

## The Eastern Trail

by Lee Lynch

I left Oregon to visit family in Boston and went on to read, in the last few nights of my trip, at three different stops.

On my way to the first reading I visited Rhea Hirschman of Golden Thread Book-sellers in New Haven, Connecticut. She hadn't expected me, but plunged into our visit as if starved for lesbian culture. While Valentine, the fluffy white cat from the attached used clothing store, showed off, Rhea escorted me through her current passions in lesbian literature. Carolyn Vance's *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* edited by Snitow, et al, the erotic poetry of Olga Broumas, Ruth Geller's lesbian novel *Triangles*, Paz by Camerin Grae and others.



She also went on about the talk Deb Edell and Joan Nestle, of the Lesbian History Archives,

did in the class she taught at Yale: lesbian sexuality, butch-femme roles, our history. Rhea said it was a powerful discussion which blew away the young, newly gay students who, after it had all sunk in, came back to her with gratitude and new visions of themselves.

My next stop was the Bloodroot Feminist-Vegetarian Restaurant and Bookstore in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I was accompanied by a transplanted Eugene resident. The Bloodroot Collective was warm and welcoming, feeding me from recipes out of *The Political Palate* and *The Second Seasonal Political Palate*, their delicious recipe books,\* before I read. The audience was a mix of brand new dykes, political dykes and a few old gays, but they all seemed pleased and excited by a reading from *The Swashbuckler*,\* my new novel, which is the story of an old gay stone butch in Greenwich Village in the 1960s. The collective, in thanks, pressed upon me a copy of Andrea Freud Loenstein's *This Place*, a highly readable, exciting new novel.

Then on to New York City where I briefly visited Womanbooks in uptown Manhattan. The salesperson was Lucy who once operated La Papaya, a woman's restaurant in Brooklyn, N.Y. She gave me a message to deliver at my next stop on the Trail, Pandora Bookpeddlers in Englewood, New Jersey. I delivered it to Vivian Shineman, a straight woman who was more interested and supportive of our culture than many dykes are. Her group wanted to talk about lesbian publishing and writing. There are a lot of dykes writing out there, building and building lesbian culture til no one will ever be able to hide us again.

Vivian graciously drove me back on the controversial and rutted Westside Highway and I treated myself to dinner in a West Coast style natural food restaurant where I planted

myself across from two apparently former lovers. They spent their meal catching up on activities of nieces and nephews and old college friends.

I spent the night at The Lesbian Herstory Archives where I ran into Felice Newman sleeping on the couch. She's a publisher of Cleis Press and was in town to sell books at the Women in Psychology Conference. Later, Madeline Davis and Liz Kennedy of the Buffalo Oral History Project arrived. We talked into the night with Deb Edell of the Archives about break-ups and non-monogamy. That seems to be a national topic.

The next morning was International Woman's Day and before I left we celebrated. Jan, a PhD candidate at Columbia who is writing her thesis on a 16th century French woman poet, sang a Cajun-style lesbian song. She's from New Orleans. Then Madeline sang two of her songs, one about the Stonewall riots and the roots of gay liberation, the other her "addict song" about being addicted to falling in love with women who are addicts. Leaving the Archives is always difficult as, unlike any other place on earth, it's for us and filled with lesbian sculpture, paintings, photographs, clothes, manuscripts, books and on and on.

But I did manage to leave, braving the NYC transportation system to stay for the night with my first lover, Sue Kenler and her 12 year old daughter Kris, on Long Island in New York. That evening while Kris took her cabbage patch doll Maryellen next door to the sitter's, Susan took me to Alternative Corners, a lesbian book and t-shirt shop in West Hempstead. The theme of the night was again our history. Three of us had come out in 1960 and another in 1942. Everyone else was post-1970. Susan grumbled that the

younger women didn't appreciate what we'd gone through, pointing out that one reason so few old gays appeared at lesbian functions was that many had killed themselves because they couldn't take "the life." Others, of course, went straight for the same reason, and still others are too painfully closeted to be seen in a gay bookstore. But we also discussed the exciting contributions of the newer "generation." These are the lesbians whose relative freedom produces the energy to do the work so many of them have begun: on lesbian alcoholism, for example, or lesbian geriatrics. Their Old Dyke Homes may well provide shelter for us all.

Shelly Glick, whom I had never met in Oregon, was there. When we repaired to the local lesbian bar, which serves non-alcoholic beverages and coffee, she showed me some photographs that appeared in *Blatant Image*, a Southern Oregon feminist photography magazine.\* She was part of the photography Ovulars held at Rootworks in Sunny Valley though she's a native New Yorker.

But Shelly is jumping back on the Amazon Trail to move to Florida. And I, the next morning, said goodbyes to our Eastern Branch and write this now, across the aisle of a DC-10 from two handsome dykes who won't meet my eye, on the great Amazon Trail in the sky. Going home.

\**Political Palate*, etc. available from Bloodroot, 85 Ferris St., Bridgeport, CT 06605, \$10.95 plus \$1.00 postage.

\**The Swashbuckler*, available from A Woman's Place Bookstore, 2349 SE Ankeny, or Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

\**Blatant Image*, available from 2000 King Mountain Trail, Sunny Valley, OR 97497.

## THE NEW BLOOD TEST FOR AIDS ANTIBODY IS NOT A TEST FOR AIDS

The physicians of the Oregon AIDS Task Force would advise you to think twice about requesting the AIDS antibody test from your doctor or the health department. The test is meant to screen blood donors not to diagnose or predict AIDS in an individual.

While we would all like to predict the risk of AIDS or exposure to AIDS by means of a quick blood test, this current test simply will not provide this information.

### We would like to warn you that:

- The test is not diagnostic for AIDS or AIDS related diseases.
- The test will not determine if you are healthy.
- The test will not determine if you have AIDS.
- The test will not determine if you are a carrier of AIDS.
- The test will not determine whether you are likely to give AIDS to someone else.
- If you have a positive test, you may experience considerable anxiety from not knowing what it means for your health status.
- If you have a negative test, it may falsely reassure you that you have not been exposed to AIDS.

### Take our advice. Don't take the blood test for AIDS.

A message from the physicians of the Oregon AIDS Task Force.

### SANDRA K. PINCHES CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

#### Counseling and Psychotherapy

Individuals, Couples, and Families

Adolescents, Adults

Gay, Lesbian Individuals and Couples

Relationship Problems

Depression

Stress

Partners of Alcoholics

1809 N.W. JOHNSON, SUITE 7  
PORTLAND, OR 97209  
(503) 227-7558

Family	Business	Traffic	Workers Comp.
Divorce Custody Support Modification Visitations Gay Couple Agreements & Breakups	Contracts Licensing Admin. Hearings Partnerships Corporations Small Businesses	Tickets Suspensions Accidents Drunk Driving	Hearings Appeals Preparation
			Other
			Wills Bankruptcy Property Medical Consents
			<b>Ben Merrill</b> <b>295-2456</b> 408 SW Second, Suite 519 Downtown Portland 97204