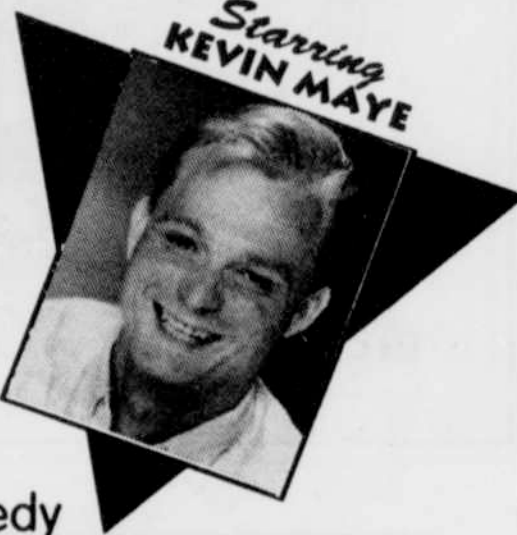


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I LOVE LAMMY

*The Lambda Literary Awards recognize a year's worth
of queer wordsmiths at their craft*

by Will O'Bryan

Billy Crystal wasn't there. Neither was Susan Lucci. Tennessee Williams' ghost? Probably. A published volume of Williams' letters to Donald Windham was definitely there, and it won the Editor's Choice Award. In other words, a Lammy.

The queer literati celebrated themselves in June in Chicago at the 1996 Lambda Literary Awards—the ninth annual awards ceremony. (The

categories are gender neutral. Gay literary superstar Clive Barker's *Sacrament* (Harper Collins) won the Science Fiction/Fantasy Lammy. The Humor Lammy went to Judy Carter and her *Homo Handbook* (Fireside).

Two awards that stood out, reminiscent of the lifetime-achievement theme, are the Publisher's Service Award and the Lambda Literary Foundation Pioneer Award. Pioneer Helaine Harris, owner of the Women In Print distribution company and member of the Furies (a lesbian, feminist collective), received the latter for her work in nurturing a market for gay, lesbian and feminist books. The service award went to Norman Laurila, co-owner of the A Different Light bookstore chain, which has stores in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. The stores have acted as de facto community centers in the sexual minority community and have worked to promote sexual minority writers, especially in California.

**OTHER 1996 LAMBDA
LITERARY AWARDS**

Lesbian Poetry (tie): *All-American Girl* by Robin Becker (University of Pittsburgh Press) and *Furious Cooking* by Maureen Seaton (University of Iowa Press)

Books

ceremony took place in 1997, but all the nominees were copyrighted in 1996).

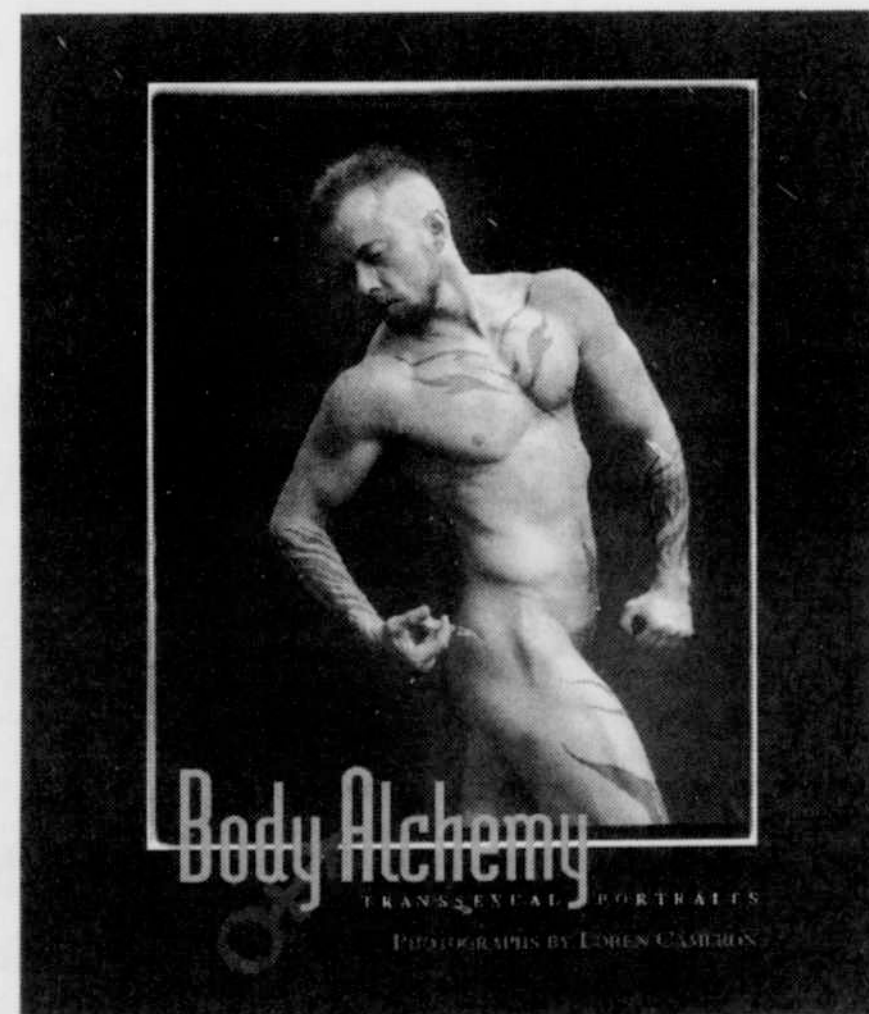
While the ceremony itself is a tradition in the sexual minority community, there was still room for something new.

The Lammys recognized a new category this year: Transgender. The winner in this new category was *Body Alchemy* by Loren Cameron (Cleis). His book incorporates photos and first-person essays to record his own transformation, as well as that of other female-to-male transsexuals. *Body Alchemy* also won the Small Press Lammy.

The awards process began when the Lambda

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Literary Foundation, which publishes the monthly *Lambda Book Report*, sent more than 50,000 nominating forms to readers, publishers and the general public. The nominees were filtered by an ad hoc committee to five finalists in each of the Lammy's 23 categories. A number of judges were assigned to each category, altogether more than 100 bibliophiles. The judges—writers, reviewers, bookstore owners, etc., representing a cross section of U.S. regions (including one Canadian)—then chose the award recipients.

The Lammy equivalent of "Best Picture" would be the categories Lesbian Fiction, Gay Men's Fiction, Lesbian Studies and Gay Men's Studies. The winners were, respectively: *Memory Mambo* by Cuban American Achy Obejas (Cleis); *Funny Boy* by Shyam Selvadurai (William Morrow), whose roots and story come from war-torn Sri Lanka; *Love Between Women* by Bernadette J. Brooten (University of Chicago Press); and *Boys Like Us*, a compilation edited by Patrick Merla (Avon).

Despite the gay/lesbian dichotomy, most cat-

Gay Men's Poetry: *What the Body Told* by Rafael Campo (Duke University Press)

Lesbian Mystery: *Robber's Wine* by Ellen Hart (Seal)

Gay Men's Mystery: *Death of Friends* by Michael Nava (Putnam)

Fiction Anthology: *Women on Women 3* edited by Joan Nestle and Naomi Holoch (Plume)

Nonfiction Anthology: *Taking Liberties* edited by Michael Bronski (Richard Kasak Books)

Lesbian Biography/Autobiography: *Life in a Day* by Doris Grumbach (Beacon)

Gay Men's Biography/Autobiography: *Geography of the Heart* by Fenton Johnson (Scribner)

Photography/Visual Arts: *Nothing But the Girl* by Susie Bright and Jill Posener (Cassell)

Spirituality: *The Good Book* by Peter Gomes (William Morrow)

Drama: *Split Britches* edited by Sue-Ellen Case (Routledge)

Children's/Young Adult Literature: *Good Moon Rising* by Nancy Garden (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)