

741.5

INSIDE **OUT**

JUNE 2024 NO. 120

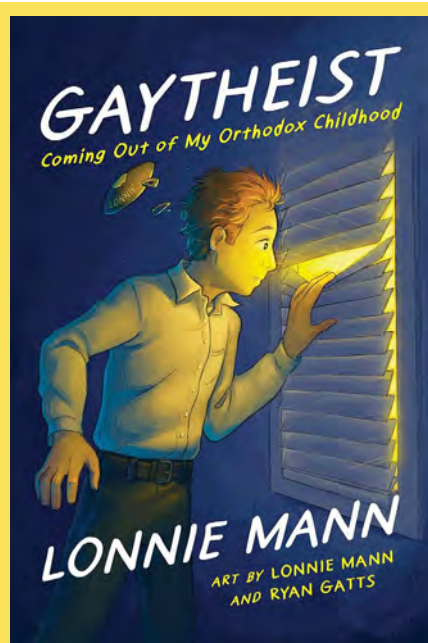
TRUE LIFE TALES OF GAY BOYHOOD



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of

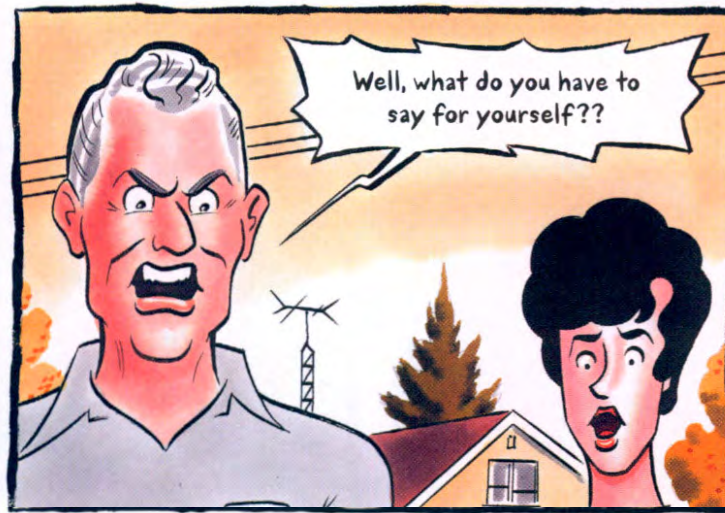


Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!

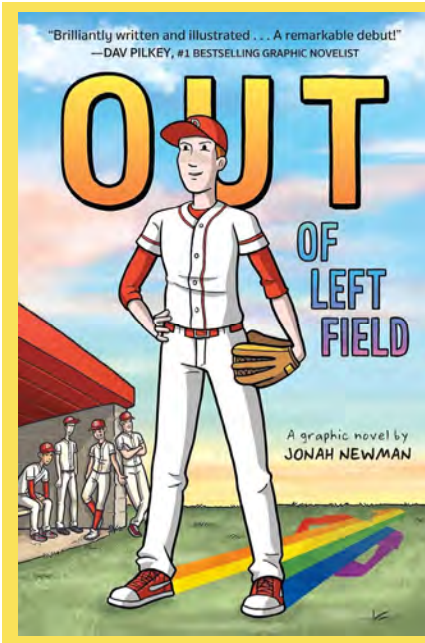


Set decades after the Swinging Sixties boyhood of Maurice Vellekoop, *Gaytheist* (Street Noise) is the true story of author Lonnie Mann, *Coming Out of My Orthodox Childhood*. It shares some similarities with Vellekoop's saga, but is noteworthy for its differences. Lonnie, like Maurice, is raised in a strict religious background. But by Lonnie's adolescence, nerd culture had become established enough to afford Mann some refuge from the demands of piety. Unlike Maurice, Lonnie tries his best to reconcile his family's faith with his personal reality. Free of the Dutch reserve of Vellekoop's family, the inevitable disputes between gay son and devout parents come to a head faster...and louder. It's the old "Band-aid" metaphor in action. Drawn in the contemporary YA style, *Gaytheist* is rendered in smooth but expressive watercolor by Mann's own husband. Go to lexpublib.org to reserve a copy!

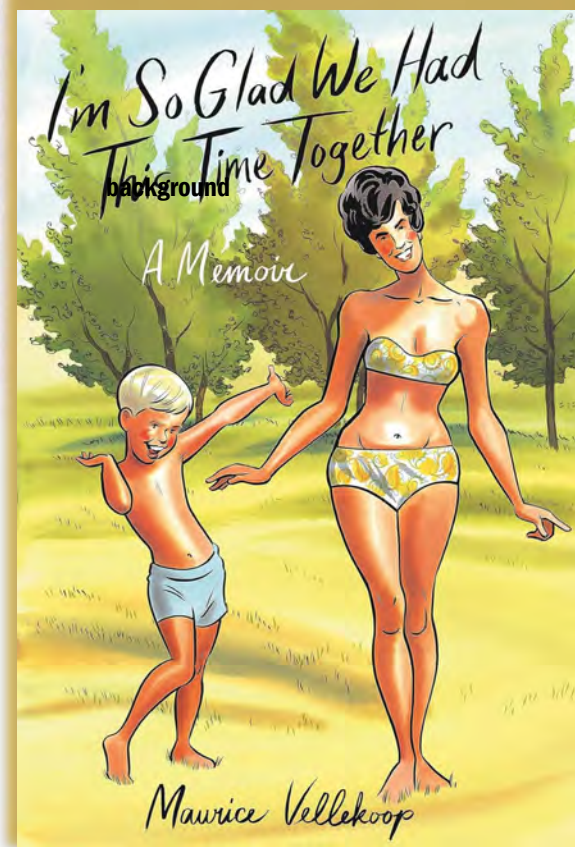
Like Ye Editor, **Maurice Vellekoop** is a member of the Blank Generation, that cohort born between 1960 (me) and 1964 (him). Like most Blanks, Maurice had three parents: Father, Mother and pop culture. Though raised within a strict Protestant sect, Maurice's messiah was Walt Disney.



Not just because, like lots of Blanks, Maurice was a sports-hating nerd, whose passive-aggressive nature (*far left*) constantly aggrieved his eternally disappointed father and loving but uneasy mother (*center*). Maurice was gay. And the only person less happy about that than his parents was Maurice.



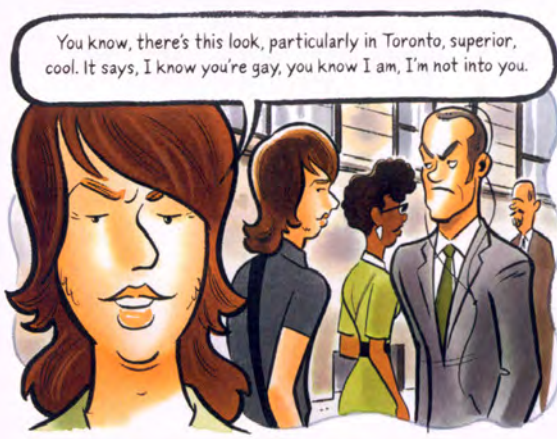
In comparison to the protagonists of *I'm So Glad...* and *Gaytheist*, Jonah, the hero of the semi-autobiographical *Out of Left Field*, doesn't have it so bad. His story takes place in the here and now of Pride flags and trans acceptance. So, while discomfited by his feelings for other boys, Jonah doesn't suffer the self-loathing that afflicts our other heroes. Neither does he bear the heavy burden of faith that bows Vellekoop and nearly breaks Mann. But Jonah learns the hard way that things haven't changed that much. Looking to get close to a boy he likes, ninth grade nerd Jonah joins the baseball team. In true sports pulp tradition, Jonah's grit and determination leads to acceptance among his peers...until he's seen kissing a notoriously "out" classmate. The other pariah on the team, ignored and underplayed because she's a girl, makes a potent point (*below*). But Jonah plays on, setting his own course in this TEEN saga!



Like most Blanks, **Maurice Vellekoop** was shaped by the suburban Sixties (*below*). Only he played with Barbie, not G.I. Joe, and his take on the Caped Crusaders (obligatory Batman reference *left*) and *Planet of the Apes* was different than most.



Like too many Blanks, Vellekoop spent his life at war with himself. His story rises above the generational mosh pit due to his unsparing honesty as a writer and astonishing sublimity as an artist. It's a graphic masterpiece @ lexpublib.org!





Ever seen the “tall girl slump”? That’s when tall girls try to make themselves less tall by ducking their heads down like a pelican with a hangover. Well, the protagonist of *ANNA* is the tallest tall girl ever, and her entire life is a slump. The effect Anna’s size has on her mother, herself and her own long and large child is told in child-like chapters in **Mia Oberländer’s** fractured fairy tale. *Stumbo the Giant*, it ain’t. Naming your heroine “Persephone” is a little obvious when your story’s about a fake heaven. But Effie is the protagonist of the sci-fi drama *Arca* (IDW). One of the teenagers who do the scutwork on the Big Space Ark, she’s the drone who got too smart, the slave who learned how to read, the nobody starting to see the holes in the Big Story. **Jesse Lonergan’s** detailed but lively art moves the mystery along. Meanwhile, today, the world is burning



MEANWHILE

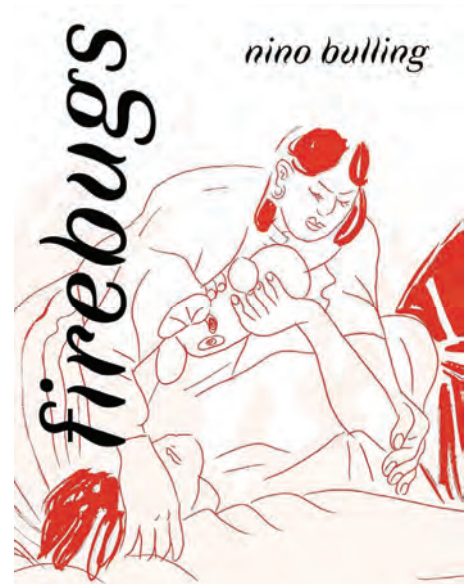
Thursday, June 20th, editor/designer/chief bottle washer of 741.5 **Bill Widener** will be a Special Guest Star at this month’s meet-up of CHECK MEOWT Book Club! This popular LPL program is the brainchild of Central Library’s **Molly Stout**. It runs from 6:00-7:00 PM and takes place in the Habicattery Room of the Lexington Humane Society on 1600 Old Frankfort Pike.

Pike. **Widener** is joining in because the book this month is a *manga* (Japanese comic) by horror master **Junji Ito**. *Yon & Mu* is **Junji Ito’s Cat Diary** (Kodansha).

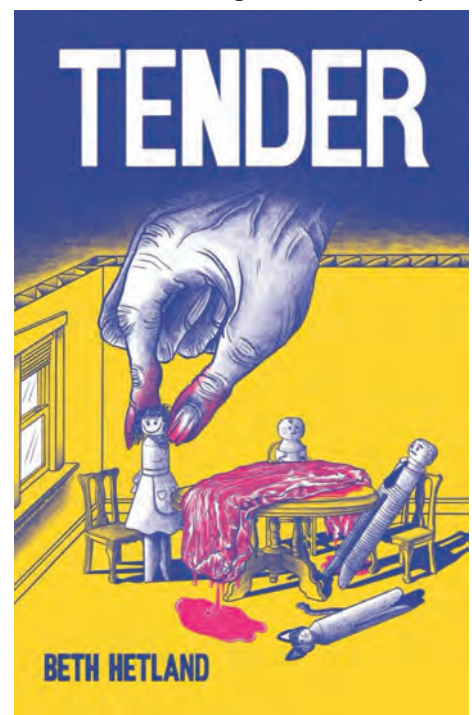
Like so many cat owners, **Ito** had no intention or interest until he married into the life and found himself the cat daddy to Norwegian forest cat **Mu** and the spooky short hair **Yon**. Cat lovers will recognize their own lovelorn travails in **Ito’s** growing relationship with these loving yet temperamental creatures while **Ito** fans will recognize the cartoonist’s mix of the everyday and eerie. There are still some books left, so register at the first floor Circulation desk Central. Get your copy today and meet some kitties!



up and Ingken’s not feeling so hot themselves. Having embraced their trans identity, the hug now feels all dirty and sweaty. Ingken can’t stop the bad thoughts roiling through their head, won’t stop the bad news scrolling down their phone. Their partner, Lily, tries to root Ingken in the here and now. But the thing about alternative lifestyles is that there are always alternatives. And Lily has an alternative to Ingken’s incessant moping. Lily has a new friend, a leggy American artist. A classic love triangle is given new form due to the trio being gay and trans women, upending the usual power dynamics inherent to such sagas. **Nino Bulling’s** drawings swirl across the page, spot blacks drifting like clots of ash on the wind. The lack of borders emphasize the characters’ want of boundaries, which promises freedom but delivers confusion. Lest one think the issues at the heart of *Firebugs* are born entirely of the protagonists’ queerness, cartoonist **Beth Hetland** hastens to assure you that normality is no refuge from the agonies of an unquiet mind. Published by Fantagraphics, *Tender*



is **Hetland’s** first novel and is a masterpiece of domestic horror. Our hapless heroine Carolanne is a typical American gal who wants to live the American dream. Never mind her actual dreams are nightmares: what Carolanne wants, Carolanne gets. She wants the wedding of her dreams (and gets it), she wants the husband of her dreams (and gets him), she wants the family of her dreams...and that’s where the dream dies. Inconsolable, increasingly delusional, a nervous habit develops into horrific self-destruction, as Carolanne literally devours herself to feed her fantasy of the perfect life. **Hetland** draws with a **Kamenesque** physicality marked by intense cross hatching and a contrast between simply drawn faces and bodies rendered with a medical realism. Go to lexpublib.org to reserve a copy of one of the most disturbing comics of the year!



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