

**BOOKS**

Continued from Page 53

waiting for 200-plus pages of sexual and gender explosion. Or at least I thought so.

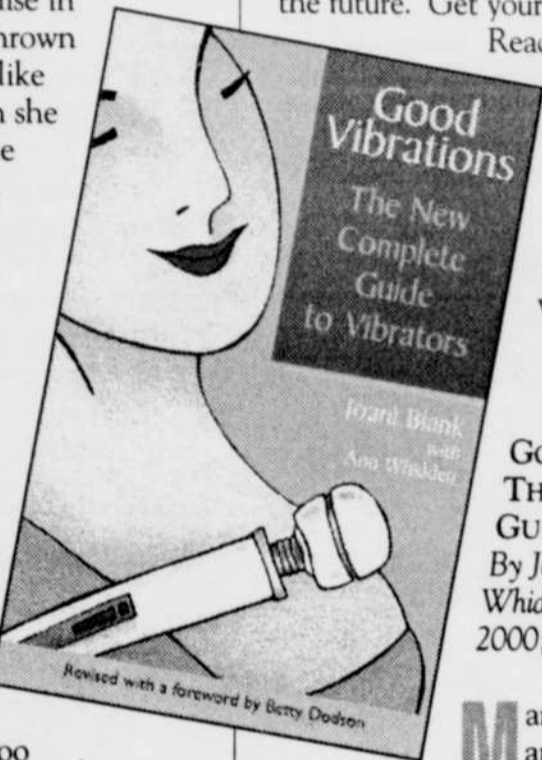
Perhaps I am too hopeful and not realistic enough to like a book that thrives on buildup and struggle, only to result in quiet resolution. Perhaps metaphors of fast cars, slamming doors, and rock 'n' roll (all of which Summer uses frequently) are only present to entice a reader enough to plow through the novel.

Paige Bergman, the promising heroine introduced in the first chapter, turns into the narrator at the beginning of Chapter 2, and Summer allows Paige's attributes to engulf the novel in a shy, apprehensive narrative.

There are moments of promise in this book that are effortlessly thrown away. Funny how much this is like Paige's own adolescence, which she spends unassertively chasing the middle-aged, furiously dynamic housewife Fiona Gallagher.

Indeed, I felt tricked as I closed the book at the end. Where was all the drama I was craving? Why did Summer set up such a thought-provoking first chapter and then slowly chip away at any sort of reader interest?

I realize that I should perhaps be more reasonable in my expectations about the possibilities for a closeted 1970s dyke, but Summer's treatment of Paige's case is all too bland. Also, I wonder if I'm the only one who finds the last chapter a bit cryptic and unnecessary? I doubt it.



Read these poems to your lover. Memorize your favorite parts. Quote them during your coffee break. These are, after all, our most intricate, shining, beautiful queer voices.

—Glenn Williams

**GOOD VIBRATIONS: THE NEW COMPLETE GUIDE TO VIBRATORS**  
By Joani Blank with Ann Whidden. Down There Press, 2000; \$8.50 softcover.

Many *Just Out* readers are probably familiar with the San Francisco Bay area company Good Vibrations.

Since its inception in 1977, Good Vibrations has unabashedly provided sex toys to the masses. Today, everything from strap-ons to "come cups" (vibrators intended for penile use), from instructive videos on G-spot stimulation to tasty tubes of lube can be purchased from the retailer.

The company boasts two stores, plus an award-winning catalog and Internet site. Founder Joani Black is committed to informative and self-affirming sex education.

Dedicated to the art of "buzzing off," *The New Complete Guide to Vibrators* is written with no holes barred. It even contains an amusing history of the devices, quoting a 1920s ad that promises "all the pleasures of youth will throb within you."

If you're in the market for a vibrator, especially if you're a novice, this book will help you make a match—it thoughtfully includes a chapter for first-timers. If you're a seasoned vibrator owner, however, you still might glean new facts and suggestions. This book should appeal to everyone—straight or queer, male or female, none or all of the above. This book is inclusive and genuinely celebrates sex.

It's a quick 72-page read, and each vibrator discussed has an accompanying illustration, which helps explain the assorted functions of the multifaceted range of vibrators available in this age of technical wizardry. The book does plug Good Vibrations to a certain extent, but why not? The company pioneered—and continues to promote—a worldview of sexual freedom.

—MW

■ CATHERINE SAMEH is the manager of *In Other Words Women's Books and Resources* in Portland. CHRISTOPHER MCQUAIN is a Portland writer and bookworm.

GLENN WILLIAMS makes poetry, prose, plays, periodica and porn in Portland.

MUFFIE WHITE is a studio art major at Reed College who is living her own coming-of-age dyke tale.

To pick over, nothing but the same damn sun,  
Indifferent but oddly angry, the face  
My father wore at dinnertime.

No amount of excerpts, however, can do this anthology justice. The poems, like the queer experience itself, are widely varied, diverse and unapologetic. These poems come shaped, rhymed, in prose and slivers, formal and informal, beat and classical, utterly literate and totally slammed. These poems speak of love and death and resentment and injustice and triumph and loss.

A finer collection of queer poetry has not been gathered in the last 20 years, and we can only hope it's a good sign for queer poetry in the future. Get your hands on this book.

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**THE WORLD IN US: LESBIAN AND GAY POETRY OF THE NEXT WAVE**  
Edited by Michael Lassell and Elena Georgiou. St. Martin's Press, 2000; \$29.95 hardcover.

If you expect poetry to be calm, polite and well-mannered—watch out! *The World In Us* just might make you come. Staggeringly personal poems commingle with gut-wrenching poems of loss and missed opportunity. Angry and terse works seethe across the page from squirmingly erotic works.

This is an essential read: contemporary, universal and ambitious. Some of the finest poets of our generation—finest poets, not just finest queer poets—are collected here. Women and men are equally represented, 23 poets each, people with almost every kind of poetic style, personal perspective and heritage. They range from well-established writers such as New York School poet Eileen Myles and Lambda Award-winning writer Michael Lassell to young, up-and-coming queer voices such as Pushcart Prize nominee Mark Bibbins and novelist-poet Robyn Selman.

Aren't familiar with these names? It doesn't matter. These are poems that speak of the universal queer experience. You will find yourself embedded in these pages. Check out the shivering sexual prose-poem "I Suck" by lesbian feminist poet Chrystos:

*My tongue is slow looking for the path  
down into the lights of need I am her pleasure,  
focused I'm erased into the fruit of her flowering,  
colors spinning I follow her through fear*

Or take a look at doctor-turned-writer Rafael Campo's belly-punching poem about cultural loss, "Belonging":

*...No beach of skulls*