Summer Reads

Whether you're sunning on the beach or snuggling in bed, these books will shine through the whole season.

June 25, 2018 By Trent Straube

Heroes: A Tribute

By Doug Meyer

Three years ago, for a DIFFA: Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS fundraiser, artist and designer Doug Meyer created 19 sculptures representing creative icons lost to AIDS. He then expanded it to a series of 50 three-dimensional portraits—composed of plastic, paint, terra-cotta, papier-mâché and other materials and accompanied by text about each person's life and legacy—that toured the country. Now comes a fabulous coffee-table book that pays homage to these amazing heroes, including Leigh Bowery (on the cover), Freddie Mercury, Tina Chow, Keith Haring, Halston, Klaus Nomi and Derek Jarman (pictured in the featured image above).

Heroes: A TributeTRA Publising

I Want Your Love

by Richard Renaldi

Portrait photographer Richard Renaldi turned 50 this year, and lucky for us, he has been snapping images of his life for four of those decades. Spanning 1970s Illinois to 1990s New York and beyond, this collection of photos and written vignettes gives us intimate (and often erotic) glimpses of Renaldi as he discovers his sexuality, comes out to his mom, tests positive for HIV,

transforms himself with steroids and bodybuilding, and meets a long-term partner. In his well-documented life, there’s lots to love.

MEMOIR In One Life at a Time, AIDS doctor Daniel Baxter recounts his time with HIV patients in Botswana and New York, sharing life lessons and insightful comparisons on cultures and medical systems. In the slender and conversational Sweet Dreams, Pamela Sneed recalls the experiences and people (including Annie Lennox, as alluded to in the book’s title) that transformed her into a Black lesbian writer and activist.

Skyhorse Publishing

Belladonna

POETRY At once succinct and nimble, Danez Smith says so much about being gay, Black and HIV positive in the astonishing Don’t Call Us Dead. Also covering the African-American queer experience but in a more expansive style, spoken-word artist Mary Bowman documents her continued journey to a better life in the aptly titled Emerge.

NONFICTION Trevor Hoppe explores HIV criminalization and the impulse to blame, shame and ultimately imprison people who have an infectious illness in Punishing Disease. Journalist and long-term survivor Randy Boyd covers race, homophobia, HIV stigma and Magic Johnson in his collection The Essential Randy Boyd.

FICTION If you’re jonesing for something edgier and less conventional—think William Burroughs or Charles Bukowski—then Doug Weaver’s got your fix in the darkly humorous Be Safe.

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