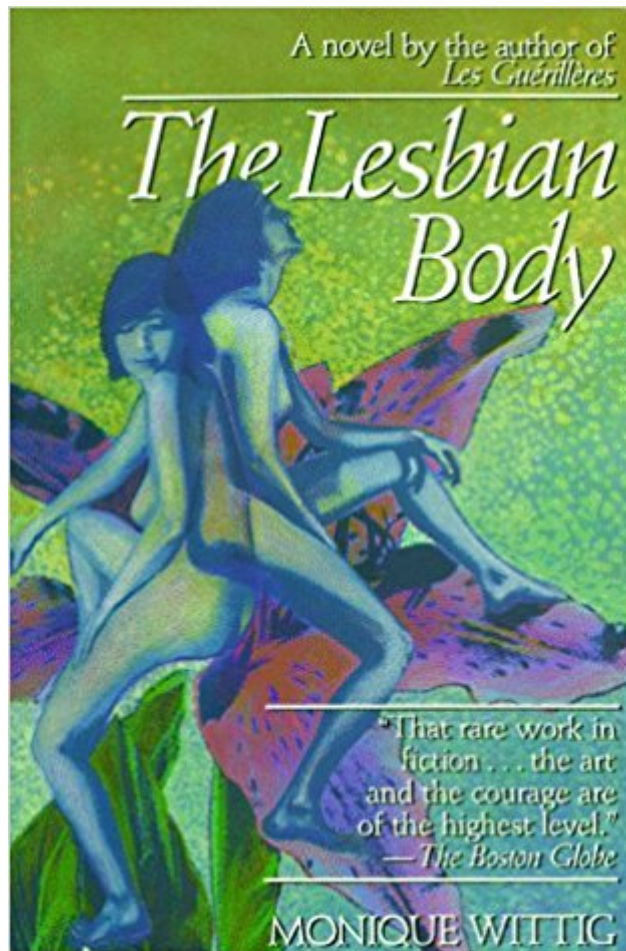




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The Lesbian Body (Beacon Paperback)



Synopsis

Back in print, this daring novel constitutes a rhapsodic hymn to women's bodies and women's relationships."That rare work in fiction . . . the art and the courage are of the highest level." â "The Boston Globe

Book Information

Series: Beacon Paperback (Book 709)

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Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, French (translation)

This book is not an easy read, either content-wise or stylistically, but it is one of the most satisfying books I have read. Monique Wittig is a radical feminist who believes that language itself must be reinvented to better serve the experience of women, and this book is her attempt to do so. She describes in painful, clinical detail the bonding of two women lovers---their very viscera entwining and disentangling as the relationship ebbs and flows. It is remarkable how we all use phrases like "we were totally bonded" without thinking--this book examines such concepts on a literal(and often unpleasant) level. It is difficult to find, but worth getting for anyone interested in extremely radical notions of language and also in truly deep exploration of the extremities of love.

One has to admire Wittig for persisting. _The Lesbian Body_ is an extended love letter from one (not an .com!) to the woman she loves. The book can have an intermittently disconcerting fascination, and it is agreeably off putting, with first person pronouns divided up ("m/e" [and in the

French version "j/e"]), presumably to break down language false to the lesbian self and the experience of love the book wishes to embody. Moreover, the attraction of the narrator for her inamorata is not confined to anything like usual romantic palaver; it can derive from, say, sweat. It is often expressed in violence. "Under m/y frantic pressure your head becomes detached at the level of the cervical vertebrae." I guess this is love, if between consenting adults. I don't find the new language _more_ satisfactory or illuminating; it is just different, for the sake being so, nor for me does feminizing the characters in the _Iliad_, as _The Lesbian Body_ does, add to an understanding of them or make the stories alluded to more moving, entertaining, true, or, given the sketchiness of the references, much unlike what they were in Homer. Interrupting the paeans of love, at apparently arbitrary points, are lists of body parts, often sounding like extracts from a medical textbook. "THE DORSALS THE ILIACS THE TERES THE QUADRATI." Is this the inevitability of the physical? Or a remaking of love in a way the outside, non-revolutionary world will or must find foreign? The best that can be said about this experiment is that, like the writing of Gertrude Stein, it can shake the reader out of traditional ideas of fiction or writing and bust up stale social notions. By the last page, 165, I had had enough. It was actually more fun to write this review than to read the book.

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