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# ***The Ladder*** ***a Lesbian Review***



MAY- JUNE 1968

# **purpose of the** *Daughters of* **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING  
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- 1 Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
- 2 Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
- 3 Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- 4 Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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# **THE** **LADDER**

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Cover "COVER GIRL"

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# MAKE IT LAST, BABY

By Zee Paulsen

Every Lesbian relationship is going to last forever, right? Then one morning you wake you and realize that the love affair of the century slipped down the drain when you weren't watching. There are a few who thrive on impermanence, but most of us get rather tired of playing merry-go-round from girl to girl to girl. And then what? Tonight in bars across the country, a thousand tragic tales are unfolding across the table to a friendly ear. We take to drink, if we hadn't before. Or we get a little more desperate as time goes on, a little more frantic to grab that gold ring of togetherness. Or we settle for the next thing that comes along, and close up our boxes of dreams.

The hell of it is that it is all so unnecessary. We need to adjust our thinking on several counts, and then perhaps we can find what we're after: a lifetime relationship. First of all comes that horrid question, is it love or sex? Face up to it honestly; if it's an itch, scratch it—but don't try to build a relationship out of it. Too many of us find ourselves screaming across the kitchen at someone we found physically attractive once upon a time, and made the mistake of settling down with. Now we're restless and want out, and who could blame us? It wasn't love to begin with, not really, and it wasn't destined to last.

No, you've got to choose a partner more carefully. And don't kid yourself; just because we're queer, dear, doesn't make us that much different from the heterosexuals of the world.

A relationship is a relationship; it has the same basic needs and requirements, and it functions in more or less the same ways. It doesn't matter if it is two women, two men, or one of each. So you have to go back to those hayseed lists that Grandmama handed down to you on how to pick a husband. Doubtlessly you're not in the market for a husband, but don't you want that girl of your dreams to mean as much to you as a husband means to the average wife? Sure, you say, maybe even more. Then you must select her just as you would select any partner for a meaningful relationship. She should be someone you can trust and respect, someone you can work with as well as play with, someone whose basic values and standards and interests agree with your own.

The two of you can't exchange long langorous looks across a smoke-filled room one night and move in together the next day. Not if you want it to last. There are a few happy exceptions but they're rare. No, give yourselves plenty of time to get acquainted. See each other in many different moods and surroundings. Desire should be there, but companionship too—because it is companionship which will help hold you two together at times when little else is left.

Eventually there will come a time, if she is the right girl for you, when you cannot bear to live apart from her. It's not just an urge or a nice idea or being able to spend all night in the same bed. There is an ache

inside you that won't disappear. This is the girl you want to laugh with and nurse through the flu and share your life with. Then is the time to move in together, because you're ready for it. You've seen her at her best and her worst, and you still like her as well as love her.

Don't wait too long, though. Separate establishments seldom contribute to the development of a life time love.

So you move in. Amid all those tumultuous first joys at joint living, try to find time for the most important thing of all: a definite honest commitment by both parties to the relationship. Decide, then and there, that both of you will work like hell to make it last. Decide that staying together is the most important thing in the world for you both, and that it deserves all the effort possible. You must be totally devoted to the relationship from this point on, or odds are that eventually you will part.

It's not a one-sentence decision. This is the kind of oath of allegiance you pledge daily. Love must be nurtured and labored over, or it will die. When you're madder than hops at that idiot, you must still feel deep inside you that you will always live with her and love her—not because it proves something, but simply because she is someone too special to live without.

From here on out, honesty is the key word. As soon as possible, face up to the problems that await you in the future. It doesn't do much good to hide from problems or the possibility of them; no one in this world has ever led a trouble-free existence, and you're no exception. You'll get a giant step ahead by planning for the future.

You're bound to meet other attractive women. So is she. So talk

about it; discuss how you'll handle it when it comes. Talk about boredom and arguments and the aging process and friends and the importance of sex in your lives. When problems do arise, you'll have an idea how to face them together.

Then keep on being honest. Develop the ability to sit down together and discuss how each of you feels, frankly and openly. Sure, sometimes it will be a mighty heated discussion, but that doesn't mean you can't be honest as well. If you're going to live with her, you might as well know what she's really like and how she really feels. And she deserves to know the real you.

Martyrs and saints are lovely, but they'd be difficult to share a lifetime with. Better to come out with a gripe or an opinion as soon as you feel it, talking about it then, instead of hugging it secretly to your bosom while you pride yourself on your ability to lead a trouble-free life. If you see a problem developing, discuss it—don't let it become so huge that not much can be done with it when you eventually allow yourselves to notice it.

We could talk about joint bank accounts and other such mechanics of a Lesbian household, but the only other vital things here are to begin thinking "us" instead of "I", and to watch for the moment when that rosy glow of first love fades. The rosy glow is part of the Vine-Covered-Cottage Syndrome, when love is idyllic. She is perfect, and you are both deliriously happy. One day you realize that she has so damn many faults that you don't know if you can spend another minute with her—and that's when the rosy glow fades out. Far too many Lesbian relationships end at that point. But what

a pity—for now that the rosy glow is gone, the two of you can begin to live together in the real world, the here and now, with things as they really are. Your relationship is just beginning, and all the real joy of it is yet ahead of you. So don't panic just because she's human; be glad you've got her, faults and all. Those faults that irritate you so much help make her the uniquely fascinating individual that she is. Learn to smile at yourselves; the let-down will pass sooner than you think.

And as for that "I" feeling: toss it out somewhere. By moving in with her and committing yourself to the permanence of the relationship, you lost your independence. Now you have another human being to consider besides yourself. Learn to place as

much importance—if not more—in how she feels as well as how you feel; her happiness and contentment, her gripes and problems, should be of as much concern to you as your own are. You can't take off on your own now, not really; she is a part of you and you're a part of her. Now and forever, wasn't that what you promised each other? So this is it, kid. Sharing and compromise. One day after a ghastly quarrel, you'll kiss her goodnight, and smile to yourself, thinking, "Boy, that one was a lulu!" When it happens, you'll know you made it.

Come around sometime and see if I'm following my own advice. It's a long hard road, but I wouldn't trade it for the world—even if I do forget, all too often, just how to travel it.

## THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

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## THREE LETTERS TO A POET

By Jane Rule

### I. With the Compliments of the Author

If I am to be the subject of a Sapphic suite, make it unprintable, as hers were, and well known, as hers were. I don't want to happen again what happened this morning, a book of yours delivered with a white card enclosed, on which was printed the following poem:

With the Compliments  
of the Author

I suppose she must have done the same thing to Gorgo:

I salute, madam,  
the descendants of  
many great kings

a great many times

A very left-handed compliment from the author, followed by the curse of Aphrodite and the promise of death. I am not your rival.

The poems you write, out of our hand to mouth existence, come to me, as you do, with no card at all, gifts of Aphrodite. If you sing them in a rite, which may or may not be open to the public, let the bitch goddess hear the flies in the ointment of tenderness, arrogance on Heraclitean air, effigies of bad temper, and the wisdom of your Making. If you record them, send them out in Haiku want ads or in stereophonic, high fidelity, long playing irony. But don't, my darling, ever send me between hard covers your unprintable suites, with compliments of any kind.

I want:

Poems, naked  
in the sunlight  
on the floor.

### II. Sunday Horoscope

The horoscope lies between world news and want ads, in the funny paper section, where your tomorrow and my tomorrow are properly predicted. I like it there. After prison riots and royal weddings and automobile accidents, after frauds and flower shows and movies, after Dr. Morgan and Peanuts and Space Cadet, we come first and together under the sign of Aries. The world was created when the sun entered the constellation of the Ram; we are, therefore, violent tempered and shall suffer physical harm, perhaps death by hanging; so much for the creation of the world or a world. We shouldn't expect to be forgiven. There's no consolation in our constellation, in little prose at the bottom of the comic strip. I like them there, our translated stars, always giving us the same day, which should be warning enough not to share it. I can go on then to look for another kind of future in the want ads, but you never ad-



vertise, in Personal or Miscellaneous. I don't check the Swap column. We, born under Aries, are not good at compromise. We know what we want, but not what we want to give away. Traders have signs of their own. There are always houses to rent, always houses for other people. There is a world to be bought and sold. If anybody wants a cat, he can have it, for the asking. But what you want and what I want is the same day together, our birth wrong of spring equinox, in which we share temperament, disease, and calamity.

I suppose we could try to look elsewhere. If the price of new stars is prohibitive, reincarnation being, as it is, a long business full of red tape, and risky, the palms of our left hands might be matched, but left hands don't match, don't come in pairs. And anyone can see that ours would make a fatal redundancy, both writing as they do, more and more on the same subject. Whoever heard of a two love poem family? God is the only handy man-made antidote to mortal blood types, incompatible insanities, and desertion, but a hell of a lot of good He is to us, being as we are in one of His imperative, categorical maledictions.

Just the same, let's not vote against the Lord's Day Act, because once a week not only beer parlors and football parks and movies, but all twelve houses of heaven are closed for the day. Because the Vancouver Sun doesn't shine, there are no morning and evening stars. Fish, bull, and ram are not allowed in print or church or sky. And on that day, my darling, granted by the kind permission of the Lord's Day Alliance Committee who, in outlawing everything else, canceled a constellation in our favor, we can, in all ignorance, neglect that star link between catastrophe and desire, with so many left-handed benedictions as to make a circus of signs of our own, stars no comic strip character ever saw in pain or sky, no bearded astrologer ever tacked to his ancient mu-mu.

### III. The Spider's Apprentice

Apprenticed to a spider, who has mistaken the basement window for a palace gate and me for the grey-eyed Athena, I watch the making of the web, frail, perfect net to catch a nourishment of enemies, who, bound in silk, become the episodes which teach the errors of the gods. I copy, as any apprentice should, not altogether comfortable, sitting daily under the eight-eyed appraisal of my mistress, who fears that I may, after all, write against those who have angered the gods. Why should I? I sometimes close the window, but not the blind. I cannot shut out sunlight. To kill a spider brings rain.

The spider and I sit a long time together, each in the center of a web, hoping to catch nourishment. The spider's web is perfect at the center, but already damaged at the edges by strong enemies. She occasionally moves out to make repairs, as I do, and then returns, as I do, to the center to wait, cannibal careful, wise, for the wisdom of the spider is greater than that of all the world put together. "The spider taketh hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces."

Poor Arachne, not shadow of the god, as some would have it, but shadow of a goddess' wrath, why, of them all, did you choose Athena? I know. Aphrodite wouldn't do, Sappho's gold crowned mother of Persuasion, who would have sent you away with a souvenir, a marble tit or a flower for your navel or a human lover to distract you from your work. You, the weaver, the

spider of creation, who can bridle the tiger, must spin the weaver goddess, in silken columns of the mind, owl, olive, and armor of virginity, to be given your due. Athena, who could forgive even Orestes for murdering his mother, could not, of course, forgive you. You loved her. But, when she tore apart the joined and jointed web which was her life, too, you hanged yourself, and she repented.

I, hanging in despair, learn to spin as you do.

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## LESBIAN LITERATURE, 1967



### AN ANNUAL REVIEW

by Gene Damon

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This is the eleventh appearance of the annual report on Lesbian literature, and there have been so many changes in this short period of time; just a year more than a decade, that a brief historical review seems needed.

We have come a long way from the 24 titles of 1957 and the 30 titles in 1958. Two different paths have been followed: the growth of trash and its inevitable decline, and the more gradual increase in quality titles.

Statistically, the quantity figures reached an all time high in 1963 with 248 titles. However, this was near the end of the paperback boom days and there were fewer hardback novels in proportion to the paperback titles. 1959 gave us 52 titles. The first enormous jump was 1960 with 108 new books. 1961 levelled off with 103 titles. 1962 jumped again

with 204.

The important years, when quality became so much a matter of course that even the casual reader could hardly avoid reading an occasional good Lesbian novel, began in 1964 with 191 titles. 34 of these were hardbacks. In 1965 there were 227 titles and 40 of them were hardbacks. 1966 dropped to only 32 hardcover novels; but more significantly, the overall figure was only 137 titles, a very substantial lessening of the paperback tripe which has been a plague in the genre. (Note: This does not imply that there were no good paperback original novels. There were many, and these have been duly noted through the years in this report and in the monthly Lesbiana columns.)

Looking through my past predictions (most of them wrong, I happily

add, since I am notoriously pessimistic), I see that two predicted trends have become firmly established: the almost complete absence of romanticism, and the complete absorption of Lesbian literature into the framework of literature in general. Very few novels are specifically Lesbian novels, except for a rash of novels dealing with Lesbians which skirt the border of pornography. Most novels tend to blend homosexuals into the general landscape. This is a qualified blessing, good for public relations, bad for reader identification.

1967 produced only 111 titles (and of these 46 were hardbacks) for an amazing new high in quality and a very welcome low in tripe. Very few readers manage to read 46 books each year. Of the 65 paperback titles, the only ones worth real attention were those odd items which appeared first in Paris editions and have only recently reached the U.S. legally. These will be included in the following general survey. In addition to the 46 titles which fall within the rather rigid limitations of this report, there are a number of peripheral titles which will be mentioned again (and the fact that they are not a part of the statistical records is hardly important) because they are vital reading for those really interested in this field.

Sharp-eyed readers will also notice that two of the titles reviewed in last month's column, specifically, *THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN* (V.2) and Iris Murdoch's *THE TIME OF THE ANGELS*, are not in this report. They will have to be carried over until next year's coverage, having reached (been read by) me too late to be included in the statistics. As has been true in the past, everything missed in this report

will be put into the next one, just as this report included several missed titles from 1965 and 1966.

After eleven years where are we? It seems to me that the most important achievement is that there have been *several dozen valid, literate studies* published in just that short time. The entire span of literature before these last eleven years has provided a lesser quantity. Certainly most of the very popular wildly romantic titles pre-date this period, having been issued between Radclyffe Hall's pioneer study, *THE WELL OF LONELINESS*, in 1928, and Clair Morgan's 1952 novel, *THE PRICE OF SALT*. But subjective and intensely personal accounts add very little to the social conscience of the general reader. Those mainstream novels that have included Lesbians as perfectly acceptable ordinary members of society at large have done a good deal to make the world a better place for all of us: a place where being a Lesbian doesn't begin to carry even half the stigma it did some fifteen years ago. In turn, this has made possible the publication of a book like *THE MICROCOSM*, by Maureen Duffy, which is the best attempt yet at a panoramic-scale objective study of Lesbianism.

I haven't any idea what the next eleven years will bring, but I do sincerely doubt that the changes will be any more sweeping, any more important. I hope to be around to bring you a regular report, in any case.

Several novels in 1967 are of such importance that the arbitrary assignment of a "pecking order" including only a few (usually 3) titles is out of the question. Even though I am handling an ever increasing number of books, this new high in quality makes

it equally impossible to lump the books together in categories, particularly with the first 15 titles discussed. After that, some general groups will be considered. This yearly report is the only concession I make to literature, choosing the writing over the subject matter . . . where such a choice has to be made. Each annotation will attempt to clarify this for the reader.

*LADIES' CLOSE*, by Sarah Kilpatrick, London, Gollancz, 1967, is, as I predicted in the August, 1967 issue, the leading title. It takes the honors in writing, surely, and it isn't too far from the top in the handling of the subject. It is not a particularly happy story, and many will prefer others in the report, but it is one title that belongs in even the casually complete Lesbian library. Story concerns a vacation, with complications, spent by heroine Chloe Whitehead, 38-year-old schoolteacher, recently over an unhappy affair, at a place called *LADIES' CLOSE* (their doom, not their proximity).

There hasn't been much sunshine and light in Lesbian novels this year, and this makes Judy Gardiner's delightful comic love story, *WALTZING MATILDA*, a short novel in her collection, *THE POWER OF SERGEANT METTLESHIP*, London, Michael Joseph, 1967, doubly welcome. I suspect it would win a popularity poll for pleasure reading among the novels to be considered here.

*OVER THE MOUNTAINS*, by Pamela Frankau, N.Y., Random House, 1967, is well written, and also very romantic. It is, unfortunately, brief in its pertinence, but a not to be missed tale of two women in love against the background of World War II.

Barbra Ward's *THE SHORT YEAR*, N.Y., Putnam, 1967, is a major study, marred by lack of focus, and the absence of any conclusions on the part of the author. Again, though, it is a not to be missed title. Story concerns a girl who fails to find moorings during her "short year" in Greenwich Village.

*ANYTHING GOES*, by Bine Strange Petersen, N.Y., Grove, 1967, employs language and events which will offend many readers, but it is, at least in part, well done, and an excellent example of a new "sub genre" which will be examined at length later in this report . . . the increasing number of books which fall close to the line of pornography, yet are too well-written to qualify for that questionable classification.

Violette Leduc's *THERESE AND ISABELLE*, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967, Dell, 1968, is poorly written, and filled with a kind of purple prose that will nauseate all but the most hardened readers. It is, however, from a writer of considerable importance, and has received wide (too wide?) attention.

Hilary March's *EITHER/OR*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1966 (issued in the United States with the title changed to *A QUESTION OF LOVE*, N.Y., Simon and Shuster, 1967) is a weak novel; again, as in *THE SHORT YEAR*, not in focus, and very confusing. It has an excellent potential story, and most readers will be unhappy at the miserable development of the story (the lack thereof). It is, though, much more enjoyable than novels such as *THERESE AND ISABELLE* or *ANYTHING GOES*. Plot is best conveyed by the English title as a girl decides whether she is or isn't gay.

The seven novels just considered

are the most clearly major of the year's 46. They are all either sympathetic or else form no real internal bias.

Francis King's *THE WAVES BEHIND THE BOAT*, London, Longmans, 1967, is a well done, richly plotted novel, with a substantial Lesbian theme, muted and properly placed in the framework of the story. It is not a sympathetic view, but it is an accurate one in this case. Underplayed, understated, good.

*THE FLAMINGOS*, by Robert Somerlott, Boston, Little, Brown, 1967, contains both anti and pro elements, and if the plot weren't so flagrantly borrowed, and the book less cliché-ridden it would be a realistic proportionment. It is a swash-buckling romantic sort of thing, though, and enormous fun to read. Americans at play and at work in Mexico—the old expatriate's tango danced again.

*THE PRACTICE*, by Stanley Winchester, N.Y., Putnam, 1967, is a doctor novel, using much the same sort of anti and pro approach as did Robert Somerlott in *THE FLAMINGOS*. For its type, it is well-enough written, and quite substantially Lesbian in emphasis. I can remember when these doctor novels were written for the little old ladies crowd. I wonder what the sweet old things are reading now?

Catherine Cookson's *KATIE MULHOLLAND*, N.Y., Bobb-Merrill, 1967, is an historical romance set in England, not so long ago in an unlikely place to find a fairly substantial Lesbian sub-plot. The inclusion here is one of those "selfless love" sort of things that are always a little hard to believe, however pleasant they are to read. Competently written, special only in that

most historical novels are much more poorly written.

*THE PEOPLE OF PROVIDENCE STREET*, by John Gooding, N.Y., Viking, and London, The Bodley Head, 1967, is a macabre study of possession and destruction, played effectively against an ordinary background. This one reeks of symbolism and has some pretty heady anti-Catholic sentiments, but it is very well written. Effective terror and madness. Caviar.

*THE TROJANS*, by Wirt Williams, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966, Bantam, 1967, is a Hollywood novel. Not nearly as bad as most of them; and, in the handling of the pertinent sections, surprisingly knowledgeable. Good of kind.

*TARA*, by Terence De Vere White, London, Gollancz, 1967, is an Irish comedy of manners with some sober undertones. The Lesbian, who plays a rather substantial part in the novel, is treated quietly and thus more effectively. Since the book deals with frustration, it is no surprise that she is among those deprived. Very well done, but definitely not sympathetic.

*THE EXHIBITIONIST*, by Henry Sutton, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1967, is a special novel. Written only to make money, this backfired on the author and despite himself he has done a credible job. It is not too major a Lesbian study but what there is deserves examination and this will be provided at length in the June column. This book has received an unfavorable press and there is a story behind that, too, which will also be discussed in June.

The last eight novels covered fall just below the initial group of seven. They are only slightly less important than the first group. Most of them are

sympathetic, and where they aren't, there are good and convincing reasons included. Very little blanket damnation appears in temporary fiction. Novels like *THE WAVE BEHIND THE BOAT*, *THE PEOPLE OF PROVIDENCE STREET*, and *TARA*, are particularly important because of their general quietness, whatever you may feel about the authors' chosen characters. If the Lesbian is indicted, there is an *INDIVIDUAL* reason, having to do with the person and not the sexual orientation, and *all* Lesbians are not automatically included in the indictment. Books such as *THE FLAMINGOS*, *THE EXHIBITIONIST*, *THE PRACTICE*, *KATIE MULHOLLAND*, and *THE TROJANS*, are written to entertain, to reach large audiences. They aren't really literature, in much the same way that paperback novels for the most part cannot honestly be called literature. That this kind of popular novel is less likely to include Lesbians disguised as monsters is a good sign. *THE FLAMINGOS* is the least sympathetic of the first 15 titles, since the author is not yet experienced enough to take the canned beast flavor out of his "bad" characters. It is a first novel, though, and many sins are forgiven traditionally.

There were numerous novels in the category of serious fiction, which cannot be considered with the fifteen books cited previously for various reasons, usually because of brevity of content or language obscurity.

*THE ITINERANT*, by William Herrick, N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1967, is only very slightly pertinent, but it is one of the better written general novels for the year. If you like good books, try it.

*THE LAST GENTLEMAN*, by

Walker Percy, N.Y., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967, is very minor, but again well-written. It has touches of whimsy and deliberate obscurity which will irritate some readers.

*AN OBJECT FOR A WALK*, by Robert Liddell, London, Longmans, 1966, is rambling and mild, with a slow pace that requires much patience. The Lesbianism is blatant, rather than muted, but the writing style is subtle. Not for some readers, particularly the young and hurried.

*DINK'S BLUES*, by Marilyn Hoff, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965, 1966, is a "carryover", a late find. It is a college novel, and the heroine, Dink, and the narrator, Sarah, spend a lot of time proving to themselves and the world that they are hetero-sexuals. What they say to each other, and tell themselves in interior monologues, is something else again. Nervous, with about the same effect on the reader as a fingernail drawn down a blackboard. Very good, very young.

Robert Carson's *THE OUTSIDERS*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1966, Fawcett, Crest, 1967, is an historical novel, and the Lesbian section is slight compared to the novel's length. Of interest, though, is the way in which the Lesbian history increases in the telling from generation to generation, becoming more, rather than less, factual, due to Freud, and various other refinements.

*ALL THE BRAVE PROMISES*, by Mary Lee Settle, N.Y., Delacorte, 1966, London, Heinemann, 1967, is actually autobiography, but it belongs more with this group of novels than with the biography-history books of the year. About women serving in World War II. Cameos of interest, only...

*HANNAH AND THE PEA-*



COCKS, by Edward Caddick, Boston, Little, Brown, 1967, is very, very minor—a passing mention in a funny novel about male homosexuals.

Edna O'Brien's CASUALTIES OF PEACE, London, Jonathan Cape, 1966, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1967, is an unsuccessful novel. It concerns the half-told relationships of a glass-sculptress, and there is a single length pertinent chapter. Oddly, this chapter (and one other not important here) stand out above the rest of the book. Minor, but worth a trip to the local library.

GO DOWN DEAD, by Shane Stevens, N.Y., Morrow, 1966, is a powerful novel about the causes of delinquency. Pertinent interest here is minor, but comes in the form of excellent cameo shots. Good . . .

GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSE-WATER, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, Dell, 1966, is an overdone satire on contemporary satire. Minor, and so what.

THE FARM, by Clarence Cooper, N.Y. Crown, 1967, is about dope addicts taking the cure. Very, very minor title, but the book is worth reading. Some of the dialogue is hard to follow.

Milena Milani's A GIRL CALLED JULES, London, Hutchinson, 1967, is a translation from the Italian, one of the seemingly endless rash of adolescent female novels, and not a particularly good one. One substantial Lesbian character. Not worth importing.

Alfred Chester's novel, THE EXQUISITE CORPSE, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1967, is one of the year's big disappointments. Mr. Chester is really a very good writer, though someone introduced to him through this

book alone might come away thinking otherwise. It is confused, inadequate, and written in a language which only sometimes resembles a familiar one. It is quite a major study, but not for very many readers. Uphill, all the way.

You will note that we have now covered 28 of the 46 classifiable titles of the year. With very few exceptions (and these have been noted) they have been good books, even where only good within the author's intended limitations (i.e., historical fiction, "popular" novels, etc.). Very few of them have been concerned with denouncing the Lesbians of the cast, though some have been too preoccupied with their sexual lives at the expense of the other 99 percent (a complaint, however, which could be made about novels in general).

In past years, the bad treatments have often outweighed the good, even when there has been no question of quality in the writing. This is much less true in 1967, and it is a growing thing. It is highly unlikely that the average Lesbian (if there be such) will ever be wholly pleased with the fictional portraits. But it remains true that happy books about happy people are rare, primarily because such people are usually dramatically boring.

There are always the novels that when you have read them you wonder why in hell anyone wrote them, and more, why anyone was idiot enough to publish them.

In this questionable class I must include the enormously big best-seller, VALLEY OF THE DOLLS, by Jacqueline Susann, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1966, Bantam, 1967, which could take honors as the poorest book since FOREVER AMBER to see print in hardcovers.

Running a close second in worthlessness (on every count) is THE TRUMPETS OF NOVEMBER, by Wesley Thurston, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1967, Signet, 1967. Please note that these last two books were both published by the controversial and quite successful new publishing firm, Bernard Geis Associates. Both of these titles are pertinent and must be recorded. I strongly recommend that everyone avoid them.

William Camp's FLAVOR OF DECAY, London, Anthony Blond, 1967, is another pointless bit, but potential damage here is very slight. It's just a so-what spy novel.

There are other novels which might belong with the three just listed, but we'll save them since they also fall in a larger, and today, more vital category: the new pseudo-pornography. These are books which could not be published here just a few years ago, but which are now appearing with amazing rapidity. There is no question that some of these are literature, and some have serious social value. There is also little question that many of them don't have value of any kind. But it is necessary and good that they be published. It is necessary that everything and anything can be published, and after that the individual can decide what he wants to read or wishes to ignore.

THE IMAGE, by Jean De Berg, N.Y., Grove, 1966, Blackcat (Evergreen), 1967, was first published by Olympia Press, in Paris, in 1966. It is erotic, sadistic, and several other things, including a major study in our field. It is bad public relations, but it is a very good book. Not for everyone.

Two books from Albertine Sarrazine, THE ASTRAGAL and THE RUN-AWAY, both from N.Y.,

Grove, 1967. Both are erotic, confused and confusing, and fairly well-written. Both are very major studies. (It might be mentioned that in this genre, of Lesbian literature, the activity is almost always three- or more-sided. This is psychologically inaccurate and generally repugnant to most Lesbians.)

LA SATIRE, by Virginie Des Rieux, N.Y., World, 1967, is trash. It cannot even achieve the questionable status of well-written pornography. Skip it.

Marcus Van Heller's THE HOUSE OF BORGIA, is one of the few paperbacks to be discussed here. This appeared first in Paris, from Olympia Press, in 1957. It was published in the United States in 2 volumes by Greenleaf, 1966. It is a major study, and it will be offensive to many readers. I do not personally consider it trash, but it walks a thin rope.

THE WATCHER AND THE WATCHED, by Thomas Peachum, is also a paperback. It first appeared in 1954 from Olympia Press. It has been issued by Traveller's Companion, 1967, and also from Greenleaf, 1967. Two paperback editions in the same year, the former the authorized edition. It is a voyeuristic study and has been met with mixed reports. The problem here is that however unpleasant many will find this book, it is beautifully written, and clearly from the pen of a talented writer. (So much of the writing compares to a now near classic novel which came also from Olympia Press to worldwide fame, that many will easily identify Mr. Peachum.)

This brings us to Frances Lengel's HELEN AND DESIRE, another paperback which first appeared in Paris from Olympia, in 1954. It



has been issued by Brandon House, 1967. As everyone by now knows, Frances Lengel is the pseudonym of Alexander Trocchi. It doesn't need adding that it is very well-written, deliberately bawdy, and quite delightful, AND, that almost everyone will be offended by it.

CALL ME BRICK, by Munroe Howard, N.Y., Grove, 1967, is trash. It seems that there is to be a rash of new books in imitation of these now freely imported books which first appeared in Paris. This is o.k. in principle, but not unless some of them turn out to be well written. Mr. Girodias's phenomenal success in this field was precisely because he used talented writers, often already very famous under their own names.

It must be mentioned also that two of the books considered with the first seven titles covered, THERESE AND ISABELLE, by Violette Leduc, and, ANYTHING GOES, by Bine Strange Petersen, belong in this group of sub-genre works. They are in the first section by virtue of the attention paid to them and their potential value. I, personally, find THERESE AND ISABELLE harder to bear than most of the books thus covered; but there is little question that my opinion in this case is in the minority.

Henri Barbusse's L'ENFER (HELL), London, Chapman and Hall, 1966, is, strictly speaking, an historical item since it first appeared in 1908 in France and first appeared in English in 1932 (London, Joines and Steele) under the title, THE INFERNO. However, until this last year it was not known to be a Lesbian title, and the 1932 translation is virtually unobtainable (I have not, in fact, seen it, and cannot even guarantee that the pertinent

portions were not deleted). This is a minor title, from the standpoint of length, but considering the year of its first appearance it seems remarkably contemporary.

There are four titles for the mystery fans and spy bugs.

THE KREMLIN LETTER, by Noel Behn, London, W.H. Allen, and N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1966, Dell, 1967, is a rather ugly C.I.A. tale, but believable enough.

THE COURTESY OF DEATH, by Geoffrey Household, London, Michael Joseph, and, Boston, Little, Brown, 1967, is a typical English novel about nuts, or more politely, eccentrics. In any case, pertinent enough for a trip to the local library.

THE GAY DECEIVERS, by Peter Leslie, N.Y., Stein and Day, 1967, is a delightful romp through the secret services of the world. Good natured humor and satire, and some minor element of mystery. It is minor Lesbian, and very major male, but good fun for all.

DEAD CORSE, by Mary Kelly, N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, 1967, is a very superior mystery. It is so well-written that it is unfortunate that it falls in this particular genre and will be overlooked by those many who will not read a mystery under any circumstances. Plot about blackmail and suicide. Very major, very well done.

The year was rich in short stories—five in all, two each from two major writers, and one from a third.

"Camp Cataract", by Jane Bowles, in THE COLLECTED WORKS OF JANE BOWLES, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966, is possibly too involved to interest all readers. But Mrs. Bowles is one of our most overlooked writers, and as is often sadly the case, one our better

writers. This collection also includes her major Lesbian novel, TWO SERIOUS LADIES. It is well worth buying the collection for this novel alone, and all of the stories are female-oriented.

John O'Hara contributed two of the stories, "James Francis And The Star" and "The Skeletons", both in WAITING FOR WINTER, N.Y., Random, 1966, Bantam, 1967. The first is minor, the second major, and all of O'Hara is always worth reading. There are, by the way, eight pertinent stories in this collection.

Graham Greene contributed the remaining two stories, "Chagrin In Three Parts" and "The Over-Night Bag", both in MAY WE BORROW YOUR HUSBAND, London, The Bodley Head, and N.Y., Viking, 1967. The first is major, and rather wry comedy; the second is major and subtle. In addition, the title story is very major male, very funny, and very well-done. While you are reading, don't skip it.

The two entries for biography—history fans are properly outside the statistical count rules—and these two books are NOT a part of the 46 titles, but both should be read. One is Gladys Taber's latest autobiographical effort, STILL-MEADOW CALENDAR, Phila-

delphia, Lippincott, 1967. The other is BONNET BRIGADES, by Mary Elizabeth Massey, N.Y., Knopf, 1966. The former is part of a lifetime series by Gladys Taber, all of which should be read by readers of this column. The latter is a study

of women in the Civil War, many of them Lesbians, or merely variant possibilities, or transvestites. In any case, very interesting.

Many things fall outside the scope of this report. This year (1967) was a rich one in reprints, which I hope I faithfully recorded in the monthly columns. There was a rash of new biographies about Sarah Churchill and Queen Anne, and their lifelong affair, etc.

There were no poetry titles in 1967 and no dramas. But there was one other book published which I feel compelled (by vanity as well as editorial injunction) to mention, and that is my own attempt at cataloging the enormous and rich field of Lesbian literature in THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, by Gene Damon and Lee Stuart, San Francisco, The Daughter's of Bilitis, Inc., 1967. I can offer it no praise, for I suspect I know its limitations as well or better than you . . . but it is a beginning and not an ending. Until next year . . . happy reading.

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## THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

\$2 plus 25c handling charge.

DOB BOOK SERVICE  
P. O. Box 3629  
Grand Central Station  
New York 17, New York

# SEXTET

By Maura McCullough

## Memoirs of a Solitary Psychosomatic

I think I have mono or typhoid,  
Leukemia, perhaps, or the flu;  
They might diagnose it as rabies;  
An ulcer is possible, too.

Or could I have encephalitis?  
I'm sure that I'm nearing the end.  
Don't tell me I'm just feeling lonely;  
I couldn't admit that, my friend.

## And the Same to You, Buddy

Here's to Philip, George, and Skip;  
In guidance they excel;  
They made me what I am today-  
I hope they rot in hell.

## A Most Private Bacchanalia

Miss Thompson has exquisite parties,  
All planned with fantastic good taste;  
The guest list is small—herself only;  
Fewer people result in less waste.

## To My Dear Friend M.M.

No poison gas or expeditious bullets for you my dear  
You deserve something pleasantly slow  
Perhaps a hanging  
Except that I'm not much at knots so that's out  
We might have to settle for an overdose of pills  
And I could watch you expire by degrees  
Tuesday next at ten  
RSVP

## It's Nice of You to Want to Help But Please Don't Try

"I want to die," I said one night,  
So what did my friend do?  
She took me to a movie  
And we pondered World War Two.

With all the soldiers dying,  
Guns exploding, blood and gore,  
Death seemed even nearer  
Than it ever did before.

Next, for further consolation,  
To an intimate cafe,  
Where the salad tastes of Lysol  
And the meat—well, I'll not say.

I survived my case of shell shock,  
Ptomaine poisoning, and flu,  
But please don't try to cheer my up  
Next time I'm feeling blue.

## For R.

When you and I are eighty-five,  
We'll be a curious pair,  
Two ancient ladies half asleep  
In wicker rocking chairs,  
With muffins on a china plate  
And steaming pots of tea  
Set out upon a linen cloth  
Beneath a willow tree.

You'll knit a shawl for me to wear,  
While I watch petals blow  
From fading roses in my lap  
Down to the grass below,  
Our life a drowsy warmth of smiles  
And lavender sachet;  
When you and I are eighty-five,  
Will we recall today?

# AMERICAN WOMEN

## THE FEMININE EAGLE

by Lennox Strong

(Editor's Note: This is the fourth article in a series devoted to American Women of unusual achievement.)

There were daily reports on the progress of Amelia Earhart's proposed world flight in most newspapers around the world. But it was not until the month of July, 1937, that she managed to take over the front page of virtually every paper in the world, including the New York Times, as she attempted the long lap from Lae, New Guinea, to Howland Island. She disappeared; and, to date, nothing really concrete has been discovered to prove other than that she died in her plane somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. For much of that month, the world held its breath. Organizations met to eulogize her forever almost before the U.S. Navy called off its search. Serious and well-meaning people predicted that this loss would end commercial aviation. She would have enjoyed the fuss; but she would have laughed at it as well.

One of the most idolized women of this century, and clearly one of the least understood by her many followers, was born July 24, 1898, at Atchison, Kansas, in the home of her grandparents. She lived most of her early years in their home, because her father's job kept him on the road much of the time. Her mother chose frequently to accompany her father,

rather than to stay with Amelia and her sister, Muriel.

A wild and undisciplined tomboy, Amelia had a strong penchant for boy's clothes, boy's games, and wore her patient grandmother to the point of distraction. Her mother, Amy, solved the clothing problem, though, by bringing Amelia and Muriel gym suits to wear. It was in this attire that they jumped off buildings, rode boy's sleds "belly-wompers," and generally engaged in as un-ladylike pursuits as they could manage.

During World War I, in her late teens, Amelia lived in Toronto. She worked as a nurse's aid during this time. There is a curious lack of information about these years of her life. Literally hundreds of articles have been written about her life, naturally emphasizing her fame in the air, but also taking her early childhood into account. Very little has been said about the years when the family was sharply divided by money and other problems. By far the best record of the more personal portions of her life can be found in the virtually unknown biography, **COURAGE IS THE PRICE**, by her sister, Muriel Earhart Morrissey.

In the fall of 1919, at 21, Amelia enrolled in a pre-medical course at Columbia. Paul Briand, in his romanticized biography of her life, **DAUGHTER OF THE SKY**, de-

voted only three pages to this period. However, he does tell of her reaction to the students around her, and her determination **NEVER** to rely on the familiar boy-girl syndrome to succeed.

Family problems forced her to give up her medical school plans, and she had to leave college for good. She moved to Los Angeles to live with her parents, and it was here that she first learned to fly. Her first instructor, Neta Snook, became her dearest friend, and remained so for the rest of her life. She wrote to her sister, Muriel: "I want you to meet my instructor, Neta Snook, 'Snooky' to everybody on the field. She dresses and talks like a man and can do everything around a plane that a man can do. I'm lucky that she'll teach me, not only because she will give me lessons on credit, but because she is a top-notch flier and one of the first women to get a pilot's license in Canada. . . ."

Shortly after this Amelia discovered that she needed to have an operation, and her doctor had her go all the way to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Amelia decided to remain in Boston, and went to work for Denison House, as a social worker. She was so very successful at this, having full charge of girl's activities, that she might well have continued in this field if she had not had broader and more daring horizons.

While working at Denison House, she was asked to be the first female passenger on a flight across the Atlantic. She was chosen for two reasons, first because she resembled Lindbergh, and secondly because she was a pilot, even though she was to have no active role in the flight. This was, of course, her June 17,

1928, flight as recorded in her book, **20 HRS. 40 MIN.**, cryptically named after the time required for the flight.

This first flight of record making significance brought her into contact with George Palmer Putnam, the famous publisher, and the man she eventually married. There were at least two other men in Amelia's life, if one is to believe her many biographers. The relationships were unsuccessful, primarily, because Amelia would not compromise her sense of freedom. She believed strongly that women have the right to do just exactly as much or as little as men, and that marriage does not alter this in any sense.

Her career in flight has been so often recorded that little space needs to be given to rehashing her accomplishments in this field. It is enough to note that she made world records in 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932 (2), 1933, 1935 (3), and 1937 (2). These included records for speed, distance, altitude and solo flights. It is, of course, in this last respect that she was really the most daring. In, by contemporary standards, egg-crates for planes, she flew over courses that even veteran male pilots would not attempt. Wiley Post, who climaxed his career in a death flight too (with Will Rogers as his passenger) warned her off her famous flight from Mexico City to Newark, New Jersey, on May 8, 1935. (It took her 14 hours and 19 minutes, and on the way she had to fly over as much water distance as half of the Atlantic Ocean.)

During her years of fame from 1928 until the end in 1937, she was very constantly in the public eye. She was adored as the female Lindbergh; and, long before her name was known, many had noticed her strik-



ing physical resemblance to the "lone eagle." Her height, her boyish build, her short-cropped curling blond hair, her clear blue eyes, all combined to make her the ideally androgynous, almost sexless, figure of which dreams are, perhaps too often, made.

Her marriage to George Palmer Putnam on February 8, 1931, created little scandal, though Mr. Putnam had to shed a wife before he could marry Amelia. She was almost 33 years old, and still not too eager to give up any part of her personal freedom, as evidenced by this letter which she wrote to her intended husband just before the ceremony:

"You must know again my reluctance to marry, my feeling that I shatter thereby chances in work which means so much to me. I feel the move just now as foolish as anything I could do. I know there may be compensations, but have no heart to look ahead.

In our life together I shall not hold you to any medieval code of faithfulness to me, nor shall I consider myself bound to you similarly. If we can be honest I think the difficulties which arise may best be avoided . . . .

Please let us not interfere with the other's work or play, nor let the world see our private joys or disagreements. In this connection I may have to keep some place where I can go to be by myself now and then, for I cannot guarantee to endure at all times the confinements of even an attractive cage.

I must exact a cruel promise, and that is you will let me go in a year if we find no happiness together . . . ."

It is only fair to say that she apparently never felt it necessary to exact that agreement with Mr. Putnam.

Some of Amelia's less well-known services on behalf of women in gen-

eral include her articles in various popular women's magazines during the 1930's. She wrote about flying, but she also wrote advocating full equality for women in all spheres. It was the time for such shouting, and she was one of the loudest, and presumably, among the most effective. Her very real accomplishments were there to back up her words.

Books continue to appear about her life, most of them making her sound like a cross between a girl scout leader and Snow White; but despite the silly aspects of this kind of worship, she seems to have been the kind of woman Shakespeare had in mind when he said:

"Women will love her that  
she is a woman

More worth than any man;  
men, that she is

The rarest of all women."

#### PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

*(Note: Only a few of the dozens of sources are listed here. There are several other biographies of her life, including recent ones which theorize concerning her possible alternative fates. However, these below give the most complete picture of her life as a whole. For the emotional impact, it is recommended that you examine the front page of each issue of the New York Times for most of the month of July, 1937. This can be found in your nearest large library.)*

Briand, Paul L. Jr. DAUGHTER OF THE SKY. N.Y., Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1960.

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Putnam, George Palmer. SOARING WINGS. N.Y., Harcourt, Brace, 1939.

## BENEFITS FOR HOMOSEXUALS

By Del Martin

Some homosexuals may be eligible for veterans benefits and not know it, according to information gleaned at the May 3rd meeting of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual in San Francisco.

Gordon Elliott, Northern California Regional Director of the Veterans Administration, and Joseph Murray, Section Chief of the Adjudicative Division, met with CRH members to clarify the law and administrative regulations regarding eligibility for veterans benefits with respect to the various types of discharges from the armed services.

Mr. Elliott made it clear at the outset that his position was one of administrator who is responsible to carry out the laws of Congress. Under Title 30A of the U.S. Code veterans with discharges that are not dishonorable are eligible for full veterans benefits, which throughout the country amount to \$7.1 billion annually. Such discharges would include honorable, general or medical. But in the case of undesirable or bad conduct discharges there has been an administrative interpretation made and regulations issued from Washington, D.C. to determine what conditions may be considered "other than dishonorable."

According to these Federal regulations, the following would automatically bar a veteran from receiving these benefits; conscientious objection, court martial, desertion, alien under certain circumstances, homosexual acts, moral turpitude, willful misconduct, etc. However, it was pointed out that these regula-

tions were changed in 1962 to delete "homosexual tendencies" so that only specific homosexual "acts" are cause to disqualify a veteran from benefits.

It is believed that during World War II and the Korean Police Action that many homosexuals, particularly Lesbians, were drummed out of the service for homosexual tendencies or associations. If their discharges were undesirable and did not specify homosexual acts, both Mr. Elliott and Mr. Murray conceded that they may be eligible for veterans benefits under the revised regulations.

Mr. Elliott pointed out, however, that the Veterans Administration is the third largest Government Agency, that in his jurisdiction alone he is serving about 1 million veterans, and that it would be impossible to seek out veterans who might possibly be eligible. The veteran who thinks he may qualify or who needs help must apply in an individual basis at the local office of the Veterans Administration. "Here in San Francisco we will see what can be done and see that you get to the right people," Mr. Elliott said. "If you don't agree with the determination, there are always avenues of appeal, which you should be aware of."

Where there is no change in the law or interpretative regulations involved, the local office has the authority to administer veterans affairs. But a case referred to the Board of Veterans Appeals is at the Washington level, and there is no further recourse within the Veterans Administration.



In cases where a veteran may file an appeal to change the character of his discharge, these would come under the jurisdiction of discharge review boards in whatever of the services involved (Army, Navy, Marines, etc.). There are cases where discharges have been reversed, but VA has no control over discharge review boards. The VA does not receive the history of a discharge and would not be aware of any change.

As for the regulation that interprets homosexual acts as dishonorable, Mr. Murray said that the intent of Congress has not been questioned to date. In fact we don't see many appeals in this area at all, he remarked.

To change the law or regulations will require group action from such organizations as the Council on Religion and the Homosexual or Veterans Service Organizations, Mr. Elliott suggested. He seemed to feel that the whole question of the homosexual's role in our society had been raised popularly, but that it was necessary to go further in effecting changes in the law.

When questioned as to the eligibility of a veteran with an honorable discharge, but who is known to be a homosexual, Mr. Elliott declared that VA administrators are not judges. If the discharge papers are in order, the veteran is entitled to all benefits regardless. A Veteran's rights are fixed at the time of discharge, he said. What happens later (convictions or whatever) have no bearing on his eligibility.

Where a homosexual may hold an honorable discharge for four years of service, but an undesirable discharge for his second hitch in the service, the second discharge would hold. However, if a veteran held an honorable discharge, went back into the service some years later and came out with an undesirable the second time around, it may be possible for him to benefit from the dishonorable

discharge, Mr. Murray seemed to think. It is where the terms of service are successive that the final discharge prevails.

The Veterans Administration has an excellent legal staff available to counsel the veteran. In cases where the veteran is trying to get his discharge changed, however, it might be desirable to engage a private attorney.

It was generally felt by those at the meeting that, certainly in San Francisco at least, the homosexual veteran would receive sympathetic response to his problems and would be given all the help possible within the province of the Veterans Administration. If they were not able to help him to his satisfaction, they would do their best to put him in touch with those who could.

In the meantime, it might be well for homosexual veterans to consider seriously the possibility of forming a Homosexual Veterans Service Organization which could bring pressure to bear upon Congress to change the laws that discriminate against homosexual servicemen.

*Del Martin*

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## ***Editorial from Our Philadelphia Chapter Newsletter***

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On March 8, 1968, the most popular female homosexual bar in Philadelphia - Rusty's - was raided by the police. No minors were found on the premises. There were no apparent violations of existing law. We assume that the bar was operating as usual: couples dancing to the jukebox rock; people talking, trying to make themselves heard over the music; newcomers looking for fami-

liar faces in the semi-darkness. In fact the same familiar scene to be found in any bar in the city. Just one exception: the patrons were all female. Rusty's was closed for the remainder of the evening. Approximately a dozen of the customers were taken in by the police and, after being treated to a tour of three police stations, booked on the all-purpose charge of "disorderly conduct." Several of the women were subjected to verbal abuse in connection with their sexual preferences. The women were not advised of their rights to refuse to answer questions until after those rights had been violated. They were pressured to fill out a questionnaire which extracted information which could be potentially harmful to those arrested, without being told that it was within their constitutional rights to refuse such information. The women were held in jail overnight, subjected to further harassment, and brought before a magistrate in the morning. The charges, of course, were dropped. No harm done. Except that the woman's rights were abused. Except that they were coerced by fear. Except that they were made to feel like criminals. Except that they know that enough information was left behind to make them vulnerable to future harassment. The charges were dropped. No harm done.

Such occurrences do not seem to arouse the indignation of the community. It is taken for granted that

such inconveniences are part of the price one pays for being homosexual in this society. But we are told that this society is governed by laws, not by men, and that these laws are to be applied equally to all. Show us, then, the statute which prohibits the gathering of congenial people in a place of their choosing. Show us the statute which makes it a criminal act for two women to dance or drink or engage in conversation. No, the girls were not charged with being homosexual-because that is not a crime. They were not charged with sodomy-because no such act was being committed. They were not charged with immoral conduct-because that plainly was not the case. They were charged with disorderly conduct because people in positions of authority had decided it was the opportune time to exercise their prejudices again.

What can be done about this situation? First, the homophile community must become aware of its rights, aroused by these violations, and determined to secure our situation among ourselves, and trying to adjust to the limitations imposed by the arbitrary actions of the authorities. We, as a group, must find the means to make our case known to the entire community so that those traditionally concerned with protecting individual rights will lend us their support, and see our cause as their own.

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## **Every Magazine Is New Until You've READ It!**

**BACK COPIES STILL AVAILABLE**

# LESBIANA

by Gene Damon

There are so many reprints to cover that I am going to start with them instead of putting them at the end as has been the tradition. Penny wise souls will be happy to see the many paperback editions of good hardback novels of past years.

Arthur Koestler's *ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE*, which was reprinted by Macmillan in 1967 in hardback has been issued in 1968 by Bantam in paperback. First paperback since 1960 for this title.

Jakov Lind's 1966 title, *LANDSCAPE IN CONCRETE*, has been issued in paperback by Pocket Books, 1968. This is worth buying in paper.

The very unusual Lesbian novel, *THE JUMPING OFF PLACE*, by Garet Rogers, has been issued by Dell, 1968. This is its first appearance in paperback, though it was published by Dial Press originally in 1962. (The ordinary thing is for a book which is moderately, or more so, successful in hardback to get into paperback between one year and 18 months later, two years at the most.)

Another novel which waited a long time for a paperback appearance is Robert C. Goldston's *THE CATAFALQUE*, which came out in 1957 from Rinehart, and has now been issued by Popular Library in 1968. (I might mention, here, that I make every possible effort to keep up with paperback editions. It is, however, not impossible for me to have missed a prior appearance.)



Graham Greene's collection of short stories, *MAY WE BORROW YOUR HUSBAND*, has come out from Bantam, 1968. This has two Lesbian stories, "The Over-Night Bag" and "Chagrin In Three Parts", in addition to the title story which is male homosexual in emphasis and very very funny.

John Wyndham's delightful, *CONSIDER HER WAYS*, has been issued in the "Bal-Hi" line of books for younger readers by Ballantine Books. This is one of the three short novels in the collection called *SOMETIME, NEVER . . .* which has been issued many times in the past, but always directed at the adult science-fiction, fantasy market. Times still changing!! I can't help wondering what the kiddies will make of this novella about an all-female world, complete with muscular "workers", fluffy "mothers", etc.

*STRANGER ON LESBOS*, Valerie Taylor's 1960 novel, has been issued by Fawcett Gold Medal, 1968. This first appeared as a Fawcett Crest novel. If you missed this one, try it now. One of the few dozen *QUALITY* paperback originals in the Lesbian literature genre, from the "golden" days, alas, now gone forever . . .

Alan Sharp's *A GREEN TREE IN GEDDE*, has been published in a quality paperback format by Walker, 1968, to coincide with their publication (in hardcover) of the sequel to

this novel. More of the sequel later, should it prove pertinent.

A real reprint bargain is the quality paperback edition of *THE COLLECTED WORKS OF JANE BOWLES*, out from Noonday, 1968. This contains the pertinent short story; "Camp Cataract," and the very major novel, *TWO SERIOUS LADIES* were bringing \$25 less than five years ago, when and if you could find them. (Most good bookstores will order a "quality" paperback reprint for you as they will a hardback novel. However, even those stores which will not do this usually have *PAPERBOUND BOOKS IN PRINT* and can look up the information you would need to mail order these things for yourself. Insist on the service, the help, pleasantly but firmly.)

Not as important, except to the literature buffs, the paperback reprint of *THE LAST GENTLEMAN*, by Walker Percy, Signet, 1968. There is a minor Lesbian subplot in the novel.

And for the mystery fans, Geoffrey Household's *THE COURTESY OF DEATH*, is out from Bantam Books in paperback, 1968. This has one fairly substantial Lesbian character.

For our English readers, two of last year's titles are now out over there from Arthur Barker (there are hardback reprints). The first is Barbara Ward's *THE SHORT YEAR*, which came out in February, 1968 from Arthur Barker. The second is Violette Leduc's *THERESE AND ISABELLE* with the title *RAVAGES*, out in May, 1968 from Arthur Barker.

But the most important news is that last year's best novel, *LADIES' CLOSE*, by Sarah Kilpatrick, has been issued here by Doubleday. This is a hardback, but as everyone who's

tried knows, it is a good deal easier to buy a U.S. publication than to get an English novel. Don't skip this one. Large libraries will buy, possibly, depending on tone of reviews.

Henry Sutton, the author of *THE EXHIBITIONIST*, N.Y., Bernard Geis, 1967, is David Slavitt, former book and film critic for Newsweek and the New York Herald Tribune. This book has an unsavory reputation (to the joy of the publisher and the author) and it is hardly deserved. The author is certainly no John O'Hara, but he is almost as good a writer as Harold Robbins, and not any more sensational. It is the story of Meredith Houseman, famous male movie star, and his daughter, Merry. Much of it has been said before in the dozens of Hollywood novels through the years. Merry, shunted from home to school to camp to temporary home, is understandably unhappy from time to time. That she is still a likeable person is made clear, something left out of these stories most of the time. If it was meant to be a cheap expose (and I am quite sure it was) it backfired. It is sensitive, believable, and well paced. There are a number of Lesbians in the story, Merry's headmistress at school is gay, but that has nothing to do with the novel or her relationship with Merry. The important relationship is with Melissa, one of her several stepmothers. One of the reviews of this book said that Merry is "found in the arms of a lusty stepmother." What hogwash. Melissa is kinder to Merry than anyone has ever been, and there is no seduction. The relationship is constructive and well handled. Even more important is the fact that Melissa's relationship with Meredith Houseman is honest and forthright. She cheats no one, but is herself hurt by those

around her. Try the book.

In several columns I have mentioned my need for help in finding titles. A few readers have responded and I am very grateful for the assistance. An English reader has been graciously running down suspicious English titles for me, and providing information on them. Two of these have turned out to be pertinent, not major by any means, but worth listing here. *THE GHOSTS*, by Kathrin Perutz, London, Heinemann, 1965, 1966, is about a novelist who has far too many women in his life and too many accompanying problems. A minor character, a hairdresser's assistant, is invited by a client to a hotel room, ostensibly to set her hair. After warding off a predictable pass, she is fired from her job. Not a nice bit at all.

A *SIMPLE STORY*, by David Higham, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966, is a romance between a girl singer with too many ambitions and a music-loving automobile nut. Their relationship founders and the girl turns to a rather brutal type for a very brief time. Somewhere along the way she gets briefly involved with a female flautist. They go to bed, it doesn't work out. No one is surprised, however, least of all the reader. Poorly written and not of much importance.

I have had several letters asking what I meant when I said that "general" reviewers tended to be unreliable in their mentions of homosexual or Lesbian material. The English reader previously mentioned provided me with a clipping from the English magazine, *THE QUEEN*, August 16, 1967, which will illustrate what I meant by unreliable, and may well prove amusing.

The clipping was a book review

column by a Mr. John Scott, simply titled, "Paperback Books." In this column, Mr. Scott reviewed a number of English books available in English paperback editions, including two books by novelist, Kay Dick. I had never heard of Miss Dick, and immediately started the drawn-out process of checking her out. Mr. Scott had reviewed novels entitled *SUNDAY* and *SOLITAIRE*, making it (I thought) unmistakably clear that *SOLITAIRE* would be a major Lesbian study. Anyone reading that column would have also thought so. I found that Miss Dick had published six books since 1949, none of them in the United States. I next determined that the two titles most interesting to me at that moment were to be found in at least one library in the United States. I had my local public library obtain them by inter-library loan. (All of this taking quite a little time and energy.) *SUNDAY* arrived first and I read it (it was the least likely to be pertinent, judging from Mr. Scott's review) and found it to be a minor male title. A few days later, *SOLITAIRE* arrived. In reviewing this book, Mr. Scott says: "the narrator, a woman in love with another woman," etc. etc. He goes on to damn the book for its poor writing (thoroughly deserved). However, this book is NOT about a woman in love with another woman. It contains not one variant sentence, not one mention or implication of Lesbianism. It doesn't even contain a close friendship between women. So much for reliable reviewers. However, I must add that this does NOT mean I am sorry to have spent the time. I would much rather check out 1000 books to find one book than to miss one for not having checked.

I am happy to mention that one

LADDER contributor and reader, Maura McCullough, has been helping me a good deal, particularly in providing short story information from popular (and esoteric) magazines, an area I have had to overlook for lack of time. Her information on a story in *COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE*, for February, 1968, caused me to look quite carefully at the entire issue. I am in the position of having lived on another planet for years as far as popular women's magazines are concerned, and probably my sense of surprise would be greater than any surprise for those of you who ordinarily see this type of publication. This one issue, though, seemed to contain a good deal of relevant material. There wouldn't have been anything like this at all in a magazine of this type just 10 years ago. There is a sympathetic and very pro-Lesbian review of the movie, *THE FOX* (though the reviewer had clearly not read the original story and was not qualified to review the movie for that reason). There is an ad, announcing that the next month's issue would contain an article on why women date male homosexuals extensively, and there are three excerpts from Sara Harris's latest expose, *HELLHOLE*, about life in a female prison. (*HELLHOLE*, N.Y., Dutton, 1967, was reviewed in the October-November, 1967 issue of *THE LADDER*.) Lastly, there was the story which started my interest in the magazine, "The Marriage Makers," by Mona Williams. I am not going to discuss the plot, because it needs its element of suspense for adequate enjoyment. It is enough to say that everything from the truth to the stereotype gets a hearing in that one issue of *COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE*. Clearly more than I realized, times have

changed.

"Hello Out There", a short story by E.F. Cherrytree, in the December, 1967 issue of *EVERGREEN REVIEW* (v.11, No. 50) is pertinent, but in a way so unlikely to appeal to the readers of this column that it is here only for the record. Miss McCullough, by the way, also found this one. For many years, the late Dr. Kinsey stated (privately) his theory on the cause of the quantity of voyeuristic tripe written about Lesbians. He felt that this junk featuring two females (with impossible female endowments) making love to one another, with infinite variations, was directed to the thousands and thousands of male readers who find such things fascinating. They are, apparently, able to imagine themselves as making love to both women under the circumstances, for some unaccountable (and best left unexamined) reason. Anyway, this story is told by a man who is aroused by such fiction, and his title is directed at the thousands of other men who share his interests. Within his story, he has placed a story which illustrates his "utopia". Two women, with the attractions usually displayed in the leather ads, meet in a forest clearing, and for no possible reason or lack of one, beat each other to a pulp, ending up making violent love. Something rotten in Evergreen . . . Has anyone looked at this magazine lately? It used to be quite highly respected. Some of the articles in this issue are in amazingly questionable taste. However, the issue does contain one chapter from *NUMBER*, John Rechy's latest novel. Not as good as *CITY OF NIGHT*, but its going to be popular.

New York City, Sunday afternoon, parks around 4:00 P.M., and hand-



ball playing. Just some of the scenes in the photographic yet poetic **CAUGHT IN THAT MUSIC**, by Seymour Epstein, N.Y., Viking, 1967. Hero Jonas Gould lives with his elderly father in a second-rate apartment in a quiet neighborhood. It is 1939, and the whole world is changing, much more rapidly than Jonas realizes. He works, for a printer, and he maybe has a future. He has an affair with an older woman, who surrounds him and crushes him with her metallic sexuality (she is a pseudo-communist, late 1930's model, New York City variety). He sidesteps involvement in the personal life of his fat, shrewd, weary, pathetic boss, Ackerman, whose troubles include a lovely daughter he cannot understand, Roslyn, whose only "crime" is her Lesbianism. Jonas finds the time to get "caught" in the music of that time, and we last see him marching up a gangplank, on his way to war. Roslyn is a minor character, but beautifully handled (as is everyone in this book.) Very good, very highly recommended.

Parmenia Migel's biography of Isak Dinesen, **TITANIA**, N.Y., Random House, 1967, is not specifically of interest here, except that Dinesen herself was very interested in homosexuality as subject matter, and was often in critical trouble in her own country for this interest. Peripheral, but good reading. Dinesen was quite a girl, and a very special writer.

Minor American poet, Paul Blackburn, is beginning to attract a small amount of general interest (he has long had a coterie of loyal fans.) Grove Press issued a collection of his work, **THE CITIES**, in both hardcover and paperback (simultane-

ously) in 1967. This contains his most substantial Lesbian poem, "The Proposition". The paperback is worth \$2.95 for this one item alone, and the rest is well worth reading (a dividend, like Green Stamps.)

**DANGEROUS VISIONS**, edited by Harlan Ellison, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1967, contains four pertinent short stories. "Riders of the Purple Wage," by Philip Jose Farmer, is a poor attempt at a satire of modern society, with minor male homosexual characters. "A Toy For Juliette," by Robert Bloch, is a spin-off story on the old Jack-The-Ripper tales and variations. This contains a specific homosexual reference to Amelia Earhart, the first I've seen in print. "Ersatz", by Henry Slesar, a short story, is a major male story, but it has a real kicker at the end applicable to everyone. About the world, after the bomb . . . "Aye, And Gomorrah . . .", by Samuel R. Delaney, tells of a time in the future when all the "spacers" are altered males or females. The so-called normal people who desire them are called "frelks" (apparently a French word, said to be "frelko" in Spanish). It is, of course, a homosexual parable, and it is a "first story." Amazingly good. Watch for Samuel R. Delaney again. This is an unusual collection in that the entire contents is supposed to be unpublishable elsewhere (I doubt if that is quite true, but the premise does make a good collection). Much of the content was created for the book especially, with the remainder from the "rejected for content" files of the contributors.

**ESPERIE**, by Frederic Bradlee, Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1967, is a delightful tale, especially recommended to those who complain about too little humor in our field. The titular

Esperie is an elderly French woman who owns and runs a rooming house, acting as mother superior to her roomers. The hero-narrator, Stephen Lynde, a young actor getting over his dependency on the bottle, goes to live at Esperie's for the "peace and quiet." He does get well, but there is little peace and less quiet. Esperie's right hand man is screaming faggot Manuelo Sweeney, an unsuccessful but undefeated artist. Among the other guests are Franz von Buhl, an older titled male homosexual with a tragic past; Scottie Ballantine, Stephen's temporary girlfriend, who is

recovering from an unfortunate marriage; a pair of aging female nymphomaniacs, who share young male lovers; a one-eyed bartender, who is a recluse; and Drusilla Sands and Mercy Buffington, known as Goering and The General, respectively. Despite the derelict sound of this cast, it is all done in tea and crumpets, with the tone evenly balanced between comedy and tragedy, and not too many wrung paws. A little too artsy-quaintsy for some, but the anecdotes and inside remarks more than make up for it. Good fun, and unusually good for a first novel.

## Readers Respond



Dear Miss Sanders:

On reading "Research Project Report" in the July, 1967 **The LADDER** I find two omissions which perhaps should be corrected.

P. 8.1) There is a falling off when the question is, "Did you want to be a boy?" (48% lesbians, 15% non-lesbians); however, 70% lesbians and 16% non-lesbians recall a sexual attraction to a female before the first menstruation.

P. 8 (3) Over half the lesbians said they did not date (56%), but a surprising number report going beyond hugging and kissing" during high school dates . . . etc.

Ralph H. Gundlach,

Dear Miss Sanders:

While I can understand Gene Damon's failure to review **PLANT DREAMING DEEP**, by May Sarton, N.Y., Norton, 1968, in the **Lesbiana** column, I feel a number of **LADDER** readers will want to read this collection of memoirs.

Those familiar with Damon and Stuart's **THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE**, will already have noted the many pertinent works (novels, collections of poems) Miss Sarton has contributed to the field.

However, though less specific, three other titles by Miss Sarton would be, I imagine, of great interest to her fans. These are, in addition to



the title cited above, *THE FUR PERSON*, N.Y., Rinehart, 1957, and, *I KNEW A PHOENIX*, N.Y., Rinehart, 1959.

*THE FUR PERSON*, a novel, is about a "cat about town" who becomes domesticated in the best sense of the word, after he is adopted by two women. The presence of the women, and the happiness of the household are lesser themes, but they are present. *I KNEW A PHOENIX* is an earlier collection of memoirs, including Miss Arton's early attachment to the theater world, and her relationship with Eva Le Gallienne, etc.

The latest work, *PLANT DREAMING DEEP*, is particularly interesting to those who have followed Miss Sartor's fictional works closely. The identity of many of her fictional characters is revealed, including, for example, the fact that the character Dorothea in the novel, *MRS. STEVENS HEARS THE MERMAIDS SINGING*, N.Y., Norton, 1965, has a very real counterpart in life.

May Sartor is the perfect example of the old school of literature that taught that to understand a writer, you must read all that he has written. Her works, whether fact or fiction or poetry, form a continuous circle. And I must add, one most readers here will find enjoyable.

Malvina Creet

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