Indigenous Literature with
a Queer/LGBT/Two-Spirit Sensibility

A Note about the List:
This list is a general resource, being neither exhaustive nor authoritative. Not everyone on this list is LGBT/Queer/Two-Spirit; some are included because of their sensitivity to Queer issues and sensibilities. Inclusion (or exclusion) of writers from this list should not be construed as verification of their sexual orientations, gender identities, or opinions regarding LGBT issues.

kateri akiwenzie-damm (Anishinaabe)
   *My Heart is a Stray Bullet*
   *bloodriver woman*

Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene)
   *The Toughest Indian in the World*
   *The Business of Fancydancing* (film)
   *Old Shirts and New Skins*

Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo/Sioux)
   *Life is a Fatal Disease: Selected Poems 1964-94*
   *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*
   *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*

Beth Brant (Bay of Quinte Mohawk)
   *Writing as Witness: Essay and Talk*
   *Mohawk Trail*
   *Food and Spirits: Stories*

Chrystos (Menominee)
   *Dream On*
   *Fire Power*
   *In Her I Am*
   *Not Vanishing*

Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee/Osage/Lenape/Lumbee)
   *Book of Memory: Honor Poems*
   *Burning Upward Flight*
   *Walking with Ghosts: Poems*
Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa)
  *Love Medicine*
  *The Antelope Wife*
  *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*

Janice Gould (Koyangk'auwi Maidu)
  *Earthquake Weather*
  *Beneath My Heart*

Joy Harjo (Mvskoke)
  *In Mad Love and War*
  *A Map to the Next World*
  *She Had Some Horses*

Tomson Highway (Cree)
  *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*
  *Kiss of the Fur Queen*
  *The Rez Sisters*

Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee)
  *Kynship: The Way of Thorn and Thunder, Book One*
  *Wyrwood: The Way of Thorn and Thunder, Book Two*

Maurice Kenny (Mohawk)
  *Backward to Forward: Prose Pieces*
  *Tekonwatonti/Molly Brant: Poems of War*

Janet McAdams (Creek)
  *The Island of Lost Luggage*

Deborah Miranda (Esselen/Chumash)
  *Indian Cartography*
  *The Zen of La Llorona*

(Rollie) Lynn Riggs (Cherokee)
  *The Cherokee Night*
  *The Cream in the Well*
  *The Iron Dish*

Gregory Sarris (Miwok/Pomo)
  *Grand Avenue*
Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts
Watermelon Nights

Gregory Scofield (Métis)
I Knew Two Metis Women
Love Medicine and One Song
Thunder Through My Veins: Memories of a Métis Childhood

James Thomas Stevens (Akwesasne Mohawk)
Combing the Snakes from His Hair
A Bridge Dead in the Water

Craig S. Womack (Muskogee Creek/Cherokee)
Drowning in Fire
Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism

Other writers
Joanne Arnott (Anishinaabe/Lakota)
Cathie Dunsford (Maori)
Connie Fife (Cree)
Jewell Gomez (Wampanoag/Ioway)
Carole laFavor (Anishinaabe)
Vickie Sears (Cherokee)
Alice Walker (Cherokee)

Selected Secondary Sources

A Note About Terminology:
Indigenous people identify same-sex eroticism and non-dualistic concepts of
gender by many names, and we have attempted to respect that diversity
here. Different communities have different terms and understandings – such
as winkte and koskalaka (as per Allen) among Lakotas and nádleeh among Navajos --
that do not always translate into Eurowestern concepts of sexuality and gender. As
most of these concepts are tribally-specific and thus not universal, we have generally
kept with the inclusive acronym LGBTQ, the broader "Queer," or the contemporary
pan-Native "Two-Spirit." The latter is a contested term, as it collapses cultural
differences into a binary concept that is not equally applicable or relevant to all
Indigenous communities. Nevertheless, many contemporary Native people embrace
the concept of Two-Spirit, so we acknowledge it here along with LGBTQ and
Queer. The term "berdache," however, is a different matter. It is used by some of the
secondary sources (particularly Will Roscoe), but it is strongly disliked by most LGBTQ/Queer/Two-Spirit people, and is generally perceived as an insult.

  * www.2spirits.com


* A particularly culturally-sensitive and intellectually-rigorous scholarly analysis of Two-Spiritedness in contemporary Native North America. Much stronger and more respectful to tribal specificity than the works of Brown, Roscoe, or Williams. Includes numerous Native contributors.


* In particular, see "Changing Native American Roles in an Urban Context and Changing Native American Sex Roles in an Urban Context" and "Warrior Women: Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women."


Osborne, Karen Lee. "Swimming Upstream: Recovering the Lesbian in Native American Literature." Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English:


Thomas, Wesley and Sue-Ellen Jacobs. "'And We Are Still Here': From Berdache to Two-Spirit People." American Indian Culture and Research Journal 23.2 (1999): 91.


