

## Just In From Publishers Weekly:

### Three Sides to Every Story

Clarence Nero. Broadway/Harlem Moon, \$12.95 (256p) ISBN 0-7679-2136-4

Nero's second outing (after *Cheekie*), set against the backdrop of New Orleans's pre-Katrina Ninth Ward, deploys three deftly drawn narrators to tell a wrenching story of desire and survival. Tonya, a stripper at Club Circus in the French Quarter, dates a shifty, up-and-coming rapper while her true love, Johnny, a former football star and preacher's son, serves time in an upstate prison for roughing up Tonya's ex. In prison, Johnny meets James, a sassy, educated drag queen from the same side of the tracks, doing time for petty theft. Worlds collide when Johnny admits to his feelings for James and becomes torn between his long-repressed homosexuality and the woman and life he had before. Once on the outside, James and Johnny become tangled in intrigue involving former and potential lovers, parents, friends and the ever-present specters of jealousy, homophobia, spite and simple misunderstanding. Nero has an excellent sense of pacing and nails each character's voice with a distinctiveness that's both illuminating and, by turns, hilarious. He moves easily from drag queen balls to church pews, and though the plot strands are tied up too neatly at the end, the book's mold-breaking characters and myriad subplots will hook readers. (Oct.)