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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.

The Gay Men's Edition

"April" 2004
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Publishers' Note

Here's your (very late) April issue. I'm sorry for the delay in getting it through the production process and out to you. The May issue will be along shortly.

-Carol

By Richard Labonte

A Few Dozen Hot! Books To Watch Out For

I've never written gay erotica. Perhaps that makes me the perfect editor for the **Best Gay Erotica** series I've edited for Cleis Press since 1996 - I don't bring my own kinks, fetishes, or preferences to the prose I sift through for the annual anthology. I was of course reading gay erotica - okay, porn - for decades before I started to pay attention to quality rather than efficacy. So you might say I was there at the point where porn evolved from semi-literate jerk-off aid to often-literary reading material. Gay short fiction and novels have always contained erotic elements - John Rechy, anyone? But over the past 15 years, nudged along by the late John Preston's *Flesh and the Word* series (taken over for a couple of volumes after his death by Michael Lowenthal), smut merged with style.

When I say that, I'm disagreeing with Karl Woelz, who in 2003 edited **M2M: New Literary Fiction**. I liked the book just fine: here's a review I wrote for my syndicated *Book Marks* column when the anthology was published:

This excellent anthology of short gay fiction is a noble literary dinosaur. In years past, the Men on Men series, launched by

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George Stambolian, was just the leader of a pack of such anthologies. But the field has become glutted with erotic collections - lots with literary flair, many variations on fetish themes of butts and muscle, rough sex and bear sex, and so on. So bravo to AttaGirl for *M2M*, a solid anthology of 20 stellar stories. Editor Woelz salts it with fine new work from marquee veterans: Felice Picano, Andrew Holleran, Edmund White. But the exciting literary fizz is in newer work, particularly J.E. Robinson's tense "Gorgon," about a private school teacher and the students who bewitch him; Rakesh Satyal's dreamy "Skins," about a sissy soccer player's lust; Craig T. McWhorter's rueful "All There Is," about jealousy and forgiveness; and Vestal McIntyre's quirky "Disability," about unexpected love. Woelz was co-editor of *Men on Men 2000*, the last in the acclaimed eight-book series, with David Bergman. His *M2M* is a distinguished descendant. (AttaGirl Press, 332 pages, \$16.95 - though I'm told by one of the first AttaGirl authors that the press is on hiatus and may close.)

Well, those *Book Mark* reviews are a short 175 words, so I didn't have room to quibble with Woelz's rather whiny dismissal, in both a foreword and an afterward, of erotic writing as a legitimate form of gay literary endeavor. There was a holier-than-we-who-don't-focus-on-cocks tone to his thinking.

So: here's a roundup of erotic-toned writing from the past year that I think has merit. Not all of the books meet the literary standard of - may I suggest - **Best Gay Erotica 2004** (Cleis Press, \$14.95), edited by Richard Labonte and selected by Kirk Read, or of earlier editions, still in print, judged by Michael Rowe, Randy Boyd, D. Travers Scott, and Felice Picano. But I find it refreshing that new generations of queer writers are finding outlets for work that blends passion with life ...



Satyriasis: Literotica2, by Ian Philips (*Suspect Thoughts Press*, \$16.95)

I'm not enough of an erotic historian to know if Philips was the first to merge "literary" and "erotica" and use the result in his title. But it fits: this is just his second collection; his first, *See Dick Deconstruct*, deservedly won the Lambda Literary Award for Best Erotica. His writing is so good that the hot bits are sometimes - often? - beside the point. And pansexuality rules - there are boys and girls and merry in-betweens frolicking in this book. "Just Another Lesbian Potluck" is a hoot, "Cyber Interruptus" deconstructs queer Internet porn, "Shrimpboat Willie" gleefully honors foot fetishists, and "Nearer My Greg to Thee" is a paean to phone sex - and the



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man the author loves. "Kidnaps Flaubert, Mark Twain, and the marquis de Sade and stuffs them in the back of his getaway car with a bottle of lube and a wooden paddle," Kirk Read wowed on the back cover, in that rarest of paragraphs - a right-on blurb.

Author info: www.ianphilips.com

Men, Amplified, edited by Michael Huxley (STARbooks, \$16.95)

Huxley appropriates the term "literotica" to describe this fecund fiction anthology. In his introduction, he further notes that this is the first STARbooks book in 20 years to use a form of the word "Man" rather than "Boy" in its title. On both counts, he has something to brag about. There certainly aren't many boys to be found frolicking in *Men, Amplified*. The barely legal twinks, teens, and lithe bods that were long a staple of this publisher's stable of queer-porn characters are all grown up here, with hair on their chests. And there's a definite literary sheen to many of the stories, notably those by M. Christian, Henry Iblis, Thom Nickels, the aforementioned Ian Philips, Simon Sheppard, Mel Smith, and Greg Wharton, and in poems by Antler, Horehound Stillpoint, and Huxley himself. No single contribution exemplifies the above-average quality of this eclectic collection, but Jerome Szmczak's provocative "The Same Words" - about closeted queer love on a small Greek island - comes close. Its fusion of heated lust and practical love amplifies the freshness of other tales quite nicely.

Seven Against Georgia, by Eduardo Mendicutti (Grove Press, \$12 paper)

When this irreverent satire was published in Spain in 1987,  America's sodomy laws were in place - and enforced - in many states. Since then, the Supreme Court has ruled against those laws - a progressive march of time that somewhat dilutes the political potency of *Seven Against Georgia*. Mendicutti's nevertheless engagingly outrageous series of linked stories features seven flamboyant drag queens who - no reason given - flaunt their fetishes by mailing steamy audiocassette tapes to an anonymous Georgia police chief. The premise is flimsy, but the impudent narrators are flashy, sexy, and oodles of fun. They include Herr Betty Honey, who falls to her knees - not to pray - for a man in a first-communion dress; Miss Madelon, with a yen for men in uniform; Miss Balcony, aroused by the sensuality of food, particularly her baker's extra-big baguette; and Colette La Coco, a well-traveled doyenne who favors risqué sex in airport terminals around the world. Their tales of over-the-top erotics are more amusing than arousing - but Mendicutti's rowdy prose, translated by Kristina Cordero, is appealingly aphrodisiacal.

Desire Lust Passion Sex, by Jameson Currier (*Green Candy Press*, \$14.95)

Any one of these stories about everyday eros would have fit comfortably into the Men on Men series - in fact, that's where "Fearless" was first published - a tender tale about a 37-year-old man with HIV falling for a 22-year-old with no real sense of the early horrors of AIDS. On the other hand, several others were reprinted in the Best Gay Erotica series. There it is again - the merging of the erotic and the literary. Currier's stories are all about sex and love and how they occasionally overlap; he writes eloquently and elegantly about the continuum of gay male sexuality, from the tickle of desire to the pull of lust to the power of passion to the satisfaction - though not always - of sex. And, though it's not in the title, there is also love in these stories, real love between real men in real time in the real world, to quote another elegant erotic writer, the aforementioned (again) Mr. Philips.

Author info: <http://members.aol.com/jimcurrier/currier.html>

... But I Know What You Want: 25 Sex Tales for the Different, by James Williams (*Greenery Press*, \$13.95)

The author of this sizzling first collection of pansexual literary erotica isn't particularly prolific, and so not as well known as, say, the late John Preston, the venerable Larry Townsend, or the alive-and-kicking Patrick Califia, each an avatar of intelligent S/M fiction. But Williams is as good as any of them, with a prowess for titillating gender fluidity that only Califia - and, more recently, that Philips fellow - might match. His range is dazzling: In "Ponyboy" and "Jason's Cock" he conjures gay male sex with exhilarating intensity. Infantilism is the fetish at work in "Daddy," where a wife dons diapers for her husband. "My Life as a Wife" is a totally hot heterosexual tale of female domination. And "I and Thou" is such a vivid, daring plunge into sexual brutality and depravity that some might be repelled - or infuriated - by it. It's by far the riskiest piece in the collection. It's also absolutely intelligent about transgressing the boundary between consensual, hard-core sex and undisciplined, dehumanized sex - an artistic bravura that's present in every one of the book's astonishing stories, but especially breathtaking in this instance.

Author info: www.jaswilliams.com

More Williams fiction: www.suspectthoughts.com/wife1.html

For another review:

www.alexanderrenault.com/bkwilliams.html

Pulp Friction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulp, edited by Michael Bronski (*St. Martin's Griffin*, \$14.95 paper)

In my introduction to this roundup of arousing writing, I



suggested that the overlap of the literary and the erotic was a relatively recent boom. But of course there's always been an erotic current running through gay fiction. Thanks to this charming mix of sex and scholarship, several tens of thousands of words of gay male pornography, culled from musty, crumbling paperbacks, have acquired overdue historical heft. Bronski, a pop scholar of queer culture, has mined the sleazier bibliographies of gay literature for the work - mostly novel excerpts - in *Pulp Friction*. Drawing on about 20 years of mass-market paperbacks from the early 1950s on, with beefcake covers and lurid titles like *Whisper His Sin* and *The Boys of Muscle Beach*, he has assembled a functional, fun erotic reader. But this is much more than a "Best Gay Historical Erotica" collection - it's also a work of rollicking social history. Smart prefaces for each of the anthology's five sections provide political, cultural, and historical context for the fiction; individual excerpts are introduced with tasty tidbits about each author and his other work; and the book concludes with an intoxicating (though not exhaustive) appendix discussing gay-content fiction published in America between 1940 and 1969.

The Sperm Engine, by *Stephen Greco* (Green Candy Press, \$13.95 paper)

This is a book whose stories – some fiction, some fact – worship cock. It's undeniably erotic - "Spurt" appears in Best Gay Erotica 2003, and "The Last Blow Job" and "Field of Vision" were featured in the *Flesh and the Word* series of yore. But Greco's virile writing goes well beyond getting off. The collection celebrates gay male sexual spirituality as much as it does gay male sexual appetites, infusing the basic blowjob with a cheerful, sacred fervor. The autobiographical bits (including the charming "How I Met My Boyfriend: The Real Story") are examples of vivid, vital erotic reportage, work where what simply happened makes for unembroidered erotic reading. But when Greco turns to fiction, drawing on creative imagination as much as carnal memory, his prowess as a storyteller really shines - particularly in "The Trout," about a pretty boy whose talent as trade betrays his will to write. Every piece in *The Sperm Engine* is fresh and focused, but that particular story is this book's triumph.

The Best of the Best Meat Erotica, edited by *Greg Wharton* (Suspect Thoughts Press, \$16.95)

Building an erotic anthology around the idea of meat seems somewhat of a stretch. And there is also the ominous possible overuse of "meat" - as a boringly obvious euphemism for a certain dangling male appendage - to make a reader wary. But Wharton has collected quite an eclectic range of well-written tales involving beef, pork, chicken, venison, shellfish, and sex; and only one (Lukas Scott's otherwise literate and sweetly

romantic "The Butcher's Boy") indulges itself in that hoary dangling meat metaphor. Several of the short stories are quite comic, among them Susannah Indigo's "Bacon, Lola, and Tomato," Lawrence Schimel's "Too Close to the Sun" and Lisa Montanarelli's "Vegan Lesbian Boarding School Hookers in Bondage." Two in particular are palpably unsettling – Marshall Moore's gleefully gruesome "The Glue Factory;" and "Meatier" by Simon Sheppard - gripping and bloody and physically, uncomfortably, sensual. With the death of the literary anthology series *Men on Men*, *Women on Women*, and *Best American Gay Fiction*, the erotic anthology has become the new home for much of what there is (online publishing aside) of quality queer writing – and this *Best* is a pretty good example.

Author info: www.suspectthoughts.com/wharton.htm

Johnny Was & Other Tall Tales, by Greg Wharton (*Suspect Thoughts Press*, \$16.95)

In addition to editing quality anthologies - others include *Of the*



Flesh: Dangerous New Fiction, and with M. Christian,

Lover Under Foot: An Erotic Celebration of Feet - and

publishing pretty good books: see Philips, above, and the two

reviews that follow, Wharton writes. *Johnny Was* is his first

collection. It's smutty, sure, with stories about hot coaches,

sexy daddys, very happy hustlers, masters of the whip - but

transcendently so. Like Philips (his husband - they were

married earlier this year in San Francisco), like Currier, like

Williams, like Greco, Wharton infuses his fiction with erotic

thrills and chills. But, as he says in his introduction, these aren't

"classically structured 'stroke' stories" - they can ignite desire,

but their real, gritty power lies in how he fuses dynamic

imagination with lyrical reality. Every story is a treat, but I'll

single out one, "Husband, Sire, It" - as intense (and

autobiographical) as Ian Philips' own "Nearer My Greg to

Thee." If anyone ever edits a collection of short stories by

couples, these two tales would set the standard.

More author info: Wharton is also the editor of

www.suspectthoughts.com and an editor of

www.velvetmafia.com

My Name Is Rand, by Wayne Courtois (*Suspect Thoughts Press*, \$16.95)

Whew. Stop. Please. No. Please. More. Are you ticklish? Does

the thought of a feather near your feet make your sole twitch

with anticipation and your soul soar with desire? The brush of

calloused fingers along your ribs, the breezy flutter of a whip

against your back, the scrape of beard stubble along your thigh

- do these make you writhe with eager, irrepressible desire?

Then *My Name Is Rand* is your kind of fiction. S/M and fetish

erotica anthologies often contain short stories about tickling as

a turn-on, but as far as I know this is the first full-bore novel to

detail the power of being tightly bound and tickled to the point of orgasmic madness. Courtois' prose is dark, nightmarish, unrelenting, and - for some - even unsettling, in its depiction of coercive sex, forced bondage, and near-torture as a pathway to pleasure. More. No more. Yes, more.

Author info, links to two interviews, two excerpts, and other writing: www.suspectthoughts.com/courtois.html

Pulling Taffy, by Matt Bernstein Sycamore (*Suspect Thoughts Press*, \$16.95)

Matt, the character, is a hustler with a ready hard-on, a quirky sense of humor, and a preference for cash up front. He's also a cute club kid with a yen for hard drugs, hard liquor, and hard partying. And he's an avowed vegetarian and committed political activist, devoted to the memory of dead friends and much loved by both his grandmothers. Plus he's intimately familiar with the raunchy backrooms of sex clubs in Seattle, Boston, New York, and San Francisco. All in all, Matt the character, much like Sycamore the author, is an uncommonly layered young fag, a charming party mix of cheeky perception and cheerful decadence. Pulling Taffy is a flamboyant hybrid of picaresque fiction and candid autobiography – one bright, brash queer boy's own fierce story. The stitched-together snippets of Sycamore's briskly erotic, peripatetic life blur the line ably between fact and fantasy; the tale told, with nervy brio, is - like the taffy of the title - fresh and chewy.

Author info: www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com

Links to two interviews and other writing:
www.suspectthoughts.com/sycamore.html

Desilicious: Sexy. Subversive. South Asian., edited by *The Masala Trois Collective - Deborah Barretto, Gurbir Singh Jolly, Zenia Wadhvani* (*Arsenal Pulp Press*, \$16.95)

There are only a handful of queer stories (and more by women than men) in this artful collection of South Asian erotic prose and poetry - including "Snake Poem" by Salacious Sister, whose contributor bio reads "...is a queer, sex-positive activist who is right pissed off at the need to use a pen-name due to the conservative nature of the South Asian community." That's a pretty apt summation of how unique this outstanding anthology is - few of the contributions come anywhere near hardcore, but every one deals with passion and desire through the filter of sexuality fused inseparably with the culture of geography and color. Sandip Roy, the founder of Trikone, as out as a writer can be, is represented with "The Secret Life of Good Boys," about growing up in India, "where gay sex was stolen." So too is Sunil Narayan, whose "In Search Of" (a man) is a work of searing whimsy. Gay or straight, though, the poems and stories in *Desilicious* share the quality of challenging colonial stereotypes of South Asian sexuality.




(Desi - derived from the Punjabi word for homeland. Delicious - descriptive of the writing. It's a splendid title for a fine anthology.

For Collective info: www.desilicious.net

Best Gay Asian Erotica, edited by Joel B. Tan (Cleis Press, \$14.95)

Sandip Roy's work also appears in this raunchier collection of Asian-themed erotica. His "Prolonged Exposure May Cause Dizziness" is a reprint from *Best Gay Erotica 2001*, as are stories by Andy Quan (2002) and John Tunui (1998). And nine of the 22 stories in *Best Gay Asian Erotica* appeared - some in different versions - in Tan's earlier anthology, *Queer PAPI Porn*. So if you're an avid follower of erotica collections, you may well have already read more than half the stories here. Still, the 10 original tales are worth the price of admission - particularly Noel Alunit's edgy "1431 Sanborn Avenue #9," about the seduction of a voice on the phone; Jaime Cortez's nervy "War on Abstinence," about prowling for sex; and R. Lucas' nostalgic "Looking for Kato," about a skinny young kid yearning for a character out of *The Green Hornet*.

Between the Palms: A Collection of Gay Travel Erotica,  edited by Michael T. Luongo (Southern Tier Editions, \$16.95)

Cleis Press did it first, and just as well, with two volumes of Erotic Travel Tales, edited by Mitzi Szereto. University of Wisconsin Press did it more literarily with *Wanderlust*, edited by Raphael Kadushin. But there's something about queers and travel - the attraction of other cultures, the allure of other "types" - that's just sexy. Luongo's roster of writers is impressive - Simon Sheppard contributes "Stoned in Ten Languages," about sucking dick and smoking dope back when long hair was in vogue; Felice Picano contributes "Biker Boys and Commie Lovers," about the feel, sound - and smell - of youthful European men; Lawrence Schimel contributes "Spanish Summer (Granada, 1992)," about searching for a willing Spanish fellow. Interestingly, all three of these stories - and several others in *Between the Palms* - are set when the writers (ranging in age from mid-60s to early 30s) were youthful travelers.

An essay by the editor, on being gay and Muslim:

www.huriyahmag.com/spring/features.michaelluongo.htm

Buttmen 2: Erotic Stories and True Confessions by Gay Men Who Love Booty, edited by Alan Bell (West Beach Books, \$14.95)

The potential for erotic monotony is always present in fixed-fetish anthologies. But *Buttmen*, the first collection of just-butt smut, was a diverse anthology of cheeky turn-on fiction, and

Buttmen 2 is an equally kick-ass compilation. The emphasis here is less literary than in most of the other titles reviewed, but editor Bell understands that one can approach an object of sexual affection or obsession - in this case, the curve of an ass, the heat of a crack, the cool firmness of butt muscle, the warmth waiting within - from any number of directions, from the raunchy and the ribald, through the sassy and the satirical, to the downright dirty and disgusting. This book has all that - and a bit of literary merit, too. Particularly well-written, as well as sexy, are stories by Simon Sheppard ("The Boy Who Read Bataille"), Michael Goodwin ("Eternal Shower"), Wes Berlin ("No Hole Like the Present"), Randy Boyd ("Rimworld"), and Greyson B. Moore ("Fat Butt Greene") - all of them works that go well beyond the "I was standing around the gym one day when ..." form of most erotic fiction. Another plus: the authors, and their characters, are a rich mix of African-American, Latino, Asian, and white - a diversity more true to the gay community than most such anthologies represent. And since I read this, there's a *Buttmen 3*.

Publisher info: www.westbeachbooks.com

Dirty Young Men and Other Gay Stories, by Joseph Itiel
(Harrington Park Press, \$14.95)

To be honest, this slender collection - just 91 pages - ought to be titled *Other Gay Stories And A Couple About Dirty Young Men*: only five of the 12 tales recount Itiel's erotic encounters with younger men eager for sex with older men. The rest are autobiographical accounts of the author's many years as a "sexual tourist," finding erotic satisfaction in other countries and with men of different colors. Itiel is an unabashed, candid, and genial writer - not particularly polished, but interesting because of how matter-of-fact, pragmatic, and unsentimental his stories are. One earlier book from Harrington Park, *Escapades of a Gay Traveler: Sexual, Cultural, and Spiritual Encounters*, collects autobiographical bits of sex abroad; another, *Escort Tales: The Trophy Boy and Other Stories*, is a frank appraisal of the sex he's had with the young men he's bought.

Author info: www.josephitiel.com

Mindjacker, by Jonathan Asche (STARbooks, \$15.95)

There aren't a lot of full-length erotic novels, it seems - most of the heat comes from short stories in single-author collections, theme anthologies, or "bests." This mix of the supernatural (mind control) and the super-horny (lust and lasciviousness on most every page) is on one level a thriller about The Institute, where men disappear mysteriously, and on another, an imaginative sexual odyssey. Asche writes with effervescence about asses and cocks and how they play together, but integrates the sizzle into an able, involving narrative -

particularly if you're partial to fiction with an SF/F twist. (Another novel with a fair amount of erotic reading is Randy Boyd's *The Devil Inside*, from West Beach Books - though its focus is more political than pornish.)

Publisher info: www.starbookspress.com


For information on some older erotic novels from Leyland Publications, including an SF trilogy by Brandon Fox, and books by Luc Milne: www.gaysunshine.com/lpgayfiction.html

Meatmen 26: Special S/M Comics Edition, edited by Winston Leyland (Leyland Publications, \$18.95)

I can't leave a discussion of gay erotica without honoring the visual charms of the long-lived *Meatmen* comics series, which has been collecting one-panel and narrative erotic cartoon art for nearly 20 years. One or two volumes appear each year - this one, with its emphasis on muscles, the military, leather, bondage, and men in armor, includes work by The Hun, Gerard Donelan, Belasco, David Barnes, and Greg Garcia. When words don't get you there fast enough...

Publisher info: www.gaysunshine.com/lpgayfiction.html

My roundup of recent queer erotica isn't in any sense inclusive - the days are long passed when a gay bookstore's shelf of hot reading consisted mainly of tattered Greenleaf Classic pulps and the wondrous true life adventure edited by the venerable, late Boyd MacDonald (*Meat, Sex, Flesh, Cum, Wads, Cream, Filth, Skin, Juice* and more - every title a succinct gem), many of which are still available from Winston Leyland's equally venerable, but still alive and kicking, Gay Sunshine Press (www.gaysunshine.com/lpenounters.html). Heck, even Warner Books, as mainstream a publisher as there is, got into the erotic game in 2003 with *Manhandled: Gripping Tales of Erotic Gay Fiction*, edited by Austin Foxxe - formerly the editor of *Men* and *Freshmen* magazines.

 Forthcoming from Alyson Books are *Law of Desire: Tales of Gay Male Lust and Obsession*, edited by the happy couple Greg Wharton & Ian Philips; *Frat Sex: Stories of Gay Sex in College Fraternities*, edited by Greg Herren; *Hard Men*, collected erotic stories by Patrick Califia; and the ongoing *Friction* series (up to volume 7 at least), which reprints porn from the glossies. Zipper Books - clever company name - from Millivres/Prowler in Britain - one of the few places to find novel-length erotica - features the work of James Lear (*The Palace of Varieties, The Low Road*), Jack Dickson (*Out of This World, The Masters File*), Peter Gilbert (*Sex Safari, Sex Triangle, The Last Taboo*), William Maltese (*Summer Sweat, When Summer Comes*), Sam Stevens (*Boy Banned*), and Caleb Ask (*Czech Mate*). And of course, Kensington Books has carved out a niche of saucy, wink-wink naughty fiction - Ben

Tyler's *One Night Stand* is coming in December, Chris Kenry's *Confessions of a Casanova* is coming in October, and novellas by Greg Herren, Michael Thomas Ford, Timothy Ridge, and Sean Wolfe in *Midnight Thirsts: Erotic Tales of the Vampire* are coming in September: porn lite.

And then there's erotic-tinged nonfiction; here is a sampling:

Out/Lines: Underground Gay Graphics from Before Stonewall, by Thomas Waugh. (Arsenal Pulp Press, paper)

Thomas Waugh has a knack for sexy scholarship. *Hard to Imagine*, his 1996 study of pre-Stonewall erotic movie and studio photography, convincingly contextualized muscle-boy pics as works of art. This book, both a footnote to the first and a sequel, does the same for drawings. It collects 200 works by about a dozen artists, a majority of them anonymous - though Tom of Finland, the Michelangelo of pornographic illustration, is featured, and devoted connoisseurs of dirty pictures will be familiar with Neel Bate (who signed his work "Blade"), Dom Orejudos ("Etienne"), and Felix Lance Falkon ("Graewolf"). For Waugh's purposes, however, the artists' identities are almost beside the point - the homoerotic imagery itself, how much it mattered to the men who savored it and shared it, is the focus of his academic archeology. With a charming combination of learned art-theory essays introducing each chapter and amusing captions situating each drawing, Waugh honors the iconic erotic power of fleshy graphic fantasies with discerning zeal and un-ironic relish. For gay men of a certain age, it's a trip down memory lane, with footnotes. For younger queers, it's history - usually in the raw.

Author info: http://cinema.concordia.ca/faculty_tom_waugh.html

Kinkorama: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Perversion, by Simon Sheppard (Alyson Books, \$13.95)

This is a book about wrestling another man into sweaty submission, savoring the fetid aroma of funky feet, and inhaling the stiff cocks of diaper-wearing young men. About the community and camaraderie of glory holes, backroom orgies, leather contests, and S/M play parties. About pissing in mouths, thrusting fists up buttoles, and lashing backs until welts rise. About kneeling a man's nuts, biting a fellow's pecs, and piercing a bottom's nipples. In short, Kinkorama is an encyclopedia of sexual extremes, a panoramic first-person exploration of fetish. Too intense for queers of a vanilla persuasion? Not at all. Sheppard, a prolific and polished contributor to dozens of anthologies of erotic fiction, writes about real-world perversity with cheeky good cheer, graceful common sense, and refreshing self-awareness. He tried wrestling, for example, but confesses he doesn't have much

stamina; when it comes to feet, "natural tang" is nice but he draws the line at fungus. That sort of disarming honesty leaches the truly lurid out of this anecdotal sexual travelogue; this is vivid writing that seduces more than it shocks.

Author info: www.simonsheppard.com

Boyfriends from Hell: True Tales of Twisted Lovers, Disastrous Dates, and Love Gone Wrong, edited by Kevin Bentley (Green Candy Press, \$14.95)

Boyfriends from Hell is not a book for beginners. Only the brave - or the desperate - will dare date after reading these remembrances of love gone awry. Editor Bentley's treasure trove of romantic tragedy is sublime cautionary hyperbole (that is, factual exaggeration not intended to deceive - and these 19 pieces are too good *not* to be true). Because they're drawn from rejection, misunderstanding, and disaffection, these confessional revelations ooze with rueful wit. Two of the best are Jim Coughenour's "Happy Birthday," about first love as a harrowing form of gay boot camp; and Simon Sheppard's "Going Down, Going Down Down," about a tryst with a tweaking twinkie. Most accounts are hilarious - Jerry Rosco's "My Boyfriend Brought Home a Rock Band," about the Butthole Surfers, is a standout. There are serious essays, too - Asian Canadian Andy Quan's "Rufo," about ethnic eroticization, and Marshall Moore's ode to dysfunctional dating, "Almost." And then there's the angry ex who tried to chew off his former beau's scrotum - eek! Who needs a date tonight? Stay home with a good book. This one.

An interview with Bentley about his dandy, sexy diary:

www.greencandypress.com/bentley.html

Outbursts: A Queer Erotic Thesaurus, by A.D. Peterkin (Arsenal Pulp Press, \$16.95)

It makes sense, obviously, that a queer erotic thesaurus would give a full 10 of its pages over to words describing the penis - from 3-4-2-5 (which spells dick on a telephone keypad) through beef bayonet and fanny ferret to trouser snake and wigga-wagga. But Peterkin's salaciously erudite *Outbursts!* is more than a sniggering collection of slangy definitions ("bruin: a bear who plays sports"); amusing synonyms ("male prostitute: buysexual, he whore"); tantalizing descriptives ("Big J: simultaneously fucking and blowing your partner, requires some flexibility"); or useful acronyms ("TPE: total power exchange," in a master-slave relationship). It's also a work of queer historical empowerment, particularly in its reconstruction of Polari, a secret gay male language comprising about 500 code words - trade, troll, and basket among them - used primarily in England from the 1930s until after Stonewall. And like the best dictionaries, it treats language as something alive, noting that such words as queer are evolving from epithet to


badge of honor.

Author info: www.arsenalpulp.com/1000beards/allan.htm

And though it's about erotic words and meanings, here's an interesting article on how "homosexual" evolved through "gay" into "queer" and their many variations:

www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/02/08/GAYLINGO.TMP

Photo Sex: Fine Art Sexual Photography Comes of Age, by David Steinberg (*Down There Press*, \$35)

There is abusive commercial pornography (*Juggs*), fluffy airbrushed erotica (*Playboy*), and buffed boy toy titillation  (*Freshmen*). And there is way too much pretentious nude photography, all oiled muscles and murky shadows. *Photo Sex*, quite wonderfully, is none of these. Steinberg's collection of the work of 31 photographers - women and men, straight and gay, but all transcendently queer - is a sensuous, profoundly intelligent celebration of the body and its infinite sexual possibilities. Best of all, the bodies are real - fat women, skinny men, gray heads, smiling faces, firm flesh here and slack flesh there. Michael Rosen's portrait of the late sex radical Scott O'Hara's self-fellatio is startling and sweet; Jill Posener's snap of two women in a cafe bathroom is raw and campy; Mark I. Chester's serial images of playwright Robert Chesley - titled "ks portraits with harddick and superman spandex" - are defiant and delicate. Those are just three of the 115 photographs in this savory, subversive book. But every one expresses a compelling erotic immediacy and draws an intimate erotic gaze.

For a collection of columns by Steinberg:

www.sexuality.org/davids.html

Hardcopy: The Men of QsJoint.com, Scenes from CyberSpace 1999-2002, by John Becht (*QsJoint*, \$25)

This isn't a polished, fine-art coffee-table book of male photography - but it is a fascinating collection of words and images, spun off from an active Chicago-based website. The men of QsJoint.com aren't well-buffed models with pouts: the several dozen color pics show men with real smiles and real smirks, sweet moodiness and sultry looks - as Becht says on his website, "smut with some smarts." Some are smooth, some are hairy, most are lithe, many show off their cocks with easy pride and come-hither ease. Every so often, the flow of bodies is interrupted by a page or two or three of "true sex stories" submitted to the site by the men who cruise it - refreshingly personal memories of memorable sex encounters. Becht, webmaster of the sex site, occasionally pitches into the mix a page of commentary - popular Chicago nightspots, rueful reflection on the commercialization of Gay Pride, thoughts on the popularity of barebacking sites - all of which give this unique half-magazine, half-book a winning personality.

For publisher info: www.QsJoint.com

Woof! Perspectives Into the Erotic Care & Training of the Human Dog, by *Michael Daniels (Nazca Plains Corporation: A Boner Book, \$14.95)*

Given the unique focus of this fascinating how-to book, perhaps it's not surprising that the copyright page claims it's a work of fiction. Sure reads real to me - though the chapters on Ethics, Why Human Dog Training?, Roles, Definitions & Practical Considerations, Gear, Care, Training, and Scenes are followed by a short story ... "A Dog's Tail," by Pup Don. The glimpse **Woof!** gives into BDSM, a component of the leather world, is articulate, informed, and certainly enthusiastic - and a lot of the instructions (basic training, rewards and discipline, commands, grooming, play spaces) will resonate with queers who own dogs with four paws and much more fur. And though there's an erotic dimension to the universe of the human dog training community, it's made explicitly clear that bestiality is not what it's all about - just men playing with their subservient pups.

Publisher info: www.leatherdog.com


And I want to mention a few other books - I'll be reviewing them at length in the next Books to Watch Out For, in the context of interviewing their authors/publishers about the process of writing, designing, printing, and marketing their own books. Perry Brass's latest title is *The Substance of God* (Belhue Press), an erotic/spiritual thriller; Kenneth Harrison has published three books - *Bad Behavior*, *Lies and Deceptions*, and *Ten Thick Inches* (Seventh Window); and Clinton Seitler has published Bob Vickery's *Play Buddies* (Quarter Moon Press). Incidentally, both Harrison and Vickery have previously published with Winston Leyland's Leyland Publications. The article will also discuss the self-pub experiences of Joe Babcock, with *The Tragedy of Geneva Flowers* (Closet Case Books) and of Scott & Scott, the co-authors of four gay romances - *Nick of Time*, *Razor Burn*, *Spare Parts*, and *Hot Sauce* (www.romentic.com).



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Two Faves:
Convenient Marriages, Unconventional Lives

Vertical is a new publisher committed to bringing Japanese fiction to America in translation - and one of the books from the first publishing season is **Twinkle Twinkle** (\$19.95) by Kaori Ekuni, an endearing novel about a fastidious gay man

 married to a fragile straight woman. Books about marriages of convenience - or closetedness - aren't uncommon. But this comedy of cultural manners is completely charming, and disarmingly honest. The man's acceptance of having a wife in his otherwise gay life is handled with realistic grace; the woman's sexual neediness and emotional instability are expressed with graceful compassion. I can only assume that the author is not a lesbian - there's a long history of straight women writing well about gay life. So if she isn't queer, she gets it right - the delicate dance of convenience inherent in any such relationship. At 170 pages, this slim book is a one-sitting read, and a charming journey.

Here's an article about Vertical Books: www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/features/2487632

Night and Fear: A Centenary Collection of Stories by Cornell Woolrich, edited by Francis M. Nevins (Carroll & Graff, \$26)

It's a coincidence, I know, that the book I read after *Twinkle Twinkle* was this 400-page collection of previously uncollected mystery, suspense, and horror stories by Woolrich - who himself had "married as a sick joke, or perhaps for cover,"  according to an introduction by Nevins. "In the middle of the night, he would put on a sailor outfit that he kept in a locked suitcase and prowl the waterfront for partners." After his marriage in 1930 dissolved, his wife discovered a diary in which Woolrich wrote about his homosexuality; Nevins says she returned it to him, he destroyed it, and he lived with his mother for the next 30 years, until she died. Then, alcoholic, diabetic, with a gangrenous leg and a cantankerous attitude, "he started to die by inches," a grizzled loner wracked by self-contempt - even though his writing brought him enough wealth to endow a writing scholarship in his mother's name. Ballantine Books published pulp-like editions of several of his novels in the late 1970s, including *Deadline at Dawn*, *Rendezvous in Black*, and *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*; I was then and am now a fan of hardboiled fiction, and somewhere in those books, reading between the lines, I sensed that Woolrich was a tormented gay man - a truth I think was reflected in the intensity of the emotional pain, deep despair, and moments of madness that the "poet of the shadows" spilled across the pages he wrote. He doesn't need to have been queer to make his work relevant - he was the Hitchcock of the printed page. But knowing he was, does add some depth to his stories.



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Off the Stage, Onto the Page

We think too often of plays as work to watch rather than to read. Pity - there's much excellent writing that deserves to be perused on the page and preserved on the shelf. A few years ago, Dialogous Publishing out of Arizona (or perhaps Texas?) was committed to publishing chapbook playscripts of exclusively lesbian and gay theatre writing - several hundred of them before the publisher vanished. A company formed in 2000, Playscripts, Inc., offers a handful of gay-themed plays among its 250-odd offerings - it's one of several chapbook publishers willing to keep plays in print, but one of a very few that lists its queer offerings distinctively. Many, many years ago, JH Press, part of the pioneering Gay Presses New York consortium, published the work of a number of playwrights, from Doric Wilson to Jane Chambers. The work of a few major authors - Tony Kushner foremost - is available from Theatre Communications, Methuen, or Faber & Faber. And of course Samuel French and Dramatist Play Service offer stage editions of the likes of Terrence McNally and Martin Sherman.

But there's no one source for the hundreds of plays written and staged every year (and for a sense of how much is out there, go to the remarkable Purple Circuit information source maintained by the indefatigable Bill Kaiser, out of Los Angeles; for a decade he distributed a fact-filled newsletter, but retired the print edition in favor of the Internet earlier this year. The current edition is at www.buddybuddy.com/pc.html - and more than three dozen plays are listed as scheduled to open in 2004.

Which brings me to the sorry state of the Drama category in this year's Lambda Literary Awards: just six works were nominated to be finalists in five categories - but one nomination was eliminated because, well, the play hadn't seen print.

Which brings me to wonder if there isn't a niche out there for a theatre lover to reinvent Dialogous Publishing. Not to publish more anthologies of gay plays, but to make chapbook editions of individual work by unique writers available for retail sale. I expect drama would sell less than even poetry - but it's an engaging, exciting, and vital element of queer literature.

Which brings me to Robert Patrick, whose **Hollywood at Sunset** premiered in March, 2004 in a TOSOS II production at NativeAliens Flatiron Playhouse in Manhattan (where the aforementioned Doric Wilson, Robert's pioneering peer in gay theatre, was one of the producers). Patrick has had more than 60 plays staged, including *T Shirts*, *Kennedy's Children*, *My Cup Runneth Over*, and *The Trial of Socrates*. His newest play is a two-actor, three-scene play chock full of sex and wit, queer wisdom and relationship angst, snappy dialogue and thoughtful perception. Chances are I'll not ever see the play - the closest

that theatre in Perth, Ontario comes to queer is along the lines of Noel Coward revivals. But (with the aid of a couple of cute-fellow cast photos) I certainly enjoyed bringing the play to life, in my mind at least, because Patrick made the effort to have his play published. There may be more than five plays in print for next year's Lammys!

To order *Hollywood at Sunset*: www.unitedstages.com, which published the play, or contact Patrick at rbrtptcrk@aol.com

For an interview about the play and Patrick:

www.nytheatre.com/nytheatre/voiceweb/v_patrick.htm

And for another:

www.broadwayworld.com/viewcolumn.cfm?colid=693


And there's more to Patrick than plays: the last time I looked, **Film Moi, or Narcissus in the Dark**, had passed 1,000 pages. Since I first read it last fall, Patrick has sent me three or four updates to add to the CD-ROM I read, all onscreen, and with great pleasure, a few months ago. At that length, it's unlikely any publisher could have taken on *Film Moi*, an irresistible, undisciplined, and exhilarating blend of queer memoir and film memories. With more than 800 movie stills and personal photos, it would have been a challenge to both print and price - but it's affordable and accessible in this self-produced CD-ROM format. In 14 "autobiographical explorations of films, the culture that made them, and the world they made," Patrick - a founding father of gay drama in America - writes with intelligent perception about movies ranging from *Fantasia* and *The Ten Commandments* to *La Dolce Vita* and *Aliens*; his chapter on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is a haunting assessment of the glorious tragedy that was Marilyn. And that's just half the delight: Patrick's candid commentary on his own precocious sexual and artistic life is equally absorbing. Reading a quarter-million words on a computer screen isn't the most comfortable way to be entertained and enlightened, but Patrick's prose is so smart and fluid that it's hard to, well, put the "book" down.

For more Film Moi info, and to order: <http://hometown.aol.com/rbrtptcrk/myhomepage/newsletter.html>




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Feeding the Body, Nourishing the Spirit

In the book-reviewing game, a good publicist is invaluable. If Alice Blackmer of Chelsea Green hadn't made the effort to note, in the press release she enclosed with **Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Food** (\$25), that author Sandor Ellix Katz was a 

resident steward of the radical faerie sanctuary at Short Mountain, I might not have connected his inspirational book to this queer newsletter. (The information is actually on the back cover of the book - but the tiny white type was almost unreadable against a dark pink background, particularly back when the book arrived and I was having eye woes.) And, regrettably, I missed Katz's dedication of the book to his ACT UP comrade, Jon Greenberg. So I didn't read on to the author's acknowledgement page where he addresses his life with AIDS and thanks the faeries of Short Mountain. So many books, so little time - so I set this one aside until, on a file-cleaning day, I finally read through the PR paper enclosed with the book. Oops.

Enough about my failings. The book: it's a chatty, professional combination of recipe collection, lifestyle adjustment, gourmet cuisine, and health regimen. Fermentation, in short, is a way of preserving and preparing food without stripping it of innate flavors and nutrients - "an alchemical relationship with bacteria and fungi." *Chapters of Wild Fermentation* discusses the health benefits of fermented foods, the phenomenon of fermentation, and how cultural homogenization and mass production have brought over-processed, under-nutritious food to our tables; other topics covered include vegetable, bean, and dairy (and vegan alternative) ferments, and home-based brewing of beers, ciders, wines, and vinegars. And along with the facts and the philosophy, there are dozens of recipes - for Ethiopian-style honey wine, wine sauerkraut, coconut chutney, essene bread, oat porridge, multicultural polenta, flower wines, soft ginger beer, hard apple cider, and wine dregs soup (using the yeasty sediment left at the bottom of the fermenting vessel for racked and bottled wines, rich in B vitamins, as a one-quarter liquid substitute for soups: "Inhale the fumes for an intense sensory experience!")

Yoga for Men by Thomas Claire (New Page Books, \$16.99) isn't queer-specific, nor does the author reveal as much of his  personal life as Katz. But there are positions and movements in this hefty instructional guide specifically for abs and butts - that's gay-useful enough! That said, this is also one of the first books about yoga to focus mainly on men. It's not intended as a self-instruction work; Claire urges newcomers to work with instructors, while using *Yoga for Men* to understand the spiritual components of the practice, to provide an understanding of different yoga traditions, and to learn how yoga - "a millenia-old body of wisdom" - has been adapted for contemporary culture. Dozens of small pictures illustrate many of the movements, a useful addition.

Author info: www.thomasclaire.com

Also: Darren Main is a gay San Francisco-based yoga and meditation teacher with three books to his credit. **Yoga and the Path of the Urban Mystic** (Findhorn Press, \$14.95) isn't as hands-on as Claire's book, but it is an intelligent, warmhearted reinterpretation of an ancient tradition for more tumultuous times. Main's other books are **Spiritual Journeys Along the Yellow Brick Road** (Findhorn, \$12.95), a delightful meditation on The Wizard of Oz only a queer man could write, and **The Findhorn Book of Meditation** (Findhorn, \$9.95).

Author info: www.darrenmain.com

Gay Witchcraft: Empowering the Tribe by Christopher Penczak (Red Wheel/Weiser, \$19.95) is pretty upfront about its intended audience - its list of charms, potions, spells, and rituals includes a "Spell to Heal Homophobia" and a "Coming-Out Ritual." Gay pagans: our kind. Penczak has written a number of more general Wiccan books, including *City Magick: Urban Ritual, Spells, and Shamanism* and *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft*. Here, though, he "explores topics not found in the typical witchcraft book" - elements of love magick, sex magick, and ritual union experienced through the eyes of a man loving another man, and so seeing the craft in a different light. In my day-to-day life, I'm as involved with Wiccans as much as I'm involved with Mormons - or with the Sunday services at any one of the five churches within a couple of blocks of my home. That is to say, not at all. But Penczak's writing about spiritual empowerment and self-discovery is calm, compassionate, and smart - I probably won't ever cast a spell, but reading *Gay Witchcraft* was a pleasurable learning experience.

For author info: www.christopherpenczak.com

For an interview from The Wiccan/Pagan Times:

www.twpt.com/penczak.htm



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Queer Bits of Bytes

John Rechy and David Ehrenstein, among others, lament the de-queering of gay culture - though Rechy also laments that his books are relegated to the "gay studies" section of general bookstores, even if most of his recent writing hasn't been gay-specific:

www.latimes.com/features/



Speaking of David Ehrenstein - here's his insider's review of Gavin Lambert's biography of Natalie Wood, a gay icon manque who died too young to become a drag queen staple: www.laweekly.com/ink/04/16/books-ehrenstein.php

Vermont journalist David Moats talks about his history of the road to civil unions in this interview with Powell's Bookstore: www.powells.com/fromtheauthor/moats.html

Also from the *L.A. Weekly*, a long and meaty interview with Joan Roughgarden about her book **Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender and Sexuality in Nature and People**, from the University of California Press: www.laweekly.com/ink/04/21/books-kotler.php

Why isn't there a book yet of this Israeli photographer's work? <http://sfgate.com/>

Until there is, here's an article about his out-of-the-closet work: <http://nyartsmagazine.com/70/adi.htm>

And here are more images: <http://www.dvirgallery.com/pages/artists/aNes>

One of my favorite books of 2003 was James McCourt's **Queer Street**; here's an assessment of it by Hilton Als of *The New Yorker*, who liked it: <http://slate.msn.com/id/2094347/>

And here's an interview with McCourt: www.nytimes.com



Another favorite was Graham Robb's **Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century**; this reviewer thought it was "elegant": <http://www.sfgate.com>

And this *Village Voice* grouch didn't think much of either McCourt or Robb, and whacks Louis Crompton's masterful **Homosexuality and Civilization** for good measure: www.villagevoice.com/issues/0406/halter.php



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Memories, Honors, Moves, & News

San Francisco poet Thom Gunn died in his sleep last week. Well-deserved fulsome obits abound – I've linked to a warmly personal one in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and to a more aloof but professionally generous one in the *New York Times*. I knew Gunn only as a leather-jacketed chap who came in to A Different Light to talk about new poetry books, browse the erotica section, pick up his monthly *Drummer Magazine*, and share his sharp but never cruel observations on writers and

writing.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2004/04/28/BAGR86C6T91.DTL>
www.nytimes.com/2004/04/28/books/28GUNN.html

In addition to the Lammy Awards – to be announced June 3 – the Lambda Literary Foundation also presents an Editor's Choice Award, this year to **Terry Castle** for *The Literature of Lesbianism*, and a Bridge Builder Award, this year to **E. Lynn Harris**, whose most recent book is the memoir *What Became of the Broken Hearted*.

For more info:

www.lambdalit.org/Lammy/T.CastlePR.html
www.lambdalit.org/Lammy/E.LynnPR.html

Over at the Publishing Triangle, meanwhile, historian **Lillian Faderman** will receive the Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement, and **Barbara Gittings** will receive a special Leadership Award, at a May 12 New School ceremony in Manhattan. Faderman's award is named in honor of a legendary editor of the 1970s and 1980s; she's author of several significant works of history, including *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*, *Chloe Plus Olivia*, *To Believe in Women*, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, and most recently, a memoir, *Naked in the Promised Land* (a finalist for both the Judy Grahn Award for lesbian nonfiction, and the Lambda Literary Award for memoir). In addition, the Publishing Triangle will present a special Leadership Award to Barbara Gittings, who headed the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association (ALA) from 1971 to 1986 and edited its *Gay Bibliography* and other gay reading lists. Gittings founded the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and edited, for a time, its magazine, *The Ladder*, and was instrumental in having homosexuality removed from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders.

For more info: www.publishingtriangle.org

Monique Truong picked up a cool \$10,000 earlier this year "when she won the New York Public Library's 2004 Young Lions Fiction Award for *The Book of Salt* (Houghton Mifflin), her fictionalized story of the Vietnamese cook who worked for Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas in Paris in the 1930s."

That's what the press release said - it didn't mention that the Vietnamese cook was gay. Naughty, naughty – that's why the book is a Lammy nominee. The award is given each year to honor a novel or short story published by a writer age 35 or younger.

Sasha Alyson once swore me to secrecy when I asked (and he

confirmed) if he was Johnny Valentine, author of four delightful children's books. The secret's been out for a while, of course – and, finally, so too are three of his books: *The Daddy Machine* and *The Duke Who Outlined Jellybeans*, both illustrated by Lynette Schmidt, and *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads*, illustrated by Melody Sarecky. Alyson Books (founded by Sasha in 1980 then sold by him to the people who own *The Advocate* in 1995) is reissuing the books in May, \$10.95 each in paper (and \$16.95 for a hardcover of *The Daddy Machine*). After selling Alyson Books, he started a gay travel company, Alyson Adventures, which merged in 2002 with Hanns Ebensten Travel in Key West. And earlier this year, Sasha donated several boxes of Alyson out-of-print books and early editions to ONE Institute in Los Angeles, before heading to Thailand, or possibly Laos, where – no surprise – he plans to start a publishing company, among other ventures. (Bonus revelation: Sasha was also “Jack Hart,” author of an early edition of *Gay Sex: A Manual for Men Who Love Men*, and editor of several anthologies, including *My Biggest O: Gay Men Describe “The Best Sex I Ever Had.”* Alyson Books has continued to use Hart as a “house name,” though Sasha hasn't edited the books for several years. Bonus connection between the pseudonyms: Johnny/Jack; Valentine/Hart. Get It?)

Sasha Alyson info: www.sashaalyson.com

Johnny Valentine info:

www.johnnyvalentine.com/aboutjohnny.htm

It's not the continuation to the six-volume *Tales of the City* series that fans have lusted after for years – but **Armistead Maupin** is getting back to his roots with *Michael Tolliver Lives*, a novel that will follow one day in the life of the now 52-year-old fictional gay gardener whose hunky good looks, affable good cheer, and inspirational resilience were the core of the series. It's coming from HarperCollins, Maupin's longtime publisher, in 2006. Maupin's agent, Steven Barclay, swears the book is “independent of *Tales*” – fat chance, though, that it will be read and reviewed any other way.

Info on the new book, plus links to Maupin interviews:

www.barclayagency.com/maupin.html



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Bestsellers from Our Bookstores

Giovanni's Room/Philadelphia

The April, 2004 top 10 gay bestsellers:

* Memoir: Delaware County Prison, Reginald Hall's own account of his incarceration (Writers and Poets, \$12.95 pb).

- * Friction 7: Best Gay Erotic Fiction, edited by Jesse Grant (Alyson, \$15.95 pb).
 - * Troll: A Love Story, by Johanna Sinisalo (Grove, \$12 pb). A story of nature and man's relationship to wild things, and to himself.
 - * Shadows of the Night: Queer Tales of the Uncanny and Unusual, edited by Greg Herren (Harrington, \$16.95 pb).
 - * I'm On My Way, debut novel by Christopher David (First Books, \$14.50 pb).
 - * Strangers: Homosexual Love in the 19th Century, a fresh examination of forbidden history by Graham Robb (W.W. Norton, \$26.95 hb)*.
 - * Rainbow Boys, a novel about being gay in high school, by Alex Sanchez (Scribner, \$7.99 pb).
 - * The Snow Garden, a college gothic novel by Christopher Rice (Miramax, \$13 pb).
 - * Geography Club: A Novel, by Brett Hartinger (Harper, \$6.99 pb).
 - * Boy In The Lake, a novel about the nature of love and the burden of guilt, by Eric Swanson (St. Martin's, \$11.95 pb)
- For more lists: www.giovannisroom.com

Little Sisters/Vancouver

"The books in these lists are the actual Top Selling books from Little Sister's for the last 60 days. They are listed in order of popularity," says the website - but the list was undated on the Little Sisters site, so these are probably - but not certainly - titles that sold January through February rather than March through April, given that most were published at the end of 2003.

Gay Bestsellers:

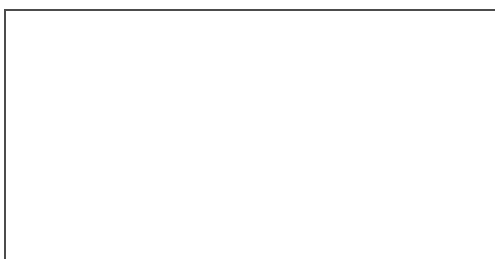
1. Pack Up the Moon, by Richard Teleky - "An unqualified gem" says the Toronto Star
2. Dorian, by Will Self
3. Best Gay Erotica 2004, edited by Richard Labonte
4. The Sea of Tranquility, by Paul Russell
5. Running With Scissors, by Augusten Burroughs
6. You Are Not a Stranger Here, by Adam Haslett - Pulitzer Prize finalist
7. Never Tear Us Apart, by Brock Quinton - A Queer as Folk novel
8. Mr. Timothy, by Louis Bayard
9. Every Nine Seconds, by Joseph Brockton - A Queer as Folk novel
10. How I Learned to Snap, by Kirk Read - A small town coming-out and coming-of-age story

General Interest Bestsellers:

1. Spartacus International Gay Guide 2004-2005
2. Wonderlands, edited by Raphael Kadushin - Good gay travel writing
3. Betty and Pansy's Severe Queer Review of New York - 3rd edition, new for 2004!
4. The Soul Beneath the Skin, by David Nimmons - The unseen hearts and habits of gay men
5. Speaking Sex to Power, by Patrick Califia - The politics of queer sex
6. Queer as Folk, by Paul Ruditis - The book
7. Queer Eye for the Straight Guy - The Fab 5 tell you how to do it!
8. Party Monster, by James St. James - Previously Disco Bloodbath
9. Sex Changes, by Patrick Califia
10. Public Sex, by Patrick Califia - The culture of radical sex (And either Patrick Califia is enormously popular in Vancouver, his books are on the reading list of a very large queer theory class, or he toured there a couple of months ago!)

For more lists: www.littlesistersbookstore.com/bestsellers.asp

Richard can be reached at tattyhill@sympatico.ca, at 613 264 5409, or at 7-A Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 2J3 Canada. Books for review, author news, interesting links – all appreciated.



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