



Contemporary Gay American Poets and Playwrights: An A-to-Z Guide

Emmanuel S. Nelson

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Gay presence is nothing new to American verse and theater. Homoerotic themes are discernible in American poetry as early as the 19th century, and identifiably gay characters appeared on the American stage more than 70 years ago. But aside from a few notable exceptions, gay artists of earlier generations felt compelled to avoid sexual candor in their writings. Conversely, most contemporary gay poets and playwrights are free from such constraints and have created a remarkable body of work. This reference is a guide to their creative achievements. Alphabetically arranged entries present 62 contemporary gay American poets and dramatists.

While the majority of included writers are younger artists who came of age in the post-Stonewall U.S., some are older authors whose work has continued or persisted into recent decades. A number of these writers are well known, including Edward Albee, Harvey Fierstein, and Allen Ginsberg. Others, such as Alan Bowne, Timothy Liu, and Robert O'Hara, merit wider recognition. Each entry is written by an expert contributor and includes a biography, a discussion of major works and themes, an overview of the author's critical reception, and primary and secondary bibliographies.

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