

Alameddine, Rabih - *The Perv: Stories*

Excellent collection by a Lebanese-American writer. "The Perv" is especially fine. The reader sees the narrow, personal world that at once becomes universal because of its specificity.

Baker, John - *Literary Agents*

Rather helpful in some ways. But it didn't really help me focus on agents who might handle gay/lesbian fiction. I think the truth is that agents will handle anything that may make them \$. Some negative comments about editors, how their roles have changed in the large corporate takeovers of publishing companies.

Bernard, Andre - *Now All We Need is a Title*

Cameron, Peter - *Leap Year*

He tossed this one off for fun like one of Maupin's books. Seems superficial unlike his other work. [No book is tossed off. They're all hard to write. Sorry I said that.]

Clark, Robert - *Mr. White's Confession*

A great sense of the profound nature of the human condition arising out of otherwise simple circumstances. He did the same in *In the Deep Midwinter*, perhaps better there than here. I like his books—mysteries unraveling—without being predictable sort of whodunits. Leaves the reader with questions to ponder about our humanity. (Why did W. commit suicide? I guess because Maggie did not die. She could have "told" on him, so he checked out? I'm still not sure.)

Cunningham, Michael - *The Hours*

Very fine. More complex than it might first appear. It seems that Cunningham likes to work with "threes." The novel is about the lives of three women, one of whom happens to be Virginia Wolff. [Re-read in 2003 before seeing the film.]

Great sentences: "He demands that his mother pick him up so he can see the soldiers better; so he will be more visible to them. All this enters the bridge, resounds through its wood and stone, and enters Virginia's body. Her face, pressed sideways to the piling, absorbs it all: the truck and the soldiers, the mother and the child" (8).

Gurganus, Allan - *Plays Well With Others*

Original prose, if not thought. "There are two kinds of . . ." (70) sets up a dichotomy throughout the book. Turtle on p. 67 is great metaphor.

Noel Coward: "Work is more fun than fun" (72)

Harry Truman: “Marco stated Harry Truman’s famous edict, “The world is run by C students” (212). [George W. Bush?]

He handles the AIDS story as a master should, giving historical and cultural context, really better than anyone has done so far. Better than Picano, Mordden, even Edmund White. [On par with *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket* by John Weir.]

Heim, Scott - *In Awe*

A strange combination of psychological thriller, (gay) mystery, the gothic element. Very well written, almost overwritten at times. Set in Lawrence, Kansas. I could hear the cadences of the voices I grew up with. He used the vernacular in dialogue to great effect: pop = soda or Coke. Character has an unbelievable obsession with a boy he can’t have. But he does “have” him, in a sense, when the boy dies. Changes POV.

Highsmith, Patricia - *Ripley Underground*

Entertaining, light reading.

Highsmith, Patricia - *The Talented Mr. Ripley*

Read it just prior to seeing the [1999] film. Two different products. Book is interesting, not a mystery. More of a “thriller.” Found myself rooting for Ripley, quite an immoral (amoral?) character.

Himes, Chester - *Yesterday Will Make You Cry*

African-American writing in 1930s. Reissued this time as it was originally written. Main characters are white persons (straight) who fall in love in prison. Interesting. Helped me to focus on the importance of “place” in my work.

Jones, James H. - *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life*

Absolutely astounding biography for a number of reasons: 1) Kinsey’s private life of masochism and how it sprang from a tortured childhood. The “Kinsey”: he attached a rope . . . wrapped it around his scrotum, tossed the other end of rope over a pipe above him, stood on a chair, holding this end of the rope . . . and jumped off. It was a “punishment” for failing to receive a Rockefeller Foundation grant. 2) Professionally, Kinsey doggedly pursued huge research numbers in all his scientific research whether it was the gall wasp or human sexual behavior. 3) Kinsey filmed individuals in various sexual acts, using the attic of his home.

Kaiser, Charles - *The Gay Metropolis*

Gossipy yet historically accurate—filling in dates and times of some events (like

Stonewall) and otherwise unknown events in U.S. gay history since WWII. [The lover in Forster's *Maurice* is based on Forster's lover, a married policeman. Patrick Dennis, author of *Auntie Mame*, "ran off with a Mexican boy." Died in Mexico City. In 1979, two boys escorted each other to the younger one's senior prom sponsored by a Sioux Falls, South Dakota, high school. 1979!]

Lamb, Wally - *I Know This Much is True*

*Men on Men 7* - David Bergman, editor

Mitgang, David - *Words Still Count with Me: A Chronicle of Literary Conversations*

Real, Terrence - *I Don't Want to Talk About It*

Excellent book about male depression. Real explains so many things, not only in my own life, but in the entire masculine culture of our civilization: alcoholism, workaholics, physical and sexual abuse. Real seems to fill in the blanks left by the inconclusive nature of my own traditional psychotherapy 26 years ago.

Richardson, Bill - *Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast*

Funny memoir about twins who run a bed and breakfast in Canada.

Sarno, John - *Healing Back Pain*

Sedaris, David - *Naked*

A "biography" although it reads, bizarrely enough, like fiction. Wickedly funny. As a child Sedaris finds a pornographic book full of typos. The results: "In the opening chapter the daughter is caught with her brother's *ceck* in her *pissy*, calling out '*Feck me, hardir.*'" [An Irish pornographer?]

Stadler, Matthew - *Allan Stein*

Read twice in succession. Absolutely loved it. The greatest combination of nonfiction and fiction I've read. Hard to tell where his prose takes up and others' leaves off. And . . . the most sensual, sexual development . . . since *Lolita*. This is a gay male *Lolita*. Lovely.

[One of my friends has failed to return my hardback copy. You know who you are. Locate my name stamped on the inside front cover, and return it now or face dire consequences. Please.]

Styron, William - *Darkness Visible*

Styron's memoir about suffering and surviving a major depression.

Taylor, Benjamin - *Tales Out of School*

Okay. Some things about his prose bothered me, an archaic (if not incorrect) usage of particular words. Plot was quaint.