

In This Issue...

News

- [Our Authors Crossover](#)
- [More Mainstream Love for Lesbian Lit](#)
- [Little Sister's Lawsuit](#)
- [Sinister Wisdom at 30](#)
- [Play to Watch Out For](#)
- [Awards](#)
- [Paula Gunn Allen](#)
- [Calls for Submissions](#)
- [Lesbian Lit Quiz, #2](#)
- [Answers to 1st Lit Quiz](#)

Books

- [Favorite Books of 2006](#)
- [Fiction](#)
- [Identity Matters](#)
- [More Nonfiction](#)
- [Lesbians On-Screen](#)
- [Friday Night Reads](#)
- [Science Fiction & Fantasy](#)
- [The Crime Scene](#)

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. Books To Watch Out For is published by Carol Seajay.

The Lesbian Edition

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

- » [Click here to subscribe.](#)
- » [Click here for more info.](#)

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 Labonté.

- » [Click here to subscribe.](#)
- » [Click here for more info.](#)

More Books for Women

covers the finest in thinking women's

The Lesbian Edition

Volume 4 Number 1

This new year brings the start of a new column, focused on lesbian science fiction and fantasy titles, written by Jill Roberts, managing editor at Tachyon Publications. She starts off by reviewing an anthology of twentieth century feminist science fiction as well as *The Future is Queer*, the anthology co-edited by Books To Watch Out For *The Gay Men's Edition* editor Richard Labonté.

As we did last year, we've asked several lesbian authors, publishers, and editors to name their favorite books of 2006. The first group of responses are in this issue of *The Lesbian Edition*, and we'll feature the rest in our next issue. You'll also find the latest mysteries in Nan's Crime Scene column (as well as her picks for the best of 2006), lots of book industry news, and of course, reviews of an eclectic variety of titles.

Wishing you many hours of great reading in 2007,
Suzanne Corson

Unprecedented Crossover Recognition for Lesbian Authors

Alison Bechdel

Books by lesbian authors have garnered attention from the mainstream press in the past, but the response to Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* is quite extraordinary. Alison and *Fun Home* have received phenomenal - and much-deserved - recognition at year end from everyone from the *New York Times* to the *London Times*. This reception for an unabashedly queer book in so many mainstream outlets is unprecedented in this country. *BTWOF* publisher Carol Seajay commented "That I've lived long enough to see this..." Richard Labonté, who writes *BTWOF's Gay Men's Edition*, says "In all my years of tracking how the straight press reacts to gay books, I've never seen this much praise." Among the accolades:

- Number one on *Time* magazine's Top 10:
"The unlikely literary success of 2006 is a stunning memoir about a girl growing up in a small town with her cryptic, perfectionist dad and slowly realizing that a) she is gay and b) he is too. Oh, and it's a comic book: Bechdel's breathtakingly smart commentary duets with eloquent line drawings. Forget genre and sexual orientation: this is a masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debts to each other."
- *New York* magazine's Top 10 list:
"Alice Munro came up with a new kind of memoir, and so did Alison Bechdel... Each year, one graphic novelist (sic) gets crowned 'the next Art Spiegelman.' And you don't read his book, because it actually seems kind of boring. Don't make that mistake with Bechdel. One of the best memoirs of the decade, *Fun Home* tells the story of her closeted father, pairing visuals and storytelling in a way that is at once hypercontrolled and utterly intimate."
- Number one nonfiction pick on *Entertainment Weekly's* Best of 2006 list:
<http://flickr.com/photos/an/330413225>.
- The *New York Times's* 100 Notable Books of the Year:
www.nytimes.com/ref/books/review/20061203notable-books.html.
- The *London Times's* Top 10 Best Books of 2006:
www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,923-2504697,00.html.
- Best Graphic Title of 2006 by *USA Today*:
www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2006-12-20-yir-books-top10_x.htm.
- Best Nonfiction Debuts of 2006 on Salon.com:
www.salon.com/books/awards/2006/12/12/debut.

reading, plus mysteries, non-sexist children's books, and news from women's publishing. Written by the owners and staff at Women & Children First, and friends.
» [Click here to subscribe.](#)
» [Click here for more info.](#)

Q. How does BTWOF define "a lesbian book?"

A. We think that any book that belongs to a lesbian is a lesbian book, just as any bike that belongs to a girl is "a girl's bike."

BTWOF: 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.

Ad Rates

Check out our ad rates at btwof.com/misc/ARC.pdf or contact Leigh for additional information and reservations.

Housekeeping

If you want to change your BTWOF email address or other contact information, [click here](#) to update:
» your subscriber profile
» whatever has changed.

Finding BTWOF

BTWOF is published by Carol Seajay and Books To Watch Out For. www.BooksToWatchOutFor.com
Email: Editor@BTWOF.com
PO Box 882554
San Francisco, CA 94188.

Send books for review consideration for the **Lesbian Edition** to the San Francisco address above.

Send books for review consideration for the **Gay Men's Edition** directly to Richard Labonte at 7-A Drummond St W Perth, ON K7H 2J3 Canada.



- One of the Best Books of 2006 in *Publishers Weekly*: www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6388182.html.
- One of the Best of 2006 Books in *People* magazine.
- One of the Top 50 Books of 2006 and one of the 10 Best Memoirs on Amazon.com.
- ...and Steve Duin from the *Oregonian* says "*Fun Home* deserves the Pulitzer Prize.": www.oregonlive.com/search/index.ssf?base/news/1164678911309440.xml?oregonian?ylccsd&coll=7.

Val McDermid

Congratulations to Val McDermid (author of the Lindsay Gordon and Kate Brannigan mystery series, among others) who was recently awarded the Portico Prize for Fiction for her latest book, *The Grave Tattoo*. The prize is awarded by the Portico Library in Manchester to "a book about the North West of England or set primarily in that region." One prize each is awarded for fiction and nonfiction titles, so McDermid's award is significant since her book was up against *all* eligible novels, not just other mysteries. *The Grave Tattoo* is a psychological thriller set in the modern day with roots in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. It won't be released in the U.S. until February 6, 2007, but you can read an excerpt on the author's website: www.valmcdermid.com/pages/books/tattoo.html.

Wire in the Blood, a TV series based on Val McDermid's novels featuring clinical psychologist Tony Hill, has just been picked up for a fifth season. In the UK, 29% of the viewing public watched it this fall, which, as our new British correspondent (and BTWOF publisher) Carol Seajay remarked, is a phenomenal rating in this era of cable and multiple TV stations. The show can be seen in the U.S. on BBC America. Learn more: www.worldscreen.com/newscurrent.php?filename=wire102306.htm.

Favorite Books of 2006

As we did last year, BTWOF wrote to lesbian writers and editors and asked about their favorite reads of 2006. "Preferably but not necessarily books published in 2006, - preferably but not necessarily lesbian books, and a few words about why you like them." Here are the first batch of responses; more will follow next issue. - SC

Hanne Blank

Oooh, definitely Daphne Gottlieb and Diane DiMassa's **Jokes and the Unconscious**, which is wonderfully wonderful, and dark, and true to itself.

...although Ellen Kushner's **Privilege of the Sword** was darned good fun, rich and textured and as ever, ferociously smart. (And Ellen's wife, Delia Sherman, has a new book out that looks beautiful, but I haven't gotten to read it yet.)

For not-Lesbian books - although she was raised by a dyke mom, does that count? - Elizabeth Bear's **Blood and Iron** is breathtaking, complicated, relentless, and magical.

Writer/editor Hanne Blank is trying to catch up on her reading while she awaits the March 2007 publication of her sixth book, Virgin: The Untouched History (Bloomsbury), the first-ever history of virginity in the Western world.

Angela Brown

1. **Grief**, Andrew Holleran
2. **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic**, Alison Bechdel
3. **Cirkus**, Patti Frazee
4. **Strangers on a Train**, Patricia Highsmith
5. **If the Creek Don't Rise: My Life Out West with the Last Black Widow of the Civil War**, Rita Williams

Angela Brown is the editor of Mentsh: On Being Jewish and Queer (Alyson Books) and Best Lesbian Romance 2007 (Cleis Press). She's currently finishing writing her first novel, I Fall to Pieces: A Kit Gunning Mystery.

Frederique Delacoste

A very short list because I am on tight, tight deadlines, but from the top of my head, among my favorite books this year: **The History of Love** by Nicole Krauss and **Decca: the (wonderful) Letters of Jessica Mitford** which I just finished reading this very morning.

Cleis Press publisher Frederique Delacoste is currently editing Jia: A Novel of North Korea for their Midnight Editions Imprint.

Emma Donoghue

Disobedience (2006) by Naomi Alderman is a highly original tale of a bad-tempered lesbian returning to her stultifying Orthodox Jewish suburb in London for her father's funeral (and an awkward encounter with the girlfriend she left behind). Alderman is extremely perceptive about the rival attractions of community and rebellion.



An Irish writer living in Canada, Emma Donoghue is the author of the bestselling Slammerkin. Her collection of short stories about contemporary taboos, Touchy Subjects (2006), will be followed by a novel about a long-distance lesbian relationship, Landing (2007).

L. Timmel Duchamp

James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon by Julie Phillips stands out as my year's favorite. Gifted and fiercely intelligent, Alice Sheldon lived several lives and went by several names but never quite found a place in the world where she could live expansively much less feel at home, most especially not as a gendered individual. Julie Phillips tells her story with deft, magnetic prose. It's a treat not to be missed.

L. Timmel Duchamp is the editor of Aqueduct Press; her recent fiction publications include Love's Body, Dancing in Time and the first three volumes of the five-novel Marq'ssan Cycle.

Heather Findlay

I love talking about my favorite books! Thanks for asking. All my faves this year were (auto)biographies.

By far my favorite book of 2006 was **Fun Home** by Alison Bechdel. I remember reading it and thinking, my god, Alison Bechdel is so smart: without any jargon or boring navel-gazing, this graphic autobiography (that is, the story of her childhood in cartoons and captions), looks at the connections between the author's psychology and her father's tragic life, including his occasional violence, closeted homosexuality, and ambiguous death (suicide? accident?). This book is the most moving take on a lesbian's relationship to her father since *Well of Loneliness*, and the most revealing and amusing since Freud's *Study of Homosexuality in a Woman*. Add to this the pleasure of the illustrations, and it's a brainy no-brainer for my fave of the year.



I read a vintage lesbian book this year, too, and loved it: Vita Sackville-West's **Joan of Arc**. This biography is so valuable. Although the famously androgynous Sackville-West (apple of Virginia Woolf's eye) clearly identifies with her subject, and at times is in utter awe of her, it's a totally unromanticized account of this remarkable girl. This book is uncomplicated by tortuous medieval politics, but not shy about the fascinating details of pre-modern warfare. Sackville-West's prose is careful, elaborate, but not overdone.

Ill-written, but interesting nonetheless: Mary Miller's **The Baroness of Hobcaw**, about Belle Barusch, daughter and heiress to Bernard Barusch, the very important financier and economic advisor to just about every president from Wilson to FDR. Belle was relatively openly gay, and connected to some of the 20th century's most famous women, men, real estate, and horses. Unfortunately, Miller doesn't make much of the links.

President and editor in chief of H.A.F. Publishing, Heather Findlay currently publishes San Francisco's official Pride guide. She founded Girlfriends magazine, which she published along with On Our Backs until both magazines were sold in 2006. (She is now working with the new owner to re-launch the titles online.) She is the girl behind Wine Girl Online (www.winegirlonline.com) and freelances for various lesbian media, including AfterEllen.com.

Nancy Garden

I have many favorites, but the one I'd most like to mention here is **Far From Xanadu** by Julie Anne Peters (Megan Tingley Books, Little, Brown). Yes, it's a young adult novel (I'm a YA author myself), and it was published in 2005, not 2006, but I think it's an important book as well as a wonderful one - it's the first YA novel featuring a very butch teenage lesbian, told from her point of view. (The very first re: a butch lesbian teen was M.E. Kerr's *Deliver Us From Evie*, 1994, HarperCollins - a fine book, but the point-of-view character is Evie's straight brother.)



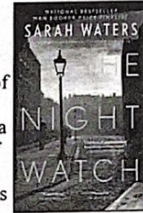
The main character in *Xanadu* is Mike; she's a softball star and an expert plumber, who's keeping her recently dead father's plumbing business going - and she falls in love with a straight girl, who teases her, leads her on, and breaks her heart. But Mike comes through the experience stronger and wiser, not only about love but about other issues in her life as well.

Julie always writes marvelous characters, three-dimensional, real people who leap off the page warts and all and make one feel that one has met them in real life. The characters in *Xanadu* are unforgettable, the situation is one that many butches face, and the book is one that I know I'll read again.

Nancy Garden has published 30-something books for children and teens, and one (Nora & Liz, *Bella Books*) for adults. Most recent are *Molly's Family*, her first picture book, (FSG), and *Endgame* (Harcourt). Forthcoming in Spring 2007 are a commemorative edition (25th anniversary!) of *Annie on My Mind* (FSG) and *Hear Us Out: Lesbian and Gay Stories of Struggle, Progress, and Hope, from 1950 to the Present* (FSG). Visit her website at www.nancygarden.com.

Seraphina Granelli

The Night Watch, by Sarah Waters - we thought Sarah was brilliant before this - now we realize that she's actually a genius! Bravely moving away from the Victorian romp that has brought her so much success, this time-reversed narrative traces the lives of three women and one man during 1940s blitzed London. Meditative, character-driven, and meticulously researched, this is a very accomplished work that shows the further maturing of one of the most formidable and exciting literary talents today.



Wish I Was Here, by Jackie Kay - few writers can use words as economically or as effectively as Jackie Kay. *Trumpet* is one of my all time favorite novels, and this powerful collection of stories is equally good. The over-arching theme is one of love lost and there's much pain in these stories about people struggling with rejection and feeling like they don't belong, but the humanity and warmth of Jackie's voice prevents these stories from becoming too depressing or sad. There is also much humor, and Jackie's knowing eye will have many of you grinning ruefully as situations or little details resonate.

The Art of Detection, by Laurie R. King - I think I should be upfront and say that I don't think this is Laurie's best book in the Kate Martinelli series, but they are so good that it doesn't really matter. This is an interesting one for a couple of reasons: a bold blending of her two seemingly world's apart series - Kate Martinelli and the Sherlockian Mary Russell series - and the very natural and everyday life way that she depicts a lesbian couple bringing up their child. It's been a while since the last Martinelli, and the updating of the characters and their situation is done with great skill and subtlety, and as always Laurie's erudition shines through impressively and disarmingly.

Pig Island, by Mo Hayder - This is my non-lesbian choice and one I probably wouldn't have come across if it wasn't for the fact that it was submitted for a prize that I was judging - it's certainly not the sort of book I'd normally read. It didn't win but it was perilously close to doing so. Mo Hayder is certainly not everyone's cup of tea, but you can't help but be utterly compelled by the sheer verve and imagination of the writing. It's difficult to summarize the plot without giving too much away, suffice to say cultish community on island, grisly goings-on, nightmarish horror, etc. For my money, Hayder is one of the bravest writers around today, and it seems that no subjects are taboo to her. This may make you wince in places, but I bet you won't be able to put it down. As Hayder showed with her previous novel *Tokyo*, she's one of those writers that the description *tour de force* really does apply to.

Seraphina Granelli has been a bookseller for longer than she cares to remember and is currently the manager of the UK lesbian shopping website www.libertas.co.uk. She also edits their quarterly magazine DykeLife. For the last three years she has been on the judging panel for the Crime Writers' Association's Ian Fleming Steel Dagger for Thrillers.

Ellen Hart

My favorite lesbian book this year was **Hit By a Farm** by Catherine Friend. The title wouldn't normally attract me. I mean, farming is central to my culinary life, but the romance of living on the land has never been my cup of tea. And that's why I was so surprised that I simply could not put the book down.



Catherine Friend is a luscious writer. She packs this memoir of two women starting a farm together in Southern Minnesota with humor, tenderness, grim reality, and more suspense than many crime novels. (When we have friends over for dinner, I often read the chapter "Chicken Sex." It's drop-dead hilarious.) This memoir is, hands down, one of best stories I've read in ages.

Favorite non-lesbian book I read this year was **Red Leaves** by Thomas H. Cook. It's a mystery that was nominated for both the Edgar and the Anthony, and it won the Barry Award. Thomas Cook is one of my new finds, and I thought this stand-alone (not part of a series) novel was beautifully written and observed.

Ellen Hart is author of the Jane Lawless mysteries. The newest Jane Lawless novel, Night Vision, is now available in bookstores.

Susan Hawthorne

My favorite lesbian book of 2006 was Maya Sharma's **Loving Women: Being Lesbian and Underprivileged in India**, 2006. It's published by a small and independent Indian lesbian press, Yoda, which is based in Delhi. What I like about Maya Sharma's book is that it is direct and unpretentious. I have read so many books about sexuality, queer, sexual minorities, etc. in which the word lesbian hardly appears even though that is what the author is writing about. For this Maya Sharma traveled to different places in mostly northern India to talk to lesbians. Some found the word impossible to say, but all connected with her in some way. Her book is about "the many silences that fall in between the uttered and the unutterable" (p. 104). The other remarkable thing about Sharma's book is the women themselves. For many, their relationships with women have become a great source of strength, while for a few it represents a concatenation of tragedies arising from the social sanctions and silence around a subject (and a practice) as taboo as lesbianism. I would love to see this and other books like it get on to courses in the European-derived world. It is a reality check for all of us.

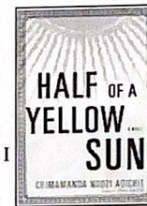
Susan Hawthorne's latest work includes The Butterfly Effect (2006) and an essay in The Journal of Hate Studies (2006) on the torture of lesbians. One of her poems in The Butterfly Effect was selected for the Best Australian Poems 2006 anthology.

Amy Hoffman

Thanks for inviting me to submit my favorite book of the year.

I always have trouble with these sorts of lists, but one of the most remarkable books I read this year was **Half of a Yellow Sun** by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It is a novel set in Nigeria during the Biafra War of the 1960s. The main characters are middle class people, academics, and their household servants. As the war and terror worsen, their lives narrow and narrow; they lose everything; they flee from town to town; they face chaos, violence, starvation. I learned about Biafra. I thought about Iraq.

Amy Hoffman is editor in chief of Women's Review of Books. Her memoir Hospital Time, about taking care of friends with AIDS, was published by Duke University Press in 1997. Her memoir about Boston's Gay Community News in the late 1970s, An Army of Ex-Lovers, is forthcoming from the University of Massachusetts Press in 2007.



Fay Jacobs

I've been a nonfiction reader all my life, but I have recently been introduced to a whole group of wonderful fiction writers. I devoured Radclyffe's **A Matter of Trust** and have been going back to become acquainted with much of the lesbian fiction I have missed. I especially enjoyed **Under the Witness Tree** by Marianne Martin (Bywater Books) Although it is not written by a lesbian, **I Feel Bad About My Neck** by Nora Ephron is one of the funniest books of essays relative to women "of a certain age." It's universal and we can relate!

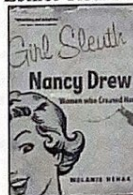
Fay Jacobs is the author of As I Lay Frying - a Rehoboth Beach Memoir, and a second book, Fried and True, to be released this February, both from A&M Books.

Joy Parks

Can't narrow it down to one this year. Definitely **Sweet Creek** by Lee Lynch, for her amazing gift for characterization, along with a seasoned wisdom, a very powerful sense of maturity and depth - there's so much to it, so many layers of emotion. **Bow Grip**, a first novel by short story writer Ivan E. Coyote, that's so gripping it makes you sad when you come to the last page; you want the story to keep going. **The Most Beautiful Girl in the World** by Judy Doenges was strange but wonderful - the language was incredible. And for nonfiction, it would be **Mockingbird**, by Charles Shields, because I've been waiting for someone to attempt a biography of Harper Lee, and this one was worth the wait.

Joy Parks has a story out in the recently released The Future is Queer from Arsenal Pulp Press (Vancouver) and stories in Best Lesbian Erotica 2007 (Cleis) and Wild Nights (Bella).

Esther Rothblum



My favorite book is **Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her** (came out in paperback in 2006). It's a wonderful description of Mildred Benson, who was the ghostwriter of most of the Nancy Drew books, and Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, who kept the family book syndicate running after her father died. I always speculated that Nancy Drew was a lesbian (I could tell Ned Nickerson was just a beard), and I know that George was a dyke. *Esther Rothblum is currently co-editing an anthology with Sondra Solovay entitled The Fat Studies Reader.*

Sarah Schulman

I loved Marcia Gallo's *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis*. Sarah Schulman's new novel, *The Child*, will be published by Carroll & Graf in June 2007.

Susan Stinson

The Night Watch, by Sarah Waters, which is set in London in the years just after and during WWII, is a brilliant novel which examines what happens in people, and in a culture, during and after the violence and trauma of war.

The story is structured, with amazing control, to run backwards in three-year intervals. I was most compelled, perhaps, by Kay, the ambulance driver in her men's shoes, cuff-links, and "shirt with a soft white collar she could leave open at the throat as a woman might," but all of the characters are full of fierce, flawed beauty.

I also loved *Fun Home*, the stunning graphic memoir by Alison Bechdel.

And *Magic for Beginners*, a wonderful book of short stories by Kelly Link, while not lesbian, is as adventurous, strange, and capacious as a faery handbag.

Susan Stinson, whose novels are *Fat Girl Dances with Rocks*, *Martha Moody*, and *Venus of Chalk*, is at work on *Spider in a Tree*, a novel based on the life of eighteenth century theologian Jonathan Edwards.

Fiction

So, we've seen books that have speculated that Jesus was a sexual being: as a straight man, through his relationship with Mary Magdalene, or as gay, with speculation about an erotic relationship between Jesus and his apostle John. Kittredge Cherry goes a creatively large step further by depicting a multi-gendered bisexual Jesus in her new novel *Jesus in Love*.

Cherry, author of *Hide and Speak: A Coming Out Guide*, *Womansword: What Japanese Words Say about Women*, and co-editor of *Equal Rites: Lesbian and Gay Worship, Ceremonies, and Celebrations*, sets the stage for her image of Jesus from the first sentence of the prologue: "Seeing as God sees got me into trouble from the start. I simply didn't notice what other people found both obvious and important, such as whether someone was male or female." Throughout the book, there are examples of this, such as when Jesus, our first-person narrator, asks one couple why they haven't married and they remind him that they're both women and aren't allowed to marry each other.

At other times, Jesus is aware of gender and how fluidly it exists in him/herself. Nowhere is this more evident than when Jesus discusses his lovemaking with the Holy Spirit, who he marries and refers to as his Bride:

"We tried to strip each other down to our naked gender, but always found a more remote and complex gender hidden under every layer. In excitement, we bared our extremes to each other. Together we sampled the endless spectrum of gender flavors available, creating more as we went. We tried on different gender possibilities, looking for new ways to tantalize and please each other."

Though I attended a Protestant church as a child, I don't have too much more than secular/popular culture knowledge about the Bible, so I'm sure I'm missing parallels with the Bible and symbolism in this novel that someone with more knowledge would catch - the "blurbs" on this book from a veritable Who's Who in Queer Spirituality (Toby Johnson, Rev. Mel White, Rev. Carter Heyward, Rev. Malcolm Boyd, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott) suggest that those who do know of what they speak think the author did a great job with *Jesus in Love*. It's also a testament to Cherry's work that her publisher actually created Androgynous Press in order to publish *Jesus in Love* and its forthcoming sequel, *Jesus in Love: At the Cross*.

I found myself quite moved by this book, by how Jesus shared his teaching, fed others love and kindness, and healed their bodies and souls. And the feminist in me appreciated the feminist Jesus, challenging the male disciples to accept all the female disciples (not just Mary Magdalene) in spite of the Temple's prohibitions about women. Cherry's introduction is also wonderful, where she discusses what her motivations were - and were not - for writing the book as well as how her views about women and Christianity changed after talking to women in Japan who had converted to Christianity from Buddhism and found themselves freed from sexism. *Jesus in Love* is a fine entry into the growing collection of art and literature about a queer Jesus. Androgynous Press, \$18.95 paper, 9781933993188.



Now that the hecticness of the winter holiday season has passed, I was able to thoroughly enjoy **All in the Seasoning**, an anthology of lesbian winter holiday stories edited by Katherine V. Forrest. This is a collection that can be read year round, especially since the holidays themselves are only incidental in some of the stories. In others, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, and Boxing Day are more integral features in the plot. Some pieces may be familiar to readers, such as reprints of stories by Jane Rule and Lee Lynch from their short story collections, but reading them next to their neighbors in this book is a rich experience. Favorites of mine included Lynch's "Hanukkah at a Bar," Rule's "Sightseers in Death Valley," "A Traditional Christmas" by Val McDermid, Kris Brandenburger's "Dallying With Llamas," and the title story by R. Gay. The poignancy, variety, and depth in these stories, coupled with Forrest's skilled editing, mix to create a very tasty whole to enjoy any time. Bywater Books, \$13.95, 9781932859263.



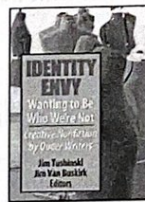
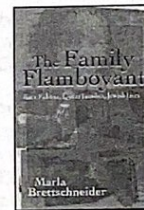
New in Paperback:

Lipshitz Six, or Two Angry Blondes, T Cooper, Penguin/Plume, \$14, 9780452288065.

Rose of No Man's Land, Michelle Tea, Harcourt/Harvest, \$14, 9780156030939.

Identity Matters

Marla Brettschneider has skillfully blended critical race theory, queer studies, Jewish studies, and feminism with her (and her family's) personal story in **The Family Flamboyant: Race Politics, Queer Families, Jewish Lives**. Marla herself is an Ashkenazi Jew. Her partner, Dawn, white, converted to Judaism. Their two adopted daughters, Paris and Toni, are African American. They live in New York City. All of these facts, as well as class, queerness, and details about their families of origin, are used to expand discussions of race, class, sexuality, religion, and family politics. She also talks about the formation of identity, about teaching her daughter that she is a Jewish girl, an African-American girl, a Jewish African-American girl. More academic than a memoir, *The Family Flamboyant* is still an accessible, thought-provoking, and informative read. State University of New York Press, \$24.95 paper, 9780791468944.



But what about those who want to be something they're not? This was the question asked by editors Jim Tushinski and Jim Van Buskirk in **Identity Envy: Wanting to Be Who We're Not - Creative Nonfiction by Queer Writers**. In their introduction, Van Buskirk and Tushinski describe sitting at lunch one day and discovering that though they were both raised in Christian homes, they wanted to be Jewish. They wondered if this kind of "identity envy" was common and asked around. This collection, with pieces from both seasoned and emerging writers, shows that there are many different kinds of such envy: Jewish girls who wanted to be Catholic, boys raised in the rural South who wanted to be European, boys who wanted to be girls, girls who wanted to be boys, lesbians who wanted to be gay men, and gay men who wanted to be lesbians. My favorite piece in the book was Andrew Ramer's "Tales of a Male Lesbian" - he beautifully captures the seventies pre-AIDS gulf between how lesbians related with one another and how gay men related to each other. I also enjoyed what could be seen as the flip side to that piece, Renate Stendhal's "Thieves, Pimps, and Holy Prostitutes - My World":

"Could there possibly be anyone with the same gender balance who would allow me to be my fluid self without effort or self-consciousness?... When this soul mate did materialize, we were both surprised to discover that we shared the same passion for the ideal boy, the same fascination with Thomas Mann, and with cultural images of female/male two-sidedness in men... We even shared the mysterious sense of reincarnation that in our lovemaking sometimes allowed us to embody and experience each other as two boys having sex with each other."

Of the many wishing-I-were-a-different-religion stories, Joan Annsfire's "The Promise of Redemption" stood out: "It wasn't that I wanted to worship Jesus or eat fish on Fridays. What I coveted most was that Catholic girl swagger, a presence that

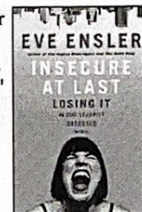
stated, 'I'm here, you gonna try to make somethin' of it?'" Harrington Park Press, \$19.95 paper, 9781560235873.

New in paperback:

Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised as a Man, Norah Vincent, Penguin, \$15, 9780143038702.

More Nonfiction

Eve Ensler's first book written directly for the page (rather than for the stage first, like *The Vagina Monologues* and *The Good Body*) is **Insecure at Last: Losing It in Our Security Obsessed World**. She wonders why it is that we live in a community where 'security' is being discussed all the time - security check, security clearance, security watch - and she feels more insecure than ever. She posits that women are part of the healing of the world, by feeling and bearing witness to the suffering of others, not by bullying or warring, not by avoiding or ignoring the suffering. Ensler describes meeting women and men from all over the world who are creating positive change in their lives and their communities, not allowing their governments - and the armies of other governments - to dictate their destinies. This book is, at times, very difficult to read, but the stories of these courageous people are inspiring. Both a political and personal book, its core is about the importance of community. Ensler talks about the power of community, sharing each other's suffering; she says that people don't need to be fixed, they just need to be with each other. Included are stories of people who *are* able to affect change and ease some of that suffering, too. She also presents personal stories of the abuse she suffered growing up. Her chapter headings are telling: "Vaginas - More Terrifying Than Scud Missiles," "In the Name of Security, They Somehow Forgot to Protect the People," and the one for the conclusion of the book: "Peace is a State of Being; Security is Being of the State." This is an important book, well worth the read. Random House/Villard, \$21.95 cloth, 9781400063345.



There's a revised edition of **Fierce With Reality: An Anthology of Literature on Aging**, edited by Margaret Cruikshank, available now. I loved the original, published in 1995; it featured a great blend of essay, poetry, humor, and folktales. This new edition includes work by twelve additional writers. Lesbian contributors to this anthology include Mary Oliver, Jane Rule, Mary Meigs, Celeste West, Elsa Gidlow, Ida VSW Red, and Margaret Cruikshank. Just Write Books, \$24.95 paper, 9780978862800. (To order from the publisher: www.jstwrite.com/index_files/Page2844.htm.)

New in paperback:

The Whole World Was Watching, Romaine Patterson, Alyson, \$15.95, 9781555839901.

Lesbians: On-Screen and On the Page



Whether you've been a fan of *The L Word* from the beginning or are just now getting into it, with the recent start of season four, be sure to check out **The L Word: Welcome to Our Planet**. This "Official Companion Book to the Hit Showtime Series" is chockfull of photos, cast and character bios, interviews, and synopses of each episode in the first two seasons - including lists of the music featured in each episode. This would be a great gift for any *L Word* fans in your life. Simon and Schuster/Fireside,

\$16, 9780743291330.

Love it, hate it, never seen it, or indifferent to it, it's hard to deny that *The L Word* is making history as the first television series about lesbians, by lesbians. The phenomena of the show is analytically examined with many lenses in **Reading The L Word: Outing Contemporary Television** edited by Kim Akass and Janet McCabe, with an introduction by Sarah Warn of AfterEllen.com. Included are essays about how *The L Word* compares to other depictions of lesbians and lesbianism on TV in the past, what *The*



L Word teaches - and does not teach - audiences about lesbian love, relationships, and sex, and how different kinds of women-loving-women are represented - or not - on *The L Word*. Anyone who enjoys reading analyses of pop culture and especially, lesbian pop culture, and of course, *L Word* fans, will love this book. I.B. Tauris, \$14.95, 9781845111793.

Do you miss Xena? Wonder Woman? Emma Peel from *The Avengers*? These and other strong women characters from films and TV, present and past, are chronicled in **The Modern Amazons: Warrior Women On-Screen** by Dominique Mainon



and James Ursini. Another treat for pop culture fans, this is a guilty pleasure-filled trip down memory lane which includes analysis of both feminist and lesbian text and subtext in action movies, TV series, and cartoons, such as *Powerpuff Girls*. Everyone you'd expect to be in such a book is here - *Tank Girl*, *G.I. Jane*, *La Femme Nikita*, Ripley from *Alien* - but then there's *Pippi Longstocking*, Pepper from *Police Woman*, and Clarice (Jodie Foster) from *The Silence of the Lambs*. These folks have

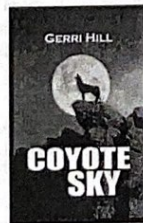
done their homework. There are hundreds of great photos, a filmography with full cast lists, a list of relevant television shows, and a timeline which begins with *Judith of Bethulia* in 1914. Great fun, and informative, too. Hal Leonard Corporation, \$24.95, 9780879103279.

Friday Night Reads

Georgia Beers became one of my favorite Friday Night Reads authors back in 2001 with *Turning the Page* (and no, it wasn't just because it was set in a feminist bookstore!). She continues to entertain with two new books, *Too Close to Touch* and *Fresh Tracks*.

Gretchen Kaiser is a workaholic with no time for romance. She's a casual relationship kind of woman who has just moved into town, taking over for a much-loved man who abruptly retired. Kylie O'Brien is her administrative assistant and a hopeful romantic. Sparks fly between them from the start in *Too Close to Touch*. These are wonderful, fully-dimensional characters, and author Georgia Beers does a great job building the tension between Gretchen's "icy boss" character and Kylie's stuck-in-the-middle-between-the-boss-and-her-subordinates situation - and how their attraction to each other grows. My only wish was that the situation with long-time friends Kylie and Mick had been resolved a bit more thoroughly, or left unresolved in a more satisfying way. But all in all, I enjoyed spending time with these characters. Bold Strokes, \$15.95, 9781933110479.

Even better was *Fresh Tracks*, and not just because it's an ensemble piece - I enjoy both books and films about groups of friends. Long-time couple Amy and Jo invite several friends to their cabin in the woods for the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Singles and couples, happy and not so, secrets and wishes, and a surprise visit from Jo's wild niece Darcy populate this delightful story. Bold Strokes, \$15.95, 9781933110639.



Gerri Hill is another author who's been prolific lately. Nan reviewed *The Killing Room* in TLE #22, and now Hill is back with *Coyote Sky*, a romance set in the mountains above Santa Fe, New Mexico. Kate is a writer whose popular mystery series is at a crossroads; she's blocked and doesn't know what to do about it, other than escape the heat in her Dallas home (and the lack of heat in her relationship with girlfriend Robin) and spend the summer with her friend Brenda in New Mexico. Lee is the sheriff in Coyote, where Brenda lives, and has a reputation for bedding all the sweet young female tourists who come to town.

With some New Age mysticism and the gorgeous landscape thrown in, Gerri Hill has given you the ingredients for a fun read. Bella Books, \$13.95, 9781594930652.

Marianne K. Martin brings back Moni and Katherine from *Dawn of the Dance* with the sequel *Dance in the Key of Love*. But this new book is really the story of another character from *Dawn of the Dance*, Paige Flemming, and her relationship with an injured dancer, Marissa Langford. Paige is running from her past but before making her final move, she returns to visit Moni and Katherine one last time and finds herself falling for Marissa. Great characters all, this is a story of women reinventing themselves,



healing, moving on, and, ultimately, facing up to their pasts. And in a carefully drawn and believable characterization, a straight white male cop gets a lesson about domestic violence that he'll never forget. Bywater Books, \$13.95, 9781932859171.



As I've mentioned in the past, stories with "first time" kind of themes don't generally interest me, but in JLee Meyer's **First Instinct**, the first-timer aspect wasn't annoying at all, even though - and perhaps because - it's an important part of the plot. Or rather, the fact that Leigh, an investment specialist, has a male fiancé suspected of financial wrongdoings is integral to the story. Conn Stryker owns a company which develops forensic software, programs that track, uncover, investigate, and/or analyze data. She consults with government agencies, like the one investigating Leigh's fiancé. The geek in me loved the forensic software bits and the mystery was convincing, but this is one of these books where I felt like the romance actually got in the way of the story. I would have enjoyed it more if the mystery was the emphasis rather than the romance. And I have to say, knowing that I was reading about a lesbian romance, it was a bit off-putting to read about a sexual encounter between one of the male bad guys and a woman. I didn't need to know that "(s)he was wet, ready for him." That aside, I enjoyed the female bonding throughout (Conn's aunt was my favorite character) in addition to the geeky crime-solving. Bold Strokes, \$15.95, 9781933110592.

Science Fiction and Fantasy

by Jill Roberts

I'm a big fan of anthologies. Whether they're collecting reprints or original stories, the editors of anthologies create a thematic dialogue between writers, each story taking a unique shape and leaving the reader to contemplate how the pieces fit together. This month I'm reviewing two new science fiction anthologies that are fine examples of quality stories combined with editorial vision.

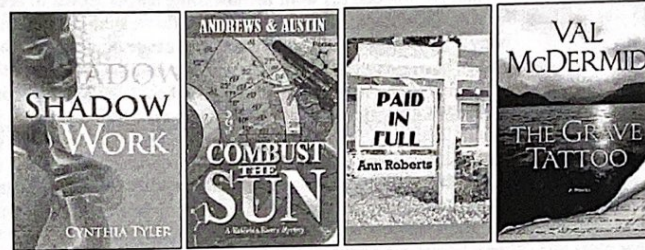
Daughters of Earth is rather unorthodox for an anthology collecting feminist science fiction of the twentieth century. It contains eleven seminal science-fiction stories published between 1927 and 2002, with a critical essay complementing each story. The choices are unexpected - some of the stories are by lesser known sci-fi authors, or the stories themselves lack overt feminist or scientific content. Yet editor Justine Larbalestier absolutely gets it right when she posits that "feminism is as much a way of reading as it is a way of writing." The stories alone would make a fine book, but it is the essays that provide crucial context, ranging from the first women authors published in the pulp magazines, the radical New Wave experiments of the nineteen-sixties, and the intriguing modern works that push outward while honoring the genre's origins. Of the many excellent stories and essays here, I was particularly impressed by Andrea Hairston's essay "Praise Song to a Prophetic Artist," on Octavia Butler's visionary story "The Evening and the Morning and the Night." *Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* is a vital anthology of feminist science fiction, and equally importantly, speaks to the overall progression of feminism in contemporary fiction. Wesleyan University Press, \$24.95 paperback, 9780819566768.



The Future is Queer, edited by Richard Labonte and Lawrence Schimel, is an original science fiction anthology, which means that each of its eight stories were written specifically for it. Original anthologies are a bold gambit, and as such, quite a rarity these days. The combination of relative newcomers with established authors has resulted in a provocative, unusual anthology on an under-explored theme, gender and sexuality in the future. Many of these stories speak to futures in which queer sexuality is still limited or proscribed. Perhaps the most dystopic entry is a miniature graphic-novel, a collaboration between Neil Gaiman and illustrator Brian Talbot, in a brutal story of revisionist repression that combines *Fahrenheit 451* with *1984*. Standouts include Candas Jane Dorsey's melancholy meditation on pagan sexuality, Rachel Pollack's experimental tale of transcendent transgenderism, and newcomer Diana Churchill's brief reunion of star-crossed lovers. Thoughtful introductions by each of the editors draw readers into futures that are not always hopeful, but are well worth visiting. Arsenal Pulp Press, \$17.95 paper, 9781551522098.

New in paperback:*Fledgling*, Octavia Butler, Warner, \$13.99, 9780446696166.**The Crime Scene**

By Nan Cinnater



What bibliophile doesn't love to make - and read - lists? At the end of the year, we all get immersed in the annual "best of" ritual, and here is mine. I compiled a short list at the end of this column of my favorite mysteries reviewed in 2006. For the second year in a row, I'm honored to be a judge for the Lesbian Mystery category of the Lambda Literary Awards, so I'm also trying to read as many 2006 mysteries as possible that I may have missed. As it turns out, a couple of these are not mysteries. I begin this column with two excellent novels that have been marketed as suspense but don't really fit into this category.

At first glance, *Shadow Work* by Cynthia Tyler appears to be a New Age-y mystery full of misguided mysticism, but it turns out to be a down-to-earth non-mystery novel about the way we - lesbian/feminists of a certain age, that is - live now. In Tyler's first novel, *Descanso: Soul Journey*, psychotherapist Chris Cameron was grieving over the murder of her lover. Now she has moved on to a "pretty happy romance" with Linda, a police officer who's also an artist. ("We made an agreement to attempt love without pressure, bed death, or U-hauls...," as Chris explains it.) The novel is framed at beginning and end by Chris's spiritual explorations with a shaman. In between we get a wonderful slice of daily life in Southern California in the 21st century, with political bloggers, right-wing Christians, and credit card-addicted lesbians. We meet Chris's friends and learn about her father, a minor star in 50s sci-fi B-movies. Much of the plot revolves around Chris's work place and her clients, so it helps to have a high tolerance for a psychotherapeutic world view. Sometimes the satire is a little too obvious (one board member has toddlers named Armani and L'Oreal). Mostly, though, this reads like a long, realistic installment of *Dykes to Watch Out For*, with all the sharp observation and political acumen, only fewer jokes. And that's high praise. Harrington Park Press/Alice Street Editions, \$17.95 paper, 9781560236221.

Slipstream by Leslie Larson is another excellent and very literary novel that doesn't qualify as a mystery. In fact, it's only a novel of suspense in the sense that the plot is compelling and makes you turn the pages. This is another slice-of-life novel, with a lesbian character featured as one of half-a-dozen characters we follow through their circumstantial connections to the Los Angeles airport. These include Wylie, a bartender at LAX, his co-worker Rudy, a cleaner who loses his job and struggles to keep his life together, Wylie's brother Logan, fresh out of jail, and Logan's lesbian daughter Jewell, who is breaking up with her girlfriend. In a cinematic style reminiscent of *Crash*, these characters lives intersect as they circle in their separate orbits, moving relentlessly toward a common fate. Random House/Crown, \$23.95, 9780307337993. (Paperback due February 20: Random House/Three Rivers, \$14, 9780307338013.)



Combust the Sun by the pseudonymous writing partners Austin and Andrews is a Hollywood fantasy about Hollywood. The intrigue begins when Teague Richfield, a freelance screenwriter with a basset hound named Elmo, takes a meeting with an old flame, a lesbian studio executive who is very nearly murdered over the salad nicoise. Teague heads for Tulsa for her parents' anniversary, where she meets Callie Rivers, her mother's astrologer, and the sparks fly. If you can suspend your disbelief when a murder in Tulsa just happens to be related to a high-level studio conspiracy in Hollywood, and let the mayhem roll over you as various bad guys kill each other and attempt to kill our heroines in search of two ancient Egyptian "death stones," then

you should enjoy this wild ride. Teague and Callie are good company, the jokes are funny, and the plot moves faster than *Fast and Furious*. Like a lot of Hollywood productions, however, this one goes on just a little too long. Bold Strokes Books, \$15.95, 9781933110523.

One thing I love about Bella Books is that the editors know how to edit, producing for the most part lean, fast-moving, dialogue-driven fiction that's compulsively readable. **Paid in Full** by Ann Roberts is no exception. Here's the first sentence: "When Ari opened the door the last thing she expected to see was a corpse, but there he was, face down, spread eagle on the floor, sunlight washing over his lifeless body." Ari is a perfectly turned-out real estate agent preparing to show a supposedly empty house; but she's also a former cop and the daughter of a cop, who gets entangled in the investigation when her best friend Bob becomes the prime suspect. The official homicide investigator, Detective Molly Nelson, is a big, muscular blonde with some self-esteem issues, which I also love. In a genre where increasingly every eligible woman is "drop-dead gorgeous," it was nice to see a somewhat self-conscious, somewhat butch dyke get the girl. Bella Books, \$13.95, 9781594930591.



The mother-daughter team called P.J. Tracy write wicked good thrillers featuring a pair of male Minneapolis cops and the Monkeewrench gang, a motley group of computer wizards who consult with the police. The good news for a lesbian audience is that they always feature some remarkable women characters, and usually some very interesting political issues as well. In **Snow Blind** the focus at first seems to be on the cops, when a corpse is discovered inside a snowman at a city-sponsored winter festival. Soon, however, a similar snowman turns up out in the hinterlands, where Iris Rikker, the newly elected woman sheriff, is on her first day on the job. Iris is a great character, and eventually we meet a number of other extremely strong women, and therein lies the tale.... *Snow Blind* barely registers on the violence scale compared to other thrillers, but there is a certain chill factor to the cold-blooded murders that may disturb the squeamish. The "good guys" are so amusing, complicated, and human, however, that I came away satisfied. Penguin/Putnam, \$24.95, 9780399153396.

Book to Watch Out For

Val McDermid's latest, **The Grave Tattoo**, will be published in the U.S. on February 7. McDermid has written some harrowing serial killer thrillers, but this leans toward the scholarly and historical, with a 200-year-old body in a bog in the lake district, and a connection to the poet Wordsworth. There are three strong women anchoring the plot: a literary scholar, a forensic anthropologist, and a black teenager who lives in a dangerous housing project. This works much better as a novel of character than as a *DaVinci Code*-style puzzler, perhaps because the Romantic poets hold less intrinsic fascination for Americans than for Brits. St. Martin's/Minotaur, \$24.95, 9780312339210.

Nan's Favorite Mysteries of 2006

The Art of Detection by Laurie R. King, Bantam, \$24, 9780553804539.
Cutting Blades by Victoria Blake, Berkley/Prime Crime, \$14, 9780425209997. *
Dope by Sara Gran, Penguin/Berkley, \$14, 9780425214367. *
End of Watch by Baxter Clare, Bella Books, \$13.95, 9781594930645.
The Killing Room by Gerri Hill, Bella Books, \$13.95, 9781594930508.
The Summer Snow by Rebecca Pawel, Soho Press, \$12, 9781569474433. *
Too Darn Hot by Sandra Scoppettone, Random House/Ballantine, \$24.95, 9780345478122. *
Unbearable Losses by Jennifer L. Jordan, Spinsters Ink, \$14.95, 9781883523688.
 * no lesbian content



More Lesbian Literature in Mainstream Media

Inside Bay Area interviewed Sarah Waters, whose *The Night Watch* is the current selection for the (San Francisco) Bay Area Living book club: www.insidebayarea.com/bayarealiving/ci_5056675.

The Toronto Star just profiled Emma Donoghue: www.thestar.com/artsentertainment/article/170177.

Nicola Griffith was recently featured on Wisconsin Public Radio's "To the Best of Our Knowledge" program. Hear the podcast, which includes her reading passages from *Stay*:
www.wpr.org/book/070107a.html.

And a new site for South Asian bloggers, Desicritics.org, which appears to have a predominantly (straight?) male staff, recently reviewed Jeannette Winterson's *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*:
<http://desicritics.org/2007/01/21/111151.php>.

.....

Latest on Little Sister's v Canada Customs

Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium in Vancouver has been battling Canada Customs for several years over their targeting of books with LGBT content for censorship and/or seizure. In the latest, and presumably last, chapter of this story, Little Sister's lost their appeal with the Supreme Court of Canada. The store was hoping to receive federal funding upfront to help finance their continued court fight with Canada Customs. They had previously received a favorable ruling about the funding from a lower court judge, but that decision was overturned by the British Columbia Court of Appeals. In its ruling, the Supreme Court said it was not convinced that this issue applies to the public interest at large rather than just to Little Sister's itself. "A litigant whose case, however compelling it may be, is of interest only to the litigant, will be denied an advance costs award." Without this advanced funding, Little Sister's cannot afford to continue their legal battle against Canada Customs. As they said in their press release after this most recent ruling was announced, "The outcome of this case means that unless there is a litigant with pockets deep enough to take on Canada Customs, the bureaucracy will continue to determine what Canadians can and cannot read, unscrutinized by public hearings." Read more on their website: www.littlesistersbookstore.com.

.....

Thirty Years of *Sinister Wisdom*

Congratulations to *Sinister Wisdom* on its 30th anniversary celebration issue, edited by Fran Day. This issue pays homage to *SW*'s history as well as to many lesbian writers, activists, musicians, and artists from throughout *SW*'s thirty years of publication. There are tributes to Gloria Anzaldúa, Tee Corinne, Anita Cornwell, Kay Gardner, Sharon Silvas, Barbara Deming, and many others. The front cover of this special issue is a reprint of Tee Corinne's cover image from *SW* #3 (later made into a poster which hung in hundreds of lesbian homes), while the back is a photograph containing all of the previous *Sinister Wisdom* covers. Contributors to this special issue include Joan E. Biren (JEB), Cathy Cade, Chrystos, Tatiana de la tierra, Merrill Mushroom, Kit Quan, Juanita Ramos, Esther Rothblum, Jean Sirius, Renate Stendhal, Jean Taylor, and Xiaoxin Zeng. For more information see www.sinistervisdom.org.

.....

Play to Watch Out For

Just in time to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Ann Bannon's first book, *Odd Girl Out*, a new play called *The Beebo Brinker Chronicles* will be staged off-Broadway by Kate Moira Ryan (who dramatized Dorothy Allison's *Cavedweller* for Broadway) and Linda Chapman of the New York Theater Workshop. The production will be part of New York's Gay Pride Celebration this June. For more details, visit www.beebobrinker.com.

.....

Awards

The winner of this year's Project: QueerLit contest is *Men with Their Hands* by Raymond Luczak. The finalists are: *My Hero: A Wild Boy's Tale* by Tristram Burden, *Initiate's Rise* by Debra Hyde, *Mono No Aware (The Sorrow of Things)* by

Bianca Jarvis, *The Fluidity of Angels* by Jeff Leavell, and *Loop* by Scott Waller. Details about the contestants, excerpts from the winning novels, complete lists of the semi-finalist and honorable mention novels, and more information about the contest can be found at www.projectqueerlit.com. (*Books To Watch Out For* is one of the sponsors of Project: QueerLit.)

The National Book Critics Circle has announced the nominees for their 2006 awards. Nominees include: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Houghton Mifflin, \$19.95, 9780618477944) and Terri Jentz, *Strange Piece of Paradise* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$27, 9780374134983) in the Memoir/Autobiography category, Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss* (Grove/Atlantic, \$14, 9780802142818) in the Fiction category, and Julie Phillips, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon* (St. Martin's Press, \$27.05, 9780312203856) for Biography. Learn more about the NBCC and see the complete list of nominees at www.bookcritics.org/?go=finalists.

Appeal for Paula Gunn Allen

Paula Gunn Allen is the author of numerous influential books, such as *Grandmothers of the Light: A Medicine Woman's Sourcebook*, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, and the recent biography *Pocahontas: Medicine Woman, Spy Entrepreneur, Diplomat*. She has also done much to bring attention to American Indian literature with *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women*, *Voice of the Turtle: American Indian Literature 1900-1970*, and *Song of the Turtle: American Indian Fiction 1974-1990*. She also taught for many years, retiring in 1999 as Professor of English/Creative Writing/American Indian Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles.

In October 2006, a fire resulted in the loss of her car, double-wide trailer, clothes, appliances, books, and papers. She also suffered smoke inhalation and consequently spent several weeks in the hospital. (2006 was a hard year for her - just before the fire, she had successfully completed radiation therapy for lung cancer.) Fortunately she is now responding well to treatment, and friends report that her spirits are better than they have been in awhile.

The Paula Gunn Allen Fund has been established to provide financial assistance to Paula and help her rebuild her life. Donations may be sent to: The Paula Gunn Allen Fund, Account No. 0129540739, Bank of America, 228 North Main St., Fort Bragg, CA 95437. (Donations are not tax deductible.)

Paula also needs copies of books containing her essays or poems because hers burned in the fire. (Fortunately, she had deposited most of her papers in the library of the University of Oregon several years before the fire.) Books can be sent to Paula Gunn Allen, c/o 560 1/2 North McPherson St., Fort Bragg, CA 95437.

Calls for Submissions

Chroma: A Queer Literary Journal is accepting submissions for their forthcoming Island Issue. "Is no person, or is everyone an island? What's your story about island living, visiting, and hopping? Is "isolation" what springs to mind - the solace and the suffering and the nobility of that? Think about seafarers. Think about Gertrude Stein and what she writes: 'What could interest an island as much,' she says, 'as the daily the completely daily island life?' Is an island a place to run away from or escape to?" Bermudian poet, Andra Simons, will be the guest editor for this issue. Deadline February 28. Full details on their website: www.chromajournal.co.uk.

A special volume of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies* entitled "The Lesbian Image in International Popular Culture" is seeking essays that explore a wide variety of lesbian images in a global context. Essays may address the lesbian image as it appears in literature, art, film, music, television, Internet, the news media, marketing, or any other venue of international popular culture. The editors welcome essays, analysis, and creative contributions, including personal accounts, oral histories, feminist theory, research, fiction, poetry, etc. Please send a one-page overview of your proposed contribution to guest editor Sara E. Cooper at scooper@csuchico.edu by February 28. Proposals will be evaluated for originality and writing style, as well as how all the contributions fit together. Essays of 15-30 pages (including bibliography), maximum word count 9000, as well as creative submissions (flexible page and word limit) as Microsoft Word attachment will be due by August 31, 2007.

Heather Cassell is working on a book about the sociology and psychology of bisexual women of color in our culture. She is seeking both survey participants and personal essays from bi women of color. Contact her at brooklyntherapist@yahoo.com for more information.

Lesbian Literary Quiz, Part Two

In the last issue, we shared with you some of the lesbian literary fun that was posted about the grounds of the last York Lesbian Festival, in the guise of some quotations from famous lesbian literature (answers to those questions at the end of this section). In part two, we'll provide you with some memorable "first lines," and you can guess the author and novel. Answers will be provided in TLE #28. Again, our thanks to the women at the York Lesbian Festival for allowing us all to play along with them!

Guess the Author and Novel of the First Lines

- 1: "Have you ever tasted a Whitstable oyster?"
- 2: No one remembers her beginnings.
- 3: My mother began me one evening in 1968 on a table in the cafe of the town's only cinema.
- 4: Cassie Turnbull leaned forward, sweaty hands on her grubby knee.
- 5: "This is murder," Lindsay Gordon complained, leaning back in her chair.
- 6: I was born on a farm on Whileaway.
- 7: Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.
- 8: Not very far from Upton-on-Severn - between it, in fact, and the Malvern Hills - stands the country seat of the Gordons of Bramley.
- 9: Dear Gert, I know I haven't been in touch for Sometime, but then neither have you.
- 10: Jack Mann had seen enough in his life to swear off surprise forever.
- 11: Well hey y'all I thought. I heard a car pull up. Come on in.
- 12: Like most people I lived for a long time with my mother and father.
- 13: '2 O seek FLATMATE' Two diamonds of masking tape held the card to the notice board. 'OWN ROOM. WOW! NO BIGOTS'
- 14: One way Martha wanted me out of the kitchen, but another way she didn't want me burning wood to keep myself warm.
- 15: He - for there was no doubt about his sex, though the fashion of the Time did something to disguise it.
- 16: "Next item on the agenda: Forward Planning. I'm afraid the time has come for us to do another story on the Outer Hebrides."
- 17: Conventions, like clichés, have a way of surviving their own usefulness.
- 18: I pull back the curtain an inch and see their heads bent together.
- 19: I've been called Bone all my life, but my name's Ruth Anne.

Answers for Last Issue's Lesbian Literary Quiz

And here are the answers to Guess the Author of the Literary Quotes from TLE #26:

1. Sappho (Translated by William Bowles)
2. Aphra Benn (1640-1689)
3. 'Quiz' (1837)
4. Anne Lister (1791-1840)
5. Jackie Kay from *Trumpet*
6. Virginia Woolf from *Orlando*
7. Gertrude Stein
8. Carol Ann Duffy from *Warming Her Pearls*
9. Valentine Ackland from *For Sylvia*
10. Elizabeth Bishop
11. Mabel Dodge Luhan from *Dorothy and Madeleine*
12. Collette from *The Pure and Impure*
13. Rita Mae Brown from *Rubyfruit Jungle*
14. Sarah Waters from *Fingersmith*
15. Jeanette Winterson from *Written on the Body*
16. Jeanette Winterson from *Written on the Body*

That's it for this issue of *The Lesbian Edition*. Be sure to look for us next month when we'll present the rest of our favorite authors' Favorite Books of 2006 along with reviews of the latest in lesbian literature.

Until next month,

Suzanne Corson
editor@bookstowatchoutfor.com
for *Books To Watch Out For*



© 2007 Books To Watch Out For
Graphics © Judy Horacek

Books To Watch Out For
PO Box 882554
San Francisco, CA 94188
415.642.9993