



My Dangerous Desires: A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home (Series Q)

By Amber L. Hollibaugh

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Amber L. Hollibaugh is a lesbian sex radical, ex-hooker, incest survivor, gypsy child, poor-white-trash, high femme dyke. She is also an award-winning filmmaker, feminist, Left political organizer, public speaker, and journalist. *My Dangerous Desires* presents over twenty years of Hollibaugh's writing, an introduction written especially for this book, and five new essays including "A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home," "My Dangerous Desires," and "Sexuality, Labor, and the New Trade Unionism."

In looking at themes such as the relationship between activism and desire or how sexuality can be intimately tied to one's class identity, Hollibaugh fiercely and fearlessly analyzes her own political development as a response to her unique personal history. She explores the concept of labeling and the associated issues of categories such as butch or femme, transgender, bisexual, top or bottom, drag queen, b-girl, or drag king. The volume includes conversations with other writers, such as Deirdre English, Gayle Rubin, Jewelle Gomez, and Cherríe Moraga. From the groundbreaking article "What We're Rollin' Around in Bed With" to the radical "Sex Work Notes: Some Tensions of a Former Whore and a Practicing Feminist," Hollibaugh charges ahead to describe her reality, never flinching from the truth. Dorothy Allison's moving foreword pays tribute to a life lived in struggle by a working-class lesbian who, like herself, refuses to suppress her dangerous desires.

Having informed many of the debates that have become central to gay and lesbian activism, Hollibaugh's work challenges her readers to speak, write, and record their desires—especially, perhaps, the most dangerous of them—"in order for us all to survive."

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Sex radical Amber L. Hollibaugh may be best known for the classic "What We're Rollin' Around in Bed With," the edited transcript of a taped 1979 conversation on butch/femme desire between Hollibaugh and Cherrie Moraga. This influential article, steeped in the lesbian feminist lingo of the 1970s, still reads almost as a confession, in which socially and economically disadvantaged women--both ardent feminists and one of them an ex-hooker--nervously admit to each other the polarity of their sexual needs. This article showcases the great strengths of Hollibaugh's work: courage and insistence on the truth. The most moving essay in *My Dangerous Desires*, which covers work of the past two decades, is a memoir and meditation on aging called "Femme Fables" (a collection of three shorter pieces from Hollibaugh's column in the *New York Native* in the early 1980s), in which she recalls returning to her working-class home after a year away at an upper-class boarding school. She had brought back a suitcase of books, to which her parents responded with awe and respect. One day she came home to find her mother sitting on her bed, crying, surrounded by these open books, unable to understand them. Years later, Hollibaugh admits:

This is a pain I cannot avoid each time I sit at my typewriter or assemble my office. The ghost of her narrowed options and all the dreams she had to defer to me, the confusions and bitter separation between us, are shapes which hang in my house now and live with me. In order to give me a chance, my parents had to create a child they did not understand; they had to endure my shame of them. The pride we carry about each other is surrounded by a sadness none of us can dissolve.

While some of the political debates that inspired these pieces are happily out of date, this remains a rich and evocative collection, offering bulletins from the battlefields of the feminist sex wars. --*Regina Marler*

From Publishers Weekly

It's not every day you meet a self-identified "lesbian sex radical ex-hooker incest survivor rural gypsy working-class poor white trash high femme dyke" who has founded a major AIDS prevention program, won an award at Sundance, organized unions and written for the *Socialist Review*. In this stunning collection of essays and interviews, Hollibaugh describes herself as having led a "double life" as savvy union organizer by day, stripper and sex worker by night. But the truth is that she's led multiple lives. Painfully excluded from the very movements she's helped to build, Hollibaugh repeatedly disguises herself, whether hiding her role as a prostitute (knowing it would alienate other feminists) or pretending to be a slumming college dropout (like other antiwar activists). These complicated negotiations contribute to her fresh perspective on a variety of issues. She sharply critiques what she sees as feminism's unproductive refusal to understand prostitution's class basis, contending that sex work is work, labor that can be more economically viable or safer than working in a dry cleaning factory or sweatshop. Hollibaugh's writing is sharp and glittering. Take her dead-on description of the barter system she exploits with sexist intellectuals: "I slept with men on the Left just to overhear their conversations about Marx and the foundations of capital... Sex was my tuition, and I paid it willingly." This provocative, challenging collection could become a feminist classic. (Nov. 8)
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Review

"Amber Hollibaugh is a brilliant activist intellectual from trailer park America. Her particular queer working-

class life has taught her the skills, risks and pleasures of radically changing society-and social movements—from their despised edges. We're lucky she hasn't kept this dangerous knowledge a secret. For years her written and spoken words have made history. Now we have them all in a book that belongs in the toolbox of every working person. Pick it up and put it to work.”—Allan Bérubé

“At a time when the once-fire of the gay and lesbian movement is being extinguished by the seduction of middle class acceptability, Amber Hollibaugh raises her voice in an equally-seductive cry of queer resistance. *My Dangerous Desires* is a history book of one of our most faithful freedom fighters, told in the story of her own sexual-spiritual survival. Informed as much by the Civil Rights Movement as the Stonewall Rebellion, Amber Hollibaugh's politic is one first forged in the bedrooms, the bar rooms and the back rooms of the working poor. A generation later, they are not forgotten; this book remains a living testimony for those unknown and untold by the gay and lesbian movement. Gracias, Amber.”—Cherrie Moraga, author of *Loving in the War Years*

“I welcome you to my friend's essays, to the unique sharp-eyed glance of a woman who had to fight to be able to say, 'I want.' In Amber's life, desire has been made sacred. Whether she is writing about the female body, the femme psyche, or the fearful need to admit desire itself, Amber has vindicated all our lives.”—Dorothy Allison, from the Foreword

“So for many years I led a double life: working as a Left political organizer, filmmaker, and writer during the day while supporting myself as a Vegas stripper and, as a young woman, earning a living through prostitution. As a dyke in the Left before Stonewall and a high femme lesbian during the growth of lesbian feminism, my erotic yearnings were often in direct opposition to the very political movements I was committed to creating.”—Amber Hollibaugh

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frances Carpenter:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or even goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They can be reading whatever they consider because their hobby is reading a book. How about the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, person feel need book if they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you'll have this *My Dangerous Desires: A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home* (Series Q).

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April Cotton:

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