

# The Origin of Love

**M**uch in the way Hedwig and the Angry Inch sings of “big rolling keg” creatures, the city of Toronto evolved an epicenter of queer zines consisting of an amorphous blob of dykes, fags, transgendered folks, punks, filmmakers and illustrators, some of whom later split apart in acrimonious fashion. Toronto is home to the performance space Buddies in Bad Times Theater as well as the zine shelf at the cleverly named bookstore This Ain't the Rosedale Library, so it isn't surprising that queer zines were able to thrive there.

Part radical manifesto, part one-handed erotic reader and all punk rock, **J.D.s** [Issue 5, 1989, 56 pages] is the gender-indeterminate parent of all queer zines. With contributors like Anonymous Boy and Dennis Cooper who produce some of the best queerly bent art in the world, **J.D.s** is a “must have” for all those who fall between the cracks of mainstream queer life and find themselves in the slam pit. **J.D.s** is also accessible to everyone through its reprint of letters the editors received from fans and haters alike.

The zine review section gave props to others in the “homocore” (later evolved into “queercore” to be inclusive) scene and they also encouraged zine trades, giving a nod to anti-capitalist sentiments. Editors G. B. Jones and Bruce La Bruce each worked on crafting their own artistic expression, and despite a falling-out later

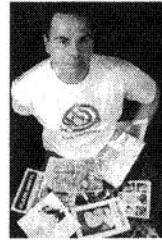
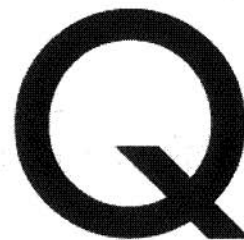
on, they are still well-known in the queer avant garde today.

Issue 5 contains two examples of G. B. Jones' brilliant and stridently feminist reworking of Tom of Finland art. Frightened by the grotesquely disproportionate anatomies and oppressive obsession with authority figures found in Tom's work, Jones reconceptualizes the style into scenes from queer punk dyke life and culture that are realistic yet still capture the edgy nature of erotic art.

Bruce La Bruce's virtual fingerprints are all over the stories of queer punk boys getting it on at shows, in parents' attics or simply out cruising. He took this gritty sexuality and splurged it all over the big screen in such films as “No Skin Off My Ass.” **J.D.s** wants YOU, badass!

Ranking as the most inspired and completely random concept from which to write a singularly awesome queer zine, **Double Bill** [Issue 2, 1992, 32 pages] explores radical queer thought through the cultural iconography associated with two fellows named Bill, William Conrad and William Burroughs.

Conrad, of course, was best known as a law man character actor who starred in the radio version of “Gunsmoke;” appeared on TV as a detective in Cannon, the crypto-gay Nero Wolfe, and Jake and the Fatman; and lent his voice as narrator of the Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons.



## Zines

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Then there is the wacko, bug-powder-snorting, misogynist Beat writer and artist William Burroughs, who allegedly killed his wife while in Mexico and got away with the crime. The brains and artistic brawn behind **Double Bill** were G. B. Jones, Johnny Noxema and Jena Von Brucker among others. The letters and reviews included read like a lovely who's who of the queer punk world — like the fan mail from a member of Bratmobile.

The juxtaposition of these seemingly disparate celebrities allowed all sorts of cultural analysis and commentary to pour forth, some of it so mind-bogglingly profound that it seems impossible that this zine evolved from simply watching too many TV reruns and receiving the now-infamous letter that Burrough's assistant sent to a number of queer zines in the early 1990s claiming, of all things, to have been the founder of and the spirit behind queer zines.

*These and other queer zines can be found online at [qzap.org](http://qzap.org), the Queer Zine Archive Project.*