OF SOULS & ROLES, OF SEX & GENDER

A Treasury of Transsexual, Transgenderist & Transvestic Verse From 1967 to 1991

Edited by Rupert Raj

with a Foreword by Trish Salah, PhD & an Afterword by Kim Elizabeth Stuart
© January 1, 2017; revised July 1, 2018, by Rupert Raj

Raj, Rupert, 1952-, editor

The editor is donating this unpublished (newly-revised) international trans poetry anthology to the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, in care of Prof. Aaron Devor, founding director, and Chair in Transgender Studies.

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DEDICATION

To all of my fellow transsexual, transgender(ist), transvestite (crossdressing), gender non-binary, genderqueer, transqueer, Hijra, intersex and Two-Spirit community members, and our partners, families, friends, allies and supporters.

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And to all the contributors to this trans poetry anthology, with a special dedication to the following contributors, at least five of whom have since departed:

Linda T. O’Connell (19??-????), a Canadian transsexual activist and poet, whose fighting spirit expressed through her two trans poetry anthologies of 1978 and 1982, inspired me to compile the present collection. It’s uncertain if she’s still alive as she was wheelchair-bound with Multiple Sclerosis in 1988. (See “The Poets” for more information, and my poetic tribute, “For Linda T., With Love” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].)

David Aaron Liebman (1966-1984), an American, autistic member of my Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF), who took his life at 18 due to intense depression. (See the entry for his sister, Maura Liebman, in “The Poets” for more information, and my poetic tribute, “For David - And Both Our Sisters” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].)


Stephen (Steve) E. Parent (19??–199?), an American trans activist and gender therapist, who died of kidney failure in his mid or late 40s. (See “The Poets” for more information, and my poetic tribute, “For Steve, My Fine American Friend” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].)


Merissa Sherrill Lynn (1942-2017), an American transgender activist and magazine editor, who died in a hospice at 75, following a much earlier massive stroke. (See “The Poets” for more information, and my poetic tribute, “For Merissa, The ‘Tiffany Rose’“ [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].)

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**ABOUT THE EDITOR**
More than halfway through the second decade of the 21st century we are, at least according to *Time Magazine*, now past “The Transgender Tipping Point.” What might that mean? Certainly the level of transgender, transsexual and genderqueer visibility we have today exceeds anything we’ve seen before, and for some time now a solid minority of that visibility involves some significant degree of self-representation. And yet a good deal of that media visibility accrues to recently-transitioning celebrities (e.g., Caitlyn Jenner) and is infused with voyeuristic spectacle, which seems to alternate between transphobic repudiation and condescendingly, saccharine affirmation of otherwise privileged individuals’ journeys of self-actualization. Even so, media-savvy trans women of colour such as Laverne Cox and Janet Mock have managed to parlay their celebrity to give voice to more complicated and politicizing narratives that highlight the normatively damaging effects of poverty, social erasure and exclusion, lack of adequate health care and job security and the criminalization of sex-work on most trans peoples’ lives. Highlighting the pervasive and systemic nature of such violence does not in itself alleviate it, but it is an improvement over exceptionalizing narratives of individual heroism in the face of adversity.

In the sphere of literature, people whom we might now call trans (or transsexual or transgender) have been telling our stories through memoirs and autobiography since the 1930s, and in the 1960s we began to see the development of educational resources, support groups, networks and newsletters. In the 1970s and early ‘80s, writers such as Jan Morris and Rachel Pollack were well-known and early literary successes from our communities. The late 1980s and ‘90s saw a proliferation of *avant garde* cultural production by transsexual and transgender folks, although Jayne County’s *Man Enough to be a Woman* reminds us that trans people were among the original punks. Nonetheless, it was not until the 21st century that we began to see a significant proliferation of trans literary production with the establishment of both web and print journals (such as *Vetch* and *Them*), the development of trans-owned presses (e.g., Topside, Biyuti, Transgress, Trans Genre Press and most recently Metonymy), the publication of anthologies of trans poetry and fiction such as *The Collection* and *Troubling the Line*, trans literary award categories in Lesbian and Gay institutions like the Lambdas, a proliferation of trans literary workshops, panels and conferences, and the recognition of trans authors as authors, rather than exemplars of an exceptional or “exotic” personal narrative. These developments have gone hand in hand with the changes to mainstream media, as well as the emergence of trans studies as an academic discipline with a home in the university and university presses.… In a wide variety of forums we are now asking questions about trans poetics, narratives, point-of-view, genre and criticism, seemingly for the first time.

Except it isn’t…. As we begin to explore trans literary history, and pre-history, we discover that if this decade is perhaps the first to see the development of an apparatus to sustain trans literature (the aforementioned presses, journals and academic programs, for instance), it is

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1 Parts of this Foreword were previously presented as “Writing What’s Not, Yet: Inscribing Emergence.” *Department of Gender Studies Graduate Colloquium: “Writing Sexualities: Poetics, Politics, Activism.”* Queen’s University, Kingston, ON. April 25, 2014. All text Copyright © the author, Trish Salah.
not the first to produce trans literature. As Trace Peterson points out, in the early 2000s poet kari edwards was attempting to broaden what trans literature might be in her capacity as poetry editor at Transgender Tapestry, a community magazine that had long featured poems and stories by trans authors. In her editorial capacity, edwards was attempting to make a break with an existing tradition, a poetry comprised of confessional verse, romantic lyrics, epics and folk-ballads, of ribald limericks, Christian and pantheistic devotional catalysts, with themes inspired by Greek myths, medical literature, personal struggles, losses and longings, and celebrations of trans forms of living under the radar and in a time of censure and social erasure. In the time leading up to edwards’s tenure at Transgender Tapestry, these poems were the mainstay of trans writing, from the 1960s to the 1990s, mostly before the internet when little magazines, ‘zines and newsletters were how we spoke to one another, how we imagined our community into being. These are the poems pioneering activist Rupert Raj has gathered together in this extraordinary collection.

Of course in those days the vocabulary through which we spoke our identities was different, though no less prolific than in the present moment. In English-language contexts alone, we might encounter a wide range of terms rooted in the gender clinic, classical sexology and Greek mythology, and of course multiple communities: transvestite, transsexual, epicene, drag, femmiphile, androgyne, cross-dresser, transgenderal, transgenderist…. Some of these were vestigial traces of older discourses, some were neologisms coined by linguistic and cultural innovators, many were contested, readily used in some contexts and repudiated as slurs in others. In the early ‘90s, the tail-end of the period covered in this collection, the umbrella term “transgender” was coming into its first, almost immediately contested use. And today that in turn is rapidly, if no less contestedly, being displaced by “Trans” either with or without an asterisk (Trans*). Meanwhile it is unclear how precisely older terms like “androgyne” are covered by the newer queer theoretically-inflected languages of “genderqueer,” “gender-fluid” and “non-binary” gender. To be fair though, trans language has long been an imprecise and contested compromise between community and theoretical discourses, and even terms like “two spirit” and “intersex” have such complicated and hybrid inflections....

Attempting to balance MtF and FtM as well as TV, TG and TS representation, Rupert Raj’s international anthology is dominated by Canadian and American contributors, but with a significant number coming from the United Kingdom and a small number of Irish, Australian and New Zealanders. A small number are identified in racial terms (Black, mixed, African-Canadian, etc.) with the majority unmarked, and while this may present the impression of whiteness, it should be noted that contemporary protocols around raced, classed and gendered self-representation are precisely that – contemporary and self-designation in such terms was less common three decades ago if one was not operating in a self-consciously politicized feminist or civil-rights context. As well, in a moment in which trans people’s lives and political imaginaries were less determined by a relation to feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer organizing, many transvestite, transsexual and transgender persons might eschew elaborating identity political self-descriptions.

In this collection many of the contributors are activists, a few of them quite well-known, such as Lou Sullivan, Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Virginia Prince, Phaedra Kelly, and Raj himself.
of the poems collected were found in TV/TS/TG community newsletters and magazines (including Transgender Tapestry), both well-known and not so, and if only a few of the authors have acquired some recognition, others perhaps should have, at the very least for historical reasons. One of Raj’s inspirations for assembling the collection, Linda T. O’Connell, was the author of two poetry collections, only one of which was published - a small volume, Fighting Back: A Symphony in Words, privately published in 1978 with a limited run of 200 copies - possibly the first book of poetry published by a transgender author in North America.

Although this is not the first anthology of trans literature to be published, it may well be the first one to have been edited. At the very least, it is a testimony to the labour and love of a community making its literature in a moment before it had a proper name.

Trish Salah, PhD
Assistant Professor of Gender Studies
Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
January 1, 2017
INTRODUCTION

This treasury of transsexual, transgenderist and transvestic verse is a compilation of close to 400 poems and short prose penned by some 170 people from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Contributors include transsexuals, transgenderists (or androgynes - now known as “gender fluid” and/or “genderqueer”) and transvestites (now known as “crossdressers”). All portray diverse perspectives and experiences, challenges and victories pertaining to their unique lives sometime within the timeframe spanning from 1967 to 1991. I have also added seven recent pieces: one from 2009 (a song composed by my Black, genderqueer friend, King, which includes trans women in a tribute to all women), one from 2012 (an expression of the evolution of my gender identity over time), and four from 2014 (separate tributes to trans friends, virtually all since departed: Linda T. O’Connell, David Aaron Liebman, Louis G. Sullivan and Stephen (Steve) E. Parent), and, for this 2018 revised version, two new memorial tributes (for Johnny A. and Merissa Sherrill Lynn), replacing the former 2014 “A Tribute to Fifteen Transformational Trans People,” deleted for literary reasons.

The inspiration to compile my own collection of TS, TG and TV poetry came from Linda T. O’Connell (it’s uncertain if she’s still alive), a Canadian trans woman then living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, who compiled two works of trans poetry: Fighting Back: A Symphony in Words (200 copies privately published in 1978) and “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available From K-Tel” (unpublished manuscript, 1982). (Both of Linda’s works are preserved in “the Rupert Raj Collection” housed in the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives in Toronto). If some of the verses in this trans poetry anthology touch you as her “heart songs” have touched me, I will have achieved my goal of a literary, trans cultural work of art.

I first put out a call for submissions of trans poetry for publication in an international anthology in June 1982. The first person to respond was C.W.M., an American trans woman (M-F TS) from Andover, Massachusetts, and her poem, “Of Souls And Roles,” was the inspiration for the first part of the title of my anthology. The second part of the title derived from a poem I penned, “Of Sex And Gender.” A variant title I was also playing with was “Of Souls and Roles, Of Genes and Gender” (“genes” alluding to the fact that gender identity is not a chosen lifestyle, but an innate disposition with which transsexuals, intersex individuals - and possibly certain other gender non-binary people - are born). Even prior, my original working title was “Of Gender and Genitals, Of Souls and Roles” (to underscore many trans folks’ feelings of alienation or disconnection from their sexual organs and a desire to acquire those of their identified gender), but I reconsidered, concerned that some readers might find “genitals” crass. In the final analysis, I’m pleased with the present title as it captures the humanity, authenticity and diversity of trans, androgy nous and crossdressing people in terms of our contrasting and complementing identities and presentations: spiritual and political, gender binary and non-binary.

In retrospect, I now wish I had also put out a call to interested individuals who were either intersex (formerly known as “hermaphrodites,” and now labelled “disorders of sex development”) or two-spirit (indigenous people with a female and a male self), but I don’t know if much material would have been forthcoming at that time given that neither intersex nor two-spirit people were that visible in mainstream society, emerging more so a decade or two later. Some of these folks (but by no means all) affiliate with the larger umbrella
“transgender” community and some even identify as “trans” in addition to their own intersex or two-spirit identity. I further wish that I had been able to solicit materials from other countries and cultures beyond the purely Western, Judeo-Christian, but my meagre efforts were unfruitful. Perhaps such a cross-cultural collection could be a project for the future?

It took me nearly nine years to complete the manuscript, which includes mini biographies of each contributing “poet” (and End Notes for selected entries), as well as an Introduction by me and an Afterword by Kim Stuart, a friend from Oakland, California. The work is divided into three “books”: Book One: “Transsexualism,” Book Two: “Transgenderism (and Androgyny),” and Book Three: “Transvestism” (now known as “Crossdressing”). The first two books are subdivided into two parts each: Book One, Part One: “Male-to-Female Transsexualism,” Book One, Part Two: “Female-to-Male Transsexualism,” Book Two, Part One: “Male-to-Female Transgenderism (and Androgyny),” Book Two, Part Two: “Female-to-Male Transgenderism (and Androgyny),” and Book Three: “Male-to-Female Transvestism.”

It’s not that female-to-male crossdressers did not exist back then (because I knew at least three in the USA), but simply that they did not contribute any poems (Lou Sullivan’s poem in this collection was about his transsexual identity, which had evolved from his previous transvestite identity). Similarly, I didn’t receive many submissions from female-to-male transgenderists/androgynes, likely because gender fluidity (“genderqueer”) did not formally emerge until the late 1980s or early 90s, when it came on with a vengeance! The other thing is that sometimes a person might be experiencing gender confusion (i.e., they were unsure if they were a male cross-dresser or a trans woman), and/or sometimes their gender identity was in evolution (i.e., they evolved from a transvestic self-identity to more of a transgenderist identity, or even a transsexual identity, over time, as the confusion cleared).

In 1988, I asked the International Foundation for Gender Education to publish my trans poetry anthology, but alas, IFGE turned me down because it did not think my book was a priority given its limited funds. I was heart-broken! All that blood, sweat and tears for nothing! Would those gender-transgressive voices across the globe forever be unheard and their words invisible to the world? Discouraged, I put the book project on the back burner (but first added several more poems over the next three years) until it resurfaced several years ago when the curators of my Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives’ induction ceremony on May 3, 2013 displayed my original (1988) manuscript for the public to peruse. A week later, CLGA invited me to read several excerpts from my original collection at a poetry salon named after the first part of the title of my anthology(!), at which time I related the backstory around its inspiration and creation.

It was important to me to create this work because, through the medium of “feelings-in-words” – ranging from the silly to the sublime - I aspired to shed some light on the real lives of transsexual and transgender(ist) people and crossdressers as they were living them a quarter of a century ago: lamenting the substantial barriers and the all-too-painful losses (poignancy), while also celebrating the remarkable resiliency (personal power) and hard-won successes of their quest to live an authentic life, to show the world their “true” self. Indeed, this collection reflects the psychosexual, psychospiritual, sociocultural, sociopolitical and historical profiles and proclivities of an “occasionally-intentional” and creatively-complex community, comprised of idiosyncratic individuals innovatively individuating in ever-evolving expression! Dialectical dynamics of souls and roles, of sex and gender.
In May 2014, my friend, Trish Salah, then Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg, invited me to read selected excerpts from my poetry anthology at the U. of W. Writing Trans Genres Conference. She also encouraged me to try again to get my languishing manuscript into print, and graciously consented to write a Foreword for this newly-revised version to frame these “verbal vignettes” within a trans-historical and trans-cultural, sociopolitical context. I am retaining Kim Stuart’s original (1988) Foreword (as an Afterword here) for historical posterity. Growing impatient to share this cultural artifact with the world, and wanting to “put it to bed” before my retirement in February 2017, I decided to donate the unpublished manuscript to the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria (Victoria, British Columbia) (where some of my newsletters/magazines are archived) in care of Prof. Aaron Devor, Chair in Transgender Studies, founding director of the Transgender Archives, and a long-time fellow trans activist and trans academic.

Now, at long last, this evolving work has finally found its “place in the sun” in supernatural B.C.! It is my hope that these “genderal” poems will induce a smile or a tear at the victories and defeats of trans people, spark righteous indignation at societal transphobia/genderphobia - or simply soothe your soul, or perhaps rub your libido. At the very least, transcend your notion of “identity”: gender, sexual, spiritual.

Rupert Raj
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Jan. 1, 2017/July 1, 2018
Book One:

Part One:

Male-to-Female Transsexualism
TRANSSEXUAL

The best of both worlds –
Or so some feel.
But caught between the furls
Of a tapestry so real
The life shown
Hides a dark despair
Where no light is known –
The lamps are in need of despair.

~~ C.H.B. (1977)

OF SOULS AND ROLES

Born was the child –
spirit of woman
body of man.

The child grew into role
while he gazed upon his soul.
“How can it be?
This is not me!”

Oh, wits of science
don’t play with me!
Tell me now…
can this be?

“Look not upon the mind
for logic has no soul.
There is no peace
in an undesired role.

Look upon the heart –
see what there be.
Do not explain it
for it is thee.”

And so, the journey begins…
a bumpy exchange of role
an inner peace –
the uniting of soul.

~~ C.W.M. (1983)
IF I...

If I told you a secret
would you tell me one?
If I tell you more –
would you tell me some?

If I opened my door
if I exposed my heart –
I wonder...would you be there
or would you laugh?

If I cried on your shoulder
and showed you all my weakness –
Could you open your heart
and show all your meekness?

Could you show all your love
Make my fears all false?
and I'll show all my love –
else, all will be lost!

~~ C.W.M. (1971)
C.W.
(for a beautiful woman from your loving friend)

There is no shelter
For persons in the process of becoming.
Caterpillars changing into butterflies
Do not do so publicly.
Tearing open a cocoon during metamorphosis
We would be appalled by so alien a beauty
Familiar as we are with absolutes.
How dare you metamorphose so openly –
How dare you metamorphose at all?

Ours is a world of caterpillars
Denying we are also butterflies.
Why can’t you be satisfied
To crawl along like everyone else?
What kind of example are you setting?
Soon everyone will believe
They too, can change.
What kind of a world will we have then?

At least, have the decency to hide
Your altered state in a cocoon of shame.
We'll all pretend it isn't happening
And that way, no one else need ever know
How beautiful, so beautiful
You are.

~~ Sara
POISED ON THE BRINK

To tell of my struggles
In whole or in part
Requires the aid
Of a listening heart;

Of one who will ask
The questions aright
Not blame or accuse
From shame or from fright.

To find such a heart –
So open, so kind
From hatred removed
To prejudice blind –

Is a quest soon abandoned
(Reality’s rule)
And I settle for less –
A contented fool.

I do what I can –
Give each heart my best
Till a balance is reached
And I feel myself blessed.

Then that makes the telling
Much harder indeed
Till the longing becomes
An incurable need.

And I find I’m entangled
In a web of gold chain
Of half-truths and lies
That protect me from pain.

But by dropping the beads
One by one
Slowly…the necklace
Comes undone.

~~ Gwen (1985)
TO TRY TO EXPLAIN

Go quietly in the world
speak softly and tread lightly.
There are those among us
who can’t bear to be surpassed
in knowledge of self
in comprehension, understanding.

They will make life
difficult for us
but not impossible.
For they only hear
the base notes, the lower notes.

What they can’t understand
does not exist – for them.
They can’t believe that
there is more to life
than what they know.

The ears of their souls
know only the drum beat.
And the passionate throb
of the bass guitar.

The rest of the orchestra
does not exist – for them.
And they can’t be told
for how does one explain music
to the tone deaf?

That is our burden –
to try to explain
to bring understanding
where none exists.

Remember always this –
that God does not give
any soul a greater burden
than it can bear.
And with perseverance,
comprehension, understanding
we will win.

~~ Dorothy of Grimsby (UK)
ASPECTS OF UNDERSTANDING...

They can’t understand
Till they’ve been through the mill.
They’ll never have felt
Till they’ve come over the hill.

The agony, the loneliness
Of always wondering why
You don’t make sense
You can’t react
As conscience says you should.

You grieve the ones that you adore
With actions ‘gainst the grain.
“You idiot, you bloody fool!”
“But darling, try to see…
I need your love, please understand
Please give me sympathy.”

The emptiness, the utter void
Rejected, hated, crushed
No one loves you, no one cares
“Oh God, why am I thus?”

~~ Angela (1969)
THE MIS-DEAL
(To A World Which Doesn’t Understand)

For thirty years I’ve lived a life
Of heartache and pretence,
A life of double-dealing
With feelings so immense.

It came to light so long ago
As I was very young,
A boy though I appeared to be
When my life had begun.

Soon I had the strangest thoughts
(Which did not match my shell)
Of sugar and spice
And all things nice,
But to no one I dared tell.

The years went by, my feelings grew,
My brain at Red Alert,
My body wearing trousers
Whilst my mind was in a skirt.

I did not have the strength to tell
My friends and next-of-kin,
And this in turn caused problems
Which I could not keep within.

When I was in the Public Eye,
They only saw my "acts,"
The usual solo drinking bouts,
To keep them from the facts.

And then thoughts of suicide
Began to cross my mind,
The feeble cuts across my arm,
The strength I could not find.

The power then began to fail
And in my mind, it fell apart;
I knew the time had come at last
To open up my heart.

My kin could not accept the fact
Of “Janet” – here to stay
And threatened me with exile,
For ever and a day.
But the choice was really simple
As the cards, they had been dealt;
My kinfolk wanted “Stephen,”
Not caring how I felt.

And so the tie was broken,
Which really set me free
To live the life of “Janet,”
To keep my sanity.

My friends, I thought I’d lose them
But it turned out I was wrong;
They’ve really been tremendous
And helped me all along.

On the road that I am taking,
I have only just set out
And there’s dozens of bridges
I must cross without a doubt.

And so two lives with join as one
And rebirth will occur,
The Life and Soul of Janet –
From now on it’s “She” and “Her,”

For thirty years I’ve lived a life
Of heartache and pretence,
But finally the time has come
To burn that middle fence.

~~ Janet Martin (1985)
UNTIL I DIE

For twenty years of suffering
Twenty years of pain
Twenty years of hated days
And tears that felt like rain.

For those long years of guilt and fear
What did I have to show?
Just a mask I hid behind
A secret none could know.

A thousand tales of bullying
The vicious, savage kind
Thought up for entertainment
By the childish, thoughtless mind.

I cannot hate those bullies
So I love them all instead
For they cannot hurt me now
As the one they hurt is dead.

I forgive them all, my torturers,
Though I can't forget the pain.
I'd live my whole life over
And be tortured once again.

Those endless years, they formed me
Of them I'm not ashamed.
They made me what I am today
From them, you see, I've gained

My strength, my personality
A deep-felt joy inside.
For everything that makes my world
Has somewhere to abide.

Tears can make you bitter
And twenty years of pain
Can make you hate existence
But from hate you never gain.

The bullying opened up my eyes
To a world that's very real.
The suffering helped me understand
The pain that others feel.
My tears brought forth forgiveness of others
And the pain to me a courage gave
To face the long uncertain road
That leads unto the grave.

I’ve been granted happiness
And true happiness is rare.
I’m not ashamed of those twenty years
That always will be there.

I’ve come to terms with my hidden past
I accept that; in future life
I’ll always be a lover
And never quite a wife.

I know I can’t have children
Which sometimes makes me cry
A sadness that I’ll have to bear
Until the day I die.

~~ Nienna of Bristol (UK)

IT’S FATE

To be or not to be, that is the question.
Do I suffer the slings and arrows of conformity
Like a puppet, whose strings
Are pulled by this prejudiced society?
Or, ignoring all reasons, do I follow my heart
This fragile thing near torn apart?

For years, no answer could I find
Though somewhere in a troubled mind
Like early morning mist ascending
All my doubts and fears at last were ending.

I know with all my heart, it’s true
It’s Fate and I must see it through.
But everyday, I pause to wonder –
Why such a cruel and heartless blunder?
If only I had been born a girl!!!

But sadly, it was not meant to be
So, here I’m faced with transsexuality.
I’m happy though, for at the end of the day
I will be a woman, albeit the roundabout way.

~~ Sandra of Falkirk (UK)
A MISTAKE OF NATURE

Nine months of suspense
Nine months of strain
Nine months of waiting
Eight hours of pain.

Smiles of happiness
Tears of joy
As the lady gave birth
To a baby boy.

A child with feelings
Different from most
Those of a Woman
Which showed when he spoke.

The mind of a Woman
Trapped in the body of a Man
Fighting to be free.
And knowing that she can.

She has to break out
She has to break through
To live as a Woman
Like most Women do.

She’s changed her appearance
The best that she can
To live as a Woman
And not as a Man.

Now all she need is what
Nature denied her –
The right sexual organ
And a good man to guide her.

A mistake of Nature
That’s what I am
Born a Woman
In the body of a Man.

~~ Kelly of Leeds (UK)
IDENTITY

Once, there had been nothing at all
Merely a sense of existence alone
I saw a star, a beam of silvery light
Noticing the star was unlike me
I realized I had identity.

Now alert, I saw a man
And in many ways, he appeared much like me
Moving, I turned to see a Girl
She appeared less like me.

The Girl expressed some quality
That neither I nor the man possessed
Yet this female nature I craved as mine
And in its pursuit, I lost integrity.

No matter how I strived for it to be
To gain the quality of the Girl in me
My adoration remained in vain
For I and the Girl appeared not the same.

Since this desire was not to be
I chose to retain integrity
And as I returned to a state of peace
Envy and frustration calmly ceased.

I had become myself again
Free from disgrace, free from shame
And to all that I now saw
I was no longer lost at all.

Once again, I saw the Girl
Yet here was me, and there was she
But then she turned, and looked at me
Then I was she, and she was me.

~~ Sophie of Southsea (UK)
MISTAKEN IDENTITY

It is dark insider her hiding place  
There is no place for light here 
It doesn’t belong. No one can see  
No one must know she lives.

She is trapped within this Hell  
Silenced agony pierces her soul  
Like a knife longing to taste blood  
And certain that it never will.

She screams for freedom  
But softly, for no one must hear  
No one would understand 
She does not understand it herself.

In times of horrible solitude  
She can slip free of the Darkness  
If only for a moment  
The Darkness knows she will return.

Her heart soars on wings of hope  
She revels in Being 
She is Alive! She is Free!  
The Darkness smiles and waits.

But something is terribly wrong  
The mirror of Reality lies shattered  
It reveals the Lie of the Truth  
And opens the wounds that none can see.

And so she shrinks back into the Darkness  
Wrapped in the arms of Despair  
She has known no other lover  
She is certain that she never will.

The mask is firmly in place again  
She returns to the emptiness of her shadows  
Living the masquerade that is his life  
She cries as the knife kisses her soul.

She is so alone…

~~ Rachael Thompson
THE CALL

Darkly the Passage beckons:
Rest for the Weary
Comforting embrace
Sorrow will take wings against the gloom.

Softly the Passage beckons:
Come quickly
Come gently
Tread the Path lightly, inevitably.

Ever the Passage beckons:
Sweet surrender
Sweeter peace
Courage will come in time.

Now the Passage beckons:
Release Despair
Heed the Call:
“Sleep with me tonight.”

Forever…

~~ Rachael Thompson

OY, JAILER, I’VE SOMETHING TO SAY…

I am no lunatic,
I am a heretic.
Why am I here?
Why is this fear
Always turning the screw of doubt in me
That one day, they’ll see through me
And set me free?

I am no heretic,
I am a lunatic.
I know why I am here.
The world is topsy-turvy
And when they see through me,
They’ll burn me.

~~ Phaedra Kelly
LIFE IN JAIL

Who am I?
Why am I?
What shall I do?

I sit in my cell wondering
If the day will come when I
Can see the freedom of life.
For what is in store for me?

I cry for help
Day in and day out –
For what is freedom
To those beyond this wall.

Is this for what I live?
In horror and in hell?
For I’m transsexual and I’m proud.
I’m not ashamed and I never will.

I guess this is life for me in jail
So, farewell to you
And till we meet again –
“LIFE.”

~~ Margret Nancie Alger (© Gender Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, June 1983)
LIFE SENTENCE

Murderers, rapists have their statutes of limitations, their paroles. But for what I am – my sisters will condemn me for all of my days.

With detachment I consider my new peril – a sweet danger that I can no more avoid than a moth the candle flame.

A woman of ordinary beauty – green eyes that glow with wisdom, confidence and joy of living. Soon she will ask me for my body and I will tremble and yield gladly to her skillful embrace.

With mature patience She will begin to explore – only to find… only to find less than she expected.

All is the fault of a few others Who employed both types of privilege to enrich themselves – spending a score of years cultivating the techniques of domination.

Late in life they greet the sisterhood like conquerors – asserting their “rights” to claim positions of leadership.

Old habits die hard – They respect not their mothers, sisters or daughters. Janice Raymond was half right and I am convicted by unchosen association.
It would be prudent to tell her first
but I cannot even speak this word.
How can I confess to being different
when my message is that I am the same?

I do not need her kisses –
my life-lover satisfies completely.
Better I should withhold my touch
than risk the loss
of a promising friendship.

But I am eager to please –
to give the gift
that will make us both richer.
And I am still as rash
as when I rejected both types of privilege
so early in life.

Will she feel betrayed?
Will she feel disappointment
or anger or pity?
Or will she not care –
and blithely love me as I am?

Perhaps my breasts
can serve to make amends.
They alone are lovely
and untouched by the scars
of imperfect surgery.

The nightmare is –
that I consider these matters
make me different.
The women’s community
has created a new “Anonymous.”

~~ Anonymous
SHADOWS

Sitting on a cold iron bunk,
Huddled in a green Army blanket,
I stare numbly at the wall before me.
Light from the watch towers outside
Strains through the steel grille,
Ricocheting about the concrete cell –
A slow strobe beating in time with my heart.
Patterns dance in the empty darkness,
Weaving shadowy webs across the bleak wall.
My thoughts fly south to warmer climes
And to sweet dreams of freedom.

The old Black preacher down the row
Mumbles litanies to a lost god
Who has departed a long time ago.
Only occasionally does he cry out –
Ranting at the misdeeds of a cruel world
That has long since abandoned him.

Lightness, darkness, lightness, darkness…
Shadows reflect the unceasing beating of my heart.
“Oh God, I’m so lonely and so cold,” I cry
Into the desolate darkness of the endless night.
Elusive patterns flit across the gray wall,
Franticly flickering in futile desperation,
Weaving deep dark spells to lure my mind
To the very brink of madness…
But never quite across the threshold.
Intricate images, hypnotic thoughts
Of faraway fantasies and dreams of hope.

I’m so tired, so tired…but still unable to sleep.
Solitary, alone, cut off from Life itself,
Drifting in the endless depths of space,
But held fast in the webs of shadows and light,
Stretching from one gossamer dream to the next.
“They’ll never break me!,” I vow to myself
But, I know they have already broken me…
Broken me off from the bonds of reality,
Broken me down and the parts duly stored away
In a little cement box, a stark cell with iron bards.
To keep my restless spirit chained and exiled.

Images of a secret midnight burial cross my mind –
A stake driven through the heart
At the crossroads of my existence.
“Break the spirit, bend the will,
Mold it to a new form,” my captors chant.
Still the shadows sweep endlessly across my soul,
Revealing past and present, and echoing their message
Repeatedly throughout the long sleepless night.
“Don’t fight, give up, succumb!”
“Don’t fight the endless night and the eternal shadows.”
Lightness, darkness, lightness, darkness…

~~ Lynn Marie Scribner

REFLECTIONS

The mirror glitters in crystal perfection
In an ornate stand against the wall.
Tall enough for my fullest reflection
Of the man who isn’t there at all.

Within a nimbus of shimmering light
Stands Woman within and Man without,
The Yin and the Yang eternally fight –
He forces her in, but She must come out.

Fantasy at war with reality…
The gentle curve of breast and hip.
From the dreams of femininity
The fragile mask has begun to slip.

I am Janus, Warrior and Maid
Bringer of Death and Birth.
But the image begins to fade
At the misting of my breath.

Must I be so hard and cold?
Nor may I laugh or weep?
Or must I fit into the mold
That others would have me keep?

I am the Nestmaker and the Earth Mother
With gentle emotions in my heart.
I am alone seeking my love
Before the time comes when I must part.

With the person I want to be
At one with Nature, Moon and Sun
Sensuous, shining and free…
Before my Time is done.

~~ Lynn Marie Scribner
RELEASE

The road is lonely, twisty and high
Quiet and silent as the mountains nigh
A lay-by surrounded by a low brick wall
In a gorge below, a waterfall.

A fresh-risen sun, a clear new morn
The very air about appears reborn.
Dazzles of gold from crystal shape
That mystical magic of a mountain snowscape.

Verdant pastures of lovely green
Blend quiet, the snow a ghostly dream.
High on the hill a tiny church
The bell within toll; my soul gives a lurch.

Within the sound I am split apart
My mind flung out, a swelling of heart
My consciousness tossed on currents of knowing
My soul in my veins, quickly flowing.

In the toll of that bell, a voice does gel
A beautiful voice I once knew so well.
My erstwhile friend, lover and wife
Clear as that bell, as if in life.

Now free of pain, her voice so clear
I heard again, not physically here
A simple sentence spoken, then done:
“Ian, my dear, the time is come.”

I looked for her face in my mind’s eye
I found it not, but began to cry.
I cried then, as never before
The relief and happiness, for now I was sure.

All my life, I carried that weight
Now was the time of leave it to sweet fate.
For seven years since, I nurtured my son
Now he’s a man, his own life begun.

In that idyllic, beautiful scene
My wonderful friend had come unseen
To let me know I was free at last
Not to forget, or hide the past.
But to step out with joyous heart
Not to be hurt by life’s cruel dart
To aim for that distant goal
That would bring happiness, peace to my soul.

I know not what the future will bring
I care not, for always I’ll sing.
I’ll be the woman I always was
There’ll be no question of it, or because.

No matter what barriers man may design
There is nothing my soul cannot climb.
I am on the road, and though with fear
I recant not, for the goal is clear.

Please, my friends, if you’re distressed
Look within, and see yourselves blessed.
You, at least, can gain a cure
There’s millions out there who’ve no such lure.

With sickness and fear the world is crammed
Add not your voice to the damned.
Go out instead, with happiness and cheer
Do what you can for all who come near.

With time and patience, all will become good
So put away the Kleenex, you know you should.

~~Susan of Fife (UK)
A LOST CHORD, FOUND

A violin I am, of seasoned wood;  
I want to make music the way I should.  
I am rounded, curly and stroked with a bow;  
I make the music that lovers know.

But somehow, this time round,  
My case ill fits; I’m a seed on stony ground.  
This reincarnation has not gone well;  
I feel a woman, but as a man I dwell.

I begun to strum, to find the key  
That will shatter this case, and set me free.  
Sick I am of the marching tune;  
I want only the chance to play “Claire de Lune.”

A crack appears in this prison wall,  
There is a SHAFT of light, freedom’s call.  
This, at last, the beginning and the end;  
My soul sings softly as these walls start to rend.

My strings become vibrant and the airs they play  
Are no longer the dirges of life’s yesterday.  
They are joyful arias, gypsy melodies;  
The air trembles perfume amongst Spring leaves.

I know myself, and the music I play;  
I have taken steps and now I pray.  
Cast aside is the aftershave,  
Replaced by Lancome and a permanent wave.

I do not yet live in my velvet case,  
But see Lady Jane! There’s a change in this place.  
My chords lie in harmony with Heaven’s sound;  
My soul fills with joy I can scatter around.

I go to my wardrobe and take out the lace,  
Soft scented fabrics, and do up my face.  
I look in the mirror and what do I see?  
An ethereal ghost of what will be me.

From the ashes of the past is a Phoenix come;  
Susan, at last, has seen the sun.  
All you out there, if set in despair,  
Take note of what can be, if you really care.
If you live still in shadows and have a word to say,
Stand proud and tall, and tell it your way.
For ignorance is fear, and fear is death;
Let God’s light and truth be your breath.

~~Susan of Fife (UK)

BEYOND BELIEF

I cannot imagine
how to explain
the lives of mine –
one life performed
and the real one mine –
to the normal world
who watched the mime.
It’s beyond belief.

~~ Christina Marie Bouchier (1988)
THE DARKNESS OF LIGHT

The blind man sat with his eyes closed, cold
Reputing the light as he had been told
Not knowing the joy
Nor the good world about
Not knowing the truth that had to unfold.

His eyes never moved from the darkness within
And he thought the whole world lived in similar sin.
Cruel to all others
Masculine – sad
In darkness he struggled for proof he’s a man.

Is life only darkness? Is this all there is?
Is coping so normal? Are feelings all his?
The sunshine he hated that he never saw
A threat to acceptance according to law:
“Don’t open your eyes for the good world to see.
Don’t open your eyes; it’s not normal, you see.”

But his eyes did peer open in his fortieth year
And the lightness, the love, as sight first appeared
Was stunning and joyous, and then, only then
Did death first appear and birth just begin.

He reveled in brightness he saw all so clear
For one shining moment, a moment so dear
Then closing his eyes
He shut out his sight
For to him it’s not normal for light to appear.

Dark is not dark until light first appears
For knowing the meaning of light brought the tears
To the unfeeling eyes
Of a man all alone
So that seeing was torment for the rest of his years.

Light is so normal to people about
Accepting the gift with no question, no doubt.
Why he should not see was ordained at his birth –
The body is the meaning of one’s life on earth.
His life would end if he continued to see:
“Don’t open your eyes; it’s not normal, you see.”

*******************************************************************************
Her eyes sparkled brightly in sunshine warm
Caressing the lightness, contentment, the norm
Feeling the joy
And the love all about
Embracing the truth which had caused all the harm.

For the blind man lay dying, the end coming near
And the girl wept softly and shed her first tear
So young, yet so knowing
Of lightness and dark
For she was first born in his fortieth year.

Can lightness be taken and earned if you fight?
Or is it only a treasure bestowed with one’s life?
The passion, the beauty, it means to a being
One lifetime of darkness, then suddenly seeing.
Someone is born and someone is dying
And the world looks at them without understanding.

You see, lightness is Gender, so strong, unrelenting
Existing forever, and once discovered, unbending.
The blind man’s torment
The girl’s finest treasure
To live life without light? Is that God’s intending?

But the world still continued its impassionate plea:
“Don’t open your eyes; it’s not normal, you see.”

The blind man must die for the dark still gets darker
The girl’s birth the cause of the man’s departure.
He doesn’t exist
Nor did he ever
And the girl chose death too, too unusual for nature.

Is it not better to see for a brief shining moment
Than to live all in darkness, even if in less torment?
She smiled and nodded, so knowing, so tender
A short life but good, and so feminine, Gender
And together they ended one life in surrender.

******************************************************************************

And the world just explained with its unfeeling plea:
“Don’t open your eyes; she’s not normal, don’t you see?”

~~ Christina Marie Bouchier (1988)
HOLLOW NIGHT

alone and driven
along a dark road that ends
either in darkness or in
a cataclysmic shattering light
that reels and bounds and ricochets

planes of wavering orange lights
jar and shimmer
nor will allow
sight and understanding
alone and driven
along a dark road

trumpet the stars
salute the cold earth
a grey dark line
lines the lonely soil

I wear the darkness like a gown
that falls to shoulder sweeping down
to brush the frozen path
blurring the footprints
evidence
of steps dull steps upon the earth
that spring like gives the winter growth
momentum in the shadowed sun
alone and driven
along a dark road

night carries the sounds
that echo wide
sound circles touches passes fades away
towards the frozen orange hue
where I forbear to sing or dance
lost without the sight of others
who forbid me
in this cold cold hollow night

alone and driven
along a dark road

towards the light?

~~ Jo-Anne of Battersea (1983)
ON REALITY

Oh tortured soul
   you soon will rest
      for now there is help
         for your quest.

For though your best was ever done
   your heart was lost
      with each setting sun.

To hurt, to long to be just me
   and all understanding
      plainly escapes me.

But it can be done
   I plainly know
      I need not live this life of woe.

My pain is real
   although it does not show
      thus help so long has been “NO.”

Confused you are and can be cured
   you bastard! In your ignorance
      It is my life you skewered.

As I am, you could take joy
   but what you see
      Is but to destroy.

What I knew all the while
   I had no choice
      I could but smile.

Now I live as I must be
   and yet need to closer be
      and then the first time
         at peace I’ll be.

~~ Dagney (1985)
TRUTH

The shock grows
Stronger with age
The years bring knowledge
And knowledge creates the tears
All the while time spins by
Knowledge can open eyes
Once closed
By too much pain
Eyes open to distant truth
Once the truth
Is embraced inside and out
Time and knowledge
Equal contentment and life.

~~ Pat Wilson

SPINNING AT THE CENTRE

Stink of lies –
He explodes with a burst of Love
Only they can see their destruction
Situation failing
Balls of glossy bath oil hide diamonds of light.
Kicking around on the floor
The pedestal is for those who refuse to shine
Are you buying or getting out?

Buy some ice cream, lick it dry
Laugh at the frozen tongue.
Fat seems to prevail while thin wishes by.
Steal the time to enter the parlour of the fly
Where death is a joke
Because it is indeed refundable
Causing anxiety to shift, to bolt, to stay.

Spinning at the centre…
Enter the fountain for the transformation
Fear nothing for the feeling is only temporary
The change is permanence.
No escape, to leave is to deny
Face your mirror
And cry while you rejoice.

~~ Pat Wilson
THE DECISION

Traveling down this pathway
chosen so very long ago.
It is here…before me…that I took
to the crossroads of my existence.
How surely this will impact upon
my distant uncertain destination.
Weary from my odyssey of the past,
I stop and reflect upon the ultimate
decision I alone must now make.

Which way shall I go?

Should I forge straight ahead,
following this predetermined course
which will lead me ever closer
to that image I yearn to attain?
Hopeful of finding that special someone
who can knowingly understand me, caress me,
yes, and even seek to aid me.
This, then would certainly bring reason
and meaning to my life.
In this struggle that is fought for
the love of another, will I be pushed away
to fight an unending war, in hopes of
a faint glimpse of that imagined joy
that I will never cast my view upon?

Which way shall I go?

Shall I follow the advice
often given forth so freely,
facing to the right,
to fight off all thoughts and memories
like a battle to be won?
Will I…could I…might I actually
succeed in finding happiness here?
More likely, will I fail…lose the battle
…suffer a crushing defeat
at the calloused heart of another?
All for the satisfaction in knowing that
I am somehow, in some way, where I belong.
Seeking contentment solely in knowledge,
I have seen the end and no victory can be claimed.

Which way shall I go?
What if I turned to the left,  
seeking yet another alternate path  
worn well by many others?  
I could attempt to balance my thoughts and memories,  
only to then encounter the ridicule of friends,  
the pain of loneliness,  
and the loss of my own true worth.  
Robber barons surely wait to snatch away  
the very essence of my own self worth  
through this, my own ability to love,  
express thoughts and emotions,  
and in what I care about most?

Which way shall I go?

Maybe it is better for me  
to quickly take my leave,  
Back-stepping from this foothold  
to the very place I have been.  
Realizing solace through the  
knowledge of what now awaits me.  
Past decisions made and change  
that I could have been,  
now clutter the certainty  
with which I place each step.  
Turn my back on yet another,  
hoping it too will but go away.  
Knowing it will not, and pushing me  
ever closer…and closer still…  
to the precipice of self-annihilation.

Which way shall I go?

Casting aside my thoughts of the past  
for the moment wrapped around me,  
I wonder aloud why it is  
that my feet now remain  
frozen on this spot called “indecision.”  
Whether it is this route or that,  
this fear or yet another which lays in wait.  
A step once taken can never be recovered.  
Yet to progress from this place is  
to beseech of the heavens above  
to answer the remaining time-honored  
inquiry still retained deep within:  
Who’s life is this anyway?  
Indeed, who’s life am I to lead?

~~ Michelle Lynn Gerald
TURMOIL

Turmoil, oh furious cauldron
Within a seething, writhing mass
My soul has fought a living struggle
To survive this boiling muddle.

Once in my life, my spirit weakened
And longed for Death to fly upon me
But Death only did gently alight
With gossamer wings, then rose in flight.

Struggling, with guard upraised
Through life's passage without showing
The inner you, your true conviction
A burden which caused endless friction.

Rejected by your apparent gender
Bullied, beaten by cruel minds
A jester you were in their eyes
Unacceptable in your male guise.

But now, the guard is slipping``
You open your femininity for all to see
The spirit cannot beat this great desire
The female cleaves through your soul with fire.

~~ Angela Jane
**SHE**

Here I am, sitting weeping,
this lonely feeling creeping
into my inner self,
“She,” my mirror.

As I ponder my fate to be
how to help this inner me,
an open heart,
“She,” my mirror.

Why is joy so tearful here?
Now I’ve found her, cheer!
My gladness smiles for her
“She,” my mirror.

Now I hope, with a fervent heart,
she will play a joyous part
in my life,
“She,” my mirror.

To the future I now gaze,
to seek happiness beyond this haze,
to be free,
“She,” my mirror.

~~ Angela Jane
THROUGH MY EYES

Girl –
peer into the mirror.
Are you unsure about
hidden traces of fear?

Trying, trying to cry now
yes, it’s love that I want
yes, it’s love –
I’m trying to cry.

But I end up without tears
no, must not tell my peers.
For I’ll beg to realize
my real self through my eyes.

And it’s me
yes, it’s me –
who’s calling!

And it’s she
yes, it’s she –
who’s sharing!

And it’s he
yes, it’s he –
the one who’s staring!

We’re the one who’s so empty
so lonely and longing to feel.

Gazing –
gazing out the window.
Must talk to someone
to help me stop closing the blinds.

But please
help me forget yesteryears.
Trans is a distant thought, boy.
Do you still like my name?

But I still am hiding
No, must not say a thing.
For I beg to realize
The truth inside through my eyes.

~~ Lois Stacey Nevin (© 1989)
THE GIRL IN THE MIRROR

I look in the mirror
There’s a girl I see.
Where did she come from?
Who can she be?

With long silken hair
And skin soft and fine
Her face I should know
Because it’s mine.

Her manner is gentle
Her will is much stronger.
She’s trapped in a cage
But not for much longer.

There are doctors and surgeons
To help her adjust.
For them it’s a maybe
For her it’s a must!

To help this young woman
Her will they must try
But if she should fail
Inside she will die.

So she must try
As hard as she can
With soul of Woman
In body of Man.

After the trying
Will come hope and joy
When she’s a girl
No longer half boy.

From darkness of night
To light of the day
She says, “Thanks to all”
For showing the way.

~~ Marion of Selby (UK)
TO BE A WOMAN  
(Through The Eyes Of A Man)

A dream it is not  
To break free from this guise.  
It is determination  
Not insane, but wise.

To walk through the streets as a woman  
No more fears at all.  
To walk boldly, gracefully  
Proud and tall.

I envy them all: the female race –  
The slender body, the lovely face  
The make-up applied with expert care  
The flowing, fresh glittering hair.

They’ve always had  
What we’ve always wanted.  
We must remain strong  
Steadfast, undaunted.

For someday it will happen  
We will become “she.”  
A most welcome change  
From the unwelcome “he.”

We will always be  
The woman within  
Until scalpels and estrogen  
And counselling begin.

We will reveal ourselves  
In our true light  
And help each other  
To share our plight.

Until that day  
Finally arrives  
When we shed ourselves  
Of our past lives.

But, for now, what to do  
Is to just make plans.  
We must wait to be a woman  
Through the eyes of a man.

~~ Kelly
I WANT TO BE A WOMAN

I want to be a Woman
To no longer be a Man
For the world to accept me
Just for what I am.

I'm a very special person
Not a rare oddity
I'm locked inside my body
But I yearn to be free.

Free to be a Woman
To no longer be a Man
To grow my hair and paint my nails
This is what I am.

People stop and stare at me
Point their fingers too
They think that I am different
But are they so perfect, I ask you?

I'm not hurting anybody
So why are they hurting me?
I haven't done anything wrong
I just yearn to be free.

I have a heart; I have a mind
So have a heart and please be kind
Though I don’t want your sympathy
I just want to be free.

I am no different from the rest
I am what I am
What I want best
From this life is what I really am.

To be accepted as a Woman
To no longer be a Man
For the world to accept me
And love me for what I am.

~~ Fiona of Poole (UK)
I JUST WANT TO BE ME

I wake to face the world
And all its fear for me.
I tell myself: another day
Of pain and anxiety.

I’m transsexual unassigned
The pressures I feel are great.
Someday, things might be better.
My time is getting late.

At times, I wonder: shall I run, hide?
Or, do I keep trying
Praying society will understand?
Will extend its love?

The questions are uncertain
Frightening as well.
The answers may be bittersweet
Only time will tell.

Another perplexity
Comes from my children
Who now I do not see.
They think it’s wrong –
My transsexuality.

As they grow older
Will they understand
This untimely plight?
Perhaps, someday
They’ll see it was right.

I feel the woman within
Longing to be free.
To take her place in life
To be part of society.

But when this happens
Will it be a lie?
Will the newborn woman
Cause the male in me to die?

Perhaps, my thinking’s wrong
If so, I’ll take the blame.
As woman comes from man
We are one and the same.
Someday, the world may
Understand true femininity –
Complex, yet simple!
I just want to be me.

~~ C. Hartman

I'M NOT ASHAMED OF BEING ME

I am not what some people think
I’m not a freak, an oddity
I’m not what people wish I were
A simple curiosity!

There are those too who have despaired
At what I am when I am me
And tried to point out graphically
What is to them reality!

Then there are those, and they are a few
Who understand me when they see
That when I am just who I am
I’m not ashamed of being me!

I'm not a liar or a fake
Instead I’m someone who must try
To rectify a gross mistake
And live a life that's not a lie!

So please excuse me if I'm not
Who you would want to have me be
“Cause I’m too damn busy trying
To become the person that is me!

~~ Anonymous
THOUGHTS ON MYSELF

A strange realization came over me today
That I am what I am, and what I say.
I’ve spent so much time wondering about
These feelings inside that try to get out.

Yet each time I try to say what I feel
The words that come out are thoughts that aren’t real.
For in speaking the truth, it means I would see
Inside of myself and what I should be.

Even now I’ve revealed what is hidden inside
Still disguised with untruths, misfacts lies.
For the me that I am is filled with dismay
At living a life not meant for today.

Frightened I am to know I may need
To cross over the line if I’m to be freed.
Yet deep from within I know without doubt
The me that I am must someday come out.

So in speaking the truth, this first step I take
At seeing ahead, decisions I must make.
One hope I hold onto that keeps me alive
Is there must be a life in which I can survive.

~~ Heather Peerson (© 1987)
THEY CALL ME MS. ROBOT

They call me Ms. Robot
I was project Number One,
A walking, talking robot
But I want to have some fun.

Somebody screwed me together,
Put micro-circuits in my head.
I can count with the speed of lightning
But nobody ever shares my bed.

I see people laughing,
I see lovers holding hands.
But I was created by this mad scientist
And I have to do whatever she commands.

All day long I work things out for her,
Hundreds of sums she can’t do.
She asks me what to eat for breakfast
And what to wear in the evening too.

One day I’m gonna be happy,
Someday I’m gonna be free.
Won’t somebody switch my circuits?
Then I can find the real me.

~~ Cathy Brown & Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)

THE FIRST TIME (THAT I MET YOU)

Two strangers came together –
Each with their own disguise.
They can’t ignore the truth somehow
When they’re touching with their eyes.
I fear you’ll slip away from me
Like pebbles through the sand.
These moments may be all we have
And I need to touch your hand.
I think that I’m in love…

~~ Cathy Brown & Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)
DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS

There’s a group of people
Who live on this earth
Who seem to be wondering
Exactly what is our worth.

We live and breathe, laugh and cry
As we question and wonder why
We seem different from the others –
“Aren’t we all sisters and brothers?”

We ponder our gender incongruity –
“Is there a way out of this hopeless mess?”
Then try to express our true identity
The only one that feels the best.

Everywhere you go, people are confused
And transsexuals the most of all.
As the world seems to pass us by
We still hope a friend will call.

Voicing the torment of our minds
We ask: “Am I really one of a kind?
I am so all alone, help me please.
Is there no one to help me appease

This heart-rending anguish in my soul?
But wait, I’ll try to think up a way
To save my sanity and make my life whole.
I’m not crazy yet, and I’m going to be okay!

In this life, I’ll make my own place
And transcend this worldly rat race.
I’ll put together the pieces, one by one
Until my self-healing work is done!”

~~ Cheli Bo
DOUBLE-GENDERED

There’s a few of us on this good earth
Whose ilk brings naught but jeers and mirth.
Rejection, insults, looks of scorn
Are our only reward for being born.

I speak of us who Nature rendered
Not he, not she, but double-gendered.
A joke once played that lasts for life
With humor lost to internal strife.

With body one and spirit other
They chafe the wound by blaming Mother.
I must have had a spineless Dad
To have fathered such a girlish lad.

They won’t face the fact that I’m just me
But blame it all on my family.
Should I dare to act, to be just me
It’s promptly called “insanity!”

Psychiatry with its brilliant mind
Has failed to cure our muddled kind.
But labels stay and theories too
Though none has worked, so none is true.

Surgeons took over and with scalpel passes
Left our minds alone but changed our asses.
A drastic way to cure our quirks?
Maybe so but it really works!

~~ Sheila
WHO ARE WE?

Who are we?
And how are we different from any other woman?

I enjoy affection, a gentleman’s attentiveness, decorating everything in as feminine a way as my imagination allows.
I enjoy looking pretty and wearing soft, pretty clothes.
Though there are times when I’m comfortable wearing jeans and a tee-shirt, or parading around the house, wearing only panties and a bra.

I enjoy a warm Spring rain, the scent of flowers and freshly-cut grass.
I like pleasant music, sad songs, sad movies, romance and emotional things that might make me cry.
I enjoy loving and being loved, the smile and laughter of children.
I enjoy life and I enjoy being alive!

I douche. I bathe.
I get angry when I get a run in my pantyhose or when I break a finger nail.
I’m obsessively concerned with how my hair looks and how well I’ve applied my make-up.
I like being soft, pretty, hairless and feminine.

I like men. I like their hairy muscular bodies.
I like their broad shoulders and the way they feel inside of me.
I like the way a man makes love to me and the different ways I can return that love.

So I ask you: with the exception of a male organ, how are we so different from any other woman?
And, why should anyone care?

~~ Roberta Angela Dee
BORROWED DRESSES

They always wanted me to make them proud
Said I should be a respectable young man
Marry her and settle myself down.
“You’ll grow out of it,” they used to say
But each day created torment
So many secrets, tears and fears.
When I wanted to be a woman
It broke their heart and broke my mind.
But now I’m getting older, I know
My life; I know myself.
Starting again was so hard and lonely
The dark nights in borrowed dresses.
No love today, no sweet caresses
Just the inner harmony and conviction
And the hopes of a life again.

~~ Leanne of Hailsham (UK)
AN ESSENTIAL PART OF ME

I used to get great thrills
Just looking at the stills
That someone took of me
When I was twenty-three.

In all the times I dressed
I knew the first real test
Would come when they would see
How pretty I could really be.

One day, I threw aside my fear
And worked on an old idea
To have a costume party
Guess what I would be?

A lady friend who I won’t name
Liked the idea and took my flame
For how could I ever come out and say
That my secret self needed her that day?

The party was good. No more took place
Except in my soul’s punate space
And Mom, to the day she died
Never knew her child had to hide.

I saw another with women’s parts
I guess that’s when the yearning starts
And what was once just a fantasy
Is now an essential part of me.

~~ Danielle
ESSENCE

The scent of perfume as it linger
for a second after I put it on,
The smell of coconut oil shamp
as I wash my hair and style it,
The feel of wearing the clothes
I feel are natural and nice,
The sight of a woman reflected
in the mirror as I pass,
The sound of gentle words and
understanding when I talk to others,
The touch of my child’s hand
on my back as she cuddles me,
The shape of my swelling breasts
seen through my sweater,
The thrill I get when receiving
gifts of handbags, purses and tights,
The excitement of men who fancy me
and those who I fancy,
The jolt when people call me “Madam,”
or “Love,” or “Miss,” or “she,”
The feel of the warm sun
shining on my bare legs,
And the feel of the wind
blowing through my long hair,
The feeling of security and belonging
and being as a woman,
The desire to accept and to be,
not to fight or to do,
And all the feelings
that cannot be put into words –
I am.

~~ Lamorna
ESSENCE

One finds not the essence of “HER” amid the earth’s soil
Nor will it leap up from the depths and take hold of your arm

You must seek that essence from within
Be that essence
Grab hold of the color of it
let it penetrate your core

One feels not the feel of “HER”
garments only point the way
Actions along with feelings stem from an inner sense of presence

Look to the soul
to the heart
to the mind

There you will find “HER” if she is there…

~~ Rebecca

COMING OUT

Tense but too excited and our audience awaits
our emergence from the cocoon of maleness upon the stage as butterflies
lest we should stumble upon our wings so new and fragile

~~ Rebecca
GENIE IN THE BOTTLE

Set her free
She cannot harm you
Give her a chance
to express all that she is
No longer can you keep her a secret

Release her wings
so that she may soar
longingly among her sisters

Learn from her
She has so much to teach you
Drink in her many mysteries

Soak her up into your consciousness
Let not one drop of her essence escape
or it will be lost to eternity

Experience her touch
throughout your whole being
A new awareness and sensitivity

So set her free
so she may guide you
towards fulfillment yet undreamed

~~ Rebecca

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are free to roam
upon this planet Earth
It seems they have
no natural enemies
Their only worth
is in their beauty
and the symbol of freedom
they stand for

~~ Rebecca


**BUTTERFLY**

I'm not this caterpillar, oh don't you see  
This worm-like body just isn't me.  
These legs, they're not mine; I really don't crawl  
I don't inch along; I can't roll in a ball.

You may think you know who I am  
But I'm telling you, “It's all just a sham.!”  
I've stolen the ways of those all around  
Crawling like them, but being a clown.

My brothers and sisters all know who they are  
They see me the same, but don't see my scars  
From trying to be that someone I'm not.  
The truth deep inside was not something I sought.

Though I know who I am...have known all my life  
I've struggled and strained...endured all the strife.  
I've tried to make do; I've tried to fit in  
Always knowing inside that surely I've sinned.

I alone know the truth...alone fought it so  
As I've tried to be the one who everyone knows.  
I'd pray every time before I would sleep  
And wish upon stars I would see in the deep...

That this cursed form I know is not right  
Would be taken from me, night after night.  
Inside is a butterfly that needs to be free  
I'm not what you think...I'm not what you see.

My cocoon is like glass, watch my chrysalis and know  
As my beautiful wings take form and then grow.  
You'll see me take flight; I'll glide on the wind  
The caterpillar gone, the worm found its end.

At last you'll behold, as you see my new form  
That the outside will match what the inside was born.  
To live and to love, to be peaceful at last  
As the butterfly I am; I am free of the past.

~~ Caryn Kristen Roberts (© 1987)
Yesterday I “came out” to meet my friends…  
The butterfly so long cocooned  
Though long foretold, emerged  
To show the world the final transformation.  

It had to be, I had no choice…  
An inner certainty propelled my presentation.  
This is Reality at last, so long repressed  
It shattered twice the marriage vows  
And hearts to condemnation.  

God knows the suffering I’ve caused  
The bitter alienation…  
The cross I bore is lighter now  
Through self-examination.  

The sexual threshold proved the gate  
To Life’s re-orientation.  
No fear of social ostracism outweighed  
The resulting peace of mind  
Nor blocked the new-found realization  

That I should lead a woman’s life  
Outran the imagination  
But calm acceptance of the fact  
Achieved such concentration  
That ne’er before I’d thought so clear  
With love and admiration.  

How should one break the awesome news?  
How, when an aged relation  
Has borne and bred you as a son  
To destroy the glowing vision?  
At times the choice though ponderable  
May pose itself for years.  

And what of friend and work colleagues  
Who know your every whim?  
How does one care and prepare the ground  
Transit to Her from Him?  
The fears, the shock, the disbelief  

The challenge to the male…  
If, step by step, the truth can dawn  
Equanimity may prevail.
The day of dread, the day of hope
Proved full of consternation
To those who knew the other mode
A curious revelation…
The same inside, or so one thought
But never a condemnation.

May those I know and love so well
Search in their hearts to understand
Life’s mysterious fascination!

~~ Angela of Stockport (UK)

BUTTERFLY

A girl is what I was meant to be
Even if a boy is what you think you see
And as a caterpillar slumbers
In its cocoon and briefly sleeps
A beautiful butterfly is what
All the world will soon see.

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson

JUST LIKE A WOMAN

I like to feel like a woman
I like to smell like a woman
I like to dress like a woman
I like to love like a woman
I like to live like a woman
Nude, I’d like to look like a woman
And someday, I will!

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson

WEDDING NIGHT WISH

Now that you’re at heaven’s door
Let me say, no man has entered in before
This sweet deflowering
I’ve dreamed of all my life
And now that you’ve made me
At long last your wife
Come on in and make yourself at home.

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson
ATTITUDE

One part at a time, one day at a time
our dreams can be realized
if we strive toward our goals.
We have the power within us
to achieve our utmost desires.
Always be true to yourself:
look not to the left, nor to the right
for there will be those who shall
try to influence our judgement.
As the drab cocoon yields
into the butterfly
and as the ugly duckling
blossoms into the graceful swan
so shall we be blessed in God’s works.
God knows our hearts and loves us all.

~~ Nancy Leigh

A TRANSSEXUAL’S PRAYER

Oh, Dear Lord, please help me free
This girl within who lives inside of me.

My nerves stay shot, for without end
To be a man, I must pretend.

All day long, I live this lie
At night, I sit alone and cry.

I cry for the clothes I cannot wear
But mostly, for the child I’ll never bear.

For the mother’s love I’ll never give
And the woman’s life I cannot live.

This male body is a prison to me
From which, someday, I must be free.

Free to live life, and enjoy it too
And do all the things other women do.

Oh, Dear Lord, please end this strife
Let me be a woman for the rest of my life.

~~ Mary Pearl
A TRANSSEXUAL PRAYER

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change
And the courage
To change the things I can
But most of all, the wisdom
To know the difference.

~~ Anonymous

THE LAMENT OF A PRE-OPERATIVE TRANSSEXUAL

Feminization without hormones and surgery
Is like co-habitation unblessed by clergery –
It is fun as far as it goes.
But, just as the human figure
Includes more than what’s between the neck and toes
(Though from the way some people act
I doubt this observation is universal)
And marriage is more than a managery
Under certain conditions, like total nudity in bed
The original masculine equipment still shows
And is to marriage an impediment, as the poet said
Since it prevents full frontal physical mergery.
Otherwise though, who knows?
If you can “pass” without being “read”
And don’t lose your head, and stay out of bed
What people don’t know is no injury
But…I…can’t…control…the…urgery!

~~ Toni
SEX AND THE SINGLE TRANSSEXUAL

One of the topics most likely to perplex
When one is accomplishing a change of sex
Is not the terrors of being attractive
But, how should one be sexually active?

When someone “comes on,” it may make you think
Is s/he really just after a girl with a “dink?”
Or, perhaps the person is truly hoping to find
How did you get that shape to your sexy behind?

Next morning, after sleeping over at their home,
Can you borrow a shaving razor as well as a comb?
What with all of the combinations to try,
How could you consider just being “bi”?

Since your curiosity is starting to peak,
I'll now put my tongue back into my cheek
And tell you my reason for writing this rhyme.
It’s something I have said time after time –

No matter how emotional or staunch intellectual,
Human beings are all, on the whole, very sexual.
And something that often has this TS perplexed
When it comes to sex, is who will be next?

~~ Steffie
WINGS

We could go back and be lovers again
And pretend that all this is a lie
But I am who I am –
and that’s more than you want
So I’m glad that we saw eye to eye.

The real me entrusted to your heart
The real me, so girlish and shy
So I let down my fences –
of false male pretences
And all you could do was just cry.

You said I was feeding you falsehoods
I was lying to me, don’t know why
There are facts that I’m facing –
that don’t fit your making
They’re wings which this bird needs to fly.

So I fly and mature as a woman
I’m sure most will think it’s a lie
‘Cause their sense of man –
Is just God’s holy plan
We’re made in His image from high.

But God is both male and female
And my body and mind do not tie
So I must make a choice –
to speak with which voice?
But to live with this plan is to die.

So my mind must win in the end surely
And I’m looking you straight in the eye
If you won’t hold my hand –
as I go through my plan
Then it’s time that we said…goodbye.

~~ Veronica Hammer
TO BE FROM BINARY

XX, XY, or near derivative
Encamped in one forever
So...say...you
In your long black gown
And white wig predecession
Deciding the past
Thru stare decisis
On cultural acceptance
Of semantic intent
The spoken word, “WOMAN.”

Inbetween is not
If not, no passage thru
So...say...you
Barring facts
Proclaimed and validated
By greater groups
Awaiting the few
Who struggle in blind resistance
With injunctions
Against the paradigm shift.

And by what right do you interpret
A human choice by only two components?
For we are human, if nothing more.

~~ Tina Lindsay

PASSING

Driving down the highway
The traffic is insane.
It blocks your forward progress
And causes you great pain.

And if you find you’re moving right
You’ll move within the main.
There’ll just be no more passing
Till you reach the passing lane.

~~ Tina Lindsay
SPINACH AND ME

There can be no more spinach
Perhaps it's really olives
Or grapes or myrrh
I checked the factual reference
It’s not there!

I won’t argue against iron wills
Armed with this evidence
And absolutes
There simply won’t be spinach
Or people like me.

Maybe I’m pestilence
Or famine, war or plague
In your eyes
Spinach would be kinder
But this can’t be.

Could you think me love
You'll find it listed there
We are all that
And spinach and me
Were born of loving sees.

~~ Tina Lindsay

REMEMBRANCE

Thoughts surfaced unretractably
Guided with precision
To forever etch
Memory’s canyons
Now reside my moments
That once were filled
With peace.

To their mark they penetrate
Beyond the accusations
Of shallowness, un-parent, un-caring
Until my soul felt
Vacuumed of existence
For purpose.

And now I correspond tomorrows
As never was.

~~ Tina Lindsay
ME AND MY WORLD

Much of my life has come and gone
I've given it to people one by one
Now I look at my life and hesitate.
Is there a future or is it too late –
For me?

For my world has come crashing down
Sorrow and pain all around.
The craziness of people
(including myself)
Has driven me closer to the final ledge.

As I look down into the void
I turn around for there is no choice
Death is not the answer
To the problems of life
So I go back, give it one more try.

For my world has come crashing down
Sorrow and pain all around.
The craziness of people
(including myself)
Has driven me closer to the final ledge.

Much of my life has come and gone
I've given it to people one by one
Now I look at my life and hesitate.
Is there a future or is it too late –
For me?

~~ Autumn (© The Phoenix, Sept. 1984)
HELLO FRIEND

Hello, friend, it’s me again
Knockin’ on your door.
Won’t you let me come in?
I know I seem different
And yes, it’s true
There’ve been some changes
In the past year or two.

I know you’re speechless
Just can’t find your voice
But it’s okay ‘cause it’s my choice.
Well, now that you’ve seen me
It can’t be all that bad.
I hope you’ll still love me
I’d really be glad.

For many long years
My life’s been all wrong
Just goin’ in circles
Singin’ the same old song.
A song of pain, a song of lies
Just goin’ to bed at night
With tears in my eyes.

Hello, friend, it’s me again
Knockin’ on your door.
Won’t you let me in?
I know I seem different
And yes, it’s true
There’ve been some changes
In the past year or two.

I know you’re speechless
Just can’t find your voice
But it’s okay ‘cause it’s my choice.
Well, now that you’ve seen me
It can’t be all that bad.
I hope you’ll still love me
I’d really be glad.

~~ Autumn (© The Phoenix, Vol. 4, No. 9, Sept. 1984)
LIVING LIFE MY WAY

So close, so close to crying
Tears of joy.
Living, not dying
So close to living life my way.

So long, so long waiting
Peace of mind.
My life’s straightened out
So long it’s taken to find myself.

Well, I can’t say it’s been easy –
The Road to Freedom’s often been hazy
Filled with pain and shallow goals.
I’ve fallen in every hole.

So much, so much to do
About something that you’d change too
So much I’ve begun to overcome.

So hard, so hard and lonely
Finding truth in fantasy
So hard learning how good life can be.

~~ Autumn (© The Phoenix, Vol. 4, No. 9, Sept. 1984)
When I take my Premarin
I take it orally.
Little purple football pills
To make a rounder me.
Orally, orally, two of them
Two of them a day.

Soon I won’t need falsies in
I'll give my pads away.
Orally, orally, two of them
Two of them a day.
I will get more feminine
And chase the male away!

~~ Anonymous

TOP 10 REASONS TO HAVE A (M-F) SEX-CHANGE

1. Feel like a woman trapped in a man’s body.
2. So I can get into an all-girls’ college.
3. Don’t have to pay for dinner on dates.
4. Guys buy all your drinks.
5. Guys hold doors for you.
6. Reduced skating admission on Ladies’ night.
7. Lounges in Ladies’ Rooms.
8. Great way to avoid creditors.
9. Annoy and confuse friends, family and neighbors.
10. Lower auto insurance.

~~ Sonia
**TRANSSEXUAL BLUES**

Dresses, make-up, voice and hair  
Parents, friends and “I don’t care.”  
Lovers lost, friends regained  
Then beaten, raped, slapped again…

Psychiatrists and psychologists  
Endocrinologists and urologists  
Plastic surgeons and plain old M.D.s  
“Professionals, can you help me, please?”…

Now, what to wear and how to set my hair?  
Mascara’s running and my nylon’s got a tear.  
Last night, feel and skinned both my knees  
Trying to balance on my new spiked heels…

Blunders, hassles, worries…sigh…more doctors  
More questions. “Don’t know why…just am, I guess.”  
Lawyers, ministers, teachers and employers  
When will all this end? Can’t last much longer…

Have to change my name legally from “Sam” to “Sue”  
Social, medical, life and automobile insurance too.  
Got to change my birth certificate, driver’s licence  
College diploma, bank account, credit cards and will…

And then, there’s Mom and Dad, Sarah and Jess  
The wife, the kids, Gramps and old Aunt Bess  
My boss, my secretary, and oh yes, Uncle Pete  
And my priest and the neighbour down the street…

Wow! Look at that guy over there with those yummy eyes.  
Wonder if he’ll ask me to dance? Damn! Got asked for I.D.  
Must change it soon – that slob probably thinks I’m a TV  
Or even worse, he might have taken me for a Drag Queen!…

Wish I’d a friend to talk to – someone who’d really care  
Maybe and understanding boyfriend too – with whom to share.  
But all these guys in here must think I’m a freak!  
And what’s even worse, so do Mom and Dad.  
Wish I could get time off work for just one week  
To show them how I really feel so they wouldn’t get so mad…

Custody battles to follow messy divorce proceedings  
Wigs to hide my hairline, which keeps receding  
And all those costly visits to the electrologist  
So some guy won’t feel stubble when my lips are kissed…
Oh, God, how to tell the family and all the guys at work! Will I lose my job and have to get another with lower pay? Probably end up as some big shot executive’s Girl Friday. Guess, I’ll have to learn how to type and take shorthand. All that hard-earned education (M.B.A.) down the drain…

Oh, oh! That nice guy is coming over this way But, nice eyes or not, I can’t take the chance. We’d have a few drinks and maybe a close dance. Then, off to his place so he can “jump in the hay.” But once he takes off my clothes to get a good view He’d probably beat me up till I was black and blue…

So, I’d better go now…just can’t face that scene anymore Or take a chance that he’d be any different from the rest. Damn! My slip’s riding up and my pantyhose is sliding down. Now I’ve a five o-clock shadow tho’ I just shaved two hours ago. Think I’m going crazy…feels like I’m on a merry-go-round. If only someone would take my hand and lead me along the way…

Later, watching the teens walk home from school Looking so casually confident and so super-cool Get a real piercing ache in my poor lonely heart. Will I ever again have friends to smile and laugh with Or will I still hurt for many, many years to come?...

Sigh…all I want is a little cottage down by the sea With a garden of red roses and a husband who loves me. But most of all, I wish for the day when I can be me. I can only pray while I still wonder, “Will it ever be?”...

~~ K.J.S.
TRANSSEXUAL BLUES NO. 2  
(Blues No. 1 Got Lost In The Male)

I’m going downtown, Honey  
just to cry these blues away.  
A lot of my comrades got the same blues I do  
from Montreal, Winnipeg, the coast and Thunder Bay.

Them transsexual blues can zonk you, Baby  
take a tip from one who knows.  
You might have some doctor tell you, “Wise up”  
but if you got ‘em, they want to goes.  

A lot of folks gots told to take up basketball  
just to drive them blues away.  
Others gots told to get a girlfriend  
some gots told they was just a whiter shade of gay.

This here’s Linda T. doing the talking now  
I’m here to tell you that stuff’s a fake.  
It’s just that people are afraid to face the issues  
and the thought of being crucified for a mistake.

Yes, when the midnight hour goes past  
and your eyes can’t close to sleep.  
You’ll know those blues for real  
because you can only see black sheep.  
The black sheep will be you, Honey  
and your life goes before your eyes.

You best come downtown no  
it’ll help you fight those blues away.  
A lot of people, you wouldn’t believe, feels the same  
so, you’s best off to start livin’ today.

Them transsexual blues can zonk you, Baby  
take a tip from one who knows.  
You might have a lot of people tell you, “Wise up”  
but if you got ‘em, they want to goes.

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
OUTCAST BLUES

The transsexual is an outcast just like a maverick of old. The cross may be heavy to carry but a heart is filled with gold.

A robber’s fate – many days I have felt like but I don’t plan to rob your hospital with my gun. I got better things to do than imitate your plastic or try to land on the dark side of the sun.

Many times the streets I have rambled wond’ring how far and how long before I’d be free. Yes, Ma and Pa, did you really see me while the ladies came and went in Barcelona?

You called me every name in your T.S. Eliot book. You think I’d rob a bank with a derringer just to get an admirer’s pleasing looks?

Let me be your western movie cowgirl like a maverick female Jesse James. And the way they treated me sometimes makes me wonder who gets the lesser blame.

The devil bank robber from Arizona couldn’t get treated worse than transsexuals do. I know Matt Dillon and Wyatt Earp are after me the same way but I know these feelings are simple and true.

The town posse is coming after me for things they don’t like that I said. But I tell you I’d say them and shout them to stop them killing another kid good and dead.

The businessman hides behind the doctor as another death bell rings on the bridge. We all wonder who controls the system – everyone does but their brains are in the fridge.

And some people once had the nerve To tell me such things are not real. Well, I’ll tell you something, big boy doctor loser - A girl is only as real as she feels.

(And after me the same way)

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
MY BLUES

I know the answer to my problem
but the same people will not understand
The same people who always rejects me
the same ones to leave me in the sand.
God knows, if they went through what I done
maybe they wouldn’t shout so loud.

Got to take all kinds of trouble
before I reach my only goal
But I know what I wants is the truth
and that’s my only goal.
Lord knows, I’m so alone
and maybe the others don’t have soul.

I’m so sorry, Lord, if I sounds bitter
but these peoples keep tripping me
I’d like to remove their mental pain
and cast it into the deep blue sea.
They ain’t been through what I know
Oh Lord, can’t you make them see?

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)

IF YOU HAD BEEN

If you had been
where I’ve been through
perhaps the same feelings
could have hit you –
In abstract silence
I have absorbed it all
through the summer
and into the fall –
Looked out my window so many times
wondering how the sun
will shine for me –
Will it shine at all?
The morning awakes –
the same people, the same cornflakes
Love, like fire, burns from my heart
praying so hard for this new life to start –
I love you.

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
THE REAL ME

A lot of people just do not understand
and I wish they would not try.
Just accept it happening to someone
who has to live and die.

I do not know why I was born a boy
but I ain’t about to quit my change
‘cause wrong is wrong and right is right
although some people might think it strange.

A lot of people just don’t believe it
but I know it’s happening to me.
Ask your mother why she’s her
then it’ll be easier for you to see.

Oompah…oompah
stick it up your jumper.
I am she as you are he as you are me
and we are all together…

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)

I'M STANDING AT YOUR CROSSROADS

I'm standin' at your crossroads
waiting for the street to clear.
It seems ironic, waiting for the green light
because I just don’t know how to fear.
There's a lot of bigger roads around
and this suffering’s not really that unique
but people afraid to admit resist.
That’s what I’ve heard it speak:
Ma and Pa alone abandoned my ship
when I was in my rebellious teens.
They couldn’t see my true sincerity
amongst the Bob Dylan songs and smokescreens.
I will not blame this world for mistreating me
but now I can walk free – down every street.
I’ve paid my dues, to the feeling of blues
they get more power each time they repeat.
Each day the need gets bigger
as this girl gets closer to her goal:
the fusing of my heart to a finally complete body
and an always-present soul…

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
THE LONESOME DEATH OF LOLO D'AMOUR
(A True Story)

Raymond Samur -
killed poor Lolo D’Amour
by throwing her against a parked auto
at a Montreal nightclub society gathering
the cops were called in
handcuffs slapped upon him
as they rode him in custody
down to the station
and booked Raymond Samur
for first degree murder.
But you, who philosophize, disgrace
and criticize all fears
take the rag away from your face
for now ain’t the time for your tears…

Raymond Samur –
who was twenty-four years old
and owned a fast car with an American engine
with middle class parents
who provide for and protect him
and sympathetic relations
in high places of freedom –
reacted to his deed
with a shrug of his shoulders
and swear words and sneering
and his tongue was a-snarling
and in a matter of minutes
the charge reduced to manslaughter.
But you, who philosophize, disgrace
and criticize all fears
take the rag away from your face
for now ain’t the time for your tears…

…continued
Lolo D’Amour –
who was a part-time nightclub artist
and was about twenty-three years old
and could never have children
and who did the only job she could
so as to get a gender-change operation
and never sat once
at the head of a table
and lived alone in a flat
and came home very lonely in the evenings
wanting so much to be free
forever rid of her seeming “male” condition
but so few even understood what she was doing
except those on a whole other level –
got killed by a blow
and lay slain in the gutter
because she dared to be free
in a world of chauvinist thinking
doomed and determined to destroy all the gentle folk
and Lolo never did nothing to Raymond Samur.

In the court of the Queen’s bench
the judge pounded his gavel
to indicate all is equal
and the courts are on the level
and the strings in the books
aren’t pulled or persuaded
and that even drunk middle class boys
get properly handled
once the cops have chased after and caught ’em
and that the ladder of the Law
has no top and no bottom –
he stared at the person
who killed for no reason
who just happened to be feeling that way
without warning
and he spoke through his cloak
most deep and distinguished
and urged the jury strongly
for penalty and repentance

Raymond Samur –
set free without sentence.
Oh, but you who philosophize, disgrace
and criticize all fears
bear the rag deep in your face
for now is the time for your tears…

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
DISCOVERY

My life...
  Sad
life birth love joy cry try tears in vain love
music songs loneliness ecstasy Marilyn marriage
oh no beginning end disbelief nervous breakdown
welfare blues transsexualism momma love crash
pool room memories Marilyn girl Marilyn love
Marilyn depression sad Albert King love job heart...
  love
girl
  joy
lovejoy
my only reason for living is love
my reason for love is love...
  Glad

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)

DEDICATED TO MAM AND DAD

You can look forlornly at my old room
and wonder where you went wrong.
Yet can it be wrong for me to be me
when love is my only song?
Tears fall like raindrops from my eyes
being apart is so hard at night
remembering warm bedtime kisses
and reading under the night light.
I honestly wanted to please you
but our dreams were worlds apart.
The blues is a lonely feeling
anyone who don’t feel it has a hole in the heart.
Could we ever hope to reach each other
when our hopes was so far aways?
I was just too proud of my female instincts
to be psyched by days.
Oh, I just got to say it again, Momma
yeah, Poppa, you better believe this is
the living flame from Llanfechfa, South Wales
saying: “I’m just too proud of being woman.”
Ha! Here I am, in living soul colour
just sailin’ across this sea –
Sail on, honey bee...

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
The blues is a heavy feeling when you know Clark Kent is deciding your sex. A nineteen-seventies, bearded, medical reincarnation wants to say what’s between my legs.

The street is full of hippie broads like me yet he wants this girl to look like Doris Day. Says something to me about assuming the female role completely yet I done always felt this way,

Slept for dimes in washrooms of bus stations collected pop bottles for my next meal at the amusement park. Walked around with my only clothes on my back yet, I feels the same, in day or dark.

I bore this pain against the jeers of the crowd who tried to break and bring me down. I knew if I tried, I could prove my right to be to every dissenter in town.

The way I feel is deep and real that’s why for this I’d die. Yet, there are those who were born “normal” who could still be asking “Why?”

For these, I can only say, try to do what I’ve done and see if you could last a day. You wouldn’t begin to figure how I’ve lasted yet, the Lord’s been in my corner all the way.

Try to figure how you gonna get a job or how you’ll pay for all the electrolysis yet, the King’s been in my corner all the way.

Try to figure how you’d do all this without the love of family to support you along not knowing if anybody could ever love you but I know it’s here I belong.

You see, it’s been here all the time and I’m not really changing my sex. All I’m asking, Clark Kent, super-doctor, is to now make more functional the gap between my legs.
Sure, it's great to be accepted now as a woman
but there's still a need inside of me.
I didn't do this hoping for pure beauty
just the right to live as a woman – free.

I've got God in my corner
so, who must be in yours?

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)

**TRUST YOURSELF**

Trust yourself to do good
I know you don't mean no harm
Trust yourself to feel good
in the city or on the farm.
You all got the stuff, people
to make the happiness, all-star team
c'mon now, shout and shimmy –
this life, it ain’t no dream.
Don’t take no more drugs
just feel the nervous energy flow
When you turn the blues into power
no tellin’ how far your heart can go.
Yes, set free your little heart, people
go ahead – and trust yourself.
It's a feeling – hmm – so hard to describe
but it’s so good to be off the shelf.
I know that drink or dope is temptation
when your life feels life a half-empty dream
But just trust yourself to feel good –
anyone can make the happiness all-star team.
No one is gonna give you a gold star
when you feels so good inside
But, you'll be you as you're happening –
not just going for a ride.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
TIME STOOD STILL

Time stood still in a lonely room
living in a thought of years
wondering how I could ever express me
fighting back the tears
with my back against the wall
attacked by others who lied
I knew I just had to do it
to free my trapped inside
I played these blues in Montreal
felt ‘em all over Cornwall, Ottawa and Thunder Bay
it’s the same thing in Winnipeg – anyplace:
everybody needs a place to stay.

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)

I STILL LOVE YOU ALL

It’s hard to be away from home
to be told nobody cares no more.
Thank the Lord for Him helping us all
and not slamming every door.
It’s easy to sit back and condemn me
while I drown on dry land – alone
yet I pray so hard you will come back
or talk on long-distance phone.
Been down in the lonely alley
and been through welfare too
‘cause no one had the guts to help me
leaving me to feel pain and very blue.
I know you gave me the death sentence
just to leave me to rot and die
but here’s to say my cause is legitimate
though you make fun and make me cry.
It just re-doubles my determination
each time you screams and shouts
because this woman won’t take no more jive
looking forward to freaking you out!

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
REPRISE

It was thirty years ago today
Christine Jorgensen taught the band to play
They’ve been going in and out of style
but they’re guaranteed to raise a smile
so let me introduce to you
the acting members of all these years
from Linda T.’s lonely hearts club band…
The 747 is revving up on the tarmac so fasten your seatbelts
because we’re going on a journey to the centre of the soul…

~~ Linda T. O’Connell
(© “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available From K-Tel,” 1982)

IN MEMORY OF ELECTROLYSIS
(Dedicated to Miss Kelly, Kelly Institute, Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Second by second, minute by minute, day by day
each hair, one by one
destined to go away -
like the Chinese parable
of the old man and the mountain –
Standing there with a shovel in his hand
while all the villagers laughed at him and said:
“You’ll never move that mountain
you’ll never move that land.”
And the old man just grinned and said:
“Maybe not by myself alone
but if my sons begat more sons
and they all dig this hill, inch by inch.
This mountain’s not getting any bigger.
By our efforts, it may take years, to be sure
but with determination, it’ll be a cinch.
So, be not discouraged, you young kids out there
if it seems to be a long journey in time
for such is the mission of life –
And you will succeed at uprooting
each troublesome hair
and overcome your personal strife.
And here’s to you, Miss Kelly
for completing work begun in 1972
for I’ve overcome a mountain of trouble
thanks to beautiful you.

ODE TO DIANNE EDWARDS.

Dianne Edwards died last night –
murdered by a youth filled with hate
who broke down the door and went berserk
when everyone was asleep
and she never had a chance.
Who could predict such a tragic end
to the life of this girl, robbed by Fate
as the clock struck four, time was getting late.

Poor Dianne died –
defending her apartment and friends
from a wide-eyed killer
with a butcher knife and a baseball bat
who lunged at her while she slept –
bleeding, she awoke, trying to save who was left.
Dianne Edwards, who had never hurt anyone
loved and respected by all who cared –
Dianne Edwards lay slain in her flat.

And what, you may ask, was the motive for this crime –
was it robbery, revenge or jealousy?
No, History will chalk it up to prejudice –
some sick revenge, perverted jealousy maybe
for she was executed by a punk
with Rocky Horror Picture images
who will testify that he just felt that way at the time
and who thought he’d do a favour for Society.

The truth is that Dianne was thirty-six years old
and lived a hard life, but really had no family
and whose only goal was acceptance
in this conservative community –
and who, in the lonely evenings
babysat the child of her only friends –
the closest to motherhood she would ever get –
yet, a candidate for murder mindlessly planned
and she was just days from making it fully.

Oh, Dianne Edwards, you were quite a woman, you know
I hope you don’t mind me saying, with tears in my eyes
The cold Toronto Sun reporter blurted out his ignorance
by writing you were a “Sex Change Man – a male transsexual”
in his know-it-all, smug way -
Ah, but if they could only have met you, alive and well
I just know they’d have to accept you
and call you a girl – any day!
Because you sweated and lived your life
just to make the grade
though it took you a few years to get this far
Oh, Jesus Lord, I cry out to you –
it’s such a senseless tragedy
please save her soul – forsake mine if you must
because, God, no one deserves such a Fate as Dianne
Oh, Jesus, don’t let her life be in vain
let her days in Heaven be spent as the female she is
and never let your child feel any more pain.


MUSIC OVER AMERICA

There’s music over America
In Detroit, Chicago, and spreading to L.A.
And I’ve been playing my songs in Denver
at a state penitentiary in my own Linda T. way:
Yes, they’ve heard them down in Galveston, Texas
in Washington and Long Beach, U.S.A.
All I’m praying for is someday they’ll let me play New York
maybe on some network, all the way back to San Jose.

And I’m just praying someday for the break
that will put these hard times to an end –
to be appreciated for what I’ve done –
a lot of years in the minors I did spend
But my heart is hitting home runs
and I just hope it isn’t too long
before they let me play in the big leagues
and my soul – a walking blues song.

Because I’d like to someday shake up Oakland
rock Utah, dazzle Memphis, on a one-night stand
I’d like to wake up Georgia, take New Orleans by storm –
the music provided by Linda T.’s lonely hearts blues band –
Just to let America know I’m in there contending –
haven’t lost a civil rights fight since 1973.
A lot of people came and went since that time -
but I’m feeling I’m getting better by degree.

Thanks to people like Gary Tessler, Kevin Evans, Glenda Jones,
Georgia Saunders, Joanna Clark, Dr. Stanley Biber, and many more –
I can hold my head up proud, each and every day –
‘cos this music of my heart’s going across my life’s home, America
And it’s so nice to be doing it My Way.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE PSYCHIATRIC KIND
(with apologies to T.S. Eliot and Steven Spielberg)

In the hospital rooms, patients come and go
discussing ways to leave Cleveland, Ohio

Victims of the system
playing at being intellectual
conjure up their jaded gender dysphoria symbols
to asphyxiate the intersexual
who, by nature –
reveal the system’s stereotypes as a fraud
perpetuated by Freudian con men
flashing Hollywood neon signs –
to be a good boy, or girl
and obey the establishment
take your heroin shot as required
to forget about the reality of life
to put trust in cocaine-cola, the environment
to be never less than content
quite nicely neutering the youth’s pursuit
of Truth, don’t you think?
Stoned on tranquilizers, but not free
dysphoric, but not fulfilled
and even life is such a heavy trip
with all the opulent, glorified mediocrity
designed to idolize hypocrisy –
to proliferate fallacy –
to put Reality so far away, it seems like fantasy –
to deceive, humble and confuse the gentle –
to claim all the world’s problems are mental
that spiritual death is a lifestyle
as new Stereotypes replace the old
in a world where no one has control
of her/his destiny
as they wrestle to eliminate individuality
by declaring everything a “Lifestyle”
(even sitting on the toilet defined as “Nouveaux riche’s crouch”)
and originality made out to be an alien sin
as we approach the time warp of 1984.
The plagiarizing Ph.D. humanoid psychologist losers
after failing to discover the answers to their own idiosyncracies
hunting in texts photocopied from legitimized thought-borrowing
discreetly very poshly termed bibliographies
can only wonder aloud at their philosophic failings
walking to and fro, near the insane asylum’s iron railings
like high priests of Nirvana, these sultans of valium
ponder and pose ever so efficiently
working out new plans to indoctrinate
the innocent new arrivals –
to prevent them, at all costs, from discovering
there’s really nothing wrong –
to prevent them from solving Life’s little mysteries
from learning the physiological nature of life
today, yesteryear and ancient histories
not covered in manuals, but permeated in hearts
to find out the real meaning of life is spontaneity –
expressing what we feel, not what the pseudo-intellectuals
in professorial pomp declare
after wasting thirty thousand bucks in university fees
to become mere conveyors of thought inactivity
losers with creative inability
poisoned by Psychology 211 at Mickey Mouse University
vainly forever disguising lack of experience
and even imagination.

Yet, victims of the system
still playing at being intellectual –
lightweights in the intelligence division
can only conjure up images of gender dysphoria
in the absence of truly incisive brains –
to go those two steps further
and to investigate the biological continuum
or even the plight of the intersexual –
this circle of ignorance still foolishly goes on
with little protest
But, people, you can be free if you want
just by being your best
and playing no heed to the shrink con artists
who still believe gender is king
or “It’s all in your head, Hymie, dear boy.”
or “Sign up ’cos dysphoria’s the latest thing”:
because God gave each one of us the right
to bust out and be who you must –
you have the right to fight
your soul is as free as the blowin’ wind
when, in Jesus, we trust –
Who said, “It’s better that one of thy body’s members perish
than thy whole body be cast into a living hell.” –
and recognized both the physical and emotional needs
and sounding Life’s Liberty Bell.

Attention: Dr. Jon Meyer

Being me is being free to be
who I’ve always been inside
and your notion of “sex change operation”
seems so preposterous
when I’ve always been a girl at heart!
Why can’t the people see
all I ever wanted to be
is just me - in soul and body
and when I underwent surgery seven years ago
it wasn’t to shock anybody.
After all those years of being the underdog
it was really just to be free
and to be just as womanly
as I feel I should be - even if it meant shyly.
When all the factors are finally “knowns”
you’ll find out I was just following my hormones
just like any other female, or male.
Oh, why can’t the world just close its eyes
for a few minutes, and imagine the pain
of being robbed, by an accident of birth
the tears cried, by thousands of little girls
trapped in sadness and sorrow like falling rain?
Yet, who cares for the intersexed child –
who will treat us with a little respect –
why do the newsmen try to make us seem immoral –
Oh, why, why, must the world neglect?
Don’t they know I’ve got parents, just like the rest
that I love my peers sisters and brothers
who are doing the best they can with limited opportunities?
You provide my people with your laughter and your mockery, world –
by what right do you attack or scorn
that which you don’t really fully understand?
All I know is I’m as female as any other female on the block
as is the current standard throughout this land.
My husband can tell you what I say is true
and I’m just being me.
I took insults like yours to be finally free –
underwent an operation on my anatomy
ten days in a hospital in another country –
took the pain of corrective surgery.
Could you, would you, do the same
if it was the only way of expressing you?

**BORN AGAIN!**
(July 9, 1975, Trinidad, Colorado)

‘Twas the dawn of my freedom
and all through the land
a few creatures were stirring
like me and my husband.
I hadn’t been able to sleep at all
the event was too exciting to me
for I’d come ready to die!
if it meant being free...

(The workers of the world awoke that hot ninety-five degree Wednesday,
too busy to know, too disinterested to care,
what was happening so many hundreds of miles
and light years of understanding away:
   In a restaurant near San Francisco
   a city cop made his complaint
   saying, “My dog might eat this
   but McDonald’s this ain’t!”
   Otherwise another routine morning in life
   a hot muggy day, even for a car ride.
   In a New York courthouse, it yet seemed so calm
   as the axe murderer was being tried…)

Yet, in this little Colorado town
whose name, by night, lit up the sky
for twenty miles into New Mexico –
for one person, who challenged the course of Fate itself
there were but minutes to launch time of a whole lifetime to go:
   This special day Jesus’s love was with me
   which I could somehow more than just sense
   filling the soul of my heart
   with a force so intense
   seeming to symbolize the apex of my life –

My Whole World’s Today:
   God’s answer to my desperate pleas
   often crying out on bended knees.
   I was like a soldier in the night
   who kept on fighting, though losing many a battle
   yet, who finally won the war
even over the pessimists’ puerile prattle.
   At gender clinics, degree-seeking, no-name interns
   have tried to play games with my precious life
   with empty talk of “role playing”
calculating three-to-five year waiting periods
   sentencing me to longer terms of imprisonment
   as they designed further stalls for continued strife.
FINALLY –
No more of their pseudo-intellectual lies and prejudice
no more of their imposed suffering sentences to endure
for I only wanted spiritual salvation
while they vainly sought out a cure
to suit their stereotypic, whimpering minds
and nine-to-five lifer subconsciousnesses
which rendered them almost totally blind –
but not even Dr. Jon Meyer
can ever hope to destroy
the WILL of a soul
to triumph over the tyranny of God-playing doctors
and to make oneself whole.

AND NOW, AT LAST -
It was really happening
the MIRACLE of my life
sensing VICTORY a-coming
bringing an end to the strife…
The “when?” I had prayed for
ever since I was small
my proud Celtic heart a-pounding
my nerves bouncing like a rubber ball…
As the final countdown minutes arrived
I knew all systems were go
as I lay in Dr. Biber’s operating theatre
in Southeastern Colorado -
thoughts came to me of Rodger, my Love
and the love we have shared
as I joked with the orderly
while the room was being prepared.

(The workers of the world awoke that summer Wednesday,
too busy to feel or sense what was happening
so many miles away…
    I really can’t say I blame them –
    afterall, it was a very personal event
    but, if they could only have shared my joy
    and to have known what this all really meant…)

The anesthesiologist steadied her needle
as the seconds flew at me.
I told her, “Honey, let’s do it for peace.”
And felt my soul roam free -
a mist came down upon me
and swirled all about
as the ether took effect
and put me out for the count.
I remember seeing the clock on the wall
its hands marking off 8:07
after the Hell of my life
I was finally reaching what -
in contrast - was Heaven.
And I saw the face of an angel
come to rescue me from a fire-filled jail.
“Nature’s mistake” being miraculously righted
finally – truly female!

(Meanwhile, at 10:00 am, the usual whistles blew
for coffee breaks across the rest of the land:
   The workers ordered coffee and donuts from the wagon
   and the President, he shook another hand
   as hog prices went up in Houston.
   For once, the dollar on Wall Street
   was steady and stable
   while a bus driver in Omaha, Nebraska
   muttered that transsexualism was but a fable
   like the same man who doubted that
   Jesus could be born in a stable…)

Up in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada), my husband
husband nervously paced the floors, up and down
as he lit up another smoke
like an expectant father
whose wife was long overdue
to him, this really was no joke…

And, back in Trinidad, though his leg was in a cast
the great Dr. Biber had come to succeed
because he knew I’d been struggling for so many decades
and that History had selected him for the deed.
And he’s never lost his care for people
his will for helping others, through his profession and life
to save those who are suffering needlessly
with the artistry and skill of his magical knife.
For four-and-a-half hours that day
at Mt. San Rafael Hospital on the hill
this event really did happen –
it seemed that the whole universe stood still.

continued…
As the anesthetic slowly lifted its veil
I remember feeling my life’s burden seemed light
as a voice began to penetrate the mist
urging me to struggle and fight:
  Saying: “C’mon, Linda, c’mon, Linda
  You can make it kid; you’ve won!”
  And I felt a surge of energy sweep through me
the Force, like the warmth of the sun –
knowing the war was over, at last
Because, in God’s eyes, I’d finally made the grade
and I softly closed my eyes again –
wandering off into my life’s parade.

At 6:30 pm, they brought me supper –
I don’t think any patient has ever eaten a bite
but they meant well, I knew
as my mind kept on flying high
dancing right into the night.

(The workers of the world sat down
to watch the late night news that Wednesday:
  Walter Cronkite was too busy to mention it
  but there was one mor female reborn in America
  when the people knelt by their beds to pray…)

Proving that, however difficult it looks
no matter how hard it may seem
if there’s a will, there’s a way -
to accomplish the Impossible Dream.


WISH YOU WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME

Hi there, friends! Remember, y’all said
Linda T. didn’t have a chance in heck?
Well, Big Momma’s still playing the blues
While some others done hit the deck.

Instead of sinking in the ocean
My ship’s done crossed the sea
And though the waves have crashed and howled
I’m so happy to be free – and me!

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© Fighting Back, 1978)
FOR LINDA T., WITH LOVE

Linda T., rebel with cause, you surely were!
   Not to mention a guerrilla gender warrior and all-round rabble rouser,
   kicking ass, fighting back against the medical establishment,
   taking to task the gender-pathologizing psychiatrists and psychologists
   at Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic, Case Western Reserve University
   and University of Winnipeg’s Health Sciences Centre.

You commemorated, in poignant and powerful verse -
   in the vein of such social protest folk singers as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez -
   some of your trans sisters (like Lolo D’Amour and Dianne Edwards)
   and trans brothers (like Brenda Spencer)
   whose lives had been tragically cut short by transphobic rapists and killers.

I met you and your hubby and your German shepherd in Winnipeg in 1979,
   when you were going by “Reverend O’Connell,”
   a year after you formed your North American Transsexual Society,
   and our paths crossed again, some years later in Toronto, after you moved there.

We had our differences of opinion and our down-and-dirty blowouts, of course
   (who doesn’t? - especially activist outsiders!)
   but we usually made up at the end of the day because we had to band together
   to fight the common enemy: society’s gender-phobic bigots.

Too bad you later contracted Multiple Sclerosis and became wheelchair-bound,
   but your inborn fighting spirit, undying faith in Jesus
   and compulsive quest for social justice remained intact, notwithstanding,
   Welsh-born warrior and life survivor that you are,
   even when you were still singing the outcast transsexual blues!

After 1990, I never saw you again, so I don’t know what’s become of you since,
   but if you’re still alive and kicking, may there always be wind in your sails,
   and if you’ve, perchance, shuffled off this mortal coil (where trans people come
   and go discussing ways to resolve gender dysphoria and overcome transphobia),
   then please know that I, for one, always believed in you, Big Momma,
   and I’ll never forget you – here’s a toast to you, Linda T., with love!

~~ Rupert Raj (2014)
FOR MERISSA, THE “ TIFFANY ROSE”

Merissa, you were a living legend of the early transgender world: a flower of Fantasia Fair and the Cherrystone Club of Boston, co-founder of the Tiffany Club in 1978 and IFGE in 1986 - a mover-and-shaker supreme in spite of charges of “imperialism.”

You started out on your gender journey as a transvestite/transgenderist, evolving, over the years, to a transsexual woman, eventually medically and surgically transgendering to female.

I contributed articles to your “TV/TS Tapestry” magazine in the 1980s and served with you on IFGE’s Steering Committee and Board of Directors (feeling outnumbered, at times, as the only trans-male member).

I can still recall our first meeting at the Tiffany House - you standing there larger-than-life, (yet, all-too human behind your iconic façade) as we hugged heartily after years of anticipation.

Thank you, Merissa, for creating a community where transsexuals, transgenderists and transvestites could all come together for camaraderie and mutual support (though personalities and ideologies often clashed!).
Like the rose emblazoned on your magazine, your “spirit” still blossoms after your body gave out in 2017.

~~ Rupert Raj (2018)
A MAN THAT WAS BORN

When I think of my life, so monstrously torn
Of the childhood of torment, the youth gone to waste
Of the marriage in tatters and the child half alone
Then I weep for the man I was born.

I remember that past, and the image I’d worn
The wife and the home and the daughter – of mine
The times of great sadness and of failure as a father
I must weep for the child that was born.

I weep for the woman that now wakes in the morn
The blossoming flower that’s grown from the bark
A life unfulfilled that will never bear fruit
And I weep for the child never born.

All through the night, from the dusk to the dawn
I cry for the one, and I cry for the other
And if ever this wailing and weeping is over
I’ll weep for the day I was born.

~~ Theresa (of Fleetwood) (1983)
I am a woman
And I was born yesterday
But that doesn’t mean I’m naïve
Victim of your force, your slave.

One side seeking liberty
The other, superiority
But I found my equality
Because we’re both, and one
Just what I chose to be
All that I have become.

I am a woman
And I was born yesterday.
By surgeon’s blade, I was fashioned and made
But he didn’t culture the spirit I’ve made.
The genital truth is something I changed
For a mythic polarity of male-in-me saved
As a reason to be the woman I am
A half-life – Atomic, not a half-living man.

I am a woman
Born yesterday.
And though you defile my time-honoured way
You cannot refute your financial pay:
From blade, through your social agony, I’m paid
Take your moral dilemma, your feminist sham
Your latency, terror and irrational stand
And shove them right up your own angst-ridden pain
‘Cos I’m a woman – free, just Born Again.

~~ Phaedra Kelly
REBIRTH

Some years ago Mother bore a boy
a child’s mind as you may know
is always Society’s toy
I tried in vain to fit their mold
to my true self I was blind
A few of us can be so bold
to make gender self-define
A struggling Woman’s spirit
was desperate to be free
I tried so not to hear it
but I knew that she was me
I no longer lay my head sedated
on a pillow damp from crying
I have been reincarnated
without ever really trying

~~ Anonymous (© The Uninvited Dilemma, 1983)

POST-OP SONG
(to the tune of “Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin’!”)

Oh, what a beautiful torso!
Oh, what a sweet pair of boobs!
I’ve got a genuine vulva
And a vagina that lubes!

When my friends started calling me “Gloria”
I got rid of my gender dysphoria.
Now my hips have a spread
That goes right to my head –
It’s like sipping champagne
At the Waldorf-Astoria!

Oh, what a beautiful torso!
I’m on a new kind of high.
Everything gives me that feelin’
I’m gonna find me - a guy!

~~ Gloria Ogleman (©Transition, March/April 1979)
ODE TO STANLEY

Look what Biber's done to me –
gone the evidence that I was he.  
I used to be an ugly brute
but now at least my bottom’s cute!

He stopped for good that awful flow
of testosterone from down below –
That stuff that roughens cheek and limb
and changed my body into a him.

He neatly nipped the culprits off
and dumped them into the garbage trough.
And then he turned me outside in
and made labia from scrotal skin.

The little tube through which I pee
is now inside of me.
I cannot aim it anymore –
it sometimes squirts out on the floor.

It looks and feels and smells just right –
a friend to help me through the night.
He even made a brand new clit
but I’m not supposed to play with it!

I no longer have what I once had
thanks to the “miracle man” from Trinidad.
With a few deft passes of his knife
in two short hours, he changed my life.

A cheerful, skilled surgeon, he
who sets cross-gendered people free.
Thank you, Stanley, for what you’ve done
with your help, at last, I’m one.

~~ Sheila
A TRULY BLESSED EVENT (Jan. 13, 1971)

South of the border
Down Mexico way
In a place called Tijuana
I'll have a short stay
And a Doc named “Barbosa”
As quick as a wink
Is changing my booties
From blue into pink!

~~ Wendy Gale Kohler

THE CREATION OF “PUSSY”¹³

Seven wise men with knowledge so fine
Created a “pussy” to their own design.

First was a butcher, smart with wit
Using a knife, he gave it a slit.

Second was a carpenter, strong and bold
With hammer and chisel, he gave it a hole.

Third was a tailor, tall and thin
Using red velvet, he lined it within.

Fourth was a hunter, short and stout
With a piece of fox fur, he lined it without.

Fifth was a preacher, by name of “McGee”
Touched it and blessed it, and said it could pee.

Sixth was a fisherman, nasty as hell
Threw in a fish and gave it a smell.

Last was a sailor, dirty little runt
Fucked it and sucked it, and called it a “cunt.”

~~ Anonymous
THE ITCH

To the Ex –
who got the nine-year itch.
For what, I don’t know –
she was a witch.
So now, I don’t need –
due to a switch.
‘Cause now I have
my very own itch!

~~ Laura

A SHORT STORY

I have three inches.

~~ Betty Joy Ann

PRE-OP LIMERICK: COCKSURE - BUT PREMATURE

A pre-op M-F TS named “Rex”
Had a most minute organ of sex.
When arraigned for exposure
He replied with composure:
“De minibus non curat Lex!”
(“The Law is unconcerned with trifles!”)

~~ Jana Thompson

POST-OP LIMERICK: THREE-TITTY DITTY

A young post-op lady named “Sue”
Has astonished more than a few
Who have looked up to see
A total of three
Where most girls have only two.

~~ Jana Thompson
RICH IN SPIRIT

I’ve never been so poor
But I’ve never been so happy.
I’ve known for a long time
That I was meant to be a woman.
I’m just glad I had the courage
To go through with it.
I feel as if my life is just beginning…

~~ Carolyne Munroe

PEACE, AT LAST

It was like World War III
Raging inside me
And, now at last –
The fighting has stopped.

~~ Stephanie Anne Lloyd

PEACE

And can I at last have found peace?
Lying here today with a tube in my arm?
and one from my insides
with the pain between my legs, unable to sleep
soothed, sedated and settled down
a creature controlled by medicine
and fashioned by science.

Can this be peace?
Can this be the contentment I have sought
these long and tortured years?
And did I not have peace of mind before
living and working as a woman, loving as a wife?
And then, I look down –
And I know that I have finally found peace.

~~ Diane
I AM WOMAN

I am Omega and Alpha, the end and the beginning,
Which was, which is, and which will come.

For my soul has journeyed on its passage
To Armageddon and thence to Purgatory,
And the sun of my world has become
as black as sackcloth of hair,
And the moon of my world has become as blood,
And the stars of my world have fallen onto the earth,
And my heaven has fallen into a bottomless pit,
And I have sought death and have not found it,
And I have desired to die, and death has fled from me.

Now my soul has returned,
From Purgatory it has returned,
From Armageddon it has returned,
To Life it has returned.
And the sun of my world is clothed with a rainbow,
And the moon of my world is gentle and still,
And the stars of my world are boundless and limitless,
And my heaven is deep within me,
And I seek Life and have found it,
And desire to love, and love has come to me.

I am Omega and Alpha, the end and the beginning,
Which was, which is, and which will come –
For I am Woman.

~~ Diane
BEING A WOMAN

Being a woman –
Is putting on an attractive face to the world
For the world will look at you closely,
Is worrying about your figure and your shape
For being healthy and beautiful is best for your body,
Is buying clothes and jewelry and perfume
For feeling and looking good is good for you.

But being a woman is also –
Straggling into work, going ‘round the supermarket,
Washing the dishes, cleaning the house,
Ironing the clothes, cooking the dinner,
Digging the garden, queueing up at the bank,
Walking the dog, and the thousand-and-one jobs
That are expected of all women.
All this I knew.

But being a woman is also –
Being loved and respected by a man
For men mostly do love women and care for them,
Being chatted up and asked out
For it is good for the ego to know you are fancied,
Being able to talk intimately to other women
For now you are one of them and share their lives,
Being able to hug and kiss and love
Without any fear of being found out,
Living your life and planning your future
For the first time in your life.

For being a woman is –
Being funny and sexy and caring and capricious
And proud and anxious and at peace with yourself,
Because being a woman is just being yourself.

~~ Lamorna
YOU'RE A WOMAN NOW  
(A Homecoming Poem for Abby Marie Green)

Do your eyes look at life  
in an entirely new way?  
Does your smile hold a promise  
of something new to say?  
Do your ears hear music  
where there was only silence before?  
Do your feet yearn to dance  
across Life's ballroom floor?

You're a Woman now –  
with a twinkle in your eyes.  
You're a Woman now –  
with a tear in your sighs.  
You're a Woman, Abby  
now and ever after…

Do your lips take the form  
of a kiss for the giving?  
Do your arms open warmly  
to embrace the joy of living?  
Does your touch grow tender  
when you reach out a hand?  
Does your heart beat more quickly  
now that you understand?

You're a Woman now –  
with a twinkle in your eyes.  
You're a Woman now –  
with a tear in your sighs.  
You’re a Woman, Abby  
now and ever after…

~~ Watson Gray (1987)
NEW LADY
(for all my transitioned trans sisters)

Yes, you were a lady before
But now, you’re a woman even more
For you have a new lease on life
And are finally free – free to be!

Mind and body are at last in harmony
The Yin element now fully reigns queen
As your budding femininity blossoms
Like a vibrant bloom of fragrant lilacs.

Drab cocoon grows into a butterfly in flight
Cinderella changes into a lovely princess
Plain Jane becomes the belle of the ball
And today, glowing Amber is a brighter jewel.

~~ Rupert Raj (1981)

THE BALLAD OF LESLEY AND THE RIGHT TO BE ME

There’s a lady I know who’s as strong as can be.
She’s making a change for the whole world to see.

From out of a man is a woman who’s being reborn.
No more guilt, she says, and to this she has sworn.

She can now walk proudly for she is who she is.
They’ll probably make jokes about what’s “hers” and what’s “his.”

But who really can say what’s right and what’s wrong.
And the point of this poem is that yes, she belongs!

What’s wrong with wanting to wear a skirt or a dress?
It’s not our fault people think we are a mess.

So, let’s unite as one so our rights can be heard.
This one’s for you, Lesley, for you’re part of this world.

~~ Jackie Adams

STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY

Transsexuals of the world unite
For you alone know what is right!

~~ Rita
FREE TO BE ME
(adapted from a poem by Ruby Edwards)

There’s a girl living inside of me
Who keeps on begging to be free.
When I was young, she used to cry out
But, in confusion, with a sigh, I’d say
“Please, please, be quiet, go away!”
Yet, she would beg day after day
“Please, I want to be set free!”

Then, as I grew, I somehow knew
That on some bright future day
That little girl would have her way.
Slowly, she started to come out
For a very quick, shy look about
Then, would run and hide inside of me
And safe again, would beg to be set free.

As I grew, she grew, and throughout the years
We lived and felt all the same fears.
I would wonder then, “How could this be?
To have this woman inside of me
Who wants so much to be set free
And live in style and dress in lovely things?
All the while, I was a man in a man’s world
So how could I also be a girl?
What strange twist of Fate created me
So neither Man nor Woman could be free?”

After many years of searching and asking
“Who am I – and why?”
I have finally realized
There aren’t two people inside.
There is just she – and she is I!
So I named her “Jean” and dressed her well
Even my own bathroom mirror could not tell.

As she learned to use her female charm
She became even more beautiful and warm.
To free her is to free me – because she is I.
Now, I have finally reached the day
When I can honestly and truly say:
“I’m so glad Jean finally had her way!”

~~ Jean Johnston (1985)
REVELATION

So, restless spirit
Why torment me so?
What freedom dost thou seek -
Like a caged animal
Pacing to and fro
Never, never to sleep?

Thou dost keep this mortal shell
Forever strained
Trying, trying, ever trying -
Like a speechless being to communicate
And yet, methinks I hear
Though not yet quite clear.

Conflict ‘twixt mortal prison
And immortal soul.
Ever striving -
For equality? identity? oneness?
I listen to thee, please tell me
Or till eternity, in anguish will I dwell.

Oh, restless spirit
Quieten thy motions
I have listened, understood and know -
Like a tall ship
My sails must set
And lean before thy blow.

Now, in harmony
Body against soul no more competes
Sails set square
Spirit, blow fair
Forever onward -
Majestic, beautiful, complete!

~~ Rae of Leicester

NOCTURNE

Come early
for I need love.
Leave often
to protect my
frail sense of me.

~~ Suesan Stewart (©Transition, March/April 1979)
ODE OF A LESBIAN-ORIENTED TRANSSEXUAL

Matchmaker, matchmaker
   Make me a match
      Find me a catch
         Fetch me a snatch!

Matchmaker, matchmaker
   Post-operative
      Does not always equate
         That I will be “straight.”

Matchmaker, matchmaker
   Please don’t be late.
      I’ll take any fate -
         Love can be great.

Matchmaker, matchmaker
   Do not be long.
      I’ll sing this song
         Till she comes along.

Matchmaker, matchmaker
   Fill me with glee
      So I can be happy
         Too.

~~ Melita Boriana Stanulet (1985)

DIANA

I am a silver huntress
Diana is my name.
I used to be a man –
a ruddy-chested, sunburnt man.
Now I run naked in the moonlight -
white breasts shining in its glow.
I pace slowly under stars –
gorgeous night my robe.

~~ Susan/Suzanne Bishop
DESIRE FOR THE DIMINUTIVE

I long to be a poetess, long-haired and oracular or an aviatrix, short-haired, pert and bold.

I’d love to be the heroine of a Gothic melodrama or a waitress pouring coffee in a roadside diner.

I long for the diminutive to be applicable to me, The “ess,” the “ix,” the “ine,” that signal femininity.

Agreed, those usages are old-fashioned, sexist, out of date, and much to be condemned. It’s the reality behind them that I would possess – the differences, vital differences, between a woman and a man.

It’s life-creating and life-sustaining that I long to be: a well, a moon, a flowering vine, fruitful, fecund, free of the madness of testosterone and its wild demands.

I’m a circle, not a line; I dance, I do not march.

I should be rapt in the female rhythm that nurtures and preserves, a captive of life’s cycle, swayed by hidden tides, giving and receiving, needing to succor need, always undiminished.

~~ Susan/Suzanne Bishop

THREE SONGS

I. You, sweetly scented shadow, moving nimbly with no noise, come remove romantic nonsense from my brain. Vagueness cloys in the gauzy air of spring. Make me pant for a sharp encounter.

II. Into the vivid landscape, two figures danced and dwindled, whirling like dust devils, tranced and flailing in the tyranny of spring. Clouds thudded in the west and the wind came that shakes the petals free.

III. Catullus, batter us with dithyrambs of delight. Libido, lead us dazzled into realms of light. Dispel ennui and we will dwell in Eden’s arbors bright.

~~ Susan/Suzanne Bishop
A SONG OF SHEBA

You are a prince,
you are a rose.
You are a chest of spices,
rich, secret, subtle,
stored with hidden pungencies
of acutest savor.
Your body is a compass,
forked and just right, precise.
Your hands are wands of willow,
savants of hidden springs:
their lightest touch upon my breast
makes stomach clench and backbone twang.
(Your little trail of ants
from navel down undoes me).
I can be your precious garden,
marvelous park,
the fittest
habitat for you.
Let me englobe you now.

~~ Susan/Suzanne Bishop

VACATION PARADISE

Come down with me to a certain place
where character rots and soul dissolves.
Your stance is rigid with resolve.
Won’t you be tempted from the cold?

You’ll be cleaned and given grace
by the heat which lounges there.
It receives you, clings, and bears you down,
creeping salaciously inside to lure out all corruption.

Dripping with our sins, we’ll amble,
with a motion learned from palm trees
down a line of bougainvilleas
to the forest’s edge,
and slip like jaguars into orchid shade.

Don’t fear a second fall.
We’ll eat only meat.

~~ Susan/Suzanne Bishop
OBSESSION
(For a dreamer)

i see your face when i close my eyes
and feel your skin again in my dreams
i touch you softly within my mind
and want to feel you hold me once again…

why is it you cannot be with me all the time?
i tell myself you can never be all mine
and yet i want to meet you at midnight –
smell the moon in your hair
and taste stars on your lips…

you touched a softness i tried so hard to kill
and now i’d follow you forever…
take me with you –
we’ll fly away to hide behind the night
and tomorrow’s goodbye will never find us again…

~~ Tory
STRANGE GIRL (STANDING ON THE CORNERS OF OUR DREAMS)

Fast fingers ‘round a silver blade
must have cut up four or five
she was laughing all the while
guess she knew
we’d come out alive.

Strange girl, we don’t play by rules
we’ve been to all the schools
and through a thousand fools
like midnight thieves
through chests of jewels.

Strange girl, stroll along the boulevard
pick up numbers right and left
painted up Vogue-model style
with Aziza
it’s not very hard.

Strange girl, only you have shared my pain
and it may come again
like sullen summer rain
and just as cruel
as Southern chain.

Strange girl, only let’s fly away to France
or maybe Singapore
America’s so rude, you know
and I’d like to have
a gambler’s chance

Strange girl, maybe everyone will laugh
maybe everyone will cry
but I’ll give you all the tea, Miss Thing
you and I, we’ll never die
fighting for our rights.

So clap a bit for Lynne and Tisha
dance for dear Amanda
sing for brave Renée
and for strange girls
standing on the corners of our dreams.

~~ Angela Lynn Douglas (© Sex Change, 1978)
DOUGLAS COUNTY GAMBLER

In Douglas County, old Nevada
The roulette wheels just spin and spin
The tumbling dice sound kind of nice
And the baccarat's pure sin

Reno’s cold and icy
Frozen faces glance at me
As I drink another bourbon
And play it all on twenty-three

I busted out in Vegas
Felt like a sunken ship
 Took a stroll down Vegas Boulevard
Looking for someone to clip

Well, I don’t care if you believe me
But I was down to my last ten
Changed it all to Reno silver
And tried my luck again

This big jet is so crowded
We’re westward bound today
And the lovely demon sitting with me
Just never has to pay

So we’re back in Honolulu
Drinking Blue Hawaiis in the shade
Looking for some action
Laughing at the trade

It hasn’t always played that way
As so many of you know
Just ask the blown-out losers
Walking lonely in the snow.

~~ Angela Lynn Douglas
camptown reality

marilyn
leaning the
the convertible

all red pleats
and lipstick

james dean said
“just shit on
‘em all”

marilyn says “sure
and i’d like a
taste of that too”

marilyn’s picture
talking to diane

diane’s a 26-year-old
post-op transsexual
who should have been
female but

wasn’t
and now is
and isn’t sure
really
if she is

marilyn’s mouth
is saying
“put it
in here”

~~ tom house
MY PIECE OF THE SKY

Dark and gloomy is life behind the shadows
Living in others’ footsteps
Living for another in another world
To see what they want to see -
It’s not for me.
It is like a quest without a vision to guide upon -
It’s not but a moment in time that we live our lives.
Let not that moment be one of hidden secrets
Of someone else.
I must find myself –
To fly…if I dare to try.

The birds of the blue sky and I have much in common -
They do not walk when they can fly
But can I? Can I try?
For the heavens are all about us -
Let me try to touch the sky
But to try, I must cry.
That side of me will never die or disappear like a wisp -
To be free as the gull
To command my own soul
To fly as I wish to fly –
If I try…dare I?

God’s creatures and I have much in common
Beasts do not take themselves for granted.
They know to try -
I now know why.
Dew on the leaves awaits a new dawning
As I peer out from behind withered shutters
Waiting for a new world –
And I cry.
The first rays capture a tear streaking my cheek
With glistening eyes, I see trees that are so tall
And I, so small.

Papa, look at me –
Papa, can you hear me?
Papa, can you see me?
Papa, can I fly?
Papa, can I try?

continued
As those golden spears drown my morning tears of rain
I open my eyes to a new day -
A new world.
I tear away my shutters and cry
For I am me -
To be free.
Papa - would he not want me to try?
To simply be me?
Knowing my quest within me must be long and hard –
Attacking the windmills of depression
Of sorrow.
Thy enemy mine –
Trying.

Reaching that unreachable star inside of me
My star to follow –
To light my way
To guide me opening the darkness of life
To listen to that song deep inside of me –
Down deep inside of me.
Look into my heart
My soul.
I must come out –
I must fly...to reach the sky.

Watch me –
Watch me fly.
To soar as high as the gull on the wing
To sing her happy melody –
Smile upon the new day.
No more looking up to the world through tear-stained eyes.
To see what I want to, from up on high –
Seeing what I thought I never could
Feeling what I thought I never would.
Seeing outside of myself –
I fly...and I try...

For my life is my own
No one can live it but me
Myself.
I want it all –
All of the sky to own and soar
To see a whole new me.
A whole new world.
I wanted more –
I know I can have it...if I try.
Why couldn’t they see me before?
Were they blind?
Not with me shadowed behind the shutters
They’re not so blind to see my shutters open wide
Letting the world see inside –
And my world out for all to see.

Papa, can you see me?
Papa, can you touch me?
Papa, can you feel what I feel?
Papa, can you fly?

I soar through cotton-covered blueness
And the universe is mine.
The bird am I –
She flies on air so light
It takes her high above the browns and greens below –
High above the tall trees now so small
Into the sunlight of the dawning.

Papa, can you hear me?
I won’t settle for a piece of the sky –
If I try…

~~ Joanne Renée Cone
VALKYRJA
(to Anna Marie)

Teutonic fraulein from lands of ice,
Why did you leave your glaciers
To come to warm California
To prowl for the souls of men?
   Why did you find no satisfaction among the gloomy
   Taciturn, single-minded Nordics of the cold?

I can feel in your remote, imperious eyes
The biting totality of the blinding winter,
   The absolute desolation of the wind that howls
   Over the unforgiving steppes and tundras.

You tell me that you dream of starships,
You say you want to fly over horizons and mountains,
   To a land with the sun at midnight.
   Why then did you choose me -
   A son of the tropics and jungles -
   To tell of the secrets of your soul?

Barbarian, ice-maiden, civilized by the monks,
Could your strange desires be a call to fly back to your wilderness -
   Where the Valkyrjas held battle vigil
   In the shadows of the creeping flames,
   Under the wings of iron weapons touched
   With the many-throated, blood-curdling cries of warriors,
   As they beat their shields with swords.

I will always remember you, because,
Through your voice and
   Metal eyes, I learned what it means
   To be in battle
   Before being borne aloft
   To Valhalla.

~~ Sigfried (© The Phoenix, Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1983)
MOON DAYS AND CYBELE

They worship, indirectly, slyly
surreptitiously –
Devotees walking the ordinary streets
ducking through a door
upstairs to the temple –
Respecting that other aspect of Jehovah
equally unpronounceable
decidedly female.
No one is sure of her name –
Isis, Ishtar, Astarte.
Aphrodite, Venus…Cybele.
They stand erect
in tribute to her
hidden places.
They worship at the grotto –
the holy Stalactite.
the boatman…man in a boat
On the amniotic Nile…
Tigris, Euphrates, Niger
Congo, the Amazon.
Her altar is a stage –
a stage is her altar
where she volunteers her sacrifice –
the sacrifice of her intimacy.
She is the priestess, who
all conditions being perfect
will transubstantiate into
the Goddess.

~~ Cullen (1988)
MERMAID SONG
(tune: “The Locust” by Kathy Mar)

I am the Mermaid, and I swim the ocean wide
I sing to lonely sailors and invite them to my side.
Most of them can’t hear me, and fewer still can see
And so I’m called illusion of dugong and manatee.
But still I sing to sailors on ship and on the beach
I call them all my sisters, who can hear my siren speech.
I am the Mermaid, and I sing across the sea:
“Come to me.”

I am the Mermaid, and I bask upon the stones
And dress my river-flowing hair with combs of fishes’ bones.
All those who see and hear my song, who come to my embrace
I change into young Mermaids as they softly stroke my face.
And so I sing to sailors on ship and on the beach
I make them all my sisters, who will heed my siren speech.
I am the Mermaid, and I sing across the sea:
“Come to me.”

I am the Mermaid, and I play a coral harp
To pierce the hearts of sailormen with tones so arrow-sharp.
And those who hear my melody, but turn away in fright
Will always have its bright refrain to haunt them in the night.
For they too are my sisters, although they fear to dive
My love for them is painful, for on land they cannot thrive.
I am the Mermaid, and I sing across the sea:
“Come to me.”

I am the Mermaid, and the Lady of the Sea
And all my beauteous sisters swim the breaking crests with me.
Some swim the seas their lives long, while some return to shore
But Mermaids on the land must e’er return to swim once more.
I love my many sisters, on land and on the sea
All sailormen are sisters, who can hear my song and see.
I am the Mermaid, and I sing across the sea:
“Come to me.”

~~ Deirdre O’Connor
ACHILLES AMONG THE MAIDENS

I did not go to Troy.
My mother feared for me
And raised me as a maid.
She well knew my two fates:
To fight and fall at Troy
Immortalized by bards
Or live a hundred years
Recalled in song by none.

A happy girl was I –
Outrunning all my friends.
I’d hunt with knife and bow
Weaving cloth by day
And minor spells by night.
I’d wear a pretty dress
And chatter all the while.
We girls together loved.

One night the goddess spoke:
“Tomorrow, I must choose
Between my twinned fates:
To don the hero’s helm
And perish in the field
Or stay for e’er a maid
And live to be a crone
Grown wise in women's ways.”

The Warrior, swift and strong:
For nine vainglorious years
To strive before Troy's walls
Quite mad with battle rage.
The poets oft will sing
Of strength, of fearlessness
Of honor, and of love
That springs ‘twixt man and man.

The Priestess, deep and wise:
For nigh on ninety years
To strive for unknown lore
With mind, with ecstacy.
The poets cannot sing
Of joy in mystery
Of secrets without name
Of love ‘twixt maid and maid.
To die a crone, unknown
To all, in times to come
Or live in song until
The Gods themselves are dust?
I hear the blind bard.
“Sing, Muse, of Achilles’ wrath!”
I see the tyrant steal
A girl from me. I sulk.

And as I sulk, my love
My boon companion falls.
All honor burns to ash
As I avenge his death.
This tale of shame, alone
Of songs of Troy will live
Whom bards would fain destroy
They first raise to great heights.

The peddlers come at dawn.
They come to draw me out
With merchandise for men
Amid the ladies’ gear.
I shun the slaughter-tools:
The sword, the spear, the helm.
And buy, instead, a ring
A spindle, and a dress.

My choice is Goddess-blessed:
That night, my maiden-love
And I pledge ne’er to part.
Then, in the hallowed ring
I draw the Full Moon down.
A Sorceress am I
Untouched by lying verse
For I did not go to Troy.

~~ Deirdre Jackson (1987)
THANK YOU

Oh, Lady, who made me
I call to you softly
You always stand near me
My Mother, my Friend.

I bring to you daily
My joys and my sorrows
To dance with you gladly
Or weep on your breast.

Today, I now bring you
My happiness, for I
Rejoice in my Womanhood
New-found and dear.

To care and to nurture
To love with compassion
To open my heart-door
Brings joy to my life.

To don pretty dresses
And chat with my sisters
To share good and bad times
Brings gladness also.

I thank you, Goddess
For making me Woman
For my femininity’s
My strength, my joy.

~~ Deirdre Jackson (1987)
A TRIBUTE TO TWO LOVELY DAUGHTERS

Hark! I hear a voice a’calling,
It must be for me, I’m sure.
It have Faith like never before,
Womanhood one day, for sure.

Many a stare, many a snigger,
Some days bleak, some unbearable
But things get better, of that I’m sure,
Just you wait till I’m a girl.

Two special friends support me still,
Girls I love and always will.
They understand in me this need
To carry on, to succeed.

They have watched me in Despair,
They have seen the silent tear.
Encouragement, love, hugs and kisses,
Wonderful things from my two little Misses.

“Come on, Lisa,” oft they say,
Where’s that smile gone today?”
They encourage me all the time
Those two little girls of mine.
Bless them, Lord, and please take care
Of the girls I love so dear.
Help them both in all they do,
Emma and Loretta, this is for you.

~~ Lisa Ann
RULES FOR TRANSSEXUAL WOMEN
(Because Your Mother Never Told You, That’s Why…)

1. **Try to shut up about it once in awhile.**
   We all realize that it’s really amazing and sometimes terribly draining, but there are other things you could comment on occasionally, just to show that, despite your medical problem, you are still in touch with the rest of humanity.

2. **It wouldn’t hurt to develop a sense of humor.**
   Tragic comedy has its roots in ancient Greece, no doubt written by a pre-op.

3. **Make friends – and keep them.**
   At the same time, remember that all transsexuals did not come from the same cookie-cutter. Never assume that because you are of the same phenomenon, you are of the same mind.

4. **Try not to take obvious fashion risks.**
   No woman should, but some of us need to be reminded. You know who you are.

5. **Never pretend to have diminished intelligence in the presence of a man to whom you are attracted in the false hope of becoming his little “fluff head.”**
   We generally come through all this with our brains intact, notwithstanding current jokes to the contrary. This behavior generally irritates people and makes them spit up.

6. **Please do not demonstrate to me how your voice used to sound…EVER!**

7. **Relax a little.**
   There are millions of misguided souls out there “rolfing” and self-actualizing themselves into a lather. At least you know what’s wrong with you.

8. **Stop whining.**
   It makes lines.

9. **Develop patience.**
   There’s not a single documented case of waking up as a genetic woman after having asked God to help you to do so the previous night. Don’t stop asking, just be patient. She’s very busy, but she’ll get to you eventually.

10. **You only pass this way once (no pun intended), so why not pass in as dignified a manner as possible?**
    If people laugh at you, laugh back. Learn to be happy with yourself at last!

~~ A.F America
**NEW TRANSABRIDGED DICTIONARY**

**transboring**, tranz-bore’ing, adj. when a pre-op male-to-female transsexual can speak of nothing except how well she can pass in public.

**transfection**, tranz-fec’shun, n. 1. the virus that causes a transsexual to seek the transfix. 2. what causes gender dysphoria in a transsexual.

**transfix**, tranz-fiks’, n. the surgical procedure of altering or ‘fixing’ genitals to conform to the inborn gender identity code.

**transformer**, tranz-for’mer, n. 1. a surgeon who performs the transfix. 2. a former transsexual of either gender who has passed through this stage to become a ‘real’ woman or man.

**transit**, tranz-it’, n. 1. a neutered transsexual. 2. one who has really been ‘fixed.’

**transitive**, tranz-i’tive, adj. when a transsexual is very sensitive about not passing.

**translate**, tranz-late’, v. when a post-op male-to-female transsexual has missed her period.

**translocate**, tranz-lo’kate, v. the act of finding a transformer to do the transfix.

**transmate**, tranz-mate’, 1. n. transsexual roommate. 2. v. when a male-to-female and a female-to-male attempt to produce offspring.

**transmeditation**, tranz-me-di-ta’shun, n. a specialized technique of meditation used by transsexuals to convince themselves they are gender dysphoric.

**transmigrant**, tranz-my’grant, n. a transsexual who changes location during transition to avoid detection.

**transmiserable**, tranz-miz’er-a-bul, adj. 1. when a post-op transsexual is not happy with the transfix. 2. when a pre-op transsexual is not yet approved for hormone therapy.

**transoceanic**, tranz-o-she-ah’nik, adj. when a transsexual goes overseas for a lower costing transfix.
**transom**, tranz-sum’, n. a large sum of money paid by the transsexual to the transformer and hospital for the transfix.

**transpire**, tranz-py’er, v. when a transsexual dies on the operating table.

**transude**, tranz-soode’, v. what a transsexual did to the transformer when he or she didn’t like the results of the transfix.

~~ Megan G. & Diana C. (*Morning Star Ltd.*, 1988)
(additional entries by Becky O., *Twenty Minutes*, 1988)
A HUMAN RIGHT

We stand by each other whenever we can

And, as women, we often have to manage
Raising our children in poverty and damage

We will no longer sacrifice our girls
To your mad man-made world

We will no longer sacrifice our sons
While you mad men negotiate with guns

We will no longer fear for our lives
We will no longer be stripped of our rights
To safe housing, to raise our chosen families
We demand justice and an end to child poverty

We demand to be safe when we walk the streets at night
We demand the right to our own human right

We are mothers, we are daughters
We are sisters, we are wives

We are trans, we are queer, we are lesbians, we are dykes
We are human and have a human right

We are trans, we are queer, we are lesbians, we are dykes
We are human and have a human right

~~ King (2009)
1. **“LIFE SENTENCE”** – Janice Raymond is an American, feminist sociologist, who wrote *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1979). Her ludicrous (and empirically unsound) central thesis is that M-F TSs are really patriarchal, masculinist and stereotypically feminine men in female flesh (“wolf in sheep’s clothing”), who try to usurp born-female women’s unique birthright (the ultimate privilege of femaleness and womanhood) by physically changing their biological sex. Chapter Four is entitled, “Sappho by Surgery: The Transsexually Constructed Lesbian-Feminist.” Raymond writes that post-operative male-to-female transsexuals “attempt to possess women in a bodily sense while acting out the images into which men have molded women.” She further argues that: “the transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist deceive[s] women [by luring them] into believing that they are truly one of us - …not only in behavior but one in spirit and conviction.”

2. **“A LOST CHORD, FOUND”** – “SHAFT” refers to the acronym for the “Self-Help Association for Transsexuals” – a peer-support group started in the United Kingdom in 1980 by Judy Cousins, a post-operative, male-to-female transsexual (trans woman). The “phoenix” is a mythical bird across many cultures), which first burns in a transforming fire, and then rises from the ashes in a re-birth of change and renewal (and sometimes more than once) - and is sometimes used as a symbol for trans people who are transitioning, or have transitioned, to their identified gender identity as their authentic self.

3. **“THEY CALL ME MS. ROBOT”** – Published in *The Gender Trap* (The moving autobiography of Chris & Cathy, the first transsexual parents), by Chris Johnson & Cathy Brown, with Wendy Nelson, Proteus Publishing Ltd., London, UK, 1982, p. 157. Notes Nelson, “[This is] a pitiful little ditty that offers a glimpse of their continuing and underlying despair and frustration of being trapped within the wrong body.” Note also the sympatico feelings of their mutual empathy in terms of their individually and collectively experienced gender distress.

4. **“THE FIRST TIME (THAT I MET YOU)”** – Ibid, p. 157. A simple but bittersweet love poem illustrating the singular predicament of this British trans couple - Chris Brown (F-M TS: trans man) and Cathy Johnson (M-F TS: trans woman) - whereby each one is in the reverse situation.

5. **“PASSING”** – For the uninitiated, “passing” in this context is a code word meaning the ability of trans people or crossdressers to pass in public in their identified social gender role as male or female. In earlier times, the term “passing women” was applied by queer historians to indicate the identity of certain natal females as masculine lesbians, female-to-male crossdressers or transsexual men. Of course, this label is erroneous when applied to the latter.

6. **“PREMARIN”** – A natural form of conjugated Estrogen (female hormone) taken orally in pill form, or intramuscularly by injection. Some M-F TSs use this particular preparation to induce the desired female secondary sex characteristics.
7. “TRANSSEXUAL BLUES” – Written by a (then) pre-op, F-M TS (trans man), who was trying to portray the experiential perspective of a pre-op, M-F TS (trans woman) in a display of brotherly empathy! Compare to “New Lady” (see End Note #16 below).

8. “OUTCAST BLUES” – Published in Fighting Back: A Symphony of Words, Fort Street Publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1978. p. 34. Linda T. O’Connell sings the blues in much of her poetry, a direct influence of Albert King (Black American blues singer) and Bob Dylan (Jewish American folk hero of the “underdog”). Her blues reflected not only her own struggle for gender identity/role liberation, but also for the larger political, social and class struggles of the oppressed inasmuch as Linda was a “street revolutionary,” fighting for all people’s individual freedom and the right to be.

9. “DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE” – Fighting Back, p. 42. The Health Sciences Centre (affiliated with the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba) sponsored a gender identity program in the 1970s to 1980s.

10. “MUSIC OVER AMERICA” – In 1978, Linda O’Connell was incarcerated in a Denver penitentiary (and then transferred to the Winnipeg Detention Centre in Manitoba) for police charges of “making threats to damage, burn, destroy or vandalize public property.” She won her court case, however, proving the charges to be false. Glenda Jones (co-founder of the International Alliance for Male Feminism), Georgia Saunders (founder of the former Gateway Gender Alliance) and Joanna Clark (co-founder of the former Renaissance: Gender Identity Service, who later became a nun and changed her name to “Sister Mary Elizabeth”) were all transgender community leaders in the U.S.A. at that time.

11. “CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE PSYCHIATRIC KIND” - “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available From K-Tel,” (unpublished), 1982, p. 64. The title alludes to Steven Spielberg’s science fiction film, “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” and the first two lines of Linda’s satirical piece are a tongue-in-cheek homage to a couplet found in T.S. Eliot’s 1917 poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”: “In the room the women come and go, Talking of Michelangelo.” Cleveland, Ohio is the location of the Case Western Reserve University Gender Identity Program, which was noted for its (then) requirement of two years’ obligatory, intensive, psychoanalytical psychotherapy (as noted in Leslie Martin Lothstein’s 1983 transphobic text, Female-to-Male Transsexualism: Historical, Clinical, and Theoretical Issues). “Hymie” refers to Jaimie Smith, a (then) psychologist at the former Gender Identity Clinic in Vancouver, British Columbia.

12. “DEAR EDITOR, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS” – “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available From K-Tel,” (unpublished), 1982, p. 49. Dr. Jon Meyer is a (then) psychiatrist and former Director of the Sexual Behaviors Consultation Unit at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1979, he shut down Hopkins’ Gender Identity Clinic (the first such clinic to open in North America in 1965) after presenting the findings of his highly controversial research study of 50 transsexuals (TSs) who underwent either psychotherapy or
sex-reassignment surgery (SRS) through the GIC since 1966. Meyer (mistakenly) concluded that SRS cannot “cure” TSs, and that there is no real difference in life adjustment in terms of jobs, educational attainment, marital adjustment and social stability between operated and non-operated groups.

13. “THE CREATION OF ‘PUSSY’” – This anthology ranges in tone from the seamy to the sublime (and from the sensual to the sexual, to the spiritual). Similar to cisgender women, transgender women can also be either crude or prudish – or both at different times, depending on their mood and the specific situation. Regrettably, there are a few cis and trans women who tend to adopt some of the sexist sensibilities of a number of cis and trans men. Some cisgender females might pick up this form of misogyny by pure osmosis of living in a patriarchy, some transgender females might assume this sexist mode by the fact of being socialized as males for part of their lives. By direct contrast, a number of trans (and cis) women (and men) are non-sexist, even feminist in their political stance, thereby, tending not “to sink to the level of the enemy” by denigrating female genitalia as having a bad (fishy) smell.

14. “PRE-OP LIMERICK: COCKSURE – BUT PREMATURE” – A somewhat less than transpositive piece (not surprising, given the de-humanizing nature of limericks - a crude, sexually-objectifying and mostly misogynistic literary genre by definition!) about a pre-operative male-to-female transsexual (trans woman), and which, regrettably refers to her as “he.” I chose to include limericks in this overall anthology to share the many various poetic forms used to depict the wide diversity of (trans) gender identities and presentations, and the gender transitioning process, where applicable.

15. “POST-OP LIMERICK: THREE-TITTIE DITTY” – One of only three transsexual limericks known to me at the time, as compared to the plethora of transvestic limericks. Perhaps this is an exception as far as transsexual verse goes, given that it is, in fact, a variation on another (TV) limerick, “Three-Titty Ditty” [BOOK THREE: MALE-TO-FEMALE TRANVESTISM]. The other two TS limericks in this anthology are “Cocksure – But Premature” and “Creation of ‘Pussy’.” The limerick seems to be a natural genre for the mostly upbeat aspects of TVism, in direct contrast to the often downbeat tone of TSism. Yet, even the gender-euphoric raptures of sex-reassignment (gender transition) do not tend to favour the limerick as the medium of choice.

16. “NEW LADY” – Penned by a F-M TS, expressing his empathic joy for those of his trans sisters (post-op M-F TSs), who have been able to change their gender dysphoria to euphoria by means of gender reassignment. Compare this to trans man J.K.S.’s similar tribute to the experience of trans women (see End Note #7 above).

17. “DIANA” – Diana was the mythic Roman goddess of the hunt, of the moon and of chastity, and the protectress of women (corresponding to the Greek goddess, Artemis).
18. “THREE SONGS” – Catullus (aka Gaius Valerius, circa 87-54 B.C.) was a Roman lyrical poet, who wrote poems about Bacchus (the Greek mythic god of wine and fertility) and Cybele (“The Great Mother Goddess” and “mysterious mother of a sexless race”), who obligated her priests to be castrated before performing religious sacrifices. Cybele loved Attis, a Phrygian youth, and while in a jealous rage, she caused him to go mad, castrate himself and die. “Dithyramb” is an ancient Greek hymn or poem in honour of Bacchus (equivalent to the Roman god, Dionysus).

19. “SONG OF SHEBA” - Sheba (aka Saba) was an ancient kingdom and people in southwestern Arabia circa 950-115 B.C., especially noted for its gems and spices. Sheba was also the queen of Saba, who visited King Solomon to test his wisdom in the biblical story in “The Song of Solomon” (1 Kings, 10:1-13). Obviously, “A Song Of Sheba” is a wordplay on this, focusing, in this instance, on Sheba. A further meaning of Sheba is an attractive and often flirtatious young woman.

20. “STRANGE GIRL (STANDING ON THE CROSSROADS OF OUR DREAMS)” – An underground hit song in California’s transsexual community of the late 1970s, which Angela Lynn Douglas composed about her M-F TS friend. Compare this to Linda T. O’Connell’s earlier piece, “I'M STANDING AT YOUR CROSSROADS.” “Amanda” refers to Amanda Lear, the iconic French pop diva, disco queen singer, actress, former model and painter (and longtime friend of Salvador Dalí), who was rumoured to be a trans woman who underwent sex-reassignment surgery with Dr. Georges Burou in Casablanca in 1963. She, however, consistently adamantly denies these allegations. “Renée” refers to Renée Richards, the famous American tennis player and ophthalmologist, who transitioned in 1975, and whose 1983 autobiography, Second Serve, was made into a documentary film in 2011. In 2007, she subsequently published a second autobiography, No Way Renée: The second half of my notorious life.

21. “camptown reality” – Note the allusion to Marilyn Monroe – a popular, sexy, cute, female cultural role model for some earlier M-F TSs, who were, back then, often more gender-binary normative then today, with some presenting as ultra-feminine. The sexy, cool, male cultural counterpart, James Dean, on the other hand, does not appear to be such a similar role model for F-M TSs except for Steven Wells’ two poems, “Parallel” and “Dedicated.” [Book Two: Part Two: F-M TGism]. Take note, also, of the stated gender confusion (as distinct from gender conflict) experienced by Diane post-surgically: “…and isn't sure really if she is.” This occasional occurrence underscores the critical importance of both informed consent (including readiness/preparedness by means of the Gender Role Experience (per the Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, (7th version), World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), 2011. www.wpath.org).

22. “VALKYRJA” – “Valkyrja” (aka “valkyrie”) is an ancient Nordic term meaning "chooser of the slain," and in Norse mythology, is one of a host of female figures who choose those who may die in battle and those who may live. Selecting among half of those who die in battle (the other half go to the goddess Freyja’s afterlife field, Fólkvangr), the valkyries bring their chosen to the afterlife hall of the slain,
“Valhalla,” ruled over by the god Odin. Valkyrja also appear as lovers of heroes and other mortals, and are sometimes described as daughters of royalty. At times, they are accompanied by ravens, or connected to swans or horses.

23. “MOON DAYS AND CYBELE” – Cybele was the mythic nature goddess of Phrygia and Asia Minor, whose cult passed to Greece circa 430 B.C. and to Rome circa 204 B.C. She was also known as Rhea (Greek goddess) and Ops (Roman goddess), as well as Berecyntia, Dindymene, and Great Idaean Mother. Note the reference to “the goddess,” also mentioned in “Achilles Among the Maidens” and “Thank You,” both by ? The goddess cult is popular with a number of trans women, as well as with many cisgender and transgender lesbians and feminists. “Man in the boat” is a euphemism for the clitoris.

24. “ACHILLES AMONG THE MAIDENS” – Achilles was the greatest of the mythic Greek heroes in Homer’s Iliad. Achilles was the son of the Phthian king, Peleus, and the sea goddess, Thetis. (Phthia was the southermmost region of ancient Thessaly [a traditional region of ancient Greece], and the homeland of the Myrmidones tribe, which took part in the Trojan War under Achilles). Achilles killed Hector during the siege of Troy, but was himself mortally wounded in the heel by an arrow from Paris.

25. “NEW TRANSABRIDGED DICTIONARY” – To add further to this witty self-parody of us trans folks is my present-day entry: trans-saturated, tranz-sat’oo-ra-ted, adj., an overwhelming sense of being burnt out by trans talk/stuff/shit. Whoever said that trans people don’t have a sense of humour and can’t laugh at ourselves? - much needed trait to balance out the widespread gravity and severity of being born transsexual/transgender(ist). This was also reprinted in my newsletter, Gender Networker, Vo. 1. No. 2, August 1988.

26. “A HUMAN RIGHT” – This is a trans-inclusive (of trans women, in particular) song for LGBTI women composed by King, my Black, genderqueer friend and colleague, who sang it at our 7th Annual Trans, Intersex & Two-Spirit Pride Day at Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
BOOK ONE:

PART TWO:

FEMALE-TO-MALE TRANSSEXUALISM
MISPERCEPTION

The female
you perceive to be
is not the “real” me.
The cover she provides
hides
the man who struggles
to be set free.

~~ Miki

ALL CHANGE

Not so much a “curse”
Rather, more of a threat
Now I’m nearly fifty-three.
Months go fleeting by
And I wonder if I’m free.

But now, this week
I’m “young” again –
Spots on back and nose
And a tummy pain.

Trousers worn tight
While patience wears slim
It’s a curse to feel “her”
While I also feel “him.”

~~ Kaye of Guernsey
A TRANSSEXUAL WISH

I wish I could turn about
And turn myself inside out!

~~ Rupert Raj (Gender Review, No. 3, 1978)

GENDER EUPHORIA¹

Once imprisoned, now I’m free
For, a girl I used to be
Till that glorious saving day
When my gender blues blew away
As I turned myself inside out
And let my masculine self shout:

“Of this human persona
(comprising animus and anima)
I am the ruling force here
Yea, the dominant sphere
In short, I am the core identity
The male self in this human entity.”

Thus, my transsexual trauma
(that uninvited dilemma
that cruelest conundrum)
Is now resolved as I’ve become
The male I always was – indeed
The man I was meant to be!

~~ Rupert Raj (1982)
THE TRANSEXUAL PERSPECTIVE

The human experience embraces both Ecstatic Heaven and anguished Hell. The transsexual perspective is at once A resented Prison and a rare Privilege.

~~ Rupert Raj

THE MAN WITHIN

I feel something stirring
Hidden inside this womanish shell.
It’s always recurring:
The Man within.

I sense something burning
Here inside this female hell.
It’s forever churning:
The Male within.

I think something’s drowning
Deep down inside this lonely well.
It’s finally sounding:
The Man within.

I know something’s surging
Just inside this Venus’s cell.
It’s Adonis emerging:
The Male within breaks out!

~~ Rupert Raj (1982)
PENIS ENVY

There once was a man named “Rick”
Who, alas, alack, had no “prick.”
He wanted so badly a “dick”
That he almost made himself sick.

He wished for a “cock” night and day
So that he could use it for sex play
(in intercourse during a “lay”)
And thus, be a man in every way.

Then, at last, he got a penis
(or rather, a penile prosthesis).
Oh, how he loved his new phallus
For now he was one of the fella’s!

~~ Rupert Raj (1982)

A GENITAL OBSERVATION

It’s easier to make a “hole” than a “pole!”

~~ Sex Reassignment Surgeon
**METAMORPHOSIS**

There are several kinds of metamorphosis:
Franz Kafka’s hero changing into an insect
Ovid’s Greeks turning into trees or stars by hex
The butterfly emerging from its chrysalis
And the transsexual surgically changing sex.

This latter sexual transformation
Is, to me, by far the most dramatic
And causes the greatest news sensation
But it can also be quite traumatic!

For, family and friends might not comprehend
And employers and others might discriminate
And a transsexual might feel quite without a friend
“Cos sometimes love is overshadowed by hate.

Two years, at least, the TS transition
(a period of mixed pain and pleasure -
this so-trying time of rehabilitation)
Is the true test of success or failure.

Yet, it’s all worth it in the final analysis
(despite the loneliness and stigmatization)
So, blossom forth from your restrictive chrysalis
And express your true gender identification.

~~ Rupert Raj (1982)

**SELF-INTEGRITY**

To thine own self be true:
Get in touch with your inner self
And don’t hide the You inside.

~~ Rupert Raj
TO BE WITH YOU

I do believe that God above
Picked you out for me to love.
Picked you out from all the rest
‘Cause he knew I’d love you best.

I had a heart and it was true
But now it’s gone from me to you.
Take care of it as I have done
For you have two and I have none.

If I go to Heaven and you’re not there
I’ll write your name on the golden chair.
If you’re not there by Judgement Day
I’ll know you’ve gone the other way.

I’ll give the angels back my wings
Golden harps and other things.
Just to show you what I’d do
I’d go to Hell to be with you!

~~ Louis Smith (1969)
THERE’S A SPECIAL KIND OF PEOPLE

There’s a special kind of people
Who wander in the night.
They grope around in darkness
Because there is no light.

They’re not like other people
They’re seldom understood.
Society looks down on them –
It claims they are no good.

But there’s good in the worst of us
And bad in the very best
And these special kind of people
Are strewn from East to West.

Who’s to say that one man’s talents
Are not as good as those of his kin
Simply ‘cause he’s one of the special few
Society has labelled as “sin”?

I wonder when the Maker calls
If we’ll be turned from Heaven’s gate
Because we were the Special Ones
Or – will we finally get a break?!

MY HEART KNOWS

I feel so alone -
My heart is heavy
My body feels like cold stone.

How I long for peace within
To align my mind and body -
How can that be such a sin?

My family says they love me so much
But the “real” me
They wouldn’t even touch.

You see, I totally love them all -
To even mentioning becoming a man
Scares me ’cos they’d say, “Don’t call.”

I used to pray to God a lot
For that’s the way I was raised
But answers…I never got.

I cannot change the way I feel -
Inside me - I’m a man
But outside – how long until…?

Can I go through life this way
Always acting out a role –
Being careful in all I say?

Why am I always crying?
And then, to questions “why?”
I always end up lying,

Someday soon, I’ll make the moves -
I’ve just got to
No matter who disapproves.

But until that long-awaited time
When I can at last be whole
I’ll try to laugh and do silly mime.

But wait – what’s this I see? -
A man dressing in my mirror
Oh, it’s me – in privacy.

In this precious secret time
To dress, act – be the man I am
Life seems so totally sublime.
Then I must leave and close the door –
Try to smile and struggle through the day
Sometimes I feel I’ll sink before
I make it to the shore.

I know I’m not the only one
But – I feel so alone.

~~ Mo

**LOST**

Little boy lost
Little girl gone.
World in a flux
Nowhere a silent sound.

Shadows of a new life
Sing a new song.
Caverns of the past
Moldy and gray.
There rots the old life
All the yesterdays.

Emerge from a chrysalis
Into a malestorm.
Standing in a new life
Standing in a new form.
Fear solid as a wall
Greets each day.
Always afraid of a fall
 Unsure of the new way.

Prison chains hold tight
Bitting my flesh.
Mind flies apart
Dying small deaths.

God, will I ever be born?

~~ Keith McUmber
**TRAPPED**

Trapped inside a shell –
A shell which doesn’t match.
Going through gender hell
My sense of manhood you try to snatch.

I try to make everyone see
This body of mine is just a mistake.
It doesn’t represent the real me
And if I act to fit my body
That would be so damn fake.

The more pain I go through
The more I want out of this horrible cage.
But for now, there’s nothing I can do
And that thought fills me with rage.

Sometimes, the thought of being dead
Just doesn’t want to leave my head.
Nothing I can do will bring relief
What would it take to change this belief?

~~ Doug Logan

**BEING YOURSELF**

Being yourself isn’t always easy:
for 20 years I lived as a tomboy
in the eyes of Society –
and my attire and actions
were disapproved of.
Now, I live as a male
in Society’s eyes –
and am accepted by it.

But now, other F-Ms disapprove:
my hair is a little too long,
my face is clean-shaven
and I don’t like to dress up.
Some F-Ms feel that short hair,
a beard, a suit and tie
prove their masculinity.

But, Society’s acceptance
Is proof enough for me!

~~ K. Robert
IN REMEMBRANCE OF CHILDHOOD

I. Who are you and where have you been?
   I gave you up for lost!
   You are an old and dear friend
   who comforted me in my darkest hour.
   Sad little one –
   so full of ideals, love and tolerance
   Baby, the world can never change you!
   a thousand years, a thousand tears
   never quite washed you away.
   Hello again!
   We are indeed the very best of friends.

II. Looking at scrapbooks of yesteryear –
    unravelling fragments of the past
    reconciling them to myself:
    a reunion of who I was and who I’ve become
    a painful, joyful, hopeful journey.
    Seeing that child –
    known to me through a half-waking dream.
    I will embrace her, for her courage
    has brought me to a place of quiet peace.

~~ Eric
ODE TO THE BOOB

Upon this much-awaited day
I enter these hallowed halls.
Concealed behind my much-worn shirt
Two lumps – not on a log.

The papers awaiting signature
"Conditionally admitted," they say.
Down payment must be made today
Before the great Take-Away.

Papers signed, down payment made
Down the halls we go.
To the second floor I’m taken
Where I’ll spend my days.

Room 233 – I’ll not forget
For it was there I met my Fate.
Questioned by a team of Them
They knew not what to think.

Poking, probing, they took my blood.
Then I ate my evening meal
Left alone to think about
The future events to come.

I slept the night before The Day -
I really don’t know how.
Told, "By noon, there’s no more choice
You’ll be on your way."

Shots been given, cart awaiting
I climb upon the mat.
One thought runs through my mind:
“Doc, please don’t an addition make!”

~~ T.C.B.
YOU - MALE GENDER

You – male gender
That I hate so much
Only I don’t really hate you
Just wish to call you, “Brother”
Why can’t I do that?
Why must you look at me
Like some lower-class citizen?
I want to reach out
And slap your back
And be known in common
As one of you
Not stared at like that
Not thought of like that
Not fucked up like that
If only being with you
Didn’t hurt so much
If buddies were meant for me
I could be your friend.

~~ Monc Inski (© 1984)

MY NIGHTMARE

I used to be living in a nightmare
And thought it was all a fairy isle dreamland
And now I’m still dreaming, not just sleeping
Clocks tell me it’s time to wake
My pool was so dark – so dark, cold and lonely
And I was swimming like a tadpole
Swimming as if to survive a life of fairy fish
In a dark fairy’s world
I couldn’t even see any light
Now I see light
And I’m swimming towards a goal
To reach the air
And breathe like a real frog
Where dreams don’t have to be dreams
Where dreams are what you dream
Where what you dream isn’t just a dream.

~~ Monc Inski (© 1984)
PEOPLE WON'T REMEMBER MY NAME

The name is obsolete
That they don’t remember
People won’t remember my name
In a few more days.
I thought that name was treasured
Yet it grows more hideous every day
The name that people won’t remember
In a few more days.
I thought that name held power
Yet it’s dethroned every day
The name that people won’t remember
In a few more days.
I hate this name
And yet names don’t really matter
I only ask
I only ask
Will they remember who I am?

~~ Monc Inski (© 1984)

MY MAN FRIEND

You are my friend, my Man
Because of street lights
And camera shine so bright
I can look so fine right in the face
You are my protector, my Man.
When the streets are dark
And what used to scare
Brings to mouth husky low laughs
You are my portrait, my Man.
When I look in the mirror on my wall
What do I see but you, my Man?
And what I see, I like
You are my shadow, my Man.
When the friendly mirror turns so shady
Images grow scary
And I no longer know who I am.

~~ Monc Inski (© 1984)


**ALTER EGO**

I want to write but I read instead
I can't arrange the thoughts in my head.
Try as I may, try as I might
I am losing the battle, losing the fight.

I wrestle and grapple with the other me
But she fights dirty and fiendishly.
She jumbles my thoughts, tears them apart
Crushes and mashes – she has no heart.

She won’t let me write; she steals every word
So I must fight so that I may be heard.
I’d stab her and squash her, grind her to dust
But her death would make my death a definite must…

For she is I
And I am she –
Together we make
What I call me.

~~ B.W. (1981-82)~~


**GUILTY AS CHARGED**

I went to prison the day I was born  
That was August 9th, 1964.  
It’s been 23 years – life without parole  
For possession of a woman’s body by a man’s soul.

I’ve pleaded with God to grant me a pardon  
For being a man who can’t get a “hard-on.”  
It wasn’t me who committed the crime  
I was just in the wrong body at the wrong time.

So he imprisoned my soul in this body at birth  
Yet allowed me my freedom to roam this earth.  
He said, upon death, Heaven would be mine  
Then he put me in Hell until that time.

I’d much rather be a man behind bars  
Than sentenced to life in this body of “ours.”  
So I suffer each day and pray death will come quick  
Who ever thought He could make those charges stick?

He’d had the last laugh and He always will  
Guilty as charged – the fate of a transsexual!  

UNCONDITIONALLY

I would not be
If it weren’t for Thee
Not judging, only loving
Unconditionally.

I searched for reasons
To hang onto life
When all I wanted
Was just to die.

And You were there
Unnoticed at times
Praying for me
Being my tangible Christ.

“Thank you” just doesn’t seem
Enough to say
For being one of the reasons
I’m alive today.

So I pray that Your example
Of love for me
Will help me love others
Unconditionally.

THE CONSTANT PRETENSE

This body of mine, this physical shell
Has brought more pain than I can tell.
What I am way down deep inside
I have always had to hide.

I've thrived on wishes and dreams
And tried to suppress the tears and screams.
My time is consumed with this one great hope
That until I can change, I'll be able to cope.

But the game just keeps getting harder to play
Year by year…day by day.
The constant pretense brings much sorrow
Yet I try to cling to my hopes of tomorrow.

For in tomorrow I do see
A whole new world through a whole new me.
A great mistake occurred when I entered this life
For they call me a woman, and this is my strife.

A man is what I was meant to be
But in the mirror, that is not what I see.
My will is bent as my illusions shatter
Being true to myself is all that should matter.

They call me “Jan,” but I’m really “John”
And still the façade goes on and on…
My strength to go on is often in doubt
But still I pray for some way out.

Will someone help me change this body of mine
So life will be more than meaningless time?
Will I ever be able to make this dream real
Without guilt and worry of what my family will feel?

I know not when my answer will arrive
So I stand on the edge, just waiting to dive –
To dive out of this void that is me
And become the man I should truly be!

~~ Anonymous (© The Phoenix, April 1981)
FROM A FEMALE-TO-MALE TO THE GIRL WITHIN

I am writing this because
   I don’t think you understand
   why I left you

I left you because you could not laugh
I left you because you could never let anyone
   see you, or penetrate you
I left you because you only loved yourself and me

Maybe if there was some way to bring back
   that boy you once had, I could be happy
But you and I both know, though we never spoke of it
   there is no means by which he could ever return

You told me a few times; you whispered it
You told me how you had really loved him
   how you just loved him so much
You never said so but you told me how you met him

And then you got this far-away look…
   the beach, the sea, the cold…
   looking in windows all the time
   his eyes were like ice, you said
   and his smile, well, his smile was like amazement
I noticed the tear streaming down your cheek

That is why I am leaving you
I could never love you

So many times I watched you
   so many times I thought
   as we walked on the cold beaches of the sea
I am leaving you because I have finally realized
   your smile is like amazement

I am going away now
Someday I might once again see you
   but I think, even if it were many years in the future
You still could not laugh
   without my seeing the hope in your eyes.

~~ Louis G. Sullivan
SHE’S GONE

She’s gone…
and you know, I'll miss her.
She always knew what she wanted
she gave and gave
never asking anything in return.
She kept to herself a lot
made some mistakes
but she was my friend.

I knew she’d go someday
I knew she had to go
but I wanted to hang on.
We’d done so much together
we had some great times along the way.
I have a few photographs
and a lifetime of memories
and we will always be close.

My friend, she’s gone…
she’s left me
but I’m not alone, you understand
she’ll always be with me.
But, it’s my turn now –
to be the man I have to be.

~~ Rae Paul Allan
I AM A MAN

I may sit beside the sea
Amidst the rocks and waves
Alone I may need to be
If it, my soul, I shall save.

I may crave a woman’s love
(Shed be so affectionate)
Or lie and daydream thereof
Somewhat more passionate.

Whatever aspects of myself
It happens I should show
I am a man, before all else
This always, you shall know.

I may laugh and I may cry
In this life I live
I may fail before I die
In the love I give.

I may look like something else
Instead of what I be
But I will somehow show myself –
The man in me, you'll see.

And when I'm totally a male
I will have reached my goal
(For the difference in a dream and a tale
is the extent to toll).

If you should take my outstretched hand
And share the road ahead with me
You must acknowledge, I AM A MAN
As I gain my private liberty.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1982)
**TO BE A MAN**

All I really want
Is to be the man I am
To be recognized
Not analyzed –
To know someone gives a damn.

I want to love my woman
With totality to match
The passion that she summons
From my very soul, in fact.

Muscle, sinew, skin and bone
Pride and virile strength
Sexy briefs and men’s cologne
My thirst is Fate’s to quench.

All I really want
Is to be a total man
To love and live my life with pride
As I hold my lady’s hand.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1982)

**FROM WITHIN**

A man,
borne of a woman’s self –
and even more than that,
a man from within,
reaching, striving desperately
to surpass a physical misconception…
a situation from within
where strength is the issue
(a strength that is intense),
for a man MUST be strong enough
to be what only HE
knows he is…
and the strength (like the man)
must come from within…

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1982)
OF IMPORTANCE TO US ALL
(Is It Any Wonder?)

Is it any wonder that, in this world
What makes him a boy or a girl
Are things that are big and yet so small –
Things of importance to us all?

If I am what is in my mind
Bar-bells and sports cars you'd find –
Things they say are “of a man”
No matter what his chosen land.

If I am what is in my heart
Then one would not know where to start
Because it reigns so far and wide
From the city to the countryside.

From years ago, when I was three
To now when I’m who I want to be
From tears shed over skirts I loathed
Ribbons and all those girlish clothes

To tuxedos and plain blue jeans
And whatever being a man means
To at last being recognized
As not a girl, but “one of the guys.”

Is it any wonder I withstand
What I must be, to be a man?

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1983)
WHAT MUST BE

In this world of bitterness
I am somewhere found distressed
As to my identity –
And the man I want to be.

Thru' the days, I come and go
And when they see me, they don't know
The thoughts that clamor in my head –
Most of which cannot be said.

Having what is feminine
And being told that it's a sin
To want to be a man instead
And from my femaleness to have fled –

I am waging war against
What's inside of me, and hence -
I'm confused beyond belief
(And that's the root of all my grief).

To seem to be a female to
The majority (who rules)
When inside, I am a man
And I know I'll have to stand –

Steadfast, facing a great crowd
Wearing my all-manly shroud.
There seems to be a large need for
Courage now, if nothing more.

But I'll take that stand, I know
No longer can I now lay low
And just merely pretend to be
Something that won't make me free.

I'm a man and I must prove
That to those set in their groove
Then I'll have the self-respect
To show my manly intellect.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1984)
EULOGY FOR A DESPONDENT F-M TRANSSEXUAL
(The Christening Of A Hopeful Man)

It enshrouds me
like smoke haze from a cigarette
and embeds itself
within my brown skin –
this adoration of my masculinity.
It never leaves me
and even on the darkest
days or nights, there is
radiating inside of me
that courageous, shining, dynamic thing
called
MANHOOD.
To the world, I will make myself known.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1984)

I WONDER

Is love beneath some rock
on the ocean floor?
Rotting and alone
to see the sun no more?

Does it hide atop a hill
amidst grassy green?
Or float upon the Nile
or the river Seine?

Is it buried in the ground
like a chunk of gold?
Under my bed? In the attic
covered up with mold?
Or disassembling and assembling
somewhere in my soul?

~~ Khalil K. Sowande (© Poetry World, 1984)
FOR MY FATHER

My flesh became a new electric thing
that charged my being.
Your hands became a burning brush,
stroking human canvas,
a small brown canvas, not yet even fully formed!
I loved your hands,
I hated them,
I hated loving them
until peace came only in solitude.
At first I thought it natural –
you were my sable god,
by the time I learned it wasn’t
I was lost.
Now, years have come and gone,
you fester in the ground.
And I’m left alone to de-program
the program that you chisled indelibly
on my brain.
Only time will tell if I survive
or fester standing up.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1990)

FOR MY MOTHER

You loved, but it was not enough
to stop my misery,
or give direction needed
for the kind of wizardry
that could stifle fear
and make me strong,
and turn my scream into a song,
and wash away deficiencies
I’ve had my whole life long.
I loved, but it was not enough
to open up your eyes
so you could see what I would be
the day the old me dies –
the male suppressed,
the boy chastised,
the endless little ways devised
to cultivate my private joy
while in your light, I lied.
We loved, but it was not enough…

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1990)
BI-LOVABLE

Voluptous hips in satin,
lipstick kisses on my brain,
and muscled arms about me
stir up desire again.

The hardness of His flesh
against the hardness of my own,
the strength of boyish fingers
that will not leave me alone.

The softness of Her inner thigh
as it caressed my cheek,
convinced me that there’s nothing
better left for me to seek.

Her bosom is enticing,
Her body soft and sleek,
His lips bring on my fever,
His kisses make me weak.

I love to love the both of them,
I love the sounds they make.
I love their stark intensity,
they know my heart’s at stake.

I give my love unselfishly,
yet I am selfish too;
I loathe to limit love to one
when I desire two!

~ Khalil Jordache (© 1990)

MY LOVER
(Haiku)

Curled up like an “S”,
my lover sleeps like a child
and loves like a man.

***

Lying chest to chest,
like loving before mirrors,
my lover and I.

~ Khalil Jordache (© 1990)
CONFRONTATION

I too am a man in this cruel place.
Do you dare call me “brother”?
I’ve walked your path with hidden face
while looking for my other.
Then I grew weary of deceit
and now I’ve dropped my mask.
I wander in a sunless heat
created by our past.

I too am longing for the touch
that changes me for good.
I’ve stalked the streets at dawn and dusk
to find someone who could.
I’ve lost myself in purging flame,
in sweat and tears of passion
but rose to find myself the same
in every anguished fashion.

I know the names that you are called
for I am called them too.
I know by what your heart is mauled;
I know the broken you.
I recognize the trouble
crouching deep within your mind:
you searched among life’s rubble
for a glimmer of “your kind.”

And now we stand together
after all was said and done,
two men in violent weather,
two souls that roam as one.

~~ Khalil Jordache (© 1990)
HE WAS ONCE CALLED AN ENIGMA

(A transsexual makes his first suicide attempt at age 7½ after being stoned by other children)

An aberration
Encumbered since birth.
He was always the observer -
His soul imprisoned within
Its fleshly vessel.
He felt the depths of
His nightmare contradiction
Of gender and identity.
He repulsed no one but himself -
He wished he’d never been born.
In a short while, as short as
This child’s patience could bear
With tremorous fist, he wished himself dead -
He felt mocked and alone.
The child did make an attempt –
A valiant one at that – and failed.
His brother lifted his tiny body
And brought him to the house
Where they lived.
He awoke in such pain and sorrow
He could not even cry.
Then he fell into sleep and dreamt:
If a man could only flee himself -
Free himself –
Achieving the true self.
He dreamt of adapting his flesh
To his soul.
He dreamt of being new
And whole.

~~ E.A. Wallach (© Rites of Passage, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1989)
SUCH IS LIFE...AND DEATH

I saw myself across the room, 5 years into my future – and the money I don’t have, spent on the surgery I need to be a man.

I am again contemplating suicide – I made my first attempt when I was 7 ½. Such is life…and death.

How do I feel about being transsexual?

I’m cold, weak and bitter…like this cup of coffee. Cold…like a corpse, almost dead to the sensations of anguish and misery of not being able to solve my problem as I am not wealthy.
Weak…from the oppression of living my life as half a person.
Bitter…from not asking to be born this way.

There is no question – I was born this way.

~~ E.A. Wallach (1989)
THE MAN WITHIN

Each day as I am learning
To handle the newness of me
I try to stop the yearning
While finding a new set of ways.

There is something others don’t know -
It haunts from within and follows me
It makes me wonder which way to go
What should my next move be?

Searching, looking, awakening from a dream
Feeling deep within utter frustration
Sometimes just wanting to scream!
Looking and searching for the answers -

Hoping to find them by the end of today.
Will the answers come to the problems
That follow me all of Life’s way -
Blooming like roses on the end of their stems?

I know – only, I can’t wait forever
To solve the mysteries lying within.
Someday, I think…or maybe, never…
Will the nameless heartache end?

Today again, I’ll search and look
To let go of the man within.
Let expression be written in my Life’s book
And then, I’ll face the world with a grin.

~~ Steve Parent
CROSSING OVER

With the first hormone shot I wondered:
“Will tomorrow be the day?”
When I look into my bathroom mirror
What will that damn hunk of glass have to say?

At some point in time, I'll know
That I've gone, passed the middle point by.
When I'm ready to cross over
Will I know I'm ready to fly?

I keep going through time and changes
Keep doing things as I have done –
Wearing jeans and loose-fitting sweatshirts
From myself no longer having to run.

Slowly, the “new” me emerges –
Knowing this is the end of my dream.
Good Heavens, did I ever!
When in the Ladies’ Room, I heard the scream!

~~ Steve Parent
ODE TO A FRIEND

As you sat within your prison cell
You let me expose my private hell...
And I waited for yet another letter from you
For the warmth and friendship inside I could feel...
As you suffered through your own private hell
You brought out what was best in myself...
I waited, longing to hear from you
Went through past letters I took from a shelf.

They charged you as “guilty of murder”
They were saying the same thing of me...
Your guilt had you locked behind prison bars
But with your help, mine set me free...
You had compassion and understanding
More than anyone I had ever met...
Encouraging words flowed off your pages
I long for them, even yet.

When the mailman came, sometimes past
I would read, and then pick up my pen...
I’d write back, baring my soul to you
In a way I’ll never do again...
What you had to say within your pages
To this day, at times, they get me through:
“In its form and in its essence
To thine own self be true.”

Ringing phone with disheartening message
News, fellow prisoner, of you…
In the hospital, dying of cancer
Please God, it can’t be true!
It seems now like for only a moment
That you passed through my life…
With your sweet and gentle encouragement
Relieving a lot of my daily strife.

My friend, please know that I love you
As they bury you here today…
From prison of bars to prison of earth
I would have wished you a better way…
As your casket slips slowly downward
To its final resting place below…
I reach out and take a flower
I’ll press this one, I know.
I turn to your wife and tell her
That I know just how she feels…
Her tears I see, her sobs I hear
My tears too, are so real…
As simply as I can, I say:
“Thank God and Heaven, he’s now free
No longer convicted of murder
He helped to make a man of me.”

~~ Steve Parent

NEW CLOTHES

“That suit is you” - such simple words
Spoken to lock up the sale.
What would he be saying to me
If he really knew my tale?

“That shirt goes well with many colors
Would you like a matching tie?”
Another salesman rambling on…
Who doesn’t know the why.

“That socks you chose have elastic tops
They will never slip or fall.”
My Heavens, so many colors!
Sizes for short and tall.

Jeans and sweatshirts on sale
I’ve had my fill, thank you.
I know he doesn’t understand
That those days for awhile are through.

Enjoying so this shopping trip
No longer a meaningless chore.
Still, it’s a necessity
No, not still – even more.

Ready now with trousers, shoes
New shirts, socks and underwear.
Oh now, I can’t sneeze now –
I forgot handkerchiefs – I don’t dare.

~~ Steve Parent
THE ORIGINAL MOTHER

The hot sands of Time burn the soles of my feet
Wondering at the sunset, so profound a treat...

I never really fail to notice the feeling
My mind stopping all the day's reeling...

As the water gently laps around my toes
Something inside me feels and knows...

As the sun's rays turn the water to red
Outwardly float all my cares and dread...

As micah sparkles amidst the grains of sand
I experience a calmness, close at hand...

The tide ebbing in, so slowly, to the shore
Gives the gentle cleansing, of which I need more...

No longer the need to run or to hustle
Away from the city, its cares and the bustle...

A spot where peacefulness is all that surrounds
Bringing out the inner peace, letting it abound...

A peace that will carry me through the night
Dispelling some of the darkness, all of the fright...

As small ripples wash in, cooling the sand
They bring freedom from the turmoil holding my hand...

The ocean so calm, such a beautiful sight
Bright rays of sunset, setting everything right...

Cooling the still-warm soles of my feet
Finding successful peace in an ocean retreat...

A oneness with Mother Nature, a feeling so true
Many tomorrows to carry me through...

When the turmoil reaches in again, and takes over
Again I will walk the shoreside, a rover...

To feel within the effects of sunset on sea
Rambling, soles burning, unchained and free...

Its peace, once again, overtakes my whole being
Opens my eyes to the brighter beauty of seeing...
Opening me up fully, letting all the beauty seep in
Washing out turmoil, giving me the will to win…

The cycle that starts at the beginning of Time
Returns to the first roots, for reason and rhyme…

The peace found in reaching back to one’s home
Placing all of Time in a constricting dome…

A feeling that here is where it began
Gently washing my feet, true Mother of Man…

With her gentle caress easing my burden and cares
She frolics freely as She sees her child dare…

Back up the shore on Time’s aged sands
Firmer footsteps, inner peace, go hand in hand…

As the rays of the sun turn purple her tresses
She gives back to her child the pause that refreshes…

She sends away her spawned child again
Giving him something to help keep him sane…

On rare occasions, She won’t let him go
Back within She draws, so the child will know…

The peace that can’t be found in the cares of the world
Relief from his burdens, tossing, bruised and hurled…

More often, She moves the child, then sets him free
Having given to him again the courage to be…

Knowing that, one day, for relief from attack
Seeking peace and beauty, the child will be back…

I’ll return again, original Mother of Earth
To feel the peace and warmth of the sands of your hearth…

To be lulled and soothed by the ripples washing clean the sand
To go back, knowing Freedom is holding my hand…

To get from you your courage, courage to be
Original Mother, Earth Woman, you’ve set me free…

~~ Steve Parent
TO ALL MY FRIENDS AT METAMORPHOSIS

You carefully dress from head to feet
Making your identity feel complete.
When all is done, you feel the part
And two personalities live in your heart.

One crossdresses and gets locked away
The other faces people from day to day.
You constantly try to unite the two
But they’re completely different entities to you.

Don’t over-analyze how you should be
Because we live in a stereotypical society.
And don’t stay sitting on a shelf –
Find a support group and discover yourself.

You’ll be lucky to find one true friend
Who will see you through from beginning to end.
I am lucky because I have found two
And I hope only the best for you!

~~ Kyle
THE SATYR BORN WRONG (INTO THE WORLD OF MEN)\textsuperscript{10}

An aberration of the body, the Satyr born wrong
his left leg stamps the ground
in anticipation of a better life.

Shrouded by the unenlightened darkness
he waits impatiently
for a cure to the injustice.

Imprisoned by his abnormality
the man with the legs of a horse
yearns to run free with the legs of a man.

To some, his equine appendages
might seem beautiful
but he is isolated in his uniqueness.

Each fibre of his sinew, bone and hair
is aching for acceptance
in an age of cynicism.

Perhaps an act of Providence
will pluck out his offending eye
and leave him blind to his deformity.

Or some barbaric cut of blade against flesh
will set him free
into the world of men.

~~ Johnny A.

WORDS ONCE WHISPERED

When I was a boy
I wanted to be a knight in armour
mounted and ready to rescue.

As I got a bit older
I began to dream of eyes so green
they’d melt a hardened heart.

Now my arms encircle you
and I am a man.

Now my thoughts enfold you
and I am whole.

ORIGINAL F-TO-M TS REGGAE RAP SONG  
(to be recited rhythmically, with a Jamaican accent)

I used to be a woman, ah, but now I’m a man  
Ever since I had a sex-change operation.  
Now I feel so much better, a complete person  
Now my identity is strictly one-on-one.

You may think I’m crazy to resort to mutilation  
But you cannot imagine the acute frustration  
Livin’ in a body that you just can’t relate to.  
Everyone misunderstands you and some hate you.

Stop for a minute, and think if you can –  
You’re a woman wakin’ up in the body of a man  
Or a man wakin’ up lookin’ like a woman.  
Your lookin’ in the mirror at your face and hands.

Your mind, it’d be so racked  
You’d have a heart attack.  
You’d be doin’ anything  
Just to get your proper body back.

Now don’t ya’ think it’s true?  
Brother, if that were you  
I think you’d want to do  
The same thing too.  
Now wouldn’t you?

Now think about it  
And tell me true.  
Wouldn’t you want to do  
The same thing too?

~~ Johnny A. (© Rites of Passage, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1989)
REFLECTIONS

I saw you last night
though a one-way mirror
surrounded by people.
You were happy and jovial
laughing and lighthearted
flitting and talking
like a butterfly amidst friends
in the warm yellow light.

And I the stranger –
I who love you, the stranger
watched you with longing
calling to you with my eyes
knowing you couldn’t see me
my arms reaching out before
I could stop them
but touching only cold glass.

And so I stood
with my heart yearning
melting again with love
in a warm flood of tenderness
wanting you to see me
afraid you might see me
knowing you couldn’t see me
for I am invisible
on the wrong side of the glass.

And so, fumbling for the door
I did what I least wanted to do
do the only thing I could do –
I left.

~~ Sidney
WHY DO I NOW HAVE A WOMAN’S BODY?  

Why do I now have a woman’s body?  
What has happened to my own?  
Is it Your wish that I became a nursemaid now?  
The great and noble warrior now rears children –  
How quaint!  
Child-minding is such a soothing occupation for a warrior  
But wait, the women cry.  
There is nothing wrong with children,  
I agree.  
There is nothing wrong with children  
But there is something wrong with me.  
We look after children all the time, they say;  
It won’t hurt you for awhile.  
Physically maybe not –  
Physical wounds are not the only things that hurt though.  
Physical blows I am used to;  
Mental stripes are far more painful.  
The Lord may have changed my body  
But in Her infinite wisdom, She did not change my mind –  
My temperament remains intact.  
I am a male imprisoned in a female body –  
A life sentence.  
What was my crime?

~~ Chris Johnson (© 1982, The Gender Trap)
YOU TAKE AWAY MY PRIDE

You take away my pride –
My manhood gone, what use am I?
What joys can I experience now?
What happiness can be mine?
What do You give me in return,
Oh, great and wonderful One?
A woman’s body:
How nice, how practical;
I can do a lot with this.
My friends will really like me now.
“Where is our comrade?,” they will ask –
“That great and noble warrior –
Our friend and champion, where has he gone?
What strange fate has befallen him?”
My friends, fate is strange indeed;
You would not recognize me now –
I have a woman’s body.
My fate is hard to bear;
I dare not let you know me now
For fear you will want me
And I will not be wanted in a woman’s way –
It sickens me.
No more can I be your friend,
No more your comrade.
I have been taken to the other side
And I cannot even speak to you.
I am so ashamed I could die.
I would die –
Rather death than your laughter,
Rather death than your eyes desiring me.
I was once your friend –
No more.
I am very sad –
I am also angry with my God,
Very angry.

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, YOU SPOILT MY LIFE

From the beginning, You spoilt my life –
It could have been good.
Anger and resentment are locked inside.
Sometimes I wonder what is beyond my resentment
But most times I hang onto it, not wishing to explore.
If I let go what will happen?
You spoilt my life –
I want You to know that.
I want it to hurt You because You hurt me.
There was no need for You to hurt me.
But You did it.
What did I do to You?
Nothing, as far as I know
And yet You still spoilt my life.
Thank You for nothing!

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)

ARE WE JUST TOYS?

Are we just toys –
Diving playthings to relieve Your boredom?
I do believe we are.
You give us minds but manipulate us.
You give us hearts, and then break them one by one.
Do we amuse You, Lord?
Do our vain struggles against Your might give You pleasure?
You must have the biggest ego in the whole of creation.
I wish I could take You down a peg or two,
Instead it’s the other way around;
I don’t like that.
You make me angry,
You frustrate me;
I kick against You and hurt myself.
Am I a simpleton?
Sometimes I wish You had never created me
Because I don’t know why You did.

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)
YOU MAKE ME ANGRY

You make me angry.
If You weren’t so beautiful,
I could kill You!
All day long,
Your vision haunts me.
Out of reach,
Your sweet voice taunts me.
You make me so angry.
How I’ve longed to make You mine –
But You are far beyond my mind.
I can’t cope with Your perfection;
All I feel is Your rejection.

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)

LORD, I WISH TO KNOW MORE OF YOU

Lord, I wish to know more of You –
Mistress, I wish to learn to love You deeply.
Only You can give me this knowledge, Lord.
Only You can help me in my search for life.
For I do not live at the moment; I exist.
I shall go on existing in this terrible world until such time,
My Lord, as You help me to know You, and then I shall live.
God, have pity on me.

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)

HOW CAN I PERSUADE YOU, LORD, TO TALK TO ME?

How can I persuade You, Lord, to talk to me?
What entreaties must I make?
How can I persuade You, Lord, to visit me?
I am so alone without You.
Your voice could comfort me,
Your presence would calm me.
I would be complete;
Now I am empty.
I have a void within my soul which will be filled
Only at Your pleasure.

~~ Chris Johnson (© The Gender Trap, 1982)
**OH GOD OF CREATION, THE MOST PERFECT BEING**

Oh God of creation, the most perfect being –  
The most perfect woman and the most perfect man.  
We were created in Your image, Lord, man and woman;  
You created us.  
Woman and man we are, Lord, and if we should but submit  
You created us.  
Woman and man we are, Lord, and if we should but submit  
To Your rule, we would no longer hate one another.  
We could live in peace…  
Please, Lord and Mistress, hear my prayer, for I love you,

~~ Chris Johnson (© *The Gender Trap*, 1982)

**OUTSIDERS**

Sitting on the outside  
How can I know a thing  
Of all the pain, anxiety  
And of the suffering?  

It’s true I can’t know everything  
Of how you really feel  
But I think I understand  
That what is wrong is REAL.

Your need to be the opposite  
Of the body you are in  
A need that now must be made right  
A peace to you will bring.

So please, do tell us outside folk  
Who are not in your position  
Exactly how you feel –  
Give us a chance to listen.

~~ Diane Andersson

**SHAFT**

S is for Support, you need all along.  
H is for Help; that’s not always wrong.  
A is for Anxiety you feel through and through.  
F is for Faith in others, faith that must be true.  
T is for Trust that by now you must have found.  
Our SHAFT, the best around!

~~ Diane Andersson
TO LOVE YOU
(For David)

I want to be able to love you
   to love you
as equals.

I want to be able to fill you
with the product
   of my new-found reality,

To be able to penetrate
the core of your longing
   with my instrument of love.

Inside, I am whole…
I have the ability
   to love you…

But outside, I am a lie…
a sad, empty clown
   with a painted-on silver tear…

Still, I need to shine true
   to shine real
   to be whole
   to imprint my love
upon your soul
   for all eternity.

All I am inside
all I try to hide
   means nothing
without you;

There is no life, no living
there is no joy, no giving
   there is nothing
without you.

There is no dawn, no tomorrow
only loneliness, emptiness, sorrow
   there is nothing
without you.

I need to be whole
   to imprint my love upon your soul
   for all eternity…
I want only to be able to love you
to love you
to love you
as equals.

~~ Steven Wells (1986)

TO YOU
(For David)

yours is the only love i know -
the only love i can understand
the love –
the pure and precious love –
the love
between man and man.

not with those who pretend
to be the fragile flower –
icy souls like frozen crystal –
masking wills and minds of inhuman steel –
void of emotion, compassion, truth.

for you are all Mankind in one –
you wear white lace and black leather
as easily as you wear your secret shadows.
you are Man: the total, complete evolution of humanity…
there is need of nothing more.

~~ Steven Wells (1985)
FOR DAVID AARON

My brother sits alone in this world
his own world – known to no one else.
He weeps and sighs each night
looking, searching for a direction home.
Afraid to move, afraid to be still
an answer denied.
Always on the verge of exploding
like a bomb (tick…tick…tick)
his brain is on a timer, waiting
to go off in a hallucinatory fit.
Autistically alone – deeper, deeper
inside himself – we call out to him.
He cannot be reached – he shuts us out.
And then we can finally help.
The fit has momentarily passed but
it isn’t long before he slips away again.
We try to find a way to relieve his grief
somehow trying to help him make it end.
Yet, so desperately alone, he cries
as he reaches out for comforting aid.
But not even the professionally-wise
can form a truth, they say.
So alone, deep inside his broken heart
he struggles, only to rip himself apart.
We wait with a dim spark of hope –
waiting is all we can do to survive, to cope.

~~ Maura Liebman
FIGHT IT WITH LOVE

Body and mind grow together, unattached
A desperate soul searches for the match.
The burning mind searches for water
To cool the flames of a son who is a daughter.

Desperation and suicide enter into the mind
To overlook this pain, one would have to be blind.
Open your eyes, families and friends
And soothe the one you love, for he depends
On YOU for survival of his disease.

He’s begging on his hands and knees
For relief from these endlessly lonely times.
If he had one person who cared, he’d be fine
So take his hand and pull him above
The dilemma which drowns him –
Fight it with love.

~~ Maura Liebman
THE END OF DENIAL

He had regular weekly screenings with a psychiatrist in the city. I went uninformed about the reasons behind the scenes for months.

When he finally unveiled the mystery of this great human suffering for me I laughed out of sheer disbelief and ignorance. He was waiting for a supporting cast – an applause, a comforting word.

‘Cause I couldn’t face this “tragedy of errors” I failed at my role as his sister. Though my character was cancelled he occupied my every thought and action.

When he needed me, I left him there to view himself alone. My back remained turned in a freeze-frame position through many acts.

I led him astray, not wanting to fully understand his point of view because it wasn’t “normal.” His life became a series of dramatic scenes and shots of hospital rooms and doctors’ offices serving as master settings in this soap-opera life.

Because the script had an ambiguous ending my fear of my brother developed into fear for him. His extreme sensitivity and self-pity caused by a self that was denied exhausted my resources and drained me completely.

Lack of love had nothing to do with my initial reaction towards him and his dilemma. I felt betrayed. I felt cheated. And, at that time, I too was trapped. My cage was the “world-of-I” – my only point of view.

Slowly, so slowly, his saddened heart broke me away from myself. I escaped my trap – that selfish, ugly, angry trap and started searching for a new angle.
My only concern became setting my brother free from his forced façade. His tragedy may never end completely but I am glad I finally turned to face him.

I cheered for him when he discovered from his many helping professionals that there was still hope for him to reach his goals for a new and liveable identity.

Life’s script would be re-written to include the proper role for my brother. With so many, many challenges to surmount the word “hope” became my brother’s paramount.

Knowing better than anyone the difficulties he had faced in his horror-film life up till then the end results would be no flawless production.

When I learned the person I grew up with as my sister was really my brother, I denied it. I pulled the curtain down, figuring that what I couldn’t see, I didn’t have to face.

But all I was doing was denying myself a very special friendship. I finally realized who it was that was being cheated and denied.

~~ Maura Liebman
FOR DAVID - AND BOTH OUR SISTERS

I

Alas, David, my long-departed young friend:
   too vulnerable to live in this unforgiving world,
   yet also much too young to die.
   I miss you even now after all this time.

You took your life at only 18 -
   when the despair finally became
   too much for even you to bear.
   1984 was not a very good year.

Even though your acute gender distress
   was relieved through hormones and surgery,
   the chronic depression and self-alienation
   proved too painful for you to find a way to exist.

II

Dear Maura, thank you for being there
   for your tormented younger brother (David),
   because a sister’s love is a priceless gift
   that can be, at desperate moments, a lifeline.

Despite your initial intense resistance,
   you strived to open up your mind
   to embrace a reality unsanctioned by Society,
   to let into your heart a loving empathy.

For a tortured soul misunderstood by all
   save, perhaps, you and your mother
   and a few of David’s closest friends.
   I’m eternally grateful for your loyalty and compassion.

III

Like David, I, too, was blessed with a sister’s enduring love,
   especially from the tender ages of 16 to 19 –
   just orphaned and gender-dysphoric, and still determined to transition -
   right up to the present day at age 62.

Dear Arjuna, thank you for being there
   for your tormented older brother (me),
   because a sister’s love is truly a priceless gift
   that can be, at those desperate moments, a saving lifeline.

~~ Rupert Raj (2014)
FOR LOU, MY FELLOW TRANSQUEER GENDER TRANSGRESSOR

Sadly, we never had a chance to meet in person
   but happily, we were longtime mail friends -
   writing long letters and exchanging newsletters
   over a span of thirteen years (1978-1991)
   till your untimely death of AIDS at age 39.

Gender trailblazers, we supported trans men in North America and beyond:
   I founded Metamorphosis in Toronto in 1982;
   you founded FTM in San Francisco in 1986.

You were gay and I was bi,
   both of us Transqueer Gender Transgressors
   at that unenlightened time of stringent gender policing
   by "shrinks" and straight trans guys alike!

How did we survive the calumny of our communities?
   You: initially denied surgical approval due to your HIV status
   till your reprieve by an advocating friend and a sympathetic surgeon,
   Me: near denial of surgical approval due to my relations with my trans boyfriend
   till I outplayed their heterosexist psychological game by playing it "straight."
   But, you were braver than I, daring to "out" yourself as gay.

I would have loved to have chummed with you
   in your queer-friendly city by the bay,
   quaffing a beer or two in a Castro café,
   laughing, talking and hugging, as loving friends do.

Lou, I still miss you, brother, after all these years,
   and you'll live on in my heart-land beyond time,
   my fellow transqueer gender transgressor
   and fondly-remembered SF friend.

~~ Rupert Raj (2014)
FOR STEVE, MY FINE AMERICAN FRIEND

My fine American friend,
   we were fellow trans activists and gender counsellors:
   you in Hartford and me in Toronto –
   and we were fortunate enough to meet in both cities.

An active member of the Twenty Club
   and a professional gender therapist too,
   you were a viable Agent for Social Change,
   helping trans folks and their loved ones transcend
   societal transphobia in school, in the workplace and in church.

You left us alone in this world far too soon –
   prematurely dying in middle age of kidney failure.
   I can’t but feel that it’s not quite fair –
   why do gentle souls like you so often die young?

A man of faith with a generosity of spirit rarely equalled,
   also a dutiful native son of Mother Earth,
   and a loving husband, son and loyal friend to the end,
   a gracious man all round - a prince among men.

Steve, I do miss your humour and companionship
   even now, decades hence,
   and you'll always remain forevermore
   my fine American friend.

~~ Rupert Raj (2014)
FOR JOHNNY A., MY FELLOW TRANS CULTURAL ACTIVIST

Cultural trans activists, we two were:
You, a drag king lesbian-trans man-wanna be gay man
(ever-striving for the best of all worlds),
performing male drag, producing musical trans porn videos,
me, a bisexual-and-transensual transexual man,
writing articles and (later) publishing books on all things trans.

We exchanged our respective periodicals for trans men:
your “Rites of Passage” newsletter published in Tenafly, NJ
and my “Metamorphosis Magazine” put out in Toronto.
And, both of us penned poems about sex and gender,
each expressing our multiple selves in our unique way.

Too bad we never crossed paths in person –
separated only by the 49th parallel
and our too-busy and too-poor lives!
Still, we met through a meeting of the hearts,
sharing a common purpose to help our trans brothers.

Johnny, you were one of a kind -
too weird-and-wacky for this woebegotten world
(perhaps polymorphous perverse?),
yet, your legacy outlives your 62 years,
my fellow trans cultural activist.

~~ Rupert Raj (2018)
IN MEMORY OF BILLY TIPTON -
(And “Billy”s Everywhere)23

Well, musically speaking
“The song is ended
But the melody lingers on…”

Now, I’m sure I do remember
When my kid sister used to say:
“Won’t you let me join, you brother
Can’t I come along and play?”

“Girls,” I’d say, “don’t play with boys
Our games are much too rough
Besides, your soft and kind of weak
Whereas we boys are tough!”

Billy, does this sound at all
Like what you may have heard?
And knowing that you were a little girl
Did it sound, even then, absurd?

You must have felt, while growing up
That speaking musically
You could play as hard and just as well
If not better than any “he.”

And then you said, sometime, somewhere:
“Why fight? I’ll damn well join them!”
And donning pants and shearing locks
You passed as man and ceased being woman.

Well, you proved for certain, through your playing
That you were among the very best
And when it came to living life
More importantly, you met its every test.

So, finally I’d like to say
To “Billy”s everywhere:
“Don’t feel unkind toward your brothers
For the simple truth is this –
Many of us would have loved to play your games
And truthfully, we were just plain envious!

~~ Louise Catherine Milner (1989)
DEATH OF THE YEAR

Cold winds tossing my hair every conceivable direction playfully tangling and weaving the strands.

Salty, crisp air enchanting all my senses and I'm wrapped up in a blanket of peace and tranquility.

The sea grows darker and the waves higher, then crashing onto the shore, leaving tiny treasures on the sands.

I could sit on a cold, wet, black rock, one of many protruding into the shallows of the water, looking out hypnotically.

The end of Autumn is the death of the year and the start of another; like a good harvest gathered, I've picked the Fruits of Knowledge and the life from the best seeds.

Many years have passed, with good and bad fortune, rotten apples in my basket and plenty of ripe ones, and seedlings left for another.

I have enough to meet my needs.

Uniquely, I see myself in my Mind's Eye as a salmon swimming up stream, changing colors as do leaves on the trees.

Changing, making wonderful transitions to survive my ever-challenging environment.

With Death comes Life, perhaps a better one than previously, and like the tides of the sea, riding them out can be the greatest learning experience of a lifetime.

~~ Tristan D.
READY TO LIVE

My first memory of gender was in Heaven before I was born.
I remember I didn’t want to be born at all
but since I had to
I wanted to at least be male.
I was told that I couldn’t
and that I would find out why later.

After getting my past lives read
I realized the reason I was born female
was so I wouldn’t have to go through another war -
the Vietnam war -
In my past life, I had been a Nazi.

Being born physically female in this life
gave me the advantage of growing spiritually
at a faster rate than if I had been born male –
although I’ve always been a male inside.

For me, dealing with my gender problems
on just a psychological or physical level
did not really get to the true cause.
The cause comes more from the spiritual level –
for you create the experiences you need to learn from.

I am now ready to live as whom I really am –
as a male –
with the balance of the spiritual
and physical reality of the Universe.

~~ Anonymous
END NOTES


2. “THE MAN WITHIN” – The “lonely well” alludes to the 1938, semi-autobiographical novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, written by Radclyffe Hall, a supposed early British, female-to-male transsexual (trans man), who had to go to court to defend their book, which was deemed offensive because of its so-called “sexual perversion” (lesbianism), which was, more likely, actually transsexualism. “Venus” and “Adonis” refer to the mythic Greek goddess and god, respectively, the culturally iconic counterparts of Femininity and Masculinity.

3. “PENIS ENVY” – A “penile prosthesis” is ideally a genitourinary device or artificial phallus that can be used for sexual intercourse as an alternative to penile surgery. It is somewhat like a dildo, but the user would be also be able to use it to urinate through while standing. At the time (1980s), no such device existed, but during the 1990s, such a device was finally designed and manufactured for trans men.

4. “A GENITAL OBSERVATION” – “Hole” refers to the surgically created neo-vagina in the M-F TS (trans woman) and “pole” alludes to the neo-phallus in the F-M TS (trans man). The creation of a vagina (and clitoris and labia) is a fairly simple, single-step, relatively affordable operation (then costing between $4,000 to $10,000 and occasionally, even as much as $20,000, and now, in 2014, ranges from about $16,000 to $20,000). In direct contrast, the construction of a penis (and scrotum and insertion of artificial testes) is an extremely complicated, lengthy, multi-staged, expensive procedure (then costing anywhere between $15,000 to $50,000, and now, ranges from about $40,000 to $125,000), depending on the particular surgical procedure (metoidioplasty or phalloplasty).


6. “FOR MY FATHER” – Khalil Jordache wrote, “This was written about my father and the abusive relationship we had.”

7. “FOR MY MOTHER” - Khalil Jordache wrote, “This was written for my mother at a time when we were going through changes about my transsexuality.”

8. “CONFRONTATION” - Khalil Jordache wrote, “This was written from my viewpoint as a Black, gay transsexual man.”
9. “TO ALL MY FRIENDS AT METAMORPHOSIS” – “Metamorphosis” refers to the service organization and support group for trans men founded by Rupert Raj in Toronto, Canada in 1982, which was later incorporated, in 1983, as the Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF).

10. “THE SATYR BORN WRONG (INTO THE WORLD OF MEN)” – “Satyr,” in Greek mythology, is one of a troop of ithyphallic male companions of the god, Dionysus, with equine (horse-like) features, including a horse-tail, horse-like ears, and sometimes also horse-like legs and even a horse-like phallus. (The female “Satyresses” were a late invention of poets - that roamed the woods and mountains). The satyrs’ chief was Silenus, a minor deity associated (like Hermes and Priapus) with fertility.

11. “WHY DO I NOW HAVE A WOMAN’S BODY?” – Published in The Gender Trap (The moving autobiography of Chris & Cathy, the first transsexual parents), by Chris Johnson & Cathy Brown, with Wendy Nelson, Proteus Publishing Ltd., London, UK, 1982, p. 174. Writes Nelson: “…in those early days before crossing over, Chris found that the agony of being trapped in a woman’s body often evoked angry and passionate feelings in him against the Lord.”

12. “YOU TAKE AWAY MY PRIDE” – Ibid, p. 175. Wendy Nelson tells us that “Chris was often unable to express to Cathy the full import of his frustrations, so he would return, time and again, to a one-sided correspondence with his Creator, with whom the quarrel over his identity was by no means over.”


15. “YOU MAKE ME ANGRY” - Ibid, p. 177. “In the end, God, as Perfect Woman, bore the brunt of Chris’s rage, while at the same time it was obvious that he feared ultimate rejection,” Nelson notes.

16. “LORD, I WISH TO KNOW MORE OF YOU” – Ibid, p. 178. Wendy Nelson tells us that “Chris had now begun male hormone treatments and his body was readily adjusting to its new form. As Chris began to feel much more sure of himself, his quarrel with God burned itself out, only to be replaced by such a feeling of remorse for his bitter outbursts that, now that he’d rediscovered what it meant to believe, he not only yearned for forgiveness, but wished to know more and more about his faith.”

17. “HOW CAN I PERSUADE YOU, LORD, TO TALK TO ME?” – Ibid, p. 178. “Chris now plaintively begged for God’s love, and absolute peace of mind was something he had to find within himself, with God’s help, rather than by turning to others for assistance,” Nelson explains.
18. “OH GOD OF CREATION, THE MOST PERFECT BEING” – Ibid, p. 178. Wendy Nelson points out that “Chris invoked imagery that was powerfully, and perhaps sometimes, unconsciously interwoven with their predicament. And that God was always addressed as a bisexual force.”

19. “OUTSIDERS” – The “outsider” here is Diane Andersson – the wife of Carl, a F-M TS in London, England. Diane’s poem is a plea to Carl and other transsexuals to share the pain and loneliness of their reality with their loved ones and friends on the outside.

20. “SHAFT” – “SHAFT” is an acronym for the Self-Help Association for Transsexuals – a peer-support group founded by Judy Cousins (a M-F TS) in England in 1980, which was later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust in 1989. The acronym also stands for “a shaft of light” in the darkness of gender conflict/confusion. Diane, a couple member (with her husband, Carl), wrote this tribute to say “thank you” to the group.

21. “TO LOVE YOU (For David)” – Dedicated to one of Steven’s gay male lovers (perhaps David Aaron Liebman? – see End Note #22 below). Male homosexuality, in addition to transsexualism/transgenderism/androgyny, is a major theme running through the poet’s work. Compare this tribute to his other one, “To You (For David),” and also to Khalil Jordache’s “Confrontation” – a piece about his transhomosexuality as a gay/bi trans man, who “confronts” other gay men [Book One: Part Two: F-M TSism].

22. “FOR DAVID AARON” – “David Aaron” was a F-M TS, and the brother of Maura Liebman. She wrote this poem (and two others: “Fight It With Love” and “The End Of Denial”) for David only a couple of years before he took his life in his Florida home in 1984 as a result of chronic suicidal depression (and possible autism). He was 18 at the time of his death. (See: “Maura Liebman” in “The Poets” section for further information).

23. “IN MEMORY OF BILLY TIPTON - (AND “BILLY”S EVERYWHERE)” – “Billy Lee Tipton” was an American, pre-op, F-M TS and jazz player, who played with the big bands in the 1930s before forming the Billy Tipton Trio in 1954. He passed as a man for 50 years, married three times (as a man), and adopted three sons – but never had sex-conversion surgery. Billy died of a bleeding ulcer at the age of 74, in Spokane, WA, in January 1989. This salute to “Billy” and other F-M TSs was written by a M-F TS.
BOOK TWO:

PART ONE:

MALE-TO-FEMALE TRANSGENDERISM (ANDROGYNY)
SPECIAL JOY

To encompass all of humanity
Both male and female
Masculine, yet loving femininity –
The best of both worlds.
To blend, to grow
To be in touch with your whole being:
No walls, no boundaries
No strings attached.
To be, to feel, to touch
Every recess of your soul.
No limits, only horizons
No repressing, just blooming
Into the complete flower of humanity
You are
You can become
The Special Joy of knowing who you are
Allowing yourself to emerge
Into the light of totality, of wholeness
Completion, Contentment.

~~ Patricia (“Lisa”) (© Our Special Joy)

FEEL THE FLOWERS

Quietly, sit quietly
in your softest gown.
Calm your senses
let your troubled spirit rest.
Cradle pink flowers in your hand
and with all the gentleness
you possess
raise these flowers
and touch them.
Touch them delicately
with your fingers and cheek.
Then, with all your courage
release your senses.
Feel the tears
well in your eyes
feel the shudder of joy
purge your spirit
feel the flowers with your soul
and you will become the flowers.
The flowers will be you –
there is no greater reward.

~~ Merissa Sherrill Lynn
TRANSITION

What am I?
Neither male nor female!
Dividing like some amoeba
Am I something?
Or nothing at all!

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson

LIGHT AND DARK

All is not dark, all is not light
Sometimes in the darkness
A transgenderist will lose sight
But, sooner or later
A TG will see what is right.

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson

JUST A LITTLE

There's just a little woman in every man
There's a little man in every woman
But there's a lot more woman in me
Than society can understand.

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson

INSULTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Some people say:
“Look at that man in women's clothing
Or, maybe it's a woman
Ha! Ha!”
Saying I'm a man is an insult
Teasing me that I'm a woman –
A dart to stick and sting -
Is a compliment.

~~ Layni Jayne Wilson
GENES

A woman or a man? We're not always sure which. Is it Sandy or Brandy, or perhaps Billy or Mitch? Can we decide when we look at hands, feet or hair Whether that person uses Brylcreem or Nair?

Perhaps we should look for clues secondary Since it's uncertain if it's Jenny or Larry. These characteristics are best seen in the light But what if we look at yon hermaphrodite?

These roles we play and lose so often. The question echoes, “What will happen When confusion reigns without resolution? And who will fight, and with what ammunition?

But for some, there is a measure of peace When granted a self with a long-term lease. For you see, I have no need to ponder “which?” As I know, quite clearly, I'm both Brandy and Mitch!

~~ Steve Townsend

CENTAUR

I, who am half Woman and half male (somewhat like the Centaur of Greek mythology who was half a man and half a horse knowing not whether to use hooves, fists or a kindly word) know not whether to use manly fists or womanly guile. In shape or form, I am as other men but in my mind – that's different. It may be as the mind of Woman, but how am I to know? Always and forever, I want to be as other women are and yet, the maleness shows – doom me to a half-life in each world and yet maybe...perhaps...the best of both.

~~ Dorothy (of Grimsby)
HAPPILY ANDROGYNOUS

When I was young, naïve and small
I knew I wasn’t’ a boy at all.
I tried really hard to be what they expected
But the feelings inside couldn’t be neglected.

I didn’t like ball; didn’t want to fight.
If I were a girl that would be alright.
I knew in my heart that it was a mistake
And prayed that I’d change before I’d wake.

Then, I found clothes let out the girl inside.
At last, I could see her – at least in my eyes!
My dressing, it soon became an obsession
But then, there were times I’d go into regression.

The sorrow, the pain, the crying, the tears
It just seemed like life was really unfair.
Then, I met a girl and made her my wife.
Thank God, it’s the end of my crossdressing life.

Time had passed by and I found I was wrong –
The feelings inside, they weren’t really gone.
So, on the couch, at least two times a week –
Where am I going? What do I seek?

I thought it was time to change, once and for all
And considered my life from the time I was small.
I had worked really hard to be mostly a man
Tho’ I knew, from the start, this wasn’t the plan.

My wife she supported me, stayed by my side
And all of her fears, she kept them inside.
She knew if I changed that she couldn’t stay
But she wanted me happy; she loves me that way!

Of all the feelings I have ever felt
The one that’s the greatest, in spite of myself
Is the love of my wife, without any doubt.
She married a person with feelings inside
And helped to release them; from her they won’t hide.

So now, all my feelings, they can coincide
An androgynous person, I happily reside.
And if I could change things and start over again
An androgynous person I’d proudly remain!

~~ Jessica Dahl
THE ANDROGYNY OF KATHERINE AND BEING
(dedicated to Katherine Ross, 1961)

Katherine, liken Being to a small white dove
Transcendent, behind the clouds of the mind
Beyond the simple manifest phenomena.
Though you know not, nor care what Being is
Yet you are like a Now-dove immanent before the clouds
Clearly in the light of day.

Illusively, that dove, Being, is male and female, mother and father
Husband and wife, man and woman:
At once, white curves of gentle volume, with folded wings
And again, eagle-eyes flashing points of flame
Falconing out of space like the Time-Lord’s Master Ship.

Primordially male, bronzed, heavily-wristed, Being
Makes a whimpering woman of a bearded, stocky-muscled philosopher
Pinioning him to his bed of dialectic
Raping his sturdy soul;
The philosopher feels helpless
Being’s angular thighs are pierced by its
Eyes of matter and energy
Time and space.

Yet, the same philosopher watches nightly beneath a shadowed moon
With firm but pulsing breath.
Gripped by a holy lust, he strains
To glimpse beneath the silk of vaporous robe
The faint electric outlines and slim, fair form
Of Being.

I, too, am a philosophrix, oh Katherine
Angular, with eagle-eyes.
Man-like, I see, I conquer, I come.
You, a wingless, white oval stone, worn smooth and new by river years
Slick as in a fashion magazine; yet
A real, inviting crystal lying shallow in clear, cold running water
A translucent, near-formed pearl, torn too soon
From the soft matrix of mother shells.

Will I know, or will I have?
Or will I be that hard-eyed eagle-dove behind the clouds
When you and I are one?

~~ Alessandra Maria Atalanta (© The Phoenix, 1982)
LIONESS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN²
(to Helen)

The moribund sun spirals down to its lowest radiance
The Winter Solstice,
Yet, strangely my soul still grows in faith and hope,
And even in my mind’s third eye, a vision appears
Of the sun’s returning: a glowing yellow and orange red
Ball of light, so hot, its golden edges flicker into the
Limits of the blackest, deepest space.

And all the while my inner eye begins to see another vision:
A woman of northern clime, so fair and delicate, whose
Kindly coolness belies her depth of passion, yet within
So warm and sweet, she might just be an equatorial fruit.
In the shivering dawn, she stands lithe and tall and
Strong in the reflected light of the glowing orb as it
Eases over the horizon.

Fully armed, sheathed sword and knife girding her slender waist,
She holds spear and shield; the weapons glow with the color of
Her hair in the light of the tentative golden dawn.
Such a young and feminine mother lioness to have
So many daughters, full grown Amazon warriors, who gather softly
About her as they don their metal skirts and breastplates,
Closing their battle vigil in the Land of the Midnight Sun.

Helena, my fearless leader princess, how clearly I see
Your inner beauty that you conceal so innocently,
The hands of your strength beneath the proverbial velvet gloves,
Your ancient wisdom that you mask with youthfulness.
May these visions stay my quailing heart, while my burning love
For you destroys all identities, and I become, at once
Your daughter, your mother, your sister, your friend.

~~ Alessandra Maria Atalanta (© The Phoenix, Vol. 4, No. 7, July 1984)
GETTING OURSELVES TOGETHER

Sometimes I wonder –
can it really be true
that everyone living
was formed as a dual?

Now, as for me
it seems quite real
that the two sides of me
I see, think and feel.

For some, maybe
the thought’s not so new
but can this apply
for only us few?

In everyone else
whom I’ve ever met
it seems that I had
sensed in a way a duet.

At times, showing strength
May be quite their fashion
and yet, it’s their weakness
that brings out their passion.

Just look and you’ll see
the change that takes place
in anyone’s demeanor –
their style or their face.

Note how the look
that is in angry eyes
will soften as they
try to apologize.

And watch as the pleasure
will surely be there
in the face of a taker
when he wants to share.

Or the change in the tone
of a voice raised to jeer
as it whispers its feelings
to one special ear.
A one-sided person
I never did find -
the difference within
is what makes up our mind.

So, if double, not single
in all is for real
and if we can’t erase
either side that we feel

Then perhaps we should
blend all of what we must be
with the best of both sides -
then we’ll find true harmony.

~~ Tess Alden

ENIGMA

No one knows her like I do
No one knows her at all.
She’s always there
Yet out of sight
Just waiting for a call.

She’s warm, she’s nice
The dearest friend
That anyone could be.
Yet, only I have seen her
Once she’s been set free.

She moves with grace
Into my life
Whenever I should call.
She warms my world
She fills my life
She lifts me when I fall.

No one knows her like I do
But, if she gets around
She’ll meet some friends
She’ll find a home
She just wants to be found.

~~ Stephanie Anne Alwood
CONUNDRUM

I want, I know not what…
but the confusion that lies within my soul
at this time threatens my existence.
I want happiness, as we all do
but the temptation of a more rewarding lifestyle
is hampered as to doubts of dream versus reality.

Do I want to start down the Road of Discovery
and put the life I know in jeopardy?
Or, to remain in this state
of frustrated existence?
Perhaps a compromise of the two extremes
that live within this but normally-appearing man.

The dilemma of the unknown
and the projection of the future
scares me to the core of my being.
Perhaps confusion can better be defined as
finding two dreams beautiful
but the realities of both threatening.

~~ S. Machi

CONFUSION

Going through life
knowing you are
thinking you’re not
a confusing lot
never being sure
not of this world
where do I belong?
my heart yearns
my eyes cry
the pain inside
the depression within
the pressure builds up
unbearable levels
must repress
in order to survive
some maybe I’ll see
my own sun rise.

~~ Janet F. (1981)
MY DREAM

As I lie awake trying to sleep
my mind runs through my secrets deep
to be fem and pretty, my heart yearns
and hope, by morning, my sex will turn.

To awake one morning and find a new me
would give my heart the ultimate glee
I see myself in the mirror that morn
with a body that’s small, shapely and warm.

I stare at myself so long in a daze
hoping I’ll never come out of this maze
as I sit and dress, I watch every move
panties, bra, stockings and shoes.

A dress and make-up is yet to come
I fear to look back and I regret some
as I finish and stand and walk to the door
my dream ends…and I’m a male once more.

~~ Janet F. (1981)

TO SOCIETY

Why do I have dreams like I do?
Why do I wish my dreams would come true?
Am I, in fact, running away -
as all the other people say -
to be someone I’m not?

They see only what they see
and not what I really feel.
It’s this type of thinking
that throws me off keel.

They say I must act a certain way
but they don’t feel what I do -
so why, why should they say?

I have certain feelings, opinions and views
but why should I tell them – just to be news?
The feelings I have are tender and warm
and I wish I could have them all day long
in a different body – then they would see
and finally understand that it’s only SHE.

~~ Janet F. (1981)
EXIST

As I think about the girl in me
I am cast upon a lonely sea
for I know that I could never be
the pretty girl I see in me.

With all the changes Man has found
and all the medical help around
it doesn’t quite do, I have found
or help me to where I’m bound.

To be genetic would be the best
and then my mind would be at rest
I don’t know how much of this I can take
maybe my birth was all a mistake.

~~ Janet F. (© The Phoenix, 1981)

TO GOD

I’ve thought of being female
ever since the age of three
and saw the difference to myself
and how different things could be.

I said to God: “What have you done?
There must be some mistake!
You must, in fact, take me back
and a female you must make.”

Now, I’ve been praying many years
and still nothing has been done
I can honestly say, living this way
has certainly not been very fun.

It has caused me a lot of grief
and pain and sorrow too
but now I find, in my mind
that God has been true.

God didn’t give me a body
shaped to my design
but wonderful feelings to be
gentle and to be kind.

~~ Janet F.
TO MY BELOVED SISTER

A long time back, I must admit
there came a certain glow
when my sister dressed me up
and to Mother she did show.

I remember feeling special
and so electrified
an emotion that ran deep and strong
it could not be denied.

I didn’t understand back then
what this could actually be
but something really special
that allowed me to be me.

~~ Janet F. (1981)

ANIMA

Oh, my sister, how I well I know you.
You are my own flesh and blood.
They cannot understand this but
we are one body, one mind, one soul.
When they were out there fighting,
wrestling, quarrelling,
vying for the crown,
I was in here with you
learning the ways of love.

~~ Jan Armstrong
I have a twin sister no one sees -
we share the same bosom,
the same body,
the same bed.
No one sees her;
no one knows she exists.

No one knows my Anima
this Siamese twin of mine
who loves the feel of nightgowns,
pretty sheets,
ruffles and lace,
feminine things.

No one would understand
for she is invisible to them.
They would only see me,
and object for their scorn
and derision.

Otherwise, they would judge
our relationship as incestuous.
Is there incest between a man
and himself?
Between a woman and herself?
What of Siamese twins –
Is sexual contact incest?

My sister and I are one body,
one mind, one soul.
She is more flesh than any succubus
yet, I still long for my Dulcinea,
someone who can love both
my sister and me as one.

For we are one.
Must such a woman be bisexual?
I think not.
For aren’t we all part male,
part female?
Isn’t the most gentle part of the male
female?
In the last and final act,
my Dulcinea and I would ride
as male and female,
this Sagittarian centaur
carrying her across the night sky.

Only, let her recognize
my sister in me,
treat her with kindness.
For she and I are one
and would be one with her –
the woman of my quest.

~~ Jan Armstrong
MY SIAMESE TWIN SISTER

Who is this little girl
I find hiding in me,
secretly wearing her mommy’s pearls,
bracelets, earrings,

putting on feminine things
from the skin outwards –
slinky, silky, lacy, ruffly,
feminine things
that feel so delicious to the skin?

Who is this lady in the bubble bath
shaving her underarms,
sponging her breasts,
almost afraid to touch them
for fear of the electric shock?

After the bath, toweling off,
putting on powder or perfume,
a gown (hidden by a man’s robe)
brushing her hair,
donning lingerie, a pretty dress,
or tight sweater skirts and accessories,

finding feminine shoes
with a heel she can walk on,
or wearing only a housecoat and apron
to do household chores?

Who is this woman
emerging out of my rib,
taking over my identity,
hiding my manhood,
yet needing it for completion?

Who is this woman
with whom I sleep incestuously?
Why is this mistress a prisoner
8in my house of love?

~~ Jan Armstrong
TO ALL MY NATURAL SISTERS

At puberty I couldn't understand
The swellings in my chest
The nipple triggers
That could send sparks through my body
Yet I loved them –
I still do.

How can I tell you
How close they bring me
To my sisters –
The sisters I never had?

My mind grew up
My groin and brain
Acted as all boys' do
And there was "women's work"
And men's…

Until I learned too late
Until a marriage fell apart
Until I was on my own
Now housework has a kind of compensation

When I can dress for it
Dress as a woman might
For I love feminine things, pretty sheets
Soft fabrics, lace, silk, make-up
And all things feminine.

When I can let my secret sister out
She speaks for women everywhere
Speaks of oppression
Of equality, of forgiveness.

For though I am a coward
At the thought of pregnancy and labor
I wish...oh, how I wish
These soft but explosive breasts
That send a million volts through my system
Could nurse a babe
Could drip with my own milk
And still beneath my frilly, dainty gown
I'd be man enough to satisfy a woman.
Oh, sisters, born to femininity
Please take me in with honor
To your sisterhood
And teach me all the things that I must know
Without retaliation for my brothers’ wrongs.

For you will have an ally
Of the gentlest kind
To help you as a helpmate
Housewife, secretary
To lift all women, feminine by birth
Or by persuasion
Into a common glorious sisterhood.

~~ Jan Armstrong

THE SECOND “I” SEEN THRU THE THIRD EYE

The Third Eye looks inward
and knows me.

It lets light in
to search my darkest corner
where guilt lurks in closets
I try to keep closed.

If the light of truth
reveals these secrets,
what will happen?
Will I be damned as an outcast?

Or, would the Light
turn these fears to dust?
How can I find out?
How can I open these closet doors?

They must be locked from inside.
No, here is a keyhole –
But…where is the key?

~~ Jan Armstrong
TWO CHAMBERS OF MY HEART

You will not understand
how I can know
what only women
are supposed to know:

How the light air
careses under our dresses,
tresses flying as we run;

What the small hills feel
when the valley forms
under lace and cotton
in our bending;

How the wet grass
welters my tender flesh
as flax on the threshing floor,
as I roll down
the dew-drenched, grassy hill,
exploding like dandelion seeds
at the bottom.

How could you know, or believe,
that I, a man, can cry
for a riven part,
coming to know
my remnant family
as two chambers of my heart?

~~ Jan Armstrong
LOVE IN THE MORNING

Love in the morning is the white down of a swan’s nest
a smile caught in the tear duct
the lullaby of rain
the powdery fall of spring blossoms
the gentleness of kisses invited in…
into the shattered unbuttoning
of our most secret places.

It is the light brush of the finger’s aura
the touchless contact
we willingly yield to…
as eyelash to tongue.

Morning love opens our windows
to let the birdsong
the silver-dewed webs of yesterday in.
It is the…yes, oh yes...
and the breakfast appetizer.

Love in our own light-filled darkness
has a combustion and a radiance
no light meters can measure
but these matins our bodies sing
have pianissimos and crescendos
glissandos and pizzicatos
the twirling terpsichore
of an impromptu ballet.

Unshutter the windows
unbutton my hidden femininity
play your love tunes on my two magic keys
for we will bring in the morning
with a gentle reverence…
an awesome embrace.

Let us trade dancing shoes –
you lead and I will follow.
Let all of your WoMANliness take charge
let all of my masculinity surrender
for a moment…
my femininity ascend
to meet you in a forbidden kiss
that leaps between us
in knowing and eager recognition
of our sisterhood…
until we cannot dance this way any longer
until we both need the gentle initiation
leading to the hard passionate culmination
the crescendos and dimuendos
of the final movement: male and female
treble and bass clefs
melody and harmony, theme and counterpoint
woodwinds, brass and percussion
play on our strings.

Love in the evening can’t hold a candle
To our skyfilling sunrise…
This morning love.

~~ Jan Armstrong (© The TV/TS Talk, Sept./Oct. 1988)
SUNBURST

Once,
where a hill curled down
from cool woods
to the gold-green of a field,
grass rooted thigh high,
wet yet
from the summer shower
after the sun’s chariots
had towed away the clouds.

I, wanting the feel
of cool wet grass
to soothe my ovened skin,
rolled, tossed, naked,
down a green roller-coaster
wet with “saliva,”
glass grassblades
cutting and licking
nipples and loins.

Till….at the end,
down where the waves
crashed on dry ocean’s shore,
I burst,
white as a dandelion
coming to seed,
as fireworks
splitting the night,
my wet body celebrating
the green fingers of grass,
the all-central sun,
mixed with the deliciousness
of silver raindrops
condensing on me
in explosions, eruptions
of volcanic ecstasy.

~~ Jan Armstrong (© The TV/TS Talk, Jan./Feb. 1989)
DESIRE (TO AN UNKNOWN WOMAN)

Speak in gentle tongues
   let all your being peruse me
      so that we communicate through senses
         more than syllables.

Speak gently with your tongue, yes
   but also with your fingers, arms, eyes
      to make ears of my breasts
         my skin, my hair, my eyelashes.

Speak the lingua areola
   tongue of lovers, tongue to the areola.

Kiss me where I have never been kissed before
   let me kiss you there too…
      and there…
         and there.

In the cloister of our chosen room
   where curtains let light in, but not eyes
      where flowers bloom for us.

We bathe each other in warm oils
   while sunlight streams in
      a candle burns for incense.

Music filters through our communications
   as we steep ourselves in each other's brew
      travel beyond Time's dimension
         into the depths of ourselves.

This is but a part
   of all that is to be
      of the multifaceted connections
         we will make in many rooms:

Museums, living rooms, bedrooms…
   as well as parks and woods, shops and homes.

Let this be a beginning
   of the continuous and continuing flowing of ideas,
      emotions, sensations, joys, cares…
Take me, all of me  
   let me take you in, as breath itself  
   for I would be one with you, in spirit  
      as well as body  
         whenever we come together.

Yet I seek not to own you, nor to be owned  
   But to offer myself gladly to your service.

~~ Jan Armstrong

THIRD WATER SONG

“Upward and on,” Woman Soul  
Life sings waves: stark, fading  
Pretty mosaics fleeting, only  
We should catch them by the tail.

Intersections where we pivot and guess  
Hill, trees, birds, earth and wet  
Dark, cool principle will preach  
While poor images past should not forget.

Orthodoxy shall whip us with custom  
And we shall smart in the breach  
Let us hammer at our leg-irons  
As our guardian Genius shall teach.

Like the gymnast would tumble and turn  
And the anchor should secure the boat  
So should our nature be our place –  
Should our nature be our hope.

~~ Deborah A.
I AM WOMAN, I AM MAN

I am woman, I am man –
I have beauty inside of me
I have strength
There was always beauty inside me
But it was buried, locked, denied.
I have always had strength
But it scared me, worried me, made me anxious.

I am woman, I am man –
Outside I was only a man
My woman was my deepest secret
Locked in a hidden magic garden
Mostly I couldn’t get there
Except in my dreams.

I am woman, I am man –
Why was my man so scary?
So fraught, desperate, devoid?
Perpetual vigil against strength being harm
At best, tight-lipped tolerance from the world
Earned by eternal service
But always risk of a mistake
And the consequences unthinkable
Punishing myself
To try to get right with the world.

I am woman, I am man –
Therapists tried to help me cure myself
Of my womanhood:
That would be a living death
With tube-feeding from Hollywood
And a meaningless job
And a prickly pear to go ‘round
At five o-clock in the morning
But where is joy? Where is life? Where is love?

I am woman, I am man –
At last, I found my hidden garden
I found it in a canyon in Colorado
I found it in my music
I found it in my womanhood
I found it in my friends and dear ones
I’m learning how to be in my secret garden
Whenever I want
Which is most of the time.
I am woman, I am man –
Now my beauty shines out
Now my strength is safe
And good and joyous
I stand tall and proud and happy
I run the woods
I revel in the beauty of nature of art, of people
I glory in the beauty of my friends
Now my love can pour out
Now I can accept their love.

~~ Robin Esch

A QUESTION OF GENDER
Am I a man who wants to be a woman
Or a man who just likes to dress like one?
Was I born in the wrong body
Or am I just jealous of my sisters?

I don’t know if I should be a woman
I don’t know that I am not a man.
Does that make me nothing?
Now, that would be something.

~~ Anonymous
THE CAGED BIRD

I bought a beautiful bird in a pet store the other day.
It’s a Cherry-headed Conure, bright green with a red head.
It stands about a foot tall and sits in a beautiful gold cage,
watching the world go by, crying for attention from time to time.

I asked the pet store owner whether the bird was male or female.
She said she didn’t know - that you can’t tell with this kind of bird
unless you perform a surgical procedure.
Did I want to know that bad? No, I decided
but it disturbed me, not knowing.

Was it a “he” or a “she”?  
How do I name it?  
How do I refer to it – as “him” or “her”?  
How do I relate to it?

I noticed I related differently to the bird
depending on how I referred to it.
If I said “he,” it was because, in that moment
I saw him as being masculine, strong and regal.
If I said “she,” it was because, in that moment
I saw her as being feminine cute and sweet.

After awhile, I adjusted to owning and androgynous bird.
I even kind of liked it.

I have a good friend, Robin –
Robin is very much like my Cherry-headed Conure.
Robin is masculine, and strong and regal.
Robin is feminine, and cute and sweet.
Robin is a man and Robin is a woman.
Robin is androgynous.

When I first met Robin, I put her in a cage.
When she was safely locked up
behind my judgements and fears and curiosity,
I could stare at her from a distance,
and not get too close, or too threatened.
The cage kept us safe, but separate.

But Robin has spent too many years in a cage.
In an impulsive moment, I opened the door to the cage,
and within moments, Robin flew out.
Her spirit filled the room, and suddenly,
I didn’t need the cage anymore,
and neither did she.
I stopped needing Robin to be either a man or a woman. Robin’s spirit is androgynous, and I cried for the spirit that had been locked up for so long in man-made cages… cages constructed by fellow human beings who were frightened by their own bisexuality… cages erected by fellow souls who needed to put Robin behind cage bars, so they could feel safe.

I unlocked the cage of my Cherry-headed Conure tonight, and within moments, the bird was gliding effortlessly around the room, filling the room with its spirit, relishing its newly-found freedom. Now, I can’t help but wonder…if I catch the bird, and return it to its cage, is that for my benefit, or the bird’s?

Robin can return to her cage too. Sometimes she goes there willingly. Most of the time, she would rather fly free but other people need her to be locked up, so she complies, and returns to the cage, so they will feel safe.

But, its getting harder and harder for Robin to return to the cage, even when people try to put her in it. It used to feel comfortable – like home even. Now, it feels like a prison, and her spirit feels suffocated within the confines of the cage.

Robin in discovering that when she escapes the cage, and allows her spirit to spread throughout the room, other people’s need for the cage seems to disappear. In fact, there was never any real need for the cage in the first place.

The Cherry-headed Conure sits contentedly, perched upon its cage, relishing its freedom.

I haven’t named my bird yet. I think I will call him or her “Robin” – a nice androgynous name.

~~ Linda Ackerman
ICE DANCER

Silently, She glides
Across an ice-silver pond
With the moon her witness
And silhouettes as her music.

She pirouettes
And glides…
The ice dancer
Inside my head.

Morning comes too soon
And He is forced to look into the mirror
And see what the world sees –
Everything but the ice dancer’s tears.

~~ Elaine Thorson (1983)

BEING A MAN FOR MOM AND DAD’S SAKE

Like a wind-up toy
I dance for you.
Sometimes though
You wind me too tight
And that strains
My main-spring
And I hurt
So very much.

~~ Elaine Thorson (1983)
GRANDFATHER, FATHER, AND ME

My grandfather was a man
Who sailed four of seven seas
Built a railroad across Canada
And wrapped canvas around the feet
Of children who had no shoes.

My father is much like him
Though he has had better days.
If things had been the same
My father would be my grandpa’s twin.
Then how did they come up with me?

I sit behind closed doors
Wearing make-up and a dress
As if to say, “Things aren’t good enough
And your history I wish not to bequest
Tho’ to tarnish your legacy, I am sorry.”

Who knows what is my reason
For being that which I am
I look to you both with love –
But am not of what has made you You
But am of what has made me Me.

~~ Elaine Thorson (1983)
SEPARATE IDENTITY

I burned my ideals in the Phoenix fire
And the ashes changed my feathers.
Though I am departing from inside
I find I am still one gender.

Don't cry for the underdog
Or drown in the undertow
Don't you know he's only one of a pack?
Can't you see he's never alone?
Individuals have themselves within
But once they are out, there is no way back.

Single-file down a tube which narrows up front
In separate identity we commute
To the search for The Light
To the ruining hunt.

Before this clarity, I was never deceived
And since, by charity, never received.
Though shrinking from the crippling lie to it
This is a crystal I had not conceived.
Make it blue and diluted, healing blue
Let its credible light shine reason.
Make it understood under easy terms
Different from this savage season
Of sex and muscle and feminchismo
Power and politic mad machismo
Double entanete and double value
Duality downed by duplicities' shallows.

Before this power, I had never believed
Quite the way I am now released to
Facing age as a circle and love as continuum
Feasted and glutted and hungry for the new.

I burned my old husk in the Phoenix fire
And the embers educated me.
Upon the smoke thermal, frozen, re-launched
Whether or not I would fall or fly free.

continued…
I am burst from the tube and have shattered its End
To the blue light that closes the lesion of Halves
I can smile to the eye contact of sister and friend
And my husk lies with those who would laugh.
Chattering apes, babbling saps
Confused, perplexed, but excited
Envy the smile in the eye of the Sphinx
And deny we’re related, much less united.
(Sad, small, sap world).

~~ Phaedra Kelly

JAQUETTA EL ‘E LA HA’ OF THE PHASE

Queen of Berdache, alter ego crisp in her
Transconscience.
She’s more real than I/me.
Without question of doubt, she fired my mind
Teased my thoughts through a rational process
Of illogic; productive
Though, behind it all, a murmur near inaudible
Of relevant sex…sure, sensual it began.
Laws are not her concern, but an overactive
Sense of justice bordering on banditry:
Who, Transformed, would institute affrays?!
What chance of “disturbing the peace”? What they mean is disturbance.
THEY are doing it behind The Bench!
The stuff of “it” is always to
Vainglorious, camp, high camp
Semi-metaphysical psychedelia
In paranormal identifying paramnesia
Fetishishti, mental paraplegia and parody and Parrot…
Multi-glossed and bright as South America
It is expected of her
It bumps and grinds through all the established
Rhythms of humanity.
So?
Give it beauty!

~~ Phaedra Kelly
THE GAP

What are you aiming at me
From your pounding heart?
I sit love – I accuse?
Window blinds of jungle vines
Shadow press your face
A tear on trembling lip
Animal wariness in eyes
Court me in pensive shams
After the act, once more the Aggressor
And it is I who feels unclean now.

How our roles invert
Invite
Gyrate
And pain
Castrate?!?
What’s given me?
A life – inside of me?
One that will not see fruition.

Coitus hilarious it was:
A femme of transcendental testiculi
Avec un homme fatal with transient womb
Surely, heady, sweet, murky revenge.
Is it oneness? Is it love – I accuse?
Or is it Oneness?

~~ Phaedra Kelly

NATURAL CHILDBIRTH

There I sat at 3:00 am, biting my pen
And counting contractions, when suddenly
I supposed my mind to be womb-shaped!
I laughed, and inspiration gone, took oxygen
Counted, waited again...then, after a slight incision
Gave birth to two stanzas and slept
Dreaming wonderment at the concept.
Immaculate paternity leaves one independent
As mother of one’s Destiny.

~~ Phaedra Kelly
FLESHWISH OF DISTURBATION

“Work it out of your system
Have your balance checked and
Thereafter make your body your slave
Not your master…”

Thanks for the good advice
However –
Bonjour encore, la petite morte!
And as the flower grows before my eyes
A week-cycle sped by my forehead projector
The phantasm short breaths and panics spread
And I indulge disturbance, unashamed.

Part-me, a sleeping partner – only when it thinks
God’s not looking.
Part-me, throws seed on stony ground.
Frantic over a Negress of forty years – still true
To Rock, a neighbour, a facsimile, such flashing
Thighs, so powerful fleshwishes.

As the flower dies before me, I part the waves
To my weakness, reconcile and rise a new being
Tremble, wash, order my mind to resuscitate the
Smothered Slave.
Aesthetically appreciative once more and home to
Love.

~~ Phaedra Kelly

ELECTRIC LOVER

Don’t touch the tip of naked memories
It’s rash.
Don’t close the circuit with your hand.
Don’t find a friend too soon
Just another fornicating man.
Don’t bleed the need from our relationship
Don’t go telling me you understand.
You wish you didn’t have to hurt, please
Just don’t leave as planned.
If you must slam the door, if go is all
Then unplug me at the floor.
Rip the memories from my valve
And do not touch the naked tip.
I close my generator down, for now.

~~ Phaedra Kelly
BUT TWINNED LIVES SAVE THEMSELVES

Let all those who have craved love
Be found by it.

I am your sister/brother
I am your mother/father
I am your son/daughter
I am the spirit that is.

I will be helped
Let me help.
I would be loved
Let me love.
I would live
Be you alive.

Profit is not where you look
But where you will be found by it.
Wait, in keeping with the flow.
Do as you feel if, you feel as you do
Find reason as a reason enough.
Let power be in the power that is not.
Let all those that have known love
Find you.

The meek shall inherit.
I am not just a friend
I am a relative.
A friend to save your life
But, blood is blood
But Twinned Lives Save Themselves.

~~ Phaedra Kelly
From the unplumbed deaths of Nature
We all seem to hear a call
For there is a little bit of rabbit
That resides within us all.

So an egg and sperm are mated
And the process, once begun
Took its long, slow, nine-month course
Till at last, there came…a son!

Who knows how genes are activated
Or how chromosomes combine?
All potentials for our future lives
In those mysteries are enshrined.

What parts of what a person is
Are set forth on conception day
And what parts does he acquire
As he travels down Life’s way?

Is all of what we say and do decided
By a self that’s wholly free
Or by unknown determinants
With which we unconsciously agree?

I cannot give these answers
Nor can the wise man say
For all I know with certainty
Is what I am today.

Many years have gone to history
Many testings have passed.
Many questions have been answered
Though many more questions asked.

Through lots of pain and turmoil
I’ve done as life required
I’ve met the challenges of manhood
I reached the goals that I desired.

I’ve lived the road expected
And done as I ought to do
As an athlete and a scholar
Husband twice, and father too.
But this life, for all its pleasures
Was somehow not complete
For always deep within me
Another heart there seemed to beat.

A man’s life has limitations
Of which he’s often not aware
He’s so busy living “manhood”
That he doesn’t seem to care.

Men can express a lot of things
But much he must repress
While women have more freedom
Their feelings to express.

With males and females in each species
Nature’s worked things out okay
And for reproductive purposes
There is no better way.

But in two genders, human life
Completely is expressed.
Each of us part of the total lives
Knowing little of the rest.

For society takes half from each of us
Telling us the other half’s forbidden.
So, if we’ve feelings like that other half
We’d do well to keep them hidden.

Repressing talents and abilities
I say’s unwise and wrong.
Our society need all of each of us
To be healthy, safe and strong.

I’ve been divided long enough
Now toward completion I’ll advance
And in the years still left to me
I’ll give my other half her chance.

There’s a girl who’s lived within me
Seeking exit to the light
She says, “Full Personality Expression”
Is every human’s right.

You say womanhood has its problems too
This, I’ll doubtless come to see
As I spend my life exploring
My own femininity.
Yes, today I have decided
That on tomorrow’s morn
My life takes a new direction
A new woman will be born.

In fifty years of masculinity
I’ve extracted all it’s worth
So now, thankfully, do I celebrate
This day of my rebirth.

Not one who on occasion lives
A stolen hour now and then
But one whose life’s completely hers
To live from now till...When?

Of man’s thoughts and drives and motives
I think I’ve had full measure.
Now it’s time for softness, grace ‘n’ beauty
And other things that women treasure.

From masculine expectations
In the future I’ll be relieved
For I can spend my life expanding
The womanhood I’ve achieved.

There’ll be freedom now for many things
And in all I do rejoice
For within my heart is singing
And it sings in a different voice.

For now, at last and finally
I stand in public, freed
I feel, I think, I act, I live
A true woman, now indeed.

What and when and how and why
And also where and who...
These questions must be dealt with
By me as well as you.

But I care not of how and where and why
Nor about another’s view
For my identity is solid
If I know what, when and who.

Who knows whether in my embryo
Whose travails none could see
There was something pre-determined?
Perhaps this was meant for me.
So, condemn me if you have to
And challenge me if you can
But I’ll live thirty years as a woman
After serving fifty years as a man!

**Epilog 1973**

‘Tis now five years, or thereabouts
Since I made my big decision.
Through all of them I’ve learned so much
I’d not make the least revision.

My hair is long and curly now
It’s been permanently waved.
My face has had its beard removed
I no longer have to shave.

My skin is soft and smooth
And the breasts I have are “B”
A fulfilment that they’re really mine
No more “falsies” for me.

My total self I have explored
And in the process grown
Till all the traits my genes possessed
At last are all my own.

Two ways there are to deal with life
The man’s way and the woman’s.
I have the choice of either now
So I feel more fully human.

How long I’ll live, I do not know
It’s a race you cannot win
But I’ll die a liberated person
Who’s expressed both “Yang” and “Yin.”

A gender role’s a prison
From which everyone should be free
So each of us can live up to
Our true humanity.

~~ Virginia Prince
YVONNE

Incomplete –
striving to be born…yearning to be free.
Afraid.
Who are you - a figment of my imagination?
An apparition – are you real?
How do I get to know you
without destroying a part of me?
Intrigue.
Need.
Feelings…good…comfortable…necessary.
I need to know you to be complete
yet, I am afraid of knowing you too well.
I feel drawn to you as a moth to a flame.
Will you destroy me as you are born?
Incessant pressure…bursting forth in need.
I cannot repress you, yet I am afraid
of your gentle, knowing strength.
Let us meet and learn to live in peace.

~~ Yvonne

FEMININITY/FEMALENESS

An elusive quality to describe, yet obvious when seen.
There seems a wholeness here – together –
an understanding of depths no male can fathom.
Frustration to be looked on as a sex object
because there is so much more.
Fear – if I relate to men, all they see is sex, not me.
Fear – if I don’t relate to them, there is emptiness.
Anger – society is so dichotomized, polarized –
a gulf between the sexes, seemingly uncrossable
and yet, must be crossed.
Anger – a pulling across that gulf – I don’t want to go.
Sadness – why must it be that way?
Sadness – why did our Creator make us male and female?

~~ Yvonne
COMING DOWN

I’m so tired
My body screams for sleep.
Today was a disaster
It’s been a hectic week.
But tonight again was magic
A triumph for my will.
My senses are still tingling
With feelings I cannot still.

My friends went home at midnight
Now it's nearly three.
I should be sound asleep in bed
But something’s driving me instead.
Another person arose tonight
She’s really always there.
Parting with her now is
A frightful pain to bear.

It took me so long with make-up
With eyelashes and dress
To awaken my inner being
And feel her soft caress.
She came into her own
She existed in time and space.
She stepped upon the stage of life
And took her rightful place.

Why must I bid goodbye
To this other half of me?
Why can’t she finally become
All that she was meant to be?
She’s a real, living person
Essential to myself.
Why must I pack her away
Like a hat upon a shelf?

Career, family and friends
They clamor for my time.
They wouldn’t understand
This desperate need of mine.
Reluctantly, I change and wash
Again, I shift my gears…
And all I’m left with at the dawn
Is my longing and my tears.

~~ Janice Cleve
LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW

Looking out the window
As my nails dry
I see the boys and girls
Hand in hand, passing by.

I see the sun is setting
The meeting’s about to start
I feel the years I’ve lost
And the dying in my heart.

I dreamed an impossible dream
Alone for all these years
And now it can be cruel
But for me it’s cause for tears.

For I have made commitments
And they depend on me
These things cannot be changed
Nor would I want them to be.

Looking out the window
My sun is setting too
I see what could have been
And what is left to do.

To live each moment as I can
And explore this gentle gender
Sharing my feelings freely
With my sister members.

~~ Janice Cleve
SCALES

A one through six
You takes yer picks
Which one describes your essence
To understand
Where you might land
In short-lived effervescence.

But who’s to claim
You shall remain
Forever to persist
There a clone
With label known
That you alone resist.

Five and six
Does not exist
Before the way emerged
And four is cusp
Of three and five
Where these two can converge.

And then there’s one
We started from
Towards the five-six side
Or off the scale
To less than one
Or off by suicide.

There’s always three
The true TV
Or two, the fetishist
Or better yet
The latest bet
The N transgenderist.

The no-op four
Or maybe more
Who listens to the wise
The mind and body
Out of synch
A choice of compromise.
Appearing in
The other role
For all the world to see
It could be this
If it fit
Conscious reality.

But watch the dark
It’s not like day
For what the nighttime brings
The quiet tears
Or choices made
Based on other things.

Proclaim the two
And all but few
Would rue the day you met
You’d be seen
As more obscene
Than labels should beget.

Should the three
Be what you see
As your identity
Prepare to lose
From what you choose
Friends and family.

For true TV
And TV truth
Are not the same at all
And fear, not fact
Still rules the minds
Of those who’d cause your fall.

But this applies
To judgement’s eyes
To all who’d be a number
And rightly so
If you must blow
The shields off thoughtless slumber.

They’d prefer
You be the one
The cured and back to zero
The whitened dark
Of group control
The figurehead hero.
The one that’s shown
Tall and right
To the heightened horde
Guided true
Red, white and blue
A eunuch for the Lord.

~~ Tina Lindsay

WILMA

Bricks and lace
And firm convictions
Made-up face
And contradictions
Living out
Fantastic fictions
Oh, that Wilma!

Man by day
Gets cast away
For feminine
Existence
The caring heart
Breaks you apart
And leaves you no resistance.

Dancing out
Reality
We sometimes call her “Bilma”
But you are he
And she is you
And he is my friend, Wilma.

~~ Tina Lindsay
ONE OF THOSE WE CALL A “SHE”

When I take on my “human” form
I’m requising that I be
Made into something quite enchanting
One of those kind we call a “SHE.”

I’ve watched those planetary creatures now
For many a Cosmic span
And observed just how the type called “SHE”
Has progressed according to the Galactic Plan.

Perhaps, you should be reminded too
That many Cosmic spans ago
It was the “SHE” who held the most respect
For nurturing what the “HE” did sow.

Our first visit there confirmed the view
That this choice was bound to be
A wise one for these creatures
But, alas! Kronos took sides with “HE.”

Then, with the help of many Titans
The “HE” took charge and said:
“You ‘SHE’ will tend your precious fire
We ‘HE’ will hunt instead.”

And so, this format was observed
Through Cosmic spans galore
Wondering when this tribute of “SHE”
Would resent this life-long chore!

We watched as Kronos finally
Tired and took another course
And “SHE,” who had more time for speech
Became the mistress of discourse.

So, as spans of matter came and went
These Earthly creatures quickly bred
To inhabit all their planet’s space
And be held by lesser forms with dread.

We watched them with their greedy Science
Create comforts by the score
But, in terms of social progress
They were infants crawling on the floor.
Our fear became that unless the “SHE”
Assumed her right and proper place
And let intuitive nature become the guide
There would be no future for this race.

So, it’s been decided by our Council
That, from among us, some will go
And they’ve granted me my wish to be a “SHE”
Before being beamed to Earth below.

Of course, this is not difficult
For such a master form of life as us
Since, for Cosmic spans, our minds have been
Androgynous – our “form” mere Cosmic dust!

Of course, you’ll never know we are among you
Working to correct the damage done
So be nice to each new “SHE” you meet –
“SHE” might just be this Cosmic One!

~~ Louise Catherine Milner
TRANSMIGRATION

Somewhere...sometime...a part of me once lived...
I know now that in this other place in time
A state of Oneness was achieved
By which the other Self rose above –
Beyond Good and Evil
Shed also the pettiness of gender conflict.
And this other one
Knew the distance to each star
Knew the planets
Understood the ebb and flow of life
From simple worm –
Through metamorphosis –
To radiant butterfly.
What happened then –
Since you, who read these lines, show understanding –
Was, alas, a time when all things throughout the world
Were judged in terms of opposites:
Beauty, Ugliness; Heaven, Hell; and so on.
And those who lived among –
Between this dualistic view of world and life
And knew another world of being existed
Were judged: Evil! Sorcerer! Witch!
Thus, my Other’s fate was sealed by fire and flame
And as such, was left no trace.
How then, do I now know?
Because a happening took place –
Somewhere a babe was left to others
For its care and nurturing
And from this long atavistic past
I have emerged –
Here to resume my journey once again among Mankind -
To view from dizzying heights once more
The wonders of this Universe to unfold.
Set down for you, that you may recognize
Such timeless thoughts – in verse!
Yet, what can poets tell from all their travels
Through the countless passage of Time?
Only this: that Soul knows no gender
Has no shape, yet manifests itself
With each and every breath –
Through intellect, virtue, love
And being so, raises inner Self
Beyond the Earthly realm of Being
To that higher state, wherein lies the ultimate –
The perfection of our endless Human dream!

~~ Louise Catherine Milner
ANDROGYNY

The Woman tide within me
ebbs and flows at the mercy
of the moon in the Man sky
within me.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1981)

MODERN TIMES

Faster than an ABC news bulletin
More powerful than Loving Motives
Able to leap tall taboos in a single bound.
Look! Out in a dress!
It’s a Boy! It’s a Girl!
It’s anyone’s guess.

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1984)

PETER PANTIES

I wear this outfit very well;
I’ve found a role that suits.
A boy or a girl? It’s hard to tell
In a mini-skirt and boots.

I won’t grow up. No, I won’t try;
I’ll never be a man.
I’m caught between a smile and a sigh,
The New Age Peter Pan!

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 3, No. 11, 1984)

WAR BETWEEN THE SEXES

I fight,
my legs sheathed in nylons
like swords
ready to be crossed at a moment’s notice,
toenails still dripping blood red
from the last battle.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1982)
**GAFFA**

They say women can’t be truck drivers  
And still be women  
At the same time.  
I say, “Yes, they can!”  
(because I’m the one who knows  
It’s possible to wear women’s clothes  
and still be a Man).


**THE LAMENT**

Sometimes I cry  
when I look down at my lap.  
I can only sow the seeds for a new life,  
ever grow them.

I would give all  
to feel Life growing within me,  
to watch my belly swell  
with child,  
giving birth to a new creation  
like a poem.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1982)

**CHICK**

I am a chick.  
I can be on the bottom  
and people will still look up to me  
because it’s ok  
when you’re a chick.  
People expect it.

I bite my tongue a lot  
because when I come out on top  
women cock their heads  
like they might be rollin’  
and men head for their cocks  
like they might get stolen.

It’s a crime…  
But it’s ok  
‘cos I’m a chick.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1983)
KALEIDOSCOPE ONE

my life is a kaleidoscope
always

i shift, I change
i don't know or what i am
then i knew too well
i love, i hate
myself and others
for standing in my way
and for moving out of it
i mirror and i absorb
people and their lives around me
i change them too

i am a curiosity
picked up
and spun about in the light
dancing through shadows
and rainbows…
they watch in awe
as I let go in a million beads
and explode in diamonds…

i am the best loved
because i have the most to offer
and everyone gets what they come for
and maybe for the same reason
I am the toy tossed aside most quickly
because too much of anything
even change

is boring
(and change is all i have to offer)

They see just what they want to see in me
good, bad, pretty, ugly,
but always….  
always they see change.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1984)
SISSY

I still hear the boys –
they chant in the street
they tease.
I remember well
the name-call, the roll-call
(you’re going to grow up like mommy)
the stone-throwing.
I know words leave scars too
sticks sharper than sticks
and you are a Sissy.

Sissy!

Ears burn...
I was afraid of that word –
It hit like a fist.

Sissy!

It filled me with hate and stomach knots
burning clumps of anger
and why am I different?...

Sissy!

I still hear the boys –
they chant in the street
they tease.
I remember well -
watch them with interest now
in fact
teasing a blonde boy to tears
led by one boy
louder than all the rest,
spitting that word out of his mouth
with hate.

Sissy!

Look for fear in his eyes –
he is me ten years ago,

~~ Cinnamon (© 1983)
THE ANIMAL INSIDE

The boys in school called me a Sissy,
I wore my hair in curls.
They never asked me to play,
I was always too busy,
Learning from the other girls.

We wore our mother’s pearls
And we wore our mother’s pride.
We wore our mother’s heels
And tried to imitate her stride,
To one day be a Bride
And keep our Husband satisfied.
We’d grow up just like her
With an Animal inside.

(but as I grew older, I learned on my own
what this game is all about;
cry on a shoulder and leave them alone,
leave them all lonely with doubt)

You can play to win!
You can play to lose!
In the game we’re in, I’ll let you choose.

All the boys today call me their Baby;
I wear my hair in curls.
I know what to say: “Yes” or “No"
But never, “Maybe;”
I’m more than one of the girls.

I wear my mother’s pearls
And I wear my mother’s pride.
I wear my mother’s heels
And I imitate her stride,
I know the way it feels
When I’m feeling satisfied.
I grew up just like her
With an Animal inside.

~~ Cinnamon (© UnderCoverGirl Music, 1985)
PLAYMATES

You called me a Sissy
And other girlish names
When I was much too busy
To play your stupid games.
You called me a baby
The day I turned thirteen,
Now you call me “Lady”
And it doesn’t sound so mean.

Could it be that your age
Has made you out a liar,
That your silly childish rage
Was hiding your desire?
Whatever be your reason
For causing me such pain,
That was another season
And there’s no need to explain.

We’ve both grown up somehow,
Though we’ve really stayed the same.
The girlish names you call me now
Are because I play your game.
So whisper in my ear
And touch me, soft as a feather,
We’ve finally seen the year
When we can play together.


BABY DOLL

It’s never easy for me to express
That graceful feeling of my happiness,
The lovely secrets that I keep inside,
Ever wary of the stranger’s eye.
But please know, I’ll try –
I don’t want to hide.

When you’re pulling back the satin shad
From an angel’s dream that I’ve made,
You’ll see sights that only God has seen
As your finger traces down the seam.
Take hold of my hand, I’ll let you see
All of the beauty kept inside of me.

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 3, No. 12, 1984)
THE LABOR PAINS

You made me feel like your woman.  
Now what more can I say?  
You treated me that way  
and I suppose the woman in me  
loved you for it.

You called me “stupid”  
yet I kept all matters of your business straight  
and never once  
did I let you fall flat on your face –  
or thank me.

You shined when we went out  
because I didn’t.  
I could have, you know  
but then no one would have noticed you  
or remembered your name.

I was always unselfish.  
You said this equals a very good woman.  
I had no choice.  I owned nothing.

You called me a “Good Woman”  
but “Good Women” aren’t people  
until they realize it…  
then they aren’t very good women anymore.  
You forgot I knew I was a person,  
didn’t you?  You pushed things too far  
one night and I turned back.  
This woman would have died for you…  
if you hadn’t killed her instead.

Yes, I was a very good woman.  
I stayed barefoot in the kitchen  
and I even carried your child once  
but only to another room.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1983)
CINDERELLA

I tossed and tumbled in my bed
So many thoughts caught in my head.
I dreamed a wish and was shocked to see
My Fairy Godmother standing before me!

“Hurry, my Dear, you'll be late for the ball!
At eight o'clock your Prince will call.
At the stroke of twelve, you'll start feeling strange
And back to a boy, you'll begin to change.”

I jumped from the bed with eyes of delight
And faced the mirror – my gosh, she was right!
Such sweet supple breasts and shapely round hips
Such long lean legs and pouting pink lips!

With a wave of her hand, I was covered in lace
A tight-fitting dress flowing with grace.
Crystal high heels made from a dream
And soft silk stockings, the color of cream.

A knock at the door – my Prince for the night.
So tall and handsome, love at first sight!
We went dining and dancing and sharing sweet talk
Till the watch on my wrist said eleven o'clock.

He took me home and we kissed at the door
In a tight embrace. We yearned for more.
Without blinking an eye, said my new-found friend:
“Come on now, hurry up! You have a ball to attend!”

He laid me down in a feather-soft bed
Making such sweet love with each word that he said.
I was fulfilled as a woman being filled by him
And I lovingly satisfied each little whim.

The clock in the den began to strike
My body felt heavy, my head felt light.
The room was spinning and all was done -
I was alone in my room. It was half-past one!

I sat up in bed, dizzy from sleep
I hugged my pillow and began to weep.
It was all just a dream. There were tears in my eyes
As I moved my hand down between my thighs.
Though I was still a boy, I was shocked to find
That my panties were soaked – and it wasn’t mine!
I moved my hand to touch the sheet
And found the large wet spot of a couple in heat!

Beside my bed, I saw, at last
Beautiful slippers made of glass
And underwear – leather and tan –
Made to fit a very large man.

I held them close and squirmed about
They belonged to my Prince, without a doubt!
How will I find him? By using my wits.
I’ll date all the men till I find one who fits!

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 5, 1984)

SHINE ME

i light up when you touch me
i am a little girl in your arms
my cheeks glow

each time you rub against me
you shine me
inside and out

~~ Cinnamon (© 1983)
A MIRROR IS NOT ENOUGH

In heels and hose, with skirt and blouse
Make-up with care applied
I sit and view my mirrored self
And wonder if she died

Would anyone feel sorry -
Would anyone be sad?
Depressed, I know, my wife, at least
Would certainly be glad.

“Jo Anne” is what I call her:
This sometime lady fair
Whom I have known and loved these years
For the special times we share.

I wish my wife could meet her
Without those fears inside
For Jo Anne is a sweet lady
Who should not have to hide.

And yet, it will not happen -
Though I pray someday it can -
For my wife just will not fathom
My being more than just a man.

There is this woman deep within me
Who is begging to be free
Who should be so much more
Than just a reflection I see.

Jo Anne just wants to share
The human being she’s become -
To speak, to laugh, to understand
Not to be forever dumb.

She needs someone to recognize
That she’s gentle, kind and real
Not just a glass reflection
Without human appeal.

I guess I’m just not smart enough
To work out all this stuff
Seeing Jo Anne within that mirror
Simply is not enough.

~~ Jo Anne Owens
CROSSING

I chose to sit down on the toilet, though
I could have stood, spread-legged
Streaming urine like a yellow laser.

Half-way across the immaculate little room
Exploding bubbles on the waterline:
Bloop! Kasplash! Instead, I sat,

Knees touching, trying to pee quietly
Not to offend or titillate any-
One who might be passing, eating in the

Nearby kitchen. My sister’s petticoats
Felt like alien feelers, tickling at the backs
Of my knees. Ascending into a dress

Was arduous, pulling seams and sinews
Askew to reach the middle buttons, I had
To tie the bow behind, by touch, like a blind

Man. Girls needed help dressing, like
Little kids. They threw from the shoulder
Always wrong-handed, ran funnily,

Afraid of spilling something within
Themselves. They could not go out after
Supper, could not go far, ever, spent

The time keeping dresses clean. Sitting
With book and doll, perceiving even as
I watched my boy friends at their ruthless

Play beyond the window, the length
Of lace at every limb, I felt: what
Exaction would be inordinate, to be

Excused from their monstrous society.

~~ Mike Bradley (1986)
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Refined like snow, sugar
Medical technology can cure
Any human impotence, reverse even
The pathetic tragedy of testosterone
Poisoning. I saw no
Reason to thirst, when a
Middling bottle of pills would
Make him blossom like a
Garden. For days, nothing: I
Was impatient as a Christmas
Child. Then, in a single
Sunday afternoon, he swelled
Gloriously, like a pregnancy, you
Could smell the sweet
Milk the moment you
Entered my house.

You should have seen him try
To squirm out of his first
Brassiere, like a tomboy
Pressed into a lacy dress for Sunday.
There were no serious side
Effects. His penis
Shriveled like a baby's
Finger after bath (he
Blushed with childish anger when
I noticed my clitoris was larger),
But I was not alarmed, I was
Perfectly satisfied with his swollen
Lips, his tongue that thrilled like a
Soprano's.

And oh! The winesap sweet milk that
Spurted from the groundswell of his nipples!
For weeks I lived on nothing but, driving like
A madman, jumping lights, in haste to get
Home to my human supper. I bought
A pump and thermos, and had him
For my lunch. I'd never had such
Energy! Manic with ideas
And plans, I slept in un-
Connected swatches, mostly in the
False dawn. I built two enormous
Rooms onto my house. He napped
A lot, every afternoon.
I loved experimenting with Ingredients; I fed him clover Honey till he retched at the hot Sweetness, poured him full of Wine until he could not stand Erect to use the toilet. His milk was good as rum.

At first he hated suckling; he Would churn about the house, Slamming doors, curling Fatally in bed, while I Ripped at his blouse with lusty Hunger. But soon the simple Pressure in his breasts would make Him writhe against my pursed Lips. He would come to me Unbuttoned, one hand proffering Each tit, begging To be milked.

~~ Mike Bradley
VERMONT

White as the clear spring sun
On first waking
Cunning eyelet lace in furls
Raised characters form a tale
In unintelligible braille
Yet ineffably moving, to make
Hale lusty men sink into themselves, implode
And weep like little boys, like little girls
In plentiful furls about the nike ach
Of my extended throat
And at my wrist-like waist
To form a wafting skirt in miniature
And where my arms would be
But bound to my body
Like lactating breasts
Trying to embrace myself
Safe from the lacerations
And bruises some incur
When jutting, chopping like
The conductor of a ballet.
And in between, ensconced and safe
Within the white, impossibly clean white
Sheen, redoubt reinforced by the invisible
Polished bones of earth’s
Greatest mammal, requiring a strong hand
Either woman’s or man’s
Myself in essence
Breathless, safe, constrained, secure.
About my nether limbs
More lacy white
An opulence of sensuous furls
A flag where dwells unfeigned allegiance
Swirls in a ballet not quite dependent
On my body for its grace
The conflict flares
And roars about me
Men rage
The brave, the strong
The canny and the wise
But I am safe, am
Proof against participation
Knees kissing ‘neath the ruffles
I am the solace, the prize.

~~ Mike Bradley
TRADEOFFS

At first I was repulsed by his
Cross-dressing, as was he, some-
Times. My sensibilities crawled,
It was depressing. Feminine by
Upbringing and instruction, I blamed
Myself for this renunciation of his
Manhood. I was not enough
A woman. No, I’d say, plaintive,
Sad, when he snapped on a
Pleated skirt, Saturday morning,
Tied himself into an apron and
Clicked into the kitchen to begin
The blueberry pancakes. I couldn’t
Bear to see the sheen of hose along
His legs smoother than my own.
I’d stay abed, ceiling staring, until
The hunger pangs were as insistent as
Labor’s contractions, and when he
Brought a tray of steaming hotcakes
To my bed, I’d turn away. I’d
Turn away when he’d present himself,
Back to me, for me to zip the
Flowered print. “Why?,” he’d whimper, “It’s
Only me, still me, the one you
Chose to love.” – just a dress. I
Didn’t find it cute or sexy.
It made me ill-
At ease.

“The way to a man’s heart is
Through his stomach,” my grand-
Mother was told a a pinafores
Little girl. There are no oblique
Methodologies. Who doesn’t like
To have her own
Way. Who would rather play
The laundromat, Saturday fore-
Noon, than litter with Shoe and
The Perfesser and a second
Cup of water-processed decaf.
If he could run the disher and
The vacuum simultaneously, who
Cared what kind of underpants he
Would be wearing. It can be
Fun to have someone slightly,
Willingly subservient. If I
Would teach him how to knit, he’d
Make the leg warmers for my
Niece’s Christmas, while I worked
On those damn reports. Who would
Rather cook couscous than sigh
Into the sofa, cool your feet out on
The table and listen, close-
Eyed, to your partner
Dance about from stove to
Table?

And I quickly grew accustomed, who
Would not, to the factual assumption
That if I dropped my jacket on
The hall chair, my slacks
Upon the bedroom floor, I’d find
Them hanging trimly in the closet?

It’s all in reading the gradations.
Time habituates. He does look kind
Of cute in the corduroy jumper. I
Tell him, smiling, when his slip
Is showing, sometimes slip and call him
“Missy” on the street, then laugh
When he blushes. I’ve quickly
Come to relish the sense and substance
Of control from being on top
In bed. When he puts on some
Jeans, one autumn Sunday morning,
I insist, with pleasurable, autocratic
Humor, that he march himself right back
And don the denim skirt I
Bought for him last night.

~~ Mike Bradley
DOUBLE TROUBLE

I lead a double life
With a double identity.
Some people think I am
Escaping from reality.

Along life’s crooked path
I cannot find my way
As I have a strong desire
To be a woman someday.

Now I quite often will
Dress in women’s clothes
And I am to the point
Of caring less who knows.

Friends have even seen me
In a skirt and blouse
And they are not offended
When they’re at my house.

But my family can’t accept
My identity that’s double.
Where they’re concerned
It really creates trouble.

I am not understood
By most of my family.
In fact, most of the time
They are condemning of me.

But, without any doubt
My dressing will continue
As it is one thing now
That I really like to do.

So, if along the way
It has brought me trouble
I’m content living with
An identity that’s double.

~~ Norma Lee
SKEPTICAL EYE

Hello, skeptical eye that stares to see.
How does that eye behold me? What do you see?

Chinks in a feminine image you think you know?
A face that is scarred and shoulders broad?

A veined and powerful hand
or does it see the way I stand?

Don’t make your mind up too fast
With that skeptical eye you cast.

The face is scarred from my brother
living too hard, trying to escape me.

The shoulder broad carried our
country’s values in a foreign land.

These hands built the pipeline in ice and snow
so that you would have fuel to make your vehicles go.

I stand on guard; afraid, vigilant of your
skeptical eye allowing my vulnerability to show.

So, cast that eye in another place.

Choose a face that makes you more comfortable
and offers no challenge for you to grow.

Your skeptical eye favors neither of us.

~~ Kyndel Fay M. Kellis
RESURRECTION

are we there yet?  are we there?
i have never known such impatience
that is a lie
i’ve been impatient to get there all my life
life-type cast-stifling role –
just can’t seem to get into this male thing
where is my agent?
i’ve come so far and yet
i see my first steps only days old

transition: the state of being in two places
at once and not really being anywhere at all

trans: across, beyond, how exciting
beyond what?  myself?  i doubt it
oh, i get it, a word of convenience for those
who are not affected by being beyond anything –
as in it’s beyond me, bob, i don’t get it
well, i got it, it’s got me more than some

transom: the horizontal crossbar of a gallows or cross
constantinople calls and i have ears
constantinople calls and i only have ears

~~ Kyndel Fay M. Kellis
HAND OF MY SPIRIT

I came to know the touch of a hand on my shoulder –
A hand which rested there since before my birth –
A hand which had lifted me held my place, unknown to me –
A hand not of this earth.

I was unaware, this caress so light
grip so firm
the cause of unimaginable delight
yet I came to feel this firm
cressing touch enveloping me.
A hand opening my heart and eyes
to feel and see existence
locked in diffuse patterns
I call my life.

I came to know the touch of a hand on my shoulder.
This touch reached through me and joined me to the stars.
A touch bringing me to life where I thought I was living.
A touch, a beginning, an end -
It lasted a breath and continues with the unfolding of the Cosmos.

I turned to see this touch laid on me and there stretched an arm from the blank void of exquisite mystery.
What can, will, and will not be all circled on the swirling sands of my androgy.
As I strained to see, no gentle squeeze made its presence known.

I came to know the touch of a hand on my shoulder.
And, it shook and rattled my bones; marrow turned gelatinous joints collapsed!
My skin dissolved, and fluid I mingled with the primordial ooze.
It plucked me up anhydrous
and bore me on a wind.
My spirit blowing in a cosmic breeze
mingled amongst the simply profound.
And in re-flux, as I saw
where I was going, where I had been
the hand formed me to where I was now.

I came to know the touch
of a hand on my shoulder.
With that touch, I knew
I would grow no older
than my energy shared
with the stars, the swirling sands
and, the breath of air.

~~ Kyndel Fay M. Kellis
“PILGRIMS”

A candle is made – formed
placed in its holder

The flame begins
small, dim
burns and consumes itself
growing brighter

The flame reaches up
away from itself
bound by its body
yet seeking relief

The flame dances to escape

The flame –
buffeted by breeze
stilled by calm –
grows brighter and is dimmed
always moving
changing
being

It does not learn from others
how to burn, yet uniquely
it burns as others
until the wick –
its spirit released –
is spent
leaving but a memory
of illumination.

~~ Kyndel Fay M. Kellis
EXCURSION OFF THE ROAD TO TRINIDAD

On the road to Trinidad, my vanities led me astray
They lured me off the main thoroughfare
To bright lights, glamor, pageantry most gay.

Glitter and shine
Love of an audience
Oh so fine.

Costumes, gowns, costing more than my car
Adrenaline pumping high, applause
I’m a star.

Admirers give money
Kisses on cheeks
Everybody calls me “Honey.”

Beginning weak-kneed, I knew I’d falter
“Am I blue?” Confidence
Now dance, G-string/halter.

Wild women do
Given the chance, opportunity
Wouldn’t you too?

Hot summer nights, the show-girl make-up runs
Mirror glance, correction
Flawless!

Spotlight, music, fun
Sun never sets
In the land of the midnight sun.

I have new friends, new family, true
Full acceptance finally arrived
Don’t feel blue.

Comes the contest to determine who’s the most fair
Astonishment –
The bitch pulled off her hair!

No woman this
Lipstick smudged across face
Crowd goes wild!
Then comes Ms. Mercedes
Wailin’ ball & chain
A new diversion appears.

A crown, title, esteem grows anew
Ecstasy, Princess Kyndel Fay
Girl, that’s you.

I’m a success
Queen?
Just a test.

New princess, star!
To see me
They come from afar.

A little numb, this life’s not bad
Still remember Trinidad
…Sometimes. Girl…so sad.

What’s wrong, Princess?
Why do you stay on your couch?
Your eyes no longer twinkle, posture slouched.

Anger to all
Except you.
Detour? Who?

Four days crying
And suddenly, you see
Darling, you’re lying.

To your own spirit you’re not being true
Are you?
Seeing, you begin anew.

Find reverse gear
Back outa here
Find the road again.

Only you can save your own day
Dues are paid
Now go! Don’t delay.

On the road to Trinidad
My vanities led me astray.

~~ Kyndel Fay M. Kellis
MY LOVE

My wife accepts me as I am
Both as a gal or as a man.
Our life together is very sweet -
Her accepting me is a real treat.

She loves me when
I am a man.
She loves me when
I am who I am.

Together, we shall always be
The one of her and the two of me.

~~ Donna

TO MY WIFE

It’s been quite a trip
From the valley of darkness
Up the mountainside.

With a gasp of disbelief
And a cry of utter joy
I see whence I have come.

Even greater heights
Stretch far above me
Inviting upward growth.

Like the rocks around me
That strew the torturous trail
I have endurance and strength.

My heart pounds from the climb
And the beauty of the view
To remind me I am fully human.

Many times along the way
The reservoir of faith
Threatened to run dry.

Prevailing, proud, I am thankful
To have had your love
With me on the journey.

~~ Anonymous
STRICTLY TABOO

Deep inside of me
Is a craving to be free
It is strictly taboo
To be you know who.

Why me, I constantly ask?
Facing the world is a task
Why can’t I be straight
To live normally with one mate?

No, I’m one of the few
Who is strictly taboo.

Life is torturous hell
Each day knows full well
I cannot be who I am
Even tho’ half the world is fem.

No, it’s strictly taboo
If they only knew
They would kill me too
What can I do?

A dirty trick was played on me
In the life of reality
To be living as a “he”
But really a “she.”

The only consolation
For my salvation
Is to accept the addiction
And live together in submission.

Being myself, whoever I am
Being “him” or being fem
But to dishonor my family
Would be too much for me.

Carefully to play out “his” charade
A double identity was made
Through no fault of my own
When born, two seeds were sown.

When “her” life is fancy free
When “him” is thinking only of “she”
Whatever will be will be
Who in the hell is me?
Which is better, which is worse?
Makes no difference in a hearse
What is to be will be
Regardless – “she” or “he.”

My problem is the feeling
Ecstacy is thrilling
Not even time can stop this drive
“He” tried but “she” is still alive.

To be “her” and to smile
If only for a little while
The world is treating “her” cruel
But surely, I am the fool.

I can kill two inside of one
Then, everything will be done
But, “she” rules my mind and gets me in trouble
It’s pure hell to be double!

And people who do not understand
Are primitive as a grain of sand
Just like you and me
There’s no difference especially.

They mock and criticize
Their insecurity is no prize.

I saw them come and I saw them go
Most will never know
Therefore, to each his/her own
What you still reap shall be sown.

I have no choice, you see
Only the burden was given to me
But into each life, may a little happiness fall
And, Bonnie love you all…

~~ Bonnie
ASCENSION

Prelude

Once there was a kindly man
Who farmed among the wooded hills.
He was strong in frame and a woodsman of skill
But his hands never struck in anger or hate.
He studied the Lord’s word every day
And performed good works for his neighbors in need.
But a part of him arose to be,
Although his God commanded “No.”
And a battle of faith versus human need
Disturbed the calm of the autumnal hills.

I

A preacher rides a country lane
As November winds toss his horse’s mane.
He’s old in years with soft temperament
And he’s buried the dead and blessed the young.
A bible rests in his saddlebag
With scripture now tattered and yellow with use.

The branches creak in the sighing wind
As he sights Jason’s farm in the clearing ahead.
He feels uneasy, yet knows not why
For Jason’s not been to church this month
And a spirit that’s sick needs consoling help.

The preacher tethers his tired mount
And walks to the well where a strong-backed form
Draws water to boil his evening stew.
They greet and walk to the timbered house
The coals of the fire cast welcome warmth.
They seat themselves and the preacher speaks:

“How I’d like to tell you,” Jason replies
“Of the anguish I feel, of the tears in my eyes
But how can I speak of the feelings I have?
My wife is now dead five years.”
The preacher fingers his gospel book
And murmurs a hasty silent prayer.
“You are lonely, my friend, in need of God’s love
Bestowed upon you in a tender wife.

You need not live in such lonely strife.
Our church has a widow, you know her well –
She will care for you as you work this farm.
It’s best for a man not to dwell alone.”

“I fear you don’t hear what I try to speak.
I tremble with thoughts I’ve had before
Yet dared not speak to anyone.
There was a time when an honest prayer
Would ease my soul, when I would embrace
The love of God, but I’ve been cursed.
I’m damned, yet fail to understand
The torment that I feel within.

What good for a man to work the ground
For fifty years, and now feel grief?
How do I escape this dreadful trap
And feel relief in what I must be?
Preacher! Look at yonder wall
And see what hangs beside the hearth!
It is my wife’s white wedding gown
Which I have been wearing this past month -
I tell you, in truth, I must be a woman!”
He sobs.

The preacher tries to mouth a prayer
And fails. He’s overwhelmed with awe.
He slowly stands and turns to leave.
He feels very old, and weary too
And helpless to render any help.
He mounts his horse and rides away
As the wind blows an end to another day.

continued…
The Elder’s face grows grim and hard
As he hears the preacher tell the tale
Of a farmer named “Jason,” who’s stumbled low
And lost his faith to a fleshly urge.
He’s heard of such sins in theology school
And he knows that the Devil has many snares.
“The devil seeks use,” the Elder says,
“Of Jason’s soul; we must make haste.
We’ll visit this man while the time is ours
Lest his immortal soul be lost.
We’ll ride this very afternoon
Together, you and I, to his farm
And pray for the power of our Lord
To cleanse poor Jason of wickedness.
We’ll cast out the demon tormenting him.”
The preacher has questions on his face.

The November sun is brilliantly lit.
It casts sharp shadows on many-hued leaves
And the air is crisp with the odors of fall.
They ride on the narrow country lane
And they feel the excitement charge the air.
The Elder uneasily sips his flask
While the preacher shivers and draws his coat.
He asks himself, and the Elder too,
“Why must such things as these take place?”
The Elder says that Evil must be
As he drains his flask and sets his face:
“Yet, we know our Lord will show His grace.”

They reach the farm, dismount, and walk
With hesitant steps to the cabin door.
They knock, then peer within the room
And note that the wedding gown is gone
While no answer comes to their anxious calls.
They stand outside by the sun-bathed well
The preacher shouts and points his arm
And they stare in shocked awe at the orchard above.
“He walks there now!” the Elder says.
“He wears the gown his wife once wore
Although I scarcely can believe
This thing of beauty could be a man.
Let’s approach, though take care, for the Devil’s near.”
But as they step, the brilliance grows.
The orchard now shimmers in radiant light
And the white form before them glows blindingly.
She rises, assuming ethereal form
And merges with vapors of Heavenly planes
Into the infinite, joyful beyond…
And then, she is no more.

The Elder stands frozen with disbelief
While the preacher feels joy surge through his soul.
He casts his gaze to the Heavenly skies
And says: “Let Thy will be done this day!”
Then turns to his waiting horse.

~~ Barbara B.

STREET LAMP

Midnight.
My footsteps fall on pavement cracks
And a lonely dog prances on frozen ground.
Snowflakes fall through the street lamp glow
And warm homes sleep - all in silence now.
A carriage comes gliding to the curb
Its gleaming wheels touch not the street.
The Queen, and Ladies of the Realm
Await. I pause, then enter.
My lovely gown rustles; I take my seat
And silently we drift away
For the Mother expects us home, soon now.
Midnight.
My footsteps end beneath the lamp.

~~ Barbara B.
THE REUNION

The sidewalk is silent, shadows run deep
In a once friendly town, now derelict.
Overhead, a mysterious, troubled sky
Half hides the pale face of a misty moon.
I walk over shards of dusty glass
And pause beneath a burnt-out lamp
Where I stare with respect at a time-worn slab.
Sons of Lithuania
Are etched upon the marble face
They died to serve their rightful cause.
I smartly salute though I knew them not
Has it been fifty years?

The cold, damp wind, it shudders my back
What a haunted town I’ve wandered into!
I move quickly on, with a cigarette lit
Past the cracked windows of vacant shops
And rotting billboards, faded and warped.
I see a hotel, decaying with age
With dark, gray rooms of memories
And I feel cold, alone and lost
As my footsteps echo on grimy bricks
As I stroll this stark and darksome street.

I pause in a hallway to rest from the wind
And the darkness grips me, causing fear
But I breathe deeply – I am a soldier!
The paper has peeled from the walls in scrolls
And the soot of countless windy days
Augments the stench of rotting wood.
The hallway is faded and laden with dust
While the eyes of rats gleam through the dark.
I see the staircase plainly now.
There’s a dimly-lit hallway just beyond
And a figure stands softly in the glow
Of a small, smiling man, who’s white with years.
My fear is gone as he speaks to me:
“Come, my friend,” he beckons me.
“The night is unfriendly and causes ill
And no friends walk the streets these times
For the happy taverns have all closed down
And the stores sell no more goods.”
I climb the steps in wonderment
And clasp his hand; he’s old and frail
With snow-flowing hair and knowing eyes.
I reflect: in my many soldiering days
In strange and distant foreign streets
I’ve never been welcomed as on this night.

We enter. We sit in embroidered chairs.
Marie and Johann, my strange new hosts
And I, excited and moved with intrigue
Enjoying the light and the warmth I’ve found.
We sit in the parlor, becoming friends
And speak of the lives we’ve lived thus far.

Johann had been a soldier once
He flew through the turbulent, roaring skies
While below, proud Europe convulsed in the mire.
He had married his Marie.
Together, they sought long days of peace
Until the columns had marched again
And the armies contested for global domain.
Their loving son, Fritz, was slain on the beach.

“We had a daughter,” Johann says,
“Our Frieda, she too was lost in war.
You see – her portrait on the wall?
I can speak no more of her.”

Marie now sheds a silent tear.
I offer the comfort that I can
But Johann stands and smiles at us
He bids that we take our dining place
While Marie serves the food of nobility’s taste
And as I eat, I feel a scene
Of times long generations past.
Of castles, banners, and gladed woods.

Our meal completed, we rest again.
Johann produces an ancient flask
Of fiery brandy, and he pours.
We drink.

continued…
My spirit leaps in excitement now
For I long to speak of her within.
I ache, that I must keep her walled
Within the corridors of myself.
And so I speak thusly to my hosts:
“For ten years now I’ve soldiered well.
I’ve earned awards in combat’s hell
But please, I do not seek to boast.
I have my female, as many do
Without whose comfort I’d lie with the dead.
When I’m at leisure in a town
We meet in hotels of luxury
And how can I say what she means to me -
The grief that she has wrought in me
Or do I fully comprehend
The ethereal joy she causes me?
For I am her, and she is me
And we are together within my soul!”
I gulp my liquor. I stare at the glass.

Marie has led me within the room
She has dressed me in clothes that ladies once wore
And the mirror mesmerizes me.
Through the curtain, the dead street stretches beneath
(But do I hear a footstep, faint?)
She arranges long tresses upon my head
As I gasp with feelings I’ve seldom known.
I’ve taken swift fight into womanhood!
(Outside, in the hall, does a floorboard creak?)
Marie throws a shawl around my frame
And she pulls at my hand for Papa awaits.

She leads me back to the sofa now
Where I sit with my parents. I have been found.
There is knocking at the door
Papa swings open, and there she stands
Our Frieda, my sister! She’s home tonight!
She enters and we four embrace –
A family triumphant. Inseparable.
As cold skies slowly grow pink with dawn
We plan our voyage to the Motherland.

~~ Barbara B.
I WILL BUILD AGAIN, I GUESS

I built a castle from a brick just one – no more, no less.
The brick was often just a smile a note, a wink, or a caress.
And off I'd go, in mad construction building for Joe, or Jean, or Jess.
But all too often, I forgot to frame that place; too often, I was careless.
I took those outward signs as love and then I found I was foundationless.
I built a castle from a brick and I will build again, I guess.

~~ Carolann Durette

RAINING, FOUR A.M.

Raining,
Four a.m.,
Awake,
Thinking,
About Sunday!

Him,
Me,
Us,
Together,
Apart now!

Open,
Closed,
Full,
Empty,
Totally alone!

End,
Finish,
Begin,
Start,
New day!

~~ Carolann Durette
THE ULTIMATE CHOICE

Behold, for I am Death – a destroyer of families and a harbinger of new life.

Tarry not, ye who would know me lest ye be forever changed. For Man that is born of Woman only a few may know both sides of Life.

Whether to be a Daughter of the Heavens – a winsome flower, gentle, and soft of voice, a sensitive giver of life, in tune with the Earth or alternately, to be her true foil – a man among men, self-assured, a protector, a noble knight who would fight to the death.

The choice is yours! It is our legacy. The chalice is in your hand. Have you the courage to drink of the Waters of Truth?

~~ Linda Anne Landess
EXCEPTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Hello, is there anyone out there?  
Is there anyone else out there like me  
In this world of misunderstanding and scold?  
It's alright, I'm told.

Slowly, I'm peeking out the door  
Putting one foot gently on the floor  
Testing the waters for warmth and reception  
Slowly learning, I'm not a lonely exception  
I mean exceptional, not deviant or detrimental  
Although emotionally experimental.

To have your cake and eat it too  
Is something that we truly get to do  
With both perspectives that our heart has hold  
It's an exceptional gift that we own.

But, it's so confusing which is truly my home  
With the many faces my heart has hold  
Crying from listening to a sad song  
Or just one of the guys  
Now both are twice as strong.

Passing between truth and disguise  
Each becomes the other  
When I change to the other's eyes  
A parallel universe with the doors open wide  
Slowly testing the perspective of life on the other side.

But, I am peeking out of the door  
Or am I looking into a room for more?  
For truth, beyond the mores  
An exceptional perspective  
That I want more and more?...

~~ Nikki B.
A WORM'S LAMENT (WITH RESPONSE)

My chrysalis is petrified, Lord
My butterflyness is stuck
Tight in this worm-shaped frame
And I'm tired of waiting for my change.

I dream of beauty, soaring free
Of fragile wings, and nectar sweet
Unexperienced worm-born dreams
Of butterfly-shaped hopes.

I want to trade this many-footed
Plodding shape for something graceful
To be done with hairiness and flab
And let velvety svelte emerge.

What's that you say, Lord?
You know my struggle in this cage
You see me hiding in the dark
And love my wormy butterflyness.

That can't be, Lord, it can't
I guess you can love worms; I guess
I know you must love butterflies; I hope
But not enigma, wrapped in pain; you can't.

How's that again, Lord?
What makes my wormy reality
Different from my butterfly dream?
Is drab chrysalis to blame?

I'll not answer, Lord. No way!
I'm suffering here and your
Questions prick me as a thorn
I need no more hurt, Lord!

I'm crying, Lord. Enough!
I know the answer in my pain
I'm me. Both worm and butterfly
Infused by you. Transformed.

I am not bound by outward
Chrysalis-shaped prison
But by dungeons of the soul
Forbidding growth in fear.
I see it now, Lord. I see!
Your grace has set me free
My shape or hope's not key
But your image, alive in me.

What happened, Lord?
The light's so strong
And I feel changed
But somehow much the same.

My chrysalis! It's burst!
I'm butterfly! I'm free!
But wait, this cannot be
I taste worminess in me.

Celebrate it! Why, Lord?
I want to bury wormhood
You mean you made me
Both worm and butterfly?

I hear you, Lord
Your image in both -
My nature graced by both
One in the other, evermore.

Give thanks, you say
Both earth and sky are mine
And I am yours always
Renewed in love.

~~ Kathryn Joy Parker
EN FEMME

Refreshing days, expressing inward delight
Outward form wearing deepest self
This is no fantasy sans insight
From shadow into light, renouncing stealth
I walk, and with each step, I grow
Through pain, into a wider world
My two-selved being, hungering to know
The oneness of myself foretold.

I am a cactus growing in the desert
Pricking those who would venture close
In scorn of pain, I seem, or hurt
But inside, there dwells a softer hidden me
For those who pass my thorny guard
And open locked doors and see
Burst forth, light-hungry, my tear-born flower bloom
Transforming cactus into rose.

Transformed, the rose transforms, and with beauty fills
The arid garden of its birth
The warning thorn no longer chills
But echoes blossoms’ message to all her earth:
“Tears water, but must mix with light
“Ere flowers bloom on desert cacti
Solitude produces naught but arid heart
While roses grow when touched by love.”

~~ Kathryn Joy Parker
FOR EVERY WOMAN

For every woman who is tired of acting weak when she knows she is strong,
There’s a man who is tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable;

For every woman who is tired of acting “dumb,”
There’s a man who's burdened with the constant expectation of knowing everything;

For every woman who is tired of being called an emotional female,
There’s a man who is denied the right to weep and to be gentle;

For every woman who is called unfeminine when she competes,
There’s a man for whom competition is the only way to prove his masculinity;

For every woman who is tired of being a sex object,
There’s a man who must worry about his potency;

For every woman who feels tied down by her children,
There’s a man who is denied the full pleasure of shared parenthood;

For every woman who is denied meaningful employment or equal pay,
There’s a man who must bear full financial responsibility for another human being;

For every woman who was not taught the intricacies of an automobile,
There’s a man who was not taught the satisfaction of cooking;

For every woman who takes steps towards her own liberation,
There’s a man who finds the way to freedom has been made a little easier.

~~ Nancy Smith
IF THERE WAS A PILL...

If there was a pill
that would make you a woman
Would you take it?
Yes.

If you were told
that you will never be a woman
could you take it?
I don’t know.

If there was a pill
that would make you a man
Would you take it?
No, I don’t think I would.

Do you ever want to die?
Yes, sometimes –
I don’t know why.

Do you ever want to live?
God, yes, I want to live!
I don’t know why.

~~ Anonymous

PERSONA

Life is the universe
I am quiet
The heart beats slow
No more the threat of separation
Once more the essence flows.

A time will come
A threshold will glow
Across it to join my sisters
As had been meant from the moment.

Man or woman I may be
No matter
Like everyone
I feel the sun
The answer’s for all to see –
I am a person.

~~ Carol Sinnock
1. **“GENES”** – “Hermaphrodite” was the current term, at that time, but has since been replaced with “intersex” person, and even more recently, “Disorders of Sex Development” (the latter of which is not consistently embraced by the intersex community). Intersex people are those born with an anomalous chromosomal and/or hormonal make-up, and/or anormative gonadal (reproductive) organs and/or genitalia. Some intersex people also identify as trans and/or queer, and some identify as cisgender and/or heterosexual.

2. **“LIONESS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN”** – The “Amazon warriors” were a nation of all-female warriors in Greek mythology and classical antiquity. Herodotus placed them in a region bordering Scythia in Sarmatia (modern Ukraine). Other historiographers place them in Anatolia or Libya. Notable queens of the Amazons are Penthesilea, who participated in the Trojan War, and her sister Hippolyta. Amazonian raiders were often depicted in battle with Greek warriors in amazonomachies in classical art. In Roman historiography, there are various accounts of Amazon raids in Asia Minor. Although many trans women are Christian or Jewish (or one of the other patriarchal religions), many are also pagans and dotéees of the goddess religions.

3. **“ANIMA (II)”** – A “succubus” is a female demon or supernatural entity in ancient folklore that appears in dreams and takes the form of a human woman to seduce men, usually through sexual activity. (The male counterpart is the incubus). In modern fiction, a succubus is often depicted as a highly-attractive seductress or enchantress, whereas, in the past, succubi were generally depicted as frightening and demonic. "Dulcinea" alludes “Dulcinea del Toboso" (aka Aldonza Lorenzo), a fictional character who is referred to in Miguel de Cervantes' novel Don Quixote. Seeking the traditions of the knights-errant of old, Don Quixote finds a true love whom he calls Dulcinea - a simple peasant, but he imagines her to be the most beautiful of all women. A “centaur” is a half-man, half-horse.

4. **“THIRD WATER SONG”** – “This poem (like all things feminine),” wrote Deborah, “is from my soul. ‘Woman Soul’ is a reference to the last line of Johann von Goethe’s tragic play, ‘Faust’: ‘Eternal Womanhead [or Woman Soul] lead us on high.’ Another variation is: ‘Woman in all of us show us the way.’ The 19th-century tragedy is based on the medieval legend of a German magician, alchemist and astrologer [Dr. Johann Faust, circa 1480 – 1538], who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for worldly knowledge and power, but who is still troubled by spiritual striving and dissatisfaction. ‘Woman Soul’ [or ‘Womanhead’] represents spiritual values, and understanding love that is divine in essence, and closeness to God.”

5. **“JAQUETTA EL ‘E LA HA’ OF THE PHASE”** - “Berdache” (correct spelling) is a Eurocentric term used by colonists in North and South America for “two-spirit” people – those Indigenous people who have both a male and a female spirit. Some two-spirit people might also identify as trans or intersex.

6. **“THE GAP”** – Phaedra, a “Gender Transient” (her own self-designation), wrote: “I am asexual - sex, the shorter semantic form of “division” is, for all, The Gap.”
7. **“CHANGE OF LIFE (1967)”** – “Full Personality Expression” alludes to the Foundation for Personality Expression (FPE), (the first-ever heterosexual transvestite peer-support group), which Virginia (Charles) Prince founded in Los Angeles in 1963. The group was later re-named “The Society for the Second Self” (aka the “Tri-Ess” sorority) in 1980.

8. **“SCALES”** – “Scales” here alludes to endocrinologist Dr. Harry Benjamin’s “Sex Orientation Scale – Sex and Gender Role Disorientation and Indecision (Males)”: Type 0: normal heterosexual or homosexual; Type 1: pseudo transvestite; Type 2: fetishistic transvestite; Type 3: true transvestite, Type 4: non-surgical transsexual; Type 5: true transsexual – moderate intensity; Type 6: true transsexual – high intensity. The SOS appeared in his groundbreaking book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (1966).

9. **“ONE OF THOSE WE CALL A “SHE”!”** – “Kronos” (aka Cronos), was, in Greek mythology, the leader and the youngest of the first generation of Titans - the divine descendants of Uranus (the sky) and Gaia (the earth). He overthrew his father (Uranus) and ruled during the mythological Golden Age, until he was overthrown by his own son, Zeus, and imprisoned in Tartarus. Cronus was usually depicted with the harpe [a sword] and a sickle, which was the instrument he used to castrate and depose his father. Kronos was the father of Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Demeter, and Hera.

10. **“EXCURSION OFF THE ROAD TO TRINIDAD”** – “Trinidad” refers to Trinidad, Colorado – once known as “the sex-change capital of the world,” where former renowned sex-reassignment surgeon, Dr. Stanley Biber, performed countless operations for M-F and F-M TSs from 1969 to 2003, at which time he retired at the age of 80. Dr. Marci Bowers (an American trans woman and gynecologist-cum genitoplastic surgeon) subsequently took over his practice before she moved it to California in 2010.

11. **“ASCENSION”** – This powerful epic tale was influenced by Barbara’s own traumatic experience with the Jehovah Witnesses, and has parallels with “the Connie Affair,” which involved a M-F TV from Mississippi and the Presbyterian church. [I’m not sure if Barbara is TV, TG or TS, so I arbitrarily assigned her piece to this section].

12. **“EN FEMME”** – Kathryn was inspired to pen this piece after returning from the “Holiday En Femme” community event for M-F TGs and TVs held in Chicago in 1988.
Book Two:

Part Two:

Female-to-Male Transgenderism (Androgyny)
TOGETHERNESS
(adapted from Ogden Nash)

When I was planned
And spawned and hatched
My body and mind
Were badly matched

My body wants roots
My mind wants wings
I cannot bear their bickerings.

Oh, Mother Nature, who wrought
This dysphoric mess?
Did you forget
Togetherness?

Must I now pay
An analyst
To teach them how
To co-exist?

Or should I rather
Go under the surgeon’s knife
And reconfigure my plumbing
To give me an integrated life?

~~ Rupert Raj (1990)
SEXUAL SEMANTICS

Biology is not, per se, destiny
Anatomy doesn't spell personality
Genitals don't add up to identity
Sex is not synonymous with gender.

Male is not always masculine
Female is not exclusively feminine
Hermaphroditism is male and female physiology
Androgyny is masculine and feminine psychology.

Transsexualism is incongruence of psyche and soma
Often requiring a surgical realignment of body parts.
It’s Womyn-Soul imprisoned in male flesh
Or Man-Essence trapped in female form.

Transgenderism is different dimensions to different people
To me, it’s physical and mental androgyny
To some, it means non-surgical transsexualism
To others, it’s “the best of both worlds.”

Sexuality, to me, is not hetero-, homo- or bisexual
But simply sexual (natural) for animals
And humansexual (biosocial) for people.

~~ Rupert Raj (1978)
SEX AND GENDER

Sex and gender
In the blender
Form is female
Matter is male:

Boy inside
Girl outside
Sexual rift
Gender Conflict!

Genes and gender
Do not render
One of a kind
Or peace of mind:

Female genes
In masculine jeans
The world’s tomboy
Is an XX boy!

Sex and gender
Torn asunder
Body and soul
Strive to be whole:

Body image – masculine
Fleshly fact – feminine
To integrate is the goal
Gender identity and sex role!

Genitals and gender
Return first to send
Such loathesome gonads
Repulsive doo-dads!

Cunt and clit
And tacky tits
Trade them all
For cock and balls!

Sex and gender congruity
Through creative surgery
Eve’s physical form
Into Adam transforms!

~~ Rupert Raj (1990)
“Nicholas” was the boy within who turned inside out in 1972; Nick changed names to “Rupert” in 1982; “Ruperta” emerged in 2012 but Rupert (and Nick) are still here. I’m your pangender baby.

Masculine and feminine, Animus and Anima, Yang and Yin, and Androgyny too, I’m the best of both worlds – and beyond! I’m your all-round pansexual pangender person.

~~ Rupert Raj (2012)
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLD BLUES
(theme song for “Linda/Les & Annie” porn video)

I was born under a wild sign –
raised on the dark side of life.
Had a little bit o’ good luck –
whole lotta’ bad luck ‘n strife.

Look into my eyes, Baby -
tell me what you see.
I’m a big man on the outside
but ya’ know this he was a she.

Yeah, I’m so hard ‘n’ nasty
but I’m sweet ‘n’ sassy too.
‘Cos I’ve got the best o’ both worlds
so I’m one up on you –
an’ I’m never ever blue!

Had a lot o’ lovin’ –
done had a whole lot o’ pain.
Some say I’m so saintly –
Hell, an’ some say I’m insane.

But I’m crazy like a fox, Babe
‘cos I know just where I stand.
I hold the winnin’ hand

Yeah, I’m so strong ‘n’ sexy
but I’m warm ‘n’ carin’ too.
‘Cos I’ve got the best o’ both worlds
so I’m one up on you –
an’ I’m never ever blue!

I got the best o’ both worlds
I got the best, I got the best!
I am the best o’ both worlds
I am the best!

female

female: feel male
ever since i felt the need to choose
i'd choose male
i felt boy rhythms when i was in knee pants
so i stayed in pants
i sobbed when i had to use the ladies' room
my undergarments made me blush
every feminine gesture i affected from my mother
humiliated me

i ran around with a pack of wolves
i puked on every pinafore
growing breasts was a nightmare
in anger i cut off all my hair
and knelt glassy-eyed before god
i begged him to place me in my own barbaric race
The male race – the race of my choice

in answer he injected me with all the characteristics
of my gender: sultry, languid, wanton
dip into summer skirts
go down with a narrow-hipped boy behind a bowling alley
bleed, come, fill my womb
the misfit massacres the mustang pony just to feel
the soft rise of marilyn monroe against his chest

bloated, pregnant
i crawl through the sand
like a lame dog, like a crab
pull my fat baby belly to the sea – pure edge
pull my hair out by the roots
roll and drag and claw like a bitch
like a bitch...like a bitch...

~~ patti smith (© 1967)
THOSE AMONG US

Those among us
who are not
who and what
we’ve always been told we should be.

Those among us
whose hearts and minds
do not fit the mold
of the body we are judged by.

Those among us
helplessly and hopelessly
trying to accept
the cages and traps of the flesh
that our real Selves are enclosed in.

For who is to see
so deep, so far into us
within these shells
of skin and bone and hair?

Who is to taste
our true longings for life and freedom
unencumbered
by the roles we’re forced to play?

How many among us
have gone astray from the norm
failing the tests
Society imposes upon us?

But what is the true measure
of masculinity or femininity?
To whom does it matter
that our own bodies
are our tormenters?

Not because we love our own kind
for that is not the case –
but because we hate ourselves,
our reflections, our roles…
because we despise what we are.

~~ Steven Wells (1982)
SURFACING WHEN

will I forever be condemned to this hell –
existing in such an empty shell?
    i am trapped within a cage;
    i am a prisoner within myself.

no amount of colored paint and disguise
can mask to me this scene of lies –
    i am not as you see me;
    i am a prisoner within myself.

inside I am aching endlessly
to be set free into reality –
    i am  Titania;
    i am a prisoner within myself.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)

PARALLEL

she looks into the mirror
she is marilyn monroe
    lips so red and inviting
    hair so full and golden
    body hot and provocative

she looks into the mirror
but sees only the past
    scared lonely little girl
    norma jean
    with bound wings

and looks deep inside herself
to a sad and secret place
    rebel with so many a cause
    yet far from Eden’s paradise
    some tearful bird singing
    come back home
    jimmy dean, jimmy dean

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
PLEA

take these parasites
these white parasites
that cling so fervently to me
and are the objects
of my shame

take these parasites
get them off me
take them far away
and bury them
in some worm-infested grave

for i am so tired
of my soul being bled dry
by curses and images and games
i want to be born

whose hands
are responsible for this blood?
the blood of weakness
a broken and torn body
a shattered spirit
nothing is whole

scrape away every ounce of falsehood
cut it all away from me
please let me come out of this shell
let me out of here
let me escape this hell
and into reality

let some miracle-worker
sew me together
or glue the pieces
like a jigsaw puzzle
that has been
taken apart

please someone
set me free
into reality
please let me come out of this shell
for i was not meant
to be this way.

~~ Steven Wells
SON OF NONE

I am a man
to whom no one
has given birth.

One day soon
I shall waken in the morning
as I have always been in the night
in my mind’s eye;
soon it will be tomorrow…
soon it will be dawn.

I have spent life
as a butterfly
desperately longing to escape its cocoon.
I have spent a lifetime
trying to escape this horrible, monstrous shell.

It has been an unbearable pain:
twenty-eight years
of Feminne Face/Masculine Grace –
the violent porcelain of a fragile mind,
shattered, as crystal.

No human being could ever imagine
this pain I have suffered
and will undoubtedly continue to suffer
as long as my life remains
being who and what I am.

Only those
who are as I am
could ever understand.

~~ Steven Wells (1985)
THIRD SON

Third son –
not my father’s son
i wear a cloak of lies
existing in disguise
chameleon in a private Hell
rag doll in a lying shell
silent torment behind these eyes.

I bear not your name
nor your flesh
you have cast me from your bloodline
even though you know not
who and what i am.
i am so empty inside.

Years of confusion, years of pain
longing to discover my own soul
and see my face
as it is in my mind’s eye
now i know, now i am real
and it is so hard to conceal
who and what i am.

It does not matter –
for you can never accept me
because i am not
as you want me to be
i am not as you demand i be
i can only be
who and what i am.

I have spent a lifetime
running from the truth
hiding from reality
and i can no longer paint myself
in a mask of lies.

I am the third son -
but i am not my father’s son
void of family, home and face
still running an endless race
to be who and what i am
to be real.
I am the third son -  
but i am not my father’s son  
can’t you accept me as your child?  
can’t you accept me as your son?  
yet i know  
you never will.

~~ Steven Wells

**POR QUÉ?**

‘tis the worst torment:  
to be born a man  
    in the shell  
    of woman;

to be born  
a sad, lonely, frightened angel  
    in the skin  
    of the serpent

inside  
i am real  
    whole  
    alive

all i want  
is to be free  
to be myself:  
who and what  
i am inside…

inside  
i am a colorful rainbow…  
outside  
i am afraid and alone,  
my silent unseen tears  
    fall endlessly  
    like a cold  
    drowning storm.

~~ Steven Wells
**IMPERSONATOR**

he is in
the shell of a woman
    yet he is still
    a man.

the length of hair, the breasts, the clothes –
they matter not.
they cause him only torment,
    for he is really
    a man.

thru' years of staring at a lie in the mirror,
years of searching for an unseen truth,
years of being masked by a stranger,
aching for reality…

for he was born
to be just a female impersonator –
he was born
in the shell of a woman –
he was born
half-formed…

    but inside
    he is a man.

~~ Steven Wells
A DEDICATION

Slash with a sword the objects of your shame
   O bitter one!
   Paint no more lies
   Upon your soul!

Shed no more tears!
   For they are felt only by you –
   And fall to the earth
   Diluted with rain
   Mixed into the mud
   Futile are your efforts
   To be understood.

Claim your rightful inheritance
   O torn and broken one!
   In whose name were you formed –
   Deformed and doomed?
   In whose name
   Was your Manhood defiled?
   Arise now, Lord of the Soul...

   Or forever be condemned
   To mix your holy water
   With blood!

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
DEDICATED
(Dedicated to Johnny D.)

Johnny Thunderbird
Angel in drag
Steps from his purple chariot
Half-believing
In miracles.

Upon the curb
High-heeled glamor
No-man’s land
But for a night or a moment
Then glimmering gingerly
As ashes, straining to remain burning
Fall unnoticed,
Upon a tablecloth.

Splendid is this life
He’s chosen to undertake
(But sometimes in the early dawn
He finds it impossible to suppress a tear).
Still, for tonight, it’s party time
Liquor flowing fast and sweet
Games and lies flowing faster.

Metallic gowns and mini-skirts
Levis and Calvin Kleins
All find a place here tonight.
It is a place to be free
A place where talk is cheap
But the real price
Is so very high.

Still, where can one go
To claim his soul
A place where souls – like bodies and wine –
Are bought and sold
For a word or a smile.

It is time to break free
Time to open the gates
To break out of the shell
To look into a new mirror.
And if James Dean
Looks deep into his soul
And sees the eyes of Marilyn Monroe –
Who is to judge?
The boys laugh freely
Here in their warm cocoon
Sheltered from the storm
Of the outside world.
Inside, each one wonders
Which is true Reality.

Bobby pops a quarter
Into the old jukebox
And jumps some new Georgie
Who has yet to become
A victim.

They all sigh
For isn’t everyone really a victim?
Isn’t everyone caught up
In some private hell?

So many ghosts
Are here tonight.
We’ve loved them, hated them
Laughed at them, made love to them
Killed them.
Now we must cry for them…
And for ourselves.

Bobby nods at someone
Who has colors streaming down his face.
It is as if everyone
Can anticipate Tomorrow
And his own fateful end.

Hiding in a booth
With empty bottles of wine
A figure appears –
Shadowy and dull now
Not the sparkler
Who arrived at nine o’clock.

Without a smile or a word
He heads for the door
Afraid his purple chariot
Has turned into a rotted pumpkin.
At three o’clock
It’s too late to end one day
Too early to begin another.
Johnny Thunderbird
Angel in drag
Glimmering gingerly
Straining to remain burning
Opens the rain-drenched door
Of his purple chariot
And wonders why
He still believes in miracles.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)

FOR J.D.

Don leopard skins and gold lamé
   and come back from the grave
i’m told it is time for the resurrection.
   who better to fill the prophecies?

You are Adam and Eve in one bone
   flesh encircling your heart
no generation will ever bear your name –
   but did you ever wear white?

Cast aside the crown of thorns
   and finally breathe free
i will be the songstress and kiss your robe
   the wounds were not in your hands and feet.

Raise yourself up on your heels
   reach for the stars
touch the sun of midnight
   where your eyes are now but flickering orbs.

Take all you can, for you have given your life
   nailed to some new cross
mary and i will weep for you
   but now it is time for the resurrection.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
THE TOY

it is a toy
it gives me pain
but it gives them joy
the toy
the shell
masking the liar
covering the hell
silent screaming bloody lies
nightmare living
behind the eyes
the toy
break the toy
tormenting me
haunting me
laughing at me
the toy
dress it as a mannequin
johnny hides
under angel’s skin
bitter pain and burning rage
female impersonator
upon a stage
playing games, acting roles
wanting Reality
to unfold
chameleon, dancer, actor, child
not growing into
your identity
hiding from
Reality
wanting to be
whole
wanting to be
Real
wanting to be
a man
but being only
a toy

~~ Steven Wells
endless games
masks
roles
lies
long painted nails
high heels
face bathed in color
this is a mannequin
to dress daily
a Hallowe’en costume
to wear
a canvas
to toss watercolors upon
this is the sad game
the actor is a clown
i am play-acting
dressing up like a six-year-old
lying to the world
an ironic joke
but no longer lying to myself
outside is a game
a mask
a role
a lie
outside is a shell
inside is reality
truth
life
joy
peace
outside is a trap
inside is freedom
outside i lie
inside i cry
i beg for release
i beg for reality
no more games
masks
roles
lies

continued…
i need to be free
to be myself
to be
who and what
i am inside
for I am not as I appear to be
    i am not this shell
    i am not
    woman.

~~ Steven Wells (1986)

ANGEL, ETC.

how many lives
can inhabit one body
how many personalities
can exist in one flesh
is there some truth in each
    or is everyone a falsehood

little Angel, virginal whore
    her head is a mosaic
ever piece of glass
too small to survive on its own
too weak to stand

little Angel, unsure changeling
    heart held together
    by bits of Scotch tape
    and Elmer's glue

little Angel, chameleon
    Jekyll and Hyde
    Christ and Serpent
    free bird and puppet
    Adam and Eve
within one shell
    Dreamer of Heaven
    Survivor of Hell

how much is real
    how much is fabrication
no one name or face can predominate
    for all are just pieces...
    pieces of some Angel.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
ANGEL

Misogynist
He tramples
The blood from the rose
He seeks to destroy
He seeks to have power
    over that which once
        enslaved him

Hatred, pure hatred
Oozing from his veins
Throbbing with heroin
A cloud of warm oblivion
Giving him peace
    If he cannot escape it
        he will destroy it

Break the shell, break the cage
Scarred soul in elusive rage
So many years in the search
So long waiting for his true birth
Confusion, pain, fear…
    If he cannot take the knife
        he will take his life.

~~ Steven Wells
SURREALISTIC ANGEL

surrealistic angel
heart and mind and soul of Johnny
body of a liar
shell of a woman

surrealistic angel
painted on the canvas of truth
poetry of Reality
mask of woman

surrealistic angel
misogynist, hating the blood of the serpent
Adam’s child
lie of woman

surrealistic angel
dream of a future life
man of peace, of joy, of Reality
no longer shell, mask, lie of woman.

~~ Steven Wells
RAGE OF ANGEL’S

like a child’s crayons
or the palette of some artist
it begins
over and over again:
little dreamer
a combination of a locked soul
oppressed by so very much pain
endless masks and games
diaries of confusion
and a hidden Pandora’s Box
looking like some age-old
cracker case
fading grey
under the sun of Paradise
existing
in a liar’s paint box.

when he puts on her face –
a silent, sad resignation –
no longer is he in the glittering glory
of the dark scene he loves the best.
when he puts on her face –
crowning himself in yet another image –
he feels stripped of his dignity
paraded before the masses
like a nickel-bag whore.

JT hides under Angel’s lies…
for where else is there
for him to go?
old legends never die, they say –
but it seems the price for martyrdom
is but a stake in the heart
and to be, once and for all
cast into Their fires of condemnation.
Johnny cries; Angel laughs…
on the outside –
the surface-image –
where it counts the most to Them…
for who gives a damn
of the deep sea within
that is so full and stormy and aching?

continued…
"i want to be…i want to be…!"
he cries silently to himself at night
when there is no one and nothing
but a pillow
and his own inner-image.
the Thunderbird queen smiles gently
in a new, honest style
when there are no eyes to stare back
no light of day
no mirrors
to reflect
the lie.

in is dreams, Johnny can smile
in his dreams
he sees dark traces around his eyes
warming to the filmy presence
that combine fantasy, reality
and hope.

Angel is nowhere in sight.
Johnny has told her to go to hell
and walked away…
at least for tonight.
“it’s nice,” he says to himself
“to break the Bitch’s halo
and come out Real
for a change.”
but he knows he’ll have to face her again –
her resigned sadness torturing him
as he tosses her accusing glances
and cruel remarks.
secretly he wishes she were dead…
so he could be free.
for two cents’ worth of courage
he’d pay some sugar man to end her
to put a knife.
to the parts that make her
what she is –
damn bitch
faded grey cracker case.

continued…
JT melts into the shadows
covering himself in the misty darkness
like all the other boys.
he is secretly afraid
that someday they’ll see him
as he plays his sidewalk game
he could never stand the humiliation
if the boys found out
he was existing in a liar’s paint box.
it is so difficult
to exist in spiders’ webs
silent songs of the heart
glittery dreams
and dark, damp closets.
sometimes
he feels as if he is in Dracula’s coffin
but with all his blood drained away
and nothing but emptiness
and silent echoes
in his veins.

the early morning
is a dull grey
as the purple chariot
whisks him away.
he hopes to fall into oblivion
before he has to awaken
and face some lonely liar’s eyes.
sadly he realizes
no one really cares…
he could easily make his oblivion permanent…
drowning
like a stinking sewer rat.
They’d just sneer
and say he got what he deserved…
after all
he was Different.
and They’d feel They have the right
the right to condemn him…
for their world has no place
for legends and Angels
who exist in a liar’s paint box.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
QUEEN MARY

Her life is a Pandora’s Box
To which no one holds the key
Violently shaking free the dust of the day
Plunging into a self-made Reality.
Fantasy is the game she plays
For what would Society’s other children say
If Queen Mary were to uncover
What only Night might see?

Only in the dark of Night
In the comfort of her dreams
Can a lonely Angel bid goodbye
To all the pain and all the lies
And exist in untouched scenes.
Evening gowns of gold lamé
Against a smoke of haze and wine
Praying to wear the glitter crown
In some future life or time.
Queen Mary’s boys gather around her
Aching for a kiss, a touch
She loves them all, then runs away
Leaving tears and silver-dust.
For the midnight Angel is facing dawn
And the madruga skies
Were not meant to hold angels –
Liars in mirrors and eyes.

Sadly and quietly moves the chariot.
She folds herself away
Into the Pandora’s Box
Which every Angel must wear
Under the stark vision of daylight.
She locks Reality with an unseen key
And melts away into Oblivion.
The Queen
Reigns no more.

~~ Steven Wells (1983)
endless games
  masks
  roles
  lies
long painted nails
  high heels
  face bathed in color
this is a mannequin
  to dress daily
  a Hallowe’en costume
  to wear
  a canvas
  to toss watercolors upon
this is the sad game
  the actor is a clown
  i am play-acting
  dressing up like a six-year-old
  lying to the world
  an ironic joke
  but no longer lying to myself
outside is a game
  a mask
  a role
  a lie
outside is a shell
inside is reality
  truth
  life
  joy
  peace
outside is a trap
inside is freedom
outside i lie
inside i cry
i beg for release
i beg for reality
no more games
  masks
  roles
  lies
i need to be free
to be myself
to be
who and what
i am inside
for I am not as I appear to be
  i am not this shell
  i am not
  woman.

~~ Steven Wells (1986)

SHE” DIDN’T LIKE MONDAYS

Brenda Spencer was too small to be scary
Or so they wrote in the Los Angeles Times -
“She had the look of a guy,” Maryann Stevenson said
“Wore guys’ clothes, everything, but participated in crimes
I don’t think she had any friends
but she smiled and laughed sometimes.”

“She” had this thing about guns, kind of quiet
But could be quite aggressive when “she” talked
Attended old war movies, liked to play war
Dressed like a guy, even the way “she” walked
The gunfire rang out across the schoolyard –
Two people dead, eight wounded –
And the world wonders “Why?”

Brenda Spencer couldn’t take the pain anymore
And left ten others just laying there to die
Teased, mocked by the insensitive
Only on weekends could He be free
How could they know why “she” didn’t like Mondays
When the system wouldn’t let Him be free?

CAN I TRUST YOU?

For most of my life
I asked if I could trust you
but the answer was, “No!”
Then, for years
the answer was, “Maybe.”
Weary of “Maybe”
I thought you might be ready
but I heard, “What if…?”
These were not your answers
but my own fears.
So, I shared myself with you
and you accepted me as before
and I did not need my secret.
Of course, you were trustworthy –
It was I who could not trust.

~~ Anonymous

FAITH IN ONESELF

The will of the free
Draws its strength
From a need,
For the action of wanting
Inspires energy.

Where there are no binding pressures
To torment the soul,
There are no obstacles
To detract from the goal.

So, to seek is to find,
To reach out to, to hold.
The achievement is victory
But victory is sold.

But reward is long-lasting,
Endeavour brings wealth
And the price, this achievement,
Is fait in oneself.

~~ Roderick (© 1979)
There is no image to describe.
1. **“TOGETHERNESS”** – An adaptation of the humorous poem by Frederic Ogden Nash, an American poet, well known for his light verse, in which he highlights the “schizoid” tension between his heart and mind, rather than the gender dysphoric disconnection between body and mind felt by most pre-transitional trans people.

2. **“SEXUAL SEMANTICS”** – The term “hermaphrodisism” is now anachronistic and has since been replaced with “intersex,” and even more recently, “Disorders of Sex Development.” (See End Note #1 in Book Two, Part One: M-F TSism above for a more further elaboration). I’d also like to add to “heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual,” “transsensual” (an attraction by a trans person for a trans man, trans woman and/or a genderqueer, intersex or two-spirit person).

3. **“PANSEXUAL PANGENDER PERSON”** – Over my lifespan, my gender identity has gradually evolved. My core male gender identity first emerged at age three (and I eventually physically transitioned to male at age 19). In 1971, I adopted the name “Nicholas Ghosh” and in 1982, I changed it to “Rupert Raj.” Around 2012 (when I was 60), “Ruperta” (my secondary [feminine] gender identity) slowly began to emerge, and now, I integrate both the masculine and feminine dimensions of my personality, (while still retaining my core male gender identity), incorporating all three identities (Nick, Rupert and Ruperta) into one multi-dimensional, pangenderal being. And throughout my life, I’ve retained my pansexual (humansexual) orientation (attracted to cisgender and transgender women and men, and also to genderqueer, intersex and two-spirit people), but in more recent years, I’ve leaned more towards women.

4. **“THE BEST OF BOTH WORLD BLUES”** – A song composed by a pre-op, F-M TS (Johnny A.) about an American, post-op, F-M TS (Les Nicholas – who also goes by his former name, “Linda”) and his girlfriend, Annie Sprinkle (a cisgender porn queen at the time), who have sexual relations in the 1990 musical porn video, “Les/Linda & Annie: The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story” (the first-ever trans porn video!). Les lets Annie stimulate his vagina with a dildo, and then fucks her with his surgically constructed penis. The song is sung in the video.

5. **“female”** – Patti Smith is the renowned iconic poet and songwriter of the 1960s to the present. Note the gender conflict she experiences, as well as the allusion to Marilyn Monroe (an American cultural icon for ultra-femininity) and compare this with Linda T. O'Connell’s “Discovery” and Tom House’s “camptown reality” [Book One: Part One: M-F TSism], and Steven Wells’s “Parallel” and “Dedicated” [Book Two: Part Two: F-M TGism]. The “Misfits” refers to the classic 1961 movie starring Montgomery Clift, another androgynous (and bisexual) individual.

6. **“SURFACING WHEN”** – “Titania” is a character in William Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In the play, she is the queen of the fairies. In traditional folklore, the fairy queen has no name but Shakespeare took the name, "Titania," from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which it is an appellation given to the
daughters of the Titans (a primeval race of powerful deities, descendants of Gaia [Earth] and Uranus [Sky], who ruled during the legendary Golden Age, and were immortal giants of incredible strength, who were also the first pantheon of Greek gods and goddesses). Titania has appeared in many other plays, poems, paintings and other works, including: Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust I, and Alfred Lord Tennyson's The Foresters. As well, one of Uranus's satellites was named after her, and there is also a butterfly named "Boloria titania" (common name "Titania's Fritillary").

7. **PARALLEL** – “Eden’s paradise” refers to the 1952 John Steinbeck novel, East of Eden, which was made into a movie, starring James Dean, another cultural icon and sex symbol. “(R)ebel with so many a cause” alludes to the classic 1955 film, "Rebel Without A Cause" (also starring Dean). “Jimmy dean, jimmy dean” is a reference to the 1982 film “Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean,” an adaptation of Ed Graczyk's 1976 play of the same name.

8. **DEDICATED (Dedicated to Johnny D.)** – Note the reference to “Georgie” – a gay boy epitomized in Rod Stewart’s song, “The Ballad of Georgie Porgie.” Note also the references to Marilyn Monroe and James Dean – a recurring allusion in Steven Wells' work, as are the alter egos of “Johnny Thunderbird” and Angel.”

9. **SHE DIDN’T LIKE MONDAYS** – From the unpublished manuscript, “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available from K-Tel” (© 1982). “Brenda Spencer” was very likely either a pre-op F-M TS or TG; because I’m unsure as to “his” precise gender status, I have arbitrarily assigned the piece to this section. The poet is a M-F TS, expressing her sisterly sympathy to a presumed trans brother.
HIGH ON HEELS

We can get so high on heels
we have to be hosed down.
We walk about with a brassy air
and our breath comes in hot pants.
We have been known to slip away
and dress ourselves in lounge array.
Of corset doesn’t make much sense
but it’s a cinch.

~~ Polly Esther

I WOULD RATHER BE...

I was born a little boy
grew up to be a man
but I would rather be a lovely lady
than have to be a man.
It’s more comfortable dressed as a lady
than it is as a man
and that’s why I like being a woman
better than a man.

~~ Rosemarie E.
TV TRUTHS

I.

Flawless.
I've sought that bird.
Sleek and smooth,
with plumage so brilliant
the sun looks away.
In the solitary jungle
I've glimpsed his startled ascent
into the darkness,
his blithe leap
from a twig
back into the imagination.
Of the photographs,
there are hundreds,
but not one
that describes the bright
horror of his beauty,
the ceaseless call in the night.

II.

The steady accretion,
the wig, the bra, the rouge,
the panties, hose and heels.
The anxious accumulations,
the hard-won prizes of mail-order courage,
patiently horded.
Under the bed, a box,
in the basement, a bag,
on the top shelf of the closet
a book and a pair of falsies.
These magic things
that possess us.

III.

This strange sorority,
the sad gallery of faces
that stare at me from the magazine.
What does “attractive” mean?
Whose aesthetic are we torturing
in these dim polaroids?
Which face is mine?
IV.

Bridgette has a copper snatch.
Her eyes are rabbit pink
in the camera’s flash.
Her boa crimson, her bra blood-red,
the blush in her cheeks, a stigmata of lust.
Her lips burn a vermillion tattoo on your forehead.

V.

So much depends upon a
red wig
covering the head of a
bodiless manneguin
that looks like Yvonne Craig.

VI.

I have seven wigs
but still I am unhappy.

VII.

Walking down Market Street
the bewigged heads from
the window of Wig America
sing out to me –
another doomed sailor.

VIII.

The old tart in the mirror
will have her way.
At arms length
she directs the traffic of my thoughts,
the distance I put between the world
and where I’m headed tonight
after half a bottle of gin.

IX.

Thank God for Madonna
resurrecting the tulle petticoat,
The zaftig figure and the
delightful drag accoutrements of yesteryear.
X.

Voracious prisoner
in my mirror
for wigs on your head.
Your breasts come in two sizes:
large and extra-large.
I’ve applied gloss to your lips
six times tonight and still
you want more.
I had promised to shave your legs
but can’t we stop all this for a moment
and make love?

XI.

Frilly, dainty panty,
pink, satin.
The missing garment
at the hamper’s bottom, they said -
found its way beneath
his Levis.
A rodeo queen!,
the headlines screamed.
A Brahma bull opened his
pants in the arena
and now
he says he wears them
for luck.

XII.

I want to see a show of hands now.
How many of you wear a bra
and who are you – anyone famous?
Is there a senator
or a brain surgeon?
Is there a writer
of bad fiction?
XIII.

The theatre is dark.
Lights shimmer through a
sea of dynel
the glowing nimbus of
the fake Madonna chorus
but the faces remain
black.

~~ Leigh de Santa Fe

CLOTHES THE DOOR

I turned five.
Already I knew my way in
and out of closets.

Dad’s clothes were plain
wrinkled, and hung carelessly
or in a shapeless pile
smelling of sweat
and strangers.

Mom’s clothes were bright
seamless, smooth
and shaped liker her
even when she wasn’t wearing them.
They smelled of sweet musk
In the dirty clothes hamper.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1981)

CLOSE SHAVE

If I gave you seamed stockings for your birthday
Would you show them to your mother?
I don’t think so. You’re not that tough.
I know you too well.
She doesn’t know you well enough.

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1983)
GENDER BLENDER

Perfumes still hangs in the air
around my neck
and bits of mascara
cling to my lashes
like gnats.
My legs have no hair on them –
will anyone notice?

~~ Cinnamon (© 1983)

THE SLIP TRICK

It’s such an illusion! I wouldn’t have guessed
That this wonderful, beautiful blonde,
Though like a magician she isn’t dressed,
Still has quite a magical wand!

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1983)

UNDERCOVER GIRL

We sit at the table.
Smoke rises from our cigars
and I swill beer
with the best of them.
But I never throw up –
ever.

I may laugh too hard
at some of their jokes
but they never notice.

I wore ribbons in my hair today
shaved my legs
and bought a new slit skirt.
I looked through Playgirl three times
before they had even woke up.

We sit at the table.
Smoke rises from our cigars
and I swallow a bit more of my pride
each round.
But I never throw up –
ever.

~~ Cinnamon (© UnderCoverGirl Music, 1984)
SECRET GIRL

I work for hours on my make-up,
Getting ready for my mission.
I want the world to turn and wake up
With desire, and not suspicion.

Take your times to look and study,
All my moves are ultra-pure.
You won’t catch me till I’m ready,
Even then you can’t be sure.

Secret Girl, caught in the act.
I’m a Secret Girl as a matter of fact.
With more or less
Underneath my dress,
I’m a Secret Girl.
What more to confess?

I won’t give you time to think twice.
I’m so cool, admire my form.
When you’re feminine, the men are nice
And they can keep a Lady warm.

I enjoy my little masquerade
And after everything is done,
I might show you how I’m really made
But that would take away my fun.

Secret Girl, caught in the act.
I’m a Secret Girl as a matter of fact.
With more or less
Underneath my dress,
I’m a Secret Girl.
What more to confess?

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 3, No. 12, 1983)
LONESOME COWGIRL

I'm just a lonesome Cowgirl.
Are you a lonesome Cowboy?
If you sweep me off my feet in a swirl,
I'll be your bundle of joy.

I love to ride in old pick-up trucks
Or on the back of a speckled mare.
I'll watch you ride your bronkin' bucks,
You can saddle me anywhere.

I can Honky-Tonk with the best of them,
I can Waltz and Doe-See-Doe.
I'm a bit different from the rest of them,
But nobody has to know.

I can handle rough stuff or a tender touch,
Either way will suit me fine.
Ride into my valley and I'll call your bluff,
You can rope my calves anytime.

I'm just a lonesome Cowgirl,
Pretty in lace or jeans.
I'm at home cookin' on the range,
Let me show you what Lovin' means.

My lips are sweeter than honeysuckle,
My thighs are sheer delight.
My fingernail is tracin' down your belt buckle,
You can load your gun tonight.

~~ Cinnamon (© Filly Music, 1985)
HARD TO PLEASE

My hose sigh soft as a whisper
As your hand feels up my leg.
They say you’re a choosy Mister
But I’m not the type to beg.

I’ve got more than the average score,
Much more than meets the eyes.
If you’re the kind who doesn’t mind
Come slip between my thighs.

You’ll find I’m a girl who’s hard to please
(Hard to please you).
I like a man who’s hard to please
(Hard to please, too).
I may talk but I don’t tease.
Force this vixen to her knees.
I’m just a girl who’s hard to please
(Hard to please you).

Everyone calls me Trans-sister,
I can turn you on in a pinch.
But if you won’t go the mile
I’ll never give an inch.

My skin is tanned and brown,
My legs are long and lean.
Find you way around
And you can come between.

You’ll find I’m a girl who’s hard to please
(Hard to please you).
I like a man who’s hard to please
(Hard to please, too).
I may talk but I don’t tease.
Force this vixen to her knees.
I’m just a gal who’s hard to please
(Hard to please you).

~~ Cinnamon (© Secret Girl Music, 1985)
TRIAL AND ERROR

I was arrested last week on a shocking charge; "Improper Dress," said the booking Sarge!
It was a quiet little town, not very large;
I spent the night in jail with a hooker named Marge.

At the small Truck Stop, I ran out of gas;
You’d think, of all places, here I would pass!
But a horny driver made a grab at my ass
And his hand grabbed much more than his mind could grasp!

I was up before the Judge the very next day;
My charge was read in a sneering way.
"Guilty" meant a two grand fine to pay;
"Innocent," I crooned, to their silent dismay.

"Now what is wrong with a Southern Belle
Stretching her legs if she stretches them well?
A black lace dress with a necklace of pearls
Is this “Improper Dress” for one of your girls?

“You’ve got my money all counted and spent
There’s holes in the road and City Hall’s rent’
A new sewage system would clear up this stench.
With your Honor’s permission, may I approach the bench?"

I whispered to him in a quiet voice:
“Listen, your Honor, I’ll give you a choice.
You let me go and I’ll drive away
And I won’t say anything else here today.

I’ve done nothing lewd, nothing so wrong;
Wearing these clothes is where I belong!
The same thing of you just cannot be said;
You belong with your wife, not in Marge’s bed!

I swished back to my seat, my heels ringing loud
And crossed my legs, so long and so proud.
When the Judge returned, that whispering room,
As he began speaking, turned quiet as a tomb.

“It sez here the charge is “Improper Dress;”
Well, it’s a bit unusual, to that I’ll confess.
But I’ve checked all my books and here’s what they say:
‘Black lace goes with pearls any time of the day!’"
I bought Marge a beer before driving away;  
It’s always wise to learn the tricks of the trade.  
And if you’re ever out just to have a good time  
Remember, black lace with pearls is never a crime!

~~ Cinnamon (© 1985) 

SLIP OF THE TONGUE

I was wearing a lavender blouse  
and you said I smelled of violets,  
remember?  
When you brushed against me,  
honey flowed down my thighs…  
I smiled at you.

Later, on the balcony,  
swaying in my high  
heels like a skyscraper,  
I caught your breath  
between my lips  
and we spoke in tongues.  
Then,  
With all of New York City  
looking over your shoulder,  
I knelt before you…

We returned to the party  
and no one even missed us,  
but we smiled at each other  
the rest of that evening,  
tongue in cheek.

You,  
with that silly grin on your face,  
and me,  
saying hello to your wife  
With you on my breath.

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1984)
BOYS CAN BE PRETTY TOO

Nature blessed this planet very well
With many secrets she won’t tell
And secrets often grow
Into mysteries you can’t know
Like the sun and moon and stars above
This funny little thing you call Love
The beautiful sights you see
Like the ones you see in me…

And boys can be pretty too
Sounds crazy, but it’s true.
There’s no copyright on womanhood
From Newport News to Hollywood
Living a life you never dreamed they could.
Look at me – it’s true
Boys can be pretty, too.

I don’t mean to cause you any harm
I’d sooner cut off my right arm
But you know what they say:
Being happy is never gay.
I watch the passion in your eyes
Turn from lust to mild surprise
Curiosity kills the cat who tries
But you don’t have nine lives…

And boys can be pretty too
Sounds crazy, but it’s true.
If you’re confused about what to do
Don’t be too used for something new
You want me, and Baby, I want you.
Forget everything you knew
Because boys can be pretty, too.

Boys can be pretty too
Sounds crazy, but it’s true.
When you draw the line between Men and Women
Don’t forget where I fit in.
I’m playing the game you never thought I’d win.
Be careful who you woo…
Because boys can be pretty, too.

~~ Cinnamon (© UnderCoverGirl Music; Femanine, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1986)
STRANGER IN MY CITY

Satin and lace and ruffles and bows,
A beautiful face that nobody knows,
Striding the street with a click of the heels,
And building up heat for some sensual meals.

Now what kind of feast is fit for a Queen?
It must be a beast with the muscle meat lean;
Firm, sweet flesh that will rise with desire,
Like bread in the oven, like heat from the fire.

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 3, No. 11, 1984)

HOT LIKE A WOMAN

We paint our toenails a frosted pink
And smooth our feet till they’re soft as mink.
Such small detail will catch a man’s eye
And cause him to think as we pass by.

We shave our legs from toes to “there”
And cover them with hose for a smooth tanned pair.
We give them shape with the heels we wear
And arch our feet for a pouting derrière.

We thin our waist and swell our hips,
We push out breasts to catch their eyes.
We wear a blouse (three buttons undone!)
And a short slit skirts to flash our thighs.

Our face! Our face! Our face!
We fuss till it’s all in place.
Sexy eyes, dreamy cheeks and silky smooth skin,
A pair of sweet lips just dreaming of sin.

Come on, Girls! Let’s dance in our stockinged feet –
No holes barred!
Let them take us like Women
For Women we are!

Why else would we dress up
So female and feminine?
It’s for the same reason they do –
To be attractive to Men!

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1984)
FOX TROT

Hey, Baby,
Just watch me walk!
I’ve got it down pat
on the ass!
I’ve got the moves
In high-heel shoes –
Don’t you know I can pass
No problem
Without hard labor
Or the monthly blues?
Yeah…
Dance me, Babe!
All I need is a foxy trot
And no one wonders
What else I got!

~~ Cinnamon (© The Transvestian, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1984)

YOU

It is only a decoration
and it makes me feel Guilty.
A heart of gold I have
and still I feel Guilty.
I spray myself with silk
spread satin on my skin
and dip my fringes in lace.
There is Guilt.
It comes when I do.

If I were alone in this world
(first person singular)
like from the beginning,
Genesis,
only skip God, Adam and Eve…
there is only me
then would I feel Guilty?
No!
YOU leave me alone, dammit.
I am beautiful.

Take U out of Guilt
and it becomes Gilt…
a decoration on something
that needs no decoration at all.

~~ Cinnamon (© 1982)
I AM S/HE

I am S/he –

Who cooks and sews and paints her toes
Who reads and writes and sometimes fights
Who laughs and cries and is afraid to die
Who dreams of painting rainbows in the sky.

I am S/he –

Who’d love to wear a mini-skirt
And to go out and flirt
Hoping for lots of admiring glances
And even some friendly advances.

I am S/he –

Who simply adores pink satin panties
Soft leather and silk lace
As well as the beautiful smile
Of a child’s precious face.

I am S/he –
Who believes in love.
I am S/he –
Who is all of the above.

~~ Joni
FEMININE CHIC

It’s a comfort to know you are there
And I’m neither alone nor unique
In choosing the clothes I would wear
To dress with feminine chic.

Many there are who will scoff
And with scornful derision they speak
When our masculine garb we cast off
To dress with feminine chic.

Transvestites are not all gay
As I am, nor cowardly and weak
Afraid to make public display
To dress with feminine chic.

I fear that I’ll never succeed
So help and assistance I seek.
Your friendship and guidance I need
In my quest for feminine chic.

My hope and my fond aspiration –
Transvestal friends I seek
Who’ll help me end my frustration
And teach me of feminine chic.

If Fortune decrees I’ll be blessed
In the lovers and friends that I seek
I’ll gladly be spanked or caressed
As learn of feminine chic.

To my sorrow, my youth is long gone
And I fear I’ll seem like a freak
When female garments I don
To emulate feminine chic.

An old lady, I cannot wish more
But modesty’s not what I seek!
Though if garishly garbed like a whore
I’ll never have feminine chic.

The smouldering embers of passion
Are quickly fanned to white heat
And I simply must dress in fashion
That will give me feminine chic.
Companions – our pleasures to share
Are not these whom we seek?
Who will understand, who will care
For our love of feminine chic?

~~ Kaye

**IF I HAD**

If I had a thinking frock
I’d gladly put it on.
I wish that I had any frock
That I could call my own.

If I had a thinking blouse
With skirt to complement it
That too, I’d gladly use
And be well-contented.

Or, If I had a thinking bra
Or panties soft and clinging
I’d be quick to wear them
And set my heart a-singing!

But sadly now, the former queen
From outside looking in
Can only see what might have been –
But…could it be again?

~~ Kaye
POEM TO A FRIEND
(Lady Cross-Dressing The Blues)

Was there a beginning –
can I remember a start?
I search inside my soul
and I rummage my heart.

I found an infant –
a poor little babe.
There was light in her eyes –
I knew it was a road to be paved.

I crossed into an ocean
and found myself drowning at sea.
My own hands at my throat –
my own self killing me.

The infant grew into a child
and she knew guilt, shame, fear.
A secret “sin” held tight –
a secret “sin” held dear.

Alone…she stood alone –
Closet case in a hostile home.
Suicidal…inflicting pain –
Fighting not to be again.

Soon, a young lady is there –
accepting that she is here.
Yet, for her, it’s very hard to do
and once again, she’s pulled in two.

Feeling sad…not knowing joy –
trying to see who she’s about.
A girl is crying in a corner –
a lady reaches out.

Lady cross-dressing the blues –
counting the days as two.
Finding hope on a bathroom wall –
Got the number to the club – Baby, please call.

Interfacing freedom and relief –
finding her own kind is beyond her belief.
Feeling better a woman, moves on –
A click in her heels like an atom bomb.
And now I’m back to where I started –
look at me now.
Is that reflection really me –
what I proudly choose to be?

No more guilt, fear or pain –
I am a girl with no shame.
I shall stand and defend our kind –
casting light onto the blind.

Getting strong, the air getting better –
feeling like an angel had sent her.
Oh, loving you girl, but conquer to the end –
we will write poems to a friend.

~~ Tiffany Vanderbilt II
YOU'RE THE WOMAN I MARRIED

Everything seemed so simple –
And I still love you with all my heart.
But there are some things that
I should've told you right from the start.

But I was afraid that I’d lose you
Because of this secret that I hide.
I didn’t want you to look down on me
So I kept it locked up deep inside.

The shame I felt for feelings I had
Was too much for me alone to bear.
How could I know, after I told you
That you would still be there?

Honey, you’re the woman I married
And I’m sorry for what I’ve put you through.
Just say that you will stay with me
“Cause I’ll never love anyone but you.

Yes, you’re the woman I married
And I hope you can understand.
Even though I’m going through changes
I’ll always want you close at hand.

I know there’s much you don’t understand
But, please Honey, don’t you cry.
I’ve tried to stop many times before
But these are feelings I can’t deny.

I know I expect a lot from you –
Seems like I’m always adding to the list.
Now I’m asking you to share these feelings
And these desires that I just can’t resist.

So you took a chance and stayed with me
And you warmed this poor heart of mine.
Maybe it was our love that pulled us through –
I guess that’s what they call “the bottom line.”

Honey, you’re the woman I married
And I’m sorry for what I’ve put you through.
Just say that you will stay with me
“Cause I’ll never love anyone but you.
Yes, you’re the woman I married  
And I hope you can understand.  
Even though I’m going through changes  
I’ll always want you close at hand.

~~ Unknown

MY OTHER SIDE

My other side, my other self  
In the mirror, sitting on the shelf.  
Behold an image for all to see  
My other self – it must be me.

When I get this urge to dress  
I must, I must to relieve the stress.  
I know my life is a mess  
But to deny me would cause distress.

At times, I’m consumed with guilt and fear  
And I end up purging what I hold so dear.  
When I think of ending those feelings  
And of saying my goodbyes  
Tears of sorrow come to my eyes.

All it takes is acceptance and love  
For me to be as free as a dove.  
What I see in the mirror I should cherish  
For if I don’t, I might perish  
Having never fully understood…  
My other side.

~~ Barbara Diane
MAGIC MIRROR

Mirror, mirror
On the wall
Who do I look like
Most of all?

Butch, my pate
But not my crown
Around my neck
The curls fall down.

Soap and razor
Touch my face
Creams and lotions
Take their place.

What is there
Is hairy chest
But I see a pair
Of snowy breasts.

Hard, slim hips
Of cowboy bold
My buns are pips
That rock and roll.

Massive arms
And biceps bold
Are better slim
And soft, I’m told.

Something there
Below the waist
When will I dare
To make erase?

I stand on legs
Like trunks of oak
Can shapely limbs
My dreams invoke?

One step back
To see the whole
But what I see
Is beauty’s role.
The picture there
In magic glass
Is made of dreams:
I'm real at last!

~~ Jennie

MIRROR, MIRROR

Mirror, mirror
In the mall
Say I'm pretty
Not too tall.

Tell me others
See me this way
As I stroll
Your busy hall.

Tell me, tell me
Those who see me
Those who pass me
Always fall –

For the me
You say I see.
What else is there
Afterall?

~~ Carol Sue S.
DRESSING ALONE ON A SNOWY EVENING
(with apologies to Robert Frost)

Whose clothes these are…I think you know.
Her work is in the city though.
She will not see standing here
To model my own fashion show.

My lovely wife would think me “queer”
To slide into these stockings, sheer.
Then let this slip drop ’round me thus
This special evening of the year.

I give the wig a gentle shake
Then fill the bra with padding, fake.
The only sound’s the gentle sweep
Of silken skirt around me, draped.

My eyes, now lovely, dark and deep
Gaze at this secret I must keep.
For “her” soul…buried, they do weep
For “her” soul…buried, they do weep

~~ Bobbi
THINGS I ALWAYS HID

I was a sweet and loving girl
And asked not much from life –
A chance to grow in beauty
Away from storm and strife.

I gladly helped with household chores
My room was always neat.
A pretty dress with matching shoes
Would make my life replete.

I’d save my pennies just to buy
A lipstick, bright and red.
I’d hide it deep down in a drawer
Or underneath my bed.

My parents did not understand
My wish to be beauty.
All I ever heard from them
Was Hell or Christian duty.

I wondered why the God above
Had made me as He did.
The things I loved most in life
Were things I always hid.

A frilly pair of panties
A shiny nylon slip
A gorgeous satin nightie
That clung across my hips.

I never knew why these were wrong
They did not hurt a soul.
To be a pretty school girl
Seemed such a natural goal.

But parents saw it differently
They fought against my joy.
Their reason was so simple –
Because I was a boy.

Into adulthood I have grown
On into middle years.
And still this restless longing
Consistently appears.
I have my secret wardrobe
That I will always cherish.
Yet will I wear it on the street
Sometime before I perish?

~~ Joanne

**JILLY**

There once was a little boy
And he had a little toy.
Was it a tractor or a train
A gun or a horse with a mane?

Was it an engineering set
Or perhaps an airplane jet?
No, no, not those at all
For he had a little doll

Whom he loved to bathe and dress
To cuddle and to caress
For he was a gentle boy
His not to wound or destroy.

His favourite color was pink
His dream to sit and think
That he wasn’t bound to feel
Like a hero made of steel

But free to ask for panties
And other female fancies
And to be just as frilly
As his little doll, “Millie”

To be sensitive and warm
Regardless of his form.
His mother understood
And in a Christmas mood

Dressed him as a little girl
To prance, to dance, to whirl
To exchange his “Jack” for “Jilly”
To be more like his doll, Millie.

~~ Joanne
ACCEPTANCE

Who is to say
Which is better or worse
To carry a wallet
Or carry a purse?

Whether you’re a Mom
Or whether you’re a Dad
At times you’ll be happy
And at times you’ll be sad.

You may tend to wonder
How things might have been
If you were born with it out
Or born with it in.

The truth of the matter
I have to confess
Is not what you wear
Be it pants or be it a dress.

Good people will judge you
Right from the start
Not by your gender
But by what’s in your heart.

A change of clothing
Of manner or hair
Can never conceal
The true You that’s there.

If receiving acceptance
Is the reason why you live
Then acceptance of others
Is what you must first give.

~~ Tess Alden
SMART SANTA

I was just twelve…
It was Christmas Day
And I swear this is true
That it happened this way.

I woke up quite early
And I rushed to the tree
I fumbled through presents
To find one for me.

The thing that I asked for
Was a holster and gun
But the gift with my name
Did not contain one.

Instead, in the box
That I opened, I found
A hot pink negligee
With white lace all ‘round.

Then I opened the gift
Tagged with Mom’s name
And there was my gun -
A mistake was to blame.

A switch in the labels
When the wrapping was done
Gave me a pink nightie
And my Mom a toy gun.

Then I looked at the nightie -
All silky and pink –
While the family still slept
I started to think.

Later, I wrapped her gift over
So neat and so tidy
So Mom would not suspect
That I tried on her new nightie.

But sometimes I wonder…
By my new wrapping endeavour
If I fell for a trick
Played by someone more clever.
Merry Christmas
To all of the CGS
And a a Happy New Year
From your friend, Tess.

~~ Tess Alden

PHONE CALL FOR SIS

Just like sister and brother
Both sharing one mind
It depends when you call
As to which you will find.

When I call some of my friends
For girl talk with another
I hope who will answer
Will be sister, not brother.

Not to be harsh
But it can happen that way
Where a sister will talk
But brother will brush me away.

Some of our peers
Keep their left from their right
And their Yin from their Yang
Just as day is from night.

But, given some thought
With fair understanding
Could it possibly be
I might be too demanding?

Life is a trial
We can all plainly see
Regardless of who
Or what we may be.

When I need a sister
For me to confide in
I'll let brothers alone
And for a sis I'll keep dialin’.

So, maybe with some friends
I guess that it's best
To hold off our girl talk
Till we are both dressed.

~~ Tess Alden
WEARING YOUR BEST

In my mirror, I always see
My image looking back at me.
A question arises in my mind
An answer to which I must find.

Why sometimes my mirror will unfold
Something quite pleasing to behold
But at other times, to my despair
That look I want is just not there.

But can it be that we could learn
That there’s value in this self-concern?
If it’s true of what I show
Then share the truth of what we know.

Make a face of scorn and sneer
And notice then how you’ll appear
Or change your thoughts to cause deceit
Like when you’re out to lie or cheat
And how you must look to all the rest
When you think that you’re at your best.

But when you know that you took pains
To help a friend protect his name
Or when you made time to be near
That special person you hold dear
And when you feel the need to care
A pleasant-looking you is there.

Because if beauty’s what you seek
To bring your joy of life to peak
Then look at you when you are true
And you’ll always see the best in you.

~~ Tess Alden
THE FIRST TIME

The first time you went out
Do you remember that night?
Was your adrenaline flowing
Was your fear at its height?

And were you so nervous
That your hands trembled so?
But did a deep yearning inside
Tell you that you must go?

Did you look in the mirror
To see that all is just right?
Did you hope where you’re going
Would be dim and not too bright?

Did you stand at your door
With a feeling of pride?
Knowing that now you can do it
And no longer have to hide?

And when you went out
The way you wanted to be
Did you feel brand new?
Did you feel happy and free?

Did you meet other people
And learn that they shared
All the fears that you had
Before they finally dared?

Did you like you much better
Were you proud you were you?
And when you returned home
Did you shed a happy tear too?

Then, to most of these questions
If your answers were “Yes”
We have much in common
And I hope I meet you! I’m Tess.

~~ Tess Alden
PROMENADE

How bitter life for me would be
If I never let myself be me.
The needs I have I must express
For if I did not, I would be less.

Once I was afraid to cry
Then I started to ask, “Why?”
Why should I live with fear inside –
My life is mine, why should I hide?

And if I stayed within a shell
Would I create a living Hell?
These questions would not go away –
“What do I fear?,” I’d ask each day.

Then I recalled what I was told
A long time ago, by someone old:
“You’ll surely waste your life away
If you live in fear of what others may say.”

The answer that came from my past
Made me break my shell…but fast!
What helped to let my heart go free
Was to see clearly what frightened me.

The dear that kept me in self-debate
Was my fear of the ones who love to hate.

~~ Tess Alden
**SHE’S ONLY MY GG**

(sung to the tune of “Shanty Town”)

She’s only a TV in old Provincetown
Her bosom’s uplifted, her bum’s hanging down.
This lady so fair, with her mop of false hair
Has as much chance of passing as Yogi the Bear!

But hope springs eternal; she puts on a face
And wiggles her fanny all over the place
And she ambles about in Goodwill’s latest gown
Our old TV in old Provincetown.

She’s only my GG, and she’s all that I’ve got
She’s only my GG, and she ain’t so hot.
She eats like a pig and walks like a goose
Her arches are gone and her teeth are all loose.

She’s cross-eyed and homely and all out of gear
Her breath is bad, it once knocked down a steer
But although she’s a slob, she’s got a very good job
I love you, my GG, my dear.

She’s only my GG, and she’s all that I’ve met
She’s only my GG; I love her, you bet.
Sometimes when I splurge and spend a bit much
In more ways than one, she’s there in the clutch.

Daytimes we meet in places quite strange
Ev’nings and weekends, it’s “home on the range”
But when it’s all over, in Heaven we’ll be
My wife, and my GG, and me.

~~ Dee Dee Watson
ODE TO A TV'S DREAM

What starts a dream I'll never know
But I was at a fashion show
And on the stage, what did I see?
A dozen models – all were me!

To the ladies of the town
First, I showed an evening gown.
What a thrill to hear one say:
“Just a bit décolleté.”

The “oohs” and “ahs” as I came on
In filmy, swirling, blue chiffon
And then (I know I looked real cute)
In hat and gloves and mink-trimmed suit.

And then, with all my female guile
Paraded up and down the aisle
In six-inch heels (a bit unstable)
In a thirty thousand dollar sable.

Showing off those sexy scanties –
Lacy bras and silky panties
And bitchy bras, so all could see
What they did for a “40 D.”

In a mini-skirt, high heels and hose
I had it made, as the saying goes
When all the males, in a body, rose
Crying, “Mama, buy me one of those.”

Of course, there had to be one guy
With monkey business in his eye –
“My place, dear, you'll simply love it.”
To which I replied, “Shove it!”

Then my alarm went off, that damned clock
Wakened me with quite a shock.
And I had to quit my modelling job
For I was back in real life, a working slob.

~~ Dee Dee Watson
ODE TO THE CLOSET TRANSVESTITE

As a closet transvestite, one must work like a dog  
Get married, have children, live high off the hog  
Move to the suburbs to get away from the smog  
Be content in life’s wheel as a functioning cog.

As a closet transvestite, one must not expose  
Any interest at all in sheer panty hose  
Must protect his male image as he all too well knows  
Of the slings and the arrows that reward “one of those.”

As a closet transvestite, cross-dressing forsooth  
Is like strawberry shortcake to a very sweet tooth  
Like taking a drink from the fountain of youth  
Equates like a bullfighter’s moment of truth.

As a closet transvestite, one never talks  
About dreams of dressing, taking walks  
In high-heeled shoes where no one mocks  
The femmiphiles in fashion’s frocks.

As a closet transvestite, one waits until night  
Pulls down the curtains, locks ev’ry door tight.  
Then, it’s lipstick and lashes, a dress that’s just right  
And simply exist for the moment in utter delight!

As a closet transvestite, alack and alas  
My only companion is my looking glass.  
How often I think, as I mow the grass  
Being a male is a pain in the ass!

~~ Dee Dee Watson
ODE TO THE TIFFANY CLUB

There was once a young man from Mass.  
Who really wanted to pass  
So he read all kinds of books  
To improve “her” comportment and looks.  
He studied hard to make it work  
But he couldn’t get his “girl” to perk.  

He tried and tried, but failed each time  
And almost even stopped the mime.  
Tired of looking oh so bad  
Naturally made his “girl” feel sad.  
Then he heard of the Tiffany Club  
And knew “she’d” no longer be a flub.  

He came to meet on Tuesday night  
And found the girls out of sight!  
All the feelings he did purge  
And then she started to really emerge.  
Oh, how lovely to be a girl –  
With new-found courage, her head did swirl.  

Now her spirits are very high  
For she’s a woman getting by.  
So to all those girls in doubt –  
Don’t sit at home and mope and pout.  
Come to the Tiffany Club for fun  
And you’ll see that you’re someone.  

~~ Dee Dee Watson
TV LIMERICKS

A TV named Pepper O'Nee
Went off on a helluva spree
In a fit of euphoria
Took on a band in Peoria
And wound up with six kinds of VD!

***

A TV I know named Louise
Has a thing she does with great ease.
In a manner most uncanny
She can wiggle her fanny
One hundred-and-eighty degrees!

***

A TV named Mimi O’Graff
Once ran a mile-and-a-half
In just four minutes flat
(And, in high heels at that!)
Asked why, she said, “For a laff.”

***

A TV whose name I’ll not mention
One Sunday attracted attention
When she did a strip tease
Right in church, if you please!
Which explains why she’s now in detention.

***

This TV, a beautiful lass
Decided to step up in class
So she applied for employment
In a house of enjoyment
Where they threw her out on her ass!

***

Said a TV, “I know it’s illicit
But, I think I’ll try to solicit.”
And tho’ she looked very well
What she had just didn’t sell
And had a two-hundred dollar deficit.

***
Oh, my Gawd!, thought a pretty TV, 
There’s somebody following me.  
Shall I run? Shall I stop?  
Shall I faint? Shall I call a cop?  
And, to top it off, I gotta pee.  

***

A TV who loves baseball named “Gloria”  
One day, in a fit of euphoria  
In a most excellent manner  
Sang “The Star-Spangled Banner”  
Stark naked at a game in Peoria!  

***

To TVs who have an obsession  
To try out the “oldest profession”:  
You’ll find you’ll be giving –  
You just can’t make a living  
When the country’s in a depression.  

***

In the days of knights, Sir Lancelot  
Would oft cross-dress and prance a lot.  
Tho,’ in Merrie Olde England, no one would say  
Whether he was, or whether he wasn’t gay  
(But he certainly visited France a lot!).  

~~ Dee Dee Watson

---

**BIOGRAPHY OF A ROMAN TV**

A closet queen at age XVIII  
Joined Tiffany when XXIII  
She came alive when XXV  
Was very flirty at age XXX  
A latent whore when XXXIV  
Turning tricks when XXXVI  
Started gaining weight when XXXVIII  
And most things done by age XLI  
She went to Heaven at age XLVII.  

~~ Dee Dee Watson
TV LIMERICKS

There was a fellow from Whittier
Who padded his bra to look tittier.
His wife hated his games
And called him bad names
‘Cuz when in drag, he’s the prettier.

***

There was a TV named “Clyde”
Who, through town, in drag, loved to ride.
He showed me the places
To find boys with girlish faces
He was really my first TV Guide.

***

I knew a TV that was Russian
Part of his bloodline was Prussian.
He was caught on three Sundays
In pink lacey undies
And now he’s a red Russian blussian.

***

There was a TV from Raleigh
Who rode “en femme” on a trolleigh.
Some folks, I suppose
Were offended by his pose
But some thought him quite a dolleigh.

***

There once was a TV named “Knight”
Who, “en femme,” was really a sight.
He dressed with great class
(A voluptuous lass)
But the goatee just wasn’t quite right.

***

There was a TV quite paranoid
Who kept on singing this seranoid:
“I know I shouldn’t aughter
Dress like my daughter
‘Cuz my girdle’s squeezing my hemorrhoid!”

***
A closet TV named “Morris”
Went by the name of “Cloris.”
He said, “I suppose
No one knows of my clothes?”
“You’re wrong,” we all answered in chorus.

***

I know a TV named “Joan”
Who went walking in town all alone.
She was placed under arrest
(To this, I'll attest)
For entering a “No Passing” zone.

***

I know a TV called “Betty”
Who thinks cross-dressing is quite heady.
She wears these and those
Under her male clothes.
Like the battery, she’s Ever Ready.

***

There was a young fellow named “Brown”
Who was caught by her wife in her gown.
She said, “I abhor it!”
As she pulled and she tore it
And left him just wearing a frown.

***

I knew a TV named “Barry”
Who certainly was not a fairy.
But his dress was cut low
“Cuz he wanted to show
That his chest was really quite hairy.

***

There once was a man from Berlin
Who thought cross-dressing was really a sin.
He knew very well
He was going to Hell
Wearing panties, a dress, and a grin.

***
There was a TV called “Kitty”
Who, in drag, loved to roam thru the city.
She dressed in great style
And could “pass” by a mile
And got an occasional pinch on the titty.

***

There was a girl named “Marie”
Who was really a closet TV.
On Saturdays and Sundays
She wore dresses and undies
But the rest of the week, she’s a “he.”

***

There was a fellow from Britain
Who wore dresses very tight fittin’.
He loved to wear slips
And redden his lips
‘Cuz with cross-dressing he’s quite smitten.

***

There was a TV in high heels
Who was giving out feminine squeals:
“I wear shoes and hose
Any female clothes
Because of how good it all feels.”

***

There once was an Arabic shah
Who said, while padding his bra:
“I guess I better add in
A little more paddin’
And then, I’ll look just like my Ma.”

***

I’m the bard of Tri-Cities
Who enjoys writing these ditties.
My theme’s always TV
So everyone can see
I enjoy getting dressed in my pretties.

~~ Linda B.
TV LIMERICKS

Just as I thought I was normal
I went to town in my formal.
I shocked the whole town
As I supped in my gown.
The doctors think it’s hormonal.

***

Hey, Diddle, Diddle
I’m chafed in the middle
This girdle is driving me mad.
It’s hard to feel bitchy
When your plumbing is itchy
With no instant relief to be had!

***

Eenie, meenie, minee, mo
Catch a TV on the go.
You’ll be much surprised
Unless I miss my guess
At what you’ll find ’neath the dress!

***

There once was a guy named “Merle”
Who fancied himself a girl.
He brought pretty dresses
And grew long tresses.
Now, our girl is having a whirl.

***

There was a young tenor named “Tim”
Who merrily was humming a hymn.
As he donned his choir robes
He blushed to his ear lobes
For his cassock had maribou trim.

***

There was a young man of renown
Who went to the ball in a gown.
He made quite a scene
As he waltzed like a queen.
Now, he’s really the talk of the town.
***

I had a patient named “Blaine”
Whose habits were really arcane.
He rode with the hounds
In the frightfullest gowns –
Equestrian, yes, but insane!

***

I had a patient named “Clete”
Whose hair was always so neat.
No wig for this guy
Whose curls were piled high
For his hair could reach to his feet.

***

I had a patient named “Clyde”
Who liked to dress like a bride.
When he powdered his face
And pranced in white lace
His excitement was hard to hide!

***

A TV by the name of O’Grady
Made a very effectual lady.
One day, near a shop
A policeman did stop
So convincing she was not afraidy.

***

A femmephile out of L.A.
While buying a slip one fine day
Caught his boss, Mr. Kay
In silk lingerie –
Now he’s got a big raise in his pay!

***

Two boys were both very tall
Dressed up like young girls for a ball.
The clothes felt so good
They remained in the mood
And went out to a show after all.

***
When Joe passed on, in his memorabilia
They found clothes of his femme-self, “Amelia”
His mother, they say
Said, “It’s surely okay –
He was happy in his femme-philia.”

***

An auto mechanic named “White”
Dressed up like a woman at night.
He was great at his trade
And a beautiful maid –
His cars were all “transves” tight!

***

There is a TV in Nebraska
Whose sexual ID is a disasta.
When dressed like a lady
He called himself “Katy.”
Does he pass? I don’t know, but I’ll aska.

~~ Anonymous

MARY HAD A TV FRIEND

Mary had a TV friend
A lovely thing to see
And everywhere that Mary went
The TV just had to be.
She followed her to work one day
’Twas not a total loss.
The owner fell in love with her
And now, she’s Mary’s boss.

~~ Anonymous
TV LIMERICKS

A cross-dressing monk from Siberia
Was said to be morally inferia
But the nuns thought it fun
And elected him Mother Superia!

***

In San Francisco, just as I feared
I met a TV whose image was weird.
I said, “I'm no prude
But don’t think me rude
To suggest you shave off your beard!”

***

A most beautiful TV from Florida
Put grapefruits in the cups of her bra.
When apprised of their size
She replied with surprise:
“They’re better than peanuts from Georgia.”

***

A playful young TV from Drew
Has astonished more than a few
Who have looked up to see
A total of three…
Where most girls only have two!

***

Said a GG, “TVs must be sick –
I just don’t know what makes them tick.”
Then she met a cross-dresser
Who began to caress ‘er…
And she gladly accepted his “schtick”!

***

A big macho brute down in MD
Exclaimed, “All TVs live in FD!”
Then a TV quite straight
Born in WI state
Said, “Au contraire, sir, I am from DD!”

***
One TV, though schooled in humanities
Steadfastly refused to wear panties.
Said she, with a shout:
“I just let it all hang out
And to hell with society’s vanities!”

~~ Jana Thompson

THE HONEY BEE AND THE BUTTERFLY
(with apologies to Becky Huntley of Blackhawk College)

Once upon a time
A transvestite honey bee
Fell in love with a butterfly
He met in a tulip tree.

Said he, “I love you madly
And would love to share your life.
Although I am a TV
Will you be my wife?”

She shook her head in horror:
“Oh, no, it cannot be
For, I am a Monarch’s daughter
And you’re just a son of a bee!”

~~ Jana Thompson

NARCISSISTIC TRANSVESTITE

I think that I shall never see
A He as lovely as a She
Unless, of course, the She is Me!

~~ Leigh de Santa Fe

LONELY TRANSVESTITE

There once was a lonely transvestite
Who often did not feel dressed right –
He could not hide his stubble
His make-up was trouble
And he was always fixing his breast height!

~~ Sharon M.
STRUTTIN' YOUR STUFF

Skirts tight on your fanny
With slits up to your thigh
Show more Venus mound
Than most people will buy.

~~ Audry

NIP 'N' TUCK

When a TAM slips her girdle
Up over her bottom
She is hoping the tissue revealed
Won't be awesome.

~~ Linda

FALSIE ILLUSION

You wouldn't know
You couldn't tell
That those two girls
Aren't what they sell.

You see her now
With her high heels
But don't be fooled
By what you feel –
They aren't real!

~~ Tefanie
A LETTER TO SALMAN

You hide, Salman:
Because you are under attack
from a rasping pulse of people.
Because your thoughts, your feelings
have been deemed too different and
too offensive to be allowed to exist.
Because you know if you went in public,
you might certainly be destroyed,
like one of your pages wadded up
and tossed on a curbside bonfire.
They kill you, they kill your ideas,
Salman, your “satanic verses.”

We, too, hide:
We know
the fear of discovery,
the metallic taste of fear,
of confrontation with those
who will not find a microscopic
fold in their brains where
our reality can live in peace.
We hide because in the open we
may be torched by the howling crowds,
burn magnesium-bright, and disappear,
but we are not here to disappear -
we are here to live.

So, Salman, your words ring true:
Your words when you say:
“Freedom is always taken;
it is never given.”
Yes, there is a price -
a price some of us are ready to pay.
It is our time to say that
we are entitled to freedom,
and we face the howling crowd
with a truth simple as a new leaf:
we exist, and this is how we are.

The consequences? Let them come.
We cannot plot and plan
beyond this point.
As you say, Salman,
“Our lives teach us who we are.”

And we are ready to learn.

~~ Chris Howey
HANGING ON BY MY FINGERNAILS

When you have a dream, don't let it slip
Keep it safely in your grip.

That's what I do with my femme person
Hanging on by my fingernails, which I've been nursin'

For so many years to a length quite lovely.
Oval-shaped and smooth and far-and-abovey

Too long for any macho male to own.
These digits could cause my “cover” to be blown.

So, I curl my hands into tight little balls
Hiding my talons from one and alls

But sometimes I notice an errant eye stray
When I'm not being careful and a nail gets away

And I see someone wonder why those nails are on a he.
I simply answer, in my head, “They're not, they're on me.”

~~ Chris Howey
MARIETTE

Though “Cuomo Orders Drag $ Probe”
Headline may please the homophobe
And other nuts around the globe
Mariette is hit like Biblical Job.

“Tax $$ Paying for Men in Drag” –
The $$ spread among us would not buy one rag.
The Council on Arts had a more focused tag
Pictures artfully closing a huge cultural lag.

A humble ode to Mariette -
Cruelly put in needless threat
By interviews which didn’t get
The truth out why her grant was let.

We each share this psychic debt
And even gender “straights” may bet
Malicious damage may have set
Our future course less merry yet.

Is State money spent “to push gay way of life?”
“Explaining” vs. “pushing” is the key to much strife.
Her camera’s not aimed to make cross-dressing rife
But to help understanding, for example, my wife!

This anti-“us” battle has long been fought
With tired arguments of what leads to what.
The Post argues not helping transvestites be taught
The Council on Arts would fund even worse rot!

The Mariette masquerade right from the start
Wasn’t morals, or money, but a matter of heart
Since few would dare argue her work is not art
The Post’s goal was to tear her subject apart.

~~ K. Poole (1988)
“CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN – OR WOMAN” (OR SO SOCIETY SAYS)⁹

If socks and jockey shorts symbolize the masculine,
Then stockings and panties signify the feminine -
(Or so society says).

If suit and boots make the man,
Then frock and slippers define the woman -
(Or so society says).

If shirt and tie portray the Mister,
Then blouse and bow outline the Missus -
(Or so society says).

If trousers and suspenders indicate the brother,
Then skirt and sweater describe the sister -
(Or so society says).

If top hat and cane mark the Lord,
Then bonnet and parasol point out the Lady -
(Or so society says).

If cuff-links and stick-pin set off the sir,
Then bracelet and brooch enhance the madam -
(Or so society says).

If cotton and corduroy clothe the guy,
Then satin and silk drape the gal -
(Or so society says).

If tweed and tobacco state the Master,
Then lace and lavender accent the Mistress -
(Or so society says).

If flannel pyjamas befit the husband,
Then sheer negligee graces the wife -
(Or so society says).

If blue beard and swarthy leather add up to Hermes,
Then long tresses and smooth skin equal Aphrodite –
(Or so society says).

But, as hairy pecs and “balls” reveal the “true” male,
So do breasts and “beaver” disclose the “real” female -
(Or so society says).
Yet, we now know that clothes don’t always “make” the person,
Nor do body parts, in every case, define the unique individual:
Be they male or female or intersex, cis or trans or genderqueer,
gay or straight or bisexual, pan- or asexual, mono- or polysexual -
(Because *gender-binary* society is passé and we are the new gender majority!).

~~ Rupert Raj (1984; revised 2014)

**CROSS-DRESSING DELIGHTS**

Understanding wife
Anything is possible -
Bathing cap bliss – rubber fetish
Your own personal slave
From fantasy to reality
Living doll
He knows his place -
Maid/slave
Bound and gagged
A loving agreement
Virility and lace
TV tips
It’s just lovely being a girl!
Frustrated dresser -
Boy today, Girl tomorrow
Becoming “Brenda”
Playing Nurse
Sex-swap
TV turn-on
Is this all there is?
Change of scene
Out of the closet slowly
TV finds true happiness
A TV special
TV watching TV
Member of the wedding
TV does have fun
What is the harm?
Total subjugation
Bad for the goose
Dominant and swapping experiences
A beautiful slave
Working out the kinks
Nice and naughty
A dominated TV.

~~ Madeleine Renault
captive

i have a fantasy
  i’m a woman

giving everything i have
  to someone who
    demands it

all suffering and sensual
  and ready to be used

like tammy wynette
  and soap operas

bruised
  bloody
    blonde

my heart pounding
  buddy rich licks

wedding satin
  cocoon

hogtied
  in the dark

someone
  come and take me

i can’t do
  without

~~ tom house
gloria's slave

he was plump
  somewhat
   and obviously
    sweet

in his french-maid
  and his heels
    (he's all knees
     and please

and kissing her
  feet his
    cupid lips

quivering)
  she likes her men
    in pink and puddles

and she'll tease
  him and teach him
    to want and to
     fear her

to live her
  will only
    (curtsy and smile)
      you fool silly thing

as she straps him
  in harness
    turns her back

stroking him with
  her kid leather palm
    almost absent-mindedly

~~ tom house
her fantasy client

and she'll teach him
    the fine role

of the feel
    of the fabric

the fine art
    the walk
        the confinement

how to smile
    in the face of
        his knees

to think only of her
    her needs
        and her whims

to cook and to clean
    to serve as her toilet
        oh she's wet
            just considering

he's so cute in his new curls
    (her own
        private
            Toy)

~~ tom house
the coming out coronation

eunuchs offer what they have
  housewives tack rags to saplings
  genitals to church doors

men with money
take

within the glossy
  satin
  chitin

insects crawl
  (creation
  myth
    & parody
    comingle
    in sexual harmony)

white is no longer pure
  honesty hinders
    (at the very least
    passion

we take our guilt too seriously
  (fantasies will have to compensate)
    I’m hard in hand
    feeling frisky
    myself

watch my lips honey
- down to vaudeville already -

drink up
drink up

the serving boys
  in high heels & mascara

are filling the goblets
  with a thick creamy
goo

~~ tom house
cock and ball torture

disciplined
  throbbing
    polished need

virtue of control
  eagerly surrendering
    decision & self

teasing thrust
  frustrated
    guts in knots
      hobbled
        just short

his aching nuts swell
  cock taut
    straining
      jerking
        to her kid leather
          touching

she’s wet and squeezing
  her thighs her
    own rapid fingers

watching him trying
  so hard to reach anything
    release all he lives for
      and she’s so out of reach

~~ tom house
BITTERSWEET PUNISHMENT

Nancy hit me, so I hit back
I guess I hurt her very bad.
Mom got angry and punished me
So now, I’m very sad.

I sit here lonely, in my room
Contemplating this strange fate.
My dress, it rustles strangely loud
And my name now is “Kate.”

My mom, you see, has dressed me
In Nancy’s prettiest frock
And told me, now a girl I’d be.
God help me if I balk…

Or, in a dress forever I’d stay
Till a gentle-man I’d be.
She’d be sure that my friends knew
Enough to call me “she.”

Nancy giggles and laughs a lot
Whenever I walk about.
“Careful, Kate,” she cries aloud.
“Girlishness you shouldn’t flout.”

Then, she howls at my expense
As my blush matches my blouse.
I dare not speak for fear I’ll blow
And use Nancy to clean the house.

Days it’s been since Darryl I was
And strangely, I must confess
Nancy loves me, and so does mom
And me, I love my dress.

Katie now I am; it’s strange I know
To be a boy, and yet a girl
With perfumed nape and lacy, silk drawers
And my hair all in little curls.

I could never return to boyhood now
And Nancy and I are growing close.
We love each other and never fight
Exceptin’ over who’ll wear what clothes.
And mom tells me I’m her delight
As her daughter, “Katie, dear.”
She’s now refused boys’ pants to me
And I’m to be her girl, that’s clear.

So, as I said earlier on
I sit here and contemplate…
Oh, I forgot to tell you too
Tonight’s my first date!

~~ Suzie J.

HOLIDAY WIFE’S LAMENT

I hear the swish of silken skirts
The click of your high heels.
I see your hair is long again
And your make-up is so real.
You’re looking grand, my darling
And it makes me feel like a heel
But really, must you be a woman
When, for a man I’d gladly kneel?

I catch a nose of perfume –
Makes my head just fairly spin
See a pretty nylon ankle
And a lipstick-outlined grin.
Dark eyes sparkle at me
And I know that state you’re in
But, do you have to be a woman?
It just fills me with chagrin.

I don’t mind your pretty clothes and face
Three times a week, or more
But your female poise and dainty grace
Has become a daily bore.
It’s such a strain to keep ahead
When I know you look so good
But, when I need some real male love
Please be a man – I only wish you could.

~~ Jo-Anne Wilson
ON THE COVER OF “TAPESTRY”

(The following masterpiece – with apologies to Dr. Hook – was beautifully performed by the Sludge Twins, Zelda and Brumhilde, at the Texas T-Party, Feb. 22, 1991)

Well, we’re TV stars; we do all the bars
And we’re loved everywhere we go
Yeah, we do our best to be overdressed
And we give all the folks a show.

We’ve got all the clothes that money can buy
But the thrill we’ve yet to see
Is the thrill that’ll get ya’ when you get your picture
On the cover of “Tapestry.”

Wanna see my picture on the cover
Gonna send five copies to my mother
Wanna see my glamorous face
On the cover of “Tapestry.”

We’ve got press-on nails that’ll never fail
And our hair’s from Paula Young
Took the training wheels off our five-inch heels
When we stopped falling on our buns.

Well, we shaved our legs, got our noses fixed
Got the biggest feet you’ll ever see
And a face by Jim Bridges, but we can’t get our pictures
On the cover of “Tapestry.”

Wanna see my picture on the cover
Gonna save three copies for my brother
Wanna see my smiling face
On the cover of “Tapestry.”

Did a solo shot on Donahue
In a gen-u-ine Mackie gown
Got a tracheal shave, electrolysis
And a ticket to Provincetown.

Well, my therapist says that it’s ok
To be the girl I wanna be
And my life’s getting richer, but I can’t get my picture
On the cover of “Tapestry.”
Wanna see my picture on the cover
‘Cos I’m a cheesecake lover
Gotta see my gorgeous face
On the cover of “Tapestry”
On the cover of “Tapestry”

Gotta see my picture on the cover
Gonna send five copies to my mother
Wanna see my gorgeous face
On the cover of “Tapestry.”

~~ Donna E. Mobley (1991)

LITTLE HAIRS
(sung to the tune of “Golden Slippers”)

You can shave them off
But they’re still there
Lurking deep down in their lairs
Tomorrow they’ll poke up everywhere
How I hate thee, little hairs!

Jabbing heads up through my skin
Making a forest of my chin
It’s a battle you can’t win
How I hate thee, little hairs!

Source of blemishes and blights
Burrowing in-grown, awful sight
Cause of more cuts than a fight
How I hate thee, little hairs!

Scrappy, scratchy, bristly plague
Black and ugly; sparks my rage
Makes me older than my age
How I hate thee, little hairs!

I sometimes think there’s nothing worse
Than this relentless, itchy curse
So, in frustration, I end this verse
How I hate thee, little hairs!

~~ Janice Van Cleve
THE MODERN PARACULTURALIST

(sung to the tune of “The Major General’s Song” from “The Pirates of Penzance” by Gilbert & Sullivan)

I am the very model of a modern Paraculturalist
I’ve studied gender theories, all of which I can infer the gist
I know the chapter leaders and I quote the fights historical
From Tri-Ess versus GGA to all the feuds rhetorical.

I’m very well-acquainted too with matters of androgyny
I plan to leave a brood of genderally-unclear progeny
About the Outreach programs, I am teeming with lots of news
With many cheerful facts concerning Ariadne’s points of views.

Then I can cite Transvestia, whose text I’ll surely render well
And fill you in on all the clothing fashions uni-genderal
In short, of these profundities, of which I’ve compiled a list
I am the very model of a modern Paraculturalist.

Our history I know from Kane and Prince as the authorities
I understand the paradox implied in male sororities
I’ll quote in scholars’ jargon at a dysphoria symposium
And I won’t say I’m a TV, though I’m sure the readers know I am.

Then I can go on television shows with objectivity
And floor them with the news of my anomalous proclivity
And I can set up workshops whose design won’t tend to fixity
Then cite them in my journals with astonishing prolixity.

And I can talk to pros throughout the medical community
And go out on the street cross-dressed with absolute impunity
In short, in all these matters, none of which I’m sure I’ve missed
I am the very model of a modern Paraculturalist.

In fact, when I know what is meant by “plethora” and “femmiphile”
When given hormones, I can guess what shape you’ll have within a mile
When I don’t have to go to Frederick’s catalogues to fill a bra
And when I know precisely what is meant by “paraphilia.”

When differences between one’s sex and gender are not lost on me
When I can tell, at sight, transsexual surgery from colostomy
In short, when I have grown enough to say that I have been around
You’ll never find a better Paraculturalist in Provincetown.
For my TV/TS knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century
But still, in matters genderal and sexual, I must insist
I am the very model of a modern Paraculturalist.

~~ Elaine Wiley

THE FETISHISTIC TV

(based on, and set to, the music of
“My Boy, You May Take It From Me”
from “Ruddigore” by Gilbert & Sullivan)

My friends, you may take it from me
That, of all deviations accursed
Which are TVs’ temptations
And dark inclinations
The fetishist kind is the worst!

Now, I'm proper, I'm sure you'll agree
I'm a femmiphile second to none
But, though highly respected
I'm deeply infected -
When wearing short skirts, I'm undone!

But, if you wish paracultural advance
And your feminine side to enhance
Then, such joys must be bottled
And stifled and throttled
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

I've a thoroughly rational mind
But these mini-skirts drive me insane!
For, I'll praise and berate them
And love them and hate them
Yet, wear them again and again!
I'm consumed by desire that's blind!
I'm obsessed by deplorable lust!
I'm beset by compulsion!
Despite my revulsion
You see why I wear these? - I must

In defense of our case, I excel
I decry all the limits on taste
And I'll quote Hall and Cushing
Whose styles I'll be pushing
As viable menswear that's chaste.

I'm politically liberal, as well
I'm for every minority right
But this bold affirmation
Hides endless frustration
With sex, I'm completely uptight!

Still, if you wish paracultural advance
And your feminine side to enhance
Then, all sex must be bottled
And stifled and throttled
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

~~ Elaine Wiley
MISS F.P. (FEMMEPHILE)
(Or, The Fetishist Reformed)

(based on, and set to the music of, Bunthorne’s Recitative, “Am I Alone and Unobserved?”, and Song, “If You’re Anxious for to Shine,” by Gilbert & Sullivan)

Introduction

(performer is dressed as a dominatrix-type TV with garish make-up, whips, chains, tightly-laced corset, very high heels)

Am I alone
And unobserved? I am!
Then let me own:
I’m a fetishistic sham!
This glossy smear
Is but a mere veneer!
These gadgets vile
Do but defile true style!
This costume laced
Is but good taste misplaced!

Let me confess:
A languid love for lascivious
Lace lingerie does not blight me!
Five-inch heels in collections
Of three-hundred pairs do not excite me!
I do not long to take up residence
At the Marquis de Sade Society.
I do not delight in blowing the minds
Of “straights” with my egregious impropriety.

I am not intrigued by suggestive
And seductive greetings
At open meetings.
In short, my entire manner has
Hitherto been based on affectation
Formerly nourished by pubescent storms
But now: chaste, subdued, and worthy
Of unqualified admiration!

(costume change: performer re-appears as a properly dressed Tri-Ess lady, standing beside a table on which are props: dolls, a Tri-Ess “bunny card” and a copy of Transvestia, which are displayed at the appropriate times)
Song

If you're anxious for to shine
In the femmiphilic line
As a girl, whose gender's pure
You must strive to be uncomplicated
Always sure that you'll be rated
Modest and demure.

Though your taste is artificial
That it's feminine is official
So, throughout your home, we'll find
Satin dolls that are such honeys
And delightful little bunnies --
Surely not of the Playboy kind!

And everyone will say
As you walk your genteel way:
"If she's content with such rarefied delights,
Which would certainly not suit me,
Why, what a very proper, refined young girl
This pure young girl must be!"

All your talk must have allusions
To the burgeoning profusions
Of new words which fit our case
For there's "femmiphile," "femmepersons"
And "femmespeak" (and still worse ones)
Yet each femmeword has its place.

For neologistic passion
Must become the latest fashion
So, we'll not be thought to be
Even close to gays or TVs --
They all give us the "heebie jeebies" --
That's why we say, "F.P."!

And everyone will say
As you wend your lofty way:
"If this young girl expresses herself
In terms too deep for me,
Why, what a very sensitive, perceptive girl
This deep young girl must be!"

continued…
Now, the sensual and erotic
Must impress you as psychotic
And unfit to cloud the scene
But you’ll show, when you are able
This *Transvestia* on the table -
It’s a family magazine!

Though a tale of boys in corsets
And stern ladies who use force gets
You excited and enthralled
All your thrills are intellectual
And most certainly not sexual
So, no one need be appalled.

And everyone will say
As you mince your pristine way:
“From the elegant comportment
That this girl displays
The essence of uncomplicated,
Uninflated, understated
Femininity!”

~~ Elaine Wiley
TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CROSSDRESSERS

Thy femininity is a sacred part of thee; thou shalt not bow down before the strange god, “Macho,” or the false god, “Guilt.”

Thou shalt not speak ill of a crossdressing sister or her organization.

Remember, thou, the confidences of thy sister and keep them holy.

Honor thy spouse – she is thy loving support.

Thou shalt not kill thy masculinity or thy femininity; both are gifts of the Lord to thy soul.

Thou shalt not commit a double standard.

Thou shalt not steal thy soul’s appreciation of beauty in art, music, literature and nature, for these are the petals of femininity.

Thou shalt bear thyself as a lady at all times.

Thou shalt covet every chance to nurture and help those in need.

Thou shalt covet every chance to learn and to teach, for with understanding abide toleration and love.

~~ Jane Ellen Fairfax
**NORMAL**

Normal isn’t fat
Normal isn’t thin
Normal isn’t medium and
Normal isn’t a double chin.

Whatever you look like
Whatever you do
Everything is normal
Because that’s part of you.

No one is perfect
But in some special way
I’m sure you think you’re normal
In one or two, or maybe
Every single way.

No matter what you look like
No matter what you do
Well, I just hope
You are normal to you.

Sometimes you may not
Be like most other people
But normal is you
And you are normal.

~~ Angela Price
I AM WHAT I AM
(the theme song of “La Cage aux Folles”)

I am what I am
I am my own special creation
So come, take a look
Give me the hook
Or the ovation
It’s my world that I want to take a little pride in
Life’s not worth a damn
Till you can say, “Hey world, I am what I am.”

I am what I am
I don’t want praise, I don’t want pity
I bang my own drum
Some think it’s noise, I think it’s pretty
And so what if I love each feather and spangle
Why not try to see things from a different angle?
Your life is a sham
Till you can shout out loud, “I am what I am.”

I am what I am
And what I am needs no excuses
I deal my own deck
Sometimes the ace, sometimes the deuces
There’s one life and there’s no return and no deposit
One life, so it’s time to open up your closet
Life’s not worth a damn
Till you can say, “Hey world, I am what I am.”

~~ Jerry Herman
**END NOTES**

1. “POEM TO A FRIEND” – “Lady Cross-Dressing The Blues” alludes, of course, to famed Black, blues singer Billie Holiday’s autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*, and the movie of the same name. The blues is a common emotional dynamic in the lives of many TSs, TGs and TVs. See K.J.S.’s “Transsexual Blues,” and Linda O’Connell’s “Transsexual Blues No. 2,” “Outcast Blues” and “My Blues” [*BOOK ONE: PART ONE: M-F TSISM*], and Johnny A.’s “The Best Of Both World Blues” [*BOOK TWO: PART TWO: F-M TGISM*].

2. “SMART SANTA” – “CGS” stands for Chicago Gender Society, of which Tess was a member.

3. “SHE’S ONLY MY GG” – “TV” stands for male transvestite (crossdresser). “GG” was a para-cultural code within the crossdressing community during the 1970s and ‘80s that stood for “genetic girl” (that is, a born female), as opposed to a transsexual or transgender girl or woman. I think the poet is using “GG” here to indicate her female-born girlfriend; alternatively, it might stand for her own femme persona (“Dee Dee”). “Provincetown” here refers to the “Be All You Can Be” annual weekends for male-to-female crossdressers held at Provincetown, Massachusetts.

4. "ODE TO THE CLOSET TRANSEVESTITE" – A “closet transvestite” is a male (or, less often, a female) who dresses in feminine (or masculine, as the case may be) clothes in secret. Some M-F TVs hide their crossdressing from their wives and/or children for fear of stigmatization (and some are also ashamed – a form of internalized femmephobia), and some even lead a double life. “Femmiphiles” (aka “femmephiles”) refers to born males (usually transgenderists and transvestites, and also drag queens and female impersonators) who like all things (including clothing) feminine.

5. “ODE TO THE TIFFANY CLUB” – “The Tiffany Club” was a private social club for M-F TVs in Wayland, Massachusetts, founded in 1978 by Merissa Sherrill Lynn (originally a M-F TG, who later evolved into a post-op, M-F TS).

6. "TV LIMERICKS" – The limerick is, historically, a particular brand of sexual humour (bawdy verse) originated by men in the Middle Ages, and carried on to the present day. It typically objectifies and commodifies women, and therefore, some male crossdressers embrace a similar patriarchal and misogynist mentality. This might also include a self-deprecating dynamic, wherein they see themselves as a travesty (caricature) of womanhood (“pseudo females”). Many other crossdressers, of course, contest this form of male sexual predatory attitudes and behaviour, and a number are even staunch feminists, fighting for the respect of women as equal (and unique) human beings. See also “TV Limericks” by Linda B., Anonymous and Jana Thompson, respectively.

7. "NIP ‘N’ TUCK” – “Nip” and “tuck” refers to the method of hiding the penis to facilitate passing in public as a female. “TAM” stands for Travestis à Montréal, a peer-support group for male-to-female crossdressers founded in Québec in the 1970s. Linda’s doggerel appeared in *Tams & Tissues* (originally *The Garter Press*).

8. "MARIETTE” – This is a poetic tribute to Mariette Pathy Allen, a renowned, American, photographer, who created a first-of-its-kind coffee table book, *Transformations:*
Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them, (1990), containing pictures of male-to-female transsexuals, transgenderists and transvestites, and their loved ones, illustrating the meaningful connections to family, friends and community. Mariette launched a lawsuit against The New York Post in 1988 for attacking her reputation for accepting a $7,200 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts to fund a panel discussion and photo exhibit on crossdressers. She later published a sequel, The Gender Frontier, in 2003, which features photos of male-to-female and female-to-male transgenders, and also trans youth.

9. “‘CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN – OR WOMAN’ (OR SO SOCIETY SAYS)” – “Genderqueer” (aka gender fluid) describes individuals who have an ambiguous or fluid gender identity and sexual identity, transgressing both the gender and the sexual binary norms of society. “Pansexual” means those people who are attracted to females, males, intersex (see End Note #1: BOOK TWO: PART ONE: M-F TGism for a definition), trans, genderqueer and/or two-spirit people, as unique individuals, favouring the person’s personality as well as , or in spite of, their physical sex or psychological gender. A number of people in society are temporarily or permanently “asexual” – not sexually attracted to anyone. “Monosexual” signifies individuals who are exclusively attracted to one sex or another, whereas, “polysexual” extends beyond even “bisexual” (attracted to females and males) to include those beyond the gender-binary (intersex, genderqueer and two-spirit people – and also those select trans people, who openly identify as transsexual or transgender, or gender-transgressive). Originally penned in 1984, when I (like many other trans folks back then) was quite binary, I revised it, 30 years later, by adding “(Or So Society Says)” to the title, and as a chorus throughout the text, and also adding a final paragraph to illustrate the sociological evolution of cultural genderal (masculine/feminine), sexual (male/female) and sexual orientation (gay/straight) stereotypes, gradually evolving from either/or binary norms to embrace more naturally-diverse (both/and) forms of human psychology and sexuality. See, for example, Joan Roughgarden’s Evolution’s Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People (2009), tracing the historical prevalence of homosexuality, transsexualism and intersexuality in both animal and humans.

10. “CROSS-DRESSING DELIGHTS” – A number of transvestites (and also some trans and cisgender people) are into “kink” (transgressive types of sex other than “vanilla” [straightforward]), including bondage and domination, submission and masochism (BDSM), as well as various forms of fetishism (lingerie, rubber, leather etc.). Psychiatry has pathologized these kinds of consensual, creative sex-play, which is simply a part of the natural human sexual repertoire. Only if coercion or non-consensual violence, or under-age participants are involved, is it a problem (unhealthy). See also tom house’s several pieces on fetishistic crossdressing and S&M (slave/master) in BOOK THREE: M-F TVism.

11. “ON THE COVER OF ‘TAPESTRY’” – “Tapestry” here stands for The TV/TS Tapestry Journal, a quarterly magazine for transvestites, transgenderists and transsexuals first published in 1978 by Merissa Sherrill Lynn, and later (circa 1986) re-named, The Transgender Tapestry, and subsequently published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. (This compiler [Rupert Raj] was the first F-M trans person to write for The TV/TS Tapestry in the 1980s, somewhat of a milestone, considering the virtually exclusive M-F content and contributors, and was also most likely the first trans man to serve on the IFGE Board: 1985-86). The title of the piece, of course, alludes to the 1972 song, “On the Cover of ‘Rolling Stone,’ by the American rock group, Dr. Hook & the Medicine Show.
The “Texas T-Party” is the private community event for M-F crossdressers and trans women held periodically in Texas during the 1990s. A “tracheal shave” is a surgical operation that some crossdressers and trans women undergo to reduce their larynx (“Adam’s apple”) to facilitate passing in public as a woman.

12. “THE MODERN PARACULTURALIST” – “Paraculturalist” is the adjectival form of “paraculture,” a term reportedly coined in the 1970s by Ariadne Kane (a M-F, bigender androgyne [TG] and psychotherapist from Brookline, MA, who prefers male pronouns), who founded the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute in 1975 (and later, the Outreach Institute of Gender Studies), and also pioneered the annual community event for M-F crossdressers and transgenderists, “Fantasia Fair,” which took place in Provincetown, MA. “Paraculture” is meant to be a gender-affirming term – legitimizing counter-culture and the particular lived experience and community life of gender and sexual minorities, as opposed to mainstream [cisgender and heterocentric] society’s “family values.” “Paraculture” was chosen as an intentional descriptor, rather than the typically stigmatizing word, “subculture” – often implying a subversive or dangerous social element. “GGA” stands for the Gateway Gender Alliance, a peer-support group for transsexuals, transgenderists and transvestites founded by Georgia Saunders (a M-F TG or TS) in Sunnyvale, CA circa 1983, and published a magazine, The Phoenix Monthly-International. “Tri-Ess” stands for the 1980 Society for the Second Self, a sorority for heterosexual crossdressers founded by Virginia (Charles) Prince (an American, heterosexual, M-F TG from California). The group was originally called the Foundation for Personality Expression (FPE) (the earliest known transvestite peer-support group), and was first formed in Los Angeles in 1963. “Transvestia” is the crossdressing magazine Prince established in 1960. “Paraphilia” is a psychiatric classification for several “sexual pathologies” listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fifth Edition) (DSM-5), (May 2013), including transvestic fetishism. Notwithstanding, most crossdressers and also many non-crossdressers (including some psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists), do not consider this form of sexual expression to be abnormal or pathological, given that it is typically consensual.

13. “NORMAL” – This poetic tribute was penned by a 12-year-old girl (at the time she wrote the poem in the 1980s) from New Zealand, who is the daughter of a M-F TV (or TG). Angela’s affirmation, “Normal,” appeared in Transcare, published by the Minorities Trust in Wellington, New Zealand.

14. “I AM WHAT I AM” – This was a song composed in 1983 by Jerry Herman (an openly gay man), and was originally introduced in the Broadway musical, “La Cage aux Folles” (1983 - 1987). The song was later released as a single by disco diva Gloria Gaynor in 1983, and served as a rallying cry for the gay pride movement. It is similarly embraced by the transgender and crossdressing communities as a musical self-affirmation and celebration of one’s (gender) identity – and right to be one’s authentic self.
THE POETS
Applying an anthropological perspective, I’m retaining the original self-descriptors (noted in the left column) for our contemporary self-identifiers (noted in the right column) to expressly capture the lived reality of that particular time period within its historical-cultural-linguistic context. Of course, personal labels for both gender binary and gender non-binary people have changed - and will continue to change over time, as how we identify and present ourselves are continuously shaped by our dynamic interactions with both the gender and sexual subcultures (“the Other” minority) and mainstream (cisgender, heterocentric) society (“the Dominant” majority). For example, the dubious anachronistic label, “he-she,” has now been transgressively supplanted by “boi” by many F-M TGs, whereas the controversial (trans misogynistic) historical label, “she-male,” is still used by some business-savvy M-F TG sex workers to enhance trade (an economically-driven capitulation to male “tranny-chasing” johns). And now many non-cisgender folks are calling themselves “gender fluid” or “gender non-binary.” And those trans people who are “in stealth” (not out) often refer to themselves as simply “women” or “men.” Regrettably there were no submissions from self-identified female-to-male crossdressers, or intersex or two-spirit people.

For the sake of brevity, I’m using abbreviations for historical self-descriptors (left-hand side), while also providing corresponding contemporary gender-role self-identifiers (right-hand side) for the purpose of trans-generational and trans-cultural edification:

male-to-female transsexual (M-F TS) = trans woman or T-girl
female-to-male transsexual (F-M TS) = trans man or T-boy
male-to-female transgenderist (M-F TG) (or androgyn or “she-male”) = transgender or genderqueer person (or gender non-binary or “she-male”)
female-to-male transgenderist (F-M TG) (or androgyn or “he-she”) = transgender or genderqueer person (or gender non-binary or “boi”)
male-to-female transvestite (M-F TV) = crossdresser or transgender person (listed in alphabetical order by first name)


**Alessandra Maria Atalanta (formerly Anna):** An American, androgynous, lesbian, post-op M-F TS. In 1984, she was in the process of writing *Late Blooming Butterfly: A Biographical Study of Transsexualism*, excerpts of which appeared in *The Phoenix Monthly-International*, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. Her poems, “The Androgyny Of Katherine And Being” and “Lioness Of The Midnight Sun,” also appeared in *The Phoenix*. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

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*Angela: A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her piece, “Aspects Of Understanding,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

*Angela (of Stockport): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “Butterfly,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

*Angela Jane: A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her pieces, “Turmoil” and “She,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

Angela Lynn Douglas (1943 - 2007): An American, post-op M-F TS (who later reverted to his male birth sex), hippie, rock musician, “notorious transsexual liberationist” and highly-controversial figure. Born “Douglas Carl Czinki” in 1943, in Detroit, MI, to Hungarian immigrants, he was partly educated in Tokyo. In the late 1960s, he played guitar with several rock musicians in Los Angeles, using the name “Dou Delain.” As a man, he served in the US Air Force and had also been an FBI informant since 1972. Angela began living as a woman in 1969, and underwent sex-reassignment surgery in 1977, performed by Dr. John Ronald Brown in California (which left her mutilated, so she helped to get him arrested, resulting in the revocation of his California state medical licence and subsequent imprisonment). In 1970, she founded the Transsexual Action Organization (TAO) - reportedly the first-ever transsexual rights group, which had over 1,000 members in five countries - in Berkeley, CA; it dissolved in 1978. She edited the TAO newsletter and as well as a commercial TS rights magazine. In 1978, before-and-after nude photos of Angela were published in the pornographic magazine, Sex Change: The Incredible Life Story of Angela Douglas, Vol. 1, No. 1, Newcastle Publishers (now out of print). Angela discounts as false her once-popular image as a “fire-breathing militant,” and openly admits to having been a “hooker” in Miami Beach, Florida in 1972, and to spending much of her time at discos in San Francisco. She was frequently attacked and was beaten unconscious six times. Ever-contentious, Angela was reportedly homophobic, misogynist and anti-feminist, as evidenced by a letter she wrote to Sister (August/September, 1977, page 7), and cited in Janice Raymond’s The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male (1979, page xvii), and Catherine Millet’s Horsexe: Essay on Transsexuality (1990). In 1982, Douglas reverted to his birth sex and lived as a man until his death. In 1998, he returned to performing as a man, as “Last Drop Douglas,” and issued a solo CD, “Cosmo Alley,” in 2003. At age 64, he died in Jackson County, FL on August 24, 2007. [Excerpted from: “A Gender Variance ‘Who’s Who’”: http://zagria.blogspot.com/2007/06/whatever-happened-to-angela-douglas.html]. Angela’s song, “Strange Girl (Standing On The Corners Of Our Dreams”), appeared in the first issue of Sex Change. She also penned the poem, “Douglas Country Gambler.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

Angela Price: A New Zealand, 12-year-old girl (at the time she wrote her poem) who was the daughter of a M-F TV (or TG). Her affirmation, “Normal,” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISIM] appeared in Transcare, published by the Minorities Trust in Wellington, New Zealand.

Audry: A Canadian M-F TS (or TG or TV), and past member of Travestis à Montréal (TAM) in Québec. Her doggerel, “Struttin’ Your Stuff,” appeared in *Tams & Tissues*. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVism].

Autumn: An American M-F TS. Her 1984 poem, “Trilogy Of Transition,” appeared in *The Phoenix Monthly-International*, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. Of her poetry, she wrote: “These songs represent a 12-month period where I went from the brink of suicide to the foot of the Mountain of Freedom. For the first time in my life, I feel so incredibly alive! But, there’s a voice within me which says I won’t reach the top of the mountain in my lifetime. But, that’s okay, for, just being at the base is fantastic, especially after the years of fear, inhibition and self-bondage. In the immortal words of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank, God, free at last!’ Yes, I’m definitely looking forward to taking a few more steps toward the Summit of Freedom, and also doing what must be done – what we must all do, one for another, to further each other’s freedom.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].

Barbara B.: An American M-F TG (or TV or TS), and past leader of the Pittsburgh chapter of the former International Alliance for Male Feminism (IAMF) in Mt. Laurel, NJ in 1977. Her poems, “Ascension,” “Street Lamp” and “Reunion,” appeared in *The Journal of Male Feminism*. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TVism].

Barbara Diane: An American M-F TG (or TV), and past member of the Chicago Gender Society. Her piece, “My Other Side,” appeared in *The Primrose*. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVism].


Betty Joy Ann: A Canadian M-F TS (or TG or TV), and past member of Travestis à Montréal (TAM) in Québec. Her poem, “Short Story,” appeared in *Tams & Tissues*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].


Bonnie: An American M-F TG from Western Pennsylvanina, and past member of the former Crossroads Chapter in Royal Oak, MI. Her poem, “Strictly Taboo,” appeared in *Crossroads Chatter*. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGism].

B.W.: An American, married F-M TS, and past member of The Adam Society (now defunct) in Waltham, MA. His pieces, “Alter Ego,” “Guilty As Charged” and “Unconditionally,” appeared in *Adam’s Word*. He wrote: “I would like to organize a support group in my area.
A number of gender-dysphoric persons call the local suicide hot-line. One more reason for me to keep going – so I can help others make it.” His poetry expresses not only the emotional and mental pain of his condition, but also his hopefulness and sensitivity to life and love. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

**C. Hartman:** An American M-F TS. Her poem, “I Just Want To Be Me,” appeared in the *Outreach Newsletter*, published by the Outreach Institute in Boston, MA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Carol Sinnock:** A Canadian, post-op M-F TS, and past leader of the Vancouver chapter of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). Her piece, “Persona,” appeared in *Gender Review: A FACTual Journal*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Carole Sue. S.:** An American, married M-F TV from Lake Mary, FL. Her poem, “Mirror, Mirror,” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Carolann E. Durette:** An American, lesbian M-F TS from New Hampshire, with an understanding and involved partner. She is an ardent feminist humanist, and submits poetry to gay/lesbian newspapers and more widely-read magazines. She is pursuing a B.A. in English (at the time) and hopes to pursue a career in writing. She composed the poems, “Once Upon A Time,” “I Will Build Again, I Guess” and “A Survivor, Not A Victim.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Carolyne Munroe:** A British, post-op M-F TS from Torquay, UK, who was formerly a popular disc jockey, and whose beautiful Irish baritone charmed thousands of his lady listeners. She wrote the piece, “Rich In Spirit.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Caryn Kristen Roberts:** An American M-F TS, and past member of The Emerald City group (now defunct) in Seattle. Her poem, “Butterfly,” appeared in *The Emerald City News*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Cathy Brown:** An Irish, post-op M-F TS, born in Armagh, Ireland, married to post-op F-M TS, Chris Johnson, and mother to their daughter, Emma. The life story of Cathy and Chris is told in *The Gender Trap* (Proteus Books, 1982), co-written by Wendy Nelson. The book contains her pieces, “Two Strangers Came Together” and “They Call Me Ms. Robot” (which she wrote with Chris). [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**C.H.B.:** An American M-F TS, and electronics engineer from Mountainview, CA. She has a B.S. in Physics and Psychology, an M.A. in Materials Science, and practises WICCA (the ancient European, pagan religion of witchcraft). She wrote: “I personally know of six other TS witches. WICCA has much attraction since it holds the feminine to be paramount. In WICCA, the generic for witch is always feminine!” She penned the poem, “Transsexual.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Cheli Bo:** A Canadian, post-op M-F TS from Toronto, ON, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). Her piece, “Different
From The Others,” appeared in *Gender Review: A FACTual Journal.* [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


**Christina Marie Bouchier:** An American M-F TS from Iowa. She penned the poems, “Beyond Belief” and “The Darkness Of Light.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Cinnamon:** An American, gay, M-F TV (drag queen) from Harrisburg, VA. Her many poems and songs appeared in *The Transvestian,* published by Tania Volen, Inc. in Tennent, NJ, and her songs were recorded under the Secret Girl Music and UnderCoverGirl Music labels. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM and BOOK THREE: M-F TSISM].

**Cullen:** An American M-F TS neo-pagan (devotee of the Goddess), and past member of the former Twenty Club in Hartford, CT. Her piece, “The Moon And Cybele,” appeared in the *Twenty Minutes* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**C.W.M.:** An American M-F TS, and past staff member of *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal* (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. She was the first person (in June 1982) to answer my call for poetry for publication in this anthology. Of her poetry, she wrote: “These poems (written during the mid 1960s and early 1970s), are not cheerful poems of hope and joy. They reflect at time before I was aware of the outside world – when I was deeply closeted. I was never aware of the subconscious statements I had made till I read them recently. Some of them reflect the torment that probably all transsexuals face. Some of them reflect the decisions made in my late teens to marry and the anguish involved in making those decisions. Her poem, “Of Souls And Roles,” was the inspiration for the title of this treasury! She also wrote the poem, “If I.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Dagney:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc. in Decatur, GA. Her piece, “On Reality,” appeared in the *Insight* newsletter, published the Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc. in Decatur, GA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Danielle:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the Leo Wollman Group in Brooklyn, NY. Her poem, “An Essential Part Of Me,” appeared in the group’s newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].
Deborah A.: An American M-F TG from Winston-Salem, NC, who writes to help consolidate his/her feelings and who also makes transgender art. Of her art, she wrote: “The only way that I have found to express all of this is through art. Overt expression is a goal of mine, but working it out is painstaking. So, whatever I express feminine, like my poem, “Third Water Song,” is from my soul.” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

Dee Dailey: An American, non-trans (cisgender) female, dominant lesbian, former nurse and gay/transgender counsellor. She founded the former Window to the World Services, Inc. (renamed from The Network) in Waukesha, WI. Her piece, “Humanness,” appeared in The Network News, (later re-named The Window), which she edited. Solely, to augment the sparser section on female-to-male transgenderism, her piece is found there. [BOOK TWO, PART TWO: F-M TGISM].

Dee Dee Watson: Now deceased, an American, married M-F TV from Hartford, CT, and past member of the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE). She wrote: “I used to substitute crossdressing for alcohol,” and also: “I find few transvestites who are pragmatic and fewer still who can find any humor in it. I don’t know why, but some hilarious things happen to TVs, yet we rarely hear of them – a pity.” Her poems, “She’s Only My GG,” “Ode To A TV’s Dream,” “Ode To The Closet Transvestite,” “Ode To The Tiffany Club” (signed “Anonymous,” but most likely hers) and “TV Limericks,” appeared in the TVIC Journal, published by the former TVIC in Albany, NY, and/or in The TV/TS Tapestry Journal, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Deirdre Jackson:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc., in Denver. Her pieces, “Achilles Among The Maidens” and “Thank You,” appeared in the center’s newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Deirdre O’Connor:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc., in Denver. Her poem, “Mermaid Song,” appeared in the center’s newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Diana Marshall: A British M-F TS (or TG or TV). Her poems, “Reflections” and “To Sleep, Perchance To Dream – A Fantasy,” appeared in TV Scene, published by TMC Publications in Manchester, UK. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Diane: A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poems, “Peace” and “I Am Woman,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Diane Andersson: The wife of Carl Andersson (a British, post-op F-M TS from London, UK, and a past F-M advisor to the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals [SHAFT] [later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust in 1989] in the 1980s in the UK). Diane’s poems,
“Outsiders” and “SHAFT,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter, and reflect her willingness to understand and her wish to offer support to transsexuals. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Donna: An American, married M-F TG (or TV). Her piece, “My Love,” appeared in the TGIC, Butterfly, EON Newsletter, jointly published by the Transgenderist International Club, the Butterfly Group and EON – all based in upper state, NY. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].


Dorothy (of Grimsby): A British, M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poems, “To Try To Explain” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM] and “Centaur” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM] appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter.

Doug Logan (formerly Bobby): An American, post-op F-M TS from New York, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. His poem, “Trapped,” appeared in the Metamorphosis newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

E.A. Wallach: An American, pre-op F-M TS, who first attempted suicide at the age of seven-and-a-half. His poems, “He Was Once Called An Enigma” and “Such Is Life…And Death,” appeared in Rites of Passage, published by F2M in Tenafly, NJ. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Elaine Thorson: A Canadian M-F TG from British Columbia, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). She penned the pieces, “Ice Dancer,” “Being A Man For Mom And Dad’s Sake,” and “Grandfather, Father And Me.” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].


Eric: A Canadian, married post-op F-M TS, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. His poem, “In Remembrance Of Childhood,” appeared in the Metamorphosis newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Fiona (of Poole): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her piece, “I Want To Be A Woman,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Gwen:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc, in Decatur, GA. Her poem, “Poised On The Brink,” appeared in *Insight*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Heather Peerson:** An American, post-op lesbian M-F TS and computer programmer, who sued her boss for unwarranted dismissal on grounds of legal sex discrimination – and won back her job. She was past leader of the Crossport trans group in Cincinnati, OH, and one of 50 trans activists to whom I awarded the “Gender Worker” Certificate of Merit in 1990. Her piece, “Thoughts On Myself,” appeared in Crossport’s newsletter, *InnerView*, which she once edited. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Jackie Adams:** A Canadian M-F TV, and past member of Transition Support (still running) in Toronto, ON. Her song, “The Ballad Of Lesley And The Right To Be Me,” was written for her friend, Lesley (a post-op M-F TS and past editor of *Trans News*, published in Toronto, ON), and appeared in Lesley’s newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Jan Armstrong:** An American, androgynous M-F TV from Pennsylvania. She wrote: “I know my poetry might seem to border on the erotic but they are not designed to do that. They were written to share very real human experiences in which no one is exploited but a full self-realization of self-expression is achieved.” Her poems, “Anima,” “Anima II,” “The Second ‘I,’” “Two Chambers Of My Heart,” “My Siamese Twin Sister,” “Sunburst,” “To All My Natural Sisters,” “Desire (To An Unknown Woman): and “Love In The Morning,” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry*, published by SCD Publishing in Minneapolis, MN. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Jana Thompson:** An American M-F TS, who co-founded the NYC chapter of the Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) and the Chi Delta Mu Chapter of the Tri-Ess Sorority in Massapequa, NY and founded The Gathering in Hackensack, NJ. She is also the past editor of Our *Special Joy* and *Passages*. Her pieces, “Pre-Op Limerick: Cocksure – But Premature” and “Post-Op Limerick: Three-Titty Ditty,” are found in BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM, and “TV Limericks” and “The Honey Bee And The Butterfly” are contained in BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM.

**Jane Ellen Fairfax:** An American, married M-F TG (or TV), and past president of the former Tau Chi Chapter in Richmond, TX. Her poem, “Ten Commandments For Crossdressers,” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].


**Janet Martin:** A British, M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “The Mis-Deal,” appeared in the *SHAFT Newsletter*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].
Janice Van Cleve: An American M-F TG (or TV), and past leader of The Emerald City Group in Seattle, WA. Of TS/TG/TV poetry, she wrote: “Our culture is very rich in feelings and expression, and I’m sure we will all grow in experiencing the feelings of our brothers and sisters in verse.” Her pieces, “Looking Out The Window,” “Coming Down” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM] and “Little Hairs” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM] appeared in the group’s newsletter (which she once edited) and The TV/TS Tapestry Journal, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA.

Jean Johnston (formerly Linda): An American, post-op M-F TS and computer software salesperson, who was let go by her former employer once he found out about her transsexual status. Soon after, however, she landed a similar job with another (but this time, understanding) employer. She was the past marketing manager for The TV/TS Tapestry Journal (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA), which featured her piece, “Free To Be Me.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Jennie: An American M-F TV from Tustin, CA. She wrote: “In my imagination, I invariably take the part of a girl and can even comfortably imagine lesbian activity. When I was five, I figured out it would be better to be a girl and let someone take care of me because I was not aggressive enough. I hated growing up, hair on the chest, etc. because it was making me more manly and putting me closer to where I would have to show the macho traits I didn’t have. In 69 years (at the time), I have learned to live with and work around those handicaps. However, I owe far more to my family than they owe to me, so I’m stuck with my imagination for the foreseeable future.” She wrote the poem, “Magic Mirror.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].


Jo Anne Owens: An American, married M-F TG (or TV) from Cupertino, CA. She wrote the poem, “A Mirror Is Not Enough.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

Jo-Anne (of Battersea): A British, M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her piece, “Hollow Night,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


JoAnn Renée Cone: An American, married, post-op M-F TS from Colorado, whose many articles have appeared in The TV/TS Tapestry Journal (published by the International
Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA) and other TG periodicals. She penned the soliloquy, “My Piece Of The Sky.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Johnny A. (aka Johnny Armstrong, Johnny Science, etc.) (1955-2007): An American former drag king and later, pre-op gay F-M TS, who founded F2M in Tenafly, NJ and its newsletter, Rites of Passage. A past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON, and one of 50 trans activists to whom I awarded the “Gender Worker” Certificate of Merit in 1990. His illustrations and poems, “Words Once Whispered” and “The Satyr Born Wrong (Into The World Of Men),” and songs, Original Reggae Rap Song [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM] and “The Best Of Both Worlds” (a musical porn video) [BOOK TWO, PART TWO: F-M TGISM] appeared in Rites of Passage and/or the Metamorphosis newsletter. See my poetic tribute, “For Johnny A., My Fellow Trans Cultural Activist” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].


Kathryn Joy Parker: An American M-F TG from New Jersey, who is married to a wonderful wife. She is a PhD candidate (at the time), ardent Christian, and past member of the Tri-Ess Society. She wrote: “I see my feminine dress as an expression of femininity, rather than deriving great ecstasy from dressing itself. Kathy is an active part of my life at all times, whether fully dressed when I’m crossdressed, or subtly there as I live in my masculine role. Though, for years, Kathy was expressed only in my fantasy world, I find I am much more at ease with myself in both masculine and feminine dimensions now that I fully express myself as Kathy in the real world.” Her poems, “A Worm’s Lament (With Response)” and “En Femme,” appeared in The TV/TS Tapestry Journal (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA). [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Kaye: A Canadian, bisexual, submissive M-F TV and power plant engineer from Acton, ON. She wrote: “I would like to become a maid-servant to one who appreciates the use of discipline for training purposes and who enjoys the soothing effects of ‘French’.” Her pieces, “Feminine Chic” and “If I Had,” appeared in Skirting The Issue, published by the former Transvestites in Toronto (TIT). [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].


Khalil Jordache (aka Khalil Sowande): An African-American, bisexual, pre-op F-M TS from Richmond, VA, who lives with a gay male lover. He is an aspiring novelist/poet, who writes on Black and gay themes, and a past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His poems, “Of Importance To Us All,” “I Am Man,” “To Be A Man,” “From Within,” “Eulogy To A Despondent F-M TS” and “What Must Be,” appeared in the Metamorphosis newsletter. “I Wonder” was published in Poet World. He also penned some other pieces, “For My Father,” “For My Mother,” “Bi-Lovable,” “My Lover (Haiku)” and “Confrontation.” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

King: A multiracial Canadian (Black, with Native/Aboriginal roots of East Coast Micmac) genderqueer woman and friend of mine, who works with me at Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She composed the trans-inclusive song focussing on LGBT women, “A Human Right,” [Book One: Part One: M-F TSism] and sang it at our 7th Annual Trans, Intersex & Two-Spirit Pride Day at SHC in 2010.

K.J.S.: A Canadian, married, post-op F-M TS from Regina, SK, and one of the three co-founders of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT) incorporated in Calgary, AB. His poem, “Transsexual Blues” appeared in Gender Review: A FACTual Journal, and attempts to portray the feelings and experiences of a pre-operative male-to-female transsexual (sic). [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Kyle: An American F-M TS from Manchester, CT, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His piece, “To All My Friends At Metamorphosis,” appeared in the Metamorphosis newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].


Lamorna: A M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her pieces, “Essence” and “Being A Woman,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Leanne (of Hailsham): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “Borrowed Dresses” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Leigh de Santa Fe: An American M-F TV from Sante Fe, NM. She penned the piece, “TV Truths,” and the limerick, “Narcissistic Transvestite.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

Linda: A Canadian M-F TS (TG or TV), and past member of Travestis à Montréal (TAM) in Québec. Her doggerel, “Nip “N” Tuck,” appeared in Tams & Tissues. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].


Linda T. O’Connell (19??-????): A Canadian, married, post-op M-F TS (born in Wales), who founded the North American Transsexual Society (NATS), Inc., a transsexual rights group based in Winnipeg, MB in 1978. Following completion of a correspondence course in Divinity, she assumed the title of “Reverend” and joined the local Gay Christian Forum in 1979 before moving to Toronto, ON. A self-styled martyr (“Canada’s answer to Christine Jorgensen and a person compared to Joan of Arc, in some quarters”), she is a true poet and satirist, who really knows how to “sing the blues and echo the cries of torment down through the ages of time immemorial.” Linda penned two autobiographical works of transsexual poetry: Fighting Back: A Symphony in Words (200 copies of which were privately published in 1978) and The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell, Not Available From K-Tel” (unpublished manuscript, 1982; dedicated to Dr. Stanley Biber, her sex-reassignment surgeon in 1975, and her husband, Rodger). Both works are now part of “the Rupert Raj Collection” housed in the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (www.clga.ca/) in Toronto, ON, Canada. The last time I saw her in 1988 in Toronto, she had just contracted Multiple Sclerosis and was confined to a wheelchair. Linda’s poems are found in BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM and BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM. See my poetic tribute, “For Linda T., With Love” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].)
Lisa Ann: A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “A Tribute To Two Lovely Daughters” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Lois Stacey Nevin: A Canadian, pre-op M-F TS from Ontario, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). She wrote: “I was well on my way to becoming just another drug overdose casualty while I was still alive. My suicide attempt, cloaked in ongoing depression and sustained misery, almost finished the life cycle. I am a woman, for better or worse. We are what we make of ourselves and our final destination is of our own planning. I am a lady-in-waiting. Until now, I’ve had very little understanding of my present condition. I don’t like this life. It’s stressful and hurts too much, but I think I’ve got a hell of a lot more courage than the bandwagon I see you on. My only ultimatum was to transcend the sexes. But I also want to accept my previous personae as they were. ‘Through my eyes, the self will realize,’ to quote my suicide note. I only want to be accepted. My journey was about life...long-term happiness. If I have to kill myself to get there, or even to get a bit closer to my emotional fulfillment, so be it. My life is far from a tragedy. It is more along the lines of liberation. The only important thing is that I (plural) lived – and I (singular) will live to discover myself and realize my full potential. Perhaps in a few years, I’ll be able to appreciate an outer freedom, not just an inner one.” Lois’s piece, “Through My Eyes,” appeared in Trans News, published in Toronto, ON. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Louis Smith: An American F-M TS, and past member of the Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc. in Decatur, GA. His poem, “To Be With You,” appeared in the institute’s newsletter, Insight. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Louis Graydon Sullivan (June 16, 1951 - March 2, 1991): An American, gay post-op F-M TS, who founded FTM in San Francisco, CA and edited its newsletter of the same name. He also wrote two books: Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser and Transsexual (1980) and From Female-to-Male: The Life of Jack Bee Garland (1990). He was also a past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. He passed away, at age 39, of HIV/AIDS, and was one of 12 trans activists to whom I awarded the “Gender Worker Award” plaque in 1990. The present anthology is dedicated, in part, to Lou’s memory. His piece, “From A F-M To The Girl Within,” appeared in the Metamorphosis Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM]. See my poetic tribute, “For Lou, My Fellow Transqueer Gender Transgressor” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].


Lynn Marie Scribner: An American, pre-op M-F TS, and former inmate of a prison in Rosharon, TX. She co-founded Transsexuals in Prison (TIP) in 1985, and is also a past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). Her pieces,
“Shadows” and “Reflections” appeared in the *Metamorphosis* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

**M.A.C.:** An American F-M TS, and past member of the Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc. in Decatur, GA. His poem, “A Special Kind of People,” appeared in the institute’s *Insight* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISIM].

**Madelaine Renault:** A New Zealand M-F TV. She penned, “Cross-Dressing Delights.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISIM].

**Margret Nancie Alger:** A Canadian, pre-op M-F TS, and past member of the member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). Her piece, “Life In Jail” appeared in *Gender Review: A FACTual Journal*, with an accompanying drawing by a trans (ex-)prisoner, Katherine (Kathy) Ann Johnson (1949-2014). [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

**Mary Pearl:** An American M-F TS from Eastman, GA. She penned the poem, “A Transsexual’s Prayer.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

**Maura Liebman:** The sister of David Aaron Liebman (1966–1984), an American, post-op F-M TS from Florida, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF), who took his life on December 22, 1984, at the age of 18, due to chronic suicidal depression (and possible autism), in spite of the emotional support of his sister and mother. At the time, Maura wrote to me: “David was a beautiful person – too beautiful for the ugliness of the world. Someday, when I’ve collected myself enough, I’ll write his story. I’m grateful to you for your help - thank you for reaching out to David. He admired and respected you and your work. I’m glad there are transsexuals who do make it. I just wish people weren’t so judgemental and cruel. If there’s something I can do to help, please let me know.” This anthology is dedicated, in part, to David. Maura wrote three tributes to her brother: “Fight It With Love,” “For David Aaron” and “The End Of Denial.” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISIM]. See my poetic tribute, “For David - And Both Our Sisters” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISIM].

**Megan M.:** An American M-F TS. Excerpts from her sardonic piece, “New Transabridged Dictionary,” (co-written by Diana C., with additional entries by Becky O.), was published by Morning Star Ltd., and reprinted in *Twenty Minutes*, published by the Twenty Club in Hartford, CT, and my newsletter, *Gender Networker*, August 1988. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

**Melita Boriana Stanulet:** An American, lesbian M-F TS from Illinois and past member of the former Gay & Lesbian Task Force. She wrote “Ode Of A Lesbian-Oriented Transsexual.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISIM].

**Merissa Sherril Lynn** (July 7, 1942 – December 1, 2017): An American, post-op, M-F TS from Exeter, NH, and a living legend in the TV/TS community, who initially identified as a M-F TG, and then later evolved into a M-F TS and surgically reassigned as female. She joined Fantasia Fair in 1976, co-led the Cherrystone Club in Boston, co-founded the Tiffany Club in 1978, and organized the first annual Tiffany Powncetown Outing in 1982. She established the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in 1986, was the past Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of its magazine, *The TV/TS Tapestry* (later re-named *The Transgender Tapestry*), and organized the first annual IFGE convention in 1987. She
received the "Doctor Virginia Prince Lifetime Achievement Award" in 1988, the "Society for the Second Self Community Service Award" in 1990, and my "Gender Worker Award" plaque in 1990. Some years following a massive stroke in 1988, she died in a hospice. Her piece, “Feel The Flowers,” appeared in The Tapestry. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TSISM]. See my poetic tribute, “For Merissa, The ‘Tiffany Rose’” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Michelle Lynn Gerald: An American M-F TS from Maryland, who (at the time) was “just beginning the long trek towards the complete adoption of a permanent feminine lifestyle.” Her poem, “The Decision,” appeared in The TV/TS Tapestry. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Miki: An American F-M TS from Portland, OR, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His piece, “Misperception,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Mo: An American F-M TS from Colorado Springs, CO, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His poem, “My Heart Knows,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Monc Inski: An American F-M TS from New Jersey, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His pieces, “You Male Gender,” “My Nightmare,” “People Won’t Remember My Name” and “My Man Friend,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].


Nancy Smith: An American M-F TS (TG or TV). Her piece, “For Every Woman,” appeared in Inner View, published by Cross-Port in Cincinnati, OH. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Nienna (of Bristol): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. She was also a past editor of the SHAFT Newsletter, which featured her poem, “Until I Die.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Nikki B.: (Now deceased), an American M-F TG (or TV), and past member of Serenity in Hollywood, FL. She wrote the piece, “Exceptional Perspective,” appeared in The TV/TS Tapestry Journal (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA). [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Pat Wilson:** A Canadian M-F TS from Ontario, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). She penned the pieces, “Truth” and “Spinning At The Centre.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Patricia (aka “Lisa”):** An American M-F TG (or TV). Her poem, “Special Joy” appeared in *Our Special Joy*, published by the Chi Delta Mu chapter of the Tri-Ess Sorority in Massapequa, NY. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**patti smith:** The famous American, punk-rock singer-songwriter, poet and visual artist from New York City (born December 30, 1946). Her piece, “Female” (written in 1967), was submitted by Roderick (a former F-M TS, who soon after reverted to the female gender role, depicting themself as a “masculine lesbian feminist” – and who also portrayed Patti Smith as a masculine feminist), appeared in *Metamorphosis Magazine*, published by the Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). [BOOK TWO, PART TWO: F-M TGISM].

**Phaedra Kelly:** A British, married M-F “Gender Transient” (GT) (her own designation) from Freshwater, Isle of Wight, UK, and founder of the Gender Transient Affinity (a TG global village/communications network of worldwide groups). She also used to help run the Transgender Archives based (at that time) in Londonderry, Ireland and edits its newsletter. She penned the poems: “Born Again Woman” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM], “Natural Childbirth,” “The Gap,” “Separate Identity,” “Jaquetta El ‘E La Ha’ Of The Phase,” “Fleshwish Of Disturbation,” “Electric Lover” and “But Twinned Lives Save Themselves” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM]. Phaedra wrote: “…a GT holds that androgyny is the human animal’s best meeting point between the conscious and the natural….I am not a Transsexual, but I am Born Again in my duality, without surgery….I am a Shaman, of the androgyny vocation envisioned by the ancient Maya….I am asexual….But there have been times when people dared called me ‘homosexual’ purely because I declined to have sexual intercourse with them….I and most Transsexual people…would claim the action of encounter with the polarity of gender identity, native to all creatures of more than one cell, was very much a conscious-raising activity (Transconscience). The fore word, ‘Trans,’ has two possible interpretations….‘Trans,’ as in to swap one extreme for another (i.e., man to woman, or vice versa), ‘Transient,’ as in to be ever mobile. Thus, there are two operative values in Transconscience: the Newtonian finite and the Quantum infinite, to employ an analogy with physics….Transconscient arts…reflect and refract what is, from the perspective of the alien, which is what society has made of the Transgendered….My field of Transconscient art is the eclectic Transience….My poetry, like my painting, photography, drama and dance, all mean something positive….They were inspired by the impression that it is still a very fresh and tasty world.”


**Rachel Thompson:** An American M-F TS from New Jersey, and past Editor of the Philadelphia Transsexual Support Group’s newsletter. She wrote the poems, “The Call” and “Mistaken Identity.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].
Rae (of Leicester): A British, post-op M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. At the time, she was still legally married to her wife, with whom she was living as a sister. Her piece, “Revelation” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].

Rae Paul Allan: An American, married post-op F-M TS from Texas, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF). His poem, “She’s Gone,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism].


Rita: A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her rally cry, “Strength In Solidarity,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].


Roderick: A Canadian, masculine lesbian feminist from Toronto, ON, and and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT), who initially identified as a F-M TS, but soon after reverted to the female gender role. Their poem, “Faith In Myself,” appeared in Gender Review: A FACTual Journal. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism].

Rupert Raj: A Canadian, post-op, F-M TS from Toronto, ON, and compiler of the present anthology. I founded three former trans organizations (and their respective newsletters/magazine): Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT) and Gender Review: A FACTual Journal, Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) and the Metamorphosis newsletter and Metamorphosis Magazine, and Gender Worker and the Gender NetWorker newsletter. See “About the Editor” (last page) for more information. I wrote the pieces: “For Linda T., With Love,” “For Merissa, The Tiffany Rose” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism], “A Transsexual Wish,” “Gender Euphoria,” “The Transsexual Perspective,” “The Man Within,” “Penis Envy,” “Self Integrity,” “Metamorphosis,” “For David – And Both Our Sisters,” “For Lou, My Fellow Transqueer Gender Transgressor,” “For Steve, My Fine American Friend,” “For Johnny A., My Fellow Trans Cultural Activist” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism], “New Lady,” “Togetherness,” “Sex and Gender,” Pangender Person,” “Sexual Semantics” [BOOK TWO, PART TWO: F-M TGism], and “Clothes Make The Man – Or Woman (Or So Society Says)” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVism].
S. Machi: An American M-F TG (or TV). Her poem, “Conundrum,” appeared in the Outreach Newsletter, published by the Outreach Institute in Boston, MA. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].


Sandra (of Falkirk): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “It’s Fate,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Sara: A cisgender (non-trans), female friend of C.W.M, a M-F TS, and past staff member of The TV/TS Tapestry Journal (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA), to whom Sara paid poetic tribute, “C.W.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Sherry (now Sheila): An American, post-op M-F TS from Austin, TX, and past member of the former Gender Identity Center of Colorado. Her poems, “Ode To Stanley” and “Double-Gendered,” appeared in the GIC’s newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].


Sigfried: An American M-F TG (or TV). Their poem, “Valkyrja,” dedicated to Alessandra Maria Atalanta (formerly Anna Marie), was published in The Phoenix Monthly-International, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Sonia: An American M-F TS and past member of the former Twenty Club. Her comical piece, “Top 10 Reasons To Have A (M-F) Sex-Change,” appeared in Twenty Minutes. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Sophie (of Southsea): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poem, “Identity,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Steffie: A Canadian, bisexual M-F TS, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT) and Transition Support group in Toronto, ON. She penned the piece, “Sex And The Single TS.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

Stephanie Anne Lloyd: A British, married, post-op M-F TG from Manchester, UK. She founded the Albany Gender Identity Clinic and Transformation (Retail) Ltd. (a clothing shop for M-F TGs and TVs in London, Manchester and Birmingham) and also the newsletter, TV Scene, published by TMC Publications. She wrote the graphic quote, “Peace – At Last.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].

Stephen (Steve) E. Parent (19??-199?): An American, married post-op F-M TS from Springfield, MA. He was the past President of the former Twenty Club, past Editor of its newsletter, Founder of Transcend Vocational & Educational Counseling Services, and past Advisor to the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. His piece, “From A F-M To The Girl Within,” appeared in the Metamorphosis newsletter. He passed away of kidney failure in his mid 40s, and was one of 12 trans activists to whom I awarded the “Gender Worker Award” plaque in 1990. The present anthology is dedicated, in part, to Steve’s memory. His poems, “Crossing Over,” “The Man Within” and “New Clothes,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism]. See my poetic tribute, “For Steve, My Fine American Friend” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism].


Steven Wells: An American, gay, androgynous F-M TG (or TS) from New York, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. Several of his prolific poems appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism] and [BOOK TWO, PART TWO: F-M TGism].


Susan (of Fife): A British M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her poems, “Release” and “A Lost Chord, Found,” appeared in the SHAFT Newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSism].

Suzie J. A Canadian, M-F TV from Cornwall, ON. She penned the poem, “Bittersweet Punishment.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVism].

T.C.B.: An American, post-op F-M TS from Elkhart IN, and past member of the former Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) in Toronto, ON. His piece, “Ode To The Boob,” appeared in Metamorphosis Magazine. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSism].
**Tefanie:** A Canadian M-F TS (TG or TV), and past member of Travestis à Montréal (TAM) in Québec. Her doggerel, “Falsie Illusion,” appeared in *Tams & Tissues.* [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Tess Alden:** An American M-F TV, lab technician and past member of the former Chicago Gender Society, who goes out dressed to gay bars on weekends. Her poems: “Chicks That Click,” “Promenade,” “Wearing Your Best,” “Smart Santa,” “Phone Call For Sis,” “Acceptance,” “The First Time” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM], and “Getting Ourselves Together” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM] appeared in *The Primrose* and *Kiara.*

**Theresa (of Fleetwood):** A British, M-F TS, and past member of the former Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT) (later re-named The Gender Dysphoria Trust) in the UK. Her piece, “A Man That Was Born,” appeared in the *SHAFT Newsletter.* [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Tiffany Vanderbilt II:** An American M-F TV (or TG), and past member of the former Crossroads Chapter in Pontiac, MI. Her poem, “To A Friend (Lady Crossdressing The Blues),” appeared in Crossroads Chatter. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Tina Lindsay:** An American M-F TS from New Jersey, NY and past member of The Gathering (now defunct) in New York City. Her pieces: “Passing,” “Remembrance,” “Spinach And Me,” “To Be From Binary” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM], “Scales” and “Wilma” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM] appeared in *Passages.*

**Tom House:** An American M-F TV from Nashville, TX, married 8 years to “an understanding and supportive wife, who however, does not really interact with a lot of my fantasies with extreme enthusiasm, but of whom, I’d have to say nothing but good things.” He works in a bookstore and edits *raw bone,* a small-press magazine featuring the poorer/rougher side of life, which sides with the underdog against injustices in the American system, and which presents varying erotic situations and aspects. His poems have often been published in several countries. He wrote: “I’ve never really settled on a femme name – my girl identity has way too tenuous a hold to have ‘finalized’ in that particular manner.” He penned a number of sado-masochistic poems: “camptown reality,” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM], “captiv,” “gloria’s slave,” “her fantasy client,” “the coming out coronation” and “cock and ball torture” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**Toni:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Renaissance: Gender Identity Services in Santa Ana, CA. Her piece, “The Lament Of A Pre-Operative Transsexual,” appeared in the *Renaissance Update* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Tory:** An American M-F TS, and past member of the former Montgomery Medical & Psychological Institute, Inc. in Decatur, GA. Her piece, “Obsession,” appeared in the *Insight* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Tristan D.:** An American F-M TS, and past member of the Gender Identity Center of Colorado in Denver. His poem, “Death Of The Year,” appeared in the G.I.C. newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

Veronica Hammer: An American “Gender Nomad” and Fine Arts student (at that time) from New Jersey, NY, and past member of the Renaissance Education Association in King of Prussia, PA, who was very active on gender-oriented Bulletin Boards. Her poem, “Wings,” appeared in The Primrose, published by the Chicago Gender Society. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

Virginia (Charles) Prince: An American, heterosexual M-F TG from California, and a professional chemist before she retired - and a living legend. She founded Transvestia magazine in 1960, and the Foundation for Personality Expression (FPE) in Los Angeles in 1963 (the earliest known heterosexual transvestite/transgenderist periodical and support group, respectively). The group was re-named “The Society for the Second Self” (aka “Tri-Ess” sorority) in 1980. Virginia was named “the person who has made the greatest lifetime contribution to the transgender community” by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) (of which she was also a Board member), and in 1987, was the first recipient of “The Virginia Prince Lifetime Contribution Award” (named in her honour), presented by the IFGE. Her piece, “Change Of Life (1967),” appeared in The TV/TS Tapestry. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].


Yvonne: An American M-F TG (or TV). She penned the poems, “Yvonne” and “Femininity/Femaleness.” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

Notes:

*It is unclear if Angela, Angela (of Stockport) and Angela Jane are different people.
**It is possible that Deirdre Jackson and Deirdre O’Connor are the same person.
Afterword

When Rupert Raj asked me to write the Foreword to “Of Souls and Roles, Of Sex and Gender, I somehow envisioned that it would be a slender volume. When he sent me the final draft of the manuscript to read, I was astounded at the amount of material he had collected from the creative efforts of a group of people who are relatively few in number. After reading the poems, I was reminded once again of the very wrenching dilemma so many transgender persons encounter.

My favourite American poet, has always been Robert Frost. He wrote a poem called, “The Road Not Taken,” and it has always struck me how relevant that poem is to the transgender world. The last stanza reads as follows:

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

I did sigh as I read through the collection of verse that Rupert has put together. He has indeed given the transgender community, and the world at large, a very important gift.

I am not a poet, but I so wish I were. It has always seemed to me that poetry, in whatever form, is a medium which rises a step above prose or song. When the words and the rhythms are combined, they form an evocative and almost erotic music that goes far beyond prose or songs. Through poetry, men and women find a way to express the very essence of themselves – their innermost feelings and the very core of their existence.

Poetry, through the blend of words and rhythms, is also a very special type of music. It allows men and women to express commentary about their relationships with others and the planet we share with so many diversified forms of life.

Poetry often queries the existence of existing, the cycle of living, the ritual of dying. It mourns our losses and celebrates renewal. It proclaims our love and opens the soul. It can vent our rage or exalt our joy. It has the power to evoke the spectrum of human emotions from the profound to the frivolous. It can make us laugh, or it can make us cry. It ranges in emotion from despair to hope. It is the use of words to express the never-ending rhythms of conscious life.

This is not a book to read in a single setting. Each poem is like a miniature novel. One needs to read one poem and absorb the story before moving on. Each contributor is the storyteller as well as the protagonist. The conflicts are deep and they generally reflect intense pain, discomfort, and often, baffling compulsions.

The climax sometimes comes in the form of seemingly irrational acts (many stories are never told because of suicide). The protagonists are frequently in conflict with themselves, loved ones, and a rigid society. Any resolution to the conflict comes from acceptance of self, not from jousting with others. Sancho Panza realized the futility of tilting at windmills, but Don Quixote continued his struggle.
People who sometimes find themselves in the never-never land of transgenderism as adults kept their feelings to themselves as children. Many did not understand the significance of their feelings, although they usually understood that acting upon their feelings would violate very strict rules of behaviour within the context of gender roles assigned to them at birth. These rules are laid out very early in childhood, and most children learn early on that any deviation from the rules will violate sacred taboos. Many of those secrets spill out from the pages of this book. Many of the selections reflect anger at a society that has constricted the writers from expressing the very nature of their personal identifications.

One of the most salient features of this collection is that so many contributors express a sense of relief and a feeling of joy to have the freedom, at last, to live their lives with an honest presentation of who they are after so many years of secretiveness.

Many people in the medical and mental health professions, and society, in general, tend to view transgender persons as suffering from some sort of mental illness. If those same judgemental people were to read through this collection, they might discover that they were looking at the transgendered in a mirror that they themselves have distorted. Perhaps they might discover that their own attitudes have caused much of the pain and suffering of those who want to climb the fences which have been erected around them.

Transgender people are human beings who want to live their lives in roles with which they feel comfortable. If that is a sickness, then it is an infection spread by the majority in a society bent on inflicting its will on all individuals. When governments treat their people in the same manner, we call them totalitarians or fascists. If we are to continue to espouse freedom, it would serve us well to set an example. Tolerance is not enough. We need to understand and embrace individual needs and preferences within our own society. The collection which Rupert Raj has assembled should serve as a brightly-painted signpost to guide all of us along a road leading to a more enlightened society.

Kim Elizabeth Stuart
Oakland, California, USA
June 1, 1988
ABOUT THE EDITOR

Rupert Raj has served the transsexual, transgender, transvestite (crossdressing), genderqueer, intersex and two-spirit communities, their loved ones, allies and supporting professionals across Canada and the USA since 1971 as a community activist (peer-educator, peer-counsellor, peer-support group leader, newsletter editor, magazine contributing writer), mental health clinician (psychotherapist, clinical assessor, psychoeducational group facilitator), gender specialist (consultant, professional development trainer), published researcher, book co-editor, memoirist and poetry compiler.

A Eurasian-Canadian, pansexual trans man and trailblazing trans activist, Rupert’s memoir, Dancing the Dialectic: True Tales of a Eurasian-Canadian Trans Activist (coming out in 2017 with Transgress Press) documents his experiences of growing up gender-distressed in Ottawa in the 1950s and ‘60s, his life-saving “T” shot in 1971, surgical solutions in 1972, 1978 and 2012 (a 41-year gender transition!), six love relationships, various minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet, an ultimately fulfilling professional career, nearly half a century of active service to trans and gender non-binary communities, and participation in larger society as a secular existential humanist, social activist, ethical vegetarian, animal liberationist and eco-feminist activist.

Mr. Raj co-founded several service organizations and peer-led groups for trans people in Canada (first Calgary and then Toronto), namely: Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT) (1978-1986), Metamorphosis-cum-Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) (1982-1988) and Gender Worker-cum-Gender Consultants (1988-1990), and edited the organizational periodicals, until he burnt out (the first time of many!) in 1990. He resumed trans work almost a decade later, co-founding the Trans Men/FTM Peer-Support Group in 1999 (but burned out after a year), and the Thursday Night Group (for trans people with alcohol/drug issues in 2000. He also co-led TransFormations (an expressive arts group for trans/genderqueer youth) (2003-2004) and Gender Journeys (a psychoeducational group for people considering gender-transitioning) (2006-2013).

Rupert earned a Bachelor’s in Psychology from Carleton University in 1975 and a Master’s in Counseling Psychology from The Adler School of Professional Psychology in 2001.

From 2002 to 2015, Mr. Raj worked as a psychotherapist at Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto and as a Gender Specialist through his private practice (RR Consulting). Besides counselling trans, genderqueer, intersex and two-spirit adults and gender non-conforming youth and their loved ones, he assessed trans and genderqueer people for gender-confirming hormone therapy and surgery; provided gender consultations or transpositive training for health care and social service professionals, researchers, policymakers, educators, students, lawyers, politicians and corporate managers; and served as an expert witness for trans people in Ontario Human Rights suits. He has published several trans-focussed clinical research papers for scholarly journals and co-edited (with Dan Irving, PhD) Trans Activism in Canada: A Reader (Canadian Scholars’ Press) in 2014.

For his nearly 46 years of trans activism, over the years Rupert has been recognized with an honourable mention in The International Who’s Who in Sexology (1986) and multiple awards. These include: two “Lifetime Achievement Awards” (Sexin’ Change Conference at Ryerson...
University and Supporting Our Youth Program’s “Trans Planet Awards”) (2001), The City of Toronto’s “Access and Equity Human Rights Pride Award” (2007), Community One Foundation’s “Steinert & Ferreiro Award” (2010), and the Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity’s “Youth Role-Model-of-the-Year Award” (2017). In 2013, he was inducted into the Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives (where “the Rupert Raj Collection” is housed) and he is memorialized in its National Portrait Collection. Selected print duplicates of his collection are housed in the University of Victoria’s Transgender Archives in British Columbia (https://www.uvic.ca/transgenderarchives/) and virtually on the Digital Trans Archive (https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/).

Retired in early 2017, Mr. Raj is morphing his trans activism into animal rights and ecological advocacy, shifting shapes from “Gender Worker” to “Rainbow Warrior.”

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