

James M. Barrie William Beckford Ludwig Beethoven Romaine Brooks Guy Burgess William S. Burroughs Sir Richard Burton Jean Cocteau Sir Noel Coward James Dean Emily Dickinson Arne Jacobsen Edward II Brian Epstein Malcolm Forbes E.M. Forster Anne Frank Frederick II (The Great) Paul Goodman Radcliffe Hall Richard Halliburton Henry III Magnus Hirschfeld

by dunning henschel

TODD DROVE THE FORTY MINUTES from Truro to the airport listening to Billy Bragg. Actually, it was just one song: *Sexuality*. He couldn't stomach the Christmas music on the radio. He played the song over and over and over again. He had even become fluent in the cockney accent, fluent enough to sing the song in the same tones as Billy. Somehow originality doesn't always matter.

The weather was clear when he reached Halifax International. Todd had been hurt when Simon left for McGill. He had planned for the two of them to continue going to school together. Now, he was glad to miss him. He had had the chance to see a solitary point of view.

Four months ago, a week after moving into Howe Hall, he moved out. He hated it. When his mother asked why: "I just can't play hockey all the time." He was lucky enough to find a room open with four others on Vernon St. He had seen an ad posted in the Student Union Building: "Gay positive environment." He practically ran out of the SUB the first time he read it; then he studied it a hundred times a day before calling.

He was surprised when a female voice answered. "Uh, hi!" he paused, "I'm calling about the room, is it taken?" Hoping it was. He asked if he could see it. Yes. He hung up. Walked out the door; stopped; turned around, picked up the phone again: "Hi, I just called..."

"Oh, yeah?"  
"About the room?"  
"Yeah?"  
"Where's Vernon Street?"  
"New in town?" She laughed.  
"Why, does it show?"  
"Well, a little, I'm Jenn."  
"Todd."  
"Where are you Todd?"  
"Howe Hall."

She told him to go one block up, to the Capitol store and turn left.

SIMON WAS AT MIRABEL an hour too early. He spent some time thumbing through *L'Etanger* but he couldn't read it without the French-English dictionary he felt too conspicu-

ous to pull out. The time passed slowly. He felt he hadn't talked to anyone since leaving Truro. He wanted to talk to Todd. He didn't want to talk to Todd.

Simon had spent the term immersed in work. He almost never went out, he lived in the libraries. He knew some people on his floor and some in his classes but hadn't made any friends. His marks were great. The thought of being in university scared him. But he had chosen to be far away from the people he knew. Home had become small, even before he left. He felt sure that Jean, his ex-girlfriend, had figured out his relationship with Todd.

He ate the food; drank the three drink maximum, and fell asleep circling Halifax. He was almost hungover when Todd met him at the baggage carousel. "Thanks for coming."

"No problem, Si, good to see you!" Todd smiled, holding out his arms asking for the hug he thought he deserved. It didn't come. Todd established a physical ease by putting his hand on his friend's shoulder. They picked up the bags.

During the drive back to Truro, Todd told Simon more about his new home. Simon wasn't impressed by the stories. He was relieved that Todd hadn't told anyone in Truro about his new home. Simon felt a mixture of fear and envy. He wanted to tell Todd that he didn't want to sleep over any more, but he couldn't find the words. Simon had always thought that Todd would want to be married, have kids, stability, respectability. It just hadn't seriously occurred to him that Todd would want to be openly Gay. They had always dated girls. "I know, I've always had better luck, but luck changes, doesn't it?"

The conversation changed as Todd turned off the highway into Truro, Simon talked about the second hand stores on Rue St. Denis, and the strip clubs on Ste. Catherine. They turned left, drove behind the mall and up past the tracks into Bible Hill.

They ate with Simon's parents. Michael was as excited about seeing Todd as he was about seeing his own son again. Todd and Simon both knew this. Neither minded, Todd's father had been dead for nearly ten years. Michael was a surrogate for him. Afterwards, the pair headed to a gathering of their high school friends, a welcome home party.

"LOOK, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS."  
"Two years ago."  
"And nothing's changed."  
"Well things have for me. You don't understand what it's been like. I talk to people, other people, who know what it's like being gay. I live with them."

"Have you told them about me?"  
"I've told them about us."  
"Shit."  
"Simon, I want people to know who I am."  
"Shit!"  
"I'm sorry, I can't lie to people anymore."  
"Why expose yourself to the ridicule."  
"I haven't had to face any ridicule. Since I've come out, no one has ever said anything negative to me."

"To you, no. But what do they say behind your back?"  
"I don't know." Todd paused. "But I can't control that anyway."  
"They label you. They make jokes about you."

"So what."  
"So it's all they see! They forget about Todd Philips the person. They only see Todd the faggot."  
"Well," Todd felt smug and campy, "if they think it's interesting enough to talk about."

"I'm serious."  
"So am I. At least, at the very least Simon, I don't have to laugh at their homophobic drivel."  
"So why don't you tell my Dad?"  
Todd felt defeated, "I thought I'd ask you first." Simon was right, there was fear. Simon had hit on the right chord. It wasn't as easy as it should be. At Dal he assumed people knew that he was gay, so he never had to tell anyone. If they knew anything at all about him — they knew he was gay; he wore it like a badge, sometimes to a fault. But home was a different story. Here there were people who could be honestly shocked, people who counted. People who could reject and hurt him. "Why does this have to be so difficult?"

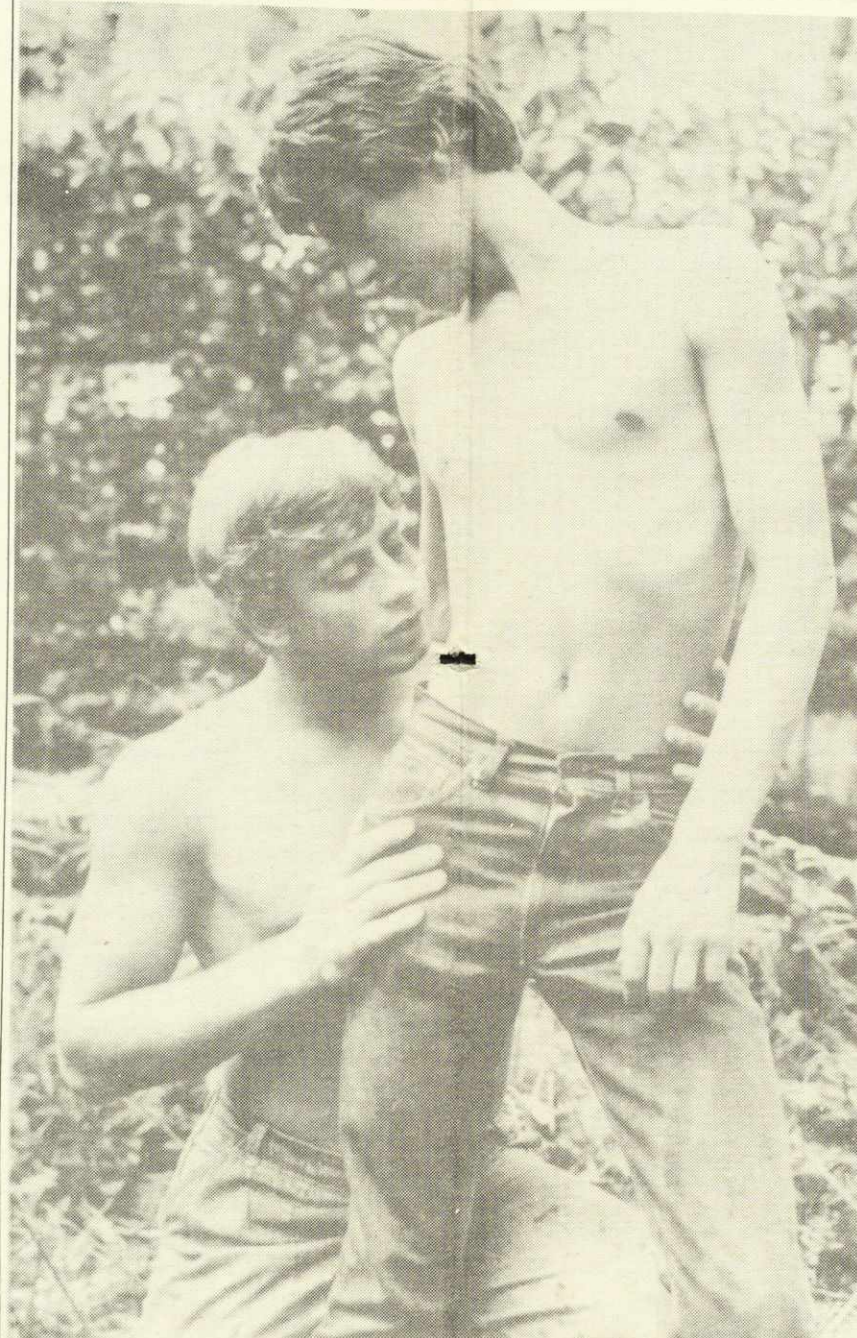
"Too much at stake."  
"Jesus, Simon, what do we have in common with these people anyway." He had never felt close to their high school crowd but the question was rhetorical. "Seriously, I've only seen a Peter

a couple of times this fall, and he lives closer to me now than when we lived here. I only ever see him in bars."  
"What bars, Rumours?" Simon was preoccupied.  
"No, I've only been there once, but no. There's a really funky place downtown, Barrington St. — gay, straight, whatever. We go there a lot."  
"Does he know?"  
"Well, if he does, I didn't tell him, and he's never asked me."  
"Have you slept with anyone?" Simon stopped himself from adding the word "else," but it was in his voice. He let the car slow down; felt his skin colouring. Usually everyone but Todd scares him. Usually Todd made him scare himself. But Todd was never the source of fear.

"Well," Todd sensed the anxiety, "to be honest," he felt the car slow again, "I have slept with one guy." Todd smiled to himself — Simon deserved to feel anxious. "I couldn't help myself. Actually, Peter got us together, but he doesn't know anything about it."  
"What's his name."  
"Oh, now, I can't tell you that. He, well, I promised I wouldn't tell anyone."  
"What did he look like?" Simon was hurt. The car was almost completely stopped. He felt suddenly distanced from Todd.

Todd continued teasing him: "He's blonde, blue eyes, about five ten, good build, but he could stand to loose a pound or two." He put his hand on Simon's neck, "and he has the strangest divot at the bottom of his neck."  
"Fuck you." The car started again. They laughed. Simon finished driving to the party.

DURING THE PARTY THEY BECAME separated by circumstances. Simon left to talk to his ex-girlfriend — Jean wanted him back. Todd spent some time reminiscing with Peter, and went home early, knowing that Simon would let himself in the basement window.  
At three o'clock, Simon went to find his friend. As usual, he found Todd asleep in his mother's basement, a gin and tonic on the floor beside him. He found the bottle and poured himself one, then sat at his friend's feet. He listened to the remix of *Small Town Boy* that was



# COMING HOME

excerpted from a longer story

### My Lesbian Alphabet

- B. Bunting**  
androgynous, Anne (Queen), AC/DC, Amazon, Alther (Lisa), AIDS, Allen (Jeffner)
- B. bulldyke, black lesbians, breasts, butch, black triangle, belly, Bilitis, bisexuality, Bernhardt (Sarah), brush cut, biologists, Bechdel (Alison)**
- C. closeted, clitoris, Colette, come, culture, coming-out, CKDU, cunt, crossdressing, community, Califia (Pat)**
- D. dyke, Desert Hearts, diesel, Deitch (Donna), disabled, Dickinson (Emily), desire, doctors, dancing, drag kings, dental dams, Donahoe (Amanda), Douglas (Michelle), Dietrich (Marlene)**
- E. ethics, Earhart (Amelia), eroticism, Etheridge (Melissa), erotica, ejaculation (female), equality, ethnicities**
- F. female, Frank (Anne), fucking, fist, femme, frigging, Frye (Marilyn), feminism, Forrest (Katherine V.), family, fingers, Ferron, freedom, finances**
- G. gay, going-down, groin, gorgeous, GLAD, gaybashing, Gazette, G-Spot**
- H. Hall (Radcliffe), homophobia, health, Human Rights, heterosexism, HIV, hairy legs, humour, hormones, The Hunger**
- I. inversion, immigration, incest, illicit, intellectuals, illustrations, isms, issues**
- J. Joan of Arc, Journal of Homosexuality**
- K. K.Y., King (Billie Jean), Kinsey Report**
- L. Lesbian, Lang (K.D.), Lesbos, love, lust, lasciviousness, lawyers, living wills, LUPPIES, leather, lace, lavender, lesbian detective novels, libido**

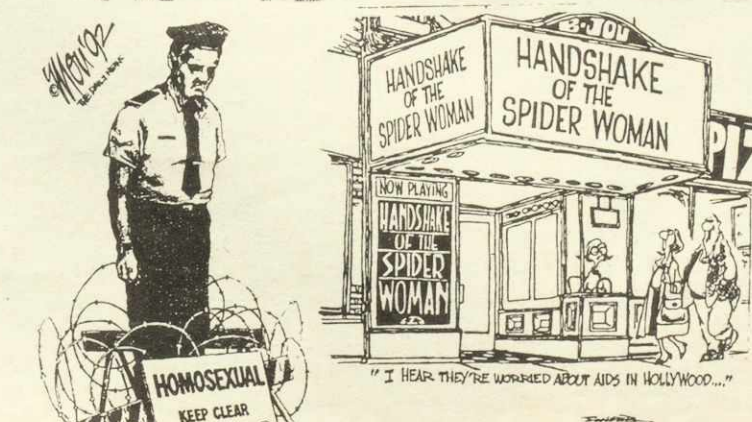


"My attitude toward anybody's sexual persuasion is this: without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible."  
Frank Zappa



**Books — Gay Men**  
*A Boy's Own Story*, by Edmund White  
*The Celluloid Closet*, by Vito Russo  
*City of Night*, by John Rechy  
*Fadeout*, by Joseph Hansen  
*Gay Spirit*, edited by Mark Thompson  
*In Heat*, by Larry Mitchell  
*The Male Muse*, edited by Ian Young  
*One Teenager in Ten*, edited by Ann Heron  
*A Single Man*, by Christopher Isherwood  
*Tales of the City*, by Armistead Maupin

**Books — Lesbian**  
*Rubyfruit Jungle*, by Rita Mae Brown  
*Sinking, Stealing*, by Jan Clausen  
*Chamber Music*, by Doris Grumbach  
*Memory Board*, by Jane Rule  
*Patience and Sarah*, by Isabel Miller  
*The Price of Salt*, by Claire Morgan  
*Contract with the World*, by Jane Rule  
*We Too Are Drifting and Torchlight to Valhalla*, by Gale Wilhelm



- M. military, Miller (Isabel), marriage, Madchen in Uniform, mothers, menstrual cycle, multiple orgasms**
- N. N.O.W., Navratilova (Martina), Naiad Press, nipples, NDP**
- O. ovaries, Off Our Backs, On Our Backs, outing, orgasms, ordination, O'Keefe (Georgia)**
- P. Phranc, philosophy, potlucks, periods, PMS, professors, perversion, power, pornography, peace, Pandora, pride**
- Q. queer, Queen Christina, Queer Nation**
- R. Rule (Jane), Rubyfruit Jungle, Roosevelt (Eleanor), Rumours, Rites, rebellion, rape**
- S. Sappho, S&M, sixty-nine, Sackville-West (Vita), sexuality, Smith (Bessie), Stein (Gertrude), separatism, sisters, safer sex, spinsters, pinsters, Shockley (Ann Ellen)**
- T. titillation, tribalism, Toklas (Alice B.), therapists, telephone bills, transcontinental flights, Two nice girls, Troubridge (Lady Una)**
- U. unconventional, underarm hair, universality, underwater sex, uncompromising, understanding**
- V. vagina, vanilla sex, Viven (Renee), vulva, vampires, vegetarianism, vibrator, variety, violence, virginity, visibility, voice, voluptuousness**
- W. Woolf (Virginia), witches, warne schwester, Well of Loneliness, Wollstonecraft (Mary), wet, woman, work, Wittig (Monique)**
- X. x-rated**
- Y. yummy, youth (as in lesbian)**
- Z. zeitgeist, zzz (the sound a lesbian makes after too much good sex), Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, Z Budapest**