



Boys Like Us: Gay Writers Tell Their Coming Out Stories

Patrick Merla , Hetrick Martin Inst , Samuel R. Delany (Contributor)

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In stunning essays written especially for this collection, twenty-nine noted gay writers recount their true "coming out" stories, intensely personal histories of that primal process by which men come to terms with their desire for other men. Here are accounts of revealing one's sexual identity to parents, siblings, friends, co-workers and, in one notable instance, to a stockbroker. Men tell of their first sexual encounters from their preteens to their thirties, with childhood friends who rejected or tenderly embraced them, with professors, with neighbors, with a Broadway star. These are poignant, sometimes unexpectedly funny tales of romance and heartbreak, repression and liberation, rape and first love defining moments that shaped their authors' lives. Arranged chronologically from Manhattan in the Forties to San Francisco in the Nineties, these essays ultimately form a documentary of changing social and sexual mores in the United States--a literary, biographical, sociological and historical tour de force.

Boys Like Us: Gay Writers Tell Their Coming Out Stories Details

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Scott says

I started reading this book three years ago - I kind of stopped reading, not this book but stopped reading novels altogether. I miss escaping into a story and am now making sure that I slow down and read. As I took so long to get back to this book, my thoughts are soft on the first half of the book and strong on the last half.

Published 20 years ago, reading even the most "current" stories is still a time that has passed. The idea of "coming out" is, thankfully, becoming a task of the past. Boys and girls are just themselves - gay or straight. I know this is definitely not the case for all, and coming out is still a powerful experience.

These book contains well-written, exceptional stories in all varieties of experiences around that brutal, uplifting, and redeeming task of coming out. There really is all kind of settings and undertakings by the writers in their quest to live their most honest lives, whether honest with themselves, lovers, or family. The revelations put forth in this tome are stark and not always easy to process, but I take them as the true sharings of talented storytellers.

Isaac says

This book changed my life, as of 3.19.16, somewhere between 10 am and noon. An incredible book that details many dimensions of coming out from the perspectives across time of men from various backgrounds. While it has a specific personal meaning to me, I think that readers who share history with coming out or want to understand the process, while reading moving, passionate and often erotic, accounts of coming out would enjoy the read.

Noah Moore-goad says

Highly recommend this book!

Brandon says

Stories from a lot of different generations and viewpoints add real texture to this book.

David says

The honesty is great... there are so many stories about sex and attraction during puberty (which really demystifies childhood innocence). But then there is a big bag of sexual frustration or repression. And in many stories, out of that hard soil gay love emerges. The chronological order by year of "coming out" also

tracks some development in perceptions of homosexuality from the 1950 through the 1990s. Well written and very illuminating anecdotes about "coming out".

The most intriguing stories were "He's One, Too" by Allan Gurganus and "Money Talks" by David Drake. Gurganus' story is about himself as a boy who is attracted to one of his father's friends, named Dan, and how this attraction becomes his first realization of his homosexuality. It is written with nostalgic longing demonstrating how this fascination develops into Dan becoming an ideal figure of beauty for him.

Drake's story highlights the aspect of the difficulty of coming out all the time in which he humorously describes coming out to his hired investment banker.

Jillian says

I'm rating this one really high based solely on how much I liked it back in 1997, when I was 17, and my mom bought it for a friend of mine (whose mother wouldn't buy it for him). It was my first introduction to any sort of lgbt writing besides out/the advocate. I ended up making my mom buy a copy for me as well. I haven't read it since high school though, so I have no clue how much I'd like it now, as an adult, but I still think it deserves 5 stars just because it was kinda life changing. :)

Skip says

This super collection of stories inspired me to write my own coming-out letter to my mother. I guess that's enough...

Boys Like Us opened my eyes to more than just gay writing, but our lives.

Jessie says

I am enjoying the coming out experiences of the different authors. Samual Delaney describes his personal reactions to the media. The experiences are chronologically arranged.

Michelle says

This book is excellent! I absolutely loved it! It is a wonderful collection of essays by various writers on what coming out meant to them. The essays take place from the late forties through the nineties, which is so interesting because so much changed in all that time. I highly recommend this book!

Lobeck says

This is an amazing collection of gay male authors telling their coming out stories or their first experiences of sexuality. There is the occasional dull story, but on the whole this is an excellent group of writers. Because

these are short stories you have the convenience of reading small snippets whenever you like and skipping the stories you dislike. My two favorite are "Beyond Words", where you experience the joy of young gay love and first sexuality, and "Fishing Practice", in which a young man comes out to parents who don't understand but are willing to practice until they get it right.

Peter says

A great collection of Gay coming out stories through the decades. I would guess mostly fictional. Two of them are short excerpts from the novels - Mysterious Skin and Dream Boy as far as I remember.

Ben says

A pretty good collection of stories. This isn't a cross section of gay writers -- most are white, most from the generation that came of age just before the AIDS crisis hit, and most seemed to have lived in New York City -- but the stories together paint an interesting and textured portrait of what was like for many young gay men in the 70s and 80s or thereabouts, and as someone born in 1983, I still found a good deal that I could relate to in my own experiences coming of age a generation later. Some of the stories are very well written, while with others I lost patience with the writing and skipped over them. Taken together, though, it's a solid collection.

Tom says

This is an anthology of 29 essays about coming-out experiences of male authors going back to their boyhoods. I'd say about half the stories are memorable and affecting. The others bog down to greater or lesser degree as the authors get too philosophical about their encounters. The best pieces tell the experience in simple narrative form. However, one wonders how an author can recall specific dialogue years after he has passed beyond youth. Either they made journal notes or else they have embellished their memories by imagining what they once said and what people said to them. It would be interesting to compile a similar collection from today's younger writers. It might help us learn whether coming out, hopefully, has become easier in the past 10 years or so. I would recommend this book primarily to teens or 20-somethings trying to get a grasp on what gay life was like pre-Stonewall.
