

Pissing in the Wind

Written September-October 1977, this feature essay was published in *Drummer* 20, January 1978. This feature essay was written as sequel to the “Mineshaft” feature in *Drummer* 19, December 1977.

- I. Author’s Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written April 16, 2002
- II. The feature article as published in *Drummer* 20, January 1978
- III. Eyewitness Illustrations

I. Author’s Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written April 16, 2002

Editor’s Note: The first collection of *Drummer* fiction and features into a book was Jack Fritscher’s solo anthology of twenty-one stories, *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O’Malley and Other Stories* (1984).

That *Drummer* collection was published by Winston Leyland, Gay Sunshine Press, San Francisco. “Pissing in the Wind” was one of the selections. The British edition of the anthology *Corporal in Charge and Other Stories* was published in 1998 by Prowler Press, London. A text-definitive edition of *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O’Malley and Other Canonical Stories* was published in 2000 by Palm Drive Publishing, San Francisco.

Censorship and the Culture War (The Greeks Had a Word for Everything except Poppers)

I used *Drummer* as a recruiting manual to corrupt my readers with my apologia for sexual abandon. [And I was spot on foreshadowing the exact torture at Guantanamo Bay thirty years later.]

In my metasexual writing, I meant *Drummer* always to seduce the reader into doing at least in his fantasy what he had not yet done in reality. My duty was to pervert the pervertible.

This was the second article I wrote for *Drummer* about the Mineshaft where men turned fantasy into life. The first was in *Drummer* 19. To break down any residual “gay shame” or reticence left over from the closet,

I equated what was a “happening” in the Mineshaft as being no different than what straight guys like the Marines or SERE recruits do when their survival training gets them into some really twisted stuff: bondage, interrogation, torture, sexual abuse, piss, and scatology. I’ve always thought that everybody always does what they want and calls it by the best name possible. The message of the Golden Age of the Titanic 70s was that a man could liberate himself to do whatever he wanted.

The tactics and behavior of self-fashioned identity that were good enough for the Black civil rights movement, for the peace movement, and for the women’s movement were good enough for us gays liberating ourselves, but we had to tell ourselves that this equation was valid. That was always the humanist political message coded behind my erotic writing in *Drummer*.

Unlike latter-day puritan kveens who strangle gay literature and castrate gay studies, I have always believed gay writing should be about sex, even though such dead-on honesty runs the risk that such writing, no matter how journalistic or literary may be dismissed as pornography. I chose early on, in 1968 in my first gay novel, *I Am Curious (Leather)* aka *Leather Blues*, to skip fantasy and to write about the actual sex lives and real sex practices of contemporary gay men.

I was lucky. In the first decade of gay liberation the gay press was not its own worst censor—as it became with the politically-correct puritans who in 1982 were swept to power in gay culture on a disaster-wind of AIDS rather like the dubiously elected George W. Bush was swept from mere presidential to imperial power by airliners crashing into the World Trade Center. Talk about two acts in the Theater of the Absurd! No one told me not to write about the real lives of actual gay men. Well, once or twice, publisher John Embry censored a piece or two that I wrote. He always blamed the fundamentalist printer who had religious and moral reservations about going too far.

Embry, having been arrested by the LAPD for the *Drummer* “Slave Auction,” was correct in his fear of the religious right. In the 1970s, the Christianazi Anita Bryant was running her anti-gay crusade in Florida where she taught the Republican Neocons who came after her to hijack government to support traditional values. So I forgave Embry for not publishing my very psychedelic poem, “Jesus Depressed; Or, Kenneth Anger, Make a Movie.” I also forgave him for pulling the feature article in *Son of Drummer* titled “Scum That I Am,” because that special “New

York art” issue featuring the leather debut of Robert Mapplethorpe was three-times gutted by the iron-fist of the fundamentalist printer. Who knew then, or knows now historically, about the uphill battle in the 1970s against all the straight religious tradespeople who, before the rise of gay businesses, called the shots on what *Drummer* could publish? “Not that cover! Not that photo! Not that article!” Talk about the censor’s fist up the sock-puppet of gay publishing! In the 1970s, the censors were hypocritical printers who would print porno for cheap after midnight and go back to printing Bibles by day.

It was because they were cheap that Embry hired them. And it was a miracle that I got away with illustrating my “Pissing in the Wind” with four photographs from the Gage Brothers’ film, *El Paso Wrecking Corp.*

Those 1970s straight fundamentalist printers on the right were the model for the 1980s politically-correct censors on the GLBT left.

Because of the pioneering times, nearly every topic I could get past all the censors—even the daring subject of “piss”—was a “first” in gay culture, not because of any particular brilliance, but because I was in the right place at the right time, and I dared move real gay behavior and gay linguistics forward into print. *Drummer* wasn’t *Queen’s Quarterly* with its queen’s vernacular. We needed new words to describe the new way we were.

For more on the “outing of language” in *Drummer*, see “Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture in *Drummer Magazine*” from the Queer Keyword Conference, University College Dublin, Ireland, April 2005. It may be worth noting that I purposely headlined a feature on the cover of my *Drummer* 24 (September 1978) with the forbidden word *fag* as in “We Abuse Fags!” *Vis-a-vis* the S&M keywords words *slave* and *boy*, which are also racist words, confer *Drummer* 174, page 5, for the editorial, “The Slavery of Words,” by Graylin Thornton who happens to be both Mr. *Drummer* 1993 and African-American.

The first post-Stonewall decade was as wild as an uncloseted preacher’s kid. The nights of the 1970s, everywhere for adventurers, were wilder than the Roaring 20s—or so I was told by Sam Steward who came out in the 1920s, and who in the 1930s made the obligatory pilgrimage of artists and homos sexing their way through Gertrude Stein’s pre-war Paris, Isherwood’s Berlin, and Mussolini’s Rome, pressing on into the international zone of Tangier where he and Cecil Beaton danced on barracks tables with young Moroccan soldiers.

Time is relative. The past is the past, and I don’t live there. I tasted a *madeleine* and found it to be a cookie. Long ago on a May afternoon in 1995, while I was sitting on the stones next to Proust’s tomb in Pere Lachaise, Mark Hemry shot a candid photograph of what looks like me

laughing in the face of omnipotent death. A sweeter shot would have been the two of us at the shared tomb of Joseph Croce-Spinelli and Theodore Sivel, two young balloonists who ascended so breathlessly high in 1875 that they—dying in thin air, lying side-by-side, holding hands—floated back down to earth where, in the tender tangled repose of two lovers sleeping, their intimacy was sculpted into marble.

Memory is fragile as ice breath on a window pane.

But it is not futile comfort.

Yesterday was as interesting as today and certainly deserves some dance to remember.

II. The feature essay as published in *Drummer* 20, January 1978

RUN! Or Men Will Do Things to (Lucky) You....

Pissing in the Wind

Wet Dreams, Golden Showers

A Night in the Mineshaft Bathtub

“Drink up. Drink up. Let me fill your cup with the promise of a man.”

— Neil Young, *Harvest*

Gay reality often reads like fiction. Mainly because the gay sense of adventure, that sense of openness to experience, causes fantasy to turn into fact and, once turned, that fact is often so outrageous in its reality, it sounds like fiction to people too chickenshit to pursue their fantasies. “What,” they ask, “would happen if you actualized your fantasies? There would be nothing left to fantasize about.”

Wrong. There would be new fantasies, one-step-further fantasies, push-the-limit fantasies. There would be new lost horizons to celebrate.

A man without fantasies is a man of the First Kind.

A man afraid to actualize his fantasies is a man of the Second Kind.

A man who acts out his fantasies is a man of the Third Kind.

[The pop-culture reference was to Steven Spielberg’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).]

BACKROOM BARS: STAND-UP SEX, MINESHAFT

The backroom bars, watering holes for night bloomers, are phenomena of the Third Kind: *Contact*. They are native to San Francisco and New

York. They began as literal backrooms, spontaneous, in bars like the Tool Box, Folsom Prison, and the Ambush. They came out on their own at the Covered Wagon, the Anvil, and with increasing intensity, the Zodiac, the Toilet, and the latest “infleshtation,” the Mineshaft.

After midnight, after the lights go down low, a man of the Third Kind can see what the boys in the backroom will have: fantasy actualized a la carte. New York’s Mineshaft is the current frontrunner. Down a steep stairway, the Mineshaft offers “The Lourdes Room,” featuring a full-length white porcelain bathtub suitable for baptizing and initiating any man who dares.

Any given night, a man can climb into the tub for nonstop Golden Showers. Fairer faucets, major and minor (less than seven inches), than he ever dreamed of, turn on—literally—to him and all over him. Saturday nights, especially, on three sides of the tub, men press in, six or seven deep. Men nearest the tub unbutton their Levi’s, unsnap their leather codpieces, or go for their meat by peeling down their jocks. They are the front line of the Third Kind, pressed from behind by dozens of others chugging their beers as they press forward toward the tub. [The topical pun referred to the biggest blonde female icon of the 1970s, Farrah Fawcett-Majors.]

BATH-TUB PISS ORGIES

A single red light illuminates the dark faces, the blond moustaches, the bared chests wet with the humid cellar sweat. Often, a man of no patience drops to his knees to drink the piss of a man three rows back from the tub. The pissers move around the private scene toward their target: the man, laid back in the white tub, sometimes naked, more often wearing only construction boots, athletic socks, a piss-soaked jock, maybe a USMC fatigue hat.

One night, a perfectly groomed dude climbed into the tub wearing wingtips, a Brooks Brothers dark wool suit, Ivy League tie, a white oxford cloth dress shirt which, when he pulled open the suit coat, exposed holes cut out over his large nipples on his hairy chest. His hands found his crotch and fished his own cock hard from his white jockey shorts. On all sides, he looked up at the fifty or so piss-filled men looking down on him. A guy in full leather hawked up some deep spit and flumed it down on the dark suit. His baptism had begun.

The ritual runs nightly the same. The dozen men closest to the tub rim are in various erect stages of pissing. Some unbuttoning, some whipping it out fast. Others teasing it out slowly. One peels back his lip of heavy foreskin through his full hardon. One stands, muscular arms folded across his thick pecs, eyes closed, waiting for his piss to work its way down

from inside his tight belly to his dick hanging out of his jeans: untouched, untouchable, but willing to piss down hard and heavy on the right motherfucker laid back in the tub. One by one, then in pairs, building to four and five at a time, they join together in a waterfall of piss.

Each chooses his own target. A man in the tub can study how some guys choose to piss on his boots. Others on his jock. Many on his chest. Most on his face and shoulders. The streams come thick. Some with firehose force. The hard ones piss straight down on his body. The thicker soft cocks rain down in a curved arc of beer-rich piss.

Ordinary to great bodies climb into the tub. Every body looks better hosed down with gallons of shiny piss. The look of the wet skin. The sound of hot piss splashing on warm flesh. The feeling, from celebration to humiliation, of aiming cock to piss on another man's cock and balls. The feel, to the man in the tub, of twenty streams of piss hitting him at once. The hot energy trade-off, man to man, in a communion of piss.

SIGHTS TRULY SEEN: PISS JOCKS

One dark-headed guy stands at the head of the tub with a dozen orange-and-blue Bike supporter boxes. He opens them slow and deliberate. One by one. Pulling out of each a clean new jockstrap. He opens the first box and throws the jock on the belly of the body soaked in the tub. Three dudes turn their dicks directly on to the new jock. It soaks up their piss fast. The second Bike box opens and the second jock lands in the tub. Again and again. The bearded guy tosses each box to the floor as he tosses each jock on top the man in the tub.

Another guy, one of those blonds with a thick red Marlboro moustache, sticks a finger through a small hole near the neck of his own white T-shirt. Slowly he tears the white cotton, shredding it to strips of rag, revealing his good pecs and smooth belly. He holds the rag of T-shirt balled up in his hand. His other hand pulls out his cock. He pisses long and heavy into his torn T-shirt. His cock hardens as he pisses.

The other men, except for one with a piss-load that won't quit, stop leaking to look at the big blond. When his T-shirt is soaked, he balls it up, wrings it out over the face of the man in the tub. Then he pisses in the shirt some more. Two other guys piss toward his cock pissing into the shirt. One hits the shirt. The other hits the blond's jeans.

Nothing bothers him. Pissed out, he lobs the dripping T-shirt like a wet softball into the face of the man in the tub. He catches it in his mouth and sucks it. Loud. His eager sucking causes six or seven more cocks to piss in his face.

The dude with the dozen jockstraps stuffs one of them into the tub drain. The tub fills up fast. Piss waves slosh side to side as the man in the tub twists and bobs for all the piss he can handle. As row after row of men moves in, the piss level covers most of his body. Once he slips. In the dripping, shuffling silence his hand makes the squeak of flesh sliding in a wet tub. For a moment, his whole head disappears under the piss and floating jockstraps.

A big fucker in full leather reaches down into the piss and dredges him up by the hair. The man in the tub gasps. Swallows. Wallows. Kneels up. Jerking off. Mouth open. Piss hitting his face. With him kneeling, the tub has room for two. Another guy climbs in for the same treatment. Both of them make gurgling sounds, mouths open, hunched back waist deep in the piss.

The guy with the jocks starts dredging them out. Fully soaked. No reason to wring them out. One at a time he steps into and pulls on the dripping jocks until his cock and balls are completely padded beneath a dozen straps soaked with the piss of nearly a hundred guys. He moves off into the darkly lit cellar and is lost in the crush.

The second guy into the tub dives for the T-shirt in the drain. He comes up with it in his teeth. The men piss harder in his face. He's working for it, begging for it, drinking it, as the tub level goes down. Slowly. The last piss swirls, gurgles, and leaves the tub slick. The first man climbs out, helped by the men standing nearest the tub. He's satisfied. He's had his turn. His scene is over.

Now the tub is ready for the new guy. He's busy already sucking the piss off the thigh-high rubber boots of a man who has thrown his fireman-booted leg across the tub. A fresh dozen dicks stream into the changing scene.

Off in another Mineshaft corner, in more private spaces, other men have waded off to bridge waters of their own. Near the bar, a short muscular man pisses into his empty beer can. He hands it to his buddy. They nod. They smile. The buddy drinks.

WET REALITIES: USMC

Camp Pendleton survival training teaches the young Marine recruits that to survive they can drink their own piss twice and eat their own shit once. Navy survival training is even better. For years, in fact, naval officers and cadets have whispered about the Navy Torture Camps: beatings by guards, "tiger cages," the starvation, and especially the exotic water tortures.

The source of all this cruel, unusual, and hardon punishment of young American males is not a foreign prison camp. It is the U.S. Navy's own hard-assed school for Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE). Designed to train servicemen to survive the rigors of POW life, the Navy's two SERE programs, one at Warner Springs near San Diego and another in northwestern Maine, lost their secrecy recently when an embittered SERE graduate filed suit against Navy personnel, exposing the SERE training as an S&M reality.

NAVY PISS: SEX ABUSE OR PATRIOTISM?

Navy Lt. Wendell Richard Young, rejected the secrecy forced on every SERE graduate, telling tales of fetid tiger cages, beatings and jarring judo flips by Navy instructors he called "gorillas," and a torture device called the "water board." Young also charged, though not in his suit, that SERE students have been tortured into spitting, pissing, and shitting on the American flag, masturbating on order before Navy guards and, on one occasion at least, engaging in sex with an instructor.

The Navy denied the unsubstantiated charges of sexual abuse, but it did acknowledge the use of water torture and physical punishment in its training camps. A Navy spokesman, Comdr. William Collins, insisted that these activities were mostly "illusions of reality" that were not as dangerous as they seemed.

These "illusions of reality" done in the name of "patriotic military training" sound very close to the "illusions of reality" done nightly in the name of "sleazy sexual ritual." In America, it's not what you do, it's what you call it in order to excuse it.

NAVY HAZING TURNS SAILOR GAY

An ex-Navy officer, who was not gay at the time of his SERE training, explained that only after he was out of the Navy and had come out sexually that he realized the full implications of the weeklong SERE training which he was forced to take on threat of disciplinary action.

He was stripped to his skivvies and boots and made to stand at attention in a line with the other young officers forced to take the San Diego training. They were hooded one by one, "sacked" the guards called it, with a heavy canvas bag tied around the neck. After that he saw no one except for contact with the guards. His hands were tied behind his back and he was locked in a kneeling position inside a small wooden box where he was left hooded, tied, and cramped for twenty-four hours. He figured the large tin can between his thighs was for his piss. Hooded he couldn't

see it. Tied he couldn't get his cock out of his skivvies anyway. He held back as long as he could, hearing the muffled sounds of the other men isolated in other wooden boxes. Finally he had to let go of his piss which wet his shorts, ran down his thigh, and pooled around his knees.

He found out that his piss was to be the excuse.

When the guards opened his box, still hooded, he could not rise from his cramped position. His boots and socks were wet with his piss. The guards, pretending outrage, lifted him bodily and dragged him across the compound, shouting at him about how even a dog won't piss in its own box. His legs were pins and needles, useless beneath him. They carried him into a room, unhooded him, and with a guard for each foot and hand, laid him out on a plywood torture board, tying him in place spreadeagled. A hose was brought near his mouth. He was thirsty from the desert heat and the twenty-four hour isolation. He drank. They pushed the nozzle closer to his face. He drank some more. They pushed the nozzle into his mouth. A strong, pair of hands held his jaws closed. The water flooded his mouth, forced out his cheeks, ran out his nose, into his ears, down his throat. He was drowning, choking, drinking to stay alive. They knew what they were doing. Right before unconsciousness, they pulled the hose from his mouth. He thought they were finished.

He was wrong. The waterboard torture lasted over an hour.

A tube was forced through his left nostril and fed the three-foot length to his belly. The water hose was attached to the tube. His belly filled to full distention. He admits to begging them to stop. Instead, they shoved a water-soaked T-shirt into his mouth, leaving only one nostril free for breathing. Then a guard posing as a foreign interrogator, climbed up on the waterboard, astraddle his bound waist, and kneaded his bloated belly until he was screaming into the T-shirt. He felt he could take no more. They knew he could. He knew he had to. They continued. The guard, kneading his belly rising and sitting, rising and pushing on his belly, then sitting back across his piss-soaked skivvies, worked him over with obvious pleasure.

MORE GRATUITOUS PISS AND VIOLENCE

Such isolation and forced feedings continued for the week. And with good reason. In his book *P.O.W.: A Definitive History of the American Prisoner-of-War Experience*, research-writer John Hubbell writes of how the enemy always tries to attack the macho American prisoner by belittling his manhood. He exposes how prisoners were forced to crawl through enemy latrines on their hands and knees, left for weeks tied in their own waste and sexually tortured. To paraphrase Hubbell: The interrogation the next

day took place in an ancient pagoda. A crowd of civilians was present, apparently invited to witness the humiliation of the American “air pirate.” As the interrogator asked questions, guards slipped the rope loops around the prisoner’s shoulders turn-buckling them tighter. He was made to climb onto the seat of a chair. An end of the long rope that held his shoulders in torture was tossed over a rafter and pulled taut. The interrogator turned to the audience, smiled, waved an arm, and the chair was yanked from beneath the prisoner, who hung in the air by his agonized shoulders. The torture continued, and the interrogator began to masturbate....

Such realities both cause the Navy to prepare its men for sexual abuse and cause civilian belief in the secret details coming to light: the spitting, pissing, shitting, masturbating, all juicily excused as preparation for patriotism.

THAT’S STRAIGHT PISS FOR YOU

For relief, comic and cockwise, Burt Reynolds wins the Wet Oscar for Best On-Screen Piss in *Semi-Tough* when he inserts his dick into a rubber hose, straps it down his leg, and pisses into a metal flask strapped inside his boot. The loud soundtrack outdoes rain on a hot tin roof. Pasolini, in his version of *Something for Everyone*, called *Teorema*, films the humpy teenaged son pissing off the family balcony. In Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising*, a classic gay version of *The Wild One*, the lead biker stands on an altar in a church and pisses into the chalice of his helmet, and finally pisses down on all the worshipers gathered around him.

In prison plays and films like Miguel Pinero’s *Short Eyes* or Kenneth Brown’s *The Brig*, the piss scene is obligatory. Experienced cons usually take to shoving a new dude’s head into the cellblock toilet in an initiation as time-honored as the Hell’s Angels’ initiation of pissing on a new member’s colors. And his leather jacket. And his jeans. From then on an Angel pulls off the road strictly for a good shit. Piss just goes off like a rocket in his pocket.

SOME LIKE IT HOT

Ancient warriors bathed in piss. Victorian athletes rubbed themselves down with piss before a good cricket match. Health addicts for years have claimed piss perfect for brushing the teeth. India’s Prime Minister Norarji Desai announced recently: “For the past five or six years, I have drunk a glass of my own urine—about six to eight ounces— every morning. It is very good for you, and it is even free. Even in the Bible it says drink

from your own cistern. What's your own cistern? It is your urine. Urine is the water of life."

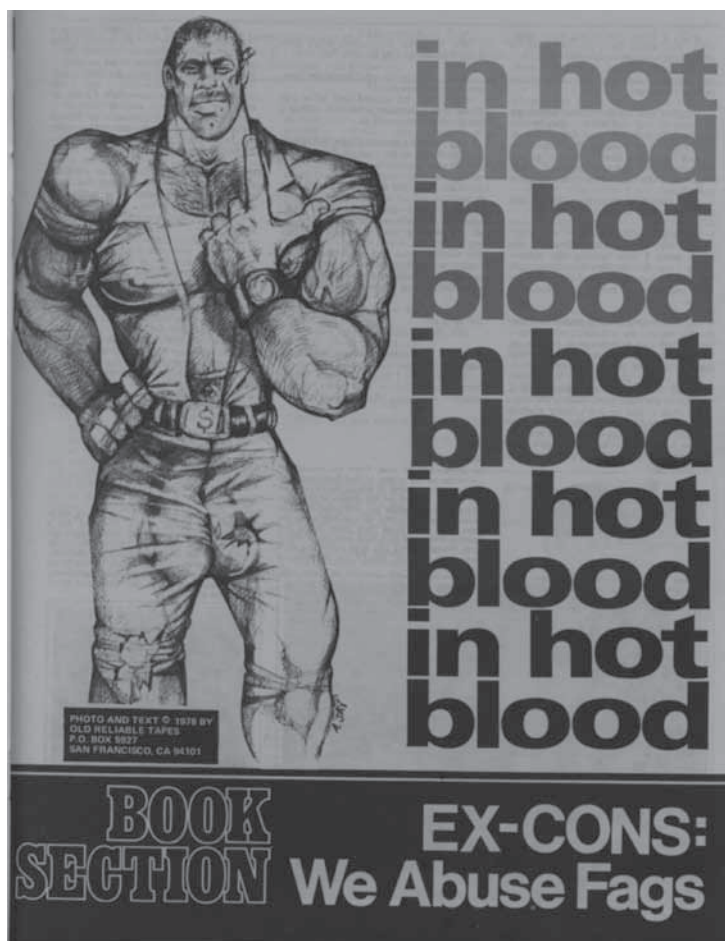
Some men, always working toward versatility, often take a liking for piss: from beer-clear to early morning thick. The range of preference is an acquired taste—the reasons for taking another man's piss range from the sacred to the profane.

Some guys start off early in life pissing, as little boys, into the family john with their brother having races to see who will finish first. Others start later, at college bars, pissing into the same trough. Refinements set in: going off to bars across from police stations to give the porcelain a good lick when the cops come in after duty for a quick beer quickly pissed out; pissing up a guy's ass before, during, and/or after a good hard fuck; and preparing the basic water sports emblem, a piss-soaked jock, tucked into the back pocket.

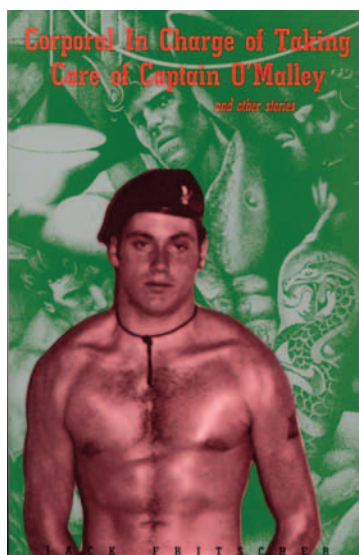
RECYCLE

Variations on any theme, even Handel's "Water Music," are as endless as the inventive mind of man. Run an ad in *Drummer's* personals, The Leather Fraternity, for Mason Jars of dirty bathwater and takers will beat a path to your P.O. Box. You just can't out-fetish and out-fantasize and out-actualize all of the people all of the time. But that is The Joy of Piss, like the joy of almost everything else: finding out that you as a man of the Third Kind are not alone, and in piss, more than almost anything else, together men sink to swim.

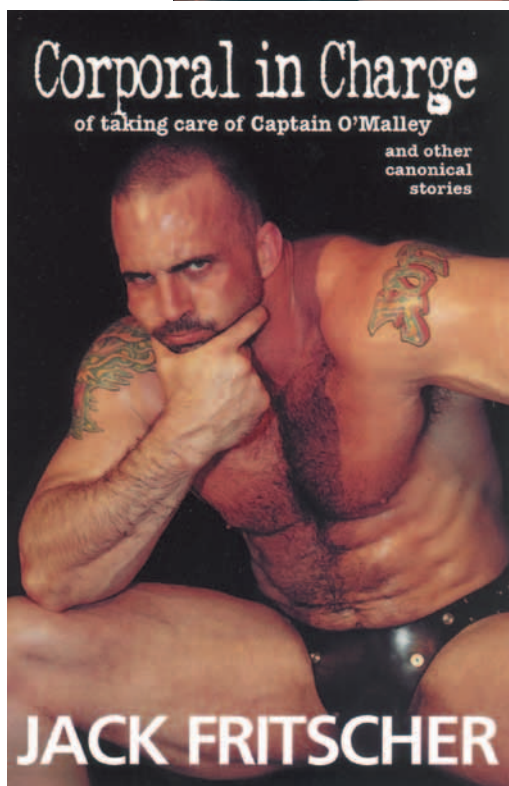
III. Eyewitness Illustrations



Drummer wasn't *Queen's Quarterly* with its "Queen's Vernacular." New words were required to describe the new way gays were. For specifics on the "outing of language" in *Drummer*, see in this book "Homomascularity: Framing Keywords of Queer Popular Culture in *Drummer Magazine*" from the 2005 Queer Keyword Conference, Dublin, Ireland. To shock and defuse "touchy" language, Fritscher provocatively headlined a feature on the cover of *Drummer* 24 with the forbidden word *fag*: "We Abuse Fags!" *Vis-a-vis* the S&M keywords words *slave* and *boy*, which also happen to be racist words, see *Drummer* 174, "The Slavery of Words," by Graylin Thornton who wrote as Mr. *Drummer* 1993 and an African-American. For thirty years, Fritscher's coinages and chronicling of gay words have funneled gay lingua franca into mainstream linguistics collections. More than twenty examples of gay language are quoted directly from his *Some Dance to Remember*, the companion book to his *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer*, in the encyclopedic *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, authors Tom Dalzell and Terry Victor, New York: Routledge, 2005.



The first collection of *Drummer* stories and articles outside of *Drummer* was *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley and Other Stories*. Clockwise from top left: First edition, Gay Sunshine Press (1984); British edition, Prowler Press (1998); textually correct edition, Palm Drive Publishing (2000), with cover featuring Jack Fritscher's photograph of Chris Duffy aka Bull Stanton. ©Jack Fritscher. The *Drummer* Salon threw a catered buffet and book-signing party for Fritscher at the Ambush bar, South of Market, celebrating publication of the first edition of *Corporal in Charge*, Friday, November 16, 1984.





Captions: Eyewitness documentation of the existence of graphics providing internal evidence supporting Jack Fritscher's text are located in the Jack Fritscher and Mark Hemry GLBT History collection. Out of respect for issues of copy-right, model releases, permissions, and privacy, some graphics are not available for publication at this time, but can be shown by appointment.

Eyewitness Illustration

Photograph. "Mineshaft Bath Tub," 1977. If this cropped documentary photograph were printed in full in *National Geographic*, it would be regarded with respect. However, because GLBT anthropology is an erotic culture, "culture war" censors rant against the legitimacy of its absolutely necessary core images. Margaret Mead should have had such luck in *Coming of Age in Samoa* as to find this evidence of the tribal baptism and bath rituals in the Mineshaft. Publicity kit photograph from the collection of Wally Wallace. Used with permission. Photographer as yet unknown.