

Cross currents by Wickie Stamps

Caught in a blitzkrieg of heterosexuality for centuries, we queers were in boot camp for breeders. Straight images, in books, plays and the media clotted off queer desires, lobotomized our queer thoughts, jammed our queer frequencies. All of us were subjected to a lifetime of mandatory aversion therapy against our own desires.

In this noxious world, our queer spirits rotted. Lives were lost. Some, seeing ourselves as the problem, drowned ourselves in rivers, others chose booze. We were shoved by the homophobes into our deaths. Some of us crawled, or were pushed, into the outstretched arms of our so-called healers, takers of their hypocritical Hippocratic oath — only to be shocked, drugged and dragged back into our straight jackets. All of us were told that our queerness was an abomination, a contamination of the master heterosexual race.

But our artists/activists, slowly subverted the goose-stepping advancement of straightness. A line in a book, a minor character in some major play, each a queer-

ness stroke, slipped into our view. Each word and image offered us an antidote to our heterosexuality barbed reality.

Now, it's volumes of queerness, week-long queer film festivals and we, the freak show of the Nineties, top Oprah's most sought-after minority. Now it's our turn to roar for our words, our images are coming out.

But it took a war to claim our corner, and it is taking one to keep it ours. And, it still remains a very white and wealthy toehold we've attained. And still, the piles of bodies of our queer artists/activists grow higher each day. And thugs, often in cop drag, track us, picking off those least protected. But, still, our writers write, our cameras roll, and our queer actors and actresses prance in roles shaped perfectly to our sexualities. We are celebrating our sexualities while still living in the belly of the racist, sexist, homophobic beast.

Queer culture — pointing the way into our own desires. Queer culture. Our weapon against our own demise. ★