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# 101 Ways to Dance

By Kathy Stinson

*Second Story Press, paperback, \$10*

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Reviewed by Kelly McClure

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Kathy Stinson's newest book is a daring collection of short stories about teenagers who are trying to get a handle on their exploding emotions and various sexual exploits. When someone recommended this book to me, I hesitated. For me, Kathy Stinson was represented by *Red is*

*Best*, my all-time favorite kids book. I thought something might collapse if I ventured beyond that, but am I ever glad that I did.

Although many contemporary young adult novels deal with sexual orientation issues, this collection of

stories does not draw attention to the differences between teenagers, but rather, the similarities. As teenagers don't we all constantly think about sex? And if you are a bookish teenager, the next best thing to thinking about sex is reading about it. It often seems that adults who write teens are missing the big picture. Characters often turn out more the way adults hope teens are behaving rather than how they really are. Stinson writes her characters as if she has freshly stumbled out of that period of life herself. While writing, she must have clearly remembered being a teen and how packed with chaotic emotions and confusion it is. Despite raging hormones, her characters share

genuine feelings and empathy for each other.

These stories are not graphic, they are beautiful and sexy. Stinson builds tender relationships, sometimes within a page or two. She is funny. She is clever. She can make you feel an almost painful tension. Most importantly, she encourages teenagers to realize that whatever they are feeling is normal, even if that means having sexual feelings for a teacher or a cousin. In short, her stories are like sex itself: build up, climax, and a feeling of wanting more.

