

# **SEEING MYSELF IN THE MIRROR: AN LGBTQ LITERATURE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH DIVERSE CHARACTERS**

*Compiled by Alyson Feldman-Piltch*

**Beam, Cris. *I Am J*. New York, NY: Little, Brown & Co., 2011.**

J always thought that he was born in the wrong body, and that one-day he would wake up and no longer look like a girl. When he realizes this isn't going to happen, he begins to hide himself under layers and layers of clothing. Eventually, it becomes too much. The oppressive clothing, his Mom still calling him *m'ija*, and falling out with his best friend Melissa: J decides this not how he wants to live his life. So, with the idea of transitioning on his mind, and the fear that those who love him won't accept him for who he is, J leaves home to seek out a new place where he can be him. An optimistic read for anyone not sure who they are or where their place is in the world. Recommended for grades 11+.

**Fu, Kim. *For Today I am a Boy*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.**

Peter Huang, the only son in his Chinese family, wants nothing more than to be a girl. The first generation son of immigrant parents trying desperately to assimilate themselves in western culture, Peter feels disgusted and confused with his body. Forced by his father to epitomize masculinity, Peter eventually goes off on his own, escaping to Montreal where he begins to discover who he truly is. A poignant work for those who want to break free from the lives others have planned for them. Recommended for grades 11+.

**Farizan, Sara. *If You Could Be Mine*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 2013.**

Sahar and Nasrin have been in love since they were little girls. For years they have had to keep their relationship a secret for the safety of themselves and their loved ones. But now, at the age of 17, everything is falling apart. Nasrin is to be married off in an arranged—to a man. Faced with the reality that gender reassignment surgery is common and accepted in Iran, Sahar must decide if it is worth changing who she is in order to be with the one she loves. A gripping and heartbreaking story, this book is the perfect read for teens who would risk it all for love. Recommended for grades 9+

**Gidney, Craig Laurance. *Bereft*. Philadelphia, PA: Tiny Satchel Press, 2013.**

14 year-old Rafe Fannen has received a scholarship Our Lady of Woods, the all male Catholic college preparatory school, but things are not as wonderful as they seem. Rafe's mom is fighting a losing battle with mental illness, his ex-con father is trying

to re-establish himself, and Rafe is coming to terms with his own sexuality. After Rafe is accused of vandalizing the school and accused of being gay, he decides to seek help from the school's Vicar to make the bullying stop. Yet, it quickly becomes apparent that the Vicar wants to something more, and it's up to Rafe to take a stand and change not only his life, but also the life of those around him. Perfect for anyone trying to find his or her place in multiple worlds. Recommended for grades 9+

**Gurba, Myriam. *Dahlia Season*. San Francisco, CA: Manic D Press, 2007.**

Desiree Garcia is described as a "Chicana. Goth. Dykling." Most importantly, she's Desiree, a teenager living her life in Southern California. Her parents don't see it that way though, and decide to extinguish the weirdness Desiree is so proud of by first sending her to a Catholic High School, and then Mexico- but things aren't as easy to fix as they believe. A comically brutal look at reality, and a must read for any older teenager who feels like their parents just don't get it. Recommended for grades 10+

**Lockhart, E. *Dramarama*. New York, NY: Hyperion, 2007.**

Demi and Sayde go to the same high school, but until their auditions for Wildwood Summer Institute they barely acknowledged each other. Sayde is tall and awkward; Demi is black and gay a practical phenomena in their Ohio town. The two quickly form a bond and quickly become best friends. Upon their arrival at summer camp, the two are separated as boys live in one dorm, and girls another. With this, things change. Demi becomes popular- Sayde not so much, and the two struggle to find a balance between stardom and friendship. A quirky read for any teen questioning if they and their BFF will really be, best friends forever. Recommended for grades 9+.

**Revoyr, Nina. *The Necessary Hunger*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997.**

Nancy Takahiro is a star basketball player in her senior year of high school, unsure of what the future holds for her, beyond Compton and basketball. Then her father's girlfriend and daughter move in. Raina Webber is the same age as Nancy and equally as good a basketball player- maybe even better. The two young women have a intense friendship, fueled by their rivalry and an underlying passion that burns brighter than any other. A lengthy, but wonderful read for anyone who isn't defined b their passions, but driven by them. Recommended for grades 11+

**Rice-González, Charles. *Chulito*. New York, NY: Magnus Books, 2011.**

Growing up in the South Bronx, Chulito has always been one of the boys. He drinks Hennessey with the boys, has a girlfriend, and moves drugs for friend Kaz. Then one day, things change. Chultio's best friend Carlos, who is openly gay and has been away at his first year of college returns, and the two share a secret kiss. Now Chulito must add his crush on Carlos to his balancing act, and decide who he really is

and what he really wants. A realistic read that breathes its setting of Hunt's Point, this book is for older teens that shows love knows no stereotypes. Recommended for grades 11+

**Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Last Night I Sang to the Monster*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2009.**

Zach is a senior in high school. This is a year that should be filled with parties, friends, and college applications- but, its not. Zach is in rehab, and won't allow himself to remember the incidents that led to his being there. Through the help of his roommate, Rafael, Zach finds the courage to remember again and share what is buried deep inside. A powerful read that will leave you reaching for a tissue, this book is for teens that are searching for both encouragement, and their voice. Recommended for grades 10+.

**Sanchez, Alex. *Boyfriends with Girlfriends*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011.**

Lance thinks he's found the boy of his dreams, the problem is Sergio is bisexual and Lance doesn't believe in bisexuality; you're either gay or straight. Sergio can't believe he's found someone like Lance, but he's nervous- he's never dated a guy before, though he's fooled around with one before. Luckily, each boy has their best friend to help them navigate the tumultuous waters of high school relationship. That is until the girls begin to develop feelings for one another too. A read that will leave you grinning, this book is perfect for teens that have ever had a crush on someone. Recommended for grades 9+.

**Wise, Tama. *Street Dreams*. Valley Falls, NY: Bold Strokes Books, 2012.**

Tyson has big dreams, and big responsibilities. Striving to become a local graffiti artist and living life on the edges of the local hip-hop scene, Tyson works a night job to support his mom and two younger brothers, and is a confidant for his friend Rawiri. Soon Tyson falls in love, and he realizes that if he wants to get the man of his dreams or the recognition he deserves, then he has to give it his all. A tale that shows no matter who you are, who you love, or what you are passionate about, anything is possible. Recommended for grades 10+.

**Woodson, Jacqueline. *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*. New York, NY: Blue Sky Press, 1995.**

For Melanin Sun, it has also been him and Mama, Mama and him; they have an unbreakable bond. Then Mama begins to hide things from Melanin, and he begins to question her. Torn between his love for his Mama and the shame he feels for her being labeled as a lesbian, Melanin must learn to set aside his pride and hate if he ever wants to rebuild his relationship with her. A beautiful tale told through

Melanin's journals, a read for any child trying to come to terms with the reality that parents aren't always who we think they are. Recommended for grades 9+.

**Yee, Paul. *Money Boy*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood, 2011.**

Ray Liu is a young Chinese immigrant who struggles at school and at home. No matter how hard he tries, Ray can never seem to do well in his classes, and anything less than perfection is unacceptable to his militant father. At least, in Ray's eyes, life is predictable. Until one day, Ray's father finds gay porn on his computer and kicks Ray out of the house for dishonoring the family. Now, Ray's life is anything but predictable, as he must find a way to survive on the streets of Toronto. Illustrative of what it's like to find acceptance within yourself, others, and tradition, this book is perfect for all those searching for their own identity. Recommended for grades 9+