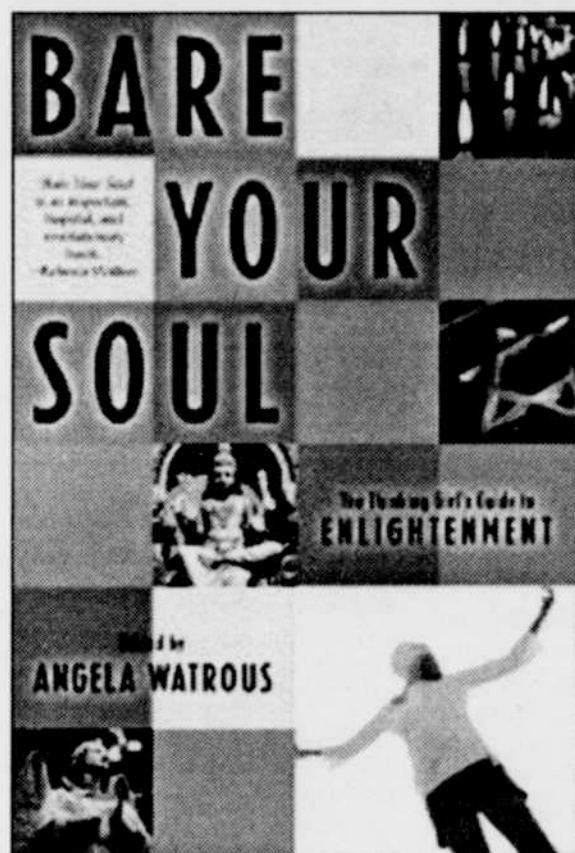


REVIEWS



BARE YOUR SOUL: THE THINKING GIRL'S GUIDE TO ENLIGHTENMENT
 edited by Angela Watrous; Seal Press, 2002;
 \$16.95 softcover

This "Thinking Girl's Guide to Enlightenment" is an exposé of spirituality, offering 25 essayed snapshots from women of all backgrounds and traditions. The pieces highlight the full gamut of beliefs—from recovering Catholics to a post-9/11 switch to Islam to butch agnostics—celebrating women's spiritual journeys.

Angela Watrous used an even hand when she chose the essays, and most of the writing is smooth, accessible and unpretentious. In "Coming Clean," by the editor herself, she says she felt like her spirituality surfaced like her sexuality. "It felt like there'd never been any decision to make in the first place...the first

time I realized I was a lesbian, it happened the same way: an immersion in community, a sudden awareness and, finally, an undeniable pull to make a choice that had already been long decided somewhere deep inside of me."

Bare Your Soul is a balanced, measured and enlightening picture of spirituality amid this third wave of feminism, although, like most other anthologies, individual pieces are hit-and-miss. Yet, I enjoyed the hits and pocketed these jewels of enlightenment—a shared view expressed in a compelling way; an experience that, although unlike my own, opened a door for me; writing and beliefs that were particularly smart.

Specifically, Maliha Masood's "The Practice of Faith" is a standout discussion of conflict between her rigid Islam heritage and the "rugged individualism" surrounding her in the United States. Stephanie Groll also hits home as she explains in "Million Step Program" how, because she had no spiritual foundation, she worked hard to shrink her body from the view of the world: "Not by starving myself, but by shutting my mouth."

Tanessa Dillard also makes an interesting

observation in "Church of Godly Men" about the increase of not only the frequency but also the strength of her church's overtly prejudiced comments. She said her head felt heavy and twisted as she listened to the sermons, baffled that they blasted gays as vehement sinners but turned a cheek to the child molesters and scandalous adulterers sitting in the same pews. Equally, she found it alarming that the church supported the patriarchal attitude that women should serve and not speak. She points to these veins within the Christian church as the reason some of the most outspoken critics of organized religion are ex-members.

Bare Your Soul is in many ways a handbook of spirituality, yet, unlike most handbooks, all the pieces are written with passion after years of thoughtful scrutiny of not only each writer's internal fabric but with an awareness of a world not in a vacuum.

—Gina Daggett

BEYOND THE CLOSET: THE TRANSFORMATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN LIFE
 by Steven Seidman; Routledge, 2002; \$27.50 hardcover

The way Steven Seidman compares Ellen DeGeneres' historical coming out on the cover of *Time* magazine to the mere byline Rosie O'Donnell's coming out was given in the entertainment section of newspapers, is an accurate analogy of the transformation of gay and lesbian life in the United States.

In his coming-of-age book *Beyond the Closet*, the State University of New York sociology professor takes a hard look at the evolution of the closet. What did it mean 20 years ago? What does it mean now? Not only does he address these questions in a well-considered and astute way, he also offers snapshots of people's experience behind and outside the closet door.

Seidman profiles queers and paints a diverse

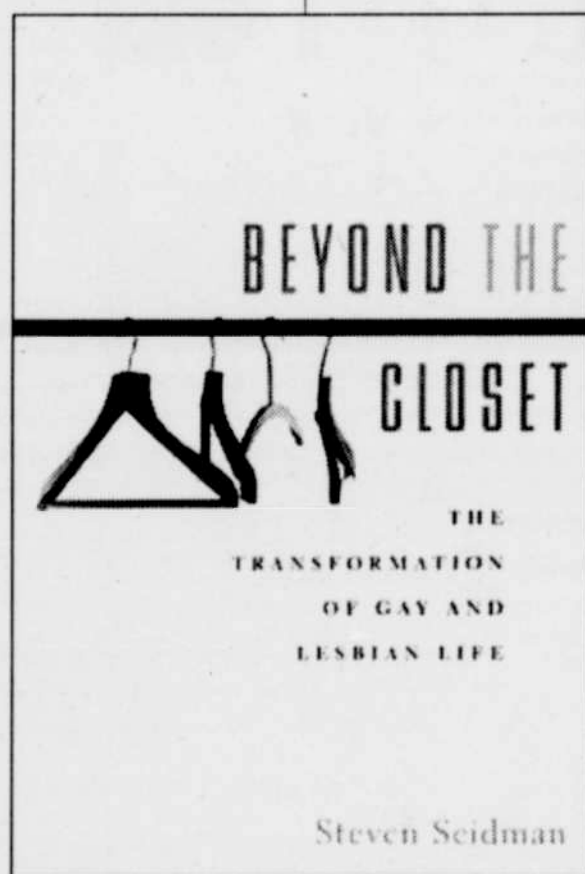
picture of what it was like in the closet, which he defines as "less about denying [homosexuality] than choosing to conceal and manage it. The closet allows one to be in the world as a respected, good person, despite possessing a stained identity. Shame, fear, terror and disgust not only are the emotional stuff of the closet, but sustain it."

A few dry patches notwithstanding, the author's expertise on sexuality and social theory make his observations on the historical evolution of being queer in America thoughtful and sage—carefully considering, for instance, how gays

were damned to silence and perceived as aliens in a severely homophobic 1950s and '60s culture. He even points his finger at the government's attempts to prevent the acceptance of homosexuals by taking away basic rights, something that obviously continues to haunt the queer community.

Seidman also takes a look at people who are "straight but not narrow" as well as a young man who is much more ambiguous and interesting than his "heterosexual and proud" stance might lead one to believe.

—GD



Steven Seidman

"ABBA-SOLUTELY FABULOUS!"

LIZ SMITH, SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

ON SALE NOW!



BENNY ANDERSSON & BJÖRN ULVAEUS'

MAMMA MIA!

THE SMASH HIT MUSICAL BASED ON THE SONGS OF ABBA®

A mother. A daughter. 3 possible dads.
 And a trip down the aisle you'll never forget!

JULY 1-13

KELLER AUDITORIUM • SW 3RD & CLAY

(503) 790-ARTS or (503) 241-1802
 ticketmaster Mon-Fri 9a-5p

GROUPS OF 20 OR MORE SAVE! (503) 241-1407

www.broadwaycrossamerica.com



MAMMA MIA! ORIGINAL CAST RECORDING
 AVAILABLE ON DECCA BROADWAY
 Tickets subject to agency convenience charges

