

SNMA Library
April 1, 2021

Queer Prison Stories

Prison is a central subject and setting in queer and trans literature. The SNMA has over 150 American and international books related to prisons, particularly from the 1970s to the present, that include personal memoirs, poetry, historical fiction, pulps, and political criticism. Explore library materials that illuminate the diverse stories and experiences of those behind bars—as well as those fighting to remake the criminal justice system.

Mohamed Abdelnabi, *La Chambre de l'araignée [The Room of the Spider]* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2019).

French translation of an Arabic novel exploring gay experience in an Egyptian prison.

Tatamkhulu Afrika, *Bitter Eden: A Novel* (New York: Picador, 2014 [2002]).

Autobiographical novel set in a prisoner-of-war-camp during World War II.

Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls* (New York: Viking, 1993 [1992]).

Autobiographical account of the author's upbringing in Cuba, time in prison, and escape to the U.S.

Christine Beatty, *Not Your Average American Girl* (Sherman Oaks, Calif.: Glamazon Press, 2011).

A memoir of Beatty's life as a trans woman, including experiences in jail.

Roger Caron, *Go-Boy! Memories of a Life Behind Bars* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978).

Influential memoir of a Canadian robber who served 23 years in prison.

Jean Genet, *Miracle of the Rose* (London: A. Blond, 1965 [1946]).

Semi-autobiographical novel about homoerotic desire in the prison system.

John Greyson, dir., *Lilies* (New Almaden, Calif.: Wolfe Video, 1996).

A queer film that captures a play put on by prisoners in mid-century Quebec.

C. F. Griffon, *Haakon: A Novel* (New York: Crowell, 1978).

The story of a bisexual professor in postwar New York City.

Alex Jeffers, *Padisah's Son and the Fox: An Erotic Fairy Tale* (Maple Shade, New Jersey: Lethe Press, 2013).

Gay erotica that takes place in a Turkish prison.

Katherine Johnson and Stephanie Castle, *Prisoner of Gender: A Transsexual and the System* (Vancouver: Perceptions Press, 1997).

A book that brings together personal experiences of, and political insights into, prison.

Kay Johnson, *My Name Is Rusty: A Story of Lesbian Life behind Prison Bars* (New York: Castle Books, 1958).

A pulp classic focusing on lesbians in prison.

Neer Korn, *Life Behind Bars: Conversations with Australian Male Inmates* (Sydney: New Holland Publishers, 2004).

Interviews with men in Australian prisons.

Erika Lopez, *They Call Me Mad Dog! A Story for Bitter, Lonely People* (New York: Simon & Schuster Editions, 1998).

Novel about Tomato Rodriguez, a bicoastal bisexual biker.

Andrea Freud Loewenstein, *This Place* (Boston: Pandora Press, 1984).

Novel about lesbian relationships in and outside of prison.

Paul Mariah, *Personae Non Gratae* (San Lorenzo, Calif.: Shameless Hussy Press, 1976).

A poetry collection addressing the author's experience in prison in the early 1960s.

Miguel Piñero, *Short Eyes: A Play* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

A play about prison life that tackles the subject of pedophilia.

Mason Powell, *The Brig* (San Francisco: Alternative Press, 1984).

A classic gay BDSM novel that takes place in a military prison.

Manuel Puig, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (New York: Knopf, 1979).

A Spanish-language novel about two cellmates in an Argentine prison.

Jordy Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox: A Novel* (New York: One World, 2018).

An imaginative transgender take on the story of Jack Sheppard, an eighteenth-century thief in London.

Jacobo Schifter, *Macho Love: Sex Behind Bars in Central America* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

An investigation into sexual cultures and HIV/AIDS in Latin American prisons.

Sin Soracco, *Low Bite* (New York: Plume, 1994).

Lesbian prison novel about friendship and survival.

Sky Vanderlinde, ed., *Prisons That Could Not hold Barbara Deming* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

Writings by feminist activist Barbara Deming, accompanied by Joan E. Biren's photographs.

George Sylvester Viereck, *Men Into Beasts* (New York: Bridgehead Books, 1955).

An autobiographical book exploring life in federal prisons at the outset of World War II.

Sarah Waters, *Affinity* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000 [1999]).

A lesbian novel that unfolds at Millbank Prison in Victorian London.

Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Oscar Wilde* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club).

The complete stories, plays, and poems of Oscar Wilde, who had a consequential sodomy trial and prison sentence.

Cleary Wolters, *Out of Orange: A Memoir* (New York: HarperOne, 2015).

Memoir of the real-life person played by Alex Vause in *Orange is the New Black*.

Wayne S. Wooden and Jay Parker, *Men Behind Bars: Sexual Exploitation in Prison* (New York: Plenum Press, 1982).

A sociological study of men and sex in prison.