

Table of Contents

Author Expo Program...4
News...2
Book of the Month...3
Fiction...4
Friday Night Reads...5
Moms and Kids...6
Nonfiction...7
Making Change...7
Resources for Change...8
Academia...8
Books To Watch Out For...9
Back in Print...11
What They Are Reading...11
The Crime Scene...12
Notable Lesbian Books...13
Writing Wanted...14
BTWOF - Fundraising for Our Community...14

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 a wide range of books likely to be of interest to our readers as well as books with lesbian content and books by lesbian writers. It also covers news of both the women in print movement and mainstream publishing. Written and compiled by Carol Seajay.

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.

More Books for Women will launch in 2005.

Special Olivia Book Cruise Edition May 8-15, 2005

Welcome Aboard!

This is a special issue of **Books To Watch Out For** to welcome you aboard the Olivia Book Expo Cruise and to introduce you to our **Lesbian Edition**.

Books To Watch Out For is an exciting new publication celebrating lesbian literature and other books that make that qualitative difference in our lives. Each issue brings you news about the lesbian and feminist book worlds and short reviews of the most important books in our community. It's an easy way to keep up with our ongoing, ever-changing, evolving literature and to find the books you most want to read.

And it's a perfect resource for women who don't live near a good, lesbian-supportive bookstore or who are too busy to browse bookstores on a regular basis. Reviews are detailed enough to decide if you want to read a book, but short enough to scan over lunch.

BTWOF also publishes a *Gay Men's Edition* and will launch *More Books for Women* later this year. You can sign up to be notified when *More Books For Women* launches on the Newsletters page of our web site (www.BTWOF.com) or add a note to the attached subscription form.

We hope you enjoy this issue and that you'll decide to support our literary community by staying informed and reading **BTWOF** every month. You can subscribe to the print edition, or have it delivered by email (quickest and cheapest) and then print out a copy to read at your leisure. Olivia cruise subscribers will also get access to our archive of back issues.

Subscriptions to **BTWOF** also make great gifts for birthdays, holidays, for anyone who is just coming out... and a subscription would also make a great gift for your sweetie – or yourself – as a monthly reminder of this very special vacation.

Yours in spreading the word about great lesbian writing,

Carol Seajay
Publisher
Books To Watch Out For

P.S. Please turn to the sidebar on page 4 for a schedule of Book and Author events on this cruise.

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BTWOF is published by Carol Seajay and Books To Watch Out For.
www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com
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Lesbian Publishing in Taiwan

Must Muster Publishing is the world's first Chinese-language lesbian publishing house and is the first gay or lesbian publisher to exhibit at the Taipei International Book Exhibit. That might be gutsy enough for most publishers – but founder Lin Han-yu is also reported to have set precedent by refusing to put "R" (restricted to people over 18) labels and seals on her publications.

"Our books focus on various issues of lesbianism," she told the *Taipei Times*. "Sex only makes up a small part and is touched on only slightly. Since the contents contain nothing restricted, we will not label the books nor have them sealed."

Lin launched the press in 2000, "without any resources or knowing any writers," after looking for lesbian books and finding only a church publication saying that homosexuality is a sin... "Volunteers staffed her booth since she cannot afford to hire employees. She makes around US\$300 a month and is in debt to the tune of US\$9,500, but she is not worried about the future. Lin said she would publish at least 100 books before she would even consider giving up."

If your Chinese is up to speed, learn more about Must Muster on the web at <http://www.2her.com.tw/>.

Spinsters Re-Inked by Bella

"It is my sincere desire to preserve the original mission and unique voice of Spinsters Ink by continuing to make available some of its previous titles and offering new titles under the Spinsters Ink name and logo in the spirit of honoring a name that has long been at the heart of so many in the feminist and lesbian publishing community." – Linda Hill

The word a couple of months ago was that Spinsters was closing, but the press has found a new home and champion in Bella Books' co-owner Linda Hill. Spinsters had been for sale for some time when then-owner Sharon Silvas and Hovis Publishing Company decided, in the face of Sharon's failing health, to close the press late in 2004. Hill is part of a small group that is taking on the Spinsters name and logo and its remaindered inventory.

Hill & company plan to continue in the Spinsters tradition of publishing works by both lesbians and non-lesbians that address significant issues in women's lives from a feminist perspective – books that name crucial issues and encourage change and growth. They have announced plans to release at least six new Spinsters titles in 2005 with a mix that includes mysteries, nonfiction, and women's fiction.

Spinsters and Bella will remain separate entities, and Hill will work actively with both houses. Both will continue to publish in their own traditions, with minimal overlap between the two. The reincarnated Spinsters, for example, will not publish lesbian romances. But it will benefit from access to Bella's infrastructures: warehousing, production, and marketing and distribution channels.

Spinsters' first book will be Jennifer L. Jordan's *Commitment to Die* (picked up from Bean Pole Press). Spinsters will also publish the rest of the books in this mystery series.

Excerpted from *Books To Watch Out For: The Lesbian Edition Vol. 2, No. 1*.

Complete article can be found at

http://www.btwof.com/enews_extras/Images13LES/13LES_HTML.html#TofC3.

To read BTWOF's interview with Linda Hill on the Spinsters Ink/Bella Connection, subscribe to BTWOF and then click Issue #13 in the Back Issues file.



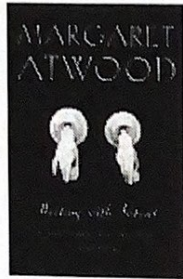
Jane Rule Sighting

Curve's February issue featured a (much too short) interview with Jane Rule to celebrate *Desert of the Heart's* 40th anniversary. They also asked her about the secrets of her 45 year relationship with Helen Sonthoff and gay marriage: "Let us into the cage? We should be opening it up and letting our friends out. None of my heterosexual friends are married; they're much more sensible than that," was her reply.

Give Jane a wave as you cruise through the Gulf Islands. She lives on Galiano Island.



Atwood: Not Made in the USofA



For a wild ride of an interview with Margaret Atwood, allegedly about her recent essay collection, **Moving Targets**, go online and follow the link below. The interview is rich with advice for writers and Atwood's wicked humor. **Moving Targets: Writing With Intent, 1982-2004** was published in Canada last fall by Anansi Press and has just been released in the U.S. by Carroll & Graf as **Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose 1983-2005**. \$26, 425 pages. http://www.maisonneuve.org/article.php?article_id=415.

Booking Your Travel

There's a rich mix of dyke- and dyke-friendly book-oriented trips and events out there this year. Go to this link for our book adventure collection: http://www.btwof.com/enews_extras/Images13LES/13LES_HTML.html#TofC11

Forthcoming Books To Watch Out For

Mary Cheney has signed up to write the first book for Threshold, Simon & Schuster's new imprint targeted at the conservative book market. Look for it in 2006.

Dorothy Allison is finishing a new book, working title: *She Who* – or maybe *Sanctuary*. It focuses on three women – Cassie, a twenty-three-year-old who survived a nearly fatal assault in a parking garage in San Francisco, her mother Barbara, who became an anti-violence activist after her daughter's attack, and Margaret, a sixty-year-old ex-nun who runs a goat farm on the California coast. Stay tuned!

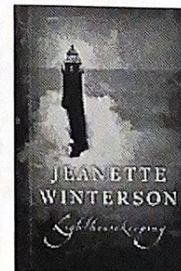


Sarah Waters, whose books are perhaps even more beloved in Britain than here, has just signed a U.S. rights deal with Riverhead for her forthcoming novel, *Harm*, which tells the story of a group of Londoners during and after WWII, and how their lives were irrevocably changed by the war. Virago is publishing the British edition. Riverhead's hardcover will be published in March 2006.

Jewelle Gomez has just finished a new novel and sent it off to her agent for placement. *Televised* is a comic novel about the 30th anniversary college reunion of Black student activists where a look back at the 1960s raises a lot of questions: What to do when the former beauty queen is now a lesbian? Or your favorite football hero may have been a government agent? Does thinking about BenGay rather than marijuana when someone says "joints" mean you can't be a radical? I can't wait! No publication date yet, but watch this space for breaking news.

Book of the Month

Finally published in the U.S., Jeanette Winterson's long awaited **Lighthousekeeping** is (with all due respect to Virginia Woolf) as elegant a love story as any woman has ever penned to another. Of course Winterson's mind never moves on only one track, so here we have stories within stories within stories: the townsfolk dispose of recently orphaned Silver by apprenticing the bastard child to old Pew, the lighthouse keeper who, as the years pass, tells Silver stories – of the town, the people, the building of the lighthouse – stories that fill in for the lack of other parenting, but eventually apprentices, even this one, must go out into the world and write their own lives out of the narratives they know. Ah! A girl's coming of age tale? Well, yes perhaps, with faint echoes of *To the Lighthouse*, a little Darwin, a little Robert Louis Stevenson, some Tristan and Isolde, a parrot or two, and a Greek island – it



olivia

FEEL FREE

Author Expo 2005
Alaska Discovery Cruise

Speakers

Dorothy Allison, Katherine Forrest,
Jewelle Gomez, Michelle Tea,
Sarah Waters

Monday, May 9

Cruising the Inside Passage

10:00am-11:30am

HERSTORY:

Uncovering Our Histories,
Recalling Our Lives

Join all five distinguished writers as they introduce themselves, their work, and discuss the great forebears of lesbian literature. (Ruben's Lounge)

1:30pm

MEMOIR WRITING

Join Dorothy Allison & Michelle Tea for a workshop on Memoir Writing. (Wajang Theater)

3:30pm

HOW TO

Join Katherine Forrest for a workshop on How To Write a Novel. (Wajang Theater)

Tuesday, May 10

Ketchikan

4:00pm-5:00pm

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

Join Dorothy Allison, Michelle Tea, and Sarah Waters in this pleasurable conversation. (Ruben's Lounge)

Saturday, May 14

Cruising Hubbard Glacier

1:00pm-2:30pm

OFF THE PAGE

Join Katherine Forrest in an engaging conversation with Dorothy Allison, Jewelle Gomez, Sarah Waters, & Michelle Tea about lesbian culture, the book business, queer families, activism, and much more. (Ruben's Lounge)

2:30pm

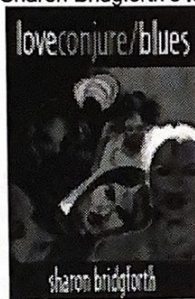
OutSpoken Lesbian Literary Series / Book signings
(Location TBA)

Program coordinated by
Michele Karlsberg

would be all too much in lesser hands than Winterson's. Women who loved her earlier books more than her later novels may find this one a good place to reenter the lyrical, surreal, complex vision of Jeanette Winterson. \$23, Harcourt.

Fiction

Sharon Bridgforth's **love conjure/blues** is a performance novel – a tale told in the voices



of a dozen or more butch bulldykes, pretty ladies, sissy boys, and various gender-bending folk as they sort out their lives and loves, survive the legacy of racism, and generally tell one another what they need to know to get on.... It's not as accessible as poet/performance artist Bridgforth's *Bull-Jean Stories*, but her mix of fierce strong women, life-sized emotion, and her portrayals of proud women's lives make it well worth a stretch. It's a great book to read aloud with friends and perfect for date night. Want to come over Friday night and read some **love conjure/blues**? \$14 paper, 92 pages, RedBone Press.

And check out RedBone's other recent publication: *Nothin' Ugly Fly: Poems* by Marvin K. White. \$14.

After publisher Lisa C. Moore's apartment burned down a couple of years ago RedBone Press (*Does Your Mama Know* and *The Bull-Jean Stories*) went on hiatus while she reassembled everything it takes to run an excellent publishing company. What a gift to have RedBone publishing again! Lisa is also the primary organizer for Fire & Ink, a Writers Festival for GLBT People of African Descent (Austin, TX, Oct. 6-9). Learn more about Fire & Ink at their web site: <http://www.fireandink.org/index.html>.

While you're in Vancouver, check out the recently reissued **When Fox Is a Thousand** by Larissa Lai. Lai uses a Chinese version of that classic myth about foxes taking over human souls to illuminate the story of one young Chinese Canadian name-challenged dyke, Artemis Wong, making her way in Vancouver. (Caldecott Medalist Mordicai Gerstein is getting a lot of attention right now for *The Old Country*, a children's story based on an Eastern European version of the myth.) In Lai's version, the fox, if he can successfully jump from body to body for a thousand years, will gain immortality. But at what cost? And to whom? Foxes – and dykes – have their own, frequently conflicting, versions of integrity, and both Artemis and the fox bring their histories with them as Lai (and Wong, and her circle of friends) sort through gender, sexuality, stereotypes, racism, family, faith, urban discontent, and the passage of time to build their own lives and mythologies.

Lai's writing is exquisite, and never drags:

"As a farewell gift [this is the fox speaking from the depths of the T'ang Dynasty] I taught her how kisses come not from the mouth, but from a well deep below the earth. The husband was smitten.

Is it my fault she ran off with the concubine?

Other foxes thought so, and chalked it up to the evil influence of the West, where personal whim comes before family pride and reputation. Westerners had been coming and going from the capital for hundreds of years. Their manner of dress had become fashionable among the students and courtesans. Their strange religion less so. Their horses – everyone wanted their horses, except, perhaps us foxes.

Other foxes chastise me for my unorthodox methods.... Their scorn, on the other hand, I understand well enough."

It's a haunting, sweetly surreal, but not always easy, story. But well worth the investment. \$16.95US; \$21.95C, Arsenal Pulp Press. (First published in 1995 by Press Gang.)

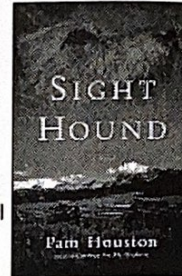


If you want a good, satisfying read, but don't have time for a novel, many of the stories in Valerie Miner's **Abundant Light** offer a novel's worth of satisfaction: characters that resonate, images that linger, and sharp, lucid intelligence. Miner is at her best in this collection of stories that illuminate family and friendship networks, the ways we shape and are shaped by them, and the moments we succeed – or fail – with them. While only a third of the stories include specifically lesbian themes, I'd argue that all of them bask in the unique (and abundant) light of "outsider" experience that illuminates across the particulars of gender, class, or sexual orientation regardless of the sex of the partner

Olivia Cruise Author Expo Coordinator **Michele Karlsberg** has been a publicist for the lesbian, gay and feminist literary community for the last 17 years. Her company, Marketing and Management Services, concentrates on print and electronic media, book production, press releases, press kits, consumer marketing, advertising campaigns, direct marketing to booksellers, promotional tours, event planning, conference planning, university tours and author appearances. Clients include Kate Clinton, Michelangelo Signorile, Dorothy Allison, Robert Taylor, Jewelle Gomez, Steven Cooper, Katherine Forrest, Urvashi Vaid and Felice Picano. As the curator of the OutSpoken: Gay and Lesbian Literary Series, she continuously helps bring forth new and established voices. She feels that her best energy is put behind the voices that need to be heard. She is also the co-editor of *To Be Continued* and *To Be Continued: Take Two* (Firebrand Books).

a specific character is mourning. If I had only 25 minutes in a week to indulge in reading, I'd head straight for "The Veranda" – and then remember it at every stop sign I passed for the next week. \$16.95, Michigan University Press.

Lesbian or not (and it mostly isn't), **Sight Hound** is probably one of the best love stories around: What does it take for a woman to go from a history of not-so-good (read: failed) relationships to the kind that have depth, continuity, respect, and long-term endurance? Romance novels are always trying to tell us it's the allure of the perfect body, of chiseled cheekbones, or come-hither eyes, or that mysterious inexplicable awareness (read: consuming sexual attraction) that signifies that *this* is the one person to whom you can, finally, fully, open your heart... But Pam Houston – my favorite, cynical chronicler of frustrating relationships (*Cowboys Are My Weakness* and *Waltzing the Cat* are both books I give friends suffering through bad break-ups) – has figured it out: It's the love of a good...dog.



Sight Hound tells the tale of one woman's transition as seen – and fostered – by an Irish wolfhound. Chapters offer perspectives from various significant others in Rae's (Dante's person's) life – the cat, the back-up dog, the cancer vet (passionate about dogs, lacking in people skills), the therapist (good with people, lacking in dog skills), the butch (but not gay) ranch-manager Darlene ("I was married one time, for about ten minutes. Didn't take.") and various other human friends who track Rae's gradual understanding of what Dante has spent his life teaching her: that love and loss are inextricably connected, at least if you're going to love a wolfhound with a ten-year life expectancy, that every minute of both is to be cherished, and that you can build a circle of friends (human and animal) who will see you through. Houston's signature emotional integrity, her wry humor, her marvelous portrayal of dynamic friendship networks, along with odd bits of gender bending, same-sex attractions, all combine to provide an ironic bit of good cheer in these troubled, troubling, times. \$23.95, Norton.

Friday Night Reads

This section honors Sue Butterworth, bookseller extraordinaire, who believed "Every lesbian deserves a good Friday-night read."

Bestselling lesbian romance writer Jennifer Fulton is back and writing and publishing like mad. Her Moon Island series (*Passion Bay* and *Saving Grace*) is now available from Yellow Rose Books, both books in expanded "author's cut" editions, as well as the third



volume **The Sacred Shore**, another goes-down-easy romance – centering on Moon Island. Romance, adventure, lesbians contemplating the errors of relationships past, anthropologists in ethical conflicts, ecological consciousness, biological clocks, the odd homophobic family and cousins who need a hand. Fulton wraps it all up seamlessly. For readers who've been waiting for the next installment – well, it was worth the wait – but it's also fine to plunge into the middle of the series and start with **Sacred Shore**. The fourth volume in the series, *A Guarded Heart*, will be published in May. \$15.95, Yellow Rose Books.

Fulton also writes mysteries as Rose Beecham. Look for the next book in her Jude Devine series, *Grave Silence*, from Bold Strokes Press at the end of this year and *Sleep of Reason* in 2006.

More info on her web site: <http://www.jenniferfulton.com>.

Even when Karin Kallmaker tries to whip up some bit of frothy dessert – as in **Sugar** – she still spins out a sweet – but not saccharine – story. Our dessert chef, "Sugar," has just launched her own independent dessert catering company in the heart of Seattle's competitive foodie-industry when her house goes up in flames. But crisis can bring opportunity – for growth, for romance, and for finding one's own, truest self. But what – or rather who – does Sugar really want? That's the dilemma in the drama – but what I really want to know, at the end of the book, is how they're going to communicate. Maybe that's the next novel? \$12.95, Bella.



In Love Speaks Her Name, Laura DeHart Young (*Forever, Love on the Line*) takes us to Alaska's Denali wilderness to test the limits of friendships, co-worker loyalty, and the good intentions in a relationship, all while supporting a friend with cancer. And then there's this small matter of international espionage. Sometimes life – and commitments – aren't as clear cut as they seem. \$12.95, Bella.

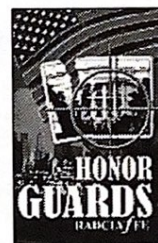


Shared Winds, from debut novelist Kenna White, offers another kind of adventure – two women reaching for their career dreams: Lan Harding needs to rebuild her beloved marina after a tornado does its damndest to destroy it; Emma Bishop needs to prove to her father that she's got what it takes to take over the family construction business when he retires. Sometimes going it alone isn't the only alternative for independent women – and sometimes it isn't the answer at all. Newcomer Kenna White offers a good look at the importance of community – a form of love that turns out to be as important as romance in the part-Cherokee marina owner's life. \$12.95, Bella.

The ever-prolific Radclyffe publishes cliff-hanging adventure/romances faster than we can read them:

Cameron Roberts and Blair Powell are back in **Honor Guards**, the latest in her Honor series about the feisty, independent daughter of the president and the Secret Agent sworn to protect her. Of course, being lovers makes everything more complicated. Look for the pair in Paris, hanging out on the Left Bank – until an international plot threatens their lives, their love, and national security... \$18.99 paper, Bold Strokes.

Justice in the Shadows is the latest in her Justice series. In this installment, Detective Sergeant Rebecca Frye takes on a pornography ring and traitor in her own department with the help of her lover, Dr. Catherine Rawlings; JT Sloan, a cybersleuth committed to revenge; a young officer with an unforeseen talent for undercover work; and a prostitute who develops an unexpected passion for cops... \$18.99 paper, BookEnds Press.



Of Kids and Moms and Moms Day

Antonio's Card by Rigoberto Gonzalez, illustrated by Cecilia Concepcion Alvarez.



Antonio loves words and he loves his mother and her partner Leslie. But when the other kids start making comments that Leslie looks like a guy when she comes to pick him up after school, he just tries to get her to leave quickly. But then there's the question of who and what to put on the Mother's Day cards they're making in school... In

Antonio's Card, Antonio comes to grips with his feelings and his commitment to his family. Hopefully the next book will also give kids some ideas about how to deal with the harassment from other kids, too. Bilingual with text in English and Spanish. \$19.95 hardcover, Children's Book Press. Publication date is April, but it should be in

stores now.

This is Children's Book Press' first book with specifically gay/lesbian content, but the Press has a long and wonderful history of doing bilingual, multicultural picture books for kids and young readers. They're wonderfully colorful and dynamically illustrated books. I'm especially fond of their titles by Gloria Anzaldua: *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y la llorona*.

Another new book for the read-to and young-reader sets: **Mom and Mum Are Getting Married!** When Rosie's two moms decide to get married, Rosie hopes for a big, fancy wedding and wants to be a flower girl – not exactly the scenario her moms had in mind. But family is about compromise and everyone – including Rosie's grandparents and little brother as well as Rosie have their own special places on the joyful day. Written by Ken Setterington, illustrated by Alice Priestley. \$11.95 cloth, Second Story.



Moms for Grown-Ups

In **The Milk of Human Kindness**, edited by the popular Lori L. Lake, lesbian writers use both fiction and memoir to address that delicate relationship between mothers and their dyke daughters. I found the nonfiction essays to be the most moving, including essays by Ellen Hart, Katherine V. Forrest, J.M. Redmann, and Therese Szymanski – or perhaps mystery writers are uniquely qualified to plumb mother-daughter relationships? But romance and adventure writers Karin Kallmaker and Radclyffe also weigh in with insightful memoirs. But sometimes the invented mothers offer more hope? Consider the cheeky advice-giving stand-in mom from the long-time not-heard-from Caro Clarke, the author of *The Wolf Ticket* (one of my five favorite

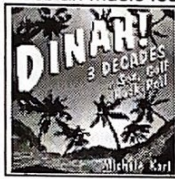


lesbian novels the year it was published). And perhaps fiction is the best medium for the complex family drama of aging parents offered by Lori Lake, the quintessential closeted family visit described by Julia Watts, or Jennifer Fulton's certainly-not-legal daughter-mother collusion. In any case, it's a fine collection that addresses a wide variety of experiences. It's a fine and generous follow-up to Lake's short story collection *Stepping Out* (\$13.95, Regal Crest). \$18.95, 250 pages, Regal Crest Enterprises.

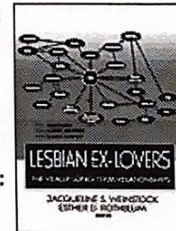
And if you're looking for a Mom's Day gift for your mother, consider *In the River Sweet* by Patricia Henley, a wonderful novel about a woman walking through a midlife crisis, who, in learning to face her own demons, also finds a better way to relate to her lesbian daughter and her partner. There are some great Dad scenes, too, which also make it a good Dad's Day present. \$14, Anchor/Random House.

Nonfiction

If lesbian music festivals are Midwestern, the lesbian pool party that's grown up around the Dinah Shore Golf Tournament is all California. Michele Kort's *Dinah! Three Decades of Sex, Golf, and Rock 'n' Roll* offers a short history of women's golf, the high incidences of lesbians therein, the evolution of the Dinah Shore Golf Tournament, its magnetic attraction for, well, sporty dykes, and its evolution into the ultimate lesbian pool party. It's a great read and full of fun facts, photos, pull-outs and even 20 full-color LPGA trading cards complete with statistics, gaydar ratings and why-we-love-her factoids. All this and useful information on where to stay and what to do when you get there. What to look for in the future? More lesbians from all over the U.S. – and Europe. Kort's previous credits include *Soul Picnic: The Music and Passion of Laura Nyro* and collaborating with Chastity Bono on *The End of Innocence*. \$18.95, Out Traveler Books/Alyson.

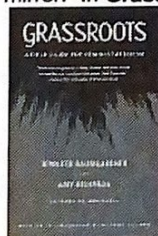


The myth is that lesbians almost always stay friends with our ex's. And the fact is that we do so at much higher rates than heterosexuals (something that, hopefully, legalizing lesbian relationships, with the attendant polarization generated by divorces and divorce lawyers, won't change). But it turns out that we stay friends with less frequency than our mythology suggests. When editors Jacqueline S. Weinstock and Esther D. Rothblum (*Lesbian Friendships: For Ourselves and Each Other*), sent out the call for contributions for **Lesbian Ex-Lovers: The Really Long-Term Relationships**, they were hoping for more research studies than they received, but this collection's focus on personal experience serves the general reader well. Memoir, journal excerpts, essays, poetry, and cartoons describe the good, the bad, and the occasionally ugly of our wide variety of relationships with ex's. Some describe wonderful support, some the high cost of losing – or maintaining – connections with ex's, and others consider the impact of good (and bad) relationships on our communities and our communities' impact on our relationships. Some stories are competently told, a few are lyrical, but all bring insight. The final section reviews the few lesbian-specific ex-lover studies and considers how research done on heterosexual relationships does or doesn't apply to lesbian relationships. It's an interesting and insightful read for any lesbian with an ex-lover – or many – under her belt. And a good reminder that our post-breakup relationships will vary as much as our relationships did. \$19.95 paper, Harrington Park Press.



Making Change

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards' definition of an activist is "as close as your mirror." In *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism* veteran activists Baumgardner and Richards (*Manifesta*) insist that "activism can be an organic, pleasurable, satisfying part of your daily life" and then share their considerable experience and insight about how women young and old can generate change in a way that's both meaningful and satisfying. What a relief from the deadening "write a letter, donate, volunteer" cliché that leaves women passive agents in someone else's vision. Real world examples, thoughtful commentary, and a host of resources make it a dream tool for teaching activist skills to new circles of women. A perfect



birthday, holiday, bat mitzvah gift for any young woman – and great rejuvenator for older, slightly burned-out types, too. Think of it as an *Our Bodies Ourselves* for activism. \$14, Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Gay and Lesbian Rights Organizing: Community-Based Strategies is a reprint of a special issue of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*. Aimed more at experienced organizers than *Grassroots* and much more academically oriented, it features case-studies of grassroots organizing campaigns, coalition building, and community building for GLBT youth, as well as strategizing for the future, GLBT think tanks, health and social service needs, transgender organizing, GLBT-oriented congregations, and GLBT organizing in Mexico City. Edited by Yolanda C. Padilla, PhD. \$24.95, Haworth Press.

Also on the academic side, **Governing NOW: Grassroots Activism in the National Organization for Women** considers the organization's 35 year history and finds that "the most representative and participatory voluntary association may also be among the least politically powerful and the least well equipped to increase civic engagement or political participation more generally." OK, we already knew that – but Maryanne Barakso's careful study tells why that's so, where and how the passionate organization got stuck, and how the organizing principles do and don't work. NOW boasts 500,000 members and 500 chapters. \$18.95, Cornell University Press.

More Resources for Change

Nicole Raeburn's **Changing Corporate America from Inside Out** looks at the mobilization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employee networks in a hundred Fortune 1000 companies, at their successes at winning domestic partner benefits, at the strategies that have been most effective, and at the characteristics of companies most willing to adopt egalitarian policies for their GLB employees as well as the impact of larger social and political changes on corporations' openness to gay-inclusive policies. \$22.95 paper, University of Minnesota Press.



In Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market, Katherine Sender foregoes the "Are we a movement or are we a market" debate to look at how the "gay market" emerged, at how it works, and at its cultural consequences. She contends that the gay community is a social construction – an imagined community formed by both political activism and a commercially supported media. She argues that mainstream "gay" marketing has been both formative in the construction of the GLBT community and identity and that it has played an important role in increasing GLBT visibility. While the bulk of the "gay" advertising dollar addresses gay men, Sender addresses the (lack of) attention to lesbian markets throughout the book and in one (short!) chapter. Published in the *Between Men – Between Women* LGB Studies series. \$35 cloth, Columbia University Press.



The Long Arc of Justice: Lesbian and Gay Marriage, Equality, and Rights by Richard Mohr looks to be a great addition to the literature of rights. Here he makes a case for legal and social acceptance, applies widely held ethical principles to same-sex marriage, AIDS, and gays in the military, and relates the struggle for gay rights and acceptance to mainstream American society, history, and political life. \$22.95 cloth, Columbia University Press.

City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia 1945-1972 by Marc Stein looks at gay and lesbian life in Philadelphia from the post-war days through the early 70s. Highlights include some of the country's first gay-rights demonstrations, *Daughters of Bilitis*, early gay liberation, *radicalesbiana*, women's liberation, and interactions with and influences of other revolutionary and social justice organizations. \$22.95 paper, Temple University Press.

A Few More Walks on the Academic Side

Lesbians, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis: The Second Wave, edited by Judith M.

Glassgold and Suzanne Lasenza, "examines recent changes in psychoanalysis that have opened the door for new perspectives on same-sex desire. Authors from a variety of disciplines and theoretical orientations combine feminism with psychoanalytic and postmodern theories to celebrate diversity in gender and sexual experience. Lesbian-affirmative writings address transference and countertransference, gender subjectivities, privilege and racism, therapist homophobia, and violence in lesbian relationships." \$19.95 paper, Harrington Park Press.

Same-Sex Cultures and Sexualities: An Anthropological Reader edited by Jennifer Roberson. Readings from four subfields of anthropology: cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological, "demonstrate the centrality of the complicated relationship of sex, gender, and sexuality to theories of human behaviors and practices... This landmark collection moves beyond other lesbian and gay studies readers by presenting a broader view of the significance of studying same-sex cultures and sexualities and presenting the lives of a range of individuals across cultural and temporal domains," says the cover. \$29.95 paper, Blackwell.

Gay Religion edited by Scott Thumma and Edward R. Gray offers "a straightforward presentation of the spiritual lives, practices, and expressions of LGBT people. New and established scholars explore the range of gay religious expression in denominations, sects, and other recognized religious institutions. The contributors ask what these religious innovations mean to the continually evolving religious environment of North America." \$28.95 paper, Rowman & Littlefield.

Books To Watch Out For

Here are a baker's dozen of books from my to-read stacks:



A Thread of Grace, by Mary Doria Russell is high up on my list of fiction treats. Her first two novels, *The Sparrow* and *Children of God*, used science fiction to explore the impact of colonialism in general and the Jesuits in particular on "new worlds." In **Thread of Grace** ("an extraordinarily complex historical novel"), Russell uses fiction to look at the period between Mussolini's fall and the end of World War II when Italians, somehow, prevented 40,000 Jews from being sent to the death camps – and at what makes ordinary people take extraordinary risks to help others – and at what, in a culture makes that the norm, rather than the exception. Her novel-in-progress looks at the Cairo Agreement, how it evolved, and how it set the stage for the war(s) in the Middle East. \$25.95, 448 pages, Random House.

You might have already known, but I just discovered that Leigh Richards is a pseudonym for much-loved mystery writer Laurie King (think both the Kate Martinelli and the Mary Russell/Sherlock Holmes series). And so I missed her science fiction debut, **Califia's Daughters**, a paperback original inspired by the Califia myth about a small enclave of women in a post apocalypse future. The a-virus-killed-all-the-men thing has been used before – but never in these hands. Spectra, 496 pages, \$6.99. Check out Laurie King on feminism, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and the inspiration for *Califia's Daughters* online at: <http://www.laurierking.com/whateverfeminism.php>. And her website at: <http://www.laurierking.com/>

The Curious Feminist: Searching for women in a new age of empire by Cynthia Enloe (*Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*). Enloe is one of feminism's most lucid – and accessible – writers. Here she looks at globalization and international politics through the lens of the lives of women most affected by them and offers a perspective to balance the daily madness being perpetuated by both our government and our economic system. "With her logical, unadorned style, she makes the argument that the U.S. is a militarized nation where "commander in chief" is the essence of the U.S. presidency" and "manipulations of manliness often shape foreign policy decision-making." This preoccupation with asserting masculinity, she contends, plays a role not only in U.S. foreign policy, but in economic strategies of American companies," says *Publishers Weekly*. In autobiographical essays she also reflects on the gradual development of her own "feminist curiosity" and maps the everyday obstacles placed on the path to feminist consciousness. \$19.95, University of California Press.





After Mecca: Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement by Cheryl Clarke (*Living as a Lesbian, Experimental Love: Poetry*). The politics and music of the sixties and early seventies have been the subject of scholarship for many years, but here, finally, is a look at the black women writers of the times: Gwendolyn Brooks, Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Jayne Cortez, Alice Walker, and others. Clarke looks at the ways these poets were turning away from white, western society to create a new literacy of blackness, at their contributions to the development of feminism and lesbian-feminism, and at the legacy they left for others to build upon. \$21.95 paper, Rutgers University Press.

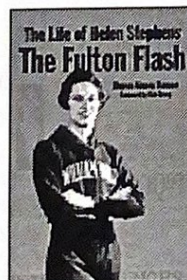
The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf edited by Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell Leaska was originally published in 1985, but the Cleis Press paperback publication is a great excuse to dip into them again – and it offers a wonderful treat for those who have never read them. 500 letters detail their love affair from its beginnings in 1922 until Woolf's death in 1941. \$16.95, 375 pages, Cleis Press.

Melymbrosia, Virginia Woolf's long lost first novel. Uncovered and recompiled by Woolf scholar Louise DeSalvo, it "concerns the emotional and sexual awakening of a young Englishwoman traveling abroad... [and] bristles with social commentary on homosexuality, the suffrage movement, and colonialism." Friends and colleagues warned Woolf that publishing such an outspoken novel could prove disastrous to her fledgling career and she revised it and published it as *The Voyage Out*. \$16.95, 350 pages, Cleis Press.



In **February House**, Sherill Tippins uncovers a mad experiment in communal living. In 1940, as the world was degenerating into war, George Davis, Auden (and his composer-friend Britten), Carson McCullers (who was beginning *Member of the Wedding* and a lesbian crush that ended her marriage), Jane Bowles, Paul Bowles, Gypsy Rose Lee (who was writing a novel as well as doing burlesque), the activist siblings Erika, Klaus and Golo Mann, and more than a few others wrote books, poetry, operas, smoked, drank, and pursued relationships of all descriptions, kept a curfew (!), and made the rent. "Enlivened by primary sources and a dishy story, [*February House*] masterfully recreates daily life at the most fertile and improbable live-in salon of the twentieth century." \$24 hardcover, 317 pages, Houghton Mifflin.

From the Inside Out: Radical Gender Transformation, FTM and Beyond is descended from that proud feminist tradition of needing a book that doesn't exist, sending out a call for first-person stories, and creating an anthology about the topic at hand. Morty Diamond wanted to read about gender explorations that weren't stuck in the traditional male/female dichotomies presumed by most of the existing literature. All of the writers in *From the Inside Out* were born female, came to realize how little they identified with that gender, and explored – and often invented – other options including transgender, genderqueer, third gender, and gender variant... Nominated for an ALA Stonewall Award. \$13.95, Manic D Press.



The Life of Helen Stephens: The Fulton Flash by Sharon Kinney Hanson. Helen Stephens went from being a Missouri farm girl to a record-setting Olympic runner (100 meters in 11.4 seconds, Berlin 1936, a record that stood for 24 years) by the time she was 18 – and that was just the beginning. Excelling as a runner, a discus thrower, and in the standing broad jump, she turned professional in 1937 and played with the barnstorming All-American Red Heads Basketball Team, playing men's rules and men's teams. The next year she started her own team, The Helen Stephens Olympic Co-Eds, becoming the first woman to own and manage a basketball team which toured before and after WW II.

Continually harassed for her athleticism, she generally gave back as good as she got: When hecklers taunted her with *Hey, tomgirl, where's your beard?* she'd respond with her characteristic lip, *Same place as yours – you're sittin' on it!* When harassed by a drunk for "masquerading like a woman," she decked him, and she and her girlfriend threw him out of the bar. When *Look* magazine insinuated that she was a man, she sued and won. All while living actively as a lesbian. Hanson conducted 70 interviews with Stephens between 1987 and her death in 1994, and this biography promises

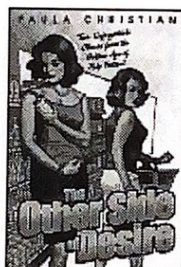


Stephens' insights into Olympic boycotts, gender-testing of female athletes, the women's movement, gay rights and on running in the Senior Olympics at 65. \$29.50 hardcover, 262 pages, Southern Illinois University Press.

Isabel Allende, Maya Angelou, Vivian Gornick, Germaine Greer, Susan Griffin, Grace Paley, Alix Kates Shulman, Terry Tempest Williams and other contributors in **Breaking Free: Women of Spirit at Midlife and Beyond**, edited by Marilyn Sewell, grapple with what age and life have taught them, contemplate their experiences, and reflect on where they have arrived. And discover not only what time has taken – but also the gifts that come only with age and experience. Whew! And it also reprints Baba Cooper's "On Being a Rebellious Old Woman." What a wealth of experience! \$16, Beacon Press.

The contributors to **That's Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation**, edited by Matt Bernstein Sycamore, aka Mattilda, look askance at the gay mainstream's focus on civil rights and insist that assimilation simply isn't enough. Here a new generation of pissed-off queer visionaries of a variety of genders, along with some early gay liberation rabble-rousers, counterculture demons, fringe artists, renegade academics and other freaks, fruits, perverts and whores, offer their visions for reframing, reclaiming, and reshaping the world. I'm particularly enamored of diatribes Gay Shame posts on San Francisco telephone poles and am glad to see some of these attitudes and visions in a format that will reach a wider audience. \$16.95, 300 pages, Soft Skull Press. An online interview with Mattilda on the intersection of "queer" and "politics": http://www.sfbg.com/39/04/lit_interview_mattilda.html.

Back in Print



The last two of Paula Christian's pulp-era novels, **The Other Side of Desire** (which includes the novel *Amanda*), are now back in print, thanks to Kensington. Kensington started reprinting the Paula Christian novels two years ago with *Twilight Girls* and *Another Kind of Love*. The title novel starts with a restless but well-behaved suburban housewife, but you know *that* won't last. *Amanda* features a sophisticated, "straight" New Yorker who writes lesbian novels under an assumed name, "but when young housewife and aspiring novelist Amanda Richardson asks for help on her own novel and comes to stay for 10 days" with the experienced lesbian writer... Now there's a familiar sounding tale... Christian was one of the writers who fought to give her pulps positive endings. She died in 2002. \$15.00,

Kensington.

What They're Reading at InsightOut Book Club

Each issue we ask a different bookseller what they're reading... This issue we checked in with the InsightOut Book Club to see what the gals were picking up there:

Women's Bestsellers

1. **All the Wrong Places** by Karin Kallmaker
 2. **Cat's Eyewitness** by Rita Mae Brown & Sneaky Pie Brown
 3. **As I Lay Dying: A Rehoboth Beach Memoir** by Fay Jacobs
 4. **True Secrets of Lesbian Desire** by Renate Stendhal
 5. **Ultimate Lesbian Erotica 2005** edited by Nicole Foster
 6. **Dinah! Three Decades of Sex, Golf, and Rock 'n' Roll** by Michele Kort
 7. **Dyke Drama: Your Guide to Getting Out Alive** by Leslie Lange
 8. **Death by Discount** by Mary Vermillion
 9. **The Intersection of Law and Desire** by J.M. Redmann
 10. **Is Your Cat Gay?** by Charles Krelloff & Patty Brown; Drawings by Victoria Roberts
- You can find more info about InsightOut at <http://www.insightoutbooks.com> or write: ISO, PO Box 6430, Camp Hill, PA 17001-9227.

The Crime Scene

By Nan Cinnater

The main characters in these books, strong women though they may be, are not all lesbians. I always identify the lesbian-themed mysteries, and I hope the reader will assume that, when I don't mention lesbian content, the book does not have any.

Thanks to the Publishing Triangle's Notable Lesbian Books list (see BTWOF #12), I just discovered **The Dead**, by Ingrid Black (\$23.95, St. Martin's), a superior serial killer thriller set in Dublin. Our heroine is an FBI agent turned true crime writer known simply as Saxon (in the tradition of great one-named and unnamed fictional detectives). Saxon is involved in a lesbian affair with chief superintendent of police Grace Fitzgerald when a serial killer who disappeared years ago apparently resurfaces. Having thoroughly researched the suspect, Saxon is the only one who realizes that this must be a copycat. British critics were wowed when **The Dead** was published there last year.



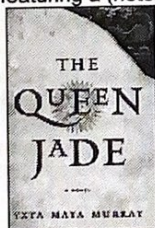
The Kookaburra Gambit (\$13.95, Alyson, April) is the latest in Claire McNab's bonzer (that's Aussie for excellent) new series featuring lesbian Kylie Kendall. Australian Kylie inherited half of her late father's L.A. detective agency in **The Wombat Strategy** (see BTWOF #6), and now she has a case of her very own. Hunky twins Alf and Chicka Hartnidge are bringing their hit children's TV series to the U.S., and someone is using the opportunity to smuggle opals inside their trademark line of stuffed toys. McNab has a wicked sense of humor, which she unleashes here on Australian stereotypes and Hollywood pretensions alike, resulting in another fast-paced, eminently enjoyable romp – and that's fair dinkum.

Meanwhile, McNab has not been neglecting her long-standing, bestselling series about sexy Australian top cop Carol Ashton. In **Fall Guy** (\$12.95, Bella Books) Detective Inspector Ashton investigates the death of a wealthy practical joker who died while sky diving. In addition, Bella Books has brought back McNab's non-mystery, **Under the Southern Cross** (\$12.95).

In Lauren Sanders' **With or Without You**, baby dyke Lillian Ginger Speck is in jail for murdering the object of her obsession, soap opera star Brooke Harrison. More an edgy, literary novel with murder than a mystery, this is the second foray outside the box for Sanders, who won a Lambda Literary Award for her first novel, **Kamikaze Lust** (both \$14.95, Akashic Books).



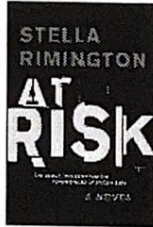
Strong Latina heroines are hard to come by in any genre so I was happy to find out about **Most Wanted** by Michele Martinez (\$23.95, Morrow) featuring a (heterosexual) Latina DA working to solve a brutal, high-profile murder in New York. However, two new suspense/adventure novels by Yxta Maya Murray look even more intriguing. In **The Queen Jade** (\$23.95, Rayo), California bookseller Lola Sanchez must rescue her archaeologist



mother who disappeared in the jungles of Guatemala on a quest for the ultimate jade artifact. In **The Conquest** (\$12.95, Rayo), a Latina rare book restorer becomes convinced that the supposedly fictional story of Helen, a sixteenth-century Aztec woman captured by Cortes, is really true. Helen's manuscript tells of her many female lovers and of her plot to assassinate Cortes, the Pope, and the Holy Roman Emperor!

For years now Nevada Barr has been delivering masterful mysteries with great wilderness sequences and great action writing. In **Hard Truth** (\$24.95, Putnam) she also gives us a wonderful new character, a woman named Heath Jarrod, a former rock climber now in a wheelchair. Sadly, although Barr brings a bit of refreshing feminist perspective to the cliché, she resorts to that hackneyed plot device, the psycho killer – at one point even admitting that her heroine, Park Ranger Anna Pigeon, got most of what she "knows" about the psychology of serial killers from novels and movies. Barr is too good a writer to put down; if it had been anybody else, I would have thrown the book across the room. **High Country**, Barr's last novel, set in Yosemite, is now out in paperback (\$7.99, Berkley). For more on Barr's other books, see BTWOF #4.

Mother-daughter team P.J. Tracy burst on the scene a couple of years ago with an outstanding thriller about the quirky gang at Monkeewrench, a computer gaming company in Minneapolis. (For more on **Monkeewrench**, \$6.99, Signet, see BTWOF #1.) Their second novel, **Live Bait** (\$7.50, Signet) which brought back some of the same characters, will be out in paperback in April. (See BTWOF #7.) In their third outing, **Dead Run** (\$23.95, Putnam, April), the focus is on our favorite female characters from the Monkeewrench crew, enigmatic Grace McBride and woman-of-size Annie Belinsky, along with FBI agent Sharon Mueller. On their way to a consulting job in Green Bay, the three women are stranded in a tiny northern Wisconsin town that's completely dead – literally.



Fans of spy fiction will be happy to discover that indeed M is female in real life – and she bears some resemblance to Judy Dench! Author Stella Rimington was director general of MI5 in the Nineties, and she has put her insider's knowledge to good use in a new spy thriller, **At Risk**. Intelligence officer Liz Carlisle is an espionage heroine for the twenty-first century, battling people-smugglers and Islamic terrorists in Great Britain. Rimington's style is crisp and compelling and her plotting, of course, extremely plausible. Good job, M! \$24 cloth, Knopf.

Now in Paper:

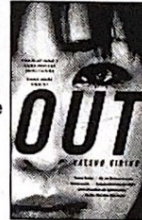
An Intimate Ghost, by Ellen Hart (\$13.95, Griffin). With a plot turning on homophobia and teenage gun violence, this is one of the most ambitious in Hart's consistently great series featuring lesbian restaurateur Jane Lawless and her sidekick Cordelia Thorn.

The 37th Hour, by Jodi Compton (\$6.99, Dell). Expert in missing persons cases must search for her own husband.

Out, by Natsuo Kirino (\$12.95, Vintage). Japanese feminist *noir* about four women factory workers who conspire to cover up murder.

Deception, by Denise Mina (\$13.95, Back Bay). The ultimate unreliable narrator novel, by a Scottish master of psychological suspense, author of **Garnethill** and **Exile** (both \$14.00, Carroll & Graf).

Birth Marks, by Sarah Dunant (\$12.00, Scribner). First in an odd but interesting series featuring London private eye Hannah Wolfe, by the author of the historical bestseller **The Birth of Venus** (\$13.95, Random House). Also available in the Hannah Wolfe series: **Fatlands** and **Under My Skin** (both \$12.00, Scribner).



Publishing Triangle Launches Notable Lesbian Books List

Hooray for the Publishing Triangle! Recognizing that lesbian books aren't getting enough ink these days, the PT has launched an annual Notable Lesbian Books List to bring recognition to outstanding lesbian literature. This first list was created by asking prominent lesbian book reviewers, booksellers, librarians and/or authors to name the most notable lesbian-themed books by lesbian or bisexual authors published in 2004. More details at their web site: <http://www.publishingtriangle.org>.

Top 10 Notable Lesbian Books

Titles are listed alphabetically by author

- A Seahorse Year** by Stacey D'Erasmus (Houghton Mifflin)
- Warrior Poet: A Biography of Audre Lorde** by Alexis De Veaux (W.W. Norton)
- Life Mask** by Emma Donoghue (Harcourt)
- Hancock Park** by Katherine V. Forrest (Berkley Publishing)
- Why I Wake Early** by Mary Oliver (Beacon)
- Luna** by Julie Anne Peters (Little Brown)
- Name All the Animals: A Memoir** by Alison Smith (Scribner)
- Venus of Chalk** by Susan Stinson (Firebrand)
- Rent Girl** by Michelle Tea, illustrated by Lauren McCubbin (Last Gasp)
- Alice Walker: A Life** by Evelyn C. White (W.W. Norton)



Writing Wanted

Barbara Johnson and Therese Szymanski are looking for hot tales of lesbian love for a new Bella anthology **The Perfect Valentine: Erotic Valentine's Lesbian Love Stories**. Deadline: June 1. Details online at <http://www.bellabooks.com/valentinecallforsubs.pdf>.

Sinister Wisdom editor Frances Day has issued a call for material for an issue on Lesbian Mothers and Grandmothers. Guest editor of this issue will be Merry Gangemi. Deadline: May 1. Contact Merry at 985 East Hill Road, Marshfield, VT 05658, or emailgangemi@sover.net.

BTWOF Fundraises for Our Community

And last but not least, our deep and abiding thanks to The Lesbian Herstory Archives for featuring BTWOF's Community Fundraising Program on their homepage (<http://lesbianherstoryarchives.org>). We are thrilled to be able to support LHA in this way. Organizations interested in learning more about BTWOF's fundraising program should email mozelle@bookstowatchoutfor.com.

We hope you enjoyed this special Olivia Cruise edition of BTWOF and that you'll subscribe and make BTWOF a regular feature in your life.

Yours in spreading the word about our wonderful and diverse literature,

Carol Seajay



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