

# 12

## Finding Fellatio

### Friendship, History, and Yone Noguchi

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In March 1899 Kōsen Takahashi, an illustrator for the San Francisco Japanese-language newspaper *Shin Sekai*, fretted over the disappearance of his friend Yone Noguchi, who had quietly left the foggy city to travel. Takahashi was “nearly drowning” in his tears after having lost his dearest Yone. “Oh where is my sweetheart?” Kōsen declared. He was nearly “mad” searching for Yone, as he dreamed of their reunion when their “warm lips” would join in an “eternal” kiss.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the century, Kōsen’s longing for Yone might appear as an unusually passionate articulation of Japanese immigrant intimacy. However, the affectionate expression becomes doubly queer since it involved two men. What was the significance of Kōsen and Yone’s relationship? Historians studying friendship among white women and men note that before the twentieth century, homosociability allowed for the acceptance of intense friendships between people of the same sex. Within this romantic friendship framework, the queer duo might appear mundane, deserving little historical notice. However, a closer look into Yone’s intimate life, in particular his relationship with white western writer Charles Warren Stoddard, points to the lesser known existence of passionate and lasting same-sex relationships among first-generation or Issei men. Notably, these affections appeared to thrive relatively peaceably among immigrants who already felt alienated from the dictates of a larger mainstream moral code. Indeed, Yone’s affairs would offer alternative realities of affectionate expression and alienation in the seemingly all-white world of American friendship as well as Japanese immigrant asexuality more than one hundred years ago.

For Yone, Kōsen, and perhaps other Japanese living in a largely homosocial immigrant community, the most significant relationships—those of

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deep discussions and even romantic if not sexual fulfillment—likely occurred between men. Yet Asian/Americanists more inclined to focus on the deprivation rather than delight of homosocial environments and historians' knowledge of acceptable intimate male friendships among white bohemians at the time have erased the unique significance these intimacies offer. For Asian/American history, these same-sex ties among Japanese point to how these men did not necessarily live devoid of romance in harsh bachelor communities. For the history of romantic friendship—read as a completely white, middle-class phenomena—Yone, Kōsen, and others reveal not just how men of color existed within this bastion of white male privilege, but also how race informed the desires of these white bohemians who considered themselves to be stewards of tolerance and internationalism. Passionate letters written by immigrant men such as Yone and Kōsen would not be just another browned version of American friendship. With their Japanese immigrant status, their intimacies would hold complicated interactions of exotification and alienation not just from whites but from themselves as well.

In 1975 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg first set the cornerstone for the study of same-sex friendships when she detailed how literate, middle-class, white women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century sustained intense emotional if not physical ties to one other. Using private letters, Smith-Rosenberg traced the socially acceptable "sensual and platonic" love these women friends and family members held for each other. Her article stirred decades of debate, particularly around the sexual orientation of these women.<sup>2</sup> While Smith-Rosenberg never mentioned the "L" word in her essay, she pointed to the dilemma in tracing intimacy among individuals of the same-sex in the past<sup>3</sup>: "[D]id the word 'love' connote to these women, as it does to us, the recognition of sexual desire . . . [o]r, alternatively, to feelings rooted not in sexual desire but in experiences of intimacy and affection that grew out of women's shared physical and psychological realities?"<sup>4</sup> Because of existing nineteenth-century norms for people to express themselves with effusive emotion, even graphic erotic words could not necessarily point to a sexual relationship.

As works on the normalcy of intense female networks proliferated, critics protested that "friendship" once again desexualized women. Blanche Wiesen Cook cautioned against the "historical denial of lesbianism," while Mary E. Wood noted that the use of "romantic friendship" avoided the more subversive label of lesbian and painted these relationships as pure and conflict-free.<sup>5</sup> By the late 1980s and early 1990s, scholars such as Lisa Moore and Emma Donoghue began writing about how some women saw their same-sex intimacies as different from acceptable female affection. Finally in 2004 Martha Vicinus synthesized and elaborated upon 150 years of friendship among educated, white women both in its acceptable and illicit forms.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike works on women, the study of male friendship from its beginnings has appeared more closely tied to sexuality, employing the word "homosexuality" rather than the ambiguous language of "friendship." Alan Bray in 1982 titled his seminal book *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, a work often credited for founding friendship studies.<sup>7</sup> Two years later literary critic Eve Sedgwick named the male intimacies she examined as homosocial "desire" rather than "love" to emphasize its erotic nature. In 1994 Alan Sinfield's "same-sex passion" included physical as well as emotional intimacy.<sup>8</sup>

While passionate exchanges between women appeared to form pacts of emotional support, male relationships appeared to have sociopolitical results—namely, the preservation of class and patriarchal privilege. If these relationships did not reinforce social ordering among the men themselves, they frequently replicated societal hierarchies by excluding women, the unlettered, or poor from their fraternal networks.<sup>9</sup> More recently, however, works that favor the centrality of emotional "love" rather than sex have been increasing, such as those by Jeffrey Merrick and George Haggerty. Others, such as Anya Jabour and Anthony Rotundo, have directly applied Smith-Rosenberg's theories on romantic friendship to their own work. Bray himself implemented a less singularly sexual framework in his most recent work titled "The Friend."<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, source materials have dictated differences between female and male friendship studies. While scholarship on women tends to rely heavily on personal documents such as letters and diaries, publications on male homosociality also extensively utilize literature, poetry, and plays, as well as criminal records. Not only have men historically had more access to education and publishing than women, but legal and moral codes also more actively policed "sodomy" than genital contact between women. Those who allegedly broke these codes left paper trails and fostered discourse on male-male sexual intimacy.<sup>11</sup> Despite the differences, the two gendered fields have a single similarity—both have yet to be significantly informed by critical considerations of race.

In the midst of a significantly diverse population in North America, the current scholarship on U.S. friendship hardly considers people of color.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in a social world of middle-class whites mingling passionately as equals with one another, those not white would likely not appear. Scholars Walter Williams and Paula Gunn Allen noted the existence of American Indian women's communities of female intimacy as vastly distinct from and unrelated to romantic friendships. The interracial homosocial interactions within the diverse southern mines of the Gold Rush that historian Susan Johnson traced more closely resembled networks of exploitation than any passionate letter-writing endeavor between men. When Judy Wu documented Chinese/American physician Margaret Chung's intimate affairs

with women that began in the 1920s, lesbian identity rather than romantic friendships had already begun to overshadow female intimacies.<sup>13</sup>

Notably, in 1996 Karen Hansen, a sociologist well established in friendship studies, brought race to the field when she traced the correspondence of one African American woman to another.<sup>14</sup> During the 1860s in Connecticut, domestic worker Addie Brown wrote letters to Rebecca Primus, a teacher. Hansen articulated their significance in terms of race: "[I]t differs from the white women's correspondence in many ways, most importantly, in that it documents an explicitly erotic—as distinct from romantic—friendship."<sup>15</sup>

Evidence of what Hansen named as "bosom sex" proved their erotic relationship. In 1867 Addie, who worked at a school, wrote to Rebecca of one particular female student who wanted to sleep with her. After Addie finally consented, she wrote to Rebecca "[i]f you think that is my bosom that captivated the girl that made her want to sleep with me, she got sadly disappointed injoying it, for I had my back towards her all night and my night dress was buttoned up so she could not get to my bosom." She assured Rebecca: "I shall try to keep your f[avored] one always for you." Hansen noted that comparable explicitness such as this remained absent among letters of nineteenth-century white women.<sup>16</sup>

However, the better-known English and white woman Anne Lister wrote explicitly of her sexual exploits with other women, albeit in her journal. When a widow in Paris climbed into her bed Lister wrote: "I was contented that my naked left thigh should rest upon her naked left thigh and thus she let me grubble her over her petticoats. All the while I was pressing her between my thighs. Now and then I held my hand still and felt her pulsation, let her rise towards my hand two or three times and gradually opened her thighs, and felt that she was excited."<sup>17</sup> In comparison to Anne's writings, Addie's might seem more girlish than erotic. Moreover, Hansen's argument that Addie's letters differed most significantly from white women's correspondence in its erotic content might ring uncomfortably familiar to black feminists who, since the late 1960s, have protested the hypersexualization of black women in scholarly studies and popular culture.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, Addie's letters hold additional importance when their difference from white women's correspondence would not define their primary significance. Evaluated on their own, Addie's letters demonstrated a certain freedom within the free black community in her explicit expressions of same-sex affections. Addie's letters may also suggest how white women hoped to engage sexually with African American women in ways that white women did not articulate in their letters to one another, since the student that climbed into Addie's bed was in fact a "whit[ie]."<sup>19</sup> Notably, the intimate affairs of Japanese immigrant Yone, about whose departure Kōsen lamented tearfully in 1899, reveals similar parallels. Not only would Yone

have intimate interactions with a white man, Charles Warren Stoddard, but Yone also expressed his same-sex affections more publicly than Charles. Their affair additionally appeared eroticized by racial difference, especially for Charles.

In 1893, at the age of nineteen, Yone traveled to the United States to facilitate his ambition to become an English-language poet. California writer Joaquin Miller introduced Yone to Charles as well as other literary figures.<sup>20</sup> Through the earliest years of the twentieth century, Yone wrote regularly to Charles, and Charles's letters in return brought "great pleasure," "certain sweet odor," and "sweetest thoughts" that Yone wished he could have every day.<sup>21</sup>

From the outset, Charles perceived Yone as his "sensual" "Orient[al]" friend, a poet filled with "fire" and "primitive eloquence."<sup>22</sup> In his personal notebook, Charles wrote his impressions of Yone: "Dearest Yone Noguchi! Eyes? His eyes are the windows of a temple, filled with the shadow of mystery. What a pernicious little body his is! As of ivory . . . as an idol that has wakened from a mystical dream. His soul—a, tis jewell in the lotus."<sup>23</sup> The use of words such as "Orient," "fire," "temple," "mystery," "ivory," and "jewel in the lotus" could only point to the most orientalist of fantasies that Charles painted upon Yone.<sup>24</sup> At their first meeting, Yone sensed Charles's disappointment. "It would have been more natural had I been barefooted and in a Japanese kimono," he recalled. Charles "condemned" Yone as "far too Americanized." Yone remained fully aware, if not annoyed, that Charles imagined him as a mystical persona from the Pacific: "Did he expect me to be another Kana Ana—a little sea god of his South Sea, shaking the spray from his forehead like a porpoise? I am positive he prayed that I would come to him in some Japanese robe at the least."<sup>25</sup>

Rather than recoil from Charles' racialization, Yone pursued Charles at his home in Washington, D.C., a gathering place known among friends as the "Bungalow." In 1900 they spent afternoons dozing comfortably together in a single armchair, chatted without end, and shared each other's most trivial secrets. In the evenings they slept in the same bed. Upon his return Yone wrote: "My Dear Charles, How rare your sweet magnetism! Your breath so soft and impressive like autumn rain! Your love—Thank God! So heavenly! Why shortest—how sad it was short!—, but loveliest visit to you was my dream realized, it cannot be forgotten. It was a great event in my life. . . . You are my ideal person."<sup>26</sup> During the Christmas holidays of 1901, Yone frequented the Bungalow almost every day.

Yet that same year after Yone relocated to New York, he hired writer Léonie Gilmour to edit his works and he reportedly fell in "love at first sight" with Ethel Armes, a reporter from the *Washington Post*.<sup>27</sup> While Léonie would become pregnant by Yone and give birth to his first child, Isamu, Yone proposed marriage to Ethel.<sup>28</sup> When Léonie moved to Los Angeles to

live with her mother and raise the baby, Yone still hoped to marry Ethel and take her to Japan in July 1904. Charles disapproved of the union. He emphasized that Ethel and Yone lacked "a nature sufficiently practical to manage domestic affairs": "You should both be free, remain free of encumbrances so long as you live. This is my firm conviction."<sup>29</sup> As Charles expressed his unconditional "love" for Yone regardless of his decision to marry, the intimacy of their relationship exposed itself more fully: "How I long to see you; to hold you in my arms again and tell you how dearly I love you or how I shall miss you when you are gone far away. If I had my Bungalow and the money to run it I should implore you to come to me and dwell with me forever."<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Charles's suggestion to live a life "free of encumbrances" included himself instead of Ethel by Yone's side.

Even as Yone planned to marry Ethel he wrote publicly of his love for Charles. In *National Magazine* with a circulation of nearly three hundred thousand, Yone detailed his deep "love" for Charles in 1904:

Ho, ho, . . . in Charles's Bungalow! Til that day we had embraced each other only in letter. "Oh Yone, you would fit in there," Charles exclaimed. We both sat in one huge chair with a deep hollow where we could doze comfortably, its long arms appearing but a pair of oars carrying us into the isle of dream. We talked on many things far and near,—things without beginning and apparently without end. We agreed upon every point. We aroused ourselves to such a height of enthusiasm. . . . Is there any more delicious thing than to listen to his talk about nothing? How full of little stories he is!<sup>31</sup>

Yone further recalled his elation when he first began writing to Charles, how he gathered flowers along a hillside, how he then offered his bouquet to an imaginary Charles, and how he blew kisses toward his bungalow in Washington, D.C.

Yone's open publication of his love for Charles in *National Magazine* and the later reprint of the same article in his autobiography, *The Story of Yone Noguchi Told by Himself*, differed dramatically from Charles's more measured public comments about Yone.<sup>32</sup> Yone likely believed that his public statements participated in a larger bohemian discourse of collegial glad-hand and fraternal intimacy. What he perhaps did not realize was that he, perhaps more so than any other American of his time, publicly detailed the affections that passed in the privacy of cozy sitting rooms. As white bohemians and writers such as Charles appeared cautious in their sexuality to avoid the tragic fate of their British counterpart and alleged "sodomite" Oscar Wilde, Japanese men such as Yone and Kōsen may have engaged more innocently in intimate same-sex relationships in public ways.<sup>33</sup>

In 1899 Kōsen ardently and openly professed his love for Yone in successive letters to Blanche Partington, a virtual stranger. Yone had just recently

hired Blanche to edit his English-language writings before publication and Kōsen had not yet met Yone's newest editorial assistant. In his letter to Blanche, Kōsen accused Yone of being an "eloping lover" who had deserted him for the seductive calls of spring. Yone the "flying lover" had left Kōsen in a pool of sorrow and tears. Kōsen declared to Blanche that he stood on the brink of madness, "still wooing [Yone] ever and ever." He had "sacrificed" his "whole heart." Kōsen wrote: "I woo to him as a boy do so for a girl well! Yone is my lover forever." As if baring his own heart brimming with same-sex affection did not prove to be enough, Kōsen then exposed Yone's unusual proclivities as well. He explained: "Yone is most queer boy among all Nipponese, and very curiousnessness of his strange manner, his character is far different from average man." He added: "I have great deal to talk [to] you something [about] Yone." As Kōsen looked forward to meeting Blanche he concluded: "I am utmost queer fellow as much as Yone is. Perhaps you will [be] surprised as you see me." For Kōsen, discretion around his affection for Yone as well as his unusual character, whether it be sexual in nature or not, appeared to be the farthest thing from his mind.<sup>34</sup>

For these two and perhaps countless other unknown Japanese immigrants, their alien status in white America may have afforded them personal liberty to become more expressive. American whites seemed undaunted by Japanese expressions of same-sex affections, since they appeared to reflect merely what intellectuals and artists believed to be the asethetic and poetic "Japanese soul."<sup>35</sup> In 1905 Japanese internationalist Inazō Nitobe published his bestseller *Bushido*, dedicated to exposing the West to the "moral and ethical value[s] of Japanese men." With its passages on the beauty of male-male love, the book gained immense popularity in the United States with no moral censure.<sup>36</sup> In the absence of explicit advice against their open expressions of love between men, these Japanese may have written more freely in their unfamiliarity with unspoken American mores.

Meanwhile, the women who comprised Yone's messy matrimonial possibilities appeared aware of Yone's shortcomings as a husband. Though Ethel had planned on moving to Japan in 1905, their reunion never materialized.<sup>37</sup> While Léonie later moved to Japan in 1906 after much insistence from Yone, she also held little expectation. Before finally deciding to move to Japan, Léonie pushed Yone to seriously consider the implications of his invitation. She asked if he would be happy with the companionship of a wife he did not love—if he could continue to live with love "shut out" of his life: "[S]omeday I will come. And you can see Baby all you like. And we will have a proper separation when you get ready—and you will remarry according to your better and ripen judgment."<sup>38</sup> Léonie confided in others as well about her relationship. One friend noted: "She seems to accept that he

doesn't love her, that he can't love her."<sup>39</sup> When Léonie informed Stoddard of her imminent departure to Japan, she remarked: "I quite agree with you that poets—at least some of them—were not made for domestic uses. So I shall open the door of the cage as soon as I get over there."<sup>40</sup> Yone also conceded to Léonie that there was something "awry" with himself. Shortly after the birth of Isamu, Yone asked for Gilmour's forgiveness; wished to God that he could love her, but could not; appreciated her kindness; and deplored his "temperament."<sup>41</sup> Though Léonie would eventually move to Japan, they lived in separate households until her own return to the United States. Ultimately, Yone would marry Matsu Takeda, a Japanese woman who he had employed to do his domestic work.

As a married man, Yone continued to write to Charles from Japan and confessed to thinking of him daily. He repeatedly invited Charles to visit and later move to Japan to live with him.<sup>42</sup> Yone's affectionate letters often pleaded for the comfort of Charles's company. He wrote: "[A]gain I am hungry (to) read your work, and touch on your feeling and fancy. Dear dad, I love you—you know that."<sup>43</sup> In an additional letter he conceded his neglect of Charles and pleaded with him to write back: "I must be wicked fellow to think I was perfectly honest and loyal to you. However, I was right in my heart and never forgot you. I feel lonesome for you today being alone at home as I said I felt loneliness for you today so I began to read *For the Pleasure of His Company*. That book makes me feel at one (with) your heart pulls and blood. I felt somehow happy afterward." Literary critics have tagged *For the Pleasure of His Company* as San Francisco's earliest gay novel.<sup>44</sup>

Charles occupied Yone's most intimate thoughts in an immeasurable way. His words revealed how Charles held his heart more tightly than even the women with whom he considered marriage. Their "love" remained significant and unique for the most personal reasons, a deeply emotional commitment that endured until Charles's death in 1909. Their intimacy additionally signaled how individuals of the same sex could hold remarkable friendships across racial lines with little consequence. Yone's explicit expressions of same-sex intimacy, paired with Addie's letters to Rebecca, suggest that non-whites may have engaged in the queerest of friendships with full knowledge of its personal significance and little turmoil over its social implication. Those already marginalized by race may have felt little compulsion to be regulated by Euro-American standards if it did not directly affect their livelihood.

Yone's intimacies further demonstrate how he stretched moral and racial boundaries of turn-of-the-century American sexual ideology. Not only did he articulate same-sex love, but also interracial marriage during times of increasing animosity toward both. While the prevalence and acceptability of passionate friendships between men likely facilitated his intimacy with Charles, his incomplete understanding of the tide of American morality



may have left him free to openly express his sentiments. In early-1900s California, nativist groups began forming an anti-Japanese campaign. Nationwide, men too “dandy” and unusually intimate with other men had become increasingly suspect with the “outing” and incarceration of Wilde. America’s romance with Japan as well as sensitive, well-groomed men who mixed well with other men seemed to be ending. In the very midst of changing American ideas about the Japanese and same-sex sexuality, Yone in his bohemian bubble may have fallen one lesson behind.

Furthermore, Yone revealed alternative narratives within well-researched early Asian/American histories that have assumed heterosexuality as the ideal norm. Immigration historians depicted these early years when men severely outnumbered women as a time of great deprivation.<sup>45</sup> While many likely suffered from the gender imbalance, Yone and others could have just as likely forged fulfilling intimacies within vibrant homosocial environments.<sup>46</sup> Yet Yone’s unique relationship with Charles has largely gone unnoticed, perhaps because of the lack of evidence detailing explicit genital contact or maybe even due to the influence of presentist notions of Asian/American male asexuality that make it nearly impossible to imagine immigrants as love machines. Ironically, scholars in Japan have glossed over the significance of Kōsen’s impassioned pleas for Yone as being typical of feverish bohemians of the time. Ultimately, the closeting of Yone’s same-sex intimacies might lie in the ubiquity of heteronormativity.

No evidence of genital contact with Ethel exists, yet just four recovered letters proclaiming “love” and a possible marriage have produced at least some scholarship that recounts their relationship as more than just late-Victorian friendship.<sup>47</sup> Thus, while nuanced interpretations of same-sex friendships reflect thoughtful historical contextualization, they may just as likely point to the insidious nature of heteronormativity. Among differently sexed couples the mere articulation of “love” in letters immediately signals a romance of greater intimacy than friendship without rigorous inspection. Marriage or a birth of a child then confirms the assessment. There would be no investigation to see if the couple’s union was one of genuine love, no requisite genetic testing to prove that the child was a product of both parents, no inquiry into the couple’s relationship to examine if sexual intercourse was consensual. While legal documents appear all too ready to reveal heterosexual bonds, they seem more resistant to telling stories of same-sex couples and the intimacies they might have shared. Shots of semen into warm mouths, clitorises massaged to orgasm, personal pacts to care for one another, all appear largely undetectable in history outside of the handful of criminal records or sensationalized stories. Additionally, finding sex acts proves even more difficult among communities not necessarily socialized to be explicitly sexual. In the absence of finding fellatio, for example, the best conclusion for these affairs might very well be romantic friendship.

Sexual intercourse, however, might have little to do with the most intimate exchanges between people. An identical sex act might hold varied meanings depending on geography, history, and culture. A gay male anally penetrating his partner after an afternoon at Pride may likely have a different sexual identity and concept of his act than a man on the "down-low" having the same anal sex with a man he just met under a freeway overpass. Similarly, two men holding hands might signal a budding romance on Castro Street in San Francisco and merely weekend soccer mates on an unnamed street in Mindif, Cameroon. Ultimately, genital or any physical contact, even if available, might prove to be a faulty determiner of the "true" nature of relationships.<sup>48</sup> It would appear that finding fellatio, or cunnilingus for that matter, is far less important than mapping emotions when documenting the most important relationships of our past.

## NOTES

1. Kōsen Takahashi, San Francisco to Blanche Partington, 24 March 1899. From Ikuko Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters* (Tokyo: The Yone Noguchi Society, 1975), 34–35.

2. Smith-Rosenberg's essay titled "Female World of Love and Ritual" appeared in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1 (1) (1975): 1–29. For the debates that arose, see Ellen Dubois in "Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," *Feminist Studies* VI (Spring 1980): 28–36; Liz Stanley, "Romantic Friendship? Some Issues in Researching Lesbian History," *Women's History Review* 1 (1992): 193–216; Sylvia Martin, "'These Walls of Flesh': The Problem of the Body in the Romantic Friendship/Lesbianism Debate," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 20 (1994): 243–66; Marylynne Diggs, "Romantic Friends or a 'Different Race of Creatures'? The Representation of Lesbian Pathology in Nineteenth Century America," *Feminist Studies* 21 (1995): 317–40; Molly McGarry, Kanchana Natarajan, Dása Franèiková, Tania Navarro Swain, and Karin Lützen, "Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's 'The Female World of Love and Ritual' after Twenty Five Years," *Journal of Women's History* 12 (2000): 8–38; and Leila J. Rupp, "Romantic Friendships," *Modern American Queer History*, ed. Allida Black and John Howard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

3. The "L" in this case refers to the word "lesbian."

4. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, 35–36.

5. Blanche Wiesen Cook, "The Historical Denial of Lesbianism," *Radical History Review* 20 (Spring/Summer 1979): 60–65; Mary E. Wood, "'With Ready Eye': Margaret Fuller and Lesbianism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *American Literature* 65 (1) (March 1993), 3.

6. The following works have more explicitly noted intimate relationship between women as "lesbian," "lesbian-like," or "proto-lesbian": Lisa Moore, "Something More Tender Still Than Friendship: Romantic Friendship in Early Nineteenth-Century Eng-

land," *Feminist Studies* 18 (3) (Fall 1992): 499–520; Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture, 1668–1801* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); and Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). See also Ann Lister, *I Know My Own Heart: 1817–1824*, ed. Helena Whitbread (London: Virago, 1988); Ann Lister, *No Priest but Love: 1824–1826*, ed. Helena Whitbread (West Yorkshire: Smith Settle, 1992); Winfried Schleiner, "Le Feu Cache: Homosocial Bonds Between Women in Renaissance Romance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 45 (2) (Summer 1992): 293–311; Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women From the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Perennial, 2001); and Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

7. I sardonically use the word "seminal" here to highlight the irony in crediting Bray's avowedly masculinist work published in 1982 as founding friendship studies seven years after Smith-Rosenberg's work appeared. In a special GLQ issue dedicated to Alan Bray in 2004, Jody Green called Bray the "founder of a new field, one we might call 'friendship studies.'" She went further to propose that "[w]ithout him, 'friendship studies' . . . might well not exist." Jody Green, "Introduction: The Work of Friendship," *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 10 (3) (2004): 320–21. According to Karin Lützen, Smith-Rosenberg's essay likely proved "queer before queer studies was invented."

8. For the publications that explicitly link male friendship to sexuality, see Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's, 1982); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1; Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London: Cassell, 1994); and Karin Lützen, "The Female World Viewed from Denmark," *Journal of Women's History* 12 (3) (Autumn 2000): 37.

9. Jeffrey Merrick, "Male Friendship in Prerevolutionary France," *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 10 (2004): 405–32; Alan Bray, "Homosexuality and Signs of Male Friendship I Elizabethan England," *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1990): 1–19; Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Goldberg, *Sodometries*; and Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

10. Merrick, "Male Friendship in Prerevolutionary France"; George E. Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Anya Jabour, "Male Friendship and Masculinity in the Early National South: William Wirt and His Friends," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20 (1) (Spring 2000): 83–111; E. Anthony Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800–1900," *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989): 1–25; and Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also Jeffrey Richards, "'Passing the Love of Women': Manly Love and Victorian Society," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle Class Masculinity in*

*Britain and America, 1800–1940* (Manchester, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 92–122; Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos* (London: Constable, 1987); and Caleb Crain, *American Sympathy: Men Friendship, and Literature in the New Nation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001).

11. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980).

12. Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 15.

13. Walter Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon, 1986); Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon, 1986). The diverse southern mines included Miwoks, Chileans, Mexicans, French, Chinese, African Americans, and Anglo-Americans. Susan Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2001); Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Was Mom Chung a 'Sister Lesbian'?" *Journal of Women's History* 13 (1) (Spring 2001): 58–82; and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005). Lillian Faderman also cited Carole Ione, *Pride of Family: Four Generations of American Women of Color* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), 16–25. Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 15.

14. For her previous works that address intimate, same-sex ties, see Karen V. Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Community in Antebellum New England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); Karen V. Hansen, "'Our Eyes Behold Each Other': Masculinity and Intimate Friendships in Antebellum England," in *Men's Friendships*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1992), 92–122; and Karen V. Hansen and Emily K. Abel, "Masculinity, Caregiving, and Men's Friendship in Antebellum New England," in *Families in the U.S.: Kinship and Domestic Politics*, ed. Karen V. Hansen and Anita Iltis Gary (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998). I thank Deb Cohler for introducing me to Hansen's critical work on African American female friendship.

15. Karen V. Hansen, "'No Kisses Is Like Youres': An Erotic Friendship between two African American Women during the Mid-nineteenth Century," in *Lesbian Subjects: Feminist Studies Reader*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 184.

16. Hansen, "'No Kisses Is Like Youres,'" 186.

17. Lister, *No Priest but Love*, 65. See also Jill Liddington, "Anne Lister of Shibden Hall, Halifax (1791–1840): Her Diaries and the Historians," *History Workshop* 35 (1993): 45–77; and Anna Clark, "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity," *Journal of History of Homosexuality* 7 (1996): 23–50.

18. Toni Cade Bambara, ed., *Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York: New American Library, 1970); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991). To Hansen's credit she immediately followed the sentence with a thorough footnote that clearly served as a disclaimer to her imaginably racist intent: "I do not mean to suggest that it represents correspondence typical of all African American women. I do not intend to generalize from the experiences of Rebecca Primus and Addie Brown. Nor do I mean that the explicit sexuality can be attributed to racial differences. Some white women's correspondence might be interpreted as erotic. This

correspondence documents only one case, a case which can be better understood by placing it in the context of both Black and white women's history." Hansen, "No Kisses Is Like Youres," 205.

19. Hansen, "No Kisses Is Like Youres," 186.

20. He first settled in San Francisco, where he quickly became disenchanted with life as a houseboy. Yone followed up on rumors that California writer Joaquin Miller offered his home to young Japanese men. From Joaquin's Oakland residence, the "Hights," where many artists sought refuge, Yone contacted Charles. Ikuko Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters* (Tokyo: The Yone Noguchi Society, 1975); Edward Marx, "A Different Mode of Speech': Yone Noguchi in Meiji America," *Recollecting Early Asian America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Josephine Lee, Imogene L. Lim, and Yuko Matsukawa (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 288-306; and Yone Noguchi, *The Story of Yone Noguchi as Told by Himself* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company, 1914).

21. Yone Noguchi, Oakland to Charles Warren Stoddard, 19 March 1900, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Yone Noguchi, Oakland to Charles Warren Stoddard, 26 July 1901, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; and Yone Noguchi, Oakland to Charles Warren Stoddard, 26 November 1901, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

22. Letter from Charles Warren Stoddard, Washington, D.C., to Yone Noguchi, April 1897; Noguchi, *Voice of the Valley*.

23. "Island Heights Notebook, 17 May 1904," Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

24. For more on Orientalism, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

25. Yone Noguchi, "In the Bungalow with Charles Warren Stoddard: A Protest Against Modernism," *National Magazine* (December 1904), 306. My most recent research reveals that Yone also took part in orientalizing himself, perhaps wittingly, to appeal to bohemian and literary types who took pride in their worldliness. In many of Yone's letters he highlights his ethnic difference by including Japanese words or calling exceptional attention to his Japanese identity. Moreover, two books he published for the popular press, *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl* and *The American Letters of a Japanese Parlor-Maid* (published respectively in 1902 and 1905), distinctly take on exotic tones. In these works he interestingly adopts a female gender identity, perhaps signaling a quintessential orientalist move to embody the feminine.

26. Yone Noguchi, Oakland to Charles Warren Stoddard, 24 September 1900, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

27. Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 12.

28. Yone's son, Isamu, born Isamu Gilmour, is in fact the acclaimed Asian/American artist and sculptor Isamu Noguchi.

29. "Island Heights Notebook, 1 August 1904," Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Yone Noguchi to Charles Warren Stoddard, Cambridge, Mass., 1 August 1904, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 185-86.

30. Charles Warren Stoddard, Cambridge, Mass., to Yone Noguchi, 1 August 1904; in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 185-86.

31. Noguchi, "In the Bungalow with Charles Warren Stoddard: A Protest Against Modernism."

32. For the reprinted article, see the last chapter in Yone Noguchi, *The Story of Yone Noguchi Told by Himself* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914). Roger Austen noted how Stoddard, knowing public sentiment toward homosexuality, felt compelled to censor his most private life. Austen described Charles as living a "double life"—a gay life in the Pacific Islands and one of seeming heterosexuality in the continental United States. As the medical community published statements stigmatizing same-sex relationships as sexual perversion, Charles increasingly lived to hide his secret world. Roger Austen, *Genteel Pagan: The Double Life of Charles Warren Stoddard*, ed. John W. Crowley (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 57.

33. Oscar Wilde was well known among American bohemian circles of the time. An acclaimed playwright, poet, novelist, and aesthete, he gained infamy when British courts found him to be a "sodomite." After two years of hard labor, authorities released Wilde in 1897. Stoddard frequently copied Wilde's pithy quotations in his journals and made notes about Wilde's publication such as *De Profundis* and *Picture of Dorian Gray*, two texts in which Bosie, Wilde's male lover, is said to have been an inspiration. Even after Wilde's scandal he continued to support him in his notebook. Charles Warren Stoddard, "III. Extracts—Bank Stock Notebook, V. Extracts—Bank Stock Notebook, VI. Extracts—Bank Stock Notebook, 190?" Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. For more on Wilde's life, see Michael S. Foldy, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality, and Late-Victorian Society* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997).

34. Kōsen Takahashi, San Francisco, to Blanche Partington, 24 March 1899; Kōsen Takahashi, San Francisco, to Blanche Partington, 29 March 1899, in Ikuko Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters* (Tokyo: The Yone Noguchi Society, 1975), 34–35.

35. The late nineteenth century marked the height of "Japonisme," Western exaltation of Japan as a place of "ascetic superiority" and "sensual sensitivity." Jean-Pierre Lehmann, "Old and New Japonisme: The Tokugawa Legacy and Modern European Images of Japan," *Modern Asian Studies* 18 (4) (1984), 758. See also Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966).

36. Theodore Roosevelt reportedly bought sixty copies to give to friends and family. F. G. Notehelfer, "Nitobe Inazō: Japan's Bridge Across the Pacific," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 22 (2) (Summer 1996): 451. For more on Nitobe, see John F. Howes, ed., *Nitobe Inazō: Japan's Bridge Across the Pacific* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995).

37. The undoing of their affair did not appear to be initiated by Yone. In April 1905, Yone rather mysteriously asked Charles if Ethel had discovered his relationship with Gilmour. He wrote in a postscript: "Did Ethel ask you about Los Angel's woman?" Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 25 April 1905, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 192.

38. Léonie Gilmour, Pasadena, to Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, 24 February 1906, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 196–97. With the birth of Isamu, Léonie appears to have believed that she was married to Yone, when in fact Yone may have simply misled her to believe so.

39. This in fact appeared to be a letter from "Elizabeth" reporting to Ethel about Léonie's closeness to Yone. Elizabeth to Ethel Armes, 23 March 1905, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

40. Gilmour planned to make a "Japanese boy" out of her son Isamu and teach at Tsuda College. Léonie Gilmour Noguchi to Charles Warren Stoddard, 6 December 1906, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

41. Elizabeth to Ethel Armes, n.d., Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

42. Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 27 January 1905, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 190; Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 25 April 1905, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 192; Yone Noguchi, Tokyo, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 20 October 1905, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 193; Yone Noguchi, Japan to Charles Warren Stoddard, 27 January 1905, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

43. Noguchi scholars have cited the use of "dad" as evidence a relationship more akin to father and son between Yone and Charles. Stoddard scholar Roger Austen, however, recounted how Charles in fact had sexual relationships with his "kids." Austen, *Genteel Pagan*.

44. Yone Noguchi, Japan, to Charles Warren Stoddard, San Francisco, 26 July 1906, Special Collections, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. For more on Stoddard's novel, see Roger Austen, *Playing the Game: The Homosexual Novel in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977); Austen, *Genteel Pagan*.

45. Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885–1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988); Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991); and Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989).

46. Jennifer Ting and Madeline Hsu also suggested that Chinese immigrant men might have found fulfillment rather than deprivation in these early homosocial communities. Jennifer Ting, "Bachelor Society: Deviant Heterosexuality and Asian American Historiography," in *Privileging Positions: The Sites of Asian American Studies*, ed. Gary Y. Okihiro, et al. (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995), 271–80; Madeline Y. Hsu, "Unwrapping Orientalism, Unwrapping Orientalist Constraints: Restoring Homosocial Normativity to Chinese American History," *Amerasia Journal* 29 (2) (2003): 230–53.

47. Note that these letters are not even exchanges that occurred directly between Ethel and Yone but rather letters between Yone and a third party. Biographer Ikuko Atsumi recounted Yone's engagement to Ethel in the introduction to her collected English letters of Yone Noguchi. Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 12. For the four letters, see Charles Warren Stoddard, Cambridge, Mass., to Yone Noguchi, New York, 28 July 1904, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 183; Yone Noguchi, New York, to Charles Warren Stoddard, 29 (1904?), in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 184; Charles Warren Stoddard, Cambridge, Mass., to Yone Noguchi, 1 August 1904, in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 185–86; Yone Noguchi to Charles Warren Stoddard, 4 (1904?), in Atsumi, *Yone Noguchi Collected English Letters*, 187.

48. Friendship scholars have long been proclaiming that the question of genital contact remains irrelevant to their argument. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, 58; Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 19; and Martha Vicinus, ed., *Lesbian Subjects: A Feminist Studies Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 2.