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 ***Let's Hear It: Stories by Texas Women Writers* ed. by Sylvia Ann Grider, Lou Halsell Rodenberger (review)**

Carmen Pearson

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE Spring 2006 Mostly, though, Gessner talks about his father's secret to success—WORK—and the different kinds of work, including writing, Gessner did in order to become a successful, if restive, nature writer. His musings range from Ultimate Frisbee to creative nonfiction and from the fine line between his imagination and that of his schizophrenic brother to, most successfully, his travels with his industrialist father to the family's source in eastern Germany, where he learns to talk with his father more or less as an equal and discovers that he is proud of him for qualities

which, as a son, he had resented for years. Every man who has had conflicts with his father—and who hasn't?—will be moved by this story and wish he had even that moment of understanding and reconciliation. The longest piece, "Howling with the Trickster," is the most ambitious, but it only partly succeeds. Tracing the movements of coyotes on Cape Cod and in Boston, Gessner struggles with whether it is possible "to live wild without living in the wilderness" (199). "Wild" is crucial to his view of himself as man and writer. The answer, arrived at with a good deal of repetition and what seems unnecessary effort, is to assert that the wild is always there because life is uncertain. Despite being labeled a nature writer, Gessner writes best about humans, especially describing gestures, movements, speech, and mental habits as demonstrated in physical movement. Aspiring writers can learn from him; those more experienced can envy his skills and be warned by his self-indulgences.

Let's Hear It: Stories by Texas Women Writers. Edited by Sylvia Ann Grider and Lou Halsell Rodenberger. College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003. 422 pages, \$40.00/\$19.95. Reviewed by Carmen Pearson University of Houston

Somewhat in response to William Peery's important anthology, *21 Texas Short Stories*, the first collection of short stories exclusively by Texas writers published in 1954 where Peery declared "Texas is in its cultural manhood, and that makes its short stories exciting" (3), editors Sylvia Ann Grider and Lou Halsell Rodenberger have assembled twenty-one short stories "plus one" written exclusively by Texas women. The editors note that, despite Peery's remarks, he in fact included four selections by women writers in his collection and that "Texas women writers have dominated the field for more than a century" (10). They further note that "[t]he first true Texas writer was a woman," Mary Austin Holley (11). The "plus one" in *Let's Hear It* is "The Circus," a selection by Katherine Anne Porter, the first Texas writer to win the Pulitzer prize and a writer without whom no collection of Texas short fiction would be complete (5). Set in the "dark days immediately following the American Civil War," the first short story in this anthology contains fascinating references to future technologies, demonstrating the imagination and potential Texas women writers have (49). The book is divided by periods: The Civil War to the Turn-of-the-Century, the 1920s-1950s, the 1960s-1980s, and the 1990s, where it ends with "Moving On," by Jill Patterson. Not only are the selections thoughtfully chosen, they are capacious enough to include formulaic, sentimental, realistic, modernistic, futuristic, and postmodern fiction. The book also celebrates voices from the region's rich cultural and ethnic mixes, including such writers as Denise Chavez and Sunny Nash. The introductory remarks, "Texas Women and the Short Story," should be mandatory reading for anyone interested in the development of the literature of the region, as well as those interested in the development of the short story, of regionalism as a literary phenomenon, or of feminist literature in general. In this thirty-page introduction, readers will learn about the pioneers of literary journals, clubs, criticism, and education; of women's roles in promoting and contributing to libraries and magazines; and of women's conscious efforts to support each other...

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