

Bi Any Other Name

A book of bisexual visibility and bridge-building



PHOTO BY DAVID HAMILTON

by Anndee Hochman

Bi Any Other Name, Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu, editors. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991, 379 pages. \$11.95

Editors Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu gathered an impressive range of 75 contributors for their anthology of personal stories and essays about bisexuality. These pieces, divided into sections dealing with psychology, spirituality, community and politics, emerge from a variety of viewpoints, age groups, ethnic backgrounds, occupations and economic strata.

Many contributors describe the invisibility they feel as bisexuals, scorned by a homophobic straight community and rejected as fence-sitters or traitors by gay men and lesbians. A handful of the pieces are poems, and these speak eloquently, showing rather than telling about the particular pleasures and frustrations of bisexuality.

BOOKS

The book does not stop with bisexuals' plea to be seen. The contributors make a case for not merely adding bisexuality to a menu of sexual options, but questioning the distinctions themselves, the rigid either/or between men and women, gay and straight, body and mind, culture and nature.

The writers included in this anthology realize that such an effort is radical—both to straight people who fear homosexuality and to gay men and lesbians who hold tight to nametags of sexual and political identity.

"Bisexuality threatens this unconscious acceptance of good and evil, us and them dualism by throwing some grey in with the black and white, by representing a continuum," writes one contributor. "We are not fence-sitters. Let us strive to be bridge-builders."

Despite some unevenness in the writing and a bit of redundancy (both the "psychology" and "community" sections contain numerous coming-out stories), *Bi Any Other Name* is an important book, certain to provoke serious thought from heterosexuals, gay men and lesbians and a ripple of recognition from those who take the name "bisexual."



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