



His violent, hedonistic characters—simultaneously repugnant, fascinating and human—are reminiscent of the droogs of *A Clockwork Orange* and the half-real, half-marketing-created thug personae of hip-hop legends like DMX, Sir Mix-a-Lot, Tupac Shakur and 50 Cent. Traynor's proud thugs—the erudite Fixer Man, the ex-con, financial savant and aficionado of Frank Herbert's *Dune*, and his dreadlocked, FUBU-sporting, Venezuelan speed-shooting sidekick Paulo—interrupt their daily work of scoring, stealing and handing out beatdowns to turn vigilante when little boys start showing up dead, all bearing similar grisly handiwork, and a famous lily-white televangelist gets seen in the



wrong place at the wrong time. Naturally, outrage, betrayals and a hail of bullets follow.

None of the characters rouses any particular sympathy; regardless, Traynor's puppy-clumsy but genuine love of language and shameless sampling of the decade's most famous bad-ass cinema and rap rhymes provide an exciting and gripping read. And the sex is, naturally, as dirty and intense as the drugs, the heists and the murders.

### Best Black Gay Erotica

Edited by Darieck Scott; Cleis Press, 2005; \$14.95 softcover

**P**rolific author, essayist and African-American literature professor Darieck Scott is an excep-

tional choice to edit the anthology *Best Black Gay Erotica*, which I hope will soon become a regular annual occurrence in the same way as other erotica collections, such as *Year's Best Erotica*.

Not merely a superb compilation of thoughtful smut by and about black gay men, this is a tightly edited and well-chosen collection of short stories and excerpts that highlights talented writers in desperate need for wider exposure. Scott's introduction shows his professorial roots in an examination of literary and political representations of black sexuality as a whole, and black gay male sexuality in particular, before he finally concedes: "At best, these are jack-off stories." Hooray!



For those who prefer a bit of brain to accompany the booty, Christopher David's sensitive and emotionally astute "Kevin," Canaan Parker's superlative "One for the Road," Blaine Teemer's hilarious story-within-a-story "Riding the Tiger" and Robert F. Reid-Pharr bringing no-holds-barred smut (complete with footnotes and a sauce of literary, social and race theory) in "Horse Philosophy" will titillate the mind as well as the naughty bits. This book has an offering for nearly everyone's palate—bonding the New York rough trade way (Samuel Delaney takes us on a late-night tour of the infamous Mine Shaft in "The Sleepwalkers"), orgiastic hedonism (Jay Russell's over-the-top excerpt from his novel "Rude Boys"), submission and domination (Giovanni's "The Pain Seekers") and spontaneous and friendly teen-age groovin' (Shane Allison's "Miracle 5," a story that will make going to a movie theater an entirely different experience). *Best Black Gay Erotica* easily matches the erotic and literary merits of better-known yearly erotica compilations.

**T**hese four works explore several viewpoints on the vast and shifting spectrum of the fantasy and reality of black gay male sexuality: hot broom-closet screws, the men who don't call back (and the ones who do), heart-throbbing romance and tender compassion for men in all stages of life from adolescence to maturity and lives taken too soon by violence and illness. Black men who love other men are as recognizable as our own faces in the mirror and as distant as another species, no matter where on the color scale or the Kinsey scale you may stand. **J**

Portlander JEMIAH JEFFERSON is the author of *Voice of the Blood*, *Wounds and Fiend* and is attempting to jump-start the genre of "gay porn for goth girls."

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