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Tackling the Issues

Editor's Pick



Tattooed Lady, Amelia Klem Osterud (Speck Press):

Today, Oscar winners like Angelina Jolie are famous for their body ink, and lesbian supermodel Jenny Shimizu is as renowned for her girl-straddling-a-wrench tattoo as her rocking body. But once women with tattoos were freak show material. Tattoo historian Amelia Klem Osterud offers up a fascinating look at the daring women who covered their bodies in ink and traveled the country performing nearly nude at a time when it was considered scandalous to even show an ankle. Gutsy broads like Irene Woodward and Nora Hildebrandt captivated circus audiences with their inked bodies. Circus producers sometimes promoted the performers with racist fantasy tales of their abduction and forced tattooing in the hands of "savages," which made tattooing into a culturally acceptable substitute for rape. Osterud's loving historical memoir pays tribute to these women with amazing vintage photos and text that combines their personal narratives along with passages on feminist labor history, circus life and the impact these tattooed ladies made on modern neo-burlesque performers. (speckpress.com) [DAM]

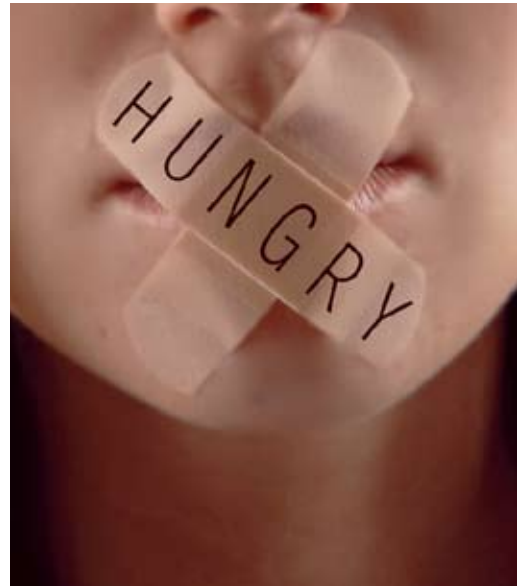
Nonfiction to engage the heart and the mind. **By Rachel Pepper**

A young woman and her mother offer an intimate look at a family with eating disorders, and a new collection of essays on gender has its finger on the pulse of this expansive and expanding topic.

Hungry: A Mother and Daughter Fight Anorexia, Sheila and Lisa Himmel (Berkley Trade): True, this is not a lesbian title, but the subject of eating disorders reaches across the boundaries of sexuality, race and ethnicity. Eating disorders affect many women, yet the topic of eating disorders, which includes anorexia, bulimia, food restricting and bingeing and purging, are still a taboo topic in the LGBT community. There are few LGBT-specific books on this topic, with the exception of recent titles, *Looking Queer: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Communities*, and Gary A. Grahl's memoir, *Skinny Boy: A Young Man's Battle and Triumph Over Anorexia*.

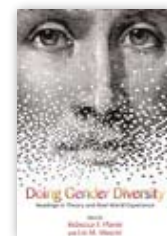
So, who can readers turn to to learn more about this devastating topic? *Hungry* is a recently published memoir written by a mother and daughter team. And it's not just any mother and daughter—this pair includes a mom who's an award-winning food critic, and a daughter who changes from an enthusiastic eating companion to a secretive, troubled teenager suffering from both anorexia and bulimia. The irony of their situation is obviously not lost on the Himmels, a family for whom food is both a passion and a profession. They also happen to live in the San Francisco area, where sustenance is celebrated and there are more restaurants per capita than almost anywhere else in the world. Lisa's eating disorder developed slowly, starting with a predisposition to stockiness (despite being involved in many sports), and a childhood drenched in food and low self-esteem. Lisa's mom, Sheila, is accepting and nurturing, but like all parents, imperfect, and the frankness with which she admits her own faults is refreshing.

As her parents begin to realize the extent to which the eating disorders have become entrenched in Lisa's life, the family dynamics implode. The dual voices in the book differ on some important points, including the availability of junk food in the house, the misread cries for help, even the way Lisa looked as a young teenager—her mother says she was "never fat," but Lisa insists she was. "I'm not sure



what I weighed, but it didn't matter because I felt fat." So began many years of over-exercising, skipping meals, restricting foods, bulimia and an obsession that consumed about 90 percent of her thoughts on any given day.

As the family stumbles towards recovery, the book winds down with mother and daughter (Lisa is now in her early 20s) expressing hope for the future. There may still be a bumpy road ahead, but the mere fact of Lisa's survival, and the revelation that healing is possible, will provide comfort for many families on the same path. (us.penguin.com)



Doing Gender Diversity: Readings in Theory and Real-World Experience, editors Rebecca F. Plante and Lis M. Maurer (Westview Press): Gender is a big topic to tackle. But if any new book on the subject were to find a place for itself in the queer academic canon, *Doing Gender*

Diversity surely would be it. For one thing, the book's editors, Rebecca Plante and Lis Maurer, are up to date on the topic. Plante, an associate professor at Ithaca College, has written or edited several books on sexuality, and Maurer is the founding coordinator of the Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Education, Outreach, and Services at

Ithaca College. Both are adept at bridging the academic divide and dealing with real-world applications of scholarly issues.

In this text, the editors have assembled a collection of essays that they hope will demonstrate “the multiple ways in which the universe of gender is socially, culturally and historically constructed.” The book is divided into three main sections—“The Basics of Gender,” “The Microcosm of Gender: Individuals in Context,” and “The Macrocosm of Gender: Institutions, Structures, and Politics”—and then broken down into subcategories such as “Rattling the Cage: Social Change,” and “Constructing the Gendered Body.” A sampling of the plethora of essays with intriguing titles that include “Intimate Transitions: Transgender Practices of Partnering and Parenting,” “His and Hers: Gender and Garage Sales,” “Part of the Package: Ideas of Masculinity Among Male-Identified Transpeople,” “‘Dude, You’re a Fag’: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse,” “The Effects of Images of African American Women in Hip Hop,”

and “The Death of David Reimer: A Tale of Sex, Science, and Abuse.” Other topics covered in the text are “ethnic anorexia,” cheerleading, drag queens, the “pregnant man” and the many intersections of race, gender and culture that occur in diverse communities. There is a generous amount of material for and about the transgender community, and many voices of people of color.

Although this book is formatted like a textbook, and its use will primarily be in classrooms, it’s also a current snapshot of where the field of gender studies is these days. As such, some snapshots are too closely cropped, others are a bit blurry and still others are satisfyingly finely focused. Even at more than 500 pages, this collection still cannot adequately cover every topic that fit under the category of gender studies and diversity. But kudos definitely are due to Maurer and Plante for reaching broadly across the gender spectrum and presenting as wide a range of perspectives as possible, for both the academic and causal reader alike. (*perseusbooks.com*) ■

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Strategies for Successful Career Change
Martha E. Mangelsdorf
(Ten Speed Press)

Mangelsdorf’s book couldn’t have come at a better time, with record unemployment affecting women across the country. This seasoned business journalist offers tips on how to change your career while still paying your bills and how to explore new careers in low-risk ways. An engaging read for those who haven’t yet aligned their professional goals with their personal life. (*tenspeed.com*) [DAM]



Sisters: An Anthology
Ed. Jan Freeman, Emily Wojcik and Deborah Bull
(Paris Press)

With works by Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, Daisy Zamora and other feminist literary leaders, this collection of poems, short stories and memoirs eloquently explores sibling love, adoration and rivalry. Read it with your sister and the two of you will be practicing your secret language again and arguing about that shirt she borrowed and never returned. Ah, sisters! (*parispress.org*) [Sarah C. Jiménez]



The Apprenticeship of Big Toe P
Rieko Matsuura, trans. by Michael Emmerich
(Kodansha International)

After a friend’s suicide, Kazumi Mano wakes up from a nap to discover her big toe has turned into a penis. After joining a show featuring sexual abnormalities, feelings begin to stir inside Kazumi—and her big toe—that she never knew existed. Even with a premise that might seem perverse, this novel is a surprisingly mainstream meditation on love and friendship. (*kodansha-intl.com*) [Stephanie Vernier]



The Veil of Sorrow
Crystal Michallet-Romero
(P.D. Publishing)

An eerie château, a woman with a haunted past and servants who only come out at night—these gothic tropes add to the chilling atmosphere in this novel. The lesbian heroine, Cecilia Natasha Dupuin, is summoned to the château to transcribe a memoir for the mysterious Comtesse Laurensa. In telling her story, the elderly woman reveals a supernatural secret. (*pdpublishing.com*) [Lisa Gunther]

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