

Between the Past and the Future: LGBTQ* Children's Picture Books Now

By Jennifer Miller

A handful of LGBTQ* children's picture books exploring activist biographies and histories have begun to emerge. I suggest that these books are particularly important because many LGBTQ* children have limited access to LGBTQ* persons, cultures, and histories. This project considers what being able to access an LGBTQ* history might mean for LGBTQ* futures. First, I consider what histories are available in children's picture books. After identifying what queer histories are currently inheritable, I consider what identities these representations might make inhabitable. To do this work, I turn to Heather Love's *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. Both coming into queerness and coming out about it are deeply personal and contingent on the socio-cultural meanings about queer genders and sexualities circulating at a historical juncture; although not ubiquitous the extent of queer affirmation in the US is certainly unprecedented. Love sees queer subjectivities and collectivities as "founded on a history of suffering, stigma, and violence," I suggest that new generations may not need to "feel backward" but may instead "move forward" to a queer future it's time to imagine.