

2021 Over the Rainbow Nonfiction Longlist

By Jane Sandberg <https://www.glbtrt.ala.org/overtherainbow/archives/727>

Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex. Angela Chen. Beacon Press, 2020. An exploration of what asexuality means and what it reveals about a society that is obsessed with sex. Chen includes a diverse range of identities, and is frank about the book's biases and why these biases exist.

Angry Queer Somali Boy: A Complicated Memoir. Mohamed Abdulkarim Ali. University of Regina Press, 2019. Ali writes about coming of age while being traumatically uprooted to Abu Dhabi, The Netherlands, and Canada. The writing is compelling and jarring, offering unique perspectives on immigration, homelessness, addiction, and loss.

Archiving an Epidemic: Art, AIDS, and the Queer Chicanx Avant-Garde. Robb Hernández. New York University Press, 2019. Even in 2020 we are learning lessons of AIDS' impact on queer culture. In *Archiving an Epidemic*, Hernández coins the theory Archival Body/archival Space and reimagines the Chicanx Avant-Garde movement in a queer way and artists' works as Mexican American memorials. As we are currently in another pandemic, this book provides evidence and memory of what was lost during the AIDS epidemic.

The Art of Drag. Jake Hall. Artwork by Sofie Birkin, Hellen Li, Jashyot, Dingh Hans. Nobrow Ltd, 2020. This beautifully illustrated, hand-sized book takes the reader through a pictorial history of drag, providing brief, reference-like written entries to how drag has been perceived, experienced and has influenced throughout history. Whether it be activism or pop culture, this book celebrates the diversity and queerness of drag.

Before Trans: Three Gender Stories from Nineteenth-Century France. Rachel Mesch. Stanford University Press, 2020. Mesch discusses "trans before trans" and "gender before gender" in this thought-provoking book. Are the ways that we understand gender and the ways that gender has been placed on others the way that those in history experienced it? Unlikely, but Mesch provides detailed research and analysis to help us understand why.

Female Husbands: A Trans History. Jen Manion. Cambridge University Press, 2020. Were women assigned female at birth who took on male roles and were deemed "female husbands" lesbians or transgender? Manion looks at these earliest accounts of queerness that have been told through the lesbian or intimacy between women lens of sexuality, and instead examines these accounts through the lens of gender. How do we make meaning of people and relationships that existed far before the labels we now use? There may be no decisive answer by *Female Husbands* gives us a lot to consider.

Figure It Out. Written by Wayne Koestenaum. Soft Skull, 2020. This book of brief essays is perfect reading for the times we find ourselves in. How can a text be about nothing and everything at the same time? Introspective stories on things that commonly ground us and bind us together are awaiting.

Gender: A Graphic Guide. Meg-John Barker. Icon Books, 2020. An excellent introduction to many facets of gender, explained with sensitivity and clarity. The writing and illustrations are accessible and enlightening without feeling pedantic. For an introduction, this title covers a lot of ground, including contemporary topics like geek masculinities, trans time, the #MeToo movement, and the #ThisIsWhatNonBinaryLooksLike hashtag.

Here for It: Or, How to Save Your Soul in America. R. Eric Thomas. Ballantine Books, 2020. A hilarious memoir about growing up as a gay Christian Black man in the US. The contents range from poignant and personal essays to witty viral Facebook posts.

A History of My Brief Body. Billy-Ray Belcourt. Two Dollar Radio, 2020. Billy-Ray's memoir details his early life in the Driftpile First Nation community, sexual exploration and identity, using writing as a survival technique, and love and loss.

Imagining Queer Methods. Edited by Matt Brim and Amin Ghaziani. New York University Press, 2019. This collection of innovative works in the field of queer scholarship aims to showcase the newly emerging field of queer studies. The works in the books cover a diverse array of topics from race studies to psychology to scientific appeals to many more. Brim and Ghaziani have done an incredible job of collecting these scholars into one volume that allows the reader to get an in-depth look into what queer theory is and what it could be.

Lady Romeo: The Radical and Revolutionary Life of Charlotte Cushman, America's First Celebrity. Tana Wojczuk. Avid Reader Press, 2020. Did you know that America's first international celebrity was a tomboy and a lesbian? Wojczuk's *Lady Romeo* tells the story of famous nineteenth century actress Charlotte Cushman, who played male characters in Europe and across the United States including *Romeo* on the London stage. This short, but compelling, read takes the reader through the life of Cushman's career, her relationships with lovers, and a time when Shakespeare was the original binge watching.

My Autobiography of Carson McCullers: A Memoir. Jenn Shapland. Tin House, 2020. While working as an intern in the archives at the Harry Ransom Center, Jenn Shapland encounters the love letters between Carson McCullers and a woman named Annemarie. The result is this book, an interweaving of a new biography of McCullers, the story of how Shapland approached her research, and a memoir of the way Shapland's efforts to understand McCullers brought her closer to understanding herself. The result brings the reader into intimate contact both with Carson McCullers and with the author herself, as the uncovering of McCullers' queer identity mirrors Shapland's own self-examination.

Something That May Shock and Discredit You. Daniel Lavery. Atria Books, 2020. A delightful mix of transmasculine memoir, biblical and pop culture references, and literary parodies reminiscent of Lavery's work on The Toast website. This book is funny, relatable, and moving — often all at the same time.

Spellbound: A Graphic Memoir. Bishakh Kumar Som. Street Noise Books, 2020. This graphic novel memoir takes us through the author's life from the view she sees herself in, as a woman fully inside and out. This is a work that focuses not on how others perceive a transgender person but rather focuses on how they see themselves.

Tasty Pride: 75 Recipes and Stories from the Queer Food Community. Compiled by Jesse Szewczyk. Clarkson Potter, 2020. A recipe book that collects the stories and recipes from 75 chefs and celebrities from across the queer community. The recipes are simple and easy to understand and let the reader experience and connect to the stories in a real and physical way.

Tomboyland: Essays. Melissa Faliveno. Topple Books, 2020. Melissa Faliveno grew up a self-described tomboy in the Midwest, a land of softball, tornadoes, guns, and casseroles. In this collection of essays, the author revisits the internal and external landscapes of her childhood as a queer adult.

What's Your Pronoun?: Beyond He and She. Dennis Baron. Liveright, 2020. A comprehensive and scholarly look at the history of pronouns and their usage in our society. This work puts pronouns outside of he and she into historical context, bringing new understanding to their usage.

Honorable mentions

- *The Fixed Stars*. Molly Wizenberg. Abrams Press, 2020.
- *Rib Joint: A Memoir in Essays*. Julia Koets. Red Hen Press, 2020.
- *Seeing Gender*. Iris Gottlieb. Chronicle Books, 2019.
- *The Times I Knew I Was Gay*. Eleanor Crewes. Scribner, 2020.