

# The Women's Library

N E W S L E T T E R

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. PO BOX 271 NEWTOWN NSW 2042

Vol. 2 No. 3 AUGUST 1993

## Membership Fees Now Due

At our Annual General Meeting on 22 June 1993, it was agreed that in an effort to raise funds, The Women's Library should begin to charge for membership. Only paying members will receive our next newsletter.

Membership fees are \$30 if you are on a wage, \$20 if you are not. This fee is tax deductible and means that you will receive our newsletter four times a year, be eligible to vote at any general meetings, and will be helping to bring the library one step closer to reality. Once the library lending system is established, only members will be eligible to borrow books.

**CURRENT LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP IS NOT VALID UNTIL A MEMBERSHIP FEE IS PAID.** (Women who have made donations of \$20 or more in the last 12 months are automatically classified as financial members.)

Please fill out the new membership form on the back of this newsletter and enclose a cheque or money order to The Women's Library Inc. to become a financial member.

## Annual General Meeting

At the AGM our directions for the coming year were endorsed. Our primary focus is finding a venue. We will continue to fundraise, collect donated books and publicise the library. Our decisions to not concentrate on housing archival material and to continue to keep all donated books with lesbian or feminist content for the library collection were also discussed and accepted. The existing committee were re-elected.

## The Women's Library T-shirts

This newsletter gives you the chance to be among the first to purchase one of our gorgeous, new The Women's Library T-shirts. The T-shirt is classic white and short-sleeved with the library logo and the words "The Women's Library read your thoughts ..." screenprinted on the front.

You can have one of these beautiful, limited edition T-shirts home delivered by filling out the mail order form on page 6 and sending a cheque or money order for \$25 (which includes postage). Or you can pick one up at our Bingo Night fundraiser at the Britannia Hotel on Wednesday 8 September for \$22 (see advertisement on this page for details).

## Bookfair Raises \$1700

The Women's Library annual bookfair was a tremendous success raising \$1700 for the library. Thanks to Gina Laurie who co-ordinated the fair and everyone who helped on the day.

## Women's Writing Evenings

The Women's Library, in association with Allen & Unwin and Women's Redress Press, are conducting a series of Evenings in Women's Writing to be held throughout 1993. The topic for the inaugural session in May was "How to Get Published", at which Lyn Tranter (agent), Marele Day (author), Lynne Spender (Australian Society of Authors) and Elizabeth Weiss (publisher) spun some lively yarns about the perils and pitfalls of the publishing industry.

July's session "New Traditions in Women's Writing" focused on writers from non-English speaking backgrounds and featured women from a variety of cultures and experiences. Beatriz Copello spoke about the centrality of her work to her life; Sonia Mycak discussed issues of national identity in literature; Efi Hatzimanolis analysed the portrayal of stereotypes in migrant writing; and Beth Yahp read from a new story.

Future events include a panel on writing for film, television and radio on September 21 and writing genres on November 3. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please contact Julia Hancock at Allen & Unwin on (02) 901 4088.

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY  
invites you to our

**B I N G O**

fundraising

As you may have heard, 8 sets of costumes, generously loaned to us by Vintage Clothing on Oxford Street, went missing after the Mardi Gras parade in February. Please support our effort to recover the cost.

Comedian Julie Mc Crossin will entertain you with her beguiling Bingo - calling skills.

Britannia Hotel  
103 Cleveland Street  
Chippendale  
7.30 start  
Wednesday 8th September  
Great prizes - including cash. Lucky door prize - tickets \$2.

RESTAURANT/BAR WILL BE OPEN. BYO Marker

# INTERNATIONAL Lesbian Magazines

Reviews by Victoria Hunt

Welcome to a quick look at some magazines from the US and UK. The magazines we have chosen to review are those that are available locally (the most recent issues at the time of writing) which identify their audience as being lesbian or lesbian and gay.

International magazines are great because they add a global dimension to our sense of community(s) and a more comprehensive perspective to our

struggle(s). As well as reinforcing similarity, they introduce a sense of cultural diversity and difference that, at times, had me feeling immensely satisfied to be a feminist/lesbian/woman!

It should come as no surprise that the following "hot" issues are being debated just about everywhere:

- the lesbian/gay/bi/transgender/"queer" thang
- the urban primitive/tattoos/piercings/

- brandings thang
- issues around same gender parenting
- gays and lesbians in the military
- women/lesbians and HIV/AIDS.

So if you're interested in finding out what's really happening out there, or you'd like your imagination fired up by anything from feminist analysis of the art historical cannon to slick advertisements for groovy clothes or all-girl weekends at exotic resorts, read on...

## DENEUVE

6 issues per year  
\$7.95 each  
Based in San Francisco: national US lesbian magazine  
Available from  
The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst



This is a lifestyle magazine with gloss and substance. It's described by its

publisher/editor-in-chief as representing the Sisterhood within a Queer Nation, and, for my money, it achieves this aim admirably.

The cover is glossy colour, the inside glossy black and white with clear, if occasionally clumsy and not always imaginative, layout and design.

The contents are divided into features and regular "Departments", which are decidedly and delightfully dykey!

The advertising team for *Deneuve*

must have been working overtime because this issue (vol. 3, no. 2) is packed, though this doesn't seem as much of a problem when the things being advertised are away from our everyday lives, indicating interesting new ideas and what other people are up to.

The journalism is informed, direct and, best of all, witty. The articles have a political nous that remains aware of differences. *Deneuve* has its fingers firmly on the lesbian pulse.

## "...the Sisterhood within a Queer Nation."

## 10 PERCENT

4 issues per year  
\$8.95 each  
Based in San Francisco: national US magazine  
Available from  
The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst



Of all the "slick glossies" reviewed in this article, *10 Percent* is the slickest and the glossiest. It even comes close to achieving that noted impossibility – "pleasing everyone". Needless to say, it is glossy and colour, cover to cover.

*10 Percent* works so well because it is

thoroughly thought through at a conceptual level. The written content, images, layout and design are never haphazard. The pages are pleasurable to both scan and read.

The editorial states that *10 Percent* is "the magazine of lesbian and gay culture", and so it is – but most particularly so in that "high" culture sense of the word, assuming a certain cognisance of art/culture/ theory.

The self-description broadens somewhat on the forms that invite you to subscribe to "the new magazine about our careers, our relationships, our homes and our world", and this typifies an interesting facet of *10 Percent* – the

assumption of unity. Lifestyle Magazine meets Coalition Politics Achieved – yeah, I kinda like it.

Now, having waxed lyrical for the past few paragraphs, it's probably time to point out that the issue I am reviewing is only the second issue of *10 Percent*, although indications are that the standard will remain high.

The only fault I found with *10 Percent* was the tiniest suspicion of smugness concerning luppie/guppie lifestyles and the replacement of raw with sophisticated – seductive as the sophisticated might be.

Overall, however, 10 out of 10 *Percent*.

Thanks to The Bookshop, Darlinghurst and Gleebooks for their help in compiling these reviews. We would love to house these magazines in The Women's Library. If you are interested in subscribing to any of these magazines for The Women's Library please contact us at PO Box 271 Newtown NSW 2042.

## ROUGE Liberté Egalité Sexualité

4 issues per year  
\$5.95 each  
Based in London:  
international  
lesbian and gay  
magazine

Available from The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst and Gleebooks



*Rouge* is a mixed lesbian and gay magazine with a definite bend to the left – as well as all the other usual ways. Like most cultural products of the UK, a good deal of space is given over to class issues, but *Rouge* doesn't let this stand in the way of a stylish approach. The design is clean and consistent and the layout streamlined.

Issue 12 is 50 pages long and divided into sections titled Undercurrents, Features and Reviews. Of the 11 features

in this issue, four deal with music, and four with sex/ sexuality/safe sex.

The video reviews concentrate on releases through three exclusively lesbian and gay distributors, and include the first positive review of *Salmonberries* I've ever seen! The music reviews are broad, with maybe a slightly higher concentration on world music, and the book reviews go on forever. *Rouge* gives a good-sized dose of politics and pop culture – great tasting medicine!

**“So many things impressed me as I read through this journal ...”**

## BAD ATTITUDE

6 issues per year  
\$9.95 each  
Lesbian Erotic Fiction:  
Cambridge Ma., US  
Available from  
The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst and  
Gleebooks



This one is juicy reading indeed, but even in a magazine devoted to erotica, there are reminders that the act of simply being lesbian is a political one, perhaps even more so when you're an SM dyke.

This issue (vol. VIII no. 3) contains a story on the recent banning of *Bad Attitude* under a law written to protect women and children from being demeaned or degraded in pornography. *Bad Attitude's* editor notes that the law was written without an understanding of SM or lesbian sexuality.

I didn't find any of the photos in this issue offensive, but neither did I find them erotic. And therein lies what can be the best surprise, or the worst disappointment, about magazines such as *Bad Attitude* that rely on reader submissions for the majority of their

content – that is, the huge variation in the quality of the stories/images/reports.

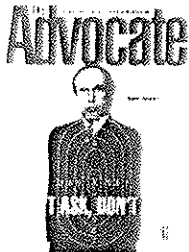
Aside from Letters/Girltalk, Reviews, the editorial, two cartoons, and a few classifieds, this issue of *Bad Attitude* is made up of 12 erotic stories with photos and one all-photo spread from a B&D Ball.

The layout is simple but good, although the picture quality doesn't always match it. *Bad Attitude* has a glossy cover and is flat black and white inside. *Bad Attitude* assumes the equation BA = (overt) SM, but otherwise it has its fingers firmly on the lesbian clit.

**the ways that gay and lesbian lives are revealed through writing**

## THE ADVOCATE

26 issues per year  
\$14.95 each  
Based in LA:  
national US gay and  
lesbian magazine  
Available from  
The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst



*The Advocate* seems to be a cross between *Newsweek* and the *Sydney Star*

*Observer*. It's glossy and colour cover to cover with very important looking layout.

Despite its assertion that it is gay and lesbian, the overall feel I get from the magazine is that it's by (that's not bi!) and for gay men. It's hard to identify exactly why this may be, but I think the clincher is the advertising which, aside from a few alcohol glossies, is either for life assurance and finance companies, nutrition and weight-gain products, or gay resorts. You have to believe that the

advertisers know their markets.

Following all these negatives there are, in fact, some positive things to be said about *The Advocate*. While the mainstay of the magazine is political comment and analysis, there are some interesting interviews/profiles. The journalism is generally of a very high standard and the issues are examined thoroughly.

*The Advocate* is American-activist-elitist (and it would help if you were a gay man).

**... 'we' are doing great and varied work out there.”**

## LAMBDA BOOK REPORT

A Review of  
Contemporary  
Gay and Lesbian  
Literature

6 issues per year  
\$7.95 each  
Based in Washington:  
well able to address an  
international gay and  
lesbian readership

Available from The Bookshop,  
Darlinghurst and Gleebooks



If you love books – you have picked up this newsletter so you probably do – then this is a feast to savour. The concept of a journal devoted entirely to literary reviews, albeit lesbian or gay ones, may sound a tad dry, but the fact is that the reviews and discussions cover every aspect of gay life.

The features, and many of the reviews too, write about and around writing. Both reviews and reviewers are a fairly even mix of lesbians and gays, and the reviews are generally well-placed to offer interesting commentaries on the works they speak about.

The Departments include Best Sellers, Author Queries (lots of requests for ideas

or contributions for anthologies) and Check It Out, a kind of literary gossip column. There's also an entire section devoted to science fiction/fantasy.

So many things impressed me as I read through this journal – the ways that gay and lesbian lives are revealed through writing; the dialogue between author and audience, and audience and audience, via letters, reviews and a forum for authors to reply to reviews; and the fact that “we” are doing great and varied work out there.

*Lambda Book Report* describes itself as “whimsical ... yet so erudite”, and so it is, as well as being informed, informative and important.

## Reviews

Here is a sample of the kind of books you will be able to find in *The Women's Library*. All of the following titles have been donated by the publishers. Thank you to the following publishers and the reviewers for your support.

**Lesbian (Out)law: Survival Under the Rule of Law**  
Ruthann Robson  
Firebrand, New York, 1992

"Lesbians are both outside the law and within it." Ruthann Robson examines a number of contexts, including discrimination in employment and housing, sexuality, child custody and violence, where the rule of law excludes lesbians either by positive discrimination or by ignoring their existence.

Most people (especially white middle-class male lawyers) assume rules of law extend from the natural order of things and are, of themselves, neutral: it is only the way in which these are applied which leads to discrimination. However, as Robson argues, "...we often do not stop to think about their sources and what they ultimately represent in terms of lesbian survival." It is lesbian survival, therefore, which should be the starting point for developing lesbian legal theories. Feminist legal theories, Robson argues, do not address issues of lesbian survival, because these are concerned with whether women are the same as and equal to men – in other words, men are used as the legal measure for women. This, she claims, leads to the widely held conclusion that "... issues of sexual orientation are best conceptualized as issues of gender."

Robson does not necessarily put forward alternative theories of law. Instead, she prefers to "start the conversation", as she terms it, by exposing the failure of existing theories of law to take into account issues of lesbian survival. For instance, in "Lesbian Relationships", she discusses the fact that lesbian relationships are not recognised as legal relationships, and cites the well-known Karen Thompson/Sharon Kowalski guardianship case as an example of every lesbian couple's worst nightmare. However, Robson cautions against what she describes as the "domestication" of lesbian relationships, that is, by assimilating non-lesbian concepts, like marriage, into lesbian theories of legal relationships. The challenge is, she argues, to make the law serve lesbian relationships, not vice versa.

This book is recommended for lawyers and non-lawyers. Robson is careful not to lapse into legal jargon. Moreover, don't be put off by the fact that it is a North American text, because the issues are just as relevant for Australian lesbians. Hopefully, this text will find its way onto some booklists for studies in jurisprudence or women in the law within Australian law schools.

Helen Fleming

**Too Rich**  
Melissa Chan  
Spinifex, Melbourne, 1991

*Too Rich* is a book I really wanted to love – even felt I ought to love – featuring, as it does, an intellectually and socially agile lesbian feminist detective and a plot that explores the violences in families and between women and men, otherwise known as "domestic violence".

The storyline is, in part, a sometimes clever, occasionally annoying pastiche of well known real life Australian society intrigues. Rosa "Sunny" Gleixner bears an uncanny resemblance to Eileen "Red" Bond. Her husband, Danil Gleixner of Eixn (or is that IXL?) Enterprises fame has left her for a younger leaner prettier solidly upper middle class "gel" he met through horse racing. After a long affair they are now

living together and it is this woman, Elizabeth Prince, who finds Danil shot dead, apparently by his own hand, in the gym of their penthouse apartment.

A good deal of media intrigue ensues as the two widows fight it out for position and possessions. Starting to sound a little familiar? It should, particularly if you're from south of the border down Melbourne way.

Picking the personalities is mostly good fun, but I can't help wondering if it contributes to Ms Chan's replacement of characters with types – Tomas, the drunken ne'er-do-well son; Daniella, the born again feminist daughter; Inspector Joe Barnaby, a westie but a good bloke.

Even our heroine, Francesca Miles, is difficult to take completely seriously. She's not exactly a type, but as an independent feminist private detective with a masters degree in criminology, in Sydney to cover the Film Festival in her role as professional critic, she is not quite believable. Our disbelief is, therefore, extended rather than suspended (and then to snapping point), and that's before the many inappropriate monologues masquerading as dialogue that explain and justify characters, actions and opinions. In short, everything is told, not shown, making the experience of reading Ms Chan's book more like that of watching bad TV.

One of the criticisms of the dialogue in *Too Rich* that I noted down as I was reading it was that it was "haranguing", and now having read back over this review I realise that I've been somewhat the same. The reason is that it could have been a great book. The plot is there, as is the basis for some interesting characters that the reader might care about, and the resolution is also interesting. It just all gets bogged down in moments of being too clever and passages of not being clever enough.

If you like to read with and around the flaws in a piece, or you could do with some instruction by example on how not to choke a plot, then this is the book for you – otherwise, *Too Rich* is too much.

Victoria Hunt

**The Truth About Women: How Women Can Advance the World**

Carolyn H. Bray, MP  
Rainbow Books, Florida, 1986

Carolyn Bray's book is very positive, built on the premise that women, all women, have a potential which goes unfulfilled in patriarchal society. This potential, hidden behind "veils" of oppression imposed both internally and externally, can be freed through processes of self-exploration.

Bray takes her readers through these processes in each of her chapters. Her book is not, however, for all women, as she acknowledges in her introduction:

*The only truth written here is the truth for me... if you can find that this view of living your life does not work for you then for heaven's sake get rid of it. (XX)*

Bray's book is very much centred on the "truths" of married, middle-class American women. While admitting to the limited nature of her "truth" she still coopts the term "woman" to stand for all women, to describe a universal feminine entity of compassion, power and gentility. A fine sentiment, however, there is no space for the acknowledgment that race and class oppression, poverty, isolation or cultural difference may hinder the process of removing the "veils".

A series of introspective exercises to search for the power within may not be enough for many women to lift the heaviest burdens of capitalist and racist Western society. This criticism aside, Bray's book is easily read, being written in a light and witty style to ease readers through an enlightening process.

Catriona Elder

**My Mother's Daughter: Stories by Women**  
Irene Zahava (ed.)  
The Crossing Press, California, 1991

This collection has been described as "26 finely crafted stories that reveal the many dimensions of the mother/daughter relationship with irreverence, poignancy and searing honesty."

The editor begins these stories with amusing poetic advice her mother gave her and concludes the collection with a brief description of each contributor. All 26 women are writers who have published work – poetry, short stories, novels or non-fiction – all with women/feminism as their central theme. The stories come from American mothers: single, married, black, Chinese, Jewish and lesbian.

A few stories are excerpts from books the authors have already had published. Some show the difficulties in mother/daughter relationships, as in "Islands on the Moon" with the "alternative-style" mother and "down-to-earth" daughter, each fighting for personal acceptance. Ironically, both of them are pregnant.

Another story, "Complex", shows the mother trying to find the connection between herself and her daughter where there seems to be none.

Then there is the competitiveness between mother and daughter in "Nicholas", where the mother always seems one emotional step ahead as the daughter keeps trying to break away from her mother's expectations.

In contrast, we see the mutual love between mother and daughter, as in "Baby Houston" as they share the anticipation of the birth of the daughter's daughter. Writer Louise Erdich tells of her mother's bravery in one incident that saved her life.

Other stories show the expectations mothers have of their daughters, like the Jewish Communist party organiser who wants her daughter to write her biography, or the mother trying to force her daughter into becoming an actress at the age of eight.

In contrast, we read of the sensitive Chinese daughter who wants to please her mother and the child who is upset because her mother has little time for her.

Basically, the stories describe situations, feelings, conversations and evaluations. Though not the first of its kind, the book is an interesting read, much like a get-together of women talking about their families and past experiences.

There are enough differences between the stories to encourage the reader and enough familiarity to make you smile.

**Adrienne Brown**

**Desert of the Heart**  
Jane Rule  
Naiaid Press, USA, 1964

I'll start by saying that I've never seen the movie but I'd like to, having now read the book (despite the "And now see the movie" Hollywood muck all over the cover). It is one of those books which ends just when you're getting to know the characters – I wanted it to go on.

*Desert of the Heart* is about the developing relationship between two women – Anne and Evelyn (who is getting divorced). By the end of the novel we have seen the relationship change the lives of both women – they are in love and committed to this love (at least for the time being).

It touched on some interesting issues about women and sexuality, though somewhat superficially. Definitely worth reading but I'm disappointed with the ending ... I'm waiting for the sequel.

**Julie Klugman**

**The Black and White of It**  
Ann Allen Shockley  
Naiaid Press, USA, 1987

A collection of short stories with lesbian love as its theme, these vignettes of "the life" are a pleasure to read. In Australia, books of this standard and subject matter are few and hard to find (The Women's Library is doing us a great service by collecting such work and making it available to a general lesbian readership).

Ann Allen Shockley presents a variety of subject matters within her theme and does not adhere to the ideologically sound. The storylines appear to have been taken from the reality that precedes theory and are not the "cautionary tales" that characterise a lot of feminist writing.

Women of all types are presented as real, believable, multi-faceted people: no goodies and baddies, but rather excerpts from life as you or I might experience it.

The writing is fluent and concise with some delightful descriptive phrasing. The characters are subtly depicted and set against backgrounds of depth and complexity. This is achieved by the author with panache in the limited narrative space of a short story.

The title led me to assume that there would be a stronger tension between the lovers. One of the ways lesbian love is denigrated within Australian groups is by accusations of who is racist, or not feminist, or ageist. Ann's stories portray such tensions in non-destructive ways with a lightness of touch and a matter-of-factness that does not ascribe guilt to anyone.

We need to seriously consider the extent to which American experience can be applied to the Australian social environment. These stories appear culture-bound, that is American. I think it would be unwise to assume that the black/white situations described in this book could be readily transposed into an Australian context, but I don't know of a comparable book by an Australian author.

I also found them somewhat dated. While being set in periods over a 150-year span, they depict the preoccupations and background of the 1970s. For example, the majority of characters are well-off; in the 1990s there are more of us in less stable jobs, so readers who don't remember the 1970s as well as I do (some were perhaps in kindergartens!) would find them less relevant.

How anyone manages to work full time and write as well as this author does is a mystery to me. It is a measure of her belief in herself as a lesbian feminist and her dedication to our cause that she has chosen to write for and about us.

I have an impression of very careful work, specific in its plotting and precisely crafted. I did find it a little constrained – a whiff of the fantastic, an other-worldly description, something just a bit way-out would make it less time- and culture-specific.

As pure entertainment, the book is a Very Good Read. And it is always a huge relief to have our lives played back to us when we spend so much time in a heterosexual world. I'm sure you will enjoy it.

**Janna Goodland**

**Casting the Circle: A Women's Book of Rituals**  
Diane Stein  
The Crossing Press, California, 1990

*Casting the Circle* is number seven in a series of books by the American author, Diane Stein, that centre around Women's Spirituality.

The Goddess Movement – a name many women prefer to Women's Spirituality – is nothing new, we are told in the opening chapter. In it Stein gives a useful and informative

overview. Way, way back, Goddess cultures were standard, and in practically every culture, deity was female. That is, until the arrival of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, when the very first global war was waged. And we all know the outcome of that one: patriarchal takeover! One of the purposes of ritual is to teach women how to discover and use their Goddess-within.

The opening chapter of Stein's book is of a broad and general nature, whetting our curiosity, whereas the remainder covers very specific information: how to create a ritual, how to cast a circle and what you need for that (ch.2), ritual structure (ch.3), followed by chapters on the various categories and types of rituals – moon phase rituals (linked with the menstrual cycle), rites of passage (ages and seasons of life), rituals for everyday happenings (e.g., moving house) and celebratory ceremonies (e.g., birthdays).

I am not really deeply into Goddess rituals but found *Casting the Circle* interesting and absorbing reading. Recommended.

Ineke Bergsma

**Desert Years: Undreaming the American Dream**  
Cynthia Rich  
Spinsters Ink, Minneapolis, 1989

*Desert Years* looks at two crucial issues for women, aging and ecology. The author discusses these issues while she shares some of her experiences of living on the desert for three years. She presents a purely personal point of view which reflects her ideas as a gay woman.

Cynthia and Barbara, her lover, decide to leave their successful careers and uproot themselves from their friends to leap into the unknown: rent a trailer in the middle of a 260,000 acre Desert State Park, two and a half hours from San Diego. The reason? They feel the consumer society "coarsens and cheapens" them. Barbara said once, "I never forget that everything I buy represents time out of the lives of the people who made it".

The desert teaches them about economy and about growing old. In the desert just the act of surviving is a celebration, a defiance.

The author's dream of avoiding the collapse of the world is partially lost after the desert begins to become popularised in less than three years. The "male world" has invaded and she feels "violated". However the book ends on a determined note, to save the desert, and therefore the planet.

I found the author's point of view on the "consumer culture" relevant, and this drew me into the book to venture into other areas, such as the author's Jewish and gay identity.

Kathi Spinks

**The Second Woman Sleuth Anthology**  
Irene Zahava (ed.)  
The Crossing Press, California, 1989

Minding my own business, I'm late and flat! It's... I notice her first, cute, smooth, a black dress, slinky... slung over her shoulder? She comes up to me right there in the street, we exchange a few words. Then she hands me a small parcel tightly wrapped in brown paper. My name's on the front.

"Take a look," she says. "You might find it interesting." Then she's gone.

Ripping off its neat cover, I discover... *The Second Woman Sleuth Anthology* edited by Irene Zahava.

As you might have guessed, I like mystery stories! Ms Zahava has drawn 13 short ones together for my delectation.

"Just the opinions Ma'am."

Hmm OK, let's get the problematic bits over with first. Like

a good comedienne, a good mystery succeeds on its timing.

On first reading, not one of those "I couldn't put it down till..." (It's 4am and I have to be up at 7am). Some stories didn't sustain the mix and flow of tension that I like, and some got clumsy in the heavily-laboured image-creation department (get my drift?).

I did find two that fulfilled my desire and within each there were gems of description, character or moment. And all the Dicks are Cunts, a pleasant change. And ... and then I went to see Pasolini's *Salò* (the strongest and clearest exploration of patriarchal culture, including methods of maintenance and transmission, I have yet come across).

Then I realised what it was about this anthology I most enjoyed; the slow change from *Salò* to some unknown place, that we are in the process of creating, is reflected here. Irene probably sought, and definitely found, diversity; diversity that includes and celebrates sexual preference, class, ethnicity, age, body shape, passion, location. The separation between public and private is constantly blurred to the point of irrelevancy.

Even the ones with licences find an alternative to shooting, and they may need back-up. Perfection is not important, only the courage to take a risk is! And most are about finding pleasures, not reproducing pains. Happy endings abound, although Hollywood probably couldn't use any of them.

The 13 stories in this book are all written by Americans and all have a certain "cleanness". However, there are 13 different writing styles and a variety of concerns ... something for everyone! Some stories are intense, some less so, but they are all sleuthing tales, and horror is not eroticised.

The other thing they all have in common is an ease of styles and simplicity of language usage (not to be confused with naivety) which I think would make them accessible to a broad age and reading skill range (not to mention moods).

Uneven as good detecting stories for me? Yes. A politically interesting and valuable collection of stories and writers? Yes. And one more thing ... on re-reading these stories for the second and third times I noticed themes, threads, details of humour and/or beauty in each story which I had missed first time round.

Familiarity did not breed contempt.

Lindsay Monteath

The views and opinions expressed in these reviews are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of The Women's Library committee or individual committee members.

## T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

Yes, I would love to have my very own The Women's Library T-shirt.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Size:	M	<input type="checkbox"/>	102 cm
	L	<input type="checkbox"/>	110 cm
	XL	<input type="checkbox"/>	118 cm

I have enclosed a cheque or money order for \$25 (which includes postage) payable to The Women's Library Inc. Mail to The Women's Library PO Box 271 Newtown 2042.

# The Women's Library Information Page

## Upcoming Events

- ❖ **Bingo Night** – fundraiser for The Women's Library. Wednesday 8 September 7.30pm at the Britannia Hotel 103 Cleveland Street Chippendale. Thai food available in the hotel restaurant.
- ❖ **Crossroads Conference 1993**, 20 and 21 September. Topics include equal opportunity, anti-discrimination and links to industrial relations and human resources policy and practice. For more information call Pia Morsley 697 3785/2886.
- ❖ **Lesbian Space Project Concert**, Coming From a Strong Space, on 10 December at Sydney Town Hall. For more information call Georgina 567 3339.

The Women's Library thanks the University of Sydney Union Women's Committee who sponsored the cost of mailing out this newsletter. Following is information about activities organised by the Women's Committee on the University of Sydney campus.

- ❖ **Women's Week** at Sydney University will be held from 6–10 September. Free activities include: films (*Tall Poppies* and *Enchanted April*), classes (self-defense, belly dancing, meditation, cooking) performances, bands, forums, pool competition. All women welcome. For more information call Sarah Connelly 660 6081.
- ❖ **Skills Workshops** for women will be held from 30 August – 3 September. Everything free including classes in computer skills, assertiveness, naturopathy and public speaking. For more information call Sarah Connelly 660 6081.
- ❖ The Women's Committee also organises the **Women's Resource Centre** (with a small lending library) and *Tangent* – an annual anthology of women's poetry and prose.

## Book Donations

If you would like to donate books for the library's collection, drop off points are:

- ❖ The Feminist Bookshop, shop 9, Orange Grove Plaza, Balmain Road, Lilyfield
- ❖ The Newtown Women's Centre, 523 King Street, Newtown
- ❖ The Women's Library Bingo Night, 8 September 7.30pm at the Britannia Hotel, Chippendale.

Please contact us at PO Box 271 Newtown 2042, if you would like us to pick up your donation.

Please note that The Women's Library has a no-strings-attached donations policy. The Women's Library reserves the right to decide whether a donated item will be integrated into the collection, discarded, exchanged or sold.

The Women's Library urgently needs a phone and an answering machine. If you can donate either of these items, or if you know of anyone who can, please contact us at PO Box 271 Newtown NSW 2042.

## Books Received From Their Authors

*Viola Tusk* by Claine Keily et al.  
Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives Inc. Periodicals List

## Publications Received

*The Center for Conflict Resolution Newsletter*  
*Queensland Pride*  
*Lesbiana*  
*The Women's Books Exchange Club Newsletter*  
*Lesbian Times*  
*PanDa*  
*Mountain Lesbian News*  
*Victorian Women's Liberation Newsletter*  
*Gayzette*  
*Pink Thylacines*  
*Grapevine*  
*OSWomen*  
*Sappho of the Hunter*  
*Women at Work News*  
*Broadside*  
*Hersay*  
*Gay & Lesbian Parents Coalition International Network*  
*Australian Women's Book Review (complete set received)*

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**Bingo ad:** Amanda Thompson

**Newsletter layout:** Jennifer Bliss (02) 557 5325

## Aims of The Women's Library

- ❖ To house a comprehensive range of feminist and lesbian novels, texts, journals and magazines.
- ❖ To house all required reading for tertiary courses in Sydney that focus on women's issues.
- ❖ To house all Australian lesbian books and magazines.
- ❖ To provide a comfortable space, preferably in the Newtown area, which will be accessible to all women.
- ❖ To act as a local women's resource centre.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **MEMBERSHIP FORM** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Please fill out this form and enclose a cheque or money order payable to The Women's Library Inc. if you wish to become a member of The Women's Library. Membership fees are \$30 for the fully waged and \$20 for others.

*Please let us know if you change your address.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about The Women's Library? \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Fee enclosed:  \$30  \$20

Mail to The Women's Library PO Box 271 Newtown NSW 2042.

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **VOLUNTEER FORM** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Women's Library constantly needs volunteers, both to set up the library and to keep it running smoothly once it is established. If you can offer help in any of the following areas, please fill out and return this form. We will contact you when we need to.

- fundraising
- reviewing books (specify preferred topics)
- publicity/newsletter distribution
- cataloguing
- staffing the library
- mailouts
- renovating
- desktop publishing
- transport/errands

Other skills you would like to offer: \_\_\_\_\_

Time available: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to The Women's Library PO Box 271 Newtown NSW 2042.