

SUMMER READERS, SOME ARE NOT

by Lee Lynch and Christopher Cuttone

Put down that lawn mower, put away that work you brought home to finish, and hearken back to the true purpose of summer: sprawling on a sandy or grassy expanse with a cooling libation and a dreamy universe tucked between cardboard covers. Summer reading. One of the prime joys of the season.

And if anyone tries to tell you you're a beach or deck potato, just tell them what Fenton Johnson says in *Geography of the Heart*: "Reading is the unsurpassed interactive act, and serious readers among the least acknowledged and appreciated of revolutionaries." So there.

LESBIAN FICTION

Amazon All Stars: Thirteen Lesbian Plays edited by Rosemary Curb. Applause, 1996; \$18.95. This is the first major collection of lesbian plays including the title play, the first great lesbian musical, by Carolyn Gage and Susan Carney. Also includes Willa J. Taylor, Canyon Sam, Jane Chambers.

Not So Much the Fall by Kerry Hart. Third Side, 1996; \$12.95. A powerful novel of striking language about the trip we're all on in this latter part of the 20th century and about letting go of what we hold on to that makes us sick.

Mono Lake Stories by Martha Clark Cummings. Rowbarger Press, 1995; \$8.95. Enjoyable, well-written short stories.

My Lover Is a Woman: Contemporary Lesbian Love Poems edited by Lesléa Newman. Ballantine, 1996; \$18.50. Simply the best. Beautiful to look at, to read, to give, to get.

Ain't Gonna Be the Same Fool Twice by April Sinclair. Hyperion, 1996; \$19.95. Those who read *Coffee Will Make You Black* will be eager to follow the next phase of young, black Stevie's life as she hits college and San Francisco. Some of the most real lesbian storytelling available.

Windswept by Magdalena Zschokke. New Victoria, 1996; \$10.95. A novel for women sailing buffs—with a mix of self-exploration, erotica and coming out.

Nightshade by Karen Williams. Rising Tide, 1996; \$11.99. A funny book of fairies and intrigue. Witch, warlock and heroine are all very likable.

Forbidden Fires by Margaret C. Anderson. Naiad, 1996; \$21.95. Edited by Mathilda

Hills. Delicious early-20th-century writing in a passionate story of love and spiritual and intellectual struggle. The biographical material and photographs enhance the fine reading.

Once More with Feeling by Peggy J. Herring. Naiad, 1995; \$10.95. A funny, light romance with some simply perfect moments about healing from a breakup and trying again. And again.

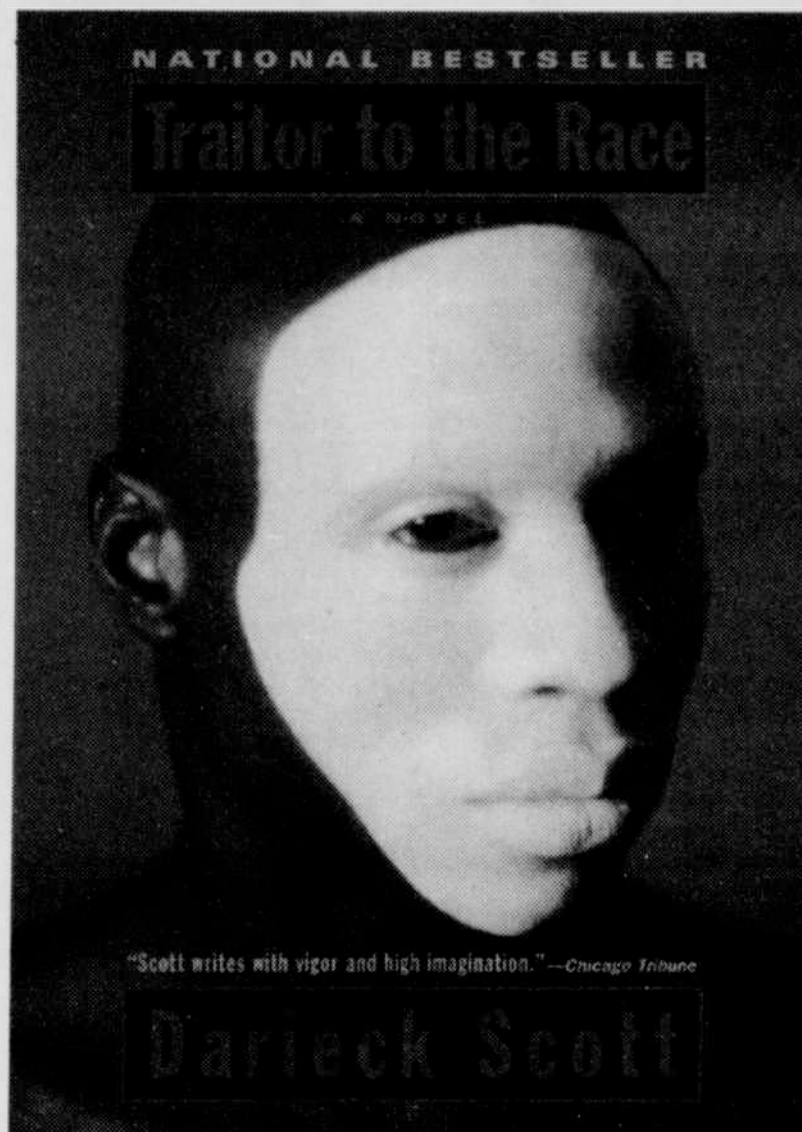
Dagger: On Butch Women edited by Lily Burana, Roxie, Linnea Due. Cleis, 1994; \$14.95. The cover offends me so much that I didn't want to read the book. Nor did I want to be represented by some of the stories included here. But when I needed to get an insight into a new generation of lesbians, like it or not, I turned to *Dagger*.

Breathless by Kitty Tsui. Firebrand, 1996; \$9.95. A range of erotic stories for many tastes.

1st Impressions by Kate Calloway. Naiad, 1996; \$10.95. A well-written mystery.

Along the Journey River by Carole laFavor. Firebrand, 1996; \$10.95. This mystery weaves in a great deal of Native American culture and history. The sleuth, a teacher who is mother to a teenager and lover to a non-Indian, works within her tribe to find stolen artifacts.

The Color of Winter by Lisa Shapiro. Naiad, 1995; \$10.95. Academic setting, appealing characters. A thoughtful romance.



GAY MEN'S FICTION

Dark Rides by Derek McCormack. Gutter Press, 1996; \$9.95. The title page calls this book "a novel in stories," which really just means that it's too short to be a novel and too long to be a

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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

FICTION

Queer View Mirror edited by James C. Johnstone and Karen X. Tulchinsky. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995; \$17.95. In a collection of over 100 short stories there has to be something for everyone—at least everyone who's lesbian, gay, in between, on the edge, or just hip enough to know all the different strokes. As the title indicates, this anthology has as its theme the power and politics of looking, which is very fertile ground (four out of five critics of lesbian performance art agree), but alas, not all of the writers included in this book have green thumbs (still, with so many from which to choose, the odds are in your favor). (CC)

Switch Hitters edited by Carol Queen and Lawrence Schimel. Cleis Press, 1996; \$12.95. No, despite the title, this is not a book by or about bisexuals. The authors included in this anthology of erotic short stories are only pretending to swing both ways, and only by pretending to be someone else. The premise—lesbians write gay male erotica and gay men write lesbian erotica—is so intriguing you might forget to be excited by all the explicit sex. Or perhaps it is just an intellectual exercise. (CC)

NONFICTION

Much More Than Sexuality: Listening to 70 Gay People Talk About Their Lives com-

plied by Liz and John Sherbloom. Audenreed, 1996; \$13. Definitely not light reading, this book may even cause temporary depressions. All straight people should be forced to read this book, but gay men and lesbians can benefit from it, too. The imitate portraits collected from interviews conducted by the authors create a sense of community for all gay people, but also recognize the wide range of differences within that community. Ten percent of profits are donated for the benefit of social justice. (CC)

Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-dressing and Sex-changing edited by Richard Ekins and Dave King. Routledge, 1996; \$17.95. It's not just for drag queens anymore! A host of international contributors examine the full range of possible transgressions of the binary divide between genders—from men in skirts to chicks with dicks—and discuss the historical, sociological and political significance of these transgressions. The serious tone of this book makes it ideal reading material for the nude beach. (CC)

Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat by Morris Dees with James Corcoran. Harper Collins, 1996; \$24. Not to ruin your vacation, but knowledge is power. (LL)

Setting Them Straight by Betty Berzon, PhD. Plume, 1996; \$10.95. The new offering from psychotherapist Berzon, author of *Permanent Partners* and *Positively Gay*, presents a battle plan for confronting discrimination—something all enlightened Oregonians should

continue to do even though the Oregon Citizens Alliance has temporarily turned its attention elsewhere. Not only does Berzon provide answers to the rhetoric of bigotry, she also focuses on understanding why people hate and the development of ways to channel the anger which is often the first reaction to disrespectful words. (CC)

Try This at Home: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Winning Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Policy by Matthew A. Coles. The New Press, 1996; \$14.95. Written by the director of the lesbian and gay rights and AIDS projects at the American Civil Liberties Union, this is the book that wannabe activists have been waiting for: It contains strategies to help individuals and grassroots groups campaign for nondiscrimination laws and policies in local and state government as well as at private institutions, and covers everything from building support and gathering endorsements to writing and negotiating effective policy. (CC)

The World Out There by Michael Thomas Ford. The New Press, 1996; \$22.50. A sort of handbook for the newly queer, this highly practical book provides valuable information for queer youth and closet refugees everywhere; it covers everything from dating and the bar scene to careers and education, and includes a list of resources and national organizations. It also makes a great gift for that cousin you always thought was gay. (CC)

Summer Reading

