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Bibliography: By, For, and/or about Jewish Lesbian/Bisexual Women

Scope note: Many of the articles referenced below are not scholarly work, certainly not qualitative research. Most of them are, rather, first-person accounts of various facets of what it means to live as a Jewish lesbian. I have also included work by/for/about bisexual women. I have limited the material almost exclusively to that written for an American and English-speaking audience. No articles published before 1990 were included. The author can be reached via email: wein@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu.

1. Websites

Jewish Feminist Resources

<http://www.jew-feminist-resources.com>

Everything from Torah to shopping, with a Jewish feminist tilt. Access to helpful information, such as listserves, and archived postings on a variety of topics.

Jewish Feminist Resources: Lesbian

http://www.jew-feminist-resources.com/board_jewish_lesbian/wwwboard.shtml

This section of the website collects and organizes postings on various pertinent themes, such as same-sex weddings.

Twice Blessed: The Jewish GLBT Archives Online

<http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/tb/>

Everything GLBT and Jewish online. News, shopping, archived photographs and materials, access to discussion rooms and other forums.

The World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews

<http://www.wcgljo.org/>

An umbrella organization to support and strengthen LGBT Jews around the world.

Jewish Women's Archives

<http://www.jwa.org>

"To uncover, chronicle, and transmit the rich legacy of Jewish women and their contributions to our families and communities, to our people and our world."

2. Mailing Lists

Jewish Lesbian Daughters of Holocaust Survivors

<http://tps.studentorg.wisc.edu/MGLRC/groups/JewishLesbianDaughtersof.html>

Nice Jewish Girls

An online community of Jewish Lesbian and Bisexual Women. Discussions are on any topic, uncensored and unmoderated. Postings are not publicly accessible or linked to public newsgroups. International membership, postings mostly in English. Sign-up is through Shamash, the Jewish portal.

[Nice Jewish Girls Homepage: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/3222/](http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/3222/)

Orthodykes

For lesbian Orthodox women. Formerly Orthodox are also welcome.

<http://www.lesbian.org/lesbian-lists/odykes.html>

Shamash

Shamash, a Jewish portal, hosts several list-serves that may be of interest to GLBT, progressive, and/or feminist Jews (and friends).

<http://shamash.org/help/listoflists.shtml>

4. Articles

Belasco, Daniel. "My Perfect Family: Two Moms." *Lilith* 24 (2): 30-33, 1999.

The author is the child of a Jewish woman whose life partner is a lesbian rabbi (the author calls his mother's partner Rebbe). He discusses the depth of his Jewish values and recognizes his mothers' commitment to "their own Jewish life."

Brinker, Ludger. "The Bat Mitzvah of American-Jewish Lesbian Fiction: Newman, Katz, and Felman." *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 13: 72-84, 1994.

Burstin, H.E. "Looking Out, Looking In: Anti-Semitism and Racism in Lesbian Communities." *Journal of Homosexuality* . 36 (3-4): 143-157, 1999.

The author discusses how racism and anti-Semitism are reflected in lesbian communities. She examines issues of privilege, invisibility, and exclusion, and offers alternative to the ignorance and guilt often experienced.

Cohen, C. "Building Jewish Lesbian Culture." *Off Our Backs*. 25 (10): 10-11, 1995.

Chronicles the Annual Jewish Lesbian Camping Festival, located on Huntington Open Women's Land (Vermont), the author, speaking as if to friends, establishes why Jewish lesbians need their own space (sounding, at times, somewhat defensive) before telling readers some of the important (and fun) parts of the festival.

Dworkin, S. "From Personal Therapy to Professional Life: Observations of a Jewish, Bisexual Lesbian Therapist and Academic." *Women and Therapy* 18 (2): 37-46, 1997.

Felman, Jyl Lynn. "Transgression in Jewish Literature." *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1-2):119-120, 1993-1994.

Discussion of Jewish library collection policies as related to gay and lesbian issues and urges more liberal, yet age-appropriate, policies. Author is a fiction writer.

Franklin, Cynthia. "Coming Out and Staying Home: Nice Jewish Girls and Home Girls." *MELUS* . 22 (1): 105-128, 1997.

An academic with the University of Hawaii, Franklin studies two anthologies by engaging in "cross-reading" -- reading from a subject position other than her own. She examines Nice Jewish Girls, an anthology by and about Jewish lesbians (the author is a heterosexual Jew) and Home Girls, a Black feminist anthology. This in-depth analysis and exploration includes some serious criticisms.

Fremont, Helen. "Daughter, Lesbian, Jew." *The Advocate* 786 (May 25): 9, 1999.

The author was raised Catholic in the 60s by Jewish Holocaust survivors. The revelation of this truth helps the author decide to reveal her lesbianism to her family -- "my parents' need to remain in hiding was as strong as my need," she says, "to come out and tell the truth about my identity as a Jew and a lesbian." The author has also written a book, After Long Silence, that explores the process of her integrating these facets of her identity.

Goldflam, A. "Queerer than Queer: Reflections of a Kike Dyke." *Journal of Homosexuality* 36 (3-4): 135-142, 1999.

Using the medieval witch-hunts and the Holocaust to compare the nature of anti-Semitism and homophobia ("lesbophobia"), the author, an Australian, reflects on and explores her feelings about her identity as a Jewish lesbian -- a "dynamic process."

Marton, Carol. "A Lesbian on the Bimah." *Sojourner* 23 (5): 24-25, 1998.

A Jewish lesbian in her mid-thirties who leads a choir at a Conservative synagogue decides to become a bat mitzvah. Coming out to her choir, her rabbi, and her community turns out to be a much more positive and enriching experience than she expected, and makes her bat mitzvah that much more special.

Miniovich, Margarita. "The Cooks, the Dykes, their Wives, and their Mother." *Fireweed* 57: 25-27, 2000.

Very amusing first-person account of the Russian-born and - speaking Miniovich's two-week visit with her mother and

grandmother, her sister, also a lesbian, and their respective lovers, also Russian. "Mealtimes are often and deadly," the author writes. Once again Jewishness and food are juxtaposed, but the very specificity of this author's situation is so well rendered as to make this experience universally understandable -- funny and touching at once.

Mitchell, Pam. "Jewish Dykes Talk About Recovery, Politics, and Community." *Sojourner* 15 (12): 7b, 1990.

The author dialogues with Jewish lesbian feminist Elly Bulkin, writer of *Password: Recovery*, about recovery from childhood sexual abuse and keeping one's voice within the feminist community. Bulkin is a well-known Jewish lesbian/feminist (and one of the founders of *Bridges*). Bulkin discusses how childhood abuse, being the child of Jewish Communists, and her present work in the feminist community as a Jewish lesbian affects her writing and her world.

Morris, Bonnie. "Anti-Semitism in the Women's Movement: A Jewish Lesbian Speaks." *Off Our Backs* 20 (10): 12, 1990.

The author, an educator on Jewish lesbian issues, describes some of her experiences as a Jewish lesbian in the women's movement, which has yet to conquer anti-Semitism.

Morris, Bonnie. "Ingathering the Tribe." *Off Our Backs* 28 (4): 10-11, 1998.

A short article in the first person discussing the formation of a Jewish women's space at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Newman, Leslea. "Reflections of a Jewish, Lesbian Author." *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1-2): 121-123, 1993-1994.

The author stresses the importance of seeing oneself reflected in literature.

Porter, Jack Nusan. "Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Literature with Jewish Content: A Bibliographic Overview." *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1-2): 124-126, 1993-1994.

Demonstrates the wide range of material and both the background and foreground of gay/lesbian Jewish literature as well as some of the barriers to accessing this material (particularly for Jewish, as opposed to gay, audiences). The bibliography is designed to help librarians select age-appropriate and topic-appropriate works.

Scheman, Naomi. "Jewish Lesbian Writing: A Review Essay." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 7 (4): 186-194, 1992.

Seif, Hinda. "A 'Most Amazing Borscht': Multiple Identities in a Jewish Bisexual Community." *Race, Gender, and Class* 6 (4): 88-109, 1999.

A Jewish bisexual community in the San Francisco Bay area is studied for the intersection of self-identification via race, gender, class, and sexuality. The author performs a sociolinguistic analysis of 31 interviews (26 women and 4 men) and discusses various models of "intersectionality" or interlocking oppressions.

Smith, A. "Reflections of a Jewish Lesbian-Feminist." *Women and Therapy* 10 (4): 57, 1990.

Subtitled "First I am Jewish, the Rest is Commentary," this essay focusses on the author's "lifelong voyage" towards lesbian and Jewish consciousness and demonstrates how her identity and functioning as a therapist are rooted in those consciousnesses.

Tova. "Mir Zayen Do!/We are Here: Some Notes on Being a Working-Class Jewish Lesbian." *Journal of Women and Religion* 12: 40-45, 1993.

This somewhat stream-of-consciousness piece is a reflection on the author's sense of herself as a Jewish lesbian of the working-class. She deals with Jewish feelings on class, lesbian feelings on Jewishness, and inter-class relationships, mostly in an effort to simply acknowledge that stereotypes and prejudices exist within these (sometimes overlapping) communities.

Yeskel, Felice. "Caught Between Two Cultures." *Journal of Women and Religion* 12: 16-19, 1993.

Another personal account of being a working-class Jewish lesbian, mostly anecdotal, with some provocative questions from the author as to privilege and class.

Zeidman, Reena. "Marginal Discourse: Lesbianism in Jewish Law." *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 1 (1): 1997. 20 August 2001 http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/journal/journal_index3.html.

Scholarly examination of Biblical and halakhic sources to lesbianism. The author contends that lesbianism has been treated mostly as a threat to (heterosexual) marriage, and stresses the need to treat lesbianism as having its own significance outside of the traditional paradigm.

5. Magazines of Interest

Bridges: A Journal for Jewish Feminists and Our Friends

<http://www.pond.net/~ckinberg/bridges>

Publishes twice a year. Essays, fiction, poetry, art and reviews "on the cutting edge of feminist Judaism." Side-by-side translations.

Lilith: The Independent Jewish Women's Magazine

<http://www.lilith.org>

Quarterly. Reporting, analysis, resource listings, interviews, historical essays, reviews, memoirs, fiction, poetry, and art.

A reprint package on Jewish Lesbians and Bisexuals is available for \$10.

Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal

<http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism>

Online, refereed scholarly journal containing full-text articles, bibliographies, and reviews.

6. Books

Anthologies

Balka, C., and Andy Rose. Twice Blessed: Being Gay or Lesbian & Jewish. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989.

Male and female contributors discuss a range of topics, including personal reminiscences (e.g., growing up in the yeshiva environment) and more theoretical writing (e.g., a theology of gay sexuality from a Jewish perspective).

Beck, Evelyn Torton, Ed. Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1982.

(second, expanded edition, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989.)

Poetry, stories, history, analysis, and memoirs of Jewish lesbian identity. The first edition was a watershed; the later edition has a new section on mother/daughter relationships, new and updated material on Israel, and new poetry and photographs. However, it should be noted that a relatively small number of contributors make up the bulk of the material.

Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie, and Irena Klepfisz, Eds. The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Jewish women of all persuasions contribute fiction, poetry, art, and essays to this anthology.

Moore, Tracy, Ed. Lesbiot: Israeli Lesbians Talk About Sexuality, Feminism, Judaism and Their Lives. Cassell Academic, 1999.

Zimmerman, Bonnie. "The Challenge of Conflicting Communities: To Be a Lesbian and Jewish and a Literary Critic." People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity. (Rubin-Dorsky, Jeffrey, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Eds.) Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 203-16.

Fiction

Bloch, Alice. The Law of Return. Boston: Alyson Press, 1983.

An American woman goes to Israel and explores lesbianism.

Calderon, Sara Levi. The Two Mujeres. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1991.

Set in Mexico City, the protagonist, disappointed with her heterosexual lifestyle, turns to a fulfilling lesbian relationship.

Dykewomon, Elena. Beyond the Pale. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1997.

Historical fiction. An epic about lesbians who immigrated to the United States in the great Russian Jewish immigration wave

at the turn of the twentieth century. Chava, Rose, Gutke and Dovida live not only outside the Pale of Settlement (areas of forced Jewish settlement in Russian towns) but also outside the pale of mainstream society. Settling in New York, the characters live through personal changes as well as social and political movements of the day, including unionization and the Triangle Shirtwaist fire.

Felman, Jyl Lynn. Hot Chicken Wings. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1992.

Eleven short stories and an introduction ("The Forbidden, or What Makes Me a Jewish Lesbian Writer") about Felman's identity issues. The stories are loosely themed on 'outsiderness', but stand separately. Felman uses some strong language and her seeming interest for food as a stand-in for sex is nothing new in Jewish-American writing.

Galford, Ellen. The Dyke and the Dybbuk. Seattle, WA: Seal Books, 1994.

Winner of a Lambda Literary Award. *Mysticism, London, taxicabs ...*

Katz, Judith. The Escape Artist. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1997.

A period novel, set in underground Jewish Buenos Aires at the beginning of the twentieth century. Protagonist Sofia Teitelbaum has been tricked into prostitution and spirited away from her Eastern European home. She meets Hankus (nee Hannah), a Polish Jew passing as a man, and together they escape towards a lesbian future. Yiddish lovers will appreciate the voice Katz has given Sofia.

Katz, Judith. Running Fiercely Towards a High Thin Sound. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1992.

Magical realism where the protagonist, a lesbian with serious family/relationship problems, runs away to the lesbian town of New Chelm. (In Jewish folklore, Chelm is a town of fools and a common placing for the stories of Yiddish writer Issac Bashevis Singer.)

Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie. My Jewish Face and Other Stories. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990.

Of course these short stories look at Jewish and lesbian identity, but go beyond to themes such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict and rape.

Levin, Jennifer. Sea of Light. New York: Plume, 1994.

Loewenstein, Andrea Freud. The Worry Girl. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1992.

A teenage girl in an assimilated Jewish family comes out as a lesbian.

Newman, Leslea. A Letter to Harvey Milk. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988.

Nine stories revolving around Jewish/lesbian issues and the conflict between sexual-orientation and religious identities. A nice range of characters and even though the general theme remains constant, Newman touches on both contemporary (e.g. AIDS) and eternal facets.

Newman, Leslea. Good Enough To Eat. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1986.

The main character is a Jewish bulimic who comes to recovery through exploration of her previously hidden lesbianism.

Newman, Leslea. In Every Laugh a Tear. New Victoria Publishers, 1998.

Jewish lesbian meets nice butch woman, but before they can live happily ever after, the protagonist's grandmother is kidnapped from her nursing home.

Schulman, Sarah. After Delores. New York: New American Library, 1989, c1988.

A very specific setting – New York's Lower East Side lesbian community – brings this novel to life. The unnamed narrator finds herself in the midst of a strange mystery and general hard times in the wake of her lover's defection.

Schulman, Sarah. Girls, Visions, and Everything. Seattle: Seal Press, 1999.

Another East Side (NYC) novel from Schulman, this one starring the Kerouac-worshipping Lila Futuransky as she

translates the On-the-Road ethos and style into a lesbian life. Peripatetic Lila encounters a variety of characters, including Emily, with whom she falls in love.

Schulman, Sarah. Rat Bohemia. New York: Dutton, c1995.

A more mature and less fun novel from Schulman, this novel has three main characters, each of whom is still struggling in the wake of their families' rejection of them for their homosexuality. The author examines the ways some gay and lesbian people are hurt by their families how those rejected children nevertheless manage to lead creative and fulfilling lives.

Shapiro, Lisa. Endless Love. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press, 1998.

Writer Andrea Stern, struggling to rebuild after tragedy, returns to her family, but being with them only seems to exacerbate her grief. Then she meets Gwen, who challenges her to make peace with her past.

Toder, Nancy. Choices. Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1991.

Classic novel, beloved by many, that a woman who has an affair with her college roommate. They meet again later in life and, examining the choices each has made, have to answer the question -- was their passionate relationship a fluke? Originally published by Persephone Press, 1980.

Tulchinsky, Karen. Love Ruins Everything. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1998.

Light romantic comedy starring a young Jewish lesbian; subplot of government conspiracy thriller revolving around the AIDS crisis.

Tulchinsky, Karen, Ed. Friday the Rabbi Wore Lace: Jewish Lesbian Erotica. San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1998.

Some familiar and some not-so-familiar names contribute to this collection of nicely written and fun Jewish-flavored erotica.

Zahava, Irene, Ed. Lesbian Love Stories. Freedom, CA : Crossing Press, c1989.

This is just one of several collections the well-known Zahava has edited on various themes. Lesbian Love Stories and its second companion volume include a number of stories by Jewish lesbians.

Essays and non-fiction

Alpert, Rebecca. Like Bread on the Seder Plate. NY: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Thoughtful exploration of balancing Jewishness and lesbianism. One of the first ordained female rabbis, the author performs Midrash (interpretation of Torah) to construct a place for lesbians within Judaism. The author gives specific suggestions towards the future in smart but accessible language. The title refers to the practice of some lesbians of placing bread on the Seder plate to symbolize their isolation or outsidership from tradition. This book won the 1998 Lambda Literary Award for spirituality/religion category. The author is also assistant professor of religion and women's studies at Temple University and codirector of the Women's Studies Program.

Alpert, Rebecca, S. L. Elwell, et al., Eds. Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Eighteen lesbian rabbis discuss, in personal essays, their decision to become rabbis and their lives as lesbian rabbis. Essays variously examine topics such as the perils of coming out/staying in the closet, the tensions between lesbian and Jewish identities, and how Jewish traditions both inform their lives as lesbians, and how their lives as lesbians can challenge and enrich Jewish traditions.

Freedman, Marcia. Exile in the Promised Land. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1990.

The author spent fourteen years in Israel as an open lesbian and a member of the Knesset.

Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie. The Issue Is Power: Essays on Women, Jews, Violence and Resistance. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1992.

Klepfisz, Irene. Dreams of an Insomniac: Jewish Feminist Essays, Speeches and Diatribes. Portland, OR: Eighth

Mountain Press, 1990.

Twelve essays written from a Jewish lesbian-feminist class-conscious perspective, including the author's frank disapproval of Israeli action in the West Bank, her thoughts on the commercialization of the Holocaust (of which she is a survivor), and the preservation of secular Yiddish culture in the US and the joy of doing creative work.

Nestle, Joan. A Restricted Country. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, c1987.

Co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn, NY, this collection records pre-Stonewall gay and lesbian life in NYC. Both Nestle's style and the poignancy of what these men and women went through to create community make this an important book.

Simkin, Ruth, Dr. Like An Orange on a Seder Plate: Our Lesbian Haggadah. 1999

Lesbian-centered and woman-affirming haggadah.

Drama

Kron, Lisa. 2.5 Minute Ride; and 101 Humiliating Stories. NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2001.

Poetry

Dykewomon, Elana.

Nothing Will Be As Sweet As the Taste: Selected Poems 1974-1994. Novato, CA: Onlywomen Press Ltd, 1995.

Hacker, Marilyn.

Start with Selected Poems 1965-1990 (NY: Norton, 1994). Hacker is known for formalism, for sprinkling her poetry with French, and for her frank but lyric treatment of her lesbianism.

Klepfisz, Irene.

Start with A Few Words in the Mother Tongue: Poems Selected and New (1971-1990) (Portland, OR: Eighth Mountain Press, 1990). Klepfisz is a Jewish lesbian Holocaust survivor; her mother tongue is Yiddish; many of her poems use Yiddish words or imagery.

Rich, Adrienne.

Start with the [Adrienne Rich](#) page at Modern American Poetry. Rich is one of the reigning figures in American feminist theory, as well as being an activist, teacher, and award-winning poet.

Selman, Robyn.

Directions to My House. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.