***MEAN LITTLE dEAF QUEER: a memoir.***

**EDITORIAL REVIEWS:**

"This is a damn fine piece of work which is unbelievably powerful. This story is true and passionate and fearless and funny as hell when it is not heartbreaking. I expect this book to charm the hell out of great numbers of people, piss off a few, and give hope to many more." —Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard out of Carolina* and *Cavedwellers*

"Cast by society as an outsider for most of her life, both in her queerness and her deafness, I am reminded, reading Terry Galloway's brilliant memoir, that most good writers create from an outsider position, a place of inner isolation and silent engagement with the deep issues of life. Galloway has suffered in her life, but with great bravery, and is indeed a very good writer who uses her lifelong separateness to reveal truths about the human heart that apply to us all." —Robert Olen Butler, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*

"This is not your mother's triumph-of-the-human-spirit memoir. Yes, Terry Galloway is resilient. But she's also caustic, depraved, utterly disinhibited, and somehow sweetly bubbly, a beguiling raconteuse who periodically leaps onto the dinner table and stabs you with her fork. Her story will fascinate, it will hurt, and you will like it." —Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home*

You don't have to be mean, little, deaf, or queer to take heart from this miraculously unsentimental, deliriously funny, refreshingly spite-free, joyously weirdo-embracing memoir. All you have to be is human. Like Augusten Burroughs, Frank McCourt, and Mary Karr, Terry Galloway has written a memoir that transcends its hilarious particularities to achieve the universality of true art." —Sarah Bird, author of *How Perfect is That* and *The Mommy Club*

"Terry Galloway has written a gripping memoir-at times harrowing, at times starkly moving-that chronicles a life beset by two enormous challenges: growing up gay in a very red state, and growing up deaf. Lesser mortals would fold, but Galloway navigates the highs and lows of her life with grace, insight, and unflinching candor." —Doug Wright, playwright, librettist, screenwriter, and winner of both the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize for Drama

"Although Terry Galloway confesses a fondness for crappy memoirs, her own *Mean Little deaf Queer* is anything but. It is funny, poignant, raw, uplifting, and exuberant. It is my new favorite book, and after you read it, it will be yours, too." —Ann Hood, author of *The Knitting Circle*

**TRADE REVIEWS:**

## Salon.com-- June 9, 2009

## The most significant moment of Terry Galloway's life happened before she was even born. During a family stint in post-WWII Germany, her pregnant mother was given the antibiotic mycin to treat a kidney ailment. The drug helped cure the infection, but also led to fetal complications -- and Terry's creeping deafness. In her meandering, beautifully written memoir, Galloway recounts her path from Germany to Texas, from hearing to nonhearing and back to hearing again, and from her chronically insecure youth to a career as a stage performer and writer.

She also makes her way from bed to bed, men to women -- having, among other dalliances, a foursome with a classics professor, his wife and her mistress, and an affair with a cocaine smuggler. ["Mean Little deaf Queer"](http://www.amazon.com/gp/redirect.html?ie=UTF8&location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.amazon.com%2FMean-Little-Queer-Terry-Galloway%2Fdp%2F0807072907%3Fie%3DUTF8%26s%3Dbooks%26qid%3D1244475621%26sr%3D1-1&tag=saloncom08-20&linkCode=ur2&camp=1789&creative=9325) manages to be more intriguing and more entertaining than most coming-out memoirs, partly because it tackles the intersection between sex and disability (a sexually inexperienced Galloway can't hear her early female lovers giving "urgently needed information" during sex) and partly because of the honesty and good humor of her prose (during a sojourn at a "camp for cripples," she reacts to losing a swimming race by pretending to drown).

Despite the frequent darkness of her story, with trips to a psychiatric hospital and multiple suicide attempts, Galloway never lapses into preachiness or self-pity, and the result is an unusual memoir about an unusual life that is both oddly uplifting and  eminently readable. -- Thomas Rogers

***Kirkus* - May 15, 2009**

"A frank, bitingly humorous memoir."

***The Gay and Lesbian Review* - May 1, 2009**

“Galloway’s new memoir tells her story from the inside out, creating a bridge to hearing audiences. An actress, writer, and performance artist, she is dexterous in her use of words and devastating with a sense of black humor that brings numerous laugh-out-loud delights. There is no political correctness here, only a poignant life journey of unexpected challenges.”

***Library Journal* - May 1, 2009**

“Owing to an antibiotic given to her mother during pregnancy, performance artist Galloway started going deaf and experiencing bizarre out-of-body experiences at age nine. Going from "normal" to disabled is jarring, and her new oversized hearing aids and thick glasses make her feel like a freak. Despite her disability, Galloway’s strong personality, heightened sense of drama, and attraction to girls lead to an unconventional and barrier-busting story filled with sexual experimentation and a desire

for a life lived at the extremes, all ably described in this compelling memoir. A good choice to strengthen disability, feminist, and gay studies collections, too.”

***Out* Magazine - June 1, 2009 (one *Out*’s of the top five summer reads)**

"When Galloway was 10, she proclaimed herself a "child freak," and by the standards of the world around her she wasn't wrong. Deaf with bad eyes and queer with a hard sense of humor, Galloway's account of her survival induces the most uncomfortable laughter of the season."

***Booklist* - June 1, 2009**

"Told with understandable rage, quirky humor, and extraordinary humanity, this remarkable woman’s engaging account deserves a large readership."

***Jane and Jane Magazine* - June 1, 2009**

“Although Galloway embodies the self-effacing title of her book, the poignancy of her life story resides in her humility and unflinching sense of humor, which counter the heartbreak of the tale.”

***Feminist Review* - August 31, 2009**

“At times hilarious and others heartbreaking, *Mean Little Deaf Queer* manages to educate the reader about what it feels like to grow up always feeling like an outsider. In the tradition of writers like Sedaris, Galloway manages to find humor and absurdity in even the saddest moments. Whether faking her own drowning at a summer camp for disabled children,or taking an acting job in the role of an “alternative Santa Claus” at an “alternative mall,” Galloway’s stories are intriguing. If anything, I wish the book had been longer.”

***Austin Chronicle* - September 11, 2009 (in full)**

**“**Too often, "person with disability" + "memoir" = "Hallmark card of saintly struggle slathered in moral uplift." But the title *Mean Little deaf Queer* should be clue enough that Terry Galloway, whose hearing loss at age 9 was caused by an antibiotic given to her mother during pregnancy, isn't one to wrap herself in the gauze of noble suffering and sanctimony. She's too blunt, too irreverent, too mistrusting of happy endings, too much a fan of the pratfall and pun, too much the fool (in Shakespeare's sense of the word) to rouge herself up as Helen Keller. (Unless she wanted to spoof her, of course, which she's done in a film parody of *The Miracle Worker*, "*Annie Dearest*.") Rather, Galloway portrays herself here as a needy, brash, impetuous sort prone to snap judgments and poor choices. Whether describing how she pretended to drown so as not to lose a race at the Lions Club Camp for Crippled Children or her patronizing attitude toward the participants in her first performance workshop for people with disabilities, Galloway never lets herself off the hook for bad behavior. Her raw honesty, when she could be making a play for our pity, is engaging, especially as leavened by the same piercing wit and slapstick sensibility that made Galloway an early star of Esther's Follies in the late Seventies. She relates tales of that nouveau vaudeville troupe and other stories of Austin back in the day in vibrant detail. Indeed, Galloway was born a storyteller, and her narrative gifts are in full force throughout, spinning yarns about herself and her family that mesmerize: childhood out-of-body visions, a great-grandmother's premonition of death, playing a fervid Falstaff in a hay barn and a frantic Santa (with a pair of gay reindeer) in a mall, a sweet same-sex crush at camp and rampant bed-hopping in college, friends wasting away from AIDS and fellow patients in a psychiatric ward staging a talent show, her beloved father spying in postwar Berlin and dying in the Texas home he built with his hands. In this memoir, Galloway isn't trumpeting her victory over a handicap; she's celebrating lives that touched hers, lives that matter, and life itself, her fierce appetite for which and embrace of are genuinely inspiring.

# **More Magazine—August 2009. Top 5 Indi Books**

# **“**This hilarious and heartbreaking memoir explores disability and difference—and uncovers profound universal truths.”

# **The Edge –**.”. . . quite simply, one of the finest, most nakedly honest and humorous autobiographies out there to be read.”

**The Collagist—First Issue August 2009 (in full)**

“I first encountered Galloway’s work as a performance artist in the early ‘90s, when she was doing one-woman shows at New York’s legendary PS 122. Galloway, who lost her hearing when she was nine, lip-reads, speaks almost flawlessly, and has a penchant for pratfalls and physical drama; she was the most darkly funny/outrageous/terrifyingly brilliant performer I’d ever seen. (After one show, I literally dreamed of skeletons flying out of the closet.) Galloway’s subject, in high-wire monologues such as “Lardo Weeping,” and “Out All Night and Lost My Shoes,” is difference, outsider-dom (“We need our freaks,” she chimed). In that dank, claustrophobic performance space, the audience was on seat’s edge wondering what scary, true thing this woman would dare to say next about our collective prejudices and personal isolation.   In *Mean Little Deaf Queer*, Galloway is both hilarious and devastating in recounting her life story. Born on an army base in post-WWII Germany, where her father was spying for the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps, she suffered fetal nerve damage as a result of experimental antibiotics her mother had been given while pregnant. The family moved back to Austin, Texas, where at nine Galloway’s hearing began to vanish; she also had episodes of feeling herself flying out of her body and watching from above. By ten, she was a self-described “child freak” with bulky hearing aids, heavy eyeglasses, and an even more burdensome rage; she also had an intense craving for attention. Sent in 1960 to the Texas Lions Camp for Crippled Children, she faked near-drowning to prevent “One Leg” and “Blind Girl” from winning a race for which she’d missed the starting cue. (“There I was once more—my own tubby, ill-favored little self in a messy competition with two other cripples who were going to beat me in a pathetic water race for a plastic two-handled cup. …Forcing yourself to drown, willing yourself to sink isn’t as easy a thing to do as you might imagine. But I did it.”)   In high school, a perceptive teacher figured out how to channel Galloway’s need for recognition into a quest for excellence. She helped Galloway to reclaim her speech, which had begun to slide, and to develop a deep understanding of language and sound. (“When my voice slipped into a flat, monotonous drone, she’d tease me, trying to coax me out of my habit of thinking how I ought to be hearing so I could concentrate on how the sound was actually moving through skin and bone. She meant to help me find the root physicality of hearing.… She’d press her fingers against my windpipe just hard enough for me to feel the pressure of my own breath as speech in its rawest state.”) Galloway practiced relentlessly, and discovered—perhaps not surprisingly--a passion for theater. In this she persisted despite an advisor at the University of Texas who dismissed her with two words: “You’re deaf.” She went on to become a fixture in Austin’s alternative theatre scene, performed everything from Shakespeare to her group’s own ad hoc shows, and eventually moved to New York.   This is no Hallmark success story. Desperately lonely in New York in the era when a deaf person couldn’t use the telephone (now there’s phone-enabling technology, plus, of course, text messaging and email), flat-out broke (she had to play up her disability in order to get new “welfare hearing aides”; the caseworker thought she was mentally retarded) and further marginalized as a lesbian, she wound up in a psych ward.   Only gradually, with more than a little help from her friends, lovers, family, work, and travel, and with a lot of soul-searching, did Galloway find her place in the world, albeit on tricky ground. The introduction of vastly superior digital hearing aides has been bittersweet, bringing not only benefits but also disquiet (literally) and sadness over time lost. But while depression and uncertainty are never banished, neither is the thrill of true companionship, of telling a story, of making art, of cracking a damn good joke. When she was growing up, Galloway’s family liked to play a hide-and-seek game called “Scare.” Here, she has raised “Scare” to an art form: Rooting around in the dangerous crannies of her psyche and her particular difference, she finds what is universal; exposing her desolation, she makes us less alone.

## A Review of a reading

When Terry Galloway read last week at BookPeople from her new memoir, *Mean Little Deaf Queer*, the standing room only crowd went wild. Galloway, a former Austinite and forever-honorary citizen of our town, is not only a writer of stunning prose that simultaneously straddles hilarious/poignant/horrific/brutally honest, she is also an incredible comic actress. And so she did not merely read about her experience as a child at a camp for “crippled children”—she recreated her time there with astonishing physical comedy. But this is not a review, it is a call for those of you who missed it (and those of you who didn’t but rightfully want more) to be certain not to skip Galloway’s remaining two readings.The first is this Thursday at 4 pm at The Cactus Café. The second is Sunday at [BookWoman](http://ebookwoman.com/NASApp/store/IndexJsp), where a party will follow the reading. One needn’t be mean, little, deaf, or queer to appreciate Galloway’s precise insight into the feelings of being an outsider, feelings that she experienced and struggled with from early childhood when, suffering the fallout of pharmaceuticals prescribed to her mother when she was pregnant with Terry, she lost her hearing entirely and also had to cope with greatly impaired vision. Running into resistance at every turn—from the UT professor who told Galloway her dreams of acting were delusional to any number of homophobes along the way—the actor-writer fought back, inspired most, it sometimes seems, by the word NO. She went on to be a founding member of Esther’s Follies, has put in time as one of the best Shakespearean actors to grace the stage of Winedale, and has trotted the globe sharing her gifts with grateful recipients everywhere.

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