



The Gilda Stories: Expanded 25th Anniversary Edition

By Jewelle Gomez

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Before *Buffy*, before *Twilight*, before Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*, there was *The Gilda Stories*, Jewelle Gomez's sexy vampire novel.

"*The Gilda Stories* is groundbreaking not just for the wild lives it portrays, but for how it portrays them--communally, unapologetically, roaming fiercely over space and time."--Emma Donoghue, author of *Room*

"Jewelle Gomez sees right into the heart. This is a book to give to those you want most to find their own strength."—Dorothy Allison

This remarkable novel begins in 1850s Louisiana, where Gilda escapes slavery and learns about freedom while working in a brothel. After being initiated into eternal life as one who "shares the blood" by two women there, Gilda spends the next two hundred years searching for a place to call home. An instant lesbian classic when it was first published in 1991, *The Gilda Stories* has endured as an auspiciously prescient book in its explorations of blackness, radical ecology, re-definitions of family, and yes, the erotic potential of the vampire story.

Jewelle Gomez is a writer, activist, and the author of many books including *Forty-Three Septembers*, *Don't Explain*, *The Lipstick Papers*, *Flamingoes and Bears*, and *Oral Tradition*. *The Gilda Stories* was the recipient of two Lambda Literary Awards, and was adapted for the stage by the Urban Bush Women theater company in thirteen United States cities.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs was named one of *UTNE Reader's* 50 Visionaries Transforming the World, a Reproductive Reality Check Shero, a Black Woman Rising nominee, and was awarded one of the first-ever "Too Sexy for 501c3" trophies. She lives in Durham, North Carolina.

[More praise for *The Gilda Stories*:](#)

"Jewelle's big-hearted novel pulls old rhythms out of the earth, the beauty shops and living rooms of black lesbian herstory, expressed by the dazzling vampire

Gilda. Her resilience is a testament to black queer women's love, power, and creativity. Brilliant!"--Joan Steinau Lester, author of *Black, White, Other*

"In sensuous prose, Jewelle Gomez uses the vampire story as a vehicle for a re-telling of American history in which the disenfranchised finally get their say. Her take on queerness, community, and the vampire legend is as radical and relevant as ever."--Michael Nava, author of *The City of Palaces*

"I devoured the 25th anniversary edition of Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* with the same venal hunger as I did when I first read it. I still feel a connection to Gilda: her tenacity, her desire for community, her insistence on living among humanity with all its flaws and danger. The *Gilda Stories* are both classic and timely. Gilda emphasizes the import of tenets at the crux of black feminism while her stories ring with the urgency of problems that desperately need to be resolved in our current moment."--Theri A. Pickens, author of *New Body Politics*

"This revolutionary classic by a pioneer in black speculative fiction will delight and inspire generations to come."--Tananarive Due, author of *Ghost Summer*

"*The Gilda Stories* was ahead of its time when it was first published in 1991, and this anniversary edition reminds us why it's still an important novel. Gomez's characters are rooted in historical reality yet lift seductively out of it, to trouble traditional models of family, identity, and literary genre and imagine for us bold new patterns. A lush, exciting, inspiring read."--Sarah Waters, author of *Tipping the Velvet*

" . . . its focus on a black lesbian who possesses considerable agency throughout the centuries, and its commentary on gender and race, remain significant and powerful."--*Publishers Weekly*

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Editorial Review

Review

"*The Gilda Stories* has been vitally important for the development of a generation of dreamers engaged in radical imagination. It has filled the desires of oppressed and marginalized peoples for stories of the fantastic that wear our faces. It helps so many to understand how to take these mythologies that speak to us, pull them into our flesh, and breathe out visionary communities of resistance."--Walidah Imarisha, co-editor of *Octavia's Brood*

"Gilda's body knows silk, telepathy, lavender, longing, timeless love, and so much blood. With sensory, action-packed prose and a poet's eye for beauty, Jewelle Gomez gives us an empathy transfusion. This all-American novel of the undead is a life-affirming read."--Lenelle Moïse, author of *Haiti Glass*

"Jewelle Gomez's sense of culture and her grasp of history are as penetrating now as twenty-five years ago, and perhaps more so, given the current challenges to black lives. From 'Louisiana 1850' to 'Land of Enchantment 2050,' from New Orleans to Macchu Pichu, through endless tides of blood and timeless evocations of place, Gilda's ensemble of players transports me through two hundred years and a second century of black feminist literary practice and prophecy."--Cheryl Clarke, author of *Living As A Lesbian*

"*The Gilda Stories* does what vampire stories do best: hold up a larger-than-life mirror in which we can see our hopes, fears, dreams, and flaws. Gilda provides us with a perspective that is too often lost in American history, and a multicultural vision of a better future for us all, human and vampire alike."--Pam Keesey, author of *Daughters of Darkness*

"With hypnotic prose, Jewelle Gomez shows the immense power of fantasy and the untold stories of American history."--Cecilia Tan, author of *Black Feathers*

"After a runaway slave girl in 1850s Louisiana kills a bounty hunter in self defense, she takes shelter with two women who run a brothel. These women happen to be vampires, and induct the girl, Gilda, into an eternal life of one who 'shares the blood.' *The Gilda Stories* by Jewelle Gomez follows the next 200 years of Gilda's life, from California in 1890, Missouri in 1921, Massachusetts in 1955, New York in 1981, New Hampshire in 2020, all the way up to 2050. Gilda's many lives are defined by the quest to understand her sexual and racial identities, and to find a place for her as the ultimate outsider in a constantly changing world. *The Gilda Stories*, first published by Firebrand Books in 1991 and winner of two Lambda Literary Awards in 1992, preceded *Buffy*, *Twilight* and Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*, but it is far more than a 'sexy vampire' book. Jewelle Gomez's novel channels her longtime LGBT and feminist activism into a thematic depth rarely achieved in the genre's modern iterations. Gomez is a founding member of GLAAD, a poet, playwright and the author of several essay and short story collections. This month City Lights Publishers is releasing a 25th-anniversary edition of *The Gilda Stories* with an afterword by black feminist scholar Alexis Pauline Gumbs."--Tobias Mutter, *Shelf Awareness*

"*The Gilda Stories* are both classic and timely. Gilda shows us the importance of what is within black feminism and her stories are filled with the urgency of problems that desperately need to be resolved even today. When the book was originally published it was way ahead of its time and now we really see why this is such an important novel. The characters are rooted in history and they make trouble for the traditional

models of family, identity, and literary genre. This is so much more than a horror story."--"Reviews by Amos Lassen"

About the Author

Jewelle Gomez is a writer and activist and the author of the double Lambda Award-winning novel, *THE GILDA STORIES* (1991). Her adaptation of the book for the stage "Bones & Ash: a Gilda Story," was performed by the Urban Bush Women company in thirteen US cities. The script was published as a Triangle Classic by the Paperback Book Club. Her other publications include *THE LIPSTICK PAPERS*, *FLAMINGOES AND BEARS*, and *ORAL TRADITION*. She edited (with Eric Garber) a fantasy fiction anthology entitled *SWORDS OF THE RAINBOW* and selected the fiction for *THE BEST LESBIAN EROTICA OF 1997* (Cleis). She is also the author a book of personal and political essays entitled *FORTY-THREE SEPTEMBERS* and a collection of short fiction, *DON'T EXPLAIN*. Formerly the executive director of the Poetry Center and the American Poetry Archives at San Francisco State University she has also worked in philanthropy for many years. She is the former director of the Literature program at the New York State Council on the Arts and the director of Grants and Community Initiatives for Horizon and the President of the San Francisco Library Commission. She lives in San Francisco.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs was named one of *UTNE Reader's* 50 Visionaries Transforming the World, a Reproductive Reality Check Shero, a Black Woman Rising nominee, and was awarded one of the first-ever Too Sexy for 501c3 trophies. She is a co-creator of the MobileHomecoming experiential archive and documentary project, which has been featured in *Curve Magazine*, the *Huffington Post*, in *Durham Magazine*, and on NPR. She lives in Durham, North Carolina."

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