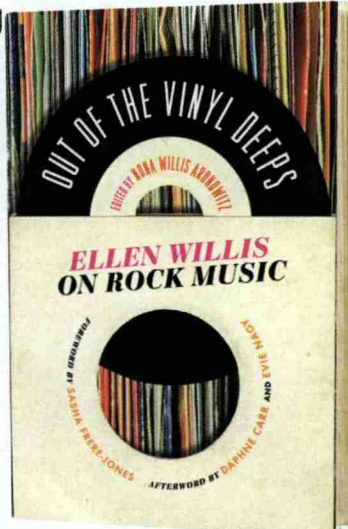


NOT JUST ONE OF THE BOYS

Make some noise for a pioneering female rock critic (yes, there were a few) who finally gets her due

In *Almost Famous*, director Cameron Crowe's valentine to his beginnings as a teenage music scribe, all the women are groupies; it would have been at least as novel to base the film on the career of Ellen Willis as on his own story. Willis was the first critic to cover pop music for the *New Yorker*, and she also parsed lyrics, analyzed the impact of bands, and dance-tested tunes for the likes of *Rolling Stone* and *The Village Voice* before turning to broader cultural topics in the 1980s. Now her daughter, Nona Willis Aronowitz (also a writer), has curated *Out of the Vinyl Deeps* (University of Minnesota Press), a literary mixtape of out-of-print essays, liner notes, and reviews by Willis, who died in 2006. In it are prescient and irreverent takes on the rock of ages: Bob Dylan, the Velvet Underground, Janis Joplin, even Elvis. But most compelling is how Willis linked popular music of all genres to social themes—sexism, commercialism, feminism, and, especially, freedom. Book-ended by meditations about Willis' influence by Sasha Frere-Jones and others, this is a great introduction to her work—at least until she gets her own movie.—CORRIE PIKUL



Page 290: Daniel King; page 314: Lauren Greenfield; Balenciaga by Nicolas Ghesquière sandal: Mark Platt (styling by Phyllis Baker for Mark Edward Inc.); book still life and Sophie Theallet for Nine West flat: Len Lagrue; Willis: courtesy of Minnesota University Press; remaining still lifes: courtesy of the designers; for details, see Shopping Guide

