

sent me on a long detour through the *Dao De Jing*, which had its rewards, but distracted me from the poems at hand. I would have preferred to encounter the poems first, and then find out about the intertextual and scholarly context in an afterword.

In its ambition and many of its themes, *Glitter and Fall* is consistent with much of Brandt's larger oeuvre, and the poems are well worth reading in relation to it. She has always been a willing risk-taker in her poetry, unafraid to risk offense as she follows her seemingly inexhaustible curiosity. Perhaps that is why her attempt to frame this project, to justify it, and—most surprisingly—to tell us how to read it, feels disorienting. A stand-alone essay by Brandt on the process of interacting with the *Dao De Jing* through transinhalation could make for an engrossing read, but the poems deserve to stand alone on their own merits.

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### Works Cited

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Daniel Shank Cruz, *Queering Mennonite Literature: Archives, Activism, and the Search for Community*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019. Pp. 184. Hardcover, \$119.95.

Daniel Shank Cruz's *Queering Mennonite Literature: Archives, Activism, and the Search for Community* is an important, ambitious work of Mennonite cultural studies. Not only does the book present a comprehensive account of queer and trans Mennonite literature, it argues for a new vision of what it might mean to be Mennonite. By linking the radical anti-normativity of the earliest Anabaptist resisters to the anti-normative, often politically radical and sexually transgressive ethos of contemporary queer life, Cruz seeks to extend Mennonite identity beyond its ethnic and religious roots, arguing that the term Mennonite ought to be understood as signifying a transformative political outlook rather than simply a religious identity. As Cruz puts it himself:

Mennonite [embodies] queer activism: being out of step with mainstream society in radical ways that advocate for those on the margins, including those inhabiting LGBT identities. This ethic may or may not be within a framework of faith. The book's act of defining asserts that homophobic institutional Mennonitism does not have sole ownership of the term *Mennonite*.

Drawing a firm link between the anti-normative Mennonite political tradition and anti-normative queer politics is provocative, but Cruz aims to do more than simply define Mennonitism in activist political terms. He seeks to challenge the exclusionary stance of many Mennonite religious polities by propounding an open, inclusive, and hopeful account of Mennonite identity.

Cruz begins his close readings with an analysis of the archival impulse among queer Mennonites. He considers this practice in relation to two projects: Christina Penner's novel *Widows of Hamilton House*, a queer revision of the biblical story of Ruth and Naomi set in contemporary Winnipeg, and Wes Funk's corpus of queer Mennonite writing, notably his memoir *Wes Side Story*. As Cruz analyzes the queer Mennonite contours of these texts, he deftly exercises his own archival impulses, assembling, preserving, and advocating for works of queer Mennonite fiction that might otherwise be overlooked or even forgotten. Cruz notes that since Wes Funk's death in 2015, many of his independently published works have fallen out of print and are difficult to obtain; his project seeks to preserve them and other similarly imperiled queer Mennonite texts. The chapter further shows that Cruz's archival reflexes are not confined to the literature he examines; they extend to his own life. By incorporating accounts of his coming of age as a bisexual, kinky man, he successfully archives his experience as a queer Mennonite.

The larger study continues Cruz's careful engagement with the rich body of queer Mennonite writing in Canada and the United States. He argues persuasively that Jan Guenther Braun's novel, *Somewhere Else*, is a hopeful account of queer Mennonite identity. The novel's protagonist, Jess, departs homophobic rural Saskatchewan for Waterloo, Ontario where she connects with a queer community and begins to date another queer Mennonite woman. Cruz reads Jess' return to Saskatchewan with her partner to confront and contest the homophobia of her home community as a way of pointing readers to the possibility of the simultaneous embrace of queer and Mennonite identities. Similarly, Cruz's analysis of Jessica Penner's *Shaken in the Water*, which depicts the loving queer relationship between two Mennonite women in early-twentieth century rural Kansas, suggests the novel functions as what Ann

Cvetkovich calls an “imaginative archive” by gesturing toward the lost history of queer Mennonite intimacy. In later chapters, he reads Stephen Beachy’s *boneyard* and Corey Redekop’s *Husk* to interrogate Anabaptist queerness in relation to violence. Cruz contends that *boneyard*’s many scenes of physical and sexual violence ultimately critique the violence of American culture, while asserting that the ethical dilemmas confronted by Sheldon—the bloodthirsty zombie protagonist of *Husk*—challenge the practicality of the long-held Mennonite value of nonviolence.

Cruz’s study offers the first extended analysis of trans Mennonite literature, as well, through his careful engagement with the pathbreaking fiction of Casey Plett and Miriam Suzanne. His detailed reading of Plett’s short story collection *A Safe Girl to Love* focuses on the search by her trans characters for stable, affirming forms of community, a search too often thwarted by transphobia, both within and beyond the Mennonite community. Cruz reads the fragmentary form of Miriam Suzanne’s unbound, card-based narrative project *Riding SideSaddle*\* as suggesting that “North America trans identity is in some ways still unspeakable because of the presence of transphobia at every turn.” Suzanne’s narrative makes no mention of Mennonite literature or culture, but Cruz includes it in his archive because of Suzanne’s ethnic Mennonite identity. Moreover, he sees Suzanne’s depictions of trans community as fundamentally Mennonite, according to the activist, politically progressive definition of the term that animates his project.

As a queer Mennonite, I fully endorse Cruz’s re-definition of Mennonite identity in communitarian, inclusive terms. It is worth noting, however, that several of the texts Cruz reads as activist and communal in orientation—notably *boneyard*, *Shaken in the Water*, and *A Safe Girl to Love*—seem to be defined less by care or mutual support than by repeated collisions of violence, exploitation, and the trauma of rejection by unforgivingly homophobic and transphobic Anabaptist polities. I don’t offer this observation to contest Cruz’s final analysis, which is carefully and justly rooted in the tradition of queer world-making. My aim is simply to point out that a less politically invested reading of the texts in his archive might suggest that queer Mennonite life is not easily reduced to a transformative political program, but is instead—like contemporary institutional Mennonitism and queerness writ large—inconsistent in outlook and dogma, by turns caring and supportive of the down-trodden, and in other cases selfish and cruel.

In addition to its accomplishments as a work of literary criticism, *Queering Mennonite Literature* is a powerful rebuke to institutional Mennonite intolerance and a moving argument for what

Mennonite identity and Mennonite queerness could become. Importantly, Cruz's forward-looking vision does not prevent him from acknowledging the limitations of our present moment. His archive of queer and trans Mennonite literature reminds us that, for now, at least, queer Mennonite life remains ideologically fragmented, turning sometimes toward progressive communitarianism and in other cases toward the fierce, self-oriented independence produced by the trauma of Mennonite cultural violence. His project concludes with a powerful endorsement of Sofia Samatar's call for more postcolonial Mennonite writing, looking toward a truly global queer Mennonite literature. At the same time, *Queering Mennonite Literature* succeeds admirably in its goal of joining queer values with those of a wider community of open and affirming Mennonite critics, writers, and allies, and it models for readers how Mennonite identity can draw on its tradition of anti-normativity to support those on the margins.

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Maurice Mierau, *How Mind and Body Move: The Poetry of Patrick Friesen*. Victoria, BC: Frog Hollow Press, 2018. Pp 74. Softcover, \$20.

The Mennonite literary renaissance that peaked during the 1980s marked a collective turn towards poetry. In Manitoba this was facilitated by Turnstone Press, which had been founded in order to publish chapbooks by local poets. The 1980 publication of Patrick Friesen's long poem *The Shunning* now stands as a landmark, anticipating and influencing the poets who followed. Friesen had already published two volumes of poetry in the 1970s, but it was the two collections that came out in the 1980s that led David Arnason to refer to Friesen as "one of the four or five best poets in this entire country." When Arnason made that claim at the memorable 1990 Waterloo conference on Mennonite/s Writing, there was widespread consensus about that evaluation. Since that day, Friesen has continued to publish volume after volume of extraordinary poetry, but his titles rarely show up when awards are announced. One reason for this is that the poetry scene in Canada is an embarrassment of riches, with new poets constantly emerging.

Although questions about reception are of a complexity beyond the limits of a review, I gesture towards them here in order to draw attention to the contrast between the current neglect of Frie-