

## Reviews

### Children's Book Review: *Amy Asks a Question: Grandma, What's a Lesbian?*

by Jeanne Arnold; illustrated by Barbara Lindquist. 1996, Mouser Courage Press. \$10.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Joy Griffith

*Amy Asks a Question* illustrates love, nurturing, and understanding in a totally humane way (the way we wish the meaning of "human" to be). It should be on the book shelves of "public" America for the mass education of pupils and adults alike.

In the book, ten-year-old Amy and her friends are called "lesbians" on the playground for hugging one another after a game. Amy asks her mother what the word means, and together they go to talk with Amy's grandmother who, with her woman partner of twenty years, answers Amy's questions and clarifies her concerns.

The book is about pride and a child's adoration of her grand elders. A little girl wonders why even more pride is needed than the pride she already feels for her talented grandma. She learns about both courage and overcoming fear. Amy could only love the fact that her grandma(s) were "lesbian" by learning at the same time the reasons why others shout, sneer and make the word sound bad. This family love story teaches Amy that "the more confident she is about herself, the more comfortable she will be in the future."

Respectability and human uniqueness in the pursuit of happiness, mutual trust and loving acceptance are the values Amy learns through daily living. What a powerful booklet this one is...a great gift given the needs of our nation! ▼

### Book Review: *Superfag*

by Daniel Curzon, 1996, IGNA Books.

Reviewed by Bruce Johnson

Despite efforts to educate people about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered issues, homophobia will always be present. Those who like to indulge their fantasies and believe otherwise will find a friendly friend and hero in "Superfag," the title character of Daniel Curzon's latest novel.

Superfag has been given a mission to eradicate homophobia using any means at his disposal. The Supreme Being tells him, "There are very many on Earth who think it right to laugh at others but never at themselves, as well as others who are sour-faced with their own righteousness." In addition, he is given a black stone from Stonewall representing strength, along with a red stone from Sodom and Gomorrah representing self-doubt. His Heavenly Father states the mission would be too easy without the red stone.

Vengeful acts toward harassers and tormentors of gay people follow. Somewhat later, Superfag observes humankind always replacing one set of problems with another. Attempting to understand the world's various cultures and attitudes, he soon views his mission as futile. Although he had resolved not to quit, Superfag tires and believes he cannot continue.

Awakening from the "sleep of death," Superfag discovers the world is in the greatest period of sexual freedom ever known. Moreover, the world is now enlightened by the omnipresence of gay people along with their tremendous diversity of talents. Now it seems straight people are the ones to be tolerated. Before departing Earth, Superfag tells his attendants that people always have sought messiahs for guidance and always will.

Throughout the book, Daniel Curzon has poked fun at many often homophobic groups, including (but not limited to) Catholic priests, Muslim mullahs, the military, the religious right, portions of Hollywood, factions of the news media, and "unacceptable" gays within the gay community (i.e. those who claim to be gay but who have not accepted their own homosexuality and consequently direct their anger and self-loathing toward other gay people).

The Holy Fundamentalist Society of America denounced this book as blasphemous and unwholesome. I, however, found it to be amusing, although rather outrageous at times. I'd recommend the book to anyone in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community who has experienced first-hand any kind of homophobic attack. ▼

### Music Review: Ferron, "Still Riot"

(1996, Warner Bros Records 9 46292-2)

Reviewed by Joy D. Griffith

The best way to get to know Ferron is to listen to some of her many compact discs. She's truly a poet and has chronicled her life changes in her albums. I would particularly recommend "Shadows on a Dime" for starters. Over the years she has fought her way through a variety of problems, including a bit of a battle with the bottle, and she is now happily ensconced in a long term relationship and has a child and two dogs.

A Canadian, Ferron lives on Vashon Island in Puget Sound, which is one of the bodies of water upon which Seattle is built in the fine state of Washington. She lives in a red house up a quaint neighborly street. She is very quiet and tries not to draw attention to herself. Ferron radiates (as you would expect) a grim intensity. You would immediately like Ferron if you were to meet her at the local library when she brings her nippy little redhead daughter in for a book. Ferron's daughter (about 3) is shared with her life partner.

Ferron, a critically acclaimed Canadian singer/songwriter, appears at many folk and womyn's music festivals for "talented lesbian content," has a number of hits to her credit, and is slightly more positive in her writing and presentation than many lesbian singers.

On "Still Riot," she displays her endless singing variations. In the song "Alice Says Yes," the mood is romantic, with the singer pleading ever so clearly to share, give, and be with "me" to a rhythmic beat that our bodies can move to. In "Venus as Appearances," the dreamy mood is abruptly changed to a rock beat on the search for life's foolish dreams of love. But what this listener mellows to is the title song, where I feel her sultry talk permeate my soul!

Ferron is incredible! She's a real poet. She expresses herself in spiritual terms so concise and poetic that she creates the perfect art. And this new album is a delight. "Still Riot" is certainly more up-beat than anything she has ever done before, and I think, musically it's the best as well. I don't know of anyone who has chronicled personal growth and change as a womyn any better than she has.

Ferron has looked the demons in the eye and made them all recognizable for her listeners. She has whipped them, too! If you should get a chance to see her latest road show — RUN, don't walk. She's backed by an absolutely superior band!

Want to know more about Ferron? Check out her Web Site: <http://www.ferron.com/>. ▼

### Music Review:

#### Catie Curtis, "Truth From Lies"

(1996, Guardian Records D 113016)

Reviewed by Alex Corey

Catie Curtis took the gay and lesbian music scene by storm last year, winning both "Song of the Year" and "Record of the Year" at the Gay and Lesbian Association of Musical Artists' "GLAMMY" awards for the beautiful honesty of her lesbian love song "Radical."

With a voice somewhat reminiscent of Shawn Colvin, Curtis mixes poetry and politics in her lyrics and infuses her music with a buoyant spirit despite difficult subjects such as domestic abuse. Hope and optimism prevail, particularly in the song "Radical," when she expresses to her lesbian lover: "But I'm not being radical when I kiss you, And I don't love you to make a point; It's the hollow of my heart that cries when I miss you, and keeps me alive when we're apart."

With musical assists by folk superstars Patty Larkin and John Gorka, Catie Curtis has produced a stunning collection of songs on "Truth From Lies." As her liner notes state, "You can walk into these songs like you're in a small club somewhere, or in someone's living room. Somewhere I've been, someone I've seen could remind you of someone you've been or some place you know. And you can stay there a while, as long as you want, really."

With "Truth From Lies" blasting from the speakers, you'll probably want to stay in that place a long, long time, and come back to visit often. It's a top-rate folk-rock album from an amazing new talent, a woman who deserves all the recognition she got at the GLAMMYs. ▼

## Insult to Injury

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mental condition at the time as well as the fact that her partner is evidently much larger and stronger than she is.

Davis was taken to the Northeast Kingdom Corrections Center, where she claims she was left alone for hours in a locked room despite her demands for medical attention. Her requests to be brought to a hospital emergency room for treatment were allegedly met with further insults and crude language.

On Monday, Davis said she stood in shackles before the court and awaited the judge's decision on a charge of battery. She was subsequently released on her own personal recognizance on several conditions, one of which included not physically or verbally threatening her partner again.

When their story made headlines on the front page the next day, both Davis and MacDonald were shocked. They felt that their status as "out" lesbians and the media attention around the hate crime case had contributed to the intensity of the Friday night incident and subsequent coverage. "I feel that was one of the primary factors in my treatment (by the police)," Davis said. "That's why I made the front page of the newspaper, too."

Following the incident, Davis lost faith in her ability to gain access to proper care and support. She cites the lack of services for gay and lesbian people as a contributing factor to ongoing persecution and insensitivity in the area. She also noted that "this is not the first time there's ever been a hate crime in this town." A previous hate crime case heard in the courts did not result in a conviction.

"I don't feel like in any way, from anyone, I have gotten any support, from my cancer group to mental health," Davis said by way of summarizing her situation. "What I want now, strange as it sounds, is some kind of support here." ▼

## It's Tax Time...

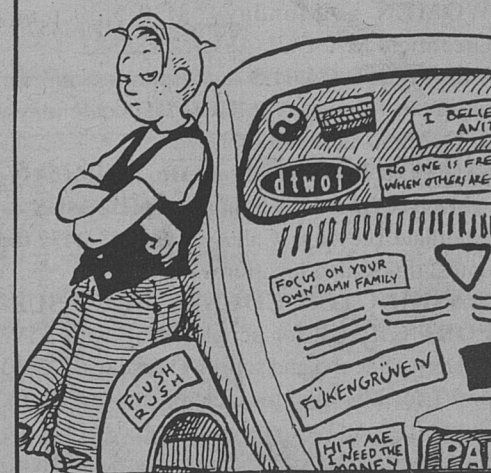
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