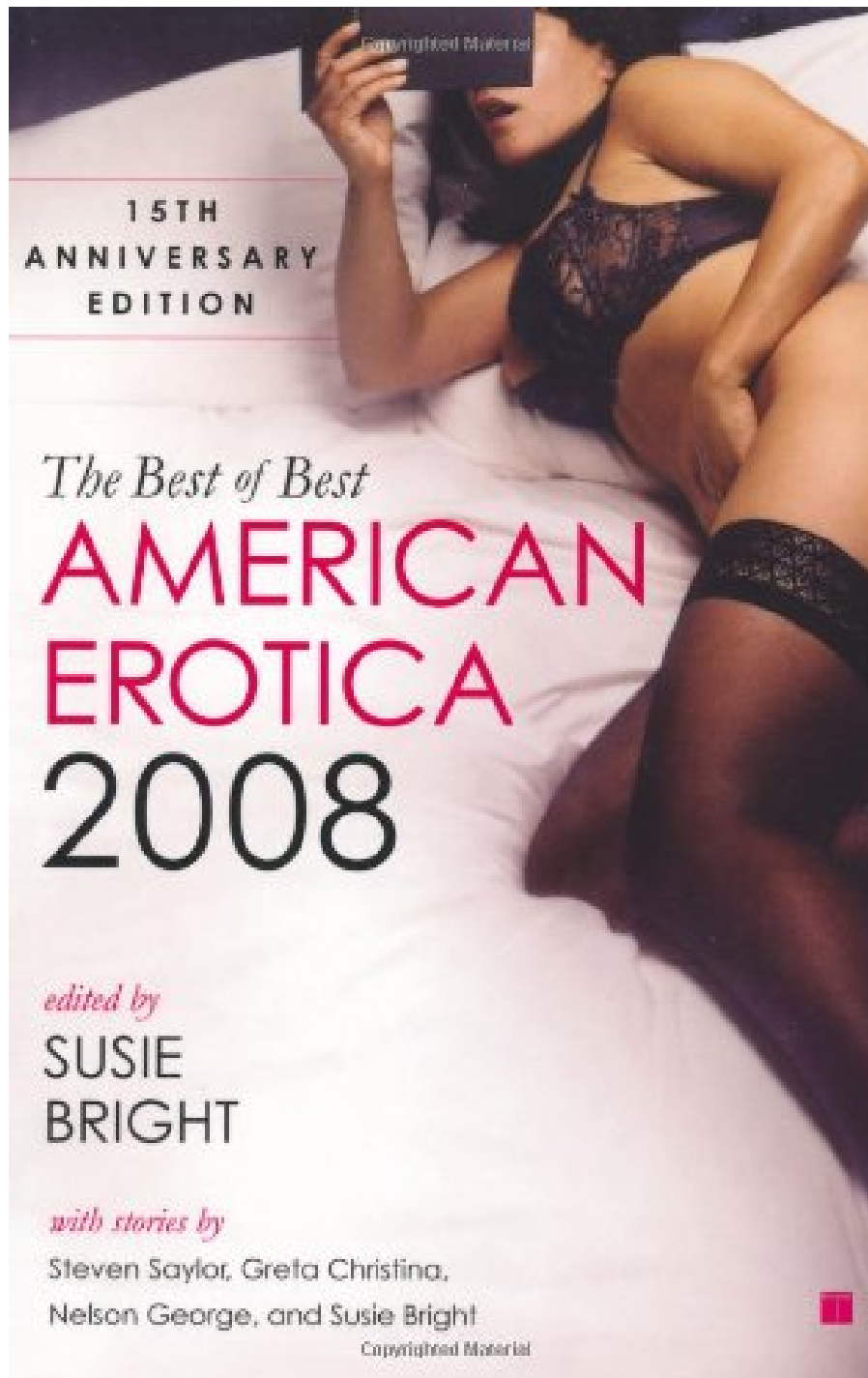


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## About the Author

Susie Bright is the editor of *The Best American Erotica* series and host of the weekly audio show *In Bed with Susie Bright* on Audible.com. She has been a columnist for *Playboy* and *Salon*, and has been profiled in *USA TODAY*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *Mother Jones*, and *Vanity Fair*, among other publications. An international lecturer on sexuality and feminism, she won the 2004 *Writer of the Year Award* at the *Erotic Awards* in London. Ms. Bright lives in Santa Cruz, California.

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Success and innovation in contemporary erotica bred fantastic originals -- and also exploitation and mediocrity. Not exclusively, but certainly exponentially! That's the sign of how big American erotica became -- it's admired, envied, and the butt of any number of literary jokes. But the proof of the erotic literary revolution is all around us, in cinema, on the Web, in our music.

Since I started BAE we've seen so much happen in American sexuality. There's been the dominance of the Christian fundamentalism in public policy, the fear -- and then ghettoization -- of the AIDS epidemic, the revolution of the Web, porn chic, kink liberation, the rise of multicultural literature -- and gay literature, the end of the thriving independent American bookstore era, two wars, an impeachment vote, 9/11, and a national abstinence policy direct from the White House that is designed to keep us chaste until marriage, no matter how old we might get. The trench has been dug. There's a war on the ground, and a war for minds and

hearts that reaches into the deepest American roots of Puritanism, individualism, and rebellion.

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The best of the best

The hottest of the hot

To mark its fifteenth anniversary, the top-selling erotica series achieves a scorching new climax with a special edition showcasing standout stories from the entire series as well as never before published pieces -- plus interviews with the authors and, for the first time, a hot and edgy piece from Susie Bright herself.

In Susie Bright's own contribution, "Story of O Birthday Party," she recounts her lover's elaborately orchestrated birthday gift: a re-creation of Pauline Réage's classic S/M tale with Susie at the center of the action. Joe Maynard enters a love/hate relationship with a two-million-dollar sex toy in "Fleshlight." Greta Christina's "Are We Having Sex Now or What?" asks the provocative question of what defines authentic sexual connection and experience.

Thoroughly electrifying -- and thrillingly eclectic -- the 2008 edition promises to open new doors with its exhilarating, equal-opportunity approach to erotic writing. Straight or gay, dominant or submissive, romantic or sadistic, Bright's selections run the gamut -- and push all the right buttons.

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- 368 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

IT'S HOT - IT DELIVERS

By Joseph H. Race

Erotica is very often personal preference...some of the stories were red-hot while others were so-so, which is precisely why there are so many stories out there, of every genre and circumstance. As my open-minded father used to say, "Whatever floats your boat." I have seen many other stories that would have been a better choice for the collection, but at the same time, my wife didn't agree with me; and thought of my judgement on several of the "average" stories to be the ones that she liked and enjoyed. The writing was professional, straight or gay, submissive or dominant, leather clothes - no clothes, etc., and that is my point. We all don't like the same things or we would all be driving Toyotas, eating at Burger King or only reading Time Magazine. The erotica was stimulating and my blood boiled several times. Good writing - I liked it.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Some are OK

By Spaz

I just finished this book and I must say I was left a little disappointed. It started off great, the first few stories got my blood rushing and made me feel good then the middle totally fell flat on its face. The stories were dry and not very interesting. The end few picked up but didn't make a full recovery. All in all, this book has some good stories and more not so good ones. I wouldn't recommend it unless you like reading erotica that isn't so much action as it is just someone telling a boring story.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Yes, pretty good

By Fiona Rix

Yes, not a bad book, some stories are better than others and the good ones are good. I must admit I read it in bits over a long period, but that is the beauty of the short story genre, you can pick it up for a quick thrill when you have a few minutes to spare. To do it justice I will give it another read when I have more time. But yes its good. Also have a look at Lust: Erotic Fantasies for Women by Violet Blue and 100 Percent Erotica

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Nowadays, I don't think there're mainstream novelists who haven't been asked what role sexuality plays in their fiction -- or why they're pussyfooting around, if they continue to avoid it. It's the stuff of Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winners.

It's not so much that erotica has made a narrow genre successful -- although that's true too -- it's that writers now don't hold back "the sex part" anymore when they write about...anything. The omission was always unnatural and deceptive, and now the lie is laid bare. Sexless stories about human relationships are dishonest. How did anyone write about love, life, or death and manage to avoid it so neatly? It was a hoax, and thankfully behind us.

Success and innovation in contemporary erotica bred fantastic originals -- and also exploitation and mediocrity. Not exclusively, but certainly exponentially! That's the sign of how big American erotica became -- it's admired, envied, and the butt of any number of literary jokes. But the proof of the erotic literary revolution is all around us, in cinema, on the Web, in our music.

Since I started BAE we've seen so much happen in American sexuality. There's been the dominance of the Christian fundamentalism in public policy, the fear -- and then ghettoization -- of the AIDS epidemic, the revolution of the Web, porn chic, kink liberation, the rise of multicultural literature -- and gay literature, the end of the thriving independent American bookstore era, two wars, an impeachment vote, 9/11, and a national abstinence policy direct from the White House that is designed to keep us chaste until marriage, no matter how old we might get. The trench has been dug. There's a war on the ground, and a war for minds and

hearts that reaches into the deepest American roots of Puritanism, individualism, and rebellion.

I don't know if we could have survived it all if it wasn't for some great erotic writing. No one wrote with more poignancy about New York and 9/11 than Tsauroh Litzky's "End-of-the-World Sex." No one captured the religiosity of sexual guilt better than Greg Boyd at his "Horny" best.

And the message of redemption -- when you've done everything to screw the pooch -- can be seen in the agonies of stories like Alicia Gifford's "Surviving Darwin."

What makes a piece of erotic fiction remarkable, even legendary? Probably the biggest factor is its unpredictability, the miracle when it transcends formula.

I couldn't resist Marian Phillips's "Three Obscene Telephone Calls" because it so neatly dug the "nice girls" grave. Thomas Roche innovated the trans-noir thriller with stories like his "Up for a Nickel." Nostalgia for the innocence that preceded labels, before consciousness of the world's judgments, is spun like honey in stories such as Patrice Suncircle's "Tennessee."

There're a few stories in this collection that I never got to include in BAE before because they predated 1993. I hungered for them; I cursed my tether to our annual tradition. First among those yearned for was "Blue Light," the novella by Steven Saylor, writing as Aaron Travis, which is perhaps the most fantastic supernatural erotic thriller ever written. Edgar Allan Poe would find a telltale cock pounding in this one. At first, I couldn't go to sleep from reading it, and then I couldn't rest until I published it! I'm so happy to finally have the story here.

The best erotic lit is always highest comedy and deepest tragedy -- both in the cut, at times. I laughed at Eric Albert's "The Letters" when I wasn't moaning at his protagonist, "You've got to be stopped!"

Erotic prescience illuminates places and times that couldn't be captured any other way -- like New York on a high-wire down low in Nelson George's "It's Never Too Late in New York."

And sometimes, you just need to laugh -- a helpless, naked, wet belly laugh -- at it all, like Joe Maynard's "Fleshlight."

The shaming prejudice about sex writing is that it's supposed to be so porny, so stupid, so obvious that "anyone" could write it, craft unnecessary.

But how many people can perfect its satire and get you off at the same time, like Serena Moloch's "Casting Couch"? How many chick-lit authors can turn a "Manicure" into a descent into the S/M looking glass, as Martha Garvey does? And who could articulate the dilemmas facing woman's sexual choices like Susan St. Aubin in her "This Isn't About Love"? Without their direct erotic approach, it wouldn't have been said nearly as well.

I also have some memorable new stories in this collection, too. I'll never say "Fuck me, Santa!" again without thinking of Steve Almond's "A Jew Berserk on Christmas Eve." Haddayr Copley-Woods's haunted house made me creep to my bed the night after I read it and felt the floors whispering to my soft feet.

Jennifer D. Munro had me howling with size-queen irony in "Pinkie," and Eloise Chagrin reinvented a cuckold's tale in "Playing Doctor."

Erotic literature is made to break taboos -- that's its promise. Rowan Elizabeth's "Halves" transformed a Hansel and Gretel-style fairy tale into a way of seeing unbreakable desire. Author G. Bonhomme

reconstructed the male libido in his "Program," and Susannah Indigo throws every Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous rule out the car window in her "Year of Fucking Badly."

I, however, am ending my tenure as your editor a little sadly -- although with great affection and respect. At the back of the book, you'll see I've included a list of all 272 writers I've worked with in our series to date -- it made my jaw drop as I reviewed the list from top to bottom. I've also provided a Readers' Directory of the most influential editors, publishers, 'zines, and Web sites that've made erotic lit something to celebrate.

There's one person in particular I'll be missing as the series goes on -- that's my dad, who passed away as I was first composing this anniversary edition.

When I was asked to start Best American Erotica in 1993, the number-one most excited person in the world was my father, Bill Bright. He was an editor, a linguist, a poet -- and the greatest reader I've ever known. That's not daughterly affection; probably everyone he knew would say the same thing. His descriptions to me of the history of American erotica, and censorship battles, were something he'd taught me since I had my first questions about "banned books."

When I was a little girl, he would sit me up at his desk while he was proofreading the galleys of his linguistics journal, *Language*. He'd give me a pencil and tell me to look for e's and a's that weren't closed up, serifs that had broken off. It took me pages and pages to find one, but what a treasure to discover a real mistake!

He proofread every one of my BAE manuscripts, which offered plenty of new grass to mow. His expertise and enthusiasm in world languages and writing systems were invaluable to every character in this series who spoke a line of dialog. Between the two of us, we covered a cou...

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