

Where's My Wand?

by Eric Poole | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY JUDITH NEWMAN

MEMOIR

Fragrant as it is of Love's Baby Soft perfume and hormones, Poole's memoir of growing up gay and Baptist in the '70s would be worth reading if it were just gut-splittingly funny (he describes himself as the kind of boy who would only crawl beneath a car "to retrieve a Cher album that had rolled under it"). But *Wand* is also a deeply moving account of a boy's attempt to control his world with his own brand of magic. That world includes

his sometimes terrifying family (his OCD mother makes him rake the shag carpet every night), an armless best friend and a golden boy Poole hoped to anoint with—well, Poole kind of thought it was the spirit of Jesus. It's Poole's mother, though, who is the standout character. Annihilating and loving by turns, she makes Sophie Portnoy look like June Cleaver, yet Poole finds her humor and humanity. We should all have such tenderness toward our parents.

Welcome to Utopia

by Karen Valby | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY ANNE LESLIE

MEMOIR

Utopia, Texas, is sweetly old-fashioned and fighting the march of time. "Everything changes," says an old-timer. "You just don't always know it when it's happening." A mother mourns her soldier son; a teen discovers prejudice; a family weighs their farm's future—as this affectionate memoir shows, small-town folks are much like Americans everywhere.



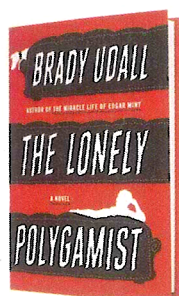
The Lonely Polygamist

by Brady Udall | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY RICHARD EISENBERG

NOVEL

Think your life is complicated? Utah polygamist Golden Richards



is juggling four wives, 27 kids, three houses and a failing contractor business. To "embrace a solitary life," he tells his families he must go to Nevada to erect a senior

center. Truth is, he's building a brothel and lusting after his boss' frisky Guatemalan wife. Bombs explode, literally and otherwise, throughout the novel, and nutty characters put Udall squarely in John Irving's league. Never mind *Big Love*. This book is Big Fun.

PHOTO BOOK

BREEDS APART

● In time for Take Your Dog to Work Day June 25 (who knew?), Barbara Karant presents a tribute to best friends of all sizes.

