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Andreoli will read at the Borders in Beaverton (2605 SW Cedar Hills Blvd., 644-6164, 7 pm Monday, Sept. 12) and downtown (708 SW 3rd Ave., 220-5911, 7 pm Tuesday, Sept. 13). Free.



Queer Window

COLUMN

KNOW THY GAY SELF

BY [BYRON BECK](#)
[bbeck at wweek.com](#)

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If it's cool and cultural, it's probably queer. That's the gist of *Mondo Homo* (Alyson, 208 pages, \$17.95), a camped-up compendium of gayness edited by freelance writer Richard Andreoli, who talked with *WW* before he hit Portland to promote his book.

QW: Is there a secret to being happy and gay? If so, where I can buy it?

Richard Andreoli: I don't know if you can buy it, although *Wonder Woman* on DVD is a good start. Truth is, the secret of being gay is to not sweat the small shit. Just deal with it and move on.

Do you know anyone who has moved on?

Me. My dad died when I was 18. As I gave him CPR, trying to save him, I knew in that instant that life was a very short, fragile thing. If I've learned anything from pop culture-via [Rosalind Russell in] *Auntie Mame*-it's that "life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death."

Talk about how gays see everything through a queer filter.

You hear stories of how kids behaved "queerly" while growing up, me playing *Wonder Woman* in my back yard and boys dressing up in their mother's clothes. That's the root of it. But queer society shapes that filter and develops it further. At the risk of sounding too faggy, we take the bitter aspects of society and create a fantastic lemon cocktail.

Mondo Homo came out almost a year ago. Have you collected stories since then?

Right after the book came out, a guy sent me a link to his blog about how a neighbor, who was a crystal-meth addict, showed up one day and asked him to fuck him. I thought, "That says so much about living in the gay ghetto and the drug use in our community."

Yeah. The book is a reflection of queer society at its most

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fucked-up levels.

That's the genius of it-and an accidental thing. The book became a reflection of the paradoxes inherent in the gay community. On one level you look at it and go, "Well, that's interesting," and then on another level you go, "Well, damn, that's fucked up."

Why does every book on queer culture end up talking about sex-OK, porn?

Sex is an important part of our identity, part of the bullshit we have to get through in order to like ourselves. The other side is that gay people have learned a lot from porn.

What can gay men learn from porn?

To get over our hangups. I've grown up into being the guy I was attracted to when I was young, which is a distinctly gay perspective, because we end up dating ourselves. Fact is, we can waste our time bemoaning our existence, or we can have a great time, which is a lot more fun.

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