

Contemporary Patterns. In the United States, the east coast boasts two resorts of particular renown: Provincetown, Massachusetts, and Key West, Florida. Just when these locales emerged as gay meccas is hard to say because they began their careers as places favored by artists, writers, and theatre people, with a considerable though not originally dominant gay admixture—"tipping" probably only in the 1960s. Fire Island, easily accessible on day trips from New York City, belongs to a special category intermediate between the metropolitan beach and the true resort. In a number of states of the United States enterprising individuals have set up gay ranches for private customers. To some extent this practice parallels nudist camps, which are themselves part of a large, but little known subculture.

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RICHARD I THE LION-HEARTED (1157–1199)

King of England. Richard was famed for his reckless courage and extreme cruelty—he massacred 3,000 brave Moslems who had surrendered Acre to the Crusaders under his safe conduct—as well as for gallantry to many, including Saladin. Favorite of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who set him against his royal father Henry II of England—himself falsely accused of having loved Thomas Becket, with whom he did share a bed on occasion while carousing and wenching together before Becket became Archbishop of Canterbury—Richard has been seen by some as a mama's boy.

The Norman and Angevin (Plantagenet) kings of England were, along with their courtiers, regularly accused by monk-

ish chroniclers of sodomy. It was not true of Henry II, who made his son's fiancée Alice of France his mistress to the outrage of Eleanor and Richard. The accusation rings true, however, for William II Rufus (ca. 1056–1100), as for his nephew Prince William (son of his brother Henry I), who was coasting down the Channel with his frivolous, effeminate companions, when the White Ship capsized—"God's vengeance on the sodomites," as the chroniclers declared.

Richard was the great-grandson of Henry I and scion on the other side of the brutal, vicious, exuberant counts of Anjou, thought by some to be genetically sadistic. It is perhaps not true that Richard fell in love with the young king of France, Philip II Augustus. Their intimate friendship was occasioned by their plotting against Richard's father. But Richard never showed any serious interest in women. He waited very late to marry Berengaria of Navarre; he spent practically no time with her, and failed to sire any heir, an important obligation of kingship. During a stay in Messina in 1190 he seems to have decided to abjure his preference for male sexual partners. He appeared barefoot in a chapel and, surrounded by high ecclesiastics, Richard confessed his past misdeeds. Although he was absolved on promise of good behavior, he apparently relapsed later.

When Richard, who spent only ten months of his eleven-year reign in England, was imprisoned or captured on his way back from Jerusalem by the Duke of Austria, an ally of Philip II of France, now his enemy, a visitor sang outside the prison a troubadour's song, composed long before by the king, as a signal of his arrival. Perhaps this was a lover, but the sources do not name a single one of them.

To Richard's reign belongs the account of the London underworld and its homosexual denizens composed by Richard of Devizes. Like Edward II (1284–1327), Richard II (1367–1400) probably practiced sodomy. None of the medieval sodomitical monarchs and princes of England died

a natural death, unlike almost all their exclusively heterosexual royal rivals in France, the Capetians.

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RIMBAUD, ARTHUR (1854-1891)

French symbolist poet. The son of an army officer who deserted his wife and family in 1860, he had an unhappy childhood under his mother's harsh discipline that may explain the spirit of adolescent rebellion that characterizes his first poems, written in 1870-71. Some of these astonishingly mature pieces attack those in authority, while others dream of a different world of total freedom. The most celebrated is "Le Bateau ivre," in which the poet imagines himself as a boat completely out of control, drifting wildly down rivers, into seas, and across oceans. Immediately after writing this poem, he set off for Paris in September 1871, where he was welcomed by Paul Verlaine, ten years his senior, whose unorthodox versification appealed to him. He then put into practice the code that he had formulated in his famous "Lettre du voyant" of May 1871, that the poet should sharpen his perception by submitting to every sort of experience and then transmitting what he has perceived directly, without conscious control.

Nearly all of his poetry belongs to the period of his homosexual love affair with Verlaine, which ended in July 1873 when the two quarreled violently and the older man shot him in the wrist. He had broken away from verse forms and adopted the prose poem in a group of some forty passages called the *Illuminations*, which however obscure in meaning, have a unique and compelling poetic quality that springs from the vividness of the imagery, the rhythm of the phrases, and the directness of the language. In the summer of 1873 he

wrote *Une Saison en enfer*, again in an obscure but often compelling prose, in which he admitted to having lived in a fool's paradise and to have spent a "season in hell" with his lover.

After this he abandoned literature, and in a sense abandoned life, becoming a solitary wanderer, first in Europe and then the East Indies, and finally in Ethiopia, where he may have had some homosexual liaisons with the natives. He died in a hospital in Marseille in 1891 at the age of 37, indifferent to the extraordinary reputation as a youthful genius of the poetic that he had acquired after Verlaine wrote an essay on him in his *Poètes maudits* in 1884.

The homosexual elements in Rimbaud's work are slight, even if the creative period of his life was one of his liaison with Verlaine, and some modern critics have seen in his adolescent eroticism the key to his life's work, a rebellion that transcends the mere personal and culminates in the shattering of society's moral conventions and the negation of its traditional values. By seeking inspiration through narcotics that placed him on the margin of respectable society and its realm of experience, Rimbaud reinforced the image of the poet as outsider, as one who has the right to create his own mode of expression rather than adhering to the received canons of literature. He remains the unmatched archetype of the adolescent poet whose homoerotic feelings lifted him far above the imitation of which most youthful writers alone would be capable—into the sphere of creative genius.

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