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“The Blue Jays of My Life”: An Autobiographical Approach to *Moise and the World of Reason*

Shelley Akers

Writing as Companionship

For Tennessee Williams, writing was never simply his occupation or even his art; it was also his therapy, his means of emotional and physical survival. The playwright’s dependency on writing, which began at an early age, becomes apparent when he describes a night in 1937 following the unsuccessful opening of his play, *Fugitive Kind*. After hearing bad reviews, Williams tried to jump out of a hotel window but was tackled before he made the leap. Reflecting on this event in *Memoirs* (1975), Williams says he knew then that “writing was my life, and its failure would be my death” (44). Writing gave Williams a way to cope not only with the strain of his career but also with the internal struggle between his ingrained puritanical beliefs and his innate homosexual desires. His journals, providing a safe place for confession, thus assumed the role of a priest or a psychiatrist. Even when he was seeing a professional psychiatrist, in 1957, Williams made writing his first priority and refused to sacrifice it for other forms of therapy: “But if [Dr. Kubie] said I had to come in at eight in the morning, I’d get up at four and do my writing . . . I couldn’t face a day without it. It was compulsive” (Devlin 152).

¶2 *Moise and the World of Reason*,Williams’s second novel,published the same year as *Memoirs*, exemplifies the notion of writing-as-companionship perhaps better than any of his other works.[1] In *Moise*, the unnamed narrator, a thirty-year-old writer who suffers from a chronically inflamed libido, struggles in trying to articulate his homoerotic desires in his journals, a series of grade school notebooks that he calls the “Blue Jays of my life” (Williams, *Moise* 152). Williams himself was writing *Moise* soon after coming out on *The David Frost Show* on January 21, 1970, and therefore the novel can be read as a text that reflects Williams’s emotional state as he was coming to terms with his newly outed public identity through his art. Ultimately, writing allows both Williams and the narrator to confess the feelings they have publicly muted for so many years, reaffirm their sexual identities, and pronounce their more liberated statuses in the post-Stonewall world.[2] This full acknowledgment of their homosexuality, however, does not ameliorate the fact that their greater visibility in the media and in the streets remains contested by society’s bigotry and occasional violence.

¶3 Williams never denied the fact that his work was a reflection of his life. In *Memoirs* he writes, “People have said and said and said that my work is too personal: and I have just as persistently countered that charge with my assertion that all true work of an artist must be personal, whether directly or obliquely, it must and it does reflect the emotional climates of its creator” (Williams, *Memoirs* 188). Williams’s acknowledgment that his work reflects his own “emotional climates” justifies why it is appropriate to read *Moise* as part of Williams’s autobiographical confession. Indeed, as Robert Bray explains in “Moise and the Man in the Fur Coat,” “understanding Williams’s work vis-à-vis events in his life helps to illuminate the work and make it more satisfying” (68).

¶4

In the aforementioned article, Bray establishes the parallels between the narrator and Williams by discussing the connections among character, situation, and biography in the novel and contends that "one discerns the imprimatur of Williams's life on virtually every page" (67). For example, in the novel, which is currently out of print, Williams directly names some of his close friends, including Christopher Isherwood, Tony and Jane Smith, and Jane Bowles; he alludes to his stay at Barnes Hospital in 1969; he indirectly mentions the death of his partner, Frank Merlo; and he writes about real experiences he had while traveling with Merlo and Marion Vaccaro. Donald Spoto even describes *Moise* as "a lightly veiled counterpart to *Memoirs*" (311), and Edward Sklepowich says the novel "gathers together many of the facts of Williams' life and presents them in fictional form" (538). Although he is critical of the novel and calls it "ultimately unsuccessful," (538) Sklepowich recognizes the autobiographical significance of *Moise*: "What does succeed in coming through clearly in *Moise* is . . . a revelation of himself and his values, an attempt to tell us some confidences with an infectious Whitmanian publicity" (542).

¶5 In establishing these personal ties with the narrator of *Moise*, Williams must have been thinking about his own sexuality, as he drew inspiration for the character from personal experiences. In a 1977 interview, William Burroughs asked Williams if his work was autobiographical; he responded:

> My answer is that every word is autobiographical and no word is autobiographical. You can't do creative work and adhere to facts. For instance, in my new play [*Vieux Carré*] there is a boy who is living in a house that I lived in, and undergoing some of the experiences that I underwent as a young writer. But his personality is totally different from mine. He talks quite differently from the way that I talk, so I say the play is not autobiographical. And yet the events in the house did actually take place. (Devlin 299–300)

Even though the narrator of *Moise* is not Williams, he certainly undergoes "some of the experiences that [Williams] underwent as a young writer," and many of the events that take place in the novel occurred in Williams's own life as well. Writing about his own experiences but attributing them to his narrator creates an emotional distance and establishes what Williams terms the "detached eye of art" (qtd. in Palmer and Bray 74). This emotional distance allows an easier kind of self-reflection—a way to look at oneself through the eyes of someone else—in order to see and understand more clearly.

¶6 According to biographer Lyle Leverich, as Williams grew older, "writing was no longer simply putting words on paper but . . . using words to release a banked flood of reflections and impressions" (370). When reading *Moise* as a glimpse into Williams's life at a time when he was publicly confronting his sexuality, it is important to remember that the novel was published the same year as *Memoirs* and that both texts were attacked for their explicit representations of homosexuality. In *Memoirs* Williams even apologizes for writing more about his love life than his career: "I am sorry that so much of this 'thing' must be devoted to my amatory activities, but I was late coming out, and when I did it was with one hell of a bang" (87). Williams's candid statement and clever pun show that he understood the importance of verbalizing his desires and openly discussing previously censored issues in both his life (*Memoirs*) and his art (*Moise*). Williams perhaps talks about homosexuality with even greater candor in *Moise* than he does in *Memoirs* because of the narrative distance the genre of fiction allows—and the corresponding safety this affords in a world where it was still dangerous to be openly gay—and this is precisely why *Moise* is an important text for understanding the turmoil (both internal and external) present throughout Williams's own coming-out story.

Writing as Confession

Since *Moise* was one of the first texts Williams wrote after spending time in the psychiatric ward at Barnes Hospital for drug and alcohol abuse in 1969 and after his appearance on *The David Frost Show* in 1970, many readers unfairly dismissed the fragmentation and so-called incoherence of *Moise* as the result of his mental and emotional instability. For example, a critic from the *New Republic* condemned the fragmentary nature of the textby saying that it read less like a novel and "more like a series of notebook entries in which the author muses at random on art and sex" (qtd. in Thornton 735). Secondly, readers and reviewers were so stunned by the graphic representation of homosexuality that they failed to notice the stylized aspects of the novel—such as the blurring of the past, present, and future and the playful metafictional intrusions—or to recognize how it showcased Williams's evolving artistic style. While the unconventional stylistic devices Williams uses in *Moise* could be attributed to the influences of experimental novelists such as Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, and Coleman Dowell, many of Williams's post-Stonewall texts share a theme of confession not present in his previous work, which further illustrates how Williams's coming out affected his creative approach and theory of artistic production.

¶8 *Moise*'s stream-of-consciousness style not only mimics *Memoirs* but also mirrors Williams's journals. The tone of the novel thus seems intimate and confessional, as if Williams is finally able to talk openly about personal issues that he had to code pre-Stonewall. According to Williams's *Notebooks* editor, Margaret Thornton, no journals have been found for the twenty-year period between October 1958 and March 1979. Whether Williams was keeping a journal during this time is not known. While it seems highly unlikely that he would abandon a daily ritual that he maintained for so many years, one could reasonably speculate that Williams substituted writing *Memoirs* and *Moise* in place of writing in his journals during the decade following his coming out.

¶9 In his writing pre- and post-Stonewall, Williams makes it clear that he feels confession is vital to maintaining one's emotional and mental health. In Williams's short story "The Mysteries of the Joy Rio," published in 1954, the narrator says, "the soul becomes intolerably burdened with lies that have to be told to the world in order to be permitted to live in the world, and . . . unless this burden is relieved by entire honesty with *some one* person, who is trusted and adored, the soul will finally collapse beneath its weight of falsity" (Williams, *Collected Stories* 102, emphasis original). At the time he was writing this short story, Williams most certainly was feeling the burden of being a gay man in a homophobic society that not only silenced but also refused to acknowledge sexual difference.

¶10 In 1969, encouraged by his brother, Dakin, Williams converted to Catholicism, but this conversion was half-hearted at best, and he never devoted himself fully to the faith. He did, however, appreciate the Catholic tradition of confession, and in a 1973 interview he stated, "I would *love* confessionals if I could get up at that time, but writing is a confessional" (Devlin 248, emphasis original). John Bak, like many other scholars, reads Williams's writing from the post-Stonewall years as confessional: "Simply put, non-fiction was Williams's public confessional, a place where parable-like recollections of his past could resonate certain truths about his vision of humanity and the directions he thought it was taking" (260). Although *Moise* is fiction, it too provides an outlet for confession. In an interview that took place a year after he came out, Williams said, "I live with my characters. They are more real than I am. They are more I than I am. My work is the only way of realizing myself" (Devlin 208). Ultimately, *Moise and the World of Reason* allowed Williams to come to terms with his new public status by “realizing [him]self” through the narrator, claiming his “outed” identity, and openly celebrating homosexuality in his art.

¶11 Despite his being out publicly, close reading of Williams’s work suggests that he was struggling privately with the guilt stemming from his ingrained Puritanical beliefs. In July 1971, Williams’s one-act play *Confessional* premiered at the Maine Theatre Arts Festival. According to Michael Paller, “Williams’s *Confessional* is an accurate portrait of his spiritual state. The title suggests the lifelong struggles between the urge to reveal and the need to conceal, with the former more explicitly prevailing for the first time” (*Gentlemen* 183). Battling against his “need to conceal,” Williams continued working on *Confessional* and expanded it into the full-length play *Small Craft Warnings*, which premiered the following year in New York. In *Small Craft Warnings*, Williams uses confession as a motif connecting all of the characters. As Philip Kolin points out, the “sacrament of confession is overridingly valorized in *Small Craft Warnings* through the spotlight appearances of the many characters who soliloquize on their lives and losses” (120). Notably, *Small Craft Warnings* was also one of Williams’s first plays to present homosexual characters on stage.

¶12 In *Moise* the narrator, like Williams, identifies writing as a type of confession, admitting that “[t]here are some sentences that a distinguished failed writer must be ashamed to complete, as if telling a secret” (Williams, *Moise* 129). The narrator even takes writing one step closer to a Catholic confession by speaking aloud as he writes in his journal: “But I am talking rapidly now, yes, talking out loud to myself as if in delirium which is a practice I have when I am alone with a pencil and Blue Jay . . .” (76–77). Similarly, in a May 1949 entry, Williams compares writing in his journals with talking to himself out loud: “Why have I not kept a journal in so long? Perhaps it is because I’ve been less lonely, or perhaps only that I grew tired of talking to myself about myself, which is what my journals were mostly. However it is good to keep one. Serves excellent purposes” (Thornton 499). For both Williams and his narrator, writing “[s]erves excellent purposes,” including providing a medium for confession. As Leverich points out, Williams possessed a “primal passion to give vent to emotions he could no longer repress. And to write them down was the only means by which he could elucidate and communicate them” (370). By transferring their thoughts to the page, Williams and the narrator are able to clarify—to themselves and others—some of the complex issues surrounding their sexual identities.

Writing for Sexual/Textual Healing

The narrator’s Blue Jays, like Williams’s journals, fill an emotional void, ease physical discomfort, and satisfy sexual yearnings; and therefore the process of writing becomes his cure for loneliness and sickness as well as his surrogate for sex. Writing alone in the middle of the night, the narrator of *Moise* admits, “Of course I have written alone but less than comfortably always. I have always preferred the presence of a companion. I think, in a way, that is the excuse for the Blue Jay” (72). The narrator’s life seems to rely on his writing; he becomes dependent on his Blue Jays as if they share a kind of unspoken connection, a nexus that is just as vital to his existence as the air he breathes. At the beginning of the second chapter, the narrator confesses, “I was so attached to it, the Blue Jay notebook, to the pale blue regularity of its parallel lines on each side of the page, that I had them mailed to me, in lots of a dozen, by their manufacturers in a Southern city” (Williams, *Moise* 55). Like the narrator, Williams took his journal everywhere, making it his only permanent traveling companion. On a flight to Italy in 1954, Williams writes, “This notebook is falling apart—will have to have it bound in Rome. I’ll need it for company in the days to come” (Thornton 641). Similarly, in November 1942 Williams writes:

"So, dear journal—my comforter—you may let me go for awhile. I will come back again, crying no doubt, and tell you about it" (Thornton 331).

¶14 Both the narrator and Williams rely on their journals to save them from their loneliness. Unlike their lovers, who come and go, their journals are always nearby to provide continuity, comfort, and companionship. This relationship, however, extends beyond the emotional realm because their journals not only sustain their mental health but also maintain their physical well-being. In March 1947 Williams writes, "But now I am having nausea—vomiting—and a little blood in the bowels again—So I turn to my journal. I always do when things look bad" (Thornton 457). As this entry proves, Williams's journals provided soothing relief from both his loneliness and his physical illness. Similarly, in *Moise*, the narrator compares his journals with his lover's drugs: "I had my Blue Jays. Lance had his 'blackbirds' and his 'white crosses'" (73). For the narrator, writing, like certain amphetamines, provides a kind of "fix" that temporarily ends discomfort.

¶15 Echoing many other scholars, Thornton contends that writing was Williams's "last refuge" and that his journals "were companions on his solitary journey—both emotional and physical" (xviii). Like the narrator's Blue Jays, Williams's journals were his lifelong friends, confidants to whom he confessed his "private expostulations" (Thornton 167). Writing, therefore, was even more than Williams's coping mechanism: it was his life support.

¶16 In *Memoirs*, Williams talks about his commitment to writing over everything else in his life—even sex: "[M]y first commitment [was] always to work. Yes, even when love did come, work was still the primary concern" (53). Likewise, in *Moise* the narrator eventually prefers writing over sex because he learns his art is more reliable, stable, and consistent than any of his lovers. At one instance, the narrator confesses to a near Freudian slip, almost substituting the words "blue jeans" for "Blue Jays" (Williams, *Moise* 57). The narrator further illustrates how writing fulfills his need for love and companionship in the second chapter of the novel, when he explains that his lover grew angry when he spent too much time at his writing desk, which he refers to as "BON AMI," French for "good friend" (Williams, *Moise* 103–4). The narrator even admits that at times he was "hotter for a Blue Jay" than for Lance, so he would go to a neighborhood bar to write free from interruption (Williams, *Moise* 104). In a 1953 journal entry, Williams similarly confesses to escaping from a lover and going "home to comfort [himself] with [his] journal" (Thornton 603).

¶17 Remembering how he realized his love for writing and his love for men at the same time, Williams admits in his *Memoirs*: "During that summer of 1934 in Memphis, when I started to realize fully an attraction I had long suspected, to writing for the theatre, I also began to realize more fully an attraction, also suspected for some time, to young men" (42). Williams's simultaneous realization of his homosexuality and his calling as a writer is significant for two reasons: first, it is through his writing that Williams copes with the strain of being a homosexual living in a homophobic society, and second, Williams continually associates writing with sexual intercourse in his work pre- and post-Stonewall.

¶18 In his article "The Couch and Tennessee," Paller discusses Williams's period of psychoanalysis during which his doctor, Lawrence Kubie, asked Williams to give up writing and homosexuality in accordance with a technique called "The Principle of Deprivation." According to Paller, "Sometimes, deprivation will be so important to a patient's progress that an analyst must intervene in his daily life and deny him his traditional sources of satisfaction" ("Couch" 46–47). Perhaps Kubie, along with many contemporary scholars, saw a connection between love and writing in Williams's life: both acts provided him with a satisfaction (albeit temporary) that eased emotional discomfort by fulfilling a need for companionship. Rather than follow Kubie's advice, Williams quit going to his therapy sessions and began relying solely on his art for emotional support, as he would for the rest of his life.

¶19 For both Williams and his narrator, writing becomes a surrogate for sex, and the sheets on the bed are symbolized by the sheets on the page. According to David Savran, "*Moise* posits, more explicitly than any other Williams work, the symmetry of writing and sexuality, pencil and penis, page and anus" (156). The narrator in *Moise* writes about the "page of the Blue Jay [being] fucked by the pencil," and therefore robbed of its purity and beauty (84). As Matt Di Cintio contends, this passage shows that "[w]riting has become the companion; it has been personified: it lives, it breathes, it makes love" (10). Heterosexual intercourse potentially creates life. This power, however, is denied to same-sex couples. Williams, therefore, creates life through his art, and the homosexual narrator of *Moise* creates art by "fucking the page" with his pencil. The clean pages of his Blue Jays become stained with words much like the sheets of his bed are stained with blood after his "defloration by the well-endowed light-colored black ice skater" (Williams, *Moise* 66). With pencils in hand, Williams and his narrator undergo a cathartic process of emotional purging through an artistic "ejaculation" of repressed feelings, and the final result for both is a release from the constraints of a homophobic society.

¶20 Reminiscent of the scene in *A Streetcar Named Desire* when Stanley raids Blanche's trunk without her permission (foreshadowing the rape that will occur later), the aging playwright in *Moise* manhandles the narrator's writing in a way that suggests a kind of invasion of private parts and thoughts: "He was seated on the bed leafing through the last of my Blue Jays. He must have known that I was observing this outrageous invasion of my—about writing, can you say privacy? No, but still, to root through a writer's work without invitation is the height of insolence" (Williams, *Moise* 123). This invasion of the narrator's privacy not only illustrates the relationship between writing and sex but also mirrors the invasion of Williams's personal life after he publicly acknowledged his homosexuality.

Writing into the Public Space

In a 1973 interview, Williams confesses: "I'm really a very private person—in a profession where privacy cannot be practiced very easily. But I must say this is a little hypocritical, because I really don't like to practice privacy now" (Devlin 240). Similarly, in *Moise*, the aging playwright, a manifestation of Williams himself, says: "In my youth . . . I was so shy it was difficult for me to talk but now I've become a garrulous old man who is full of anecdotes that pour out as the wine pours in" (Williams, *Moise* 45). In the post-Stonewall era, homosexuals gained greater visibility in the public sphere, but the transition out of the closet (private sphere) was not easy or fully achieved due to society's continuing homophobia. As Gert Hekma points out, "Heteronormativity gives rise to a dichotomy between public and private, in which 'public' equals 'heterosexual,' and 'homosexual' is reduced to a personal and private affair" (350). By talking about gay sex candidly, Williams brings homosexuality into the public discourse and therefore disrupts the dichotomy established by heteronormativity.

¶22 In the first chapter of *Moise*, the narrator explains to his lover the importance of speaking out publicly: "Charlie, you heard [Moise] last night. She said it was to make an announcement and she said it probably didn't concern anybody but herself but she wanted to make it publicly" (Williams, *Moise* 16–17). Just as Moise wants to announce her "retirement" from the world of reason publicly, homosexuals, who were coming to terms with their new status in the post-Stonewall world, needed to speak out about their sexuality even though "it probably didn't concern anybody but [themselves]." Although Williams's gayness was common knowledge in his private circle of colleagues and friends, he continually struggled to claim his homosexuality publicly. As Kirk Woodward notes, "Williams felt compelled to disguise or play down his homosexuality in public," and until the last decade of his life, he "refused to acknowledge his homosexuality publicly as he did privately in his letters" (181). While his letters and journals supplied a private place to divulge his inner thoughts and confess his sexual desires, *Moise* (as well as *Memoirs*)provided a public medium for Williams to embrace his newly outed identity.

¶23 In *Gentlemen Callers*, Paller speculates why Williams never identified himself primarily as gay: "For most of his life Williams never identified himself as a gay playwright, if only because such an identity did not exist for homosexual men and women of his generation" (158). While playwrights like Tony Kushner and Doug Wright define themselves and their art in terms of their homosexuality, this was not an option for Williams and his contemporaries. Williams was (and still is) criticized for not using his celebrity to speak boldly about gays and lesbians and for failing to represent homosexuality in a positive way in his plays. During the immediate post-Stonewall era, gay playwrights were caught in a double bind: if they spoke honestly about homosexuality, they were attacked by critics and could not find producers for their plays, and if they were dishonest, they were criticized for disguising homosexuality in a way that was harmful to the gay liberation movement and gay identity as a whole.

¶24 In *Moise*, Williams explores the possibilities of homosexual desire and interaction, probing the boundaries of gender and disrupting traditional gender norms. Intent upon illustrating various ways that men and women relate to one another, he challenges the hegemony of heterosexual marriage and its exclusive claims for social legitimacy. The only married heterosexual couple that appears in the novel is the narrator's parents, and this relationship is not depicted in a positive light.[3] Reflecting on his childhood in Thelma, Alabama, the narrator tells the reader: "You've doubtless surmised that I had a possessively devoted mother and a father that loved her but was brutal to me because . . . he'd often find the bedroom door locked against him and would break in the door and find my mother clinging to me on the bed as if I could protect her from his liquored ravishment of her" (Williams, *Moise* 67). Like the narrator of *Moise*, Williams was exposed to the difficulties and limitations of male-female relationships from an early age. As Paller notes in *Gentlemen Callers*, "Williams was born into a sexually dysfunctional family amid a deeply conservative Southern society in 1911, and to argue that this environment did him no psychological harm . . . would be foolish" (9). In "Edwina Williams's Diary," Bray describes the Williams household as a "domestic hell" (8) where "Cornelius's frequent tirades and occasional physical abuse usually left Edwina running for cover" (9). Hoping to find a bond that could not exist between a man and a woman, the narrator of *Moise* (like Williams) explored other options. Remembering his first homosexual encounter, the narrator says: "Then, having been joined in wedlock by mutual penetration (a complete sort of wedlock that's often denied to straights), we went to his pad together" (Williams, *Moise* 67). The physical union achieved by homosexual men during intercourse, a connection usually denied to heterosexual couples, reflects the deep emotional and physical bond possible between two members of the same sex.

¶25 After his appearance on *The David Frost Show*, Williams continually talked about his homosexuality, partly because he was constantly asked by interviewers about his personal life, and partly because he could not resist speaking about this issue that he had publicly muted for so long. As Williams's own life demonstrates, coming out is both a turning point and an ongoing process. In *Coming Out* Jeffrey Weeks identifies three stages in the process: firstly, admitting it to oneself; secondly, admitting it to other gays; and thirdly, admitting it to the rest of the world (192). While Weeks describes coming out as a linear process, Eve Sedgwick, in *Epistemology of the Closet*, compares it to a spiral or circular movement that one is forced to repeat again and again. According to Sedgwick's theory, homosexuals never actually leave the closet because they are repeatedly coming out to each new person they meet. As Williams expresses in a 1970 interview with Don Lee Keith, the process of coming out (and the consequences that resulted from doing so) was something he was faced with every day for the rest of his life: "Jesus, I've grown so tired of being a target. Yet, what can you do? It never stops" (Devlin 148). Like many gays, Williams suffered from a kind of claustrophobic fear because dominant society repeatedly slammed the door on homosexuals, trapping them in the closets from which they continually tried to escape—even after they had come out.

Writing for Completeness

In an interview that appeared in *Playboy* in 1973, Williams recalls his appearance on *The David Frost Show*, admitting that he had never talked openly about his homosexuality until then: "David Frost had me on his show and asked me pointblank if I were homosexual. I was very embarrassed. I said, 'I cover the waterfront.' He called a station break, mercifully, and I said, 'I should think you *would*'" (Devlin 232, emphasis original). Williams obviously was pressured by Frost to address his sexual orientation before he was ready to do so. Written soon after his appearance on the show, *Moise* can be read (to borrow Foster Hirsch's words) as "Williams' true confession" (24–25). As Williams said in his 1970 interview with Don Lee Keith, "some kinds of emotional stress can suffocate creativity, while others may give you the drive to create" (Devlin 153). Williams's desire to publicly claim his homosexuality in his own artistic way was perhaps the spark that ignited his creative drive to write *Moise,* and reexamining the text vis-à-vis his biography and the cultural zeitgeist could shed light on other works in the Williams canon, revitalize scholarly interest, and perhaps make an argument for putting the novel back in print.

Notes

[1] I examined a draft of *Moise* dated May 1974 at The Historic New Orleans Collection's Williams Research Center. I would like to thank THNOC and Mark Cave for providing me access to this manuscript. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Bray and Dr. Claudia Barnett for working closely with me on this project from its conception.

[2] Around midnight on June 27, 1969, nine New York City policemen raided a popular Greenwich Village gay bar known as the Stonewall Inn. The police supposedly had a search warrant authorizing them to investigate reports that the bar was selling liquor illegally. However, when the police raided the bar and arrested the bartender, the doorman, and three transvestites, a violent riot erupted. According to a *New York Times* article published two days later, "Thirteen persons were arrested and four policemen were injured. The young men threw bricks, bottles, garbage, pennies, and a parking meter at the policemen" ("4 Policemen" 33). Today, the Stonewall riots are said to mark the official beginning of the gay liberation movement, although gays had been fantasizing about change long before this monumental night.

[3] Consider other dysfunctional heterosexual unions such as Maggie and Brick in *Cat* and George and Isabel and Ralph and Dorothea in *Period of Adjustment*.

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