



PIER KIDS

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



On the Christopher Street Pier in New York City, homeless queer and trans youth of color forge friendships and chosen families, withstanding tremendous amounts of abuse while working to carve out autonomy and security in their lives. With intimate access to three fearless young persons -- Krystal, Desean and Casper -- Pier Kids highlights the resilience of a community many choose to ignore.

Contributors

Penny Talbert
Connie Zack

ADULT NON-FICTION

Beam, Cris. *Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teens*. Mariner Books, 2008.

When Beam moved to Los Angeles, she was drawn deeply into the pained and powerful group of transgirls she discovered. This work shows readers their world--a dizzying mix of familiar teenage cliques and crushes with far less familiar challenges like how to morph one's body on a few dollars a day.

Berg, Ryan. *No House To Call My Home: Love, Family and Other Transgressions*. Nation Books, 2016.

A deep and intimate look at the lives of LGBTQ youth in foster care, vividly chronicling their struggles, fears and hardships, and revealing the force that allows them to carry on: the irrepressible power of hope.

Davis, Heath Fogg. *Beyond Trans: Does Gender Matter?* NYU Press, 2017.

Beyond Trans pushes the conversation on gender identity to its limits: questioning the need for gender categories in the first place. Whether on birth certificates or college admissions applications or on bathroom doors, why do we need to mark people and places with sex categories? Do they serve a real purpose or are these places and forms just mechanisms of exclusion? Heath Fogg Davis offers an impassioned call to rethink the usefulness of dividing the world into not just Male and Female categories but even additional categories of Transgender and gender fluid. Davis, himself a transgender man, explores the underlying gender-enforcing policies and customs in American life that have led to transgender bathroom bills, college admissions controversies, and more, arguing that it is necessary for our society to take real steps to challenge the assumption that gender matters.

Eichinger, Marilynne. *Over the Peanut Fence: Scaling Barriers for Runaway and Homeless Youths*. MEZR Press, 2019.

When a 20-year-old street youth came to live with the author, it initiated a five-year struggle to help the youth scale a wall of hopelessness to attain a future of possibilities. His journey along with others' illustrate what it takes to overcome early trauma. Part memoir, storybook, and analysis, the book provides a path forward.

Ho, Vivian. *Those Who Wander: America's Lost Street Kids*. Little A, 2019.

In 2015, the senseless Bay Area murders of twenty-three-year-old Audrey Carey and sixty-seven-year-old Steve Carter were personal tragedies for the victims' families. But they also shed light on a more complex issue. The killers were three drifters scrounging for a living among a burgeoning counterculture population. Soon this community of runaways and transients became vulnerable scapegoats of a modern witch hunt. The supposedly progressive residents of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, only two generations removed from the Summer of Love, now feared all of society's outcasts as threats. In *Those Who Wander*, Vivian Ho delves deep into a rising subculture that's changing the very fabric of her city and all of urban America. Moving beyond the disheartening statistics, she gives voices to these young people--victims of abuse, failed foster care, mental illness, and drug addiction. She also doesn't ignore the threat they pose to themselves and to others as a dangerous dark side emerges. With alarming urgency, she asks what can be done to save the next generation of America's vagabond youth.

Lowrey, Sassafra; Burke, Jennifer Clare; Shepard, Judy Peck. *Kicked Out*. Homofactus Press, 2010.

This volume is collection of essays written by young people who were kicked out of their homes as minors for identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), as well as a few policy essays from service providers. Diverse contributors ranging in age, experience, and current living situation share stories of perseverance and abuse with poignant accounts of survival. The editors point out that very few urban areas have recognized the need to serve dispossessed LGBT youth by establishing shelters or safe houses; money is tight and public support is often hard to muster. They feel that homelessness of these kids is but a symptom of a larger and more pervasive cultural problem: we are a society that does not value all people, and somehow there seems to be a tacit belief that parents of LGBT youth are entitled to abdicate their responsibility to love and protect the children they have created. They feel that such a mindset is due to a homophobic and transphobic culture. This anthology intends to present the points-of-view of the voiceless and also to challenge the stereotypical face of homelessness.

Robinson, Brandon Andrew. *Coming Out to the Streets: The Lives of LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. University of California Press, 2020.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth are disproportionately represented in the U.S. youth homelessness population. In *Coming Out to the Streets*, Brandon Andrew Robinson examines their lives. Based on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in central Texas, *Coming Out to the Streets* maps the LGBTQ youth's lives prior to experiencing homelessness-within their families, schools, and other institutions-and while they live on the streets, deal with police, and navigate shelters and services for people experiencing homelessness. Through this documentation, Robinson shows how poverty and racial inequality shape how LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness negotiate their gender and sexuality. Robinson contends that solutions to addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness need to move beyond blaming families for rejecting their child. By highlighting youth's voices, Robinson calls for queer and trans liberation through systemic change.

Smith, Martin J. *Going to Trinidad : a Doctor, a Colorado Town, and Stories from an Unlikely Gender Crossroads*. Bower House, 2021.

For more than four decades, between 1969 and 2010, the remote former mining town of Trinidad, Colorado was the unlikely crossroads for approximately six thousand medical pilgrims who came looking for relief from the pain of gender dysphoria. The surgical skill and nonjudgmental compassion of surgeons Stanley Biber and his transgender protege Marci Bowers not only made the phrase "Going to Trinidad" a euphemism for gender confirmation surgery in the worldwide transgender community, but also turned the small outpost near the New Mexico border into what The New York Times once called "the sex-change capital of the world." More than six thousand transgender men and women left Trinidad hoping that hormone therapy and surgical relief was the right prescription for their pain. For most it was, but not for all, and their experiences offer important and timely insights for those struggling to understand this sometimes confounding human condition.

ADULT FICTION

Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1956.

In the 1950s Paris of American expatriates, liaisons, and violence, a young man finds himself caught between desire and conventional morality.

David is a young American expatriate who has just proposed marriage to his girlfriend, Hella. While she is away on a trip, David meets a bartender named Giovanni to whom he is drawn in spite of himself. Soon the two are spending the night in Giovanni's curtainless room, which he keeps dark to protect their privacy. But Hella's return to Paris brings the affair to a crisis, one that rapidly spirals into tragedy.

David struggles for self-knowledge during one long, dark night—"the night which is leading me to the most terrible morning of my life." With a sharp, probing imagination, James Baldwin's now-classic narrative delves into the mystery of loving and creates a deeply moving story of death and passion that reveals the unspoken complexities of the human heart.

Frankel, Laurie. *This is How It Always Is*. Flatiron, 2018.

When Rosie and Penn and their four boys welcome the newest member of their family, no one is surprised it's another baby boy. At least their large, loving, chaotic family knows what to expect. But Claude is not like his brothers. One day he puts on a dress and refuses to take it off. He wants to bring a purse to kindergarten. He wants hair long enough to sit on. When he grows up, Claude says, he wants to be a girl. Rosie and Penn aren't panicked at first. Kids go through phases, after all, and make-believe is fun. But soon the entire family is keeping Claude's secret. Until one day it explodes. *This Is How It Always Is* is a novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales, and family. And it's about the ways this is how it always is: Change is always hard and miraculous and hard again; parenting is always a leap into the unknown with crossed fingers and full hearts; children grow but not always according to plan. And families with secrets don't get to keep them forever.

Halberstam, Jack. *Trans: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. University of California Press, 2018.

In the last decade, public discussions of transgender issues have increased exponentially. However, with this increased visibility has come not just power, but regulation, both in favor of and against trans people. What was once regarded as an unusual or even unfortunate disorder has become an accepted articulation of gendered embodiment as well as a new site for political activism and political recognition. What happened in the last few decades to prompt such an extensive rethinking of our understanding of gendered embodiment? How did a stigmatized identity become so central to U.S. and European articulations of self? And how have people responded to the new definitions and understanding of sex and the gendered body? In *Trans**, Jack Halberstam explores these recent shifts

in the meaning of the gendered body and representation, and explores the possibilities of a nongendered, gender-optional, or gender-queer future.

King, Nia. *Queer and Trans Artists of Color Volume 2*. Biyuti Publishing, 2016.

A celebration of queer and trans Black and brown genius... Building on the groundbreaking first volume, *Queer and Trans Artists of Color: Stories of Some of Our Lives*, NIA KING is back with a second archive of interviews from her podcast We Want the Airwaves. She maintains her signature frankness as an interviewer while seeking advice on surviving capitalism from creative folks who often find their labor devalued. In this collection of interviews, Nia discusses biphobia in gay men's communities with JUBA KALAMKA, helping border-crossers find water in the desert with MICHA CÁRDENAS, trying to preserve Indigenous languages through painting with GRACE ROSARIO PERKINS, revolutionary monster stories with ELENA ROSE, using textiles to protest police violence with INDIRA ALLEGRA, trying to respectfully reclaim one's own culture with AMIR RABIYAH, taking on punk racism with MIMI THI NGUYEN, the imminent trans women of color world takeover with LEXI ADSIT, queer life in WWII Japanese American incarceration camps with TINA TAKEMOTO, hip-hop and Black Nationalism with AJUAN MANCE, making music in exile with MARTÍN SORRONDEGUY, issue-based versus identity-based organizing with TRISH SALAH, ten years of curating and touring with the QTPOC arts organization Mangos With Chili with CHERRY GALETTE, raising awareness about gentrification through games with MATTIE BRICE, self-publishing versus working with a small press with VIVEK SHREYA, and the colonial nature of journalism school with KILEY MAY. The conversation continues. Bear witness to QTPOC brilliance.

Myers, Alex. *Continental Divide*. University of New Orleans, 2019.

"Go West, Young Man" is the advice every east coast boy has considered at least once in his life. At nineteen, Ron Bancroft thinks those words sound pretty good. Newly out as transgender, Ron finds himself adrift: kicked out by his family, jilted by his girlfriend, unable to afford to return to college in the fall. So he heads out to Wyoming for a new start, a chance to prove that--even though he was raised as a girl, even though everyone in Boston thinks of him as transgender--he can live as a man. A 'real' man. In Wyoming, he finds what he was looking for: rugged terrain, wranglers, a clean slate. He also stumbles into a world more dangerous than he imagined, one of bigotry and violence. And he falls for an intriguing young woman, who seems as interested in him as he is in her. Thus begins Ron's true adventure, a search not for the right place in America, but the right place within himself to find truth, happiness, and a sense of belonging.

Schulman, Sarah. *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Generation*. University of California Press, 2013.

In this gripping memoir of the AIDS years (1981–1996), Sarah Schulman recalls how much of the rebellious queer culture, cheap rents, and a vibrant downtown arts movement vanished almost overnight to be replaced by gay conservative spokespeople and mainstream consumerism. Schulman takes us back to her Lower East Side and brings it to life, filling these pages with vivid memories of her avant-garde queer friends and dramatically recreating the early years of the AIDS crisis as experienced by a political insider. Interweaving personal reminiscence with cogent analysis, Schulman details her experience as a witness to the loss of a generation’s imagination and the consequences of that loss.

YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

Erskine, H. Craig. *Teen Homelessness (Issues That Concern You)*. Greenhaven Publishing, LLC., 2018.

More than two million kids in the U.S. face homelessness each year, with 57 percent going without food for at least one day a month. Teens represent a shocking 7 percent of the country's total homeless population. Whether they're crashing on someone's couch, living in cars, staying in shelters, or literally sleeping on the street, studies show that the plight of homeless youths is only growing worse. The viewpoints in this book tackle the economic and societal factors that contribute to teen homelessness, the stark situations faced by young transients today, and what can be done to curb this alarming trend.

Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Candlewick Press, 2015.

Six unwaveringly honest American teens describe what life is like for them as members of the transgender community in this Stonewall Honor book.

Madrone, Kelly. *LGBTQ : the survival guide for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning teens*. Free Spirit, 2018.

Provides realistic advice for teens who are LGBTQ, questioning whether they might be, or are just interested in knowing more about LGBTQ history and rights. Also included are practical suggestions on dealing with homophobia; dating; creating a more accepting school environment; and reconciling your sexual/gender identity with cultural and religious beliefs.

Ryan, Kevin. *Almost Home: Helping Kids Move from Homelessness to Hope*. Wiley, 2012.

Inside the lives of homeless teens—moving stories of pain and hope from Covenant House Almost Home tells the stories of six remarkable young people from across the United States and Canada as they confront life alone on the streets. Each eventually finds his or her way to Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless and runaway youth in North America. From the son of a crack addict who fights his own descent into drug addiction to a teen mother reaching for a new life, their stories veer between devastating and inspiring as they each struggle to find a place called home.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Bohjalian, Chris. *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands*. Doubleday, 2014

Emily Shepard is a homeless teen living in an igloo made of ice and trash bags filled with frozen leaves. Half a year earlier, a nuclear plant in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom had experienced a cataclysmic meltdown, and both of Emily's parents were killed. Her father was in charge of the plant, and the meltdown may have been his fault. Was he drunk when it happened? Thousands of people are forced to flee their homes in the Kingdom; rivers and forests are destroyed; and Emily feels certain that as the daughter of the most hated man in America, she is in danger. So Emily takes off on her own for Burlington, where she survives by stealing, sleeping on the floor of a drug dealer's apartment, and inventing a new identity for herself -- an identity inspired by her favorite poet, Emily Dickinson. When Emily befriends a young homeless boy named Cameron, she protects him with a ferocity she didn't know she had. But she still can't outrun her past, can't escape her grief, can't hide forever--and so she comes up with the only plan that she can.

Booth, Coe. *Tyrell*. PUSH, 2006.

Fifteen-year-old Tyrell, who is living in a Bronx homeless shelter with his spaced-out mother and his younger brother, tries to avoid temptation so he does not end up in jail like his father.

D'Arcangelo, Lyndsey. *The Education of Queenie McBride*. Publishing Syndicate, 2012.

Sometimes the most important education happens outside of the classroom. Over-privileged and over-confident Queenie McBride thinks she has this whole college thing figured out. But as soon as classes begin at Boston University, she realizes this isn't high school. Luckily, her best friend JJ is there to help keep her in line. When Queenie meets Pudge, a homeless LGBT teen, her entire world is forever changed. With the help of Izzy, a strong-headed and beautiful social worker, Queenie learns how to be there for Pudge, leave her old habits behind and become the person she's always wanted to be.

Hyde, Catherine Ryan. *Becoming Chloe*. Alfred Knopf, 2008.

Jordy is gay; he has run away from his wealthy and totally disapproving parents. Sleeping in a cellar in New York City he tries to rescue a tiny blonde girl from rape. Chloe—she chooses that name—doesn't exactly seem to notice. She has been thoroughly abused, and Jordy finds himself completely taken by the need to protect her. These two take a journey lit by Chloe's dreams of beautiful things, including riding a horse along Big Sur in California. From Niagara Falls to the Painted Desert, they ride, hitchhike and bicycle, mostly helped by the kindness of strangers but occasionally hurt or hindered. What is gorgeous, however, is their search and their response to the world, to living creatures and to each other, reminding readers of how many different names there are for love.

Ryan, Darlene. *Pieces of Me*. Orca, 2012.

Maddie is living on the streets, trying to protect herself and make enough money to get a place to stay and find a way to go back to school. When she meets Q, she is wary but welcomes his friendship. And then she meets Dylan, a six-year-old boy, living on the streets with his family. When Dylan's father asks Maddie to watch the boy for a while, she is happy to help. But Dylan's parents don't come back; and Maddie and Q are left looking after him. Trying to make a life together and care for her makeshift family, Maddie finds that maybe she has to ask for help.

Strasser, Todd. *Can't Get There From Here*. Simon and Schuster, 2004.

Tired of being hungry, cold, and dirty from living on the streets of New York City with a tribe of other homeless teenagers who are dying, one by one, a girl named Maybe ponders her future and longs for someone to care about her.

Yee, Paul. *Money Boy*. Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2011.

After his Chinese immigrant father discovers he has been cruising gay websites, eighteen-year-old Ray Liu is kicked out of the house and heads to downtown Toronto, where he faces the harsh realities of life on the street.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

Ewart, Marcus. *10,000 Dresses*. Seven Stories press, 2008.

In her dreams, Bailey is a young girl. Every night she dreams about magical dresses. Unfortunately, when Bailey wakes up, nobody wants to hear about her beautiful dreams. This is because Bailey is a boy and shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all. However, Bailey meets an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's dreams and courage. Eventually they start making dresses together that represent Bailey's dreams coming to life.

Gunti, Erin. *A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story*. Library Ideas, 2019.

This simple, touching picture book shows readers a women's shelter through the eyes of a young girl, who, with her mother's help, uses her imagination to overcome her anxiety and adjust. Includes factual endnotes detailing various reasons people experience homelessness and the resources available to help.

Genhart, Michael. *Rainbow: A First Book of Pride*. Magination Press, 2019.

A must-have primer for young readers and a great gift for pride events and throughout the year beautiful colors all together make a rainbow in this sweet ode to rainbow families. This book is an affirming display of a parent's love for their child and a child's love for their parents. With bright colors and joyful families, *Rainbow* celebrates LGBTQ+ pride and reveals the colorful meaning behind each rainbow stripe.