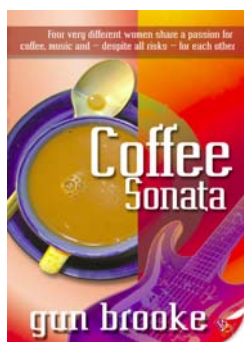


Book Review: August 2006

by Kathi Isserman (reviewer at [JAW](#) & [L-word.com Literature](#))



Coffee Sonata

Gun Brooke

ISBN: 1-933110-41-4

Trade paper, 296 pp, \$15.95

May, 2006

Lesbian Fiction/Romance

Bold Strokes Books, Inc.

www.boldstrokesbooks.com

Just About Write

Web site:

www.justaboutwrite.com

Nann Dunne

Editor-in-Chief

& Publisher

Award-winning author Gun Brooke has given us another delightful romance with *Coffee Sonata*. I was so totally immersed in this story that I read it in one sitting.

Brooke builds anticipation as she introduces us to her four main characters. We want to know who each will fall in love with and how they will come together, and Brooke does not disappoint us. Vivian Harding suddenly comes home to East Quay to give her last performance as an opera singer after staying away for years. Her friend, deeply closeted socialite Manon Belmont, has arranged for Vivian to perform a benefit concert. Eryn Goddard is a top notch reporter covering the diva's return when she attends a press conference staged by Manon for Vivian. She is captivated by both Manon and Vivian. Mike Stone is the owner of a coffee shop and spends so much time there that her home is in the secluded basement below it. Mike seems the most unlikely to fit in with this group, but Brooke makes Mike's story the linchpin of *Coffee Sonata*. These four women are not searching for romance. They are not even looking for friendship, but all of them find both in this most unusual romance.

Each of these characters is intriguing, attractive and likeable, but they are heartbreaking, too, as the reader soon learns when their pasts and their deeply buried secrets are slowly and methodically revealed. Brooke does not give the reader predictable plot points, but builds a fascinating set of subplots and surprises around the romances. On top of this, we are treated to some very erotic scenes too. The author develops two romances within the book, and the story floats effortlessly back and forth between the two. She blends their lives, their friendships, and their loves with an easy writing style. This is most impressive since this is only Brooke's third published novel. This style also makes the reader care about the story's characters.

It may be an understatement to say that Brooke has improved with each of her books since *Course of Action*, her debut novel, and *Protector of the Realm* recently won 2006 GCLS Goldie awards. With *Coffee Sonata*, the author continues her award-winning storytelling and gives us a charming tale.

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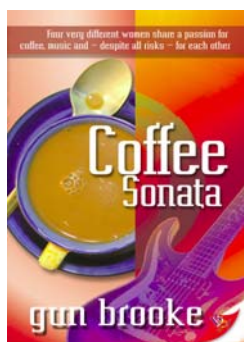
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Book Review: 2006

by R. Lynne Watson (reviewer at MegaScene Magazine)



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Award-winning poet and author, Gun Brooke has brought to life the town of East Quay, Rhode Island. East Quay is a quiet backwater town that boasts of one celebrity, Vivian Harding. Vivian is a world famous opera singer. As the story opens, Vivian has returned to her hometown to give a benefit concert for the hospital. This is to be her final concert before retirement.

Sea Stone Café is a coffee house owned by Mike Stone. Mike has put her heart and soul into the business, and lives in the basement below the café. As Vivian loves good coffee, she stops in often and the two become friends and confidants. Eryn Goddard is a reporter for the town's newspaper. Her latest assignment is to interview Vivian, and her friend Manon Belmont. Manon is the head of the philanthropic foundation that is backing Vivian's farewell performance.

In *Coffee Sonata*, the lives of these four women become intertwined. In forming friendships and love, closets and disabilities are discussed, along with differences in age and backgrounds. Love and friendship are areas filled with complexity and nuances. Brooke takes her time to savor the complexities while her main characters savor their excellent cups of coffee. If you enjoy a good love story, a great setting, and wonderful characters, look for *Coffee Sonata* at your favorite gay and lesbian bookstore.

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