

Original gay voices

Fifteen recently published books for gay men

by Robert Friedman

This has been another boom year in gay publishing, and the following list of books is by no means definitive. Rather, it reflects my preference for fiction and my taste for the exotic as well. The books differ greatly, but if you pick up any of the following, I guarantee you'll be engaged by an original gay voice, and a true vision.

Brother To Brother, edited by Essex Hamphill, Alyson. A sequel to 1986's *In the Life*, edited by the late Joseph Beam, a collection of writings by African-American gay men, including an essay by Marlon Riggs, "Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen."

The Candles of Your Eyes, by James Purdy, City Lights. Purdy is one of the best writers we have, and his unique sensitivity is at play in this new collection of short stories.

Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration, by David Wojnarowicz, Vintage. Essays by the artist whose plaguetime canvasses were too honest and raw for the National Endowment for the Arts, testimony to the "Fear of Diversity in America."

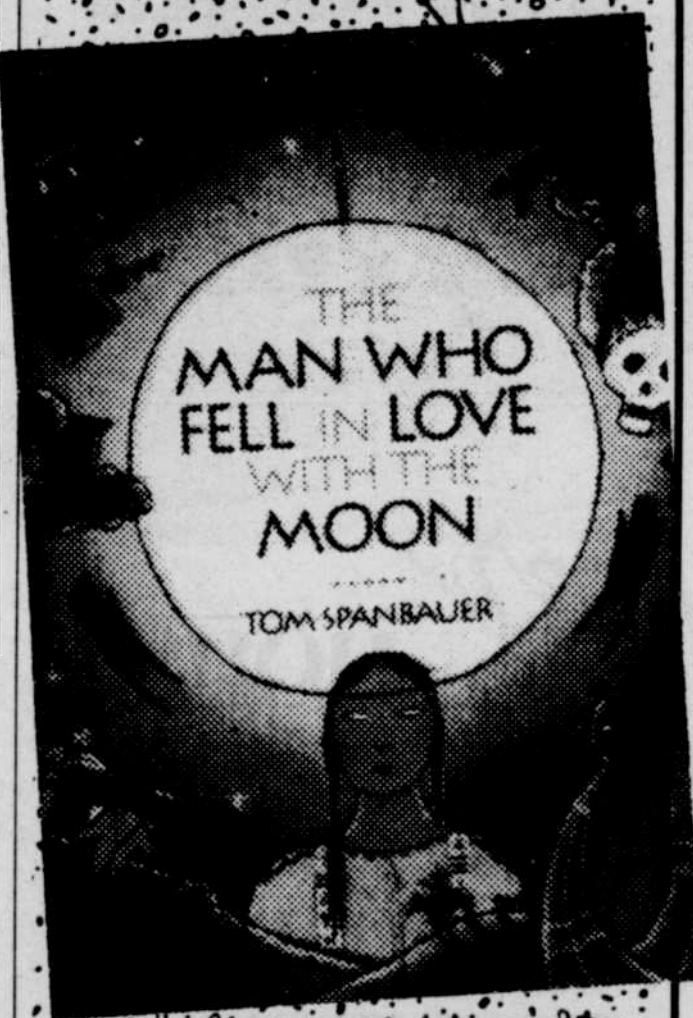
The Faber Book of Short Gay Fiction, edited by Edmund White, Faber & Faber. A superb collection, including Paul Bowles' classic "Pages From Cold Point" and an excerpt from *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 novel.

BOOKS

Indivisible, edited by Terry Wolverton and Robert Drake, Plume; and **Certain Voices** edited by Darryl Pilcher, Alyson. Two new entries in the burgeoning field of anthologies of short gay fiction; the former devoted to West Coast gay and lesbian writers, such as Michael Lassell and Eric Gutierrez, the latter including stories by Ley Raphael, Larry Duplechan and yours truly.

The Language We Use Up Here, by Philip Gambone, Dutton. An impressive first collection of stories which reads like 16 calling cards from his world, gay circles as they intersect straight circles in contemporary bourgeois Boston.

Life Drawing, by Michael Grumley, Grove Weidenfeld. We lost a major talent when the author succumbed to AIDS in 1988; his novel, a coming-of-age story in elegantly styled prose, comes with a controversial introduction by Edmund White and an afterword by George Stambolian.



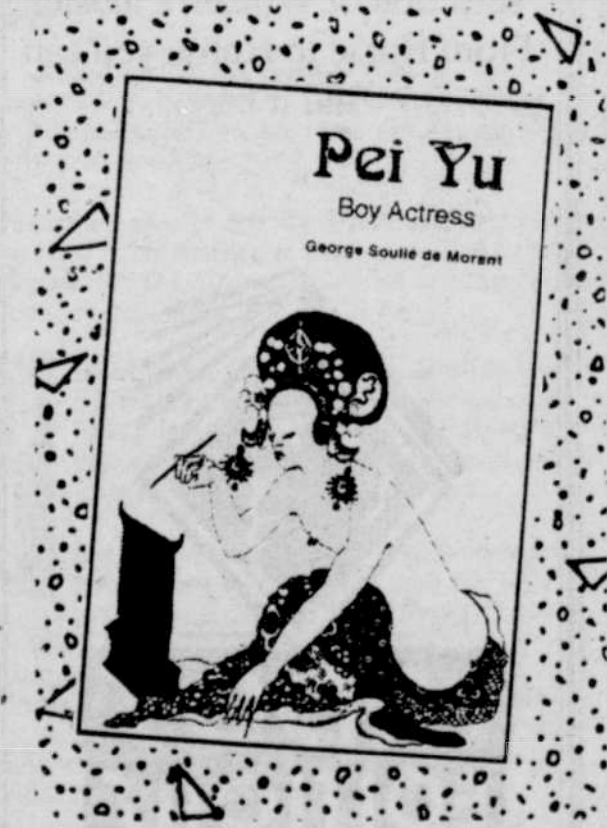
The Man Who Fell in Love With the Moon, by Tom Spanbauer, Atlantic Monthly Press. A rousing story of life in the Wild West with a twist: its hero is a half-blood bisexual named, alternatively, Duivichi-un-Dua or Shed, who falls between categories and worlds.

The Whistling Song, by Stephen Beacy, Norton. This unusual first novel, of a footloose orphan on the road, is distinguished by its author's lyrical flights of fancy and punch-drunk word-play.

William S. Burroughs At the Front, edited by Jennie Skeri and Robin Lyndenberg, Southern Illinois University Press. Burroughs once compared writing to bullfighting, saying that unless writing had the same danger and urgency, it didn't rate. This collection of 30 years of critical response to his work shows how the world has received this gay, mad matador.

Landscape: Memory, by Matthew Stadler, Scribners. An unabashedly romantic tale of teenagers in 1914 San Francisco.

A Place I've Never Been, by David Leavitt, Viking. New stories of twentysomething gays and their pals from college, spiced up with the European idle rich.



Pei Yu, Boy Actress, by George Soulie de Morant, Alamo Square Press. A novel based on the life of the *hsiang-k'ung*, a boy who acts the part of women on the stage, during the last dynasty of China. Originally published in 1925 in France, reissued in a new edition with English translation and lovely Art Nouveau illustrations by Nemi Frost.

Frisk, by Dennis Cooper, Grove Weidenfeld. Cooper goes where most gay writers fear to tread, and his latest novel is an unblinking exploration of the shared borders of sex and horror.

Hometowns, edited by John Preston, Dutton. Short stories by gay men writing about where they came from and where they now belong, proving once again that we are everywhere.

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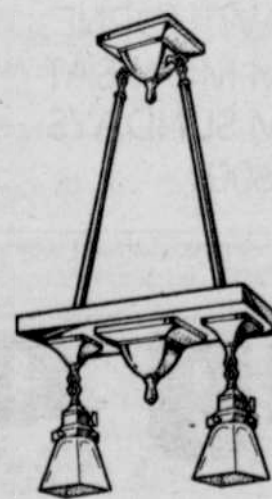
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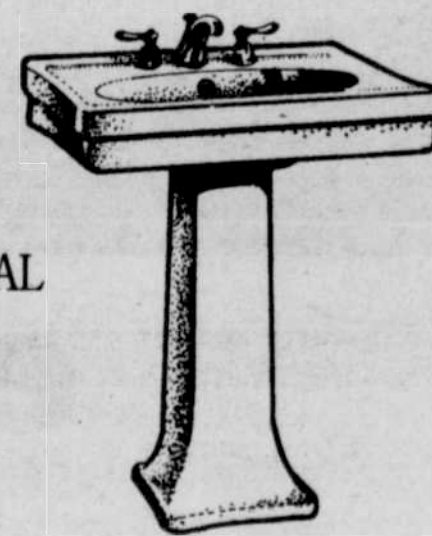
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