

## Winter reading list

*From a stack of forty-three books, Lee Lynch picks an eclectic assortment, "all of them contributing rich literary experience . . ."*

B Y L E E L Y N C H

**T**his year has been an extremely fertile one for lesbian and gay male literature. I'd like to think it's a trend and that every year into infinity will yield more and higher quality books. The only drawback is that this list cannot grow, due to space limitations, with the gay lit

## Books

crop. In front of me I have a stack of forty-three books which have come to my attention. So, I'll begin —

**Memory Board** by Jane Rule. Naiad, 1987. \$8.95. This is my favorite of Rule's books since *Desert of the Heart* and her most mature, solid work. About an older lesbian couple, one of whom has lost her memory, and about the twin brother of the other. Rule depicts the merging of worlds and the agonies and joys of that process. She is the queen of lesbian fiction.

### A Holiday Tradition



There is a place of enchantment  
Where the mountains meet the sea —  
Where pine trees bend on windy days  
And sandy shores are free.

There is a place of magic  
Where peace and calm abound —  
Where sunsets bloom and fade away  
Then star-filled skies are found.

There is a place of romance  
Where all your senses soar —  
Where morning walks can only top  
The evening walks before.

There is a place of fantasy  
Where life is like a dream —  
Where whales and sea lions come to play  
And unicorns are seen.

There is a place of magic  
Where warmth and cheer reside —  
Where ambience and charm are made  
Then tucked all neat inside.

There is a place of enchantment  
Where mountains meet the sea —  
It is a home away from home  
— The See Vue was for me.

Gwendolyn J. Rzutkiewicz  
July 1987

## The See Vue

Experience the unusual

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**In the Life** edited by Joseph Beam. Alyson Publications, Inc., 1986. \$7.95. I loved this book starting with the cover. It talks about all our histories: being gay in a straight world, with the added perspective of being black in the gay world. Real-life narratives of triumphant survival.

**Ice Blues** by Richard Stevenson. Penguin Books, 1986. \$3.95. A funny, laugh-aloud mystery and a very good mystery. Set in the wilds of Albany, N.Y., Don Strachey, P.I., moves through the gay underground of age and love. His safe sex consciousness, his earnestness about his love relationship, are strong, positive portrayals. I enjoyed every minute.

### Dykes To Watch Out For



**Dykes to Watch Out For** by Alison Bechdel. Firebrand, 1986. \$6.95. A wonderfully funny and insightful talent. Unlike most cartoon collections it bears multiple reading. Try the "Are You a Real Jock" quiz with friends. I confess, I scored at Wimp level.

**Gay Life** by Eric E. Rofes. Dolphin/Double-day, 1986. \$12.95. An anthology about gay male issues like sexism and interests like Judy Garland, this volume provides information about and analysis of the gay lifestyle.

**Rapture** by Wanda Honn. A Wanda Honn Publication, 1987. \$6.50. A self-published erotic novel which held my interest through a series of sexual trysts and women, political changes and personal growth. I like these out of the way finds, the more of us who write, the stronger we are. Order info: PO Box 559 Adelphi Station, Brooklyn, NY 11238.

**The Pearl Bastard** by Lillian Halegua. Alyson, 1985. \$3.95. Republication of an absolutely beautiful novel of lesbian adolescence.

**Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons** by Marilyn Hacker. Arbor House, 1986. \$7.95. An amazingly erotic, narrative, passionate book of verse which can be read like fiction (or autobiography) or for the sheer beauty of the poetry.

**Significant Others** by Armistead Maupin. Harper & Row, 1987. \$9.95. Irresistible. His "lesbian" novel in which he continues to create comic archetypes of us all.

**Cass and the Stone Butch** by Antonia Azolzkov. Banned Books, 1987. \$8.95. A book after my own heart, about a bunch of dykes who are living life in all its gay glory and struggle. Memorable portrait of a butch named Lester.

**Dreams of the Woman Who Loved Sex** by Tee Corinne. Banned Books, 1987. \$7.95. Here it is at last, a book of beautifully written lesbian erotica for those of us who turn on to romance and explicit gentle lovemaking. A novella, thirty-one brief hot poems, and a long sensuous tale. Read it for the introduction alone, an excellent capsule history of lesbian erotica.

**Gay Spirit: Myth and Meaning** by Mark Thompson. St. Martin's Press, 1987. \$18.85 (hardbound). An anthology of writings about gay spirituality by writers including Harry Hay, William S. Burroughs and Judy Grahn. Important, absorbing work. Illus.

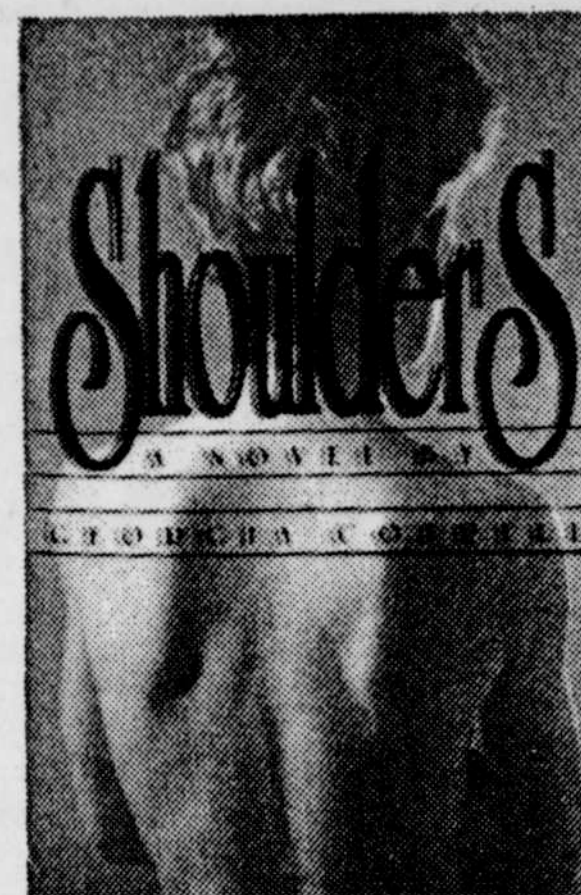
**A History of Shadows** by Robert C. Reinhart. Alyson, 1986. \$6.95. A novel about four gay men in their 60s and 70s at the time of the book who reminisce about their lives.

**A Cry in the Desert** by Jed A. Bryan. Banned Books, 1987. \$9.95. Good novel about lovers who are pulled into a drama around the AIDS crisis and the vulnerability of us all to the madness of a world that despises us.

**Say Jesus and Come to Me. The Black and White of It. Loving Her.** By Ann Allen Shockley. Naiad, 1987. \$8.95/7.95/7.95. Stories and two novels about black lesbians. Reissued, thank goodness.



**Living with AIDS, Reaching Out** by Tom O'Connor with Ahmed Gonzalez-Nunez. Corwin Publishers, 1987. \$18.95. A marvel of a book packed full of information by a marvel of a man who has lived his research since 1980. The book is highly appropriate even for low-risk folks as it discusses nutrition, various therapies, detoxification, etc.



**Shoulders** by Georgia Cotrell. Firebrand, 1987. \$8.95. A popular young-lesbian novel.

**Murder at the Nightwood Bar and Dreams and Swords** by Katherine Forrest. Naiad, 1987. \$8.95. Ever-popular Forrest produces two more likely-to-be-ever popular books. The first is another Kate Delafield mystery, the second short stories.

**Death Strip** by Benita Kirkland. Banned Books, 1986. \$8.95. Novel about the way it is for many women whose class excludes them from the relative ease of being out in the context of the women's movement.

In addition, I really enjoyed the new Nathan Aldyne mystery, *Canary*, set in Boston (Bantam, \$2.95); John Preston's fifth Alex Kane adventure *Secret Dangers* (Alyson, \$4.95); *Act Well Your Part*, a young-adult novel by Don Sakers (Alyson, \$5.95); Ben Eakin's *Fairy Tales Your Mother Never Told You*, charming "fairy" tales (Banned Books, \$5.95); and *Maurice* by E.M. Forster (Penguin), a too-long closeted classic.

Some of these books are fun, some very serious. All are proof of our maturing and rich gay culture. I can't help thinking that Minnie Bruce Pratt must have been misquoted in *The Advocate* (11/10/87) when she said, "I'm teaching a course in lesbian novels, and they all have this coming out ritual. But beyond that, what is there? If there is a gay culture, these novels are not it . . . yet."

For me, the forty-three books in my stack, and all the others which have eluded me this year, are it. A tiny fraction are about coming out. All of them contributed to a rich literary experience and can enrich our lives. May you have a luxurious winter's reading by your fireplaces or, in Richard Stevenson's words, "by the picture of the fire."

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