



Out of Step: A Memoir

Anthony Moll

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Enlisting in the military is a complicated choice for anyone, but it was especially complex for Anthony Moll, a pink-haired bisexual man who signed on during the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” era. That shows just how eager Moll was to get away from his hard-luck upbringing and escape the claustrophobic future that awaited him. Along the way, he learned about himself and explored the problematic question of what it means to be a man in America.

His incongruous story is an unlikely melding of a military memoir and a queer coming-of-age story, but the balancing of these two genres is seamless, showcasing just how much they have in common. It has typical features of both categories, covering, for example, the grueling days of boot camp and the damage that homophobia and hate speech cause for young LGBTQ people.

Weaving together the jarring contrasts and dehumanizing elements of both the military and the fight for LGBTQ respect, the book presents a compelling story of losing and finding an identity. The narrative grapples with the complexity of sexuality and identity, as well as with the complexity of foreign policy and what it means to be a nation in a world filled with other nations.

Vivid, visual descriptions of people and places from before, during, and after Moll’s time in the army are included. Scenes are elegantly crafted, moving deftly between key moments to create a cohesive narrative.

Filled with raw emotion, wry humor, and unselfconscious reflection, the story conveys Moll’s unwavering sense of self in a refreshing, inspiring way. The peace he’s made with himself, in spite of and even because of his unconventional choice to enlist, is a compelling invitation to all, no matter their sexual identity. *Out of Step* is a personal story whose impact is far reaching and life affirming.

MELISSA WUSKE (July/August 2018)

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