

Book Review: A Response to Gore Vidal on Reading the Memoir *Palimpsest*

by Don Whipple

For a man so well educated, Gore Vidal remains an adolescent in some areas (like me). He went to St. Alban's, a prep school associated with the National Cathedral in Washington. There, he fell in love with a classmate. They had sex — mutual masturbation, actually. After graduation, the young man became a Marine and was killed in the Pacific during World War II.

Gore continued to be in love with the ghost of the boy that was, even though there was evidence that the young man intended to become a pro baseball player and marry his sweetheart after the war.

However, while serving in the Pacific, the Marine wrote home for a copy of Walt Whitman's poetry. And Gore now wonders... Was the Marine revealing himself, and trying to connect with the world and the feelings he and Gore once shared?

In searching for the truth, Gore recently visited the mother and former sweetheart of the Marine, hoping, I believe, that either one would say something like this: "Before he dies, in his last letter home, he wrote, 'If you see Gore, tell him I love him.'" But he got no such message, and so

lives out his life with the fantasy of what might have been.

Gore and his present lover (a forty year relationship) have bought a plot in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington DC, not far from where the Marine lies buried.

Gore also suffered, and suffers yet, from his mother Nina. Like a lot of socialites, she shuffled her child off to private schools and camps. He grew to detest her. They were both in London, living separately, when she died in a hospital. He did not go to see her on her deathbed. He writes that at her death it was finished between them, whatever there was. He pretends she is out of his heart and memory forever, but her presence pervades the entire book.

Gore is hurting like a child that has been abandoned. He thinks now he has written her off and left that hurt behind. I believe the pretense only intensifies it. Any good counselor could get him to admit that Nina is and always will be a presence in his life. He must grieve over what never was between them. He must forgive her. Then, I think, he will be free at last. ▼

Regular Meetings

AA MEETINGS:

BURLINGTON — Sundays, 5 p.m., Christ Church Presbyterian, Redstone Campus, University of Vermont.

— Thursdays, 7 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, Cherry Street, Burlington. Call 658-4221.

CONCORD (NH) — Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, North Main and Washington Streets.

KEENE (NH) — Saturdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call (603) 357-4300.

MANCHESTER (NH) — Sundays, 7:30 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 669 Union St.

NASHUA (NH) — Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Nashua Unitarian Church.

BISEXUAL NETWORK OF VERMONT

Last Saturday of each month, 6:30 p.m., City Market, Burlington. Call 658-9544 or 865-3062. Discussion group: first Sunday of each month, 4:00 p.m., Outright Vermont offices. For more info, call 849-6638.

COLLEGE GROUPS:

Middlebury GLBA — Sundays, 8:00 p.m., Chellis House.

UVM GLBA — Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. For location and/or more details, call 656-0699.

GAY GUY GET-TOGETHERS

The Gay Guy Get Togethers are currently under renovation. For an update, call 254-8263.

HIV/AIDS MEETINGS

BRATTLEBORO AREA AIDS PROJECT — For PLWA, friends, and families. 4th Floor, 67 Main St., Brattleboro. Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Call Maryann at 254-8263.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR HIV+/AIDS WOMEN — Mondays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Greenfield MA. Call (413) 773-8888.

VERMONT CARES — Support group for gay/bi men living with HIV/AIDS, Mondays, 5:30-7 p.m. Call 863-2437.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN living with HIV/AIDS — Alternate Tuesdays, Call Ayana at 863-2437 for dates, times, and locations.

WASHINGTON COUNTY AREA SUPPORT GROUP for people living with HIV/AIDS — Second and fourth Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m. Call 229-4560 for location and more info.

Support group for family and friends of people living with HIV/AIDS, Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. Call 863-8162.

HUNTINGTON OPEN WOMEN'S LAND (HOWL)

Sunday brunches, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 864-5595.

KEENE GAY MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesdays. Unitarian Universalist Church, 69 Washington St. Keene, NH. Call Brian at (800) 639-7903.

MYRIAD NETWORK

For g/l/b/t's in the Berkshires. Fridays, 7 p.m., First Congregational Church, Williamstown MA. Write Box 288, Williamstown MA 01267.

NETWORK NORTH

Cheap Movie Nights, Tuesdays, 6:15 p.m. at Wilton Mall Food Court, Wilton NY.

Coffee Nights, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.

Coffee Mornings, Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. at Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs NY.

OUTRIGHT VERMONT

GLBQ youth groups (under 23). Fridays, 7-9 p.m. Young men's group (under 23): Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call 800-GLB-CHAT.

GLBQ 'zine publishing group (under 23): First Wednesday of every month, 7-9 p.m.

P-FLAG OF CENTRAL VERMONT

3rd Sundays, 1 p.m., 2nd Floor Chapel, Unitarian Universalist Church, Montpelier (use School Street entrance). Call Jan at 479-9246.

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES FOR MEN (SAM)

Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. For more info, contact Ed at 649-3133 or SMED@valley.net.

STRAIGHT SPOUSES OF G/L/B PARTNERS

Support group, every third Tuesday at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Northampton MA. Call Jane at (413) 625-6033.

YOUTH AWARE

Support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth in Addison County. First Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m., Ilsley Library Meeting Room, Middlebury. For more info, call Hugh at 388-6503.



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