

Boys Like Her

Taste This

Press Gang Publishers (May 6, 2002)

Unknown \$18.95 (224pp)

978-0-88974-086-0

This book has appropriately been dubbed “A road movie of young queer life and gender transformation.” It chronicles the experiences of four performance artists collectively known as Taste This, and succeeds as a fascinating study into the sexuality of the individuals at hand.

Boys Like Her is actually the literary version of the ensemble’s traveling show, with additional insights and stories from their journeys. The authors continually alternate narration, which makes for a steady pace and a decent amount of variety. It is unfortunate, however, that their writing styles rely so heavily on clichés, which diminish the power of the word.

The wide range of topics discussed include childhood memories, emotional and physical traumas, addictions, desires and so forth. One of the most intriguing and reoccurring areas of interest is that of gender identification. One of the authors contemplates after being asked if she is a boy or a girl: “She is told there are only two possible answers, yet neither of these rings completely true to her ear.” These individuals bravely exist within the fluidity of the two sexes, and this notion of sexual malleability is an important concept for all sexual beings.

The biggest disappointment is in the book’s photographs and images. Many of the pictures are sexually explicit and are then matched with un-sexually explicit writing. This problem reflects an interesting phenomenon of expression within repressed communities. As is the case in queer culture, sexual expression can often emit overbearing tones, and result with an in-your-face sense of sexuality. Here the effect is disturbing, especially when the texts are printed directly on top of the image. These inappropriate choices end up tainting the literary experience.

KYLE NORRIS (January / February 1999)

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