



Our Naked Lives: Essays from Gay Italian American Men (Via Folios)

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Literary Nonfiction. LGBT Studies. Italian American Studies. Edited by Joseph Anthony LoGiudice and Michael Carosone. OUR NAKED LIVES: ESSAYS FROM GAY ITALIAN AMERICAN MEN includes essays by Michael Carosone, John D'Emilio, Charles Derry, George De Stefano, Joseph A. Federico, Joseph Anthony LoGiudice, Michael Luongo, David Masello, Tommi Avicolli Mecca, Joe Oppedisano, Felice Picano, Frank Anthony Polito, Michael Schiavi, Frank Spinelli, and Tony Tripoli.

The impetus for this book derived from Michael's thesis on the marginalization of Italian American literature for his master's degree in English. While conducting his research, Michael stumbled upon two books of gay Italian American writings. The only two books! At first, Michael was excited with his discovery. Then disappointment and anger erased the excitement when he realized that Gay Italian American identities and voices were not represented in literature, especially Italian American literature and Queer literature. So, we talked about how both of our identities—Gay and Italian American—never appeared throughout our years of formal education. Those two characters were never written in the scenes; those two actors were never given roles on the stage. And we wondered how much longer this would continue, and how much more we were able to tolerate. The purpose of this book is to present these essays that inform on the experiences of these men and their lives as part of the diverse fabric of American society. The lives of these writers are complex because they are forced to conform into a society that demands that they do not express their sexual and ethnic identities, with pride, in positive ways. As sexual and ethnic minorities, these men experience double discrimination. Many people will ask why this book is important and unique, and why this group of men is important and unique. Our answer to that often ubiquitous and trite question is this: Our identities, voices, words, and lives are important and unique because the intersection of our sexuality and ethnicity does not allow us to fit in to the mainstream American society and culture, thereby keeping us in the margins. And it should be common sense and common knowledge by now, in the twenty-first century, that no human being deserves to be marginalized for any reason.



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Jocelyn Lee:

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