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Arches National Park
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*Back Cover: “Bristlecone Lovefest”
Wheeler Peak/Great Basin National Park
Baker, Nevada*

Constructions of Sex

There's a lot to think about when it comes to sex. Few themes have dominated the American cultural landscape more pervasively than sex. Is there anything as visibly invisible as sex? Or as invisibly visible? With so many layers of sexual connotation filtering through our lives, it starts to cut across the full spectrum of our experiences – surface layers, “deep” layers, hidden layers, social layers, subtle and explicit layers – all flowing along to carry us ahead into an increasingly sexual landscape.

The articles in this volume focus on some interesting facets of this landscape. You will find them direct and to the point. We hope some will make you laugh. We know a few will make you think, and perhaps along the way something will even challenge you to question a view set in stone.

The discussions draw our attention to a range of topics reflecting four layers of social involvement. One layer reflects on social and personal

dimensions of sexual existence; another focuses on sexual motifs in media directed at children and young adults; a third layer discusses sexual philosophies of bodily love; and the fourth layer develops some critical perspective on the alluring entanglements of sexual openness and visibility.

It should not surprise us that the perspectives and values reflected in these writings are quite diverse. The rich and challenging diversity of contemporary American culture shines through many of these discussions, revealing subtle cracks in bedrock social attitudes about sex and its place in the larger scheme of human preferences.

And so we begin with a proposition: Of all things set in stone, sex belongs to the ages. All aboard! The time has come for us to partake in a brief journey from necessity to choice.

Enjoy!