and dozens more of her assorted backlist - even personalizing copies for customers who came out to say hello.

That attention to her fans - including her gay fans - is why the imbroglia involving Rice and some virulent (and mostly anonymous) "reviews" on amazon.com interests me: if you haven't picked up on the fuss, here's what's up...

Anne Rice was miffed at the tone of hundreds of amazon.com reviews of her last Vampire Lestat book, *Blood Canticle* (the hardcover was published a year ago, the mass market edition was released this August):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/11/books/11rice.html?oref=login&8bu>

Many of the reader "reviews" of the book are a fascinating bath of bile:

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/037541200X/qid=1097901569/sr=2-3/ref=pd_ka_b_2_3/102-5018319-9971346

And, in case it's bumped again from amazon.com, here's the text of Rice's fiercely frank response to the reviews, both a mesmerizing display of pique and pride on the author's part, and a raw example of the perverse way some readers personalize their non-existent relationships with authors:

Seldom do I really answer those who criticize my work. In fact, the entire development of my career has been fueled by my ability to ignore denigrating and trivializing criticism as I realize my dreams and my goals.

However there is something compelling about Amazon's willingness to publish just about anything, and the sheer outrageous stupidity of many things you've said here that actually touches my proletarian and Democratic soul. Also I use and enjoy Amazon and I do read the reviews of other people's books in many fields. In sum, I believe in what happens here.

And so, I speak. First off, let me say that this is addressed only to some of you, who have posted outrageously negative comments here, and not to all. You are interrogating this text from the wrong perspective. Indeed, you aren't even reading it. You are projecting your own limitations on it. And you are giving a whole new meaning to the words "wide readership." And you have strained my Dickensian principles to the max.

I'm justifiably proud of being read by intellectual giants and waitresses in trailer parks, in fact, I love it, but who in the world are you?

*Now to the book. Allow me to point out: nowhere in this text are you told that this is the last of the chronicles, nowhere are you promised curtain calls or a finale, nowhere are you told there will be a wrap-up of all the earlier material. The text tells you exactly what to expect. And it warns you specifically that if you did not enjoy *Memnoch the Devil*, you may not enjoy this book.*

This book is by and about a hero whom many of you have already rejected. And he tells you that you are likely to reject him again. And this book is most certainly written - every word of it - by me. If and when I can't write a book on my own, you'll know about it.

And no, I have no intention of allowing any editor ever to distort, cut, or otherwise mutilate sentences that I have edited and re-edited, and organized

and polished myself. I fought a great battle to achieve a status where I did not have to put up with editors making demands on me, and I will never relinquish that status. For me, novel writing is a virtuoso performance. It is not a collaborative art.

Back to the novel itself: the character who tells the tale is my Lestat. I was with him more closely than I have ever been in this novel; his voice was as powerful for me as I've ever heard it. I experienced break through after break through as I walked with him, moved with him, saw through his eyes. What I ask of Lestat, Lestat unfaithfully gives. For me, three hunting scenes, two which take place in hotels - the lone woman waiting for the hit man, the slaughter at the pimp's party - and the late night foray into the slums - stand with any similar scenes in all of the chronicles. They can be read aloud without a single hitch. Every word is in perfect place.

The short chapter in which Lestat describes his love for Rowan Mayfair was for me a totally realized poem. There are other such scenes in this book. You don't get all this? Fine. But I experienced an intimacy with the character in those scenes that shattered all prior restraints, and when one is writing one does have to continuously and courageously fight a destructive tendency to inhibition and restraint. Getting really close to the subject matter is the achievement of only great art.

Now, if it doesn't appeal to you, fine. You don't enjoy it? Read somebody else. But your stupid arrogant assumptions about me and what I am doing are slander. And you have used this site as if it were a public urinal to publish falsehood and lies. I'll never challenge your democratic freedom to do so, and yes, I'm answering you, but for what it's worth, be assured of the utter contempt I feel for you, especially those of you who post anonymously (and perhaps repeatedly?) and how glad I am that this book is the last one in a series that has invited your hateful and ugly responses.

Now, to return to the narrative in question: Lestat's wanting to be a saint is a vision larded through and through with his characteristic vanity. It connects perfectly with his earlier ambitions to be an actor in Paris, a rock star in the modern age. If you can't see that, you aren't reading my work. In his conversation with the Pope he makes observations on the times which are in continuity with his observations on the late twentieth century in *The Vampire Lestat*, and in continuity with Marius' observations in that book and later in *Queen of the Damned*.

The state of the world has always been an important theme in the chronicles. Lestat's comments matter. Every word he speaks is part of the achievement of this book. That Lestat renounced this saintly ambition within a matter of pages is plain enough for you to see. That he reverts to his old self is obvious, and that he intends to complete the tale of *Blackwood Farm* is also quite clear.

There are many other themes and patterns in this work that I might mention - the interplay between St. Juan Diago and Lestat, the invisible creature who doesn't "exist" in the eyes of the world is a case in point. There is also the theme of the snare of *Blackwood Farm*, the place where a human existence becomes so beguiling that Lestat relinquishes his power as if to a spell. The entire relationship between Lestat and Uncle Julien is carefully worked out. But I leave it to readers to discover how this complex and intricate novel establishes itself within a unique, if not unrivalled series of book.

There are things to be said. And there is pleasure to be had. And readers will say wonderful things about *Blood Canticle* and they already are. There are readers out there and plenty of them who cherish the individuality of each of the chronicles, which you so flippantly condemn. They can and do talk circles around you. And I am warmed by their response. Their letters, the papers they write in school, our face-to-face exchanges on the road - these things sustain me when I read the utter trash that you post.

But I feel I have said enough. If this reaches one reader who is curious about my work and shocked by the ugly reviews here, I've served my goals.

And Yo, you dude, the slang police! Lestat talks like I do. He always has and he always will. You really wouldn't much like being around either one of us. And you don't have to be.

If any of you want to say anything about all this by all means Email me at Anneobrienrice@mac.com. And if you want your money back for the book, send it to 1239 First Street, New Orleans, La, 70130. I'm not a coward about my real name or where I live. And yes, the *Chronicles* are no more! Thank God!

By Sept. 26, Rice noted on her website that her original amazon.com posting had been deleted, along with several hundred reviews; as of Oct. 17, there were 276 reviews online, (there were 297 the day before, so it seems amazon.com is deleting some) but at least one person had reposted Rice's response. In the same message, Rice also said she'd given up responding to

emails to her mac.com address, though she was still honoring her pledge to refund money to unhappy buyers (no numbers cited) - and that she was sending copies returned to her to U.S. troops overseas. "I'm going back to work," she wrote. "I've enjoyed your letters. As I said, I'm grateful for them. And the whole experience has been amazing. I leave it with the hope that the Amazon site is going through some sort of natural development with regard to its purpose and freedom for positive and negative anonymous reviews. I leave it with the hope that the site will become stronger and better, but how this is to be worked out, I know not."

<http://www.annerice.com/msg092604a.htm>

Author website: www.annerice.com



Cruising the Internet with Heim, Leroy, and Henry James

Scott Heim is really, really happy with Gregg Araki's film based on his novel *Mysterious Skin* (Sept. 18 entry):

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

JT LeRoy talks about the queer fear of sexual ambiguity, and about his new graphic novel, *How Loathsome*, collecting the first four issues of the gender-straddling comic *Loathsome*:

http://www.advocate.com/html/stories/924/924_loathsome.asp

Marc Acito (*How I Paid for College...*) is part of the First Author tour written up here (though the focus is on a local author; more stories are sure to follow):

http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/entertainment_columnists/article/0,1299,DRMN_84_3257459,00.html

The Southern Voice touches on the PayPal denial of service to a growing number of queer gay web sites:

<http://www.southernvoice.com/2004/10-15/news/national/internet.cfm>

Steven Schreiber writes about the odyssey from finishing his novel, *Blood in My Hairspray*, in 1994 to getting it published in 2002 - and reflects that his payback isn't in the money:

<http://www.gfn.com/features/story.php?sid=12378>

"Two meteor movies in one year" is one thing, comments *Slate*; but two novels about Henry James? Six months after Colm Toibin's *The Master*, Stephen Metcalf discusses David Lodge's *Author, Author* (with references to Emma Tenant's *Felony* and Allan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty*):

<http://www.slate.com/id/2108064/>

In the *Village Voice*, Benjamin Strong calls *The Line of Beauty* "a beautiful novel about ugly people":

<http://www.villagevoice.com/vls/182/strong2.shtml>

And Phyllis Fong appreciates *The Selected letters of James Schuyler*, edited by William Corbett - letters that are, she remarks, "happily... often petty":

<http://www.villagevoice.com/vls/182/fong.shtml>

The most frequently challenged book of 2004, according to this story about Banned Books Week? *King and King*, by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland, the story of a royal couple on their honeymoon - a gay couple; its sequel, *King and King & Family*, about the two men's desire to adopt, was a top Book Sense pick:

<http://www.philly.com/mld/dailynews/news/opinion/9830300.htm?1c>

Kinsey, the man who made us 10 per cent of the population, is at the center of a new book by T.C. Boyle and a new movie by Bill Condon:

<http://www.timesstar.com/Stories/0,1413,125~1549~2474161,00.html>



Some Bits 'O News

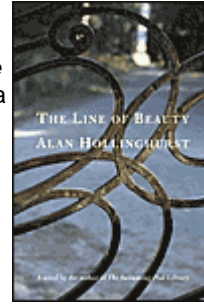
Hollinghurst's the Man (Booker)

British novelist Alan Hollinghurst beat the bookies' odds Oct. 18 to win the Man Booker prize for his novel *The Line of Beauty*, a thematic sequel to his 1987 debut, *The Swimming-Pool Library*. Most U.K. critics had predicted a win for David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*; and *The Master*, Colm Toibin's novel about Henry James, was also a contender for the prestigious literary prize:

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/news/story.jsp?story=573936>

A pre-prize interview:

<http://www.newsday.com/features/booksmags/ny-bktalk1017%2C0%2C3317140.story?coll=ny-bookreview-headlines>



And, from an insider's account, Economist literary editor Fiammetta Rocco writes about the experience of serving as a Booker judge:

"The final meeting, in a zebra-striped London hotel room, lasted nearly three hours. Mr. Hollinghurst's coolly elegant skewering of Thatcherite London was pitted against Mr. Toibin's quietly enthralling study of regret and the convoluted workings of human remembering, and both books faced the thrilling pyrotechnics of the young Mr. Mitchell in *Cloud Atlas*. There was no clear winner, even after five rounds of voting. Ultimately, Mr. Hollinghurst drew ahead only by the finest of whiskers when the chairman, Chris Smith, a master of political shepherding, proposed that the only vote for Mr. Toibin be transferred to that judge's second choice."

http://www.economist.co.uk/books/displayStory.cfm?story_id=3308497

GayToday.com, resurrected:

Badpuppy publisher William Pinyon writes: "We are pleased to announce that we have had a few options present themselves that will result in a rebirth of Gay Today. Depending on which option we choose there is one thing that I must let you know. The format of Gay Today will have to change; however, we will be keeping the complete archives online dating back to our first article on February 3, 1997 by Jack Nichols. Please check back with us soon. We currently anticipate a re-launch date of Nov. 8; however, site renovations may begin occurring in the next week and you will be able to preview the up and coming New Gay Today."

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

Lambda Literary Vox Populi

The Lambda Literary Foundation has opened a **Lammy Awards Suggestion Box** on its website, soliciting recommendations for nominees for the 2004 Lambda Literary Awards - and then posting the list of books "so that readers can follow along and see if their favorite title has been suggested," says LLF executive director Jim Marks.

In a sense, this new suggestion box hearkens back to the early years of the awards, when there was no fee assessed for nominations, and any reader could submit books for consideration. Now anyone can suggest a title, but books must then be officially nominated - with the nominations accompanied by a processing fee.

More formally: The Lambda Literary Awards are selected using a three-tiered process - first, books are nominated by a publisher or other authorized agents, who pay a \$20 fee per title. Then, an ad hoc Finalist Committee selects five finalists in each category. Finally, panels of judges in each category select the Award recipients. The Awards will be presented in New York City on June 2, 2005.

"Books suggested should, if possible, include contact information for the book's publisher; this will enable us to contact all publishers to give them an opportunity to nominate their titles," says Marks.

In addition, there are two new categories this year: *Gay Men's Debut Fiction* and *Lesbian Debut Fiction*, each with a \$1,000 prize. Self-published titles are not eligible for the Debut Fiction prizes.

To suggest titles:

<http://www.lambdalit.org/Lammy/suggestionnew.html>

A different deadline:

Billy Merrell writes with news of the *Queerthology* publishing project, mentioned in **Books To Watch Out For/Gay Men's Edition 9**:

"The Bad News: Very Important: Due to highly irritating and unfortunate circumstances, we need anyone who submitted electronically before Oct. 12 to submit again to submissions@queerthology.com. The Good News: The deadline for submissions has been extended to Dec. 15. Please pass this important information on to whoever you know."

Info: www.queerthology.com

Le dernier chance Texaco:

French rights to Brent Hartinger's second YA novel, *The Last Chance Texaco*, have been sold to Pocket Jeunesse; with a mix of queer and straight characters, the book is about kids at a "last chance" group home whose detective work exposes the vandal who is trying to get the facility shut down. Hartinger's sequel to the best-selling *The Geography Club - The Order of the Poison Oak* - is coming in February 2005 from HarperTempest.

Author's website: <http://www.brenthartinger.com>

The new book's first chapter:

<http://www.brenthartinger.com/firstchappoak.html>



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Bestsellers and Popular Titles from Down Under

The Bookshop Darlinghurst:

www.thebookshop.com.au

Bestsellers of interest to gay men*

1. *The Line of Beauty*, by Alan Hollinghurst
2. *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, by David Sedaris
3. *French Letter*, by Bruno Bouchet - Peter's father vanished 25 years ago. But then a letter arrives from him, urging Peter and his gay brother, Didier, to visit him in France to find out about their past. Arriving in Marseille, the brothers are plunged into the bizarre world of their father and his Greek wife, Kiki, who have embarked on a bizarre scheme involving such culinary delights as Lavender Moussaka, Fetta Fondue and a throat-ripping ouzo made from cheap brandy and aniseed balls.
4. *Last Summer*, by Michael Thomas Ford
5. *Dry*, by Augusten Burroughs

*Four of the five titles on the online Bookshop Darlinghurst bestseller list have popped onto bestsellers lists at most American bookstores, including Lambda Rising, Outwrite, and The Open Book; the third-ranked book, however, is published by Hodder Headline Australia: here's a link to the book's page:

<http://www.hha.com.au/books/0733618138.html>

Bookshop Darlinghurst also lists a number of "Australian" titles (the first four are "new" in 2004), many of them unavailable in the U.S. I've included the bookstore's synopses (somewhat edited) for the more interesting titles - about half of the books you'll find by following the link:

www.thebookshop.com.au/index.cfm?CFID=3247795&CFTOKEN=90915154

Fly By Night, by Narrelle M. Harris - Successful musician Frank Capriano returns home to Perth for his mentor's funeral, along with his band-mate and lover Milo. Frank's old friends are having money troubles and are trying to make ends meet through smuggling. But that turns out to be only the tip of the iceberg - soon they have a murder to contend with.

Homosapien: A Fantasy About Pro Wrestling, by Julie Bozza - It's hard to explain the attraction of opposites - especially when one is a bookshop worker, intellectual, and gay rights activist, and the other is a professional wrestler struggling to build his career in that macho industry while burdened by a gay persona.

I Am What I Am, by John Marsden - Long active in the areas of civil liberties, gay law reform and police integrity, John Marsden was a well-connected Sydney solicitor with friends in high places when he was very publicly brought down by allegations of pedophilia made against him in state

parliament. What followed turned into the longest, the most expensive, and perhaps the most unsavory defamation trial Australia has ever seen: a nine-year nightmare that took John Marsden to the brink and beyond.

Twilight of Love: Travels with Turgenev, by Robert Dessaix - For 40 years Turgenev was passionately devoted to Pauline Viardot, a singer, and he followed her and her husband around Europe. Yet it seems their relationship was chaste - both had affairs with other people - and at various times Turgenev lived amicably as part of the Viardot household. Robert Dessaix has had his own 40-year relationship with Turgenev and his work - as a student, tutor and now old friend. This is a truly remarkable work of memoir, literary biography, and travel writing.

And So Forth, by Robert Dessaix - A selection of this highly esteemed writer and critic's essays, short fiction and journalism from the last decade. His subjects are various and include gay fiction, Aboriginal spirituality, the suburban family, and the nature of creativity.

Barbwire Entanglements, by P.V. Goode - As a 23-year-old Australian serving with the RAF in WWII, Phil Braddock survived being shot down over Germany. During long months as a prisoner of war, he became intimately involved with an American in the same camp. Thirty years later, Braddock reluctantly agrees to organize a get-together of fellow prisoners - and is forced to confront memories of his wartime affair.

Confessing a Murder, by Nick Drayson - Purporting to be an anonymous memoir found in an attic, its author is an arrogant but brilliant homosexual whose life has crossed with that of Darwin with startling regularity.

Desirelines, by Peter & Richard Wherrett - Behind the hype and the sensational headlines of cross-dressing, wife beating, substance abuse, and homosexuality is a very candid memoir of an extraordinary suburban Australian family. It works on so many levels: Peter's confession of his desire to cross-dress, Richard's brilliant historical evocation of Sydney and especially gay Sydney.

Holding The Man, by Timothy Conigrave - One of the publishing success stories of 1995 and still one of our bestsellers in 2002, *Holding the Man* charts a love affair between schoolboys that weathered disapproval, separation, and ultimately death. It explores the intimacy, constraints, and temptations of Conigrave's relationship, while revealing the strength both men had to find when they tested positive to HIV. A powerful, passionate and moving book that is essential reading for every gay Australian.

Ian Roberts: Finding Out, by Paul Freeman - To come out as gay in Australia's strongest bastion of het machismo - football - is hard to imagine. Ian Roberts did it and has lived to tell. For the first time in our rough and tumble sporting history we finally have a gay sports icon but Roberts' sporting career has had more hurdles in its stead than homosexuality. He has suffered from epilepsy for nearly 20 years. *Finding Out* offers an all-Australian perspective on gayness - from the rigors of a childhood in Maroubra to centerfolds in *Blue*, Ian Roberts' story is worth finding out.

Repercussions, by Michael D. Campbell - Young Byron Crawford flees Australia to Italy after a failed attempt on his life. Re-establishing a link with his former lover, Byron avails himself of an opportunity to change his identity. As a result, Ricco Luciani, famous model of the 90s, emerges and takes the world by storm. He heads Down Under with only one aim: to exact revenge against his would-be killers.

Rudeboy Train, by David Lennon - A new Australian gay novel that also happens to be the world's first gay rock 'n' roll novel. (Gay) sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll - this is a backstage pass to the scenes behind the gigs! Connery is living his musical dream: playing across the country, adoring fans, full on partying, record contracts, and chart topping singles. But things aren't complete as he's also searching for the perfect boyfriend.

Sushi Central, by Alasdair Duncan - Go out. Take a pill. Meet a boy. Dance. Recover. Repeat. Calvin is sixteen and out of control. Experienced but naive,

he and his friends feel disconnected from their safe, suburban world of private schools and four-wheel drives. They inhabit a world of their own design where fun comes by the milligram and fashion is all that counts. Then Calvin meets Anthony, and the two boys form an obsessive bond. But as Calvin deals with the confusion of first love, he discovers pictures of Anthony on a website, and is drawn into a world more adult than he could have imagined. This is a subversive black comedy about teen angst pushed to its final, self-destructive extremes.

Vanity Fierce, by Graeme Aitken - From the best-selling author of *Fifty Ways of Saying Fabulous* comes the ultimate comic novel of gay Sydney. Stephen Spear is everyone's golden boy (including his own). When he falls for Ant (the only gay man he knows who still has chest hair), he is astounded to find his desire unrequited. But Stephen is determined to get his man. This is a love story that's big on outrageous schemes, dark secrets, and firm muscles.

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Dear BTWOF

Thanks for that beautiful piece on Donald Allen! It was bittersweet to read it. He brought a lot of treasures into my world when I was growing up in Ohio. Back when books were *everything* to me. Back before there was even cable TV. Once again, a great issue.

--Marilyn Jaye Lewis

(For news about Lewis' new collection of bisexual erotica, *Lust*, from Alyson Books:

<http://store.yahoo.com/alysonbooks/lubier.html>

And the author's website:

<http://www.marilynjayeewis.com/>)

Thanks very much for alerting me to your kind comments about GayToday and about my Tomcat book. You said a number of things that show how keen are your insights.

I'm beginning to enjoy having my first real vacation in nearly eight years.

Prior to the present, GayToday required work that had to be done on a daily basis. When Lige [his deceased partner] and I resigned in 1973 from the original GAY, I recall thinking how editing is rather like being an orchestra leader and that it was then high time to play my own instrument - solo. That's somewhat how I feel now. I could have continued holding a baton, but it's going to be fun having this new biweekly column to do*.

With two books still for sale in stores I'm also thinking of revising what I call my "major work," my 1975 book on males (*Men's Liberation*). Between 1975 and 1990 it sold almost 100,000 copies, went into German and Greek with excerpts in Parents' magazine and in textbooks. It needs updating.

If the Bushies are re-elected, I, for one, will no longer allow myself to self-identify even marginally as a pragmatic anarchist attempting to compromise and depending on some benighted (if not fixed) national vote to save us. I'll just be an anarchist celebrating the good old anarchist tradition: which in my experience means enthusiastically recalling of the themes of Kropotkin, Bakunan, Goldman, Goodman, Chomsky and my own thoughts on macho-male role-training

--Jack Nichols (The Tomcat Journals)

(*To read Jack Nichols' new column, go to:

<http://www.365gay.com/opinion/nichols/nichols.htm>)

I loved the elegy to GayToday. I wrote for GT for several years, and loved working with Jack. GayToday was outrageous in the most marvelous way, was totally non-corporatized, and put a bright flashlight onto some areas that never get covered in the gay press (and certainly not in the straight one). I'm also glad you reviewed Jack's book. I'm looking forward to reading it.

--Perry Brass (Belhue Press)

Thanks so much for the review - I always get 3-5 subscriptions when you mention Bloom. Glad you like the second issue - we're at work on #3 already, will let you know the contents soon enough. One small correction though: we're two issues a year, \$16 per year (\$10 each issue in

bookstores).
--Charles Flowers
(www.bloommagazine.org)

Thanks, Richard, for including me as *Young, Smart and Thinking of Cum* (always!). Although I preferred the link at the top: *Cuming of age and Cuming out*.
Enthusiastically,
--Marc Acito (*How I Paid For College*)



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Anyone Else?

For 10 installments, BTWOF/GM has expressed a single - though, I do hope, wide-ranging - voice. I'd like to include other voices – so anyone who'd like to declaim over a book, vent on a topic, list favorites, recall writers, or otherwise contribute to forthcoming newsletters... you are invited. Send submissions or questions to me at tattyhill@sympatico.ca



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