



Little Birds

Anaïs Nin

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Evocative and superbly erotic, Little Birds is a powerful journey into the mysterious world of sex and sensuality. From the beach towns of Normandy to the streets of New Orleans, these thirteen vignettes introduce us to a covetous French painter, a sleepless wanderer of the night, a guitar-playing gypsy, and a host of others who yearn for and dive into the turbulent depths of romantic experience.

Little Birds Details

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Author : Anaïs Nin

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Alex says

I found this less subversive than her more famous collection, Delta of Venus. That book I compared to "a kitty who rolls on her back for you and you reach out to rub her stomach and she shreds your hand with no warning." This one is a little more, like, you want sexy stuff, here's the sexy stuff.

I mean, sortof. It's all still pretty weird. Nin leaves no kink unkinked. She deals with power imbalances a lot. She investigates the concept of consent. She is nonjudgmental. If you aren't equally nonjudgmental you'll find some of these disturbing. (Well, either way, probably.) They often take radical turns; they end abruptly, or veer off into different stories altogether. Nin maybe doesn't seem like she's actively trolling you quite as hard as she did in Delta of Venus.

I wrote down brief plot descriptions of some of these. They're in order. They contain spoilers. Here they are.

A guy moves into a garrett so he can expose himself to schoolgirls. He's too aggressive and they run away like little birds.

A guy peeps in a window and then has a sexy rendezvous with a strange woman on the beach. She tells a story about being consensually groped and fucked by a stranger in a crowd while watching a man get hanged.

A brief story about a gay woman who may be transgendered.

A complicated story about sisters. One takes another's lover. The guilt kills her sex drive. She ends up faking an orgasm with him while remembering the orgasms she just had with another man, whom she was imagining was this guy.

During an African dust storm, a woman begins to tell what promises to be the long and weird story of her sex life - but then stops, and doesn't seem to recognize the listener when she sees him next.

A painter starts to love his paintings of his wife more than his actual wife

A whore's body is painted by an artist. It turns him on and she promises that once the paint dries he can fuck her first; but she doesn't wait, she lets everyone else fuck her.

A woman learns she must fight her passive nature and take sexual control with her passive lover. When she falls for another man, he's turned off by her aggression; he thinks she's acting like a whore.

A nubile teen marries a much older man. Surprise, he can only get it up for their black servants; she remains a virgin until she accidentally makes herself smell like a servant.

"In New York I unfold my wings of vanity and coquetry."

A lesbian gives a woman who's had a lot of sex her first orgasm by sticking a finger in her butt. This story is almost pure sex.

An older man takes in a teen runaway who wants to be sexually awakened; when he tires of her his even older roommate is happy to inherit her. It works out for her too.

Joshua says

I found this book long after discovering "Delta of Venus" as a boy on someone's book shelf. I read "Little Birds" as an adult and I believe it should be taken in tandem with the former rather than separately.

What I can say is that thanks to encountering Anais Nin as a boy, I grew up viewing sexuality and sexual attraction as something that takes place mostly in the mind and it is that tension that she describes, between desire and fear/exhilaration, and the surrender that her characters often go through that has made for a very healthy sense of the sexual in my life. I view this as a stark contrast to most of my other male friends who only view sexuality through the somewhat crude lens of pornography. I would recommend Nin's books to them, but I am almost certain they would hate them.

So Nin had a positive effect on my life, and contributed to my understanding of the way the female mind views sexuality. I can't think of a higher compliment to give her.

I would also just add that it's healthy for a mind to sometimes entertain thoughts for which you wouldn't morally approve. This is the very nature of the illicit, and why we are attracted to it in the first place.

Vipassana says

My first piece of erotica and after Little Birds, both my opinion of Anais Nin and the bar for erotica is very high.

Several people believe that sex is purely physical. I see this as a deliberate dissociation from the vulnerability that desire creates in us. Our society and culture, apart from feeding our own self preserving tendencies also "encourages us to acknowledge very little of who we normally are in the act of sex", as Alain de Botton said.

Anais Nin's writing is absent of any such pretensions. In thirteen short stories, Anais Nin explores all kinds of men and women, and how the intricacies of their lives shape their personalities and their desires. Her characters range from strong to weak, coy to explicit and most important of all, the characters themselves go through a whole range of emotions quashing any notion of fixed sexual inclination in humans.

It is not the honesty of the narrative that has my favour though, it is the treatment of the subject. *Lust, obsession, fantasy and desire emerge as part of the human condition, as pure or as complex as any other.*

Favourite stories: The Woman in the Dunes, The Model and Mandra.

Adrienne says

Ok first up I bought this *knowing* that it contained stories that are also in *The Delta of Venus and Eros Unbound*, so I guess out of 13 stories I've already read 6 most of which I love and adore and would read again over and over. The remaining 7 left me feeling a little disappointed, the verve seems to have gone, the exquisite delicacy and graceful writing and words, vanished, the languidity replaced by a sense of urgency. Perhaps by the time she wrote these she was bored to tears of writing erotica or perhaps some of these are collaborative work. So for this one it's 3 stars. By the way my favourite story from this is *The Woman on the Dunes*:)

Sabra Embury says

This book would be a great read for someone too conservatively raised to appreciate visual pornography for its valuable lessons in learning how to be comfortable with yourself or your partner. It would be a valuable read for someone who did not know how to caress his or her partner to get them aroused for sex.

If someone's fifteen-year-old son asked their mom or dad what sex was all about, first it would be wise to tell them about reproduction, how to avoid it until ready, venereal diseases, and so on; and then tell them about *Little Birds*, how it's available at the library, and how reading it would educate them in a way which is hard to explain by anyone but experienced confidants.

The stories are written by a sensualist, it's bohemian erotica, tales of being taken, taking; the articulation of women who want what they want, when they want it, without shame: living in the dark ages as we do, stories like these are still considered taboo. The mention of puckered nipples, the clitoris, bulging cocks excreting, and so on; it's all so racy, isn't it?

Little Birds is saturated with it, by way of models and muses being seduced by artists, mostly painters, sometimes American writers, and other times random men on the street. Whether it's sex in the sand with a stranger, or being shared by two men in a well-furnished apartment in New York through a fur coat, the reader is guaranteed to become aroused, and educated in a reality we should embrace, rather than ignore, while fumbling in the dark.

Lukas Prytikin says

PEOPLE ARE WASTING THEIR TIME NOWADAYS WITH AN OVERLOAD OF TOTALLY INSIGNIFICANT, SHALLOW EROTICA-BOOKS ! ANAIS NIN IS A GODDESS OF MASTERFULLY WRITTEN, DARK EROTICA - HER CHARMING VULNERABILITY AND PERSONAL HONESTY IS PART OF HER POETRY ! SOME OF THE THINGS SHE HAS WRITTEN ABOUT HAVE THE POWER TO BE SOMETIMES DISTURBING BUT THEY ARE ALSO A UNIQUE TESTIMONY ABOUT ANAIS NIN AS A PERSON, THE WOMAN SHE BECAME, THE WOMAN SHE WAS ! ALL THAT IS MEANINGFUL AND PROFOUNDLY MOVING ! (L.prytikin)

Cheryl Anne Gardner says

This little book of short stories is by far some of the finest erotica ever written. Nin is a true master of love, lust, and the body's betrayal of our innermost desires. Nin writes with a simple elegance. Never overdoing the imagery, we get just what we need to feel the work without a crass microscopic examination. Nin plunges deeply into the psyche of her characters, and we get more than an up-close and personal intimate glimpse of their inner turmoil as they struggle to break free of their self-imposed sexual limitations. Her characters awaken, blossom like flowers covered in the morning dew, and perfume the pages before our very eyes.

Nin is not merely writing about sex or sexual taboos in these stories; she is writing essays on humanity's constant battle to reconcile our inner longings and emotional conflicts concerning sex and death. She definitely pushes the boundaries, but she does it with such nuance and such poetry and such innocence that the disturbing subject matter feels tempered in order for us to achieve a greater understanding of themes presented.

This is a wonderful introduction to Nin's work. I highly recommend that all authors read her work, specifically authors who are interested in exploring sexuality in their own material. Her approach is genuine: voyeuristic without being intrusive. Those who are already familiar with the great erotic enchantress know this. This book is a must have for the collection. It is a book to return to with a blush and a smile over and over again. However, if you are looking for graphic depictions of sex, you will not find it here, for this is true erotica, and it takes a deeply subliminal approach, not plot laden poke and jab.

To me, there is a huge difference between erotica and pornography. Erotic doesn't even necessarily have to be about sex, and as a reader and a writer, I don't need it to be. I find that erotica tends to titillate at a deeper more emotional level, and ambiguity can be used to great effect. Well-written erotica affects the reader beyond the physical, and often times that affectation is so powerful that the physical can be left out entirely. As for my own work, I do write a fair amount of sex, and it's never comfortable no matter how many times you do it. Each scene feels just like the first time you did it yourself. It's awkward and fumbling and downright un-poetic, but just like the rest of the story, sex scenes evolve during the re-writes. Sex for your characters can be a well-spring of self-discovery, and if done well, they can deepen the experience for the reader and move the story beyond the plot-line. Sexual motivation is deeply rooted, and exploring your character's Id can be quite fulfilling, if not a bit frightening. Just watch your language, erotica can turn into cheap porn with just a few puerile words ... it doesn't take much, and not every story needs sexual exploration. You are the author: you know the story and the characters ... you will know if the story needs it or not depending on your overall Thesis. The trial and error part comes in deciding how deeply to explore. Don't justify the need: be sure it's worthwhile for your characters to go there; otherwise it will just read like a bad segue.

Of course, I am speaking of literary erotica here. If you are writing erotica for sexual titillation, meaning that you are writing pornography for the sole purpose of arousing the reader, then have at it: But you had better make it good. Clichés only leave my head *throbbing* and me *longing* for an aspirin. Spare me the twenty-inch manhood and the weeping multi-orgasmic vulvas paleeease.

Amanda says

I give *Little Birds* four stars in comparison to *Delta of Venus*' two, though as a stand alone, it would probably only get 2 or 3. There are almost no disgusting and despicable sex scenes in *Little Birds*, and for this, I am grateful. (As it turns out, I'm a bit prudish after all...)

Little Birds is set in various places around the world, but quite often set in New York and New Orleans. It feels more modern than *Delta of Venus*. It feels more aware, more present. And this, my second dip into a collection of Anais Nin's short stories, I finally understand why she is a noteworthy FEMALE writer. She is finally writing about women. Silly, stupid women. And most of it's pretty sexy.

Ian "Marvin" Graye says

In Full Flight

The titular birds feature in polar opposite contexts in this collection of erotica.

In the first story, Marcel rents an attic with a terrace. He feeds the birds, so as to attract the attention of schoolgirls across the road. Having won their trust, he exposes himself to the girls, after which they take fright and run away, like little birds.

In the last story, a runaway 16 year old girl, Jeanette, finds physical shelter with Jean and Pierre. She wants to have a few men to herself. *"One is not enough?"* asks Jean. *"I don't know yet. I will have to see."*

Both men treat her sensitively as they initiate her into the sensual world. Pierre even withholds his penis from the immediate satisfaction she is seeking:

"It was as if he held a palpitating bird in his hand, a captive bird that tried to leap at her but that Pierre kept for his own pleasure...He continued to massage it...as if to say, 'I don't need you.'"

In response, Jeanette is emptied of all but her own *"desire to be taken and satisfied"*:

"She bloomed under his caresses, no longer the girl but the woman already being born."

Here, the bird helps Jeanette to take flight.

Italian cover featuring *"La Belle Rafaela"* by Tamara de Lempicka (1927)

The Most Delicious Vise

I initially felt this posthumous collection was inferior to its immediate predecessor, *"Delta of Venus"*.

However, gradually, it's thematic content cohered and became more apparent.

This is very much about the transition from 13 year old innocence and naivety to 16 year old experience and worldliness. As she grows, the notional girl awakens from flight to the embrace of birds, not to mention the

"little silver foxes" of other women (who "moan like pigeons...beneath the satin and the fur") and "the most delicious vise of silky, salty flesh".

The life of this fiction is filled with perfumes, jewelry, curtains and caresses.

This is the feminine flipside of the masculine rites of passage explored in the fiction of Haruki Murakami, except it's both more focussed on and better attuned to a woman's sexual perspective.

SOUNDTRACK:

Little Birdy - "Beautiful To Me"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMcFm...>

Readings of "The Woman On The Dunes"

<https://vimeo.com/9633397>

<https://soundcloud.com/viciousminutes...>

Aubariah says

This is bad erotica. In 13 stories only one focuses on two people screwing because they like it. I read the whole thing and here are the stories (spoilers aplenty):

1. Open with pedophilia
2. Magic mystery sex with a stranger who romantically recounts being raped in a crowd while watching a hanging.
3. Main character Lina just needs a bit of rape to get her to like sex.
4. Adorable tales of boys molesting their little sisters, and how it leads to a vigorous incestuous sex life.
5. This one is just boring and racist. A woman finally gets back at her cheating husband by -gasp!- sleeping with another man!
6. The hot prude's husband begins to make secret paintings of his naked wife against her will. Then she catches him shuffling the paintings. So she tears her clothes off and just becomes Even Sexier.
7. A virgin naif is introduced to sex by Scoundrel Artists. Bizarre stories of raping jungle women. Minor lesbian tryst due to horseback injury.
8. This one I described only as "Whores, amirite?"
9. How to shame a woman into submission and have her be grateful.
10. Fantasies of bestiality rewarded by rape.
11. How to get your husband to stop screwing "colored women"--just smell like one and it will "break the spell"!
12. Two women enjoy a bit of sex and anal play. A little lesbian fondling. This is the best story and it is still rather dull.
13. Two men take in a runaway girl and keep her for sex.

The stories all reinforce sex as vile, enjoyed only by delinquent women, and necessitating trickery. The

writing is very dry, which works against supposedly hot sex. The whole thing reads like a tame French translation of 50 shades.

Faye says

Read: October 2016

Overall rating: 4/5 stars

For me Anais Nin has been a very unpredictable author to read; some of her books (*Under a Glass Bell & Collages*) I have absolutely loved, others I have loathed (*Delta of Venus*), while her book of essays (*In Favour of the Sensitive Man*) left me a bit 'meh.'

After the first story in this collection I was afraid that *Little Birds* would fall into the 'loathe' category but thankfully Nin veered away from the pedophilic undertones in the remaining stories, actually creating some beautifully written narratives, and examining different ways and forms of sexuality and what it means to be a sexual being.

The ratings for the individual stories are:

Little Birds - 1/5 stars

The Woman on the Dunes - 3/5 stars

Lina - 3/5 stars

Two Sisters - 4/5 stars

Sirocco - 3/5 stars

The Maja - 4/5 stars

A Model - 2/5 stars

The Queen - 3/5 stars

Hilda and Rango - 4/5 stars

The Chanchiquito - 2/5 stars

Saffron - 3.5/5 stars

Mandra - 3/5 stars

Runaway - 3/5 stars

Emily May says

I found this incredibly boring when compared to the eroticism and sensuality of *Delta Of Venus*. I was expecting far more from Anais Nin, especially when regarding a field that she had so much expertise in.

The thing is, erotica is one of those things that is so hard to suffer through when it's dull... there's just no pretending otherwise; and these stories were very similar, caresses followed by a very scientific depiction of oral sex. Sorry to say it did nothing for me.

Nora toomey says

this is how I learned about sex. Thanks mom and dad for owning it! Also, I stole it from you.

Monique says

This is my first time to read erotica, but because I pretty much have a good idea what to expect, I wasn't at all shocked, surprised, nor repulsed. As I figured, the only way to appreciate erotic literature such as this is to keep an open mind.

I would like to report that I did exactly that, in the first stories. Towards the end, however, I could not also help but become cynical and/or sarcastic. After all, how much sex can you read about and let your mind absorb before your head actually, truly aches and you declare you've finally had enough?

Little Birds is a compilation of short stories of erotica. These are stories about varying degrees and classes of sexual deviancy and exhaustive descriptions of all manners of copulation. There's a story about an exhibitionist, a pig-like creature with a snout that finds its way between women's legs, orgies, homosexuality, even incest (the one that I couldn't stomach), and more sex. Sex on the sand, sex in a public place, sex in the forest, sex just about *everywhere*. Cunnilingus and fellatio are described in clear, vivid detail, such that the author's words leave nothing to the reader's imagination.

The stories I couldn't forget are those with endings that I found either funny or weird. The first story, entitled *Little Birds*, was about this man who lures several young girls to his apartment near their school by purchasing and displaying birds on cages in his terrace. The man was an exhibitionist, and something funny (at least, to me it *is*) happens near the end. :) And the one I found weird was about the husband who couldn't make love to his own wife, preferring to do it with his colored servants instead. Yes, the husband would actually caress and touch and make foreplay with his wife, but he couldn't just seem to be able to do *it* with her. The wife is heartbroken especially since, every night, she would hear her husband and one of the colored maids getting it on somewhere nearby. Finally, when the wife makes a purchase of this particular herb, the mystery is solved. Oh, had the wife only known...! :)

In Anais Nin's foreword, she narrated that she started writing erotic literature out of necessity, creating the stories from an empty stomach. According to her, she became the "*madame*" of a certain group of writers who lived and got by through what she termed "literary prostitution". When I read this, I realized that the value of these erotic literature was the fact that it put food on *their* table, at the time. And if it stirred people's sexual desires, well, that would have been a mere incident now, wouldn't it? :)

Kitty says

This book, along with its companion book (they run together in my mind and am talking about both here), *Delta of Venus*, are wonderfully evocative erotic stories. They are never the wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am stuff of porn magazines. Sometimes magical, sometimes freaky, with a European sensibility, these stories are softly spellbinding. I can't help but get caught up in them whenever I pick up these books. Elena, Pierre, Leila, the Basque and Bijou, what a cool group of characters! And there are so many more. The sexual encounters depend on the development of the characters and there's more to them than you find in pretty

much any other such stories. Very enjoyable!
