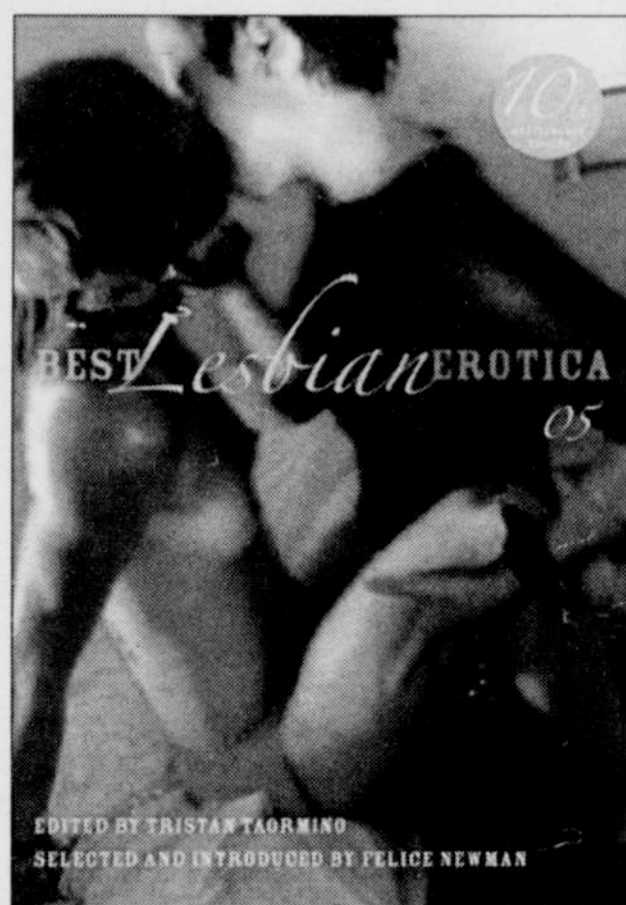


THE SEX ISSUE

Let's Not Forget the Ladies

Cock blocks *Best Lesbian Erotica*; women get their due in *Tantric Sex* guide



Best Lesbian Erotica 2005

Edited by Tristan Taormino; Cleis Press, 2005; \$14.95 softcover

Sometimes you just want to get off without a lot of work, and that's when erotica can help. But when you keep encountering the word *dick* in lesbian erotica, it kinda defeats the purpose. Some would say that makes *The Best Lesbian Erotica 2005* the most provocative edition yet. I wouldn't.

The foreword presents an overview of published U.S. lesbian erotic writing since 1996 and convinces the reader of its importance. Have you ever tried to create erotica? It's terrifically difficult. Just reading the author descriptions is an education in progressive self-definitions. "Gender dissident," "almost kicked out of elementary school for chronic masturbation" and "screws with the binary gender system" are sure different from "GF seeks same for long walks on the beach."

The stories' characters are spread out all over the gender landscape. Beyond the initially shy first-date gals, we meet dildo-sucking femmes and bold FTMs with cyberdicks. If you like anatomical detail, you're in luck. Lots of genderfuck. See "Fags Like Us" on Page 115. I found my brain spinning (is that how erotica starts to affect the body?) trying to keep track of who was doing who with what means of penetration.

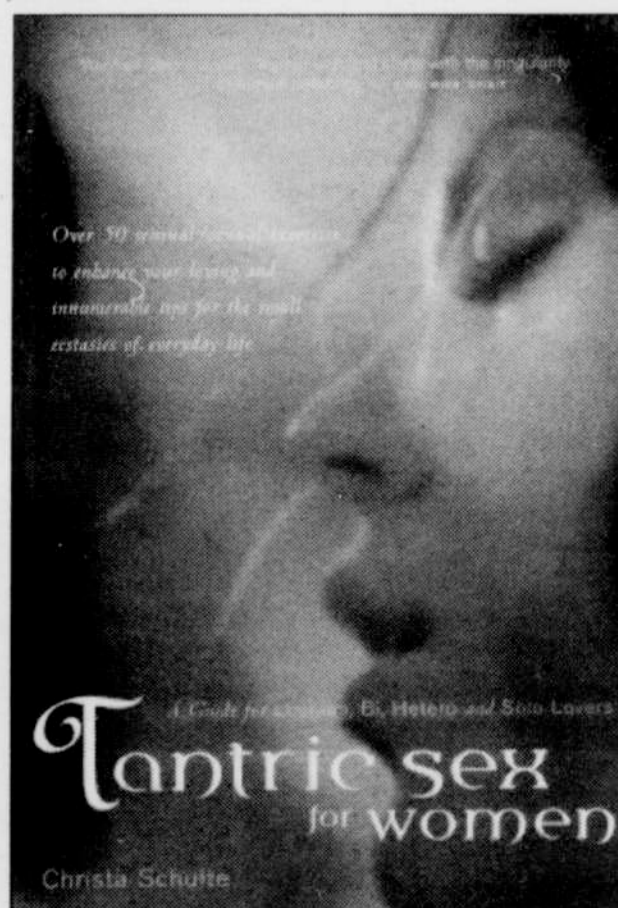
**I found my brain spinning
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Do we humans have a biological set point for what arouses us? I like to believe I'm open to possibilities, yet my physical reactions to the stories confirmed what I already like and don't like. Are our human sexual preferences really chemically wired? Can a story be written that changes our body chemistry? In this collection, the answer is...sometimes.

Tristan Taormino has worked hard so you don't have to. She's read thousands of stories and selected the juiciest and edgiest for us. As Felice Newman crows in the introduction, "Tristan is dedicated to good-fucks-for-all and has the energy to back it up."

Lesbian erotica has been with us for centuries. Sappho, however, might be challenged here by all the cyberdick!

ANITA LACY came out in the mid-1970s reading erotic writers Monique Wittig and Olga Broumas. She had numerous partners 'til she met and married her hot best friend in '91. Anita grows flowers and cuts hair in Portland.



Tantric Sex for Women: A Guide for Lesbian, Bi, Hetero and Solo Lovers

by Christa Schulte; Hunter House, 2004; \$17.95 softcover

Whenever Americans "discover" something—especially something ancient—there is invariably a mad and obsessive scramble to make it uniquely and marketably their own. Once the various sex-positive communities found out about tantric sex, there was an avalanche of instructional workshops, presentations, demos, videos, arti-

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cles and books, nearly all invariably claiming to be the be-all and end-all of tantric knowledge and wisdom.

Surprisingly, this has made it difficult for men and women interested in this suddenly hip subject to know where to start their educational journey. Given the market appeal that exists for those hoping to help men seeking orgasm control as a way to enhance their staying power, it has sometimes been even more difficult for women to find useful and accessible information specifically designed for their needs and desires. No longer.

Christa Schulte's newest book, *Tantric Sex for Women*, has done an amazing job of not only addressing the unique concerns of women but doing so in a way that is useful to all kinds of biological women, regardless of whether they partner with men, other women, both men and women, or themselves.

While some books on the subject become lost in arcane philosophy or insufferable pretense, Schulte remains accessible and sensible, early on encouraging her readers to browse her book casually, "yummy drink" in hand and filled with both a "childlike curiosity" and "adolescent joy" for experimenting with and learning about their bodies, their desires and the deliciousness that can result when the two are combined.

Schulte provides useful information and easy-to-understand exercises focusing on a wide variety of subjects including but not limited to anatomy, spirituality, emotional healing, body image, love, meditation, expanding personal limits and achieving a state of ecstasy. Although illustrations and photographs are sparse, they are also both informative and, in the case of the photographs, quite tastefully erotic.

This essential women's tantra book concludes with an abundant list of resources and two appendixes, one focusing on "Lesbian Love as a Form of Self-Love" and the other delving into "Sexual Healing as a Healing Force."

THERESA "DARKLADY" REED is a full-time sex writer and event coordinator as well as Ms. Oregon State Leather 2004. You can learn more about her plans for world conquest at www.darklady.com. 10

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