

alien-smuggler. At the same time, the man she wants to love, and who wants to love her - their respective emotional kinks get in the way - is enlisted to crack the case of the killer, who is re-enacting decades-old Nazi medical horrors in a killing spree through Holland and Germany. The two tension-laced storylines of *The Last Temptation* eventually intersect in a grisly wash of bodies and blood - this is no lace-doily British mystery. But McDermid imbues the violence with an emotional honesty and a psychological logic that renders it both explicable and acceptable. And, queer readers take note - two major characters, Dutch and German policewomen, start out as Internet lovers but are in each other's arms by the end of the story.

***Americano*, by Emanuel Xavier. Suspect Thoughts Press, 73 pages, \$12.95 paper.**

Xavier got his start shouting his work from New York's uninhibited poetry-slam stages, where anarchy fueled brilliance as much as excess muffled achievement. In *Americano*, he brings a more modulated voice to the printed page - though the urgency, energy, unsentimental personal honesty, and unabashed sexual imagery of his performances are still present. The 35 poems in this second collection are more formal and formed than those in *Pier Queen*, his self-published 1997 collection of slam poems. That was the work of a young man in a rush to express - to himself as much as to his audience - the harsh truths of a boyhood of homelessness, hustling, and drugs. This is the work of a mature man aware of how words transformed his life, and equipped to bring wisdom, as well as raw passion, to that work. Xavier is a minority within a minority, a queer man with a Latin heritage who grew up an outcast in America. With this collection, an accomplished combination of the sensual and the analytic, he proclaims that America is his nation, too.



***The Power of a Partner*, by Richard L. Pimental-Habib. Alyson Books, 228 pages, \$15.95 paper.**

As long as gay girls and boys fret about finding the perfect Ms. or Mr. Right, there will always be a market for books like *The Power of a Partner*. If Betty Berzon or Rik Isensee don't have all the easy answers to yearning questions about

