

Book Review

Title: *Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories*

Editors: Bob Guter & John R. Killacky

Publisher: Harrington Park, 2004

Paper, 2003 ISBN: 1-56023-457-1

Cloth, 2003 ISBN: 1-56023-456-3

Cost: Paperback - \$19.95 USD; Hardcover - \$39.50 USD

Reviewer: Steven E. Brown

Like the earlier *With the Power of Each Breath*, (Pittsburgh and San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1985), edited by Susan E. Browne, Debra Connors, and Nanci Stern, an anthology about women with disabilities—almost two decades old now--this is a pathfinding work.

Queer Crips includes stories from people trying to find their way in their own worlds—and in ours. These gay (mostly) men (mostly) explore lives trying to determine how to combine their sexuality and disability identities, or lacks thereof. Authors range from proud to be gay, but not to have a disability, to the reverse, and many colors of the rainbow in-between.

In the next-to-the last of the book's thirty-five pieces by twenty-nine authors, Eli Clare, who's described as a "transgendered poet, rabble rouser, and author," (page xiii), writes that he(?) seeks, "places... where we are encouraged to swish and swagger, limp and roll, and learn the language of pride. Places where our bodies begin to become home." (page 215) A sentiment with which those of us struggling with our "disabled" bodies can often identify.

Co-editor Bob Guter, whose interviews with a variety of characters, are one of the book's highlights, states in the anthology's final piece, "We who are accustomed to being medicalized, analyzed, evaluated, counted off by statistical standards, are tired of being passengers. We are determined to drive this vehicle that is our lives" (page 224).

I cannot think of a better way to begin, conclude, or be in the middle of our existences.

This book, as far as I know, is unique. It won't stay that way. There are too many similar stories to tell. But as the first of its kind, it will, like *With the Power of Each Breath*, remain at the frontier's edge.

As a classroom tool, it has the ability to awaken intense discussions; as a book, it belongs in every disability rights library; and as literature, it belongs in all the other ones.