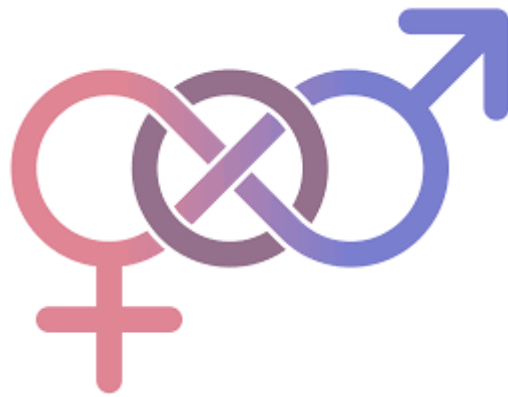


# ***OF SOULS & ROLES, OF SEX & GENDER***

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

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**Edited by Rupert Raj**

**with a Foreword by Trish Salah, PhD  
&  
an Afterword by Kim Elizabeth Stuart**

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Raj, Rupert, 1952-, editor

Of Souls & Roles, Of Sex & Gender: A Treasury of Transsexual, Transgenderist & Transvestic Verse from 1967 to 1991 / Rupert Raj.

The editor is donating this unpublished (newly-revised) international trans poetry anthology to the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, in care of Prof.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].)

**Louis Graydon Sullivan** (1951-1991), an American, gay trans activist, newsletter editor and biographer, who died of HIV/AIDS at 39. (See "The Poets" for more information, and my poetic tribute, "For Lou, My Fellow Transqueer Gender Transgressor" [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].)

**Johnny A.** (aka Johnny Armstrong, Johnny Science, etc.) (1955-2007), an American former drag king, gay trans activist, musician, videomaker and newsletter editor, who died at 62. I don't know the details surrounding his death. (See "The Poets" for more information, and my poetic tribute, "For Johnny A., My Fellow Trans Cultural Activist" [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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## FOREWORD<sup>1</sup>

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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<sup>1</sup> 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 devotionals, 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. Many

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, androgynous and crossdressing people in terms of our contrasting and complementing identities and presentations: spiritual *and* sexual, personal *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<sup>1</sup>**

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,  
Frantically 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 bars.  
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<sup>2</sup>**

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 life 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<sup>3</sup>**

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)<sup>4</sup>**

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 puny 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 shampp  
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)

### **BUTTERFLY – DECEMBER '83**

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 clergy –  
It is fun as far as it goes.  
But, just as the human figury  
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<sup>5</sup>**

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)

## **PREMARIN<sup>6</sup>**

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**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>**

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 away?  
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)

## **DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE<sup>9</sup>**

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 like 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 feel 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.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

## **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.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

### **MUSIC OVER AMERICA**<sup>10</sup>

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.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

## **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE PSYCHIATRIC KIND**<sup>11</sup>

(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.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

**DEAR EDITOR, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS**<sup>12</sup>

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?

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

## **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.

~~ Linda T. O'Connell (© "The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O'Connell," 1982)

### **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)

## **BORN AGAIN WOMAN**

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"<sup>13</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup>**

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...

~~ Carolynne 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 –  
Stragglng 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**<sup>16</sup>

(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 Borianan Stanulet (1985)

## **DIANA**<sup>17</sup>

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**<sup>18</sup>

- 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**<sup>19</sup>

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)**<sup>20</sup>

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**<sup>21</sup>

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**<sup>22</sup>  
(to Anna Marie)

Teutonic fraulein from lands of ice,  
Why did you leave your glaciers  
To come to warm California  
To prowls 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**<sup>23</sup>

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**<sup>24</sup>

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 ecstasy.  
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 TRANSEXUAL 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**<sup>25</sup>

**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**<sup>26</sup>

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)

## END NOTES

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 TRANSVESTISM]. 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, focusisng, 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 Dali), 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 than 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*, (7<sup>th</sup> version), World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), 2011. [www.wpath.org](http://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 Berecynthia, 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 *Illiad*. Achilles was the son of the Phthian king, Peleus, and the sea goddess, Thetis. (Phthia was the southernmost 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 EUPHORIA<sup>1</sup>**

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 TRANSSEXUAL 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<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup>**

It's easier to make a "hole" than a "pole!"

~~ Sex Reassignment Surgeon

## **METAMORPHOSIS<sup>5</sup>**

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?!

~~ M.A.C. (1974)

## **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  
Biting my flesh.  
Mind flies apart  
Dying small deaths.

God, will I ever be born?

~~ Keith McUmbur

## **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!

~~ B.W. (1987)



## **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.

~~ B.W. (1989)

## **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  
(She'd 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  
of 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<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup>**

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**

Voluptuous 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<sup>8</sup>**

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 7 ½ 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."

Ringin' 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.

“Those 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  
Firm 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<sup>9</sup>**

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)**<sup>10</sup>

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.

~~ Johnny A. (1988)

# **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  
the only thing I could do –  
I left.

~~ Sidney



### **WHY DO I NOW HAVE A WOMAN'S BODY?<sup>11</sup>**

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**<sup>12</sup>

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**<sup>13</sup>

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?**<sup>14</sup>

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**<sup>15</sup>

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**<sup>16</sup>

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?**<sup>17</sup>

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**<sup>18</sup>

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**<sup>19</sup>

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**<sup>20</sup>

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**<sup>21</sup>  
**(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**<sup>22</sup>

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)<sup>23</sup>**

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

1. **“GENDER EUPHORIA”** – “Uninvited dilemma” refers to the 1983 book of the same name by Kim Elizabeth Stuart, *The Uninvited Dilemma: A Question of Gender*. “Conundrum” is an allusion to Jan Morris’s 1974 (M-F TS) autobiography of the same name.
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).
5. **“METAMORPHOSIS”** – “Franz Kafka” is the famous Czech existentialist, who, in 1915, wrote the bizarre novel, *The Metamorphosis*, about a man who changed into a cockroach and died. “Ovid” (Publius Ovidius Naso) is the classical Roman poet, who wrote the mythological work, *Metamorphoses*, in A.D. 8. “Metamorphosis” is also the name of the service organization and newsletter/magazine for transsexual and transgender men founded by Rupert Raj in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1982.
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.”
13. **“FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, YOU SPOILT MY LIFE”** – Ibid, p. 176. “Chris’s anger simmered and boiled, and after months of torment, he wrote furious and bitter words to God, whom he felt had surely forsaken him,” Nelson narrates.
14. **“ARE WE JUST TOYS?”** – Ibid, p. 176. According to Wendy Nelson, Chris became enraged beyond reason at the seeming hopelessness of his situation with Cathy, and so he resorted to cynicism.
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<sup>1</sup>**

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 –  
dooming 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 SUN<sup>2</sup>**

(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

### **ANIMA (II)**<sup>3</sup>

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  
in 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  
caresses 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  
welts 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 diminuendos  
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<sup>4</sup>**

“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 entante 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 gluttoned 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<sup>5</sup>**

Queen of Berdache, alter ego crisp in her  
Transcendence.  
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<sup>6</sup>**

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



### **CHANGE OF LIFE (1967)**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>**

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”<sup>9</sup>**

When I take on my “human” form  
I’m requisitng 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).

~~ Cinnamon (© *The Transvestian*, Vol. 3, No. 12, 1984)

## **THE LAMENT**

Sometimes I cry  
when I look down at my lap.  
I can only sow the seeds for a new life,  
never 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.

~~ Cinnamon (© *The Transvestian*, Vol. 3, No. 10, 1984)

## **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  
Spurled 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 nape  
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 as a pinafored  
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  
caressing 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 androgyny.  
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**<sup>10</sup>

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  
Ecstasy 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**<sup>11</sup>

### 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:

"Jason, I come with concern for you  
For the time's been long since you came to church  
And I long to hear your vibrant voice  
Sing hymns as we worship on a Sunday morn.  
Have you been ill? Let me comfort you  
As I read from the book of wisdom and truth."

"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...*

## II

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 flight 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**<sup>12</sup>

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

## END NOTES

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 devotees 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 genitoplasty 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<sup>1</sup>**

(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<sup>2</sup>**

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)

### **PANSEXUAL PANGENDER PERSON<sup>3</sup>**

“Nicholas” was the boy within who turned inside out in 1972;  
Nick changed names to “Rupert” in 1982;  
“Rupert” 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<sup>4</sup>**

(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!

~~ Johnny A. (© *Rites of Passage*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Dec. 1989)

## **female<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup>**

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 Feminine 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<sup>8</sup>**  
**(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

## **GAMES**

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  
    every 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 madrugada 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)

## **GAMES**

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<sup>9</sup>**

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?

~~ Linda T. O’Connell (© “The Greatest Hits Of Linda T. O’Connell,” 1982)

## **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)

## **HUMANNESS**

Having the will, the hope  
to live day by day  
under pressure, underloved.  
Making mistakes, hurting ourselves  
and others sometimes.  
Always picking up the pieces somehow...

Not blaming anyone except those  
who deserve blame for hurting us  
when they could help, and know better  
and are stronger than we are.  
Not feeling like a failure  
even if we fail at some things.

Every day, trying, consciously  
to do and be the best we can.  
Sincere, caring, loving, giving, taking...  
Seeing always there's more good than bad  
more strength than weakness  
in everyone who does the best they can.

~~ Dee Dailey



## END NOTES

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 “hermaphroditism” 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,” “transsexual” (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), “Rupert” (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, pangendered 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.

**BOOK THREE:**

**MALE-TO-FEMALE TRANSVESTISM (CROSSDRESSING)**

### **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 hoarded.  
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 mannequin  
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.

Filly, 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 –  
never.

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 –  
never.

~~ 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; *Feminine*, 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<sup>1</sup>**

(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<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup>**

(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<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup>**

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 frightfulest 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 afraid.

\*\*\*

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-philialia."

\*\*\*

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, / 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<sup>7</sup>**

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-abovevely

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<sup>8</sup>**

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)<sup>9</sup>**

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**<sup>10</sup>

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"<sup>11</sup>**

(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 glam'rous 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**<sup>12</sup>

(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 prolivity.

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 they 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**<sup>13</sup>

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**<sup>14</sup>

(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 TRANSVESTITE"** – 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

## 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)<br>(or androgyne or "she-male") | = | transgender or genderqueer person<br>(or gender non-binary or "she-male") |
| female-to-male transgenderist (F-M TG)<br>(or androgyne or "he-she")   | = | transgender or genderqueer person<br>(or gender non-binary or "boi")      |
| male-to-female transvestite (M-F TV)                                   | = | crossdresser or transgender person                                        |

(listed in alphabetical order by first name)

**A.F. America:** An American M-F TS. Her piece, "Rules For Transsexual Women," appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**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].

**\*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 TSISM].

**\*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 TSISM].

**\*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 TSISM].

**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 "Doug 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 Millot'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 TSISM].

**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 TVISM] appeared in *Transcare*, published by the Minorities Trust in Wellington, New Zealand.

**Anonymous:** An American, F-M TS. His intense piece, “The Constant Pretense,” appeared in *The Phoenix Monthly-International*, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-MTSISM].

**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 TGISM].

**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].

**Becky O.:** An American M-F TS. She added some further entries to the sardonic piece, “New Transabridged Dictionary,” (co-written by Diana C. and Megan G), 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 TSISM].

**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].

**Bobbi:** An American M-F TV (or TG). Her piece, “Dressing Alone On A Snowy Evening,” appeared in *Inner View*, published by Cross-Port in Cincinnati, OH, and in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Bonnie:** An American M-F TG from Western Pennsylvania, 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].

**Carolyn 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 lifestory 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].

**Chris Howey:** An American M-F TV (or TG). Her poem, “A Letter To Salman,” appeared in *Femme Mirror*, published by the Society for the Second Self (SSS) in Tulare, CA, and “Hanging On By My Fingernails,” appeared in *Our Sorority*, published in Alexandria, VA. Both poems were also reprinted in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Chris Johnson:** A British, post-op F-M TS, born in Birmingham, UK, married to M-F TS Cathy Brown, and father to their daughter, Emma. The lifestory of Cathy and Chris is told in *The Gender Trap* (Proteus Books, 1982), co-written by Wendy Nelson. The book contains his pieces, “Why Do I Now Have A Woman’s Body?,” “You Take Away My Pride” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM], and “They Call Me Ms. Robot” (which he wrote with Cathy). [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 TVISM].

**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. (re-named 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 C.:** An American M-F TS. Excerpts from her sardonic piece, “New Transabridged Dictionary,” (co-written by Megan G., 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 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].

**Donna E. Mobley:** An American, widowed M-F TV, freelance audio/video/TV producer, and President of the Fiesta chapter of the Tri-Ess Board of Directors from Texas. Her song, “On The Cover Of ‘Tapestry’,” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Elaine Wiley:** An American M-F TV (or TG), and past member of the former Tiffany Club in Wayland, MA. Her operatic parodies (a la Gilbert & Sullivan), “The Fetishistic TV,” “The Modern Paraculturalist” and “Miss F.P. (Femmephile) (The Fetishist Reformed),” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal*, published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Gloria Ogleman:** An American, post-op M-F TS from New York. Her “Post-Op Song” appeared in *Transition*, published by Confide: Personal Counseling Services, Inc. in Tappan, NY. [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 Talk*, published by SCD Publishing in Minneapolis, MN. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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 F.:** An American, married M-F TG (or TV) from Flushing, NY. Her piece, “To Exist,” appeared in *The Phoenix Monthly-International*, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. She also wrote: “My Dream,” “Confusion,” “To My Beloved Sister,” “To God” and “To Society.” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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].

**Jessica Dahl:** An American, androgynous M-F TG. Her piece, "Happily Androgynous," appeared in *The Phoenix Monthly-International*, published by the former Gateway Gender Alliance (GGA) in Sunnyvale, CA. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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].

**Jo-Anne Wilson:** An Australian, married M-F TV (or TG). Her piece, "Holiday Wife's Lament," appeared in *Feminique*, published by the Seahorse Club of Australia in Sydney. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**Joanne:** An American M-F TG (or TV). Her poem, "Things I Always Hid," appeared in the *Educational TV Channel Newsletter*, published by the ETVC in San Francisco, CA, and her other piece, "Jilly," appeared in the *Journal of Male Feminism*, published by the former International Alliance for Male Feminism (IAMF). [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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],

**K. Pool:** An American M-F TV (or TG) and psychologist. K.'s tribute to Mariette Pathy Allen (renowned photographer of transvestites and creator of the photographic book, *Transformations*) entitled "Mariette," appeared in the *Educational TV Channel Newsletter*. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**K. Robert:** An American (?) F-M TS. His poem, "Being Yourself," appears in 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 TGISM].

**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].

**Kaye (of Guernsey):** A British, pre-op F-M TS, and past editor of *The GDT Newsletter*, published by The Gender Dysphoria Trust(formerly the Self-Help Association for Transsexuals [SHAFT]) in the UK. His poem, "All Change," appeared in the *SHAFT Newsletter* and the *Metamorphosis Magazine*. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

**Keith McUumber:** An American F-M TS. His piece, "Lost," appeared in *The Transsexual Voice*, published by Phoebe Smith in Hapeville, GA. [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].

**Kelly:** A Canadian, pre-op M-F TS, and past member of the former Foundation for the Advancement of Canadian Transsexuals (FACT). Her poem, "Through The Eyes Of A Man," appeared in *Gender Review: A FACTual Journal*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Kelly (of Leeds):** 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 Mistake Of Nature" appeared in the *SHAFT Newsletter*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**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].

**Kyndel Fay Mercedes Kellis:** An American M-F TG from Alaska, married to a supportive life partner, and past chairperson of the Berdache Society. She is interested in psychology, anthropology, transcendental metaphysics, honest sharing, friendship and developing her femininity. Her poems, "Skeptical Eye," "Resurrection," "Hand Of My Spirit," "Pilgrims" and "Excursion Off The Road To Trinidad," 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 TGISM].

**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].

**Laura:** An American, post-op M-F TS, and past member of the Twenty Club in Hartford, CT. Her poem, "The Itch," appeared in the *Twenty Minutes* newsletter. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].



**Layni Jayne Wilson:** An M-F TS (or TG) from Arizona. She penned the pieces, “Butterfly,” “Wedding Night Wish,” “A Woman,” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM], “Light And Dark,” “Just A Little,” “Transition” And “Insults And Compliments,” [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM]. The last two appeared in *The Transsexual Voice*, published by Phoebe Smith in Atlanta, GA.

**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 Ackerman:** A friend of an American M-F TG, Robin Esch. Linda paid tribute to Robin in her poem, “The Caged Bird,” which 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 TGISM].

**Linda Anne Landess:** An American M-F TG (or TS or TV). Her piece, “The Ultimate Choice,” 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 TGISM].

**Linda B.:** An American M-F TV from Kawkawlin, MI. The “bard of Tri-Cities, she penned a series of homegrown “TV Limericks.” [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/](http://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].)

**Louise Catherine Milner:** A Canadian, M-F TV from British Columbia. She paid tribute to an American, F-M TS jazz bandleader, Billy Lee Tipton (who had just died in January 21, 1989), in her poetic eulogy, “In Memory Of Billy Tipton – and ‘Billy’s Everywhere,” which appeared in the *FTM* newsletter, published by Louis Sullivan in San Francisco, and *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal* (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA). [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM]. She also penned “One Of Those We Call A ‘She’” and “Transmigration” [BOOK TWO: PART TWO: M-F TGISM].

**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 TSISM].

**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 TSISM].

**Madelaine Renault:** A New Zealand M-F TV. She penned, “Cross-Dressing Delights.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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 TSISM].

**Mary Pearl:** An American M-F TS from Eastman, GA. She penned the poem, “A Transsexual’s Prayer.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**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 TSISM]. See my poetic tribute, “For David - And Both Our Sisters” [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].)

**Megan G.:** 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 TSISM].

**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 TSISM].

**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 Provincetown 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 TGISM]. 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].

**Mike Bradley:** An American M-F TG and TV (“in that order”) from Virginia. His pieces, “Crossings,” “Medical Technology,” “Tradeoffs,” and “Vermont,” appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry*. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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 Leigh:** An American M-F TS, and editor of *Gender Feelings, Tender Feelings*, published by Simply Enterprises in Independence, MO, which contained her poem, “Attitude.” [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F 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].

**Nicola:** A British M-F TG (or TV). Her piece, “Happiness Is...,” appeared in *TV Scene*, published by TMC Publications in Manchester, UK. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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 TGISM].

**Norma Lee:** An American M-F TG (or TV). Her poem, “Double Trouble,” 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 TGISM].

**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 themselves 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 swop 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.”

**Polly Esther:** An American M-F TS. Her piece, “High On Heels,” appeared in the *Educational TV Channel Newsletter*. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Rebecca:** A M-F TS, and past President of the Chicago Gender Society. Her pieces: "Essence," "Genie In The Bottle," "Coming Out" and "Butterflies," appeared in the society's newsletter, *The Primrose*. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F 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].

**Roberta Angela Dee:** An American M-F TS from Georgia. Her poem, "Who Are We?," appeared in *Passages*, published by The Gathering in New York City. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Robin Esch:** An American M-F TG from New England. Her piece, "I Am Woman, I A, Man," 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 TGISM].

**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," "Pansexual 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].

**Samantha:** An American M-F TV. Her piece, “The Shadows Of My Mind,” *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal* (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA). [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Sharon M.:** An American M-F TV from Mountainview, CA. She penned the limerick, “Lonely Transvestite.” [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Sidney:** An American F-M TS. His poem, “Reflections,” appeared in *FTM Forum*, published by Louis Sullivan in San Francisco, CA. [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 Ann Alwood:** An American, M-F TG. Her poem, “Enigma,” appeared in *Renaissance News*, published by the Renaissance Education Association in King of Prussia, PA. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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*. He also wrote "Ode To A Friend" and "The Original Mother." [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM]. See my poetic tribute, "For Steve, My Fine American Friend" [BOOK ONE, PART TWO: F-M TSISM].)

**Steve Townsend:** An American, M-F TV (or TG). His piece, "Genes," appeared in *Gender Review: A FACTual Journal*. [BOOK TWO, PART ONE: M-F TGISM].

**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].

**Suesan Stewart:** An American, M-F TS. Her piece, "Nocturne," appeared in *Transition*, published by Confide: Personal Counseling Services, Inc. in Tappan, NY. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Susan (Suzanne) Bishop:** An American, post-op M-F TS. Her poem, "Desire For The Diminutive," appeared in *The TV/TS Tapestry Journal* (published by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in Wayland, MA). She also wrote: "Diana," "A Song Of Sheba" and "Three Songs." [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**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], “captive,” “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].

**Unknown:** An American M-F TV (or TG). Her piece, “You’re The Woman I Married” appeared in *The Transvestian*, and *Crossroads Chatter*, published by the Crossroads Chapter in Pontiac, MI. [BOOK THREE: M-F TVISM].

**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].

**Watson A. Gray:** A friend of Abby Marie Green, an American, post-op M-F TS. Watson wrote a homecoming poem for her, “You’re A Woman Now,” which appeared in *The Transsexual Voice*, published in Atlanta, GA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**Wendy Gale Kohler:** An American, post-op M-F TS, and past Director of the former Transsexual Counseling Unit in San Francisco, CA in the early 1970s, who had sex-conversion surgery in Tijuana, Mexico in 1971. Her piece, “A Truly Blessed Event – Jan. 13, 1971,” appeared in the *EEF Newsletter*, published by the former Erickson Educational Foundation in Baton Rouge, LA. [BOOK ONE, PART ONE: M-F TSISM].

**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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