

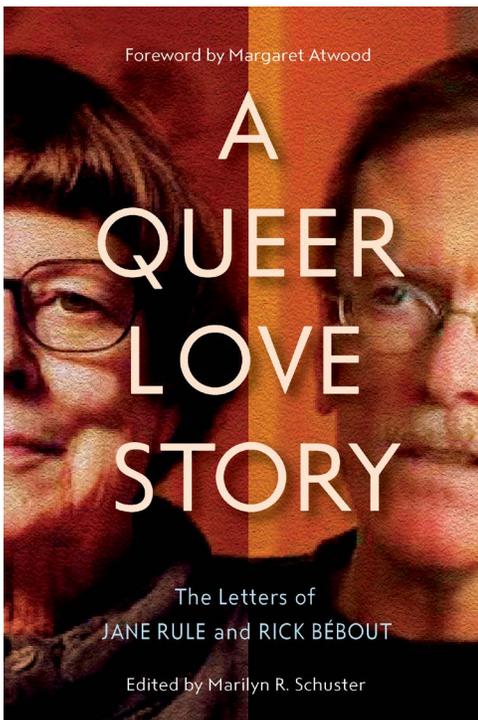
# A QUEER LOVE STORY

The Letters of Jane Rule and Rick Bébout

Edited by Marilyn Schuster, with a foreword by Margaret Atwood

*"Jane and Rick were two brave souls. They tried the ice, they moved the markers, they ducked the shots. They were also two brave souls who could write — charmingly, intricately, intimately, persuasively."*

Margaret Atwood



The letters of Jane Rule, a novelist, essayist, and the first widely recognized “public lesbian” in North America, and Rick Bébout, journalist and editor with the Toronto-based radical LGBTQ publication *Body Politic*, tell a story of emotional intimacy between a man and a woman joined not by family or by conventional love, but by shared intellectual and political passions.

*A Queer Love Story* presents the first fifteen years of their correspondence. It turns poignant, scintillating, and incisive, their exchanges include ruminations on queer life and the writing life as they document some of the most pressing LGBTQ issues and events of the 1980s and ‘90s, including HIV/AIDS, censorship, youth sexuality, public sex and S/M, Toronto’s infamous bath raids, and state regulation of identity and desire.

These unlikely correspondents were both American by birth, but claimed expatriate status in Canada. Editor Marilyn Schuster describes this choice to be as “much for what Canada offered as for their frustration with American politics and commercial values.”

As writers, Rule and Bébout hoped to nurture a more precise language to articulate gay and lesbian lives. In her letters, Rule reflects on her life with companion Helen Sonthoff and expectations regarding marriage, monogamy, and long-term relationships. In his letters, Bébout details his more “promiscuous affections,” ranging from a knowing glance at a stranger in the subway to obsessive on-again, off-again affairs. Together, they offer sharp-eyed and unsentimental observations on queer communities and politics.

*A Queer Love Story* showcases not only two incisive minds in intimate dialogue but also, more largely, how members of the queer community worked together to build ties of love and friendship amidst intolerance and outright hostility.

*"These letters swept me up like a novel. The evolving friendship between these unlikely correspondents – the older lesbian writer and the younger gay editor and activist – is indeed a love story. But their love is about something much larger than themselves."*

Alison Bechdel, cartoonist and author of *Fun Home*

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650 pages, 6" x 9"

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Jacketed Hardcover | \$50

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## BIOS

**Marilyn R. Schuster** was the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Smith College and has been professor and provost emerita since 2015. She is the author of *Marguerite Duras Revisited* and *Passionate Communities: Reading Lesbian Resistance in Jane Rule's Fiction*. She lives in Oakland, California.

**Rick Bébout** was born in Ayer, Mass. and came to Canada at age 19 in 1969. He died in Toronto in 2009. He was the editor of *The Body Politic*, "the magazine of record for the activities and development of the gay liberation movement across the country."

**Jane Rule** was born in Plainfield, New Jersey and moved to Canada in 1956. She died at her home on Galiano Island in 2007 at the age 76. She was inducted into the Order of British Columbia in 1998, and into the Order of Canada in 2007. She wrote 14 books, including *Desert of the Heart* (1964), which was turned into the movie *Desert Hearts*.

Jane Rule's full bibliography:

*Desert of the Heart* (1964)  
*This Is Not for You* (1970) Naiad Press  
*Against the Season* (1971) Naiad Press  
*Lesbian Images* (1975) The Crossing Press  
*Theme for Diverse Instruments* (1975)  
*The Young in One Another's Arms* (1977) Naiad Press  
*Contract With the World* (1980)  
*Outlander* (1981) Naiad Press  
*Inland Passage and Other Stories* (1985) Naiad Press  
*A Hot-Eyed Moderate* (1985) Naiad Press  
*Memory Board* (1987) Naiad Press  
*After the Fire* (1989) Naiad Press  
*"Loving the Difficult"* (2008) Hedgerow Press  
*Taking My Life* (2011) Talonbooks

## TOUR DATES

### May 2017

Glad Day Books, Toronto, ON

### June 2017

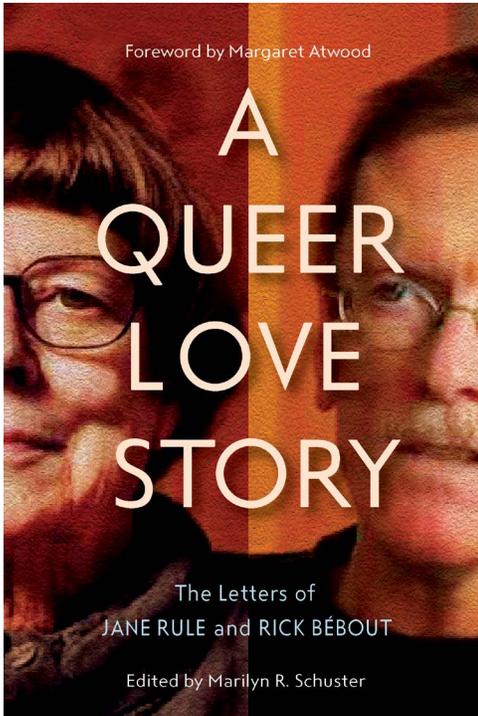
The Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities,  
 Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY  
 Venue TBD, New York City, NY

### July 2017

Venue TBD, San Francisco, CA  
 Little Sisters Bookstore, Vancouver, BC  
 Galiano Island Books, Galiano Island, BC

### Fall 2017

Smith College, Northampton, MA  
 Mills College, Oakland, CA



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## ADVANCED PRAISE

"These letters swept me up like a novel. The evolving friendship between these unlikely correspondents – the older lesbian writer and the younger gay editor and activist – is indeed a love story. But their love is about something much larger than themselves. Jane and Rick's running analysis of the sea changes occurring in queer life, from the radical seventies, through the AIDS-devastated eighties, to the assimilationist nineties, is incisive, deeply considered and, above all, engaged. In the current era of atrophying attention spans and political atomization, these lush, eloquent letters between people who see themselves first and foremost as part of a movement are exhilarating."

**Alison Bechdel**, cartoonist and author of *Fun Home*

"*A Queer Love Story* offers fresh insight into two important figures in Canadian LGBT history – their lives, their views, their activism, and their deeply engaged friendship."

**Ivan Coyote**, writer

"The intelligence of both writers, the means by which they directly confront the issues affecting the queer community and identity politics, and their desire to explore love, power, the erotic, and the nature of sexuality – these are some of the most engaging facets of these letters."

**Linda Morra**, editor of Jane Rule's memoir, *Taking My Life*

"It is a queer love story indeed, and it is a story that must be told ... This book reminds readers that other, more radical, alternatives are available, that conversations about these alternatives were very much part of both feminist and gay liberationist discussions in the 1980s and '90s, and that Rule and Bébout lived the promise of queer community considerably *avant la lettre*."

**Catriona Sandilands**, co-editor of *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*