

# THE BALD • HEADED HERMIT AND THE ARTICHOKE

AN EROTIC THESAURUS



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A.D. PETERKIN

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A.D. Peterkin is a Toronto psychiatrist and journalist.

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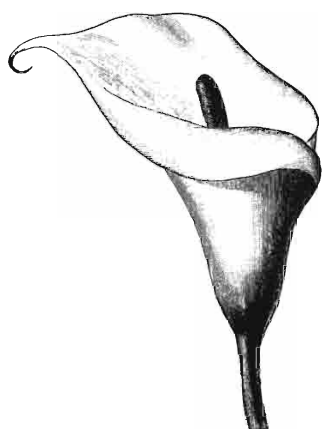
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*The*  
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*and*  
The Artichoke

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A.D. PETERKIN



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THE BALD-HEADED HERMIT  
AND THE ARTICHOKE

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## Introduction

The language for things sexual in English is outrageously rich, but is routinely excluded from dictionaries and thesauri alike. Editors of dictionaries have lobbied vigorously since the late 1940s for the inclusion of the word fuck in their references, and some braver souls have included it in the last decade. Erotic slang words from Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia, and other English-speaking nations number into the tens of thousands; *penis* alone has well over 1,400 synonyms. Sexual acts and organs which could not be spoken of openly in polite society have always found expression in the most creative of ways.

The reader of this book will note how pig Latin, rhyme, alliteration, acronym, abbreviation, approximation, foreign language, mythology, metaphor, and secret code have all been recruited imaginatively to name what was thought to be unnameable. As well, sexual slang, the bulk of which was constructed by heterosexual men, has changed irrevocably in the 20th century due to contributions from previously silent communities. Women increasingly use and invent profanity, perhaps in relation to the feminist movement, professional association with men, and to a growing acceptance of “four-letter words” in modern literature, film, and television. (In fact, the Cuss Control Academy in Northbrook, Illinois now offers classes to women who wish to “clean up their language,” if they feel they have become a bit too free in their expression.)

Nonetheless, female slang, which once confined itself to issues of childbirth and menstruation, now celebrates the body, sexual acts, and even masturbation in a highly playful fashion. Gays and lesbians, once the brunt of homophobic and humiliating slang, have reappropriated words like *dyke*, *queer*, and *fag* for their own use and routinely contribute funny, outrageous, and provocative new words to the erotic lexicon.

Fetishists and the transgendered now share once-coded lingo and experience with curious millions in the popular press and in tell-all television programs like *The Jerry Springer Show*. College students, club kids, rappers, and others add to the fray. When it comes to sex, if it can be thought of, it can now be named and uttered.

*The Bald-Headed Hermit and the Artichoke* seeks to compile the majority of English-language terms currently and historically used to describe the body and human sexuality. Many of these words are relational, poetic, creative, life-affirming. Others reflect archaic or demeaning attitudes to women, ethnicity, alternate orientations, and human sexuality in general. Some are obscene, even pornographic, and the reader may (and, at times, should) find them completely unacceptable. Regrettably, in 1999, the publishers of both Roget's and Merriam-Webster's thesauri bowed to "politically correct" lobbyists and removed all "objectionable" terms and categories for women and homosexuals. The reader of this book is, however, assumed to be discerning enough to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate terms (Note: for a list of appropriate journalistic terms regarding gay, lesbian, and bisexual life, contact the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association at [nlgja@aol.com](mailto:nlgja@aol.com)).

This thesaurus, the first of its kind, nonetheless includes all words without censure so as to be comprehensive and true to the language of sex. Thorough lists, etymologies, sample usages,