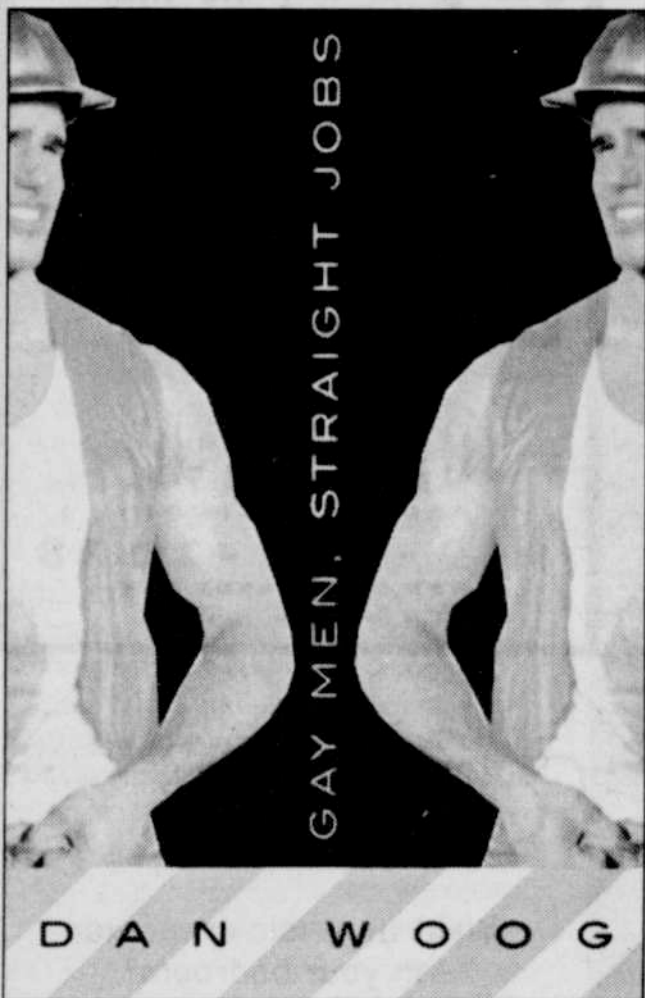


Holiday Gift Guide



GAY MEN, STRAIGHT JOBS
by Dan Woog.
Alyson, 2001; \$14.95 softcover.

Although the cover makes this look like a stroke book, *Gay Men, Straight Jobs* is actually a fascinating collection of true-life biographical studies. Author Dan Woog has interviewed dozens of men who work at jobs not typically thought of as having homo-friendly environments: firefighters, con-

struction workers, oil rig mechanics, judges, criminal defense attorneys and even Christian bookstore clerks.

Each job is represented by a short chapter detailing the histories and experiences of one or two men who work in that field. Some of the men are still deeply closeted, using pseudonyms and hiding their boyfriend or forgoing any relationship, while others have used the coming-out process as a way to humanize themselves and their community in the eyes of co-workers.

Woog does a fine job at giving each section a personal voice representative of the worker he's profiling, and the 28 different jobs covered are certainly diverse. During the read, you'll find out interesting facts about the fields—and a bit of gay trivia. (The gay man who invented mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is profiled in one segment.)

The bite-sized chapters make perfect short reading for bathrooms or bedsides, but you'll likely find yourself saying, "Just one more chapter."

—AM

BEFORE NIGHT FALLS New Line

Adapted from the memoirs of Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls* shows his life from the squalor of his childhood

to his time in the Cuban rebels, winding to his later years as a poet and writer in Havana. Along the way, he discovers he serves two lovers: men and his typewriter.



Javier Bardem and one of his loves

Imprisoned by the government for his homosexuality, Arenas fights for his dignity even as he finds a way to smuggle his revolutionary writing out of jail and to a foreign publisher. Spanish actor Javier Bardem (a Golden Globe and Oscar nominee) portrays him so realistically, we almost feel as if we're watching a documentary.

Director Julian Schnabel (*Basquiat*) delivers a film full of stunning vistas amid crumbling filth, steeped with casual nudity, casual smoking and not-so-casual violence. In theaters, the film was raw, harrowing and real and tore at your emotions without once

stooping to sentimentality.

On video or DVD, however, it seems a little quieter and more tightly focused on Bardem—the smaller screen does him justice, even if the scenery suffers a bit. The DVD also features an informative commentary track by the director, the star and others plus behind-the-scenes featurettes and an interview with the late Arenas. Highly recommended!

—AM

ALBERTA ARTS

A great way to shop for gifts and support gay-owned businesses is to stroll along Northeast Alberta Street between 14th Place and 30th Avenue, where you'll find 21 galleries full of art, many of them featuring special holiday group shows. Among those is the Alberta Arts Pavilion/Our Dream Gallery at 2315 N.E. Alberta St.

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