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### DONATELLO (DONATO DI NICCOLÒ DI BETTO BARDI; CA. 1386-1466)

Florentine sculptor. Less well known today than some other Italian Renaissance artists of the fifteenth century, Donatello may have been the most original. His apprenticeship took place in the orbit of ongoing work on Florence Cathedral. In 1408-09 he created the marble *David*; the youthful, teasing grace of this delightful figure already shows the sculptor's homosexual tastes, which are documented from other sources. From 1416 to 1420, for Or San Michele, he created the moving figure of *St. George*, a work which later became the "boyfriend" of countless admirers of male beauty.

In 1431-33 he was in Rome with the architect Brunelleschi, studying ancient works of art which were then accepted as touchstones of quality. On his return Donatello created the bronze *David* now in the Bargello Museum. From 1433 to 1453 he was in Padua, where he made the high altar of the great church of St. Anthony, as well as the equestrian monument to the condottiere Gattamelata, which set the pattern for countless such figures in public squares throughout Europe and the Americas. On his return to Florence, Donatello explored new expressive dimensions of characterization, opening avenues which were important for the paintings of Sandro Botticelli.

Donatello's patrons, including Cosimo de' Medici, took an attitude of amused tolerance with regard to his homosexual escapades. On one occasion he is supposed to have chased a boy to another town with the intention of killing him, only to relent when he saw the beloved

form once more. As a homosexual Donatello was fortunate to live mainly in the first half of the fifteenth century when attitudes were relatively relaxed. After his death, the authorities of Florence, alarmed at the city's reputation as a new Sodom, sought to take "corrective" action. Although the resulting denunciations did little to stem the overall incidence of activity, they dissolved the easy, almost carefree environment in which Donatello flourished.

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### DOOLITTLE, HILDA (H.D.; 1886-1961)

American poet, novelist, and translator. A Pennsylvanian, H.D. met Marianne Moore at Bryn Mawr and Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams at the University of Pennsylvania. Footloose after college, she formed her first lesbian attachment with Frances Gregg, a family friend. In 1911 she left America to settle in Europe. Pound introduced her to his London circle and gave her the nickname "Dryad." He also included her work in his anthology *Des Imagistes* (1914), and arranged for her poems to be published elsewhere, signed (at his suggestion) "H.D. imagiste." Her lyrics, influenced by ancient Greek poetry, were characterized by a minimalist concision and purity of language. In 1913 H.D. married the English writer Richard Aldington, while they were not officially divorced until 1938, the separation caused by his wartime service effectively ended the union.

In 1918 Annie Winifred Ellerman, daughter of one of the richest men in England, sought her out. Ellerman, better known under her pen name of "Bryher," had memorized H.D.'s volume *Sea Garden* (1918). Although she was linked to the

bisexual American writer Robert McAlmon in an "unconventional" marriage, Bryher had long been aware of her lesbianism. She swept H.D. off her feet and the two embarked on a number of trips together, including visits to Greece and Egypt, a country which left a great impression, reorienting H.D.'s subject matter. They both remained on friendly terms with McAlmon, whose Contact Editions became H.D.'s publisher. The two women settled more or less permanently in Switzerland, providing mutual support in their careers as writers. They both consulted with Sigmund Freud in Vienna and helped to spread his fame in the English-speaking world. Another passion was films, which they made and supported with a critical journal. H.D. spent the war years in London, returning to Switzerland where Bryher was watchful over her deteriorating health.

The reputation of H.D. remained for a long time linked to her participation in the imagist movement in the teens of the century, to the detriment of her later work. In the 1960s, however, she underwent a revival, influencing a number of contemporary poets, including Robert Duncan.

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### DOUGLAS, ALFRED, LORD (1870-1945)

British writer and adventurer. The third son of John Sholto Douglas, the eighth marquess of Queensberry, Alfred Douglas was an exquisitely beautiful child. The boy was sent to various preparatory schools and then to Winchester, where he encountered a good deal of what Douglas called "public-school nonsense," which he at first resisted but then accepted. While he was at Winchester, his father took as mistress a woman so notorious that when Lady Queensberry eventually sued for divorce the proceedings took only fifteen minutes.

This episode marked the beginning of Alfred's alienation from his father, who was later to declare, "I never believed he was my son."

In the summer of 1889 young Douglas had his first affair with a woman, a divorcee whom he encountered while staying at a hotel in the south of France, but who found herself the object of indignation for having seduced "an innocent boy." In the fall of 1889 he entered Magdalen College, Oxford, where despite some faults of character—he was a poor loser—he was popular, with a dashing personality and lighthearted rebelliousness that endeared him to his fellow undergraduates. His burgeoning literary talent also won him admirers. The minor poet Lionel Johnson arranged an introduction to the celebrated litterateur Oscar Wilde at his house in Tite Street in London in the late summer of 1891.

Douglas later admitted that the friendship between them had some sexual expression (though of sodomy "there was never the slightest question"), which began about six months after they met and ended forever some six months before the catastrophe that terminated Wilde's career. Wilde did not generally care for sexual intimacy with young men of refinement and preferred "rough trade" from the lower depths of society, while Douglas was aggressively masculine. At the outset, moreover, each of the friends was inordinately proud of the other. It was a few nights after Douglas attended the premiere of *Lady Windermere's Fan* (February 20, 1892) that the intimacy between them began.

During the term that followed Douglas became involved in a homosexual scandal at Oxford and got out of it by paying £100 to a blackmailer. He was an aristocrat in the worst sense, indifferent to bourgeois morality, and obsessed with the belief that he enjoyed the inalienable privilege of amusing himself as he pleased. Wilde, for his part, reveled in flirting with danger, deriving much of his pleasure from