

“On Pinkie”

Jennifer D. Munro discusses the genesis of the short story “Pinkie,” a brief essay written for The Best of Best American Erotica 2008, 15th Anniversary Edition

I got stuck at dinner a few years ago with a friend’s pal whom I didn’t know. Our mutual friend never showed up. The conversation turned to erotica. Friends are fascinated that I write erotic stories. I live in a suburb, work in a cubicle, and keep my butt-crack covered, so apparently I don’t fit their Anais Nin image.

I mentioned to my new acquaintance that I’m not interested in writing about perfect bodies and gymnastic sex, since that’s not my reality. Most days I’m happy if I can still fit into my jeans and then unzip them to squeeze in a quickie.

She seemed surprised at my reality—she was currently having marathon sex in every possible position with a beautiful, well-endowed man. (Shortly after our dinner, she was checked into a psychiatric clinic with a severe mental illness. Don’t ask me what the moral is there.)

At dinner that night she shrugged, yawned, and said, “Well, why don’t you write a story about a man with a really small dick?”

So I did. To me, the idea was far more intriguing than to write about the amazing fornication that she was describing.

I’m as fond of Pinkie as the day he introduced himself to me. Once he plunked his glorious derriere down at my desk and started to talk, I became fascinated with the problem of a woman’s prejudices against him. I’ve written a lot about female bodies that don’t cooperate, but I hadn’t yet written about a man’s biological challenges. I enjoyed turning the tables.

Although many of my short stories are inspired by real events in my life, *Pinkie*’s pure fiction, but he’s confirmation that any writer in a relationship needs her partner to be understanding, to have a sense of humor, and to have a strong sense of self. My husband’s a good sport about the heat he takes over this story and others that I’ve published. Neighbors ask him at barbecues about his pubic hair and penis size. Everyone assumes that we’re screwing all the time, but usually I’m telling him to be quiet so I can write.

I’ve never thought of myself as an erotica writer. I’m a writer, period. To limit myself within a genre would feel as restrictive as *not* writing about sex in general fiction or essays. I simply write about relationships, and to exclude the sex that is intrinsic to most “romantic” relationships would feel false. I adore my characters. I fall in love with all of them and suffer empty-nest depression when they’ve gone off into the world on their own. I celebrate their ability to flounder through life with flawed bodies and challenging relationships, like we all do. Generally they do it with a lot more wit and grace than I manage.

I'm grateful for "toy" stores like Babes (formerly Toys in Babeland). I can walk into that glorious store for research, ahem, and the staff there will answer any of my questions (usually of the "what the heck is that and where does it go?" variety) as non-judgmentally as if I'm at the Safeway cheese counter asking about the difference between manchego and gorgonzola. I'm so clumsy that I've knocked over an entire shelf of vibrators there (they're like dominoes, boom boom boom boom boom), but they were nice about it. We need places like that to provide shining examples of being comfortable with our sexuality, no matter how awkward and uncool we may be. And *Best American Erotica* is a virtual place that does the same thing. I'm proud to be included in its pages.