

The Book Corner

Gay Words, Gay Worlds

Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds. Judy Grahn. Beacon Press, 1984. 284 pgs. \$19.95

Judy Grahn's book is an awesome combination of gay history, folklore, etymology, mysticism and autobiography. Encased in a framework involving a dialogue with her first lover, Von, Grahn leads us down these many paths with humor, sensitivity, and at times a fervent forcefulness that speaks to gays and straights alike.

This book is not just about the significance in gay culture of the color lavender or the origin of the word dyke; it is also about Grahn's own search for who and what she is. This book is the outward manifestation of her coming to terms with herself as a lesbian and as a gay person in general. This process is one all of us have dealt with, or are still dealing with, as fellow gays and lesbians.

Grahn succeeds in weaving her highly personal search with her findings on gay culture in the italicized dialogues with Von at the beginnings and endings of each chapter. These dialogues lead us into and out of each chapter and lend a cohesiveness to the book which, because of its broad subject matter, desperately needs some linking device.

Despite these dialogues, Another Mother Tongue at times gets lost in a mish-mash of ideas, all trying to force themselves from Grahn's mind onto the page. I do want to know all these ideas and stories that Judy Grahan has collected in her head, but it get confusing at some points. Granted, there is so much material that Grahn feels she should share--and rightly so--that it would be an impossible task to pull it all together into a perfect cohesive unit without being dull and too factual.

GAYS AND LESBIANS AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF PRESENT AND PAST

Despite the fact that the book is at times overflowing (to the point of confusion), it is well worth, well worth the price and the time to read it. Even when Grahan loses herself on a tangent about Joan of Arc with no transition from her original point, she is fascinating and inspirational. She is excited by what she has discovered, making it a joy to read and absorb her message of gay pride.

What impressed me greatly about Judy Grahn's book was the fact that one of its major goals is to establish the fact that gays and lesbians are, and always have been, integral parts of society. By tracing our history back to the Celts, the American Indians, Joan of Arc, the

Amazons, Sappho and the Ancient Greeks, Grahn shows over and over again that we have a niche, an abiding place. We are, and always have been, an important part of society with an important function to serve.

Grahan is a well-known lesbian poet who has published several volumes of poetry, including Edward the Dyke, along with many contributions to the early lesbian newsletter "The Ladder."

I have only specifically mentioned a few of the fascinating facts and theories found in Another Mother Tongue. Hopefully, I have piqued your interest because the book is worth your attention. Despite Grahn's tendency to stray from the subject at times, her tangents all relate to the same basic questions central to the book: Who are we as lesbians and gays? Where are we and where have we been? And, most importantly, where might we be going?

Grahn attempts to answer these questions, and for me she succeeds eloquently, poetically, and humorously. At the end of Another Mother Tongue, we have found some answers and we see Grahn reaching conclusions of her own about her identify as a lesbian. Perhaps her search brings us all a little closer to our own answers.

-Kim



Supportive Groups

A lesbian support group has been formed in Durham for lesbians wanting to give or receive support about important issues affecting her life. The facilitated group meets each Wednesday from 7:30-9:30pm at the Durham YWCA, 809 Proctor Street.

The group began on Sep. 12 and is slated to run for 8 weeks, but it may continue as an ongoing group. Call 688-4396 for details.

A feminist men's group meets each Wednesday in Chapel Hill to discuss changing sex roles from a male perspective and to participate in the movement for sexual equality. The group is sponsored by and meets at the Women's Book Exchange, 106 Henderson Street. Call George at 942-2424 or Richard at 929-5226 or David at 967-3677 for details.

And the UNC-CH Student Mental Health Center is organizing support groups for lesbian and gay students. Details have not yet been finalized, but if you're interested, call CGA or Student Mental Health.