

**PORNO, ERGO SUM:
THE INCREDIBLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING MALE**
by
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Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies. The British critic Edward Lucie-Smith told me that if my once-upon-a-time lover Robert Mapplethorpe had written a monograph on how and why he shot his photographs, the world would have had an invaluable insight into his work. Because Robert wrote nothing, his beautiful work stands on its own. Answering why and how I write my literary erotica is like skating a Figure 8 on an ice cube, naked. Anne Rice and I started out on Castro Street at the same time; both of us have double careers writing fiction and literary erotic fiction. Behind the mask of eros, I write literature. Erotica is literature with velocity. My writing is like thinking while cuming. I'm Gatsby's Daisy: "I write because men are so...so...beautiful," and because of the incredible lightness of being male. I enjoy being a guy.

Readers and critics feel my writing is autobiographical when it's only *verite*. In truth, from 1965 to the present, I've been downloading my personality into books, magazines, video features, and telephone tapes. Jeez, I have lived it up to write it down; but my work is no more autobiographical than the movie, *Platoon*, which director Oliver Stone said, "...is not about me, but if I had not been in Vietnam, I could not have written and directed such a film." So it is with my signature novel, *Some Dance to Remember*, which is a gay history novel of the Golden Age of Liberation, 1970-1982, in San Francisco. *Some Dance*, full of real tales of the City, weaves its emotional and historical and erotic ropes around a specific group of people in a specific place at a specific time. My "quantum style" folds time, squeezes a dozen years into 562 pages so structured with Aristotelian unities and limned with stream-of-consciousness that readers willingly suspend their disbelief which is the aim of fiction. "Daddies" who were at the 70's Gay Renaissance party write me that they make their "Boys" who missed the party read *Some Dance* to experience the High Water Mark to which gay culture once rose before plague and politics destroyed the most erotic decade in American history.

Born the year after Thomas Wolfe (*Look Homeward, Angel*) died, I grew up as the other Tom Wolfe (*The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*) popularized gonzo journalism in which the writer must participate in the story. I came of age on the rhythms of James Joyce, Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and cried when at fifteen I first read Walt Whitman, forbidden at my high school as filthy erotic literature, and I wondered why the parts the teacher thought dirty seemed so achingly beautiful. I've been balancing Whitman with Rimbaud ever since. Some of my writing is erotic, *porno verite*, because Oscar Wilde was right as usual: "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses."

"In the end, he could not deny his human heart."

Opening sentence, novel, *Some Dance to Remember*, 1990

I confess. I breathe in experience. I exhale fiction. Feeling, emotion, is the oxygen of my fictive voice. Stories for me begin as raw emotion felt, or a disembodied "voice" heard. As a humanist, who is neither a feminist nor a masculinist, I welcome all emotions as well as women's voices and men's voices which I channel. As literary critic Michael Bronski points out, "In *Some Dance*, there are 9 plot lines and 15 major characters sweeping through the epic story of the rise and fall of everyone who was ever anyone." Those plot lines and characters are intricate to the

way I write: avoiding stereotype (Freud), going for archetype (Jung). Slice of life stories rule, because that angle best matches our human lives lived in slices of time, emotion, and awareness.

Fiction should render the writer invisible behind strong story arcs, and layered characterizations, and strong dialog. Fiction actually “works” when the suspension of disbelief tips the reader into saying, “Aha! This is real. This happened. This is autobiography.” Perhaps what is recognizable is my intention to try to reflect something universally human about “the autobiography of the reader’s inner self.” Readers of my erotic adventure-fiction want to know how I read their private sex journals, how I read their dirty minds, how I know what they did last summer. The storyteller is a trickster, a conjure man. Sex is only three degrees of separation.

At the baths, one time, a man whose tits were in my steely fingers, slipped down past my face, my cock, looking up at me, saying, “Do to me what you did to that guy in that story.” I sent him on his way. My sex life is not a tour of my Greatest Hits of Fritscher Friction Fiction, but erotic reputation is a pisser after more than thirty years in adult entertainment: literature and photography and video. With more than 8,000 pages in print, and around a thousand photographs in magazines from *Drummer* to *Bear* to *Unzipped* to *Honcho*, and more than 140 feature videos, I’ve been a busy boy living a wonderful life. My mantra is: “He who dies with the most column inches wins.” That’s a joke. Personally, I *am* leather; I *am* wicca; I *am* bear fetish. But, in my poker hand, my “wild card” as culture critic trumps leather culture’s Full House to top me; trumps satanic culture’s four Aces of Spades to claim me; trumps bear fetish culture’s Hearts and Diamonds to seduce me. I create erotic videos, but, maverick, neither join nor validate any adult director’s guild or video archive. I am a unique hybrid: I am personally leather and a pioneer action-figure in leather culture as well as a scholar-historian of gay male leather culture, but not part of the establishment Leather Reich of “Mother-May-I S&M.” In my *Porno Manifesto*, art for art’s sake may go beyond the pale of consent.

The rest of that particular Wyoming night was the sort of history that never gets recorded, but’s never forgot either: how three fairground fellows, all rodeo cowboys, paraded into the bar duded up...and started a punch-out with the barful of working cowboys in a brawl they could never win...The biggest one escaped when Arrow’s dad kicked his ass through the bar window...The middle-size cowboy...revived fast when the barkeep dragged him across the floor to the john and shoved his face into the cold piss-water toilet. The third cowboy they dragged to the feedlot....A boot on the back of his neck shoved his face into a fresh steaming horse-pie. They pulled the shit-covered outsider to a railroad X-sign. Arrow watched them lift the drunken cowboy in his filthy satin shirt and torn jeans up against the railroad cross. They spreadeagled him to the four heavy-beamed wooden arms. He was roped tight and secure. The men passed around a bottle of whiskey. Arrow’s dad handed the bottle to his son. Arrow raised the bottle to his lips and pulled a long burning swig. He could never forget that moment: looking at his father who had led these men, tasting his first whiskey, feeling the pressure of his hardon in his jeans, seeing the crucified cowboy hanging on the railroad cross, helpless and drunk and howling at the full Wyoming moon low on the horizon behind him. **Third-person omniscient point-of-view, scene from novel, *Leather Blues*, 1972, partially published in *Son of Drummer*, 1978, and as a serial in *MAN2MAN Quarterly*, 1980-81**

Actually, critic John F. Karr, in the *Bay Area Reporter*, wrote, June 27, 1985, that beginning in 1972 with the first publication of my novella *Leather Blues* through my creating *Drummer* culture’s heart, image, and style as *Drummer*’s founding San Francisco editor-in-chief: “Jack Fritscher is the man who invented the South-of-Market prose style (as well as its magazines which would never be the same without him.” In the 70’s hardly anyone was writing, photographing, drawing erotica. In the right place at the right time, I had twenty years of magazine and journalism experience in writing and photography, as well as ten years in leather and S&M, when I became editor of *Drummer*. Supply and demand. A nasty job, but somebody

had to do it. It was the dawn of gay culture. The times cast me as the hot boy editor...and, luckily, like “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” the crowd called out for more. To put content, ethos, and style in those pages with everyone else out fucking and dancing, I had to fill that magazine cover to cover out of my own dick and brain inventing the first articles on cigars, tits, daddies, all the hot tickets that have become the usual “themes.”

In truth, I wrote two-year’s worth of *Drummer*, eleven issues—the thickest, juiciest, most original issues *Drummer* ever had—mostly at the baths, with pencil on yellow legal pads in small rooms painted black under a naked red light bulb. Arriving at 8 PM, hard with anticipation of how the Barracks/the Slot/the Everhard/the St. Mark’s/wherever, would pick up by midnight, I mainlined (metaphor only) the anticipation of the action into the veins of my stories, feature articles, and interviews. I channeled the high energy of the sexual revolution at the baths into my erotic art (which is the other side of my “legit” literary writing). My porno I write with my dick in one hand. Like the reader later falling into the story, I, the writer, must fall into the story while creating it. I must believe the fiction or the feature article (“Prison Blues,” “Pumping Roger”) to the degree my dick stays hard driving the words, just as the words ultimately must drive the dick of the reader into hardening, and cuming, in what I feel is the most interactive art in the world. The ultimate porno review is a reader shooting his load.

Others may deny that, because they’re gay Puritan Fundamentalists who swing “politically correct.” I’m as fucking nice a BoBo (bourgeois bohemian) as you can get, but no one fucks with me—who successfully escaped the censorship of the Catholic Church and Vatican politics—when it comes to writing, photography, and videography. What you read is what you get: no agenda; all entertainment. It’s sexual truth, personal and raw, the kind you can’t write if you suck off publishers, editors, workshops, museums, archives, or, worse, write for the failed Marxists in “politically-correct focus groups.” Fuck ’em all. As Sondheim writes, and Streisand sings, in “Putting It Together,” it’s all about the work.

Porno is an act of aggression that tops the reader, making him go nucking futz (like now), making a party in his pants. Erotic writing is so Fritscher-Rechy “outlaw,” so much like shooting an “indie film” outside the studio system that the “proper” academic gay rags have yet to acknowledge the literary merits of the only real gay writing there is—erotica—in reviews or awards. But God spare us from gay erotica becoming academically institutionalized. Teaching novels as assignments for class ruined the reading of fiction. College film courses assigning movies for term paper critique destroyed the enjoyment of film. The irony is that twenty years after erotic “outlaw writing” is written, the mainstream begins to suck it up into respectability. It’s hard to be edgy; it’s harder to remain edgy. For a good time, give me a heaven with wild fucking saints who aren’t canonized.

Too bad the future of an art form lies in the prejudices of its audience. The straight press thinks I’m “gay.” The gay press thinks I’m “erotic.” (The San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival thinks my videos are “not gay enough.” Go figure.) I’m professionally trained in literature. I know writing. Most gay writers who wannabe on the straight best-seller list are perpetually angry because the straight mainstream literary world judges “Gay” and “Lesbian” writing as just another genre like “Westerns,” “Mysteries,” and “Romances.” I witnessed the 1998 Key West Writers conference when the President of the Writers association abruptly and indignantly ended the conference sending all of us—including the other excellent writers in attendance, Tony Kushner, Edmund White, David Leavitt, Michael Bronski, agent Michael Denny, and that sweet writer whose pseudonym is Andrew Holleran—out into the street. We

were given the bum's rush not so much because Larry Kramer as usual went ballistic on stage, but because the readings and panel discussions had started to turn in the tropical heat from "lit' rature" to "erotica." Key West wanted us to talk about AIDS as a Literary Genre. Instead, steamy, sweaty, promiscuous gay writing and culture got too icky to deal with. We'll always be driven into the streets like hated queers until the exclusionary gay literary establishment owns up to the reality that gay writing is quintessentially erotic, and therefore legitimate, because eros drives human nature—particularly gay human nature—the same way that erotica drives new technology: VCRs, DVDs, the Internet.

So much goes on behind the scenes of porno I could write a backstage musical. Back in the 70's, I advertised my tutorial services in the pages of *Drummer* with a display ad called "Writer's Aid." Having been an associate professor teaching university journalism and literature for ten years, and needing other writers' work to fill *Drummer*, I took on, during those first years of gay lib, aspiring writers to tutor them in both creative writing and journalism of the erotic kind. Two of those students were "Jack Prescott" and Anthony F. DeBlase. I counseled Prescott to take back to his real name, John Preston; and then I did the final rewrite on his raw manuscript, and published, *Mr. Benson*, from which draft Preston finally polished up the "unedited version." Tony DeBlase, years later, actually paid money to buy the ailing *Drummer* and became its publisher. Other 70's graduates of Writer's Aid include some wonderful current erotic writers who can reveal their own names *ad libitum*. So, actually, John Karr in the *BAR* was right about my conscious nurturing of the South of Market leather fetish porn style. Lesbian conferences, hosted by historical-revisionist groupies, are full of certain gay authors of a certain age claiming they and their exclusive circles invented gay writing. Fucking weird, man. No one invented gay literature anymore than someone invented Irish literature or African-American literature.

In Dublin, the Banshee queen himself could well imagine the four lads from the punk band rolling in the fast-forward, slow-motion, and freeze-frame of the porno videos shelved in his rental shop. *The hot wet mouths of those handsome handsome handsome swanlike boys lipping down slow then eager on jutting cocks spit wet tongued fucking pink butt yes like dogs taking every shape cum spurting on lips nose eye lashes stripped naked in the shed barn woods no no no yes linen sheets stained with shit dewlaps hot young sweat browning each other those four drip cum into me into you fuck into you fuck me oh yes wipe it on me eat it eat it swallow more more more fucking yes you and you and you those four lads ah ah ah.*

—Stream-of-consciousness orgy scene from "Chasing Danny Boy," the title story in the 1999 fiction anthology, *Chasing Danny Boy: Powerful Stories of Celtic Eros*, Finalist Best Gay and Lesbian Fiction

Erotic content for me spins out of specific characters in a specific place at a specific time, so that the convergence of the quite "specific" nails a certain "universality" of human truth. Some people think my Robert Mapplethorpe was a photographer when he was actually first an artist who was second a photographer. Never take this writer-editor-photographer-videographer, who was a founding member of the American Popular Culture Association in 1968, for anything less. That pop culture sensitivity and my education, which I earned in my—as writer Dorothy Allison loves to repeat like a mantra—"working-class family" trained me with a Ph.D. in American Literature and Criticism, so that I was prepared, with my homework done, to take on gay culture's ignition at Stonewall and blast-off into the Titanic 70's for the cruise altitude of *Drummer*.

When the love that dare not speak its name began to scream, Golden Age writers' duty and necessity was to name those unspoken acts, facts, and people. Erotic writers are endlessly

inventive creating infinite synonyms for sex organs and sex acts. Actually, I had to determine for the 70' "Gay Culture Style Guide" that *cum* would be spelled "c-u-m" to match the Anglo-Saxon "f-u-c-k." and that *hardon* had no hyphen. My name being "Jack" tuned my familiarity with the word *manjack*, as in "every manjack for himself." So I wrote a *portmanteau* word by planting the word *man* as a prefix as in "mancock." Oi and vay! Every imitator on the block has prefixed everything but the "mankitchen sink" into what is now a total cliché of "manporn." (Nothing's worse than jerking off to some writer's story and realizing he's imitating your style. Bummer.) Pioneer writers had to create new vocabulary to spin/spin/spin queers from hated stereotype to heroic archetype. Stereotypes can be down and dirty shorthand to create a quick villain; but heroes need to be archetypes. I admit I write as a Platonist; out there somewhere exists the Perfect Lover. Quentin Crisp, who was not a Platonist, told me there was no such thing as the perfect tall, dark, and handsome Platonic Ideal. I told him, "Of course, there isn't. He's blond."

That first night when I first saw Kick, I recognized one of life's long shots at the Perfect Affirmation. He was a man. He had a man's strength and fragility, a man's grace and intensity, a man's joy, and a man's passion. He seemed my chance to celebrate the changes in me as growth. He was so fully a man, he was an Angel of Light. To him I could say nothing but *Yes*. One thing, you see, I know for sure: Nature very rarely puts it all together: looks, bearing, voice, appeal, smile, intelligence, artfulness, accomplishment, strength, kindness. That's what I looked for all my life: the chance to say *Yes* to a man like that. I look in men for nothing more than that affirmative something that grabs you and won't let you look away. Maintaining my full self, to have some plenty to offer back in balance, I've looked for some man who fills in the appropriate existential blanks, for some man to be the way a man is supposed to be, for some man to keep on keeping on with, in all the evolving variations of friendship and fraternity, beyond the first night's encounter. I've looked for that to happen: to be able to say *Yes* inside myself when a good, clean glow of absolute trust settles over the world. Honest manliness is never half-revealed. When it's there, it's all right there in front of you. The hardest thing to be in the world today is a man....When Ryan first saw Kick, I dare say, his fantasy spanned a million years. **Aria, "Archetype," from the novel, *Some Dance to Remember*, published 1990, re-published 2002 by Alyson Publications**

Erotica is storytelling. Erotica is pillow-talk. Erotica is what you whisper into an ear to seduce. Erotica is what you say in bed to bend your partner into three more inches. Erotica is what you promise afterwards to make sure you get sex again. If I may make a comment as one of the first and longest living gay writers/editors, lesbian authors in the 21st century need to get their storytelling shit together. Lesbian writing should be as good as straight writing, or better, if the fantasy is true that lesbians have better taste than straights. Look at the lesbian magazines. Most of the illustrations look like the drawings of mental patients. Most of the models, pro or amateur, have dead faces. Much lesbian writing reads the same: mental and dead. Humorless. Lesbian narrative is largely unimaginative: "I went to a bar, met a god who took me off on his bike, fucked me, and left me, but I'll never forget him, because he was my first time." Lesbian writers need to develop titles, story arcs, character back stories, dialog, points-of-view other than the "first person narrator," and certainly not one more "sensitive soul coming-of-age story" which deserves the "No More Wire Hangers Award"!

Just because writers' laptops print out instant-gratification columns—formatted to look like writing on a book page or a magazine page—doesn't mean that the writers need not go back over the first draft to polish it twenty times. I started writing *Some Dance to Remember* in 1968 and finished it in 1982, with final edit in 1984, and publication in 1990. Be patient, but always keep focused. I could only write the novel as fast as history happened. I knew this *Some Dance* diary of gay culture was a 3-way love story told against the epic rise of gay lib, but I had no idea in 1978 that HIV would enter the novel the way the burning of Atlanta entered *Gone With The*

Wind to which *Some Dance* has been compared, by, among others, *The Advocate*, as “the gay *Gone With The Wind*.” On the other hand, I wrote my nonfiction memoir of my bicoastal lover, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*, in ninety days while over and over as loud as possible I played the soundtrack from *The Crying Game*. Suggested reading: *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters* by Christopher Vogler.

A trained cultural analyst, I mention this huge problem in gay storytelling, because such process analysis reveals the construct of what my erotica attempts. I’m tempestuously Irish (romantically independent) and Austrian (romantically aggressive), a Gemini born during the noon hour on the summer solstice. My first nonfiction book was about sex and the occult, *Popular Witchcraft: Straight from the Witch’s Mouth*; my second was *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*. Patricia Morrison, the writer who attempted the horrible biography, *Mapplethorpe*, named me, based on my journalism in *Drummer*, “The King of Sleaze,” showing how shocking she—as a straight interloper—found gay-culture *verite* to be. Was Patsy pissed that my frankly honest *Mapplethorpe* memoir beat her puritanical Catholic school-girl biography into stores, and was the first book on Mapplethorpe ever published? Anyway, this King of Sleaze thanks Ms. PM for her rant which in the inverted gay world is wonderful, actually, for quoting on covers of books.

READER DISCRETION ADVISORY

This pop culture memoir contains sex, lies, greed, perversion, murder, deceit, infidelity, drugs, sex, immorality, scatology, ambition, sex, equivocation, character assassination, slander, blasphemy, aspersion, sex, betrayal, distortion, racism, ungodliness, sodomy—and that’s just the critics of Mapplethorpe!

—First page, before title page of the memoir, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera*, 1994

Educated in Catholic schools, I can’t seem not to write “sexy.” I try, but even my earliest stories, published in—believe it or not—Roman Catholic magazines—are erotic subliminally, written as they are about virgin-saints fighting impurity, martyrs suffering joyously under the sadistic hands in the Colosseum, and revolutionaries in Latin America nailed to the roofs of cars by the *policia* in my 1961 story, “The Untimely Death of J. Cristobal.” (Get the coded name?) My stories were “out” erotically before I was, in fact, before I knew that sex, or homosexuality even existed. For a fictional memoir “take” on this, check out the year 2000 pre-quel to 1990’s *Some Dance to Remember*, titled *What They Did to the Kid: A Post-Confessional Comedy*. *Kid* is totally overheated eros told from *inside* “the closet,” so it is a new kind of gay erotica that takes place before there is any coming-out story.

When straight people ask me what I write, I say, “Men’s adventure stories.” All my stories are relationship stories disguised as adventure stories (“Wild Blue Yonder”), comedy stories (“By Blonds Obsessed”), revenge stories (“The Lords of Leather,” very Edgar Allen Poe), fetish stories (“Cigar Sarge,” “K-9 Dog Dik,” “Foreskin Blues”), war stories (“The Shadow Soldiers”), leather stories (“S&M Ranch”), bear stories (the one-sentence, 3500-word “Three Bears in a Tub”), gym stories (“Father and Son Tag Team”), muscle stories (“Buzz Spaulding’s Training Academy”), sci-fi stories (“Roughnight@sodom.cum” which won the Richard LaBonté Different Light award for best title), twinkie stories (“A Beach Boy Named Desire”). I write stories of the future (“Earthorse”) and the past (“*Titanic*,” the gay version), as well as ethnic stories (the Irish “Chasing Danny Boy,” the Native-American and German “Buckskin Foreskin,” and the Latin “From Nada to Manana”). Hell, I even write lesbian stories and novels (*The Geography of Women: A Romantic Comedy*) that win awards, despite being told by one

prestigious reviewer: "I know how to review your gay male porno, but I don't know how to review a man writing about women." Duh. Such anti-humanist bigotry! Could he review *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

I'm known for helping editors out at the last minute when other writers don't meet the deadline. Editors beginning new magazines often invite me in to their first issue for good luck on the kickoff (*Skin*, *Just Men*, *Bear*, *Fetish Noir*, etc.). To sustain a porno career, and a writing career, one must stretch, grow with the times, as in changing my by-line name to www.JackFritscher.com. I'm famous for pastness, memoirs, but also hot on the latest. I'm always trying to refresh the gray column inches of gay publishing, books and mags, with alternative erotic genres: plays ("Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley" which was the only gay play published in the canonical collection, *Gay Roots*) and screenplays ("Buck's Bunkhouse"), and features written in Internet e-style ("The Genome of Bear" for *Bear Classic 2000*, "The Genome of Leather" for "The Leather Magazine of Record," *Checkmate Magazine*). I've written a ton of lesbian erotica for major straight publishers (Larry Flynt), because I'm a humanist, and not a slave to the failed Marxism of political correctness, and will defend to the death my pal Pat Califia's right to advise gay men about their penises. Camille Paglia and I not long ago appeared together on a BBC Channel 4 TV program titled "Priapus Unveiled" defending the penis as erotica for both women and men. These female/male gender-liaisons occur because writers are thinkers, analysts, and, maybe cultural weathervanes, as well as storytellers. I write literary erotica, as bipolar as Anne Rice who is A. Roquelaire (all forms of sex), because it plays to a double audience: those interested in literature, and those interested in intelligent sex. "My porno starts in your head and works its way down."

I like to be in America. Okay by me in America where box office maps pop culture. *Some Dance* has sold nearly 23,000 copies; *Mapplethorpe* in hard cover, 42,000; the other ten of my soft-to-hardcore books, 70,000. That's approximately 130,000 book copies, coupled with more than 250,000 units of my 130 erotic videos. That's major sales, and a rubdown with a velvet glove on the balls of a culture, especially when there's from one to a dozen places to jerk-off in those 480,000 pieces of entertainment. (That's the sexual pun in "Palm Drive.") That's say, conservatively, 4 million masturbatory loads out there in the dark, which is something to a Catholic boy who was raised to believe that masturbation is a mortal sin that condemns the masturbator to hell for all eternity. Is that why I write? Christ meets Dionysius? Or do I just get off knowing every night that out there someone is wacking himself into a moment of sublime pleasure, his only joy after a day of a shitty job or of taking care of his elderly parents?

Sometimes tiny Stanislavski quirks sneak into the writing method: sometimes I get naked; sometimes I dress up in leather or sex gear; once upon a time I sometimes smoked a cigar, or sniffed popper because nothing clarifies erotica like amyl nitrite which in its purple haze turns Godzilla into God and the brain comes down with some little mantra, three or four words of essence, as valid as Gertie Stein's experimental writing. Art is a delicate balancing act: living in one's brain waves at alpha (14 cycles per second) in a beta-driven world (18 cycles per second). No one sane ever does it; sane people make money. No one without the discipline of a monk and a Marine can do it. The secret of art, of the art of writing, of porno, of literature, or of the art of literary erotica, is putting your butt in the chair, with all the notes on pieces of paper to cue the next paragraph, the dialog, the feeling. I write three pages every day, five if it feels good, but no more. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is aged beef. At five pages I begin to foreshorten. I stay hungry, eager, at three pages, so the next day the drive continues into the next three pages. Until

a book is actually bound, until an article or story is actually in the publisher's hands, the writing is never over: visions, polishing, re-visions. A person has to be very brave to write porno, and very secure to publish under their own name, because sooner or later "everything you say can and will be used."

For better or for worse, critics always mention my style. "Fritscher is a stylist." Style for me is strong word choice, rhythmic phrases, colorful metaphor, filmic editing of space and time and memory, distinct objective dialog as well as the streaming-consciousness, the convoluted monolog of thought and conscience which reveals characters seen by themselves in contrast to how other characters see them. "How Buddy Left Me," one of my favorite stories, is an example of strong word choice that turns a porno story into a love story. "Chasing Danny Boy" is full of rhythmic phrases born of the sex-rhythms of jerking off. "Titanic" spins on queer/queen metaphor: survival. In the hold of *Titanic*, the second night of the ill-fated voyage, sex occurs.

Edward and the Stoker, two different classes of men, were as perfect an odds-on match as *Titanic* was for the North Atlantic.

"When I beat you, young gentleman, sir...", the Stoker said. He appreciated Edward's cock and cockiness. "...You will stay with me for 24 fucking hours below decks in the hold, in the boiler room, maybe even in chains in the brig, just so you see, young gentleman, how men like you make men like us live."

Edward, ever the knightly aristocrat, picked up the gauntlet. He hated socialism and bolshevism....Edward either had to take the Stoker's 14-fat-inches down his throat, and, mind you, up his ass, or he had to spend a day and a night in the hold getting up to the Stoker's "fucking" speed, outdistancing his old sculling records, the way *Titanic*, slicing through the still, cold waters was outdistancing herself and her sister ship, *Olympic*.

The Stoker stripped naked to his boots. Edward shucked his clothes and shoes. A sailor started rapping a rhythmic tattoo on the iron railing in time to the rods pistoning the huge engines. The Stoker was a stroker, wrapping both big hands around his cock, squeezing out a third handful, vein-popping the bulbous mushroom head, its piss-slit dripping translucent 4-weight lube webs. His was a savage cock, primitive, animal, evolved somehow, from the mountain giants of Eastern Europe into a steel-hard, mechanized piston. The way his ox-driving ancestors wielded their barbarian swords, the Stoker aimed his ram at Edward like some unstoppable industrial weapon....The Stoker was the stuff of Edward's dreams.

Orgy Scene in the novella, *Titanic*, from the collection of 69 stories in 4 volumes, *Titanic: Forbidden Stories Hollywood Forgot*, 1999, first published in *Uncut Magazine*, September 1988, and *Mach Magazine* #35, March 1997

Distinct objective dialog drives the two-man play/screenplay, "Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley." How many porno writers bother to do dialog to catch the very rhythms of sex? This drama opens up the erotic back-story behind the poem, "Oh, Captain, My Captain," by Walt Whitman.

Captain O'Malley: Stick your tongue out so you can take the Captain's cum that's coming out of his big dick.

Corporal Powell: Ahhhgh! Yessir. Please, Sir.

O'Malley: You keep that fuckin' mouth open. You keep that fuckin' mouth open.

Powell: Ahhh.

O'Malley: Captain's gonna shoot a big load all over your fuckin' face...all over your fuckin' face. I'm gonna shoot a load all over your fuckin' face, Corporal. It's gettin' close...Big fuckin' load from the Captain's cock...I'm gonna shoot all over your fuckin' face.

Powell: Oh, please, Sir. My God! Yessir! (With feeling) *Yessir!*

O'Malley: Your legs are quivering, Corporal.

Powell: Ahhhgh...I want, Sir...Please, Sir. Hurry and cum, Sir. Please, I'm ready.

O'Malley: Awright! Shoot that load. Shoot your fuckin' load.

Powell: Yessir!

O'Malley: C'mon, Corporal, shoot your fuckin' load. Shoot your fuckin' load. Captain's close. Captain's close...Oh,

look at that cum coming out!

Powell: Ahhhgh! Yes, ahh, yessir.

O'Malley: Look at that fuckin' cum. Ah, Corporal, cum's coming out. (High cries of orgasm) Ohhaaaggh, there it comes. All over your fuckin' face, it's all over your fuckin' face, Corporal. It's in your fuckin' eyes.

Powell: I can't see. It's in my eyes.

O'Malley: Ow, your fuckin' mouth, your fuckin' chest, ahhh!

Powell: I can't see....It's burning my eyes...

O'Malley: The Captain shot a load. In your hair, Corporal.

Powell: Yessir.

O'Malley: You got cum in your hair.

Powell: Yessir. Ahhh.

O'Malley: The Captain wants to wipe your eyes, Corporal. (Post-orgasmic moans interspersed with dialogue) The Captain wants to hold you, Corporal.

Powell: Yessir.

O'Malley: The Captain want you to hold him.

Powell: Yessir. Ahhh. Captain. Ah, Captain. Just lay on top of me, Sir.

O'Malley: Big fuckin' Corporal to hold his Captain...

Powell: Yessir. Oh God. Layin' on top of me, Sir. This is really fine. Oh God. I needed that, Sir. This is really fine. Oh God. I had a rough day too, Sir...

O'Malley: Lick the rest of the cum out of the Captain's cock...

Powell: Yessir. Does the Captain have to piss, Sir?

Close shot: CAPTAIN O'MALLEY's face grinning. Medium shot: slow motion. CAPTAIN O'MALLEY's semi-hard dick pisses heavy and golden down on CORPORAL POWELL who drinks fast. Gulping.

Powell: OH, CAPTAIN! My Captain!

O'MALLEY rubs his tight hairy belly. The piss splashes in slow motion, catching the back light, golden. Both men are laughing.

—Final scene from “Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley” from the collection of 69 stories in 4 volumes, *Corporal in Charge and Other Stories*; first published in *Drummer*, May 1978; published in the canonical *Gay Roots: An Anthology of Gay History, Sex, Politics and Culture*, 1991

Subjective monolog tells the 3,500 word story, “Three Bears in a Tub,” in one sentence that never takes a breath, yet is rather perfectly punctuated.

“Listen here, boy, there'll be no hibernatin till after I finish tellin you this bedtime story about Big Daddy when he was himself hardly more than a boy and he turned into a six-foot-five man and what he done to earn that reputation he got that famous summer on Bear Lake when the canoe overturned late around midnight and Big Daddy saw them two young hairy fishermen floppin like bears in the water next to drownin with their rubber boots suckin them down to the clear rock bottom and them able to stand just barely with their chin on the surface of the moonlit water...[omitting 5 pages]...and they was beggin Big Daddy to do with them what he wanted because he was their Big Daddy and they loved him so much and that's what Big Daddy wanted to hear so he saved them both by cuttin them out of their rubber waders so they floated to the surface of Bear Lake and Big Daddy took ahold of them by their hair and beards and nipples and dicks and buttoholes and pulled both them boys into his rowboat where they sat the rest of the night laughin and drinkin and shoutin through their beards at the moon while stars glistened between them nipple to nipple with comets shootin flume tails from their dicks and they floated ever so happy on the still surface of the water while the real constellation of the Bear rose and set over their heads and their fudgey fingers sticky from their buttoholes were all entwined in the fur on their chest and the hair of their bellies and the carpet on their shoulders and the bush of their crotches and the hugeness of their beards and the curly sweep of the hair on their heads and they were all three of them so satisfied that the summer night smiled and half-asleep in each other's big furry arms, Griz and Cub and Big Daddy drifted slow across the mirror of stars to their dock on Bear Lake as if the rowboat knew their way home.” **“Three Bears in a Tub” from 69 stories in 4 volumes, *Titanic: Forbidden Stories Hollywood Forgot*, first published in *Bear Magazine Classic Annual 1999*, and in *Best Gay Erotica 2001***

In this filmic age, I attempt stories vivid enough to jump directly from page to

performance. *The Geography of Women* and “Rainbow County” are virtual plays/screenplays. Like it or not in our culture, literary pages are validated by the screen, which is why I enjoy the high concept of turning my written fiction into porno videos, and vice versa, as in “Buck’s Bunkhouse Discipline.” The final test of writing is reading the text out loud. If as a writer I stumble, stutter, when reading the lines, something is wrong with the lines. Re-write. Find the rhythm of the words, of the sex, of the scene, and write that rhythm. Faced with the huge difficulty of writing such a “confession” as this, I am tempted to retract the veracity of all these factual words, and turn fact into fiction, presented in a way that shows how reality is re-shaped by fiction, how autobiography turns to drama, how experience turns into entertainment.

“Not arrested, but picked up, questioned about what he did and how he did it, he told everything revealing nothing. On the table before him, the tips of his fingers, sensitive from years of typing, drummed the wood, impatient with the interrogation. From an ashtray, blue smoke from a half-twisted butt rose like incense at a seance toward the naked light bulb. *He breathed in experience*. He could feel the heat on his forehead. *He exhaled fiction*. Under the metal shade, the bulb hung like a burning pear, a scrotum, on a cord. He sat in the intense circle of light. He studied the detectives’ movement in the darkness beyond the shade. His cock hardened untouched. He looked for the faces out there in the dark.

Other hands, other intentions, shuffled the evidence spread across the table, turning pages, trying to sort fiction from nonfiction, examining photographs, advancing videos frame by frame. He smirked. Excitement tweaked his nipples. Someone had tampered with the evidence: cum had spurted across his thousand photographs of naked men; more cum glued together the pages of his sixty-nine stories in four volumes; cum, mixed with sweat and tears, curled the pages of his 562-page ransom note he couldn’t even dance to remember. *Everything you say can be held...against...hard against...fill-in-the-blank*, he figured.

At fourteen he had bet he could get away with murder. At first, all he needed to pull off the job were yellow legal pads, then a manual typewriter, then a Selectric, and finally a laptop. He moved on to cameras, black-and-white print film, 35mm transparencies (*mmm*, that first willing lifeguard on the beach in Chicago!), 8mm, Super-8, 16mm, video. He was an analyst. He lived it up to write it down. He was a part of all he met and *vice-versa verite*, baby. He nailed a warning above his bed: ‘Enter here to become a story told at night around the world.’ He could have sold space in his books and stories so eager were the accomplices wanting to be mentioned in code or in reality, desperate for him to write, ‘When the hero came into the bar, he walked by X who stood by the pinball machine.’

He could have admitted to none, some, much, most, or all of the fiction that was truth that was fiction, but he didn’t. His pen was the mighty. He was a rich man with a big dick driving a fast car. As they had when he played football, everyone patted his ass. He always knew exactly what he was doing, who he was doing, when, where, and how he was doing it. His brain was his ultimate hardon. He had the last laugh.”

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