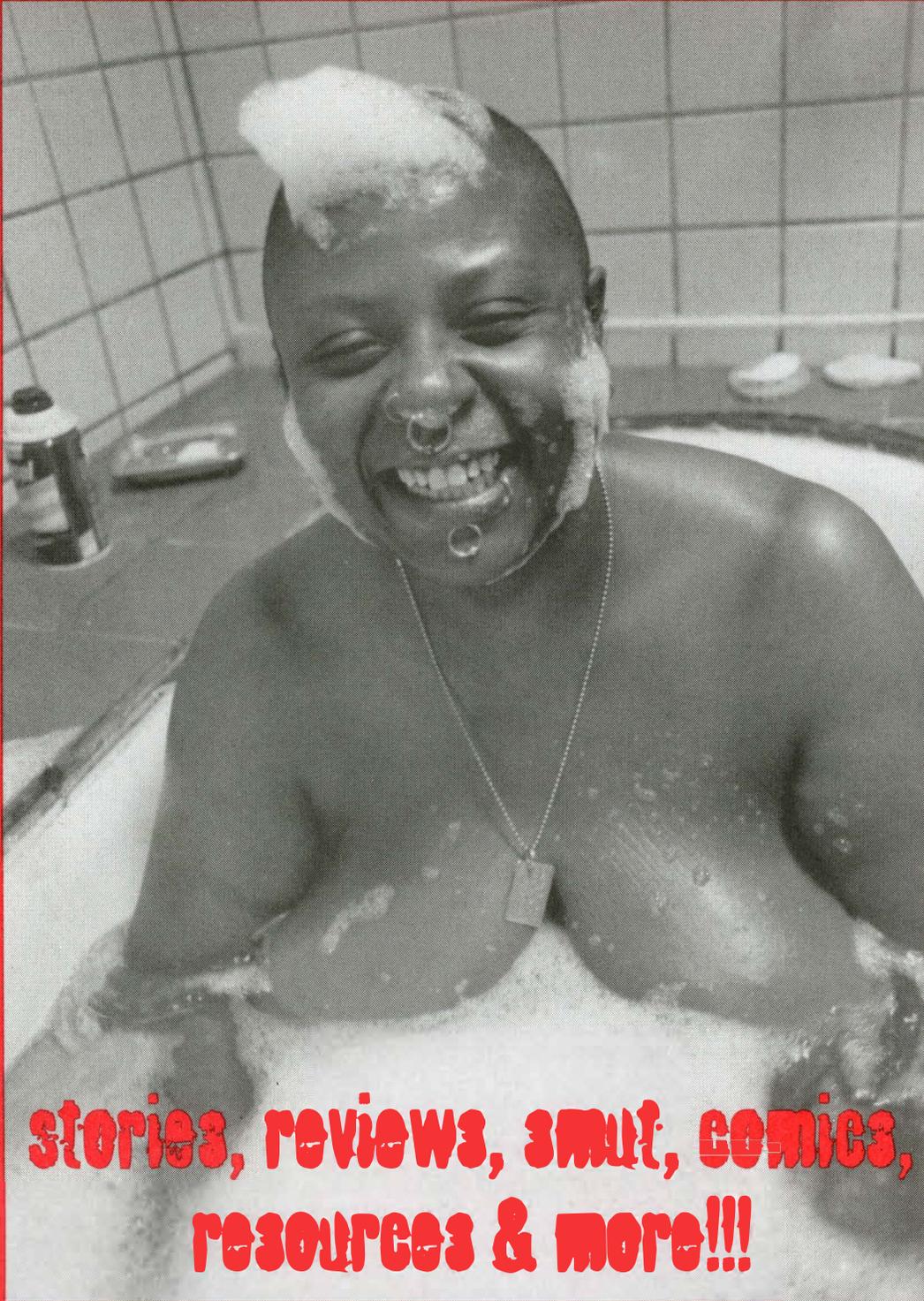


\$5

# FAT GIRL



A Zine for Fat Dykes and the Women Who Want Them



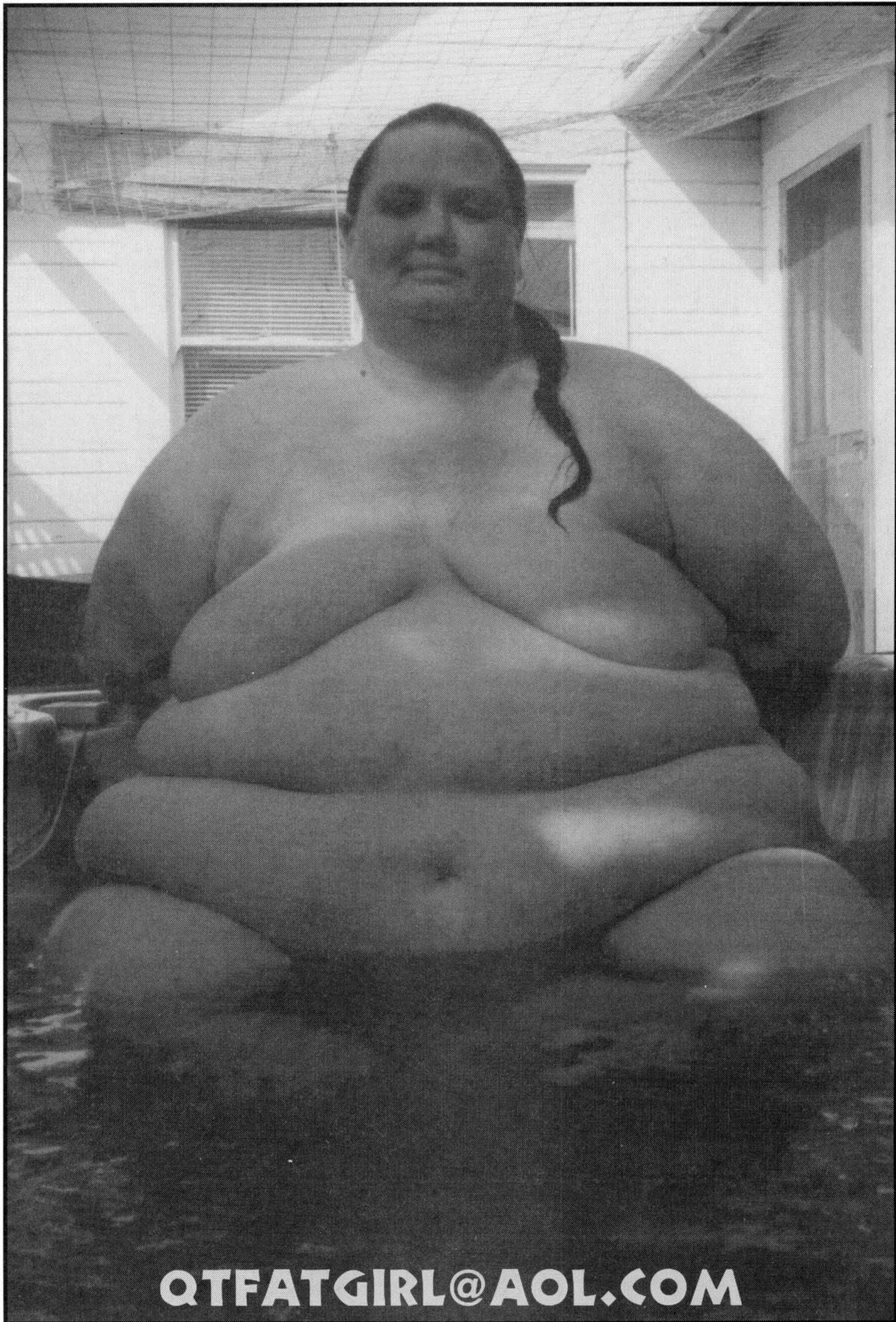
**Dorothy  
Allison  
On Fat**

**Fat  
& Thin  
together  
?@#\*!**

**TABOO  
SUBJECTS!**

- The F Word
- Fat & Healthy
- Racism & Fat Hatred
- Dirty Pictures
- Big Clean Fun
- No Apologies

**stories, reviews, smut, comics,  
resources & more!!!**



**QTFATGIRL@AOL.COM**

**PHOTO: M GILLASPIE**

# FaT GiRL #3 is...



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# Letters

## Like the finest chocolate!

Dear Divine Max Airborne and celestial staffers of the totally faboo *Fat Girl*: Thanks for the tres kind review/write-up of *Living Large* you ran in issue #2. It was unexpected, and most appreciated! I've even gotten a response to it; it was from a male porn collector who thought it might be similar material to your own groovy zine. So sorry to have disappointed him (yeah, right). Was totally blown away by issue deux of yr zine. Most zines usually blow out the jams on issue 1 and subsequently go downhill at varying rates of speed. You not only exceeded the initial promise of your premiere but have set a new standard for yourselves. I was able to devour #1 in one glorious sitting; I find #2 is so dense and intense that I'm having to merely nibble a bit at a time, like the finest chocolate. Will definitely have to get busy with some butt photos for y'all. Thanks again, for the review, and for your dedication to Fat Girls everywhere!

KM

## Sisterspirit responds

Dear *Fat Girl*:

This letter is in response to the "No Armless Chairs? Saw them off!" article about Sisterspirit Bookstore in Issue #2. We were very disappointed to see something such as this written about us, since this was the first we had heard of the issue. We have both armless chairs and chairs with arms (for volunteers and for customers), as well as a large bench in our store. There is a coffee cart and a lounge area in the community center that we are located in, but I can only speak for our store.

We are a co-op run, 100% volunteer women's bookstore, and at any time someone is free to attend our monthly open meetings to bring up an issue, or write a letter, etc. No one has mentioned a request for bigger/different chairs until this article, and therefore we have never "refused" to provide them. We would have gladly accommodated a request, had it been made. We have since then received suggestions from women in our community as to the kinds of chairs they prefer, and we are working to solve the "problem."

Sisterspirit welcomes women of all ages, nationalities, sexual orientations, disabilities, sizes, etc. If we are doing something that is not "right," we invite our community to let us know so we can do something to change it. Please help us improve by giving us feedback and suggestions, and not just accusatory statements that may or may not be true.

DM

A member of the Sisterspirit collective (and also a proud fat dyke)

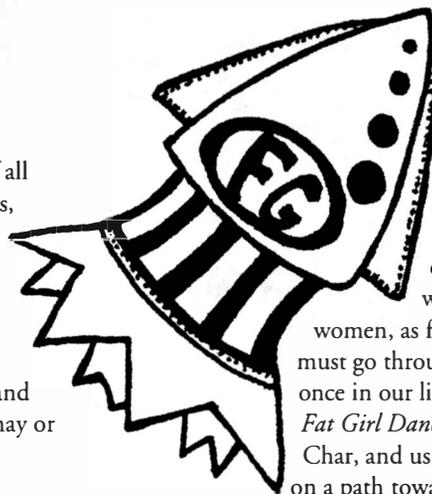
## Reviews: *Fat Girl Dances With Rocks*

Dear *Fat Girl*,

Wow—I had such a different reaction to *Fat Girl Dances With Rocks* [by Susan Stinson, Spinster's Ink] than Selena that I felt like she and I read different books! I \*loved\* *Fat Girl Dances*, so I'm writing to give *Fat Girl's* readers another perspective on this book. *Fat Girl Dances* is a small story but an important one. Char, the main character, is the 17-year old fat daughter of a fat mother. Like many of us who grew up fat, Char's life is full of regular humiliations both large and small, daily weight checks with mom, and unceasing pressure to achieve the ever-elusive but all-important goal—becoming thin. Only then is Char supposed to feel all right about herself.

But Char is more than the sum of her fat oppressions, and *Fat Girl Dances* is larger than its simple story line. *Fat Girl Dances* portrays the quiet moments when Char creeps towards self-acceptance. The novel beautifully shares the small steps Char takes towards loving herself. But in *Fat Girl Dances*, Susan Stinson gives us a heroine brave and true, capable also of making giant leaps into moments of utter freedom. The first time Char eats alone in a restaurant, \*ordering exactly what she wants to eat,\* is such a leap—the type of small, usually invisible heroics that fill the lives of women everywhere. During the summer of *Fat Girl Dances*, Char begins to stop participating in her own fat oppression.

Even though *Fat Girl Dances* is the story of a young woman's transformation, don't be put off by the heroine's youth. Char's changes, begun but not completed in



*Fat Girl Dances*, are changes each of us—as women, as fat women, as fat lesbians—must go through at least once in our lives. Really, *Fat Girl Dances* starts Char, and us beside her, on a path towards self-dis-

covery and self-love that we will continue throughout our lives.

So that's the story, sort of, and then there's the language of *Fat Girl Dances*. Susan Stinson bathes us in language both precise and extravagant, filled with details that make real just how it feels to live inside every curve, fold and bend of Char's fat body, and of our own. *Fat Girl Dances* is rich with description, evoking every sense as we learn, along with Char, just how our fat bodies really feel. With Char, we expand from a reality squeezed too tight outward to the very edges of our skin. *Fat Girl Dances* is a journey, a boat rocking on language so smooth and perfect that it seems utterly effortless, with images so clear and strong that we may think we've always seen them. And that's the brilliance of *Fat Girl Dances*—Susan Stinson takes a reality usually hidden in this fat-hating world, and exposes it, sharp edges and soft, to our view. *Fat Girl Dances* is a story some of us have lived and all of us should know. Sumptuous and musical in its images, abundantly—no, fatly full of life, *Fat Girl Dances* is a treasure to be shared by every woman on the journey to self-love.

XXXXL,

Judith Stein

## Reviews: *Women En Large*

Dear Fat Girls:

Language, words are the tools of a writer's trade, and everyone who writes uses those tools to the best of her ability, the best of her awareness of connotation, shades of meaning, points of reference. But none of us are exempt from the mistakes caused by the human tendency to hear our own voices saying our words, to believe that our own complex understanding of our intentions is iden-

tical to the simpler (and sometimes wrong) words we choose. I want to thank Candida for pointing out two serious errors of that kind in my work.

When I wrote the text for *Women En Large*, I knew some important things that the reader has no way to know. I knew that I intended the sentence immediately following Queen T'hisha's piece to refer to the entire preceding long essay, not to Queen T'hisha's words specifically. I knew that so well that I (and approximately ten other people who read the text before publication) missed the point that Candida accurately brings out: that sentence can be read as a misrepresentation of the very important things she has to say.

Similarly, I know what the word "outrageous" means to me. I tend to use it with more than a bit of envy for the flair and style (and courage) I associate with it. Nonetheless, it's my job as writer to be aware that this is not mainstream discourse (just as using "fat" as a compliment, or "girl" as an empowering word, is not mainstream discourse). By failing to take that into account, I made a bad choice. "Courageous" would have been a better word; certainly, its connotations would have been more in keeping with what I meant. I am deeply sorry that April Miller found her experience was tainted and her words dismissed. I take this opportunity to extend a personal apology to her for that experience. Nonetheless, I believe that her words are strong and memorable, and that readers will not find her empowering statements easy to dismiss.

If *Women En Large* goes into a second printing, "courageous" will replace "outrageous" and appropriate changes will be made in the text following Queen T'hisha's comments.

I am sorry that these two errors were sufficient reason for Candida to dismiss the entire text. Our experiences over the past six months confirm that *Women En Large* is serving its purpose as a successful life-changing phenomenon for many women of a wide variety of sizes, ethnicities, and life experiences, and we have every reason to believe it will continue to do so. I hope that the readers of *Fat Girl* will

choose, as Candida recommends, to taste the text (and the universally acclaimed photographs) for themselves, bearing in mind that no writer is perfect, and that an imperfect text is not the same as one with no merit.

Your magazine is terrific!

Abundantly yours,  
Debbie Notkin  
author/editor  
*Women En Large: Images of Fat Nudes*

### Fat bi visibility

Dear Fat Girlies:  
Howdy! Thank you very much for the review of *Pasty* in *Fat Girl* #2!!! I was SO surprised and flattered to be on the same page with Nomy (*I'm So Fucking Beautiful*) and Marilyn (*Fat!So?*). I can't wait to hear from other fat girls who read your magazine!!!

One leetle correction: I'm not a dyke, I'm a proud BI chick! Yee-HA! I love being fat AND bi, too—sometimes I feel like I could take over the world!!! YAY for fat bi visibility!

Comments on *Fat Girl* #2: tres steamy, especially the pictures of Dina and Candida. I wanna see more from these two babes! I also loved the article on the book *Women: En Large* ... that comment about April being "outrageous" made my blood fucking boil. April, you're not outrageous, except for being outrageously sexy! Your words about self-esteem and pride were so true and beautiful, and reflected the way I feel about MY lovely shape. You just GO, girl!

Take care all you gorgeous vixens, and I can't wait to get *Fat Girl* #3! Big wet steamy kisses,  
SK

### Starved

I would love to receive at least one issue of *Fat Girl*. I read about you both in *Deneuve* and *Girlfriends*. I am a short, round dyke who is starved for seeing more fat women, women who are fat and unashamed. I was thrilled from head to toes to see that such a publication exists. I would like to subscribe, for starters.

*ed. reply: Please also let the editors of the publications you mentioned (and others you read) know that you are a fat dyke and would like to see images of fat dykes in their pages, too.—FG*

*continued...*

# FAT GIRL

Fat Girl is a zine for and about fat dykes. Fat Girl seeks to create a broad-based dialogue that both challenges and informs our notions of fat dyke identity. We encourage dialogue based on our lived experiences as fat dykes, recognizing that our lives are various and multifaceted. Fat Girl is produced by an eclectic collective of fat dykes. We come in all shapes and sizes; from diverse ethnic cultures and different class backgrounds. Fat Girl is a political act; we want your participation.

Fat Girl collective members: April Miller, Barbarism, Bertha Pearl, Candida Albicans, Max Airborne, Oso and Selena.

Staff photographer: Laura Johnston.

Layout: April, Barb, Max and Selena.

Business caca: Max

Editorial/Photo caca: Barb

Transcription/copy edit queens: Candida & Max

Ad sales: Bertha

Logo by Fish.

Other contributors to this issue: Amiee Ross, Betty Rose Dudley, Cath Thompson, Charlotte Cooper, Christine, Crystal Mason, Dana Blumrosen, Dorothy Allison, Jill Posener, Karen Stimson, Laura Winton, Lea Arellano, Lila Sophia Robinwood, Lori Ann Selke, Maria Cimino, Marian Bailey, Michele G, Sisters of Size, Sondra Solo, Steph, Syndee Branton, Tristan Nathe, Val, Vicki Hodges, Wolfie.

**Cover photo:** Crystal Mason by Laura Johnston.

**Back cover photo:** Barbarism

Thanks to our devoted readers and contributors, the friends who never tire of hearing our Fat Girl sagas, and the generous souls who see fit to send us extra money (we always need it). Special thanks to Meridith Lawrence & Judith Stein (Pumpke and Tubby) for lighting the way.

Subscriptions: Send \$20/4 issues, \$5/sample along with a signed age statement to the address below.

Stores: Our terms are 60/40, you pay shipping.

Ads: Business cards: \$40, quarter page: \$75, half page: \$150. Send your ads ready to scan. We can shrink to fit. Ad design is available for an additional fee.

Submissions: We accept original work by women that's relevant to fat dykes. Please include a S.A.S.E. with your stuff. We like written submissions that are typed & in a simple font (so we can scan it). We are always on the lookout for art!!! Don't ever send us your original copy of anything. Please include a brief bio with your stuff and model releases for your photos (we can send you these if you don't have them).

Next deadline is August 15, 1995.

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San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 567-6757 or 550-7202,  
airborne@sirius.com or boot@sirius.com

## is a political act

## Worth the wait

It's very exciting that you're doing a Web page! Our email address: 75773.717@compuserve.com—thanks for including us! I also want to thank you for the wonderful things you said about Largesse in *Fat Girl 2*.

Calling Largesse “our friendly neighborhood fat archivist” is just about the nicest thing anyone's ever said about us! We've gotten several orders for the sourcebook and other stuff which I'm sure resulted directly from your listings. And while I'm writing this I want you to know how much I LOVE your zine...the second issue is even better than the first and really inclusive of the community you serve. It's ironic that the segment of the movement that pioneered fat liberation—radical fat dykes and bykes—has had to wait nearly a quarter century to get its own magazine, but *Fat Girl* was worth the wait! I expect (even) great(er) things to come of you! Keep in touch—Big hugs to all.  
Karen Stimson, Largesse

## Giant Ass speaks

It might seem obvious to some but it should not go unsaid—I must tell all you “phAt fat girls” that your zine is most excellent and extraordinary! It's been a long time coming that the voice of fat girls be heard!—So keep on gettin down and serious with your groovicious publication. I'll spread the word locally. Stay with it—the universe needs *Fat Girl!*

xo stacy sheehan  
Giant Ass Publishing

## Yippie!

You all rule! I've been a fat activist for almost ten years (was stuck in diet hell for eight years before that) and am so excited to see your zine! You go girly.

## Trapped in a cuddly prison

Hello, “Fat Girls”,

I just received the second issue of *Fat Girl* (which is the first issue I have seen.) I loved it tremendously. Looking at the photographs made me realize how unaccustomed we are to seeing fat people in pictures, unless it's someone's idea of comic relief or “grotesque.” I am so, so happy to see serious and beautiful pictures of fat women. Like another reader whose letter you published, I have been calling myself “fat” with pride. Many people misunderstand and think that I am putting myself down, as if being fat could only mean something negative. I love to eat and I still struggle with the idea of “eating too much,” meaning eating more than my

share, as well as/besides “overeating.”

Women in this culture seem to be socialized toward thinking restraint toward food is “feminine” and that it is polite to go hungry rather than to eat one's fill.

I am not even sure that I am, in fact, “fat,” though (as my mother is sure to remind me) I am certainly “overweight” (whatever that means). I have stopped looking at the scales long ago, since I never diet and I dislike going along with this game of “checking up on” my weight, as if it makes any difference. I am short and have a belly, and rather than being perceived as “scary” as some of your contributors noted, I seem to be trapped in the prison of “cuddly,” as in “innocent and childlike,” not as in “sexy.” This is frustrating, as I feel that I cannot define me as I wish to define myself, but am defined by my body-type (and probably by the additional condition of having a physical disability). It is on this ground that I very strongly relate to so much of what is being said in *Fat Girl*. People claim that “you can't judge a book by its cover,” but people seem to make a whole host of unfounded assumptions when they look at fat people.

I can't wait to see subsequent issues and may yet contribute to one of them. My only reservation concerns the breadth of sexual experience explored within *Fat Girl*. It's not that I am among that class of prudes who cannot even bear to hear about S/M practices, let alone look at them. Rather, I think our sexual vision can be wider than this, can be wider even than the supposed polarities of “vanilla” vs. “S/M” stories. Surely there is more to life than this? Also, I hope that you continue with the useful practical tips you offer, including the resource guides, and the personal experiences. Those are a joy to read.

Bountifully,  
I J

## Manhattan visitor's bureau

Dear *Fat Girl*,

The staff of this zine deserves great praise from all fat girls. I am a completely hunky dyke who lives in Manhattan, NYC and I adore your magazine. Yes, I am fat, but I am a brilliant bohemian she-goddess who can make the little girls swoon when I care to. If any of the *Fat Girl* staff visit Manhattan, I would be honored to show them the town. I now remove my hat, place it on my heart and sing your praises.

Retropixie

## Readers and Writers II

Dear *Fat Girl*,

Thank you so much for existing. I had gotten to a place in my life where I could accept being fat, but until I read your magazine (issues 1 & 2), I had no clue that being a fat girl could be celebrated. I was lucky enough last year to run into another large woman who was so sensuous she broke through all my fat-phobia. I'll always be grateful to her for showing me the pleasure of loving a large woman. It took reading *Fat Girl* for me to accept that all large women, myself included, are worthy of being visible, worshipped, and paid attention to. As a writer and an artist I have decided to include large women in my work. They might not always be the main focus but they will be there. No more so-called perfect worlds where everyone is thin and that is the only standard of beauty.

At Readers and Writers II, the conference put on by A Different Light bookstore, there was a panel called “The Boy/Girl Next Door Need Not Apply.” I would like to tell you what the panel was supposed to be discussing, but it wasn't clear to the audience, the panelists, or the moderator. The panel consisted of Max Airborne (because of *Fat Girl!*), Anne Ogborn (because she is transgender?), and Julia Dolphin Trahan (because she is a performance artist, because she uses a crutch?). The moderator was Joan Jett Black. All of these people are the boy/girl next door. You might not think so because of media invisibility. By media I mean most writers. Until we all start writing about ourselves and others, there will continue to be the perception that we are fringe elements. That there are not enough of us to pay attention to. I read books and stories about lesbians because I want to see that part of my life reflected. I want to know I am not alone. For the same reasons, I want to read *Fat Girl*. I also read to find out about other kinds of people. Is it too much to ask that other writers consider the wide range of flavors that people come in and try to include some of them? I'm not asking for a PC, one-of-everything story, just that more than a narrow few be included.

The panel was scheduled at the same time as two other very popular panels, which was a pity because it just made sure we would remain “on the fringe” and that the writers that really needed to hear us probably wouldn't. I want to thank Max Airborne and her fellow *Fat Girl* editor for showing up and staying, even when it looked like there would only be five audience members.

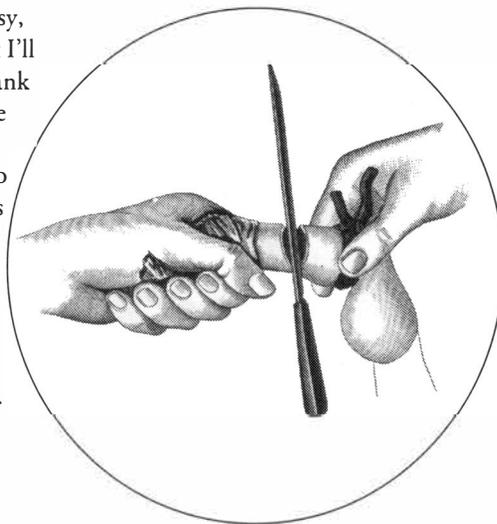
And thank you all for encouraging fat dykes to be visible and verbal. You give me hope.  
LR

### Fat dykes in Japan

Dear *Fat Girl* Dykes,  
I want to tell you what a huge effect your zine has had on my life, but I hardly know where to start! I'm no stranger to Fat Liberation—I was organizing Fat Dyke workshops at Michigan Womyn's Music Festival 1986-88, but I tell you, that stuff needs doing over and over again. Or needs constant reinforcement, or something. I was truly overwhelmed by the photos—I don't think I've ever seen such frank pictures of fat dykes. And you came along just when I needed you, just that week I'd been working with my therapist on "choosing to see my own beauty"—not easy when you are the only fat dyke around. Not only that, practically the only fat woman. I never see a dyke whose weight could possibly be within a hundred pounds of mine (not sure what, but I'm probably 300). And that makes it hard to appreciate that I could be beautiful. I also got to talk to my lover about some things around sex I was finding it hard to express,

using *Fat Girl* as a starting point. Not easy, but necessary. Lots more I could say, but I'll suffice with Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, you are bodacious dykes, and I hope you'll get enough \$ to go on producing your fabulous zine. I'm enclosing a photo—well, I know what you look like, so it's only fair. I don't have any less-clothed ones, and even if I did I wonder if I'd have the nerve to send one. This internalized fat oppression stuff sure is pervasive, thank the Goddess you've come along to shake us all into **dealing** with it. NOW!

Lesbially,  
AH  
Tokyo, Japan

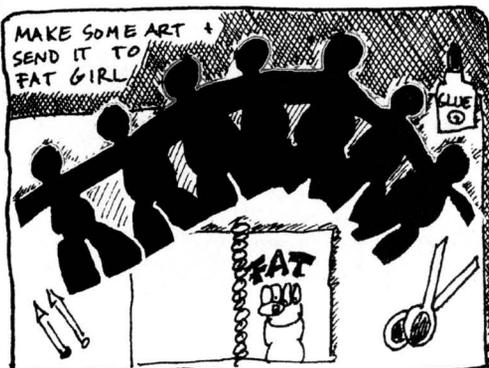


### FAT GIRL letters policy

We love receiving letters from our women readers. Consent to publish your letter is assumed unless you specify otherwise. Send letters, art, submissions, gifts and money to: *Fat Girl*, 2215-R Market St. #193, San Francisco, CA 94114. And don't forget, you can also send us email at [airborne@sirius.com](mailto:airborne@sirius.com).

We do not print letters or submissions from men. Please remember: *Fat Girl* is a zine for fat dykes and the women who want them. ★

### Things to do on a



# Lip Service?

Hey, word about FaT GiRL is getting out. We've gotten brief mentions in such glossy magazines as *Out*, *Deneuve*, *Girlfriends*, and *On Our Backs*. But do you see any fat women in these publications? Ever? (When?) What about other kinds of media?

Sure, we're publicity whores. We're hungry! Fat women are starving for visibility. If the pages of these magazines were any indication, you'd think the entire gay/lezzie population was skinny and white. As though fat lesbians (in ALL our variations) were some kind of rarity!

We appreciate that these publications have made a point of mentioning our zine—and several other editors have recently complimented us on our work, as well. But I'd hate to think that by mentioning one zine catering to fat dyke interests, they think they've done their part in representing us. (Whew, now that someone's covering diverse fat women, we don't have to?)

Hey, think of this minor media attention as a foot in the door. Fat queers are more visible than ever, and in great numbers, so please use this opportunity to make yourselves visible! Some publications are possibly even eager to please a fat readership now that they see a demand for FaT GiRL, but just haven't made the outreach. Send photos and articles about yourself or other fat dykes to magazines you'd like to see yourself in. Are you a fat athlete? Submit to *Girljock*! Want to be in *On Our Backs*? Deluge them with fat photos! Feel like *The Advocate* is just a skinny white boys' club? Submit an article about fat activism in your community.

Of course, FaT GiRL still wants, craves, and welcomes your submissions. We need you. But don't let fat visibility end with us. After all, if we're going to get *Lip Service*, it had better be good!

—Candida for FaT GiRL✳

## EXTRA! EXTRA!! THOUSANDS OF FAT DYKE VIDEOS AT THE 1995 SF QUEER FILM FEST!

Sounds too good to be true? Well, it's sort of true... FaT GiRL is sponsoring a film/video showing on "Lesbian Body Politics" Saturday June 17 at 2:00 pm at the Victoria Theater (16th and Mission)—not to be missed! Curated by the fabulous Junkyard, this showing of six shorts weighs heavy in the fat dyke area—four being about queer, fat, and women. The fact that all the videos are not "the fat dyke flicks that I have been waiting for my whole life" is because these haven't been made yet, but that shouldn't stop you from coming to the fest to enjoy the creative work that has been offered.

And while I'm on the topic of *should*: all of you faboo fat dykes who are making videos and talking about making videos, get cracking! The 1996 Film fest is only a year away—much too long for all of us to wait! It frustrates me that we couldn't have an all fat dyke video/film fest to devour!!! (Although the non-fat dyke videos in this showing are tremendously important pieces of video about radical body politics.) Here's the lineup:

*The Top Pig* by Angela Holtschmidt, 1994, Germany. A sophisticated animation of a fat dancing burlesque pig who manipulates her copious flesh into a traditional femme diva shape—a painful transformation. This short is very sharp, both ironic and provocative.

*Gracious Flab/Gracious Bone* by Evie Leder, 1995, US. A rhythmic and sensual piece about the work of fat dyke author Susan Stinson. Stinson reads (really performs) her work from both *Belly Songs* and *Fat Girl Dances with Rocks*. Interspersed with Stinson's radical fat dyke vision of what she does as an author and a poet, this video manages to capture the power and nuances of Stinson's work.

*Fat Chance* by Anne Goden, 1994, Canada. (With an alternative video industrial feel) this video is about a fat dyke loving her body—surrounded by food, her lover, her thoughts on her

mother—it worked for me. Her sense of self is distinct and refreshing. Full of yummy moments of fat dyke flesh being groped by a hungry lover...fat tummy being ravaged...fat dyke being fed by lover...fat sexually aggressive dyke on a movie screen! I want more!

*Big Fat Slenderella* by Lorna Boschman, 1993, Canada. This video has that documentary feel—with a twist. Varied fat people talking about their experiences with their bodies, dieting, and the dieting industry, the twist being a very distracting background to all the speakers: artsy shots of nature—mostly of the ocean and aquatic animals—that compete with and frustrate what is being said. The fat images are constrained into a small space for a final point of how we should be following our natural rhythms and self. This definitely needed better integration. Worth it for the interviews and the high points of anti-diet industry commercials, and a glorious fat woman smashing a scale to itsy bits with the mean swing of a sledge hammer. Get down!

Plus the following radical lesbian body politics pieces (which I haven't seen): *Risk: Lesbians & AIDS*, *Breast Exam*, *Madonna in Me*, and *I Remember Running*. Tickets are \$5.00 and are available through BASS Ticket outlets.

Finally, IMPORTANT KUDOS to Frameline staffer Junkyard for making this happen! On top of providing a showing of radical lesbian body politics she is working on FAT DYKE ACCESSIBILITY TO THE FILM FESTIVAL THEATERS—demanding that the CASTRO AND VICTORIA THEATER HAVE FAT SEATING UPON REQUEST.

Call Frameline for further info at (415) 703-8650; (for nerds check out <http://www.frameline.org/>). Or call the House Manager at the Victoria Theater at (415) 863-7576, or the Castro Theater at (415) 621-6350. —Barbarism✳

# editorial

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**Fat** is a big, fat deal for most of us. Regardless of body size, most of us have some kind of relationship with fat. But what is fat? Are you fat? What does this mean in a world that measures itself as *too fat*—no matter what? Some people think fat is just a construct. If fat is a construct how can we begin to grasp the parameters of that structure?. Can you describe fat? Smell it? Taste it? Feel it?

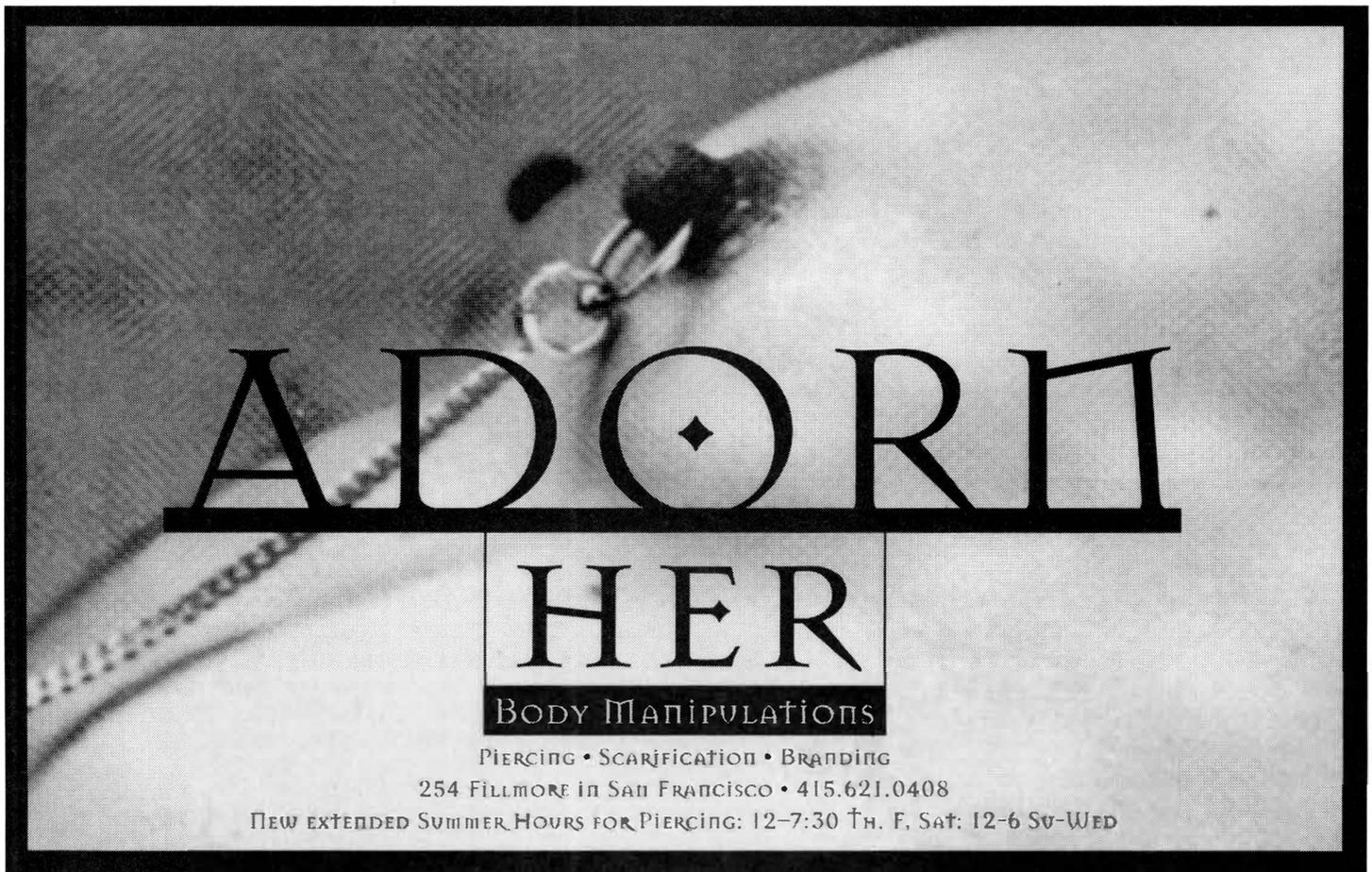
Everyone has their own line, of course—what is the line for you? Is that line different when it's not you? What about who you're with? Fat is power. Fat is lack of power. Fat is identity. If you claim fat for yourself, is it yours to claim? What is it with all these skinny girls who think they're fat? Isn't there a difference between being told you're fat by society and actually *being* fat? Are these women our friends and allies? Some say "How dare they call themselves fat! Doesn't that make us invisible?" But who is this "us," this "we," this "fat community" anyway? Some of us are fat, chubby, super size, skinny, thin—it depends on whose dictionary you're reading. What does a 400-pound woman have in common with a 200-pound one? Or with a 100-pound woman who thinks she's fat

because she's been told it all her life? What are our differences? How can we communicate with each other when it seems we are speaking different languages and looking through different lenses?

We don't claim to have the answers. We just wanna talk about it. We're here to give fat dykes and our friends a space to get down and dirty with this stuff. If something in these pages pushes your buttons, tell us about it!

And speaking of pushing buttons, we've been quite busy doing that and more since the last issue of *Fat Girl*. We made some really amazing friends and connections at OutWrite, a national queer writers conference, where we were part of a panel (to scare the skinny white boys publishing glossy gay fashion mags) and gave a workshop about self-publishing; we guest-lectured a class at UC-Santa Cruz (in which *Fat Girl* was required reading!); we participated on a panel at the Readers and Writers II conference here in San Francisco; and were guests on Prime Time with Joan Jett Blakk, a local talk show. We're fantasizing about getting a bus and going on tour—let us know if you'd like to hostess us in your town!

—Barbarism and Max for FaT GiRL★



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# Fat and Healthy



by Lori Ann Selke

**T**oo often, being both fat and healthy is seen as impossible, contradictory. Being fat is, if not a disease, than at least a medical condition, and (lucky for us?) a treatable one. And besides, it's much more healthy to be thin, right?

Not in my not-so-humble opinion. Fat girls, especially self-accepting fat girls who take care of themselves in a positive fashion, can be just as healthy as everyone else; often healthier, even, especially when you consider the detrimental health effects of yo-yo dieting or what have you.

It is very difficult to find accurate, unbiased health information for fat women. Sometimes, it seems that every medical problem we have is linked to our weight, especially by fat-phobic doctors. We need accurate information about what we are and are not at risk for because of our weight, what alternatives to losing weight we have for treating certain conditions, how to exercise well and eat right without worrying about how much fat we are burning or how many calories we are consuming. Eventually, I hope to talk about many of these topics: nutrition and exercise, alternative treatments for health conditions commonly experienced by fat women which do not involve losing weight, and similar topics. (And I encourage people with specific questions to write this magazine.)

But first, I'm going to start off by discussing some health problems fat girls are less prone to than other women. We're told that we're unhealthy and at risk for so many things; but being fat also reduces your chances of suffering from certain conditions.

Foremost among these is osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a condition in which, over time, bones lose mass and eventually become brittle and prone to fractures and collapse. Women are more prone to osteoporosis than men, and there has been a lot of press about how devastating osteoporosis can be, as well as the

fact that it is both incurable and preventable. But there are many other risk factors besides being female in regards to osteoporosis. Three of the most notable are being underweight, small-boned, and lacking a history of load-bearing exercise. It seems that fat women's bones become denser and stronger from a lifetime of carrying notable weight. Thus, even if fat women begin to suffer bone loss in their later years, their bones have farther to go before they deteriorate to the point that osteoporosis sets in. This doesn't mean you shouldn't maintain

carrying extra weight gives our bodies spare energy stores to access when our blood sugar drops; perhaps those stores also help in some way to regulate our blood sugar levels when we eat too much sugary food at once, by providing an alternate, steadier energy source. No one really knows for sure; but anecdotal evidence certainly seems to show a strong correlation between increased weight and decreased frequency and severity of low blood sugar symptoms.

A higher body weight also seems to correlate with less complications during

pregnancy, for all you fertile kid-contemplating dykes out there. There seems to be a reason women gain significant non-baby weight during pregnancy; the extra

weight again seems to be protective in some yet-undefined way. Certainly, it is linked with less risk of low birth weight, stillbirth, and premature birth among other things. Doctors used to try to restrict weight gain in pregnant women on the mistaken belief that it would prevent toxemia. Many pregnant women also diet in an attempt to limit how much weight they retain after their pregnancy ends, an idea that seems downright dangerous to me. Nowadays, many doctors set ideal minimum weight gains for pregnant women, a vast improvement. Eating well and nutritiously, without regard to weight at all, is the best plan for pregnancy.

And fat women are also less prone to malnutrition, which shouldn't come as too much of a surprise. It may come as a surprise that malnutrition isn't confined to Third World countries or poor urban neighborhoods; however, when you consider that the World Health Organization defines starvation as a calorie intake of less than 1000 a day, and that reducing diets in this country often restrict calorie intake to 700-1000 calories a day (and in some cases, even as low as 500), you can see that malnutrition can be very easy to experience, even if one is white and comfortably middle-



**We are told that we are unhealthy and at risk for so many things; but being fat also reduces your chances of suffering from certain conditions.**

a calcium-rich diet, of course, but it does mean that the next time your fat-phobic doctor suggests for some reason or other that you might want to lose some weight, you can look at him or her with wide eyes and say, "Oh no, I couldn't do that, you see, it might put me at risk for osteoporosis..."

Another condition that carrying more body weight seems to reduce is the effects of having low blood sugar. (However, hypoglycemia, medically-defined low blood sugar, is often considered a precursor of diabetes, which is supposed to be linked to being "overweight." Here I'm referring more to the symptoms accompanying non-medically diagnosable low blood sugar, which is why I'm not using the medical term.) Many women who suffer from low blood sugar notice that when they eat sugary foods on an empty stomach, they get a burst of energy, followed by spells of dizziness. (What's happening is that the body's blood sugar peaks, and then drops significantly, causing the dizzy spells.) Also, people with a tendency toward low blood sugar often begin to feel woozy and faint, or sometimes sleepy, when they've gone too long without eating, because their blood sugar levels have dropped too low. Perhaps



## Fat and Healthy, continued

class. Fat girls who eat right, however, aren't likely to short themselves on essential nutrients the way chronic dieters are more likely to.

Which brings us to the hazards of dieting that fat girls can avoid by being big and proud. Most notably, chronic dieters put a lot of strain on their hearts, probably from the repeated need to adjust to weight gains and losses. A stable weight, of whatever proportion, is much easier on the heart. Regular aerobic exercise is even better for one's cardiovascular health, and is certainly to be recommended over a weight-loss program if you're concerned about this.

There are some health conditions that seem to correlate with being fat, such as gallstones, diabetes, and joint problems. Later columns will hopefully address these. For now, keep in mind, and be sure to tell your doctor, that correlation does not equal causation; being fat does not necessarily contribute to these conditions, they are merely associated with each other. Also keep in mind that most health conditions supposedly associated with being fat are actually most likely linked with on-again off-again dieting. Almost all research done in this country relating fatness to health problems is actually done on chronic dieters.

It's my hope that the information in this column will help you be happy, content, outrageous and healthy dykes, prepared with energy and information to challenge stereotypes and ignorance about fat women and health. Spread the word. After reading this column, tell everyone how being the way you are actually keeps you healthier than you might be otherwise! And then explain, in excruciating, gloating detail... ✨

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**FaT GiRL is thrilled to have *Fat and Healthy* as an ongoing feature. Send your health-related questions to: Fat Girl, 2215-R Market St. #193, San Francisco, CA 94114. We'd also love to have regular columns on other subjects. If there's something you'd like to write about, drop us a line!**

## The Lesbian Health Guide

a review (mostly) by M.G. Cimino and Sondra Solo

"Food is love!!!" Did you know that? I didn't either until I made the mistake of perusing the 'self help' guides at the local Barnes and Noble. A quick, unofficial study of the psychiatry and addiction/recovery section informed me that right after 'co-dependency,' love-starved fat people were the hot topic. One book blamed my mother, another my father, while one was simply entitled "Daily Affirmations for the Compulsive Overeater." Two of the selections came with self-help 'workbooks.' How will you achieve recovery with the help of these workbooks? Can we all say, "Weigh and measure your food"? So, be warned, the attack on fat people has again cloaked itself yet another disguise.

Because of this specter of dieting, which turns up far too often, it is with great trepidation that I approach any health guide or medical advice. Too often, any helpful messages I might receive are lost in the blare of "Lose weight!!"

Well, thank the Goddess for the *Lesbian Health Guide*, edited by Regan McClure and Anne Vespry. Published by the Queer Press in Canada, this book begins with "Body Image and Eating Disorders" as its first section. The section opens with a Fat Oppression Roundtable. Under the body issues section the problems are listed as: Anorexia, Bulimia, Weight Preoccupation/Yo-Yo Dieting, and Compulsive Eating. The chapter discusses each briefly, and then gives suggestions for the lesbian interested in improving her body image. For example, "Weight preoccupation includes anything from a desire to be thinner, to counting calories, or continually trying to lose weight." It is the first health guide I've seen mention that fat women are oppressed and receive poor medical care because so much attention is placed on their appearance. The section is excellent and contains one of the best discussions of body image, society's influence, and what you can do about it, that I've seen in a health book.

The book continues, discussing problems that affect all of us including stress, menstruation, child rearing, menopause, drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, lesbian abuse, and living in poverty. Unfortunately, most of the hospital/medical care advice is applicable to Canadians who work and live under a different health care system.

If anyone is interested in getting a copy ask your local bookstore. If need be, they can order you a copy from Bookpeople Wholesalers in Oakland. They can have it for you the next day. The price should be about \$15.

Whether you buy the *Lesbian Health Guide* or not, take 5 minutes to participate in some fat activism: Step 1) go to your local mondo-chain bookstore. 2) Proceed immediately to the 'Self-Help' section and fill your arms with an assortment of 'Food is Love' titles, which you can then helpfully disperse around the store, placing them carefully backwards, behind other books and in other convenient locations. 3) With all the extra room on the shelf, turn other titles, such as *Addiction to Dieting*, *Shadow on a Tightrope*, and *Fat Women Speak*, so that their covers face the consumer. 4) As you depart the store, pat yourself on the back for making the fat-phobic world a better place. ✨

## Three Inches

syndee branton 1995

three inches and life will be better, new worlds will open up for the taking  
three inches and the fucking voice in the back of my mind might shut up  
three inches and I'll be sexy, attract lovers, a full-blown sexual threat  
three inches and I can dress for success, climb the corporate ladder,  
be everything I'm supposed to be  
three inches and I can swallow this lie again and believe it  
They call it dying by inches  
I do it all the time

# Difficult Seductress!

# Dorothy Allison

interviewed by Barbarism

I creamed over the opportunity to talk about fat with very busy Dorothy Allison: brilliant, sexy author extraordinaire, whose challenging writing saved my life and provides me with constant inspiration. Her works include the award-winning bestseller *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Skin*, *Trash*, and *The Women Who Hate Me*. Dorothy is currently working on *Two or Three Things I know for Sure*, due out this September from Dutton, and took precious time out to talk to *Fat Girl*.

**Barbarism:** What's your new book about?

**Dorothy:** It's about my family (with photos)—the photos are my mother's snap shots. And then we're pairing them with snap shots of when I was in my 20s and 30s, when I was in the lesbian collective. Some of them when I was a difficult seductress.

**B:** A difficult seductress!

The first book I picked up of yours was *The Women Who Hate Me*, and it saved my life. I was really suicidal and having a really hard time. I picked it up in a *Different Light*, and sat there and read it from cover to cover. I had no money whatsoever and I came back and I read it and I just kept coming back and reading it all week long. And it really made a difference—it spoke to me. There's something about the language you use that I felt as a fat woman, that you were talking about people in my life in a way that I rarely have come across as a reader. So I want to talk to you about fat.

**D:** I always think of *Dumpling Child* as my fat poem. Since I've had some lovers who were obviously "high up"—you were pretty high up when you were on their thighs.

**B:** As you were coming out as a dyke, was fat also a related issue for you, something you talked about or you were conscious of?

**D:** We never talked about it. I don't think I have ever not been conscious of it. I mean, it makes for, it's like another level of excruciating self-consciousness when you're a fat lesbian. Especially when I was a teenager, you never got in bed with it but it was always there. And it was because of the kind of girls that I would go after, they would tend to be these jocks. Jocks don't have fat, they have muscles. It made for an enormous amount of self-consciousness. A sense of not being a match for them. So I had to work harder. Way harder.

**B:** In your coming out process did you ever come across people assuming that you became a lesbian because you were fat?

**D:** Well, I think that's one of the givens. But I had other stuff going on. They had a long list of reasons for me to be a lesbian, on top of being fat and ugly. Basically, when I was a kid, they were equal. Fat was equal to ugly. It's really funny, because today I was working on these photos and there are all these pictures of my sisters and other women in my family and most of the women in my family are what we call "gravy-fed girls." Nice, big, husky, strong looking, with wide faces. But my editor is like, "you know, you're not ugly. These kids aren't ugly." And I would say "yeah, but look at 'em. They *think* they're ugly." And they're not the American ideal of a svelte, young teenager.

**B:** It's funny going back to pictures, I just went through that process. My grandmother died recently. She helped raise me. So I did an altar and I went through a lot of old family photos...looking at myself in pictures and remembering who I was at that point, and

feeling like a fat person, and having been told at that age that I was fat, but when I look at those pictures and I think, "I don't look fat. What's going on here?"

**D:** That's what hit me really hard, because I can remember this sense of being this grotesque, fat creature, and that's how I thought of myself, but in pictures I don't even look fat! So, it's like this complete disjunction. I can remember, christ, in '73, going to a what was kind of a body-consciousness group, and it was this huge thing. We were all supposed to name the part of your body that you're most ashamed of that you haven't made friends with. And it was like, "Part of my body? You're talking about my entire body!" But I look at these pictures and I don't recognize myself as that person. I recognize the situation, I recognize the other people, but *that* body is not how I ever saw myself.

**B:** It is a disjuncture.

Do you think the meaning of fat has changed for you from when you were growing up to what it means now for you?

**D:** I'm not sure that it's any more accurate, my body sense. I think my body sense is permanently damaged. I have to constantly check in to get a sense of what my real dimensions are. Hell, even what size I wear. But mostly just a sense of who I am in space. But when I was young, I had no notion. My notion was of this excruciating self-consciousness. I hunched, I wore dark clothing, my god, I used read those wretched magazines looking for clues on how to hide the fact that I was this fat person. Except that, when I was around 24, and I became really involved in the feminist activist community, there was an enormous amount of information that said "This is all a cultural myth and you have to resist it." So I learned this language to lay on top of it. And I was trying to live up to the language, but I didn't notice that it had much impact on people's behavior.

**B:** Ha ha ha, that's for sure! In terms of fat, how has it shaped your self-awareness of your sexuality?

**D:** I think it's made me more sexually aggressive. Because I always assumed I had to be a little bit faster and more pushy than anyone else. Anyways, my girlfriends says, "You know, if you ain't pretty you gotta work harder."

**B:** Do you think it has affected your development as a writer?

**D:** Hmm. The sense of being ugly has affected my sense, my development as a writer, in the sense of being an outsider, physically an outsider. I look, I watch people and I notice things. And I think most people don't usually pay any attention. I notice, for example, what colors people choose to wear, how they dress, how they move their bodies, how they *don't* move their bodies. All that comes not from being a writer but from being a fat woman. Watching other fat women.

**B:** That's very true. I think I spend a lot of time into the visual, and I remember people visually—I have a hard time with names, but I'll remember what they wore and how they moved physically. I don't know if it's a part of my defense process or if I'm trying to figure out where I fit in relationship to people in the world.

**D:** Oh hell, get real! We're always looking for somebody fatter than us so that we don't look quite so outside the pale. I'm always completely aware of my weight in relation to my friends' weight. Even though I really don't approve of this, I don't like it, and the other thing is I don't date skinny girls. I'm not comfortable with skinny girls, either physically or emotionally. They're just too foreign to me. I have to really work to get their stuff. But I figure it's justice. They're prejudiced against *me*, and it balances out.

**B:** Do you think your readers are aware of you being fat?

**D:** Ha! [laughter] No! They're not aware of anything. I show up...[more laughter] It depends. You know, because I've been running around the country for 20 years now doing this, there's a lesbian feminist audience that's aware of me, of who I am physically and who I am in the world and what I look like, but I go to these University gigs and they ain't got a clue. Because basically, publishers tend to want to use the photo of you that makes you look the skinniest, and they tend to want to use the photo of you that makes you look the youngest and the most socially acceptable. Well, by the time I get to Universities I'm usually three days exhausted, and you know water weight retention, and I *really* don't look like those pictures. [Big laugh] Oh god. But they tend to be well behaved.

**B:** What kind of assumptions do you come across about your size when you're interacting?

**D:** People are *really* careful.

**B:** So here we are asking you all these questions!

**D:** If I show up as Dorothy Allison the writer, they tend to be extremely polite and really careful. But, I travel a lot, and when you're traveling nobody knows who the fuck you are, and a fat woman with a suitcase is living hell. People are rude, it's not just the physical stress, the tiny little airplane seats, people are mean. I get on a bus and people will refuse to sit with me, people say nasty things, I'm hauling my luggage through the airport to get to the next plane and people have literally tripped me. This is a real...People hate fat women. And they have complete permission to act out on it. So, when I am anonymous, when I'm just another fat woman, it's mean. When I show up as the writer they tend to be more polite and very careful. I suspect that the answer is get rich and famous. I haven't made rich yet, but I'm working hard on famous, and the don't fuck with me stuff.

That's another thing. I'm 46. You mouth at me in an airport and I mouth back. I find that they're really startled.

**B:** I think they think that we're so big that everything bounces off of us. They don't really see us as real people, and they definitely expect us to be really submissive.

**D:** Old, cowed, ashamed.

**B:** I had a really great visual treat a day or two ago that made my day. I was walking around downtown in the business area of San Francisco. Most people don't walk around at lunch hour eating, you know, they don't want to show you that they're eating. And there was

this big fat woman walking along eating her yogurt and she was so happy with her friend, bouncing along through the crosswalk. It was so great to see that. And when you're traveling you're so vulnerable, because you're living your life, you're eating, being yourself, and you don't have your support network around you, you don't have the things that you use to touch base with to keep aware of feeling good about yourself, and everyone's just shitting on you. I think it must be really difficult for you to travel all the time.

**D:** Except there's another thing that happens when you're traveling. You bond with other fat women, pretty quickly. Especially in airports and train stations.

**B:** That's refreshing to hear, because sometimes I feel like fat people who don't get it or aren't there yet avoid you.

**D:** You can spot how they dress. A certain kind of upper-class fat person would never talk to you in public. But on trains, I've had really good experiences on trains, especially going across the country on trains. God, I think that's where we all are. I met more fat people on that train from Portland to Boston than I've ever met.

And for good damn reason! It's physically more comfortable.

**B:** Were the seats more spacious? That's good to know. I don't travel that much because...if I don't know if I'm going to fit in, physically if I'm not gonna fit, it leaves a lot to be desired.

Do you think that your readers and audiences make invisible your physical body when they see you? That once they see you, that they listen to you but they don't look at your physical body? Do they gloss it over?

**D:** I don't know. I don't know actually how I would know that. I do know that when I did the gig in Boston, I did a performance of two or three weeks in the same theater, and there was a very short section of questions and answers afterwards where I had this conversation. This guy asked this old question I'm really used to, which is "How can

you do what you do? How can you be who you are? What's the process?" And I said, "Everybody is constantly in the process of discovering their vulnerabilities. That's what writers do." And so then I started talking about being fat, and I said, "You know, sometimes I look at myself and I think oh god, yeah, I'm fat." And I watched and he flinched! It was like I had said something really forbidden. And because he flinched, I went on about it for quite awhile. And it was really interesting to watch people's faces, and a good half of the people just glazed, because they don't want to discuss this subject. They want it to be cute, and they want me to be funny about it, but they don't want to take it seriously.

**B:** There's this phenomenon, if you know people, if they know you personally or if they have a personal tie-in to you, as opposed to someone who doesn't, if they saw you physically, someone of your physical size, they'd be like "Oh, look at that woman. She's fat." Or say something else derogatory. But if they know you, they say "Oh, you're not fat."

**D:** They're always telling me that, "You're not fat!." Get real, honey! It's because they don't...It's also kind of insulting. They say, "Oh you're not fat." Well, what's fat then, dear?

**B:** Or, why won't you look at me and see me how I am? That's what I meant about making you invisible.

Oh hell,  
get real!  
We're  
always  
looking for  
somebody  
fatter  
than us

**D:** Well, I assume that people don't really see me. But I also know that once I start talking, they forget. They forget how you're dressed, what you look like, everything disappears.

**B:** Do you ever feel that your fat is eroticized by your audience? I know that within the dyke community you have become a sexual icon. Many women are bowled over by you.

**D:** I wonder why. I bowl them over at every opportunity. The best thing that ever happened to me was Alix, my lover, who makes no bones about the fact that she's a chubby chaser, although she hates that term. She basically had one skinny girlfriend, and we have these jokes about "she hurt me!" 'cause her bones stick out. But then basically, Alix really has this whole erotic response to large buttocks and large breasts and meaty thighs. And because she is so, I don't know, she's just, it's very present, she's always like grabbing my butt, grabbing my thighs and making these lip smacking noises.

**B:** That's nice!

**D:** It's been going on now for eight years, and it's really become... Well, at first I didn't really believe her, and at first I was really uncomfortable, because she was constantly calling attention to parts of my body that I was very self-conscious about or unhappy with. And she likes my tummy, and I've had surgery, so my belly *hangs*, honey. And she *likes* it! And she would touch it and play with it and I would flip out, but after a couple years of somebody who's really a good fuck telling you that you're really beautiful and she really loves it and demonstrating it constantly, something peculiar happened and I started to be able to enjoy parts of my body that, up to that point, I don't think I could even feel. And now, I've basically taken on Alix's behavior, 'cause it's like it gave me permission to start flirting with women for what I really like. I like women with large butts, it's just one of my things.

**B:** Well, it's a good thing! Yeah, there's nothing like a nice fat ass.

**D:** Oh, god. Oh, god. And also, it's really attractive to see somebody who's comfortable in their body. I've been working on that one for a long time. Big women who are comfortable in their body, like the woman you saw. One that is moving freely and happily. It just makes the world look better. Very sensual.

**B:** How has fat affected your experience as a femme in the dyke community?

**D:** (I have to make my own corsets!) It's almost as if you're not really a femme if you're fat, or at least it was for a long time. That's changed. But then, a lot of us have worked really hard to change it. *sigh*, it's real difficult. It's really... I used to have this girlfriend whose horror in life was her fear that her lover would leave her for a man. Well, my horror as a femme is that my lover would leave me for a skinny femme. A high-fashion femme. And I don't do high fashion. I do a form of high fashion, but since I make most of my high-fashion clothes or alter them, it's not like your traditional... [heavy laugh]... it's not Kate Moss; it's not even Isabel Rosalini. No, it required an enormous amount of chutzpah. Fortunately I knew some really big women who were femmes who did it and carried it off with no money, thrift store makeovers, and it gave me all these notions. So, I got into the whole thing about being a trash femme. Which means, you know, it doesn't matter if your fishnet hose split—it adds to the look—because they always do, for chrissake! Who can afford to buy new ones? And I made corsets. I made corsets for all my big girlfriends. I said god, who could pay those prices? And I got the

recipe from Amazon Drygoods and started making my own.

It also helps moving here. In New York it was really painful and impossible. Jewelle and I have talked about this. Being big in New York was really, much more obnoxious. But moving to California there was much more of a community that really did more than lip service. There were actually a great many big women here who were like, really working on body acceptance. And there were shops. It's really extraordinary for me to buy clothes that fit. Most of my life, probably it was because of being poor, I bought clothes in thrift stores. Honey, finding clothes to fit you in thrift stores is really hard, and even making over clothes. I used to be the mistress of buying big jeans and splitting the seams and putting panels in. When I'd buy jeans I'd split every one of 'em and then my girlfriend discovered... well, suggested that I make some further alterations.

**B:** Zippers?

**D:** Velcro. Velcro's much more fun. Zippers are a pain in the butt. Although it does make a noise when she opens it in the restaurant.

**B:** When you fantasize sexually, are you fat?

**D:** [giggle] I'm not even human in some of my fantasies. I'm pretty much myself, which has only been the case for the last decade. No, when I was a kid I was never... when I was a kid I used to have fantasies like some of those short stories by Samuel Delaney, where the

she's  
always like  
grabbing  
my butt,  
grabbing  
my thighs  
and making  
these lip  
smacking  
noises

preliminary part of the fantasy was always being kidnapped and taken to an alien fat farm, and forcibly fucked and reduced until I was *the* perfect size, and *then* everything would happen, which is a really interesting self-hating sexual fantasy. Some of the masochism was ok, but the rest of it was pretty awful. Now pretty much, I'm me, but I'm younger and my back doesn't hurt.

**B:** Where do you find a sense of community in your life? Do you currently feel closely connected to the "women's SM community"?

**D:** Not in particular. I find a sense of community from my friends. The virtue of living this long is that I have friends that I've had for 20 years, that I've known through a great many struggles, and we're all of an age, and we're all of a size, and we're all pretty much of an attitude. And those are the people I trust. Since turning 40, I don't make friends as easily. It's harder and harder. I'm a little concerned about it. It's hard for me to meet new people. There's just so much history you can't catch up. It drives me crazy. I

find it frustrating. I'll tell you, though, I find more of a community with, essentially what I think of as the fat women's community these days. Because it's *really* important to me.

I had this moment in my mom's last bout with cancer. She had gone through chemo, and she was just, she looked like she had been through hell. She was just gray and exhausted and sick as a dog. She was lying in this bed, and she said "well, if there's one good thing, I've lost five pounds." And when she said that it was like she had just punched me right in the heart, and it was like I can't stand this any fucking more. And that's been, it was five years ago. And I stopped, and I just get really angry and really disgusted. So I kinda work on this stuff. Sometimes it's really work, it's real serious emotional work. It's insidious. But I get bored with it. I get bored with work.

**B:** How has having a child affected your sex life?

**D:** [big laughs] Ah, the year when there was none?! God! It totally and completely stopped it for awhile, altered it significantly, and has only recently come back.

**B:** Do you think you will talk about being fat with your son?



**Dorothy Allison and Alix Layman photographed by Jill Posener**

**D:** I don't think I'll have to. I don't know. Probably. It's different with boys. I don't think...my experience with my sisters and other people in my family with boys is that they don't talk about bodies. There's this whole "mommies are not for that kind of discussion." We talk about it now, and we take baths together and it's just, he's more fascinated with my genital jewelry than fat. He's still pretty comfortable. He's still in that stage where he's not self-conscious. It was a big issue for me with one of my nieces. My niece is my, as my mother says, my spittin' image. She's probably 18 this year. And I bet she's been doing amphetamines. She's lost a lot of weight. It makes me crazy! My sister basically is like "well, she's lost weight." Come on girl, I was an addict, you were an addict, let's get real. My sister won't listen. She'd rather my niece be an addict than be fat. And I've been talking to her since she was 11 about it, because she...my younger sister is two years younger than me, and she is, it's the biggest issue of her life. She is convinced that because she is, was, fat, she is a rigid dieter—christ, god, she looks like Pat Nixon, and she looks that miserable!—my sister's attitude pretty much shaped my niece's attitude, and I've tried to be a different voice. But I can't see that it's had any effect. It's more important with girls.

**B:** Yeah, I know that my grandmother on my father's side was very fat, and I know that my father had a lot of negativity about fat and it's really class related for him. He's first generation middle class and trying to move away from being seen as working class. I remember as a little child him saying that he doesn't want a wife with a fat ass, he doesn't want a woman like his mother.

**D:** He wants a trophy wife.

**B:** He wants to move away from that...You really have to start working on people when they're young.

**D:** Or just preventing that stuff from getting lodged in. Most of my mother's family, the women were big, most of them were fat, but they were also big—I'm a shrimp—much taller than me, broader shoulders, and so they could carry weight better. They weren't just fat. My stepfather's family, who were like, really dragging their ass into the middle class with every tooth they could grab, man, they all became dentists and lawyers. And their women were much skinnier. My stepfather was obsessed with it, and you could see the impact on Barbara and me. I can remember, his stuff about food and control was appalling. Just that whole way of making you eat what he wanted you to eat and then constantly belittling us and harping on us, and harping about how fat my aunts were, how fat my cousins were, how ugly we were, and going after my mother on the same stuff. So we grew up with that crucible. It's amazing that any of us can have any kind of comfort in our bodies at all. And I think he's the norm.

**B:** Yes.

**D:** I can remember visiting my aunts, who were big women who ate and cooked a lot, and we'd all sit around the table and eat finger food, and they were really comfortable in their bodies. Especially when I was in my 20s, that was when I held onto it with every tooth I had, because I had to have something to hold onto. Because I was trying to pass as middle class. And it was clear to me that part of passing as middle class was trying to be skinny. And being comfortable with being held in contempt by other people was also passing. Because they would go to the grocery store and people would make snarky comments and my aunts would mouth off back. But my mother would never mouth back. I wanted to be like my aunts, and take no shit, and not be ashamed of myself. It's been something I've been trying my whole life.

**B:** My mother's family is very fat phobic, first-generation middle

class, and the same...cooking a lot of food, (big Irish-Catholic family,) always cooking, always eating, tea, everything; but then, at the same time, "don't eat anything!" The urge to cook and nurture through cooking—that being a part of a family—was very much there, but it was very much for, what my grandmother calls my brother, "the little man." It was about feeding my brother, feeding my uncle, with the women just picking or not getting a plate, but there would always be all this food around. There was such a conflict of...

**D:** For me it was also really clear that being poor and trashy was about being fat. About passing was about losing weight. Assume the guise, wear the right clothes. The right clothes never fit!

**B:** That's one of the things I wanted to talk about. In *Skin* you talked about "Class, Race, Sexuality, gender and all the other categories by which we categorize and dismiss each other," and it has always seemed to me that fat phobia is really intertwined with the operating modes and the stereotypes of those categories and that often there is...it gets complicated. Because they are conflicting stereotypes of "poor fat lazy" and "rich fat capitalist pig"—it's ok for a business man to be big and fat.

**D:** A man.

**B:** If you are fat it seems like your success is occurring despite the fact that you are fat. Like you said earlier about being sexually aggressive, you have to be aggressive—you have to be twice as wonderful in every way—you have to be bright, you have to be on top of things.

**D:** You damn well have to have a sense of humor!

**B:** To make up for the fact that you are taking up so much space! And that you're \*so\* present. How do you see the ways that classism works to intersect and perpetuate fat phobia and vice versa?

**D:** I don't think of it as fat phobia. I think of it as hatred. I don't think they're afraid of us. I think they hate us. Like people who'd rather you be addicted to amphetamines than that you be a size twenty. It's incomprehensible except it isn't. It's totally comprehensible. It makes perfect sense. Fat is trashy. Fat is lower class. Fat is evidence that you are unredeemed, far as I can tell. Salvation is clearly held through eating lettuce and starving yourself. Ascetic model. But, what has saved my life—the piece of one of the pieces that has saved my life—is that concept of embracing being scary; embracing being unacceptable. And I'll tell you the truth. I think that the fantasy that I cooked up of my aunts as not giving a shit about what people thought of them—big women comfortable in their bodies—is a fantasy. I don't think that was entirely true. I think the reality is that my aunts—I know—their men left them, their men treated them bad, the men laughed at them. These were women who, a lot of their identity was built around their families: "The Husband," then the father and the children. And since that whole thing was about losing that loved object. They were miserable a lot of the time and that a lot of what they did—the bravado—was a life-saving strategy. And they could only use it sometimes. But every time I saw it I grabbed it and held on to it. The thing is, I think the culture thinks about lower class women—the image of the lower class woman—is this big mouthy dangerous...

**B:** Like Rosanne.

**D:** Taking up lots of space...yeah. And also, a woman who is willing to do the forbidden, say the forbidden thing, cause you know, mostly, we do. Lower class women tend to have a fearlessness about their body and its functions. I used to think skinny girls didn't shit. Ya know?

**B:** YES!

**D:** And I knew that fat women had more odor to them, more sense of—when they came by you could smell one coming. Skinny girls didn't smell and didn't shit. They weren't real. They didn't have bodies. They were these ethereal creatures. You were earthy, real, and at the same time, dirty and contemptible and scary. It all gets bound up together. I don't think the culture has sorted it out. I know for a *fact* that even the best-intentioned feminist-conscious fat women haven't sorted it out. Cause I've run into it over and over again.

**B:** I feel like we have such a death culture that we just fear bodies. A lot of it is people have problems with other people—the differences that we have. Like shitting and just all of those things that we do that people don't want to talk about and they can't deal with them but they are such a part of our lives.

**D:** I am on the other side of it too, I am starting to be aware of the fact that—I am in early menopause—I am having all of that stuff, all the hot flashes, sweats, and insomnia and everything. Boy, people do *not* want that to be mentioned. You can be standing there, water

just running all over you, sweat running all over your body, and you're like cooking and they're pretending that nothing is happening. You say "I need to fan myself and sit down." and they're like "is something wrong?" LOOK CLOSER. Same thing with being big. And don't know about the fear. I think it is hatred. And I think it's about people hating our bodies. We are more our bodies in some consensual sense.

**B:** People are always trying to get away from that—always this pursuit of immortality...living for the future and raising themselves above their bodies. There is such a split.

**D:** But there is so much stuff! What I am excited about with the whole idea of FaT GiRL magazine is that we start to talk about some other stuff. And I have got some questions that people are not even addressing. LIKE: Have you ever noticed that the SM community, women or men, has this whole thing about discipline? *You know the whole fantasy of discipline?* Well honey, think about the fantasy of discipline for fat girls. Cause I know—I once did an interrogation discipline scene for three days and all I was fed for three days was water and gruel. And at the time I kept thinking, there's something about this I gotta remember after I stop having orgasms.

**B:** That's very funny because...I have been a very good girl, and then broken a scene over someone trying to feed me gruel. I didn't realize what a...

**D:** Gruel is awful! (big cackle)

**B:** Besides having to deal with that level of—I can give anything else but if you're gonna force me—I can't deal with this. Forget it! I was so out. This is it. Get away from me! But it's true. Physically being a fat woman who's got society always disciplining your body and then breaking through—giving that up and allowing someone to discipline you. There's a lot that's going on.

**D:** Oh, massive stuff. I'm totally fascinated. I remember having long conversations with Fakir. He does the amazing tight-waisting. He has been doing it since he was a teenager. Well, I've done the same thing. There were two years of my life as a teenager when I wore a chain as tight as I could wear it around my waist, and I was never a small girl. But I am really fascinated with how that dovetails with learning to love the body. We haven't even gotten to that. We are still fighting over whether we can be a size twenty and live in the world. There is so much more stuff.

**B:** It's something I've been thinking about with corsets—allowing

**I don't think of it as fat phobia. I think of it as hatred.**

myself to be photographed with a corset on—what’s going on here for me? It’s something I enjoy—the process, I like the way it feels, I like how I get high, I feel very sexy, but is it an image I want to be reproduced for other people to see? When we were doing our Fat Girl reading there was a discussion between some of us about fetish wear—not wanting to wear some of it because of how it can be restricting or binding or how it shapes our bodies. To do that in public—when I wear it am I reinforcing their things about fat or is it...it’s really fun for me because it is sort of, in your face, ya know?

**D:** Besides. You and I both know a fat woman wearing a corset is an entirely different movie than a skinny person.

**B:** That’s for sure!

**D:** And it’s way more—at least for me—it’s like cross dressing. It’s a real challenge to the concept of who is supposed to, what you are supposed to look like wearing a corset. Now, this is separate from the image which has it’s own sexual context. And separate from the physical sensation. I love the physical sensations of corsets and tight bondage. In fact, my assumption is that tight-waisting is a kind of bondage for me that I really enjoy. There is no way in hell that I will allow anybody to tell me that I couldn’t do it because it would communicate a bad image. But I’m not always gonna want to give those people that treat.

**B:** Right.

**D:** Sometimes it’s just too personal.

**B:** That is something we have been trying to do with Fat Girl—getting past Fat 101 and start really talking about complicated things. Feeling good about my body is a complicated process. I feel that with doing the zine, doing public things, people have been calling me a lot on the phone about so much that they are getting from the zine and how liberating it is for them, and I feel like when they call I have to be in ok space with them and Rah Rah Yeah it’s wonderful but you know that it’s not always fun. Being fat is very complex and...

**D:** I can be positive and supportive lots of times but sometimes I am not feeling comfortable in my own body.

**B:** Right. You want to be angry. You want to be where you’re at! I think that the fat women’s communities have grown and progressed enough where to be able to not be a *fat happy monolithic fat happy* crowd.

**D:** Especially that whole word *happy*. The whole notion that we are all supposed to be so fucking happy.

**B:** I have one last question. We at Fat Girl, in publishing the zine, have had to make some difficult choices about penetration, and hard core materials. Some of the decisions have been in terms of within the fat dyke community itself, having the zine be flexible enough to have a dialogue for as varied as the community is. Some of the choices we have had to make in terms of how and where we are going to be able to distribute. And we have made a choice that if something comes along that makes us hot or is difficult we are going to print it. And if we can’t distribute it where we have been then we can’t. But we are going to try to take that route. How do you think that the ongoing political back lash against the queer community and in particular the focus on banning the distribution of obscene queer writing across the borders of Canada—right now there is very aggressive movement on the part of the right to control material even to the point of trying to legislate stuff on the internet (trying to put obscenity laws on the internet)—how does this affect you as a writer and your writing?

**D:** I work with PEN, I do all this volunteer work. I see one of my major have-to-do stuff is to basically be completely conscious of the

fact that these sons of bitches are trying this shit and keep working. Some of the legal stuff is nightmarish. Because they’ll break you financially before they break you legally. For example, if you do publish pictures with penetration and they basically rule it as obscene and confiscate the magazine and take you to court—you can get really busted in North Carolina—it can cost you a fortune. Now you will probably eventually win the case except nobody’s been able to carry the case long enough to win. Because it is so fucking expensive. Same movie in Canada. They’re not winning on the censorship issues, they’re winning on financial issues. And the same thing is happening to writers. If you can’t get paid you are basically writing to exchange work with other people, you’re not able to do any wider distribution. It’s really...*sigh*...same old same old. I don’t think they can shut it down on the internet. I think they can shut it down on the services like AOL and CompuServe and Prodigy. They can try to control it but they’re not going to be able to...

**B:** That’s what the legislation is about. Looking at charging huge fines to service providers for every bit that is written.

**D:** But they won’t have to do it. The service providers are going to censor themselves. They already are. And people will go off the service providers to get it. Just trickier—you have to do some education. I think in the long run that is something I am in favor of. Of not being bonded into...That’s not where I am worried. Where I am worried is what people are persuaded to do themselves. What people are

**I’m in favor of the creation of more mouthy big girls!**

being persuaded not to write. Out of either fear or financial need. Just making a living stuff. I’m just going through dealing with the lawyers at Dutton because of this new book. It is a very lesbian book. It’s very frank. And they are totally—these are all true stories, all family stories—and everything has to go through the lawyers. It’s driving me *nuts*. I keep thinking I don’t ever want to do this again. Except that I believe in doing this. But I can see where the impulse comes not to do it. I have friends who are writing who are really fine young writers who can’t sell their stuff to a trade press cause it’s sexually explicit and the trade press are scared shitless of them. Scared for two reasons. One the legal stuff, which is about money, and then scared because they’re afraid we won’t sell enough. You have some astonishing young writers that are being deliberately

marginalized. Writing is about time; time is about cash. I am less worried about government censorship than that.

**B:** I think that censorship works well when it creates the environment where people are censoring themselves and I feel that is what is going on.

**D:** If you make people really embattled you get fat women who are afraid to show images of themselves, because after all it might hurt your distribution. You might suddenly have to start making these decisions because the money would become so tight.

**B:** Well, we’re not publishing for any money right now so...

**D:** It’s a labor of love.

**B:** It would change what we are doing. We set out realistically knowing that Fat Girl magazine wouldn’t support me in that way but it gives the juice and go out and do my job and do the mundane things that I do to get my survival money.

**D:** There is one other little detail. It will have an enormous impact on other magazines that are more straight because these ideas generalize. It’s the kind of work that goes out and changes the world.

**B:** It’s changing me.

**D:** I’m in favor of the creation of more mouthy big girls! ✨

# TORCHSINGER

April Miller,

*Sultry red spotlight slowly rises to disclose a voluptuously fat female standing center stage wearing a clingy, full-length, red velvet dress. She slowly draws a sheer gold scarf across her breasts and belly, then drops it to the floor and addresses the audience.*

**Sexy, huh? Pause.**

**Lights.**

*She drops her pose. Glaring white lights come up suddenly.*

**I'm happy to say that I won't be singing tonight.**

After the last Femme Show I realized that there were some things about *my* femme experience that I really wanted to talk about, and I swore that if I got the chance again I'd say them. **Voila!** Death on Heels 2: the femmes return. This is clearly my second chance, so if I'd sung tonight it would have been a cop-out. I try really hard not to do that.

I think that most of you don't have the slightest idea of what it's like to live as a truly fat woman in America. Or what it was like, for me, to be a fat kid. I doubt you've ever even thought about it. So I'm going to tell you.

Being fat means fighting for your life in a battle against every single thin person in the world—and most of the fat ones, too—all of you on one side, and me on the other. It means being everybody's favorite victim, their easiest target, and their worst threat. It means going through life praying that everyone will ignore me. That I'll be invisible. That they'll leave me alone. 'Cause if they notice you, they'll hurt you.

Have you ever thought about the fact that at the other end of every fat-hating comment you have ever heard, or made—

"Fatty fatty two-by-four, can't get through the kitchen door!" "I've **got** to get to the gym this week or I'll blow up like a balloon!" "Billy's got a crush on April! Billy's got a crush on April!"

—there's a target: Me.

Or some fat woman just like me.

"No ifs or ands, just one big butt!"

That's me. Bertha big butt.

I've read and heard a lot of things that imply that it's *easy* to be femme. Apparently all you have to do is to lay back on a tide of societal pressure and get carried off to a rose-colored land of lipstick and mystery dates. I only wish it were that easy. You know how thin little girls get told they're *so* pretty, and they're going to be *beautiful* when they grow up, and do they have a boyfriend yet? I got told it was such a shame. I had such a pretty face...

As I was working on this piece I wrote a lot about the sexual attention—abuse—I received and survived as a child. That writing made me realize that there was nothing special in all my experiences, nothing to distinguish them from things which happened to any of

you. Except this: those disgusting and terrifying 30 and 40 and 60 year old men who would offer to give me money and presents if I would be "nice" to them were also the only indication I had that my body was not too disgusting to be desired. Can you imagine the horror of being *grateful* to a bunch of would-be baby-rapers for giving you a sense of self-worth?

I meet a lot of people who seem to think that: A) I've got some kind of special dispensation from God that makes *my* world supportive and insult-free so that I can be the kind of sexy fat femme that they could never even *dream* of being. B) I must be sexually available—I show off my tits!—and incredibly stupid. Because everyone knows that fat is disgusting and no fat person could possibly love their body. Or else, C) I'm not fat! People actually say that to me, "Oh, April, You're not fat!" Right.

See, when it comes to the games of happiness, and femme-ininity, and desirability, and power, fat girls aren't allowed to play. The most we get is to sit up in the nose-bleed section and watch. For motivation.

I want you to know that I have had to fight—like a fat girl—for every shred of the poise, self-respect and glamour that you see in me. My entire experience with having femininity thrust upon me consists of being given Bonne Bell samples in my teenage weight-loss group by the counselor who came in "to show you how to put on make-up for all those dates you're going to go on when you're thin!" And my experience of heterosexual privilege is the dejected, angry, wistful feelings I get as I turn down phone numbers and offers of coffee from what appear to be perfectly nice men because, as I tell them, "I'm a lesbian. I don't do men."

Not that I "do" many women either.

When you have a body like mine you're either dogshit or a sex object. I am the kind of femme I am largely because I learned to use my sexuality as a way to keep men in their place. "Look, but don't touch." Funny, I'm a femme dyke who actually *likes* butches, and likes to have sex with butches—at least sometimes—but I'd rather be leered at by straight men. Because at least *\*they\** know how to keep their hands off.

The confidence I project is fueled by a *\*fuck-you\** bonfire in my soul that's trying to turn a lifetime of humiliation into ashes. And the supreme irony of my participating in this glorious expression of femme solidarity is that I know perfectly well that the glamorous, self-loving, sensual, vivid fat girl that I have to work so hard to continue to be is the personification of your worst nightmares.

"Just shoot me if I ever get that fat, OK?"

**BLACKOUT**★

This piece was performed in San Francisco, CA in December, 1994

# An Interesting Discovery

The night was as hot and heavy as she was. The canvas army surplus tent flaps snapped in the warm breeze.

Iris was an archeologist. She was on a dig miles from anywhere during the hot dry season. She climbed out of the dusty excavation pit with its neatly roped off squares, clutching her precious find. The kerosene lantern she held in one hand cast strange shadows her mind was too preoccupied to see. She clumped into her tent, her heavy boots making the floorboards resound and sending the scorpions scuttling for cover. She crossed over to the wooden chair in front of a metal folding table and put down the lantern and object.

As she placed her round buttocks onto the chair, she grabbed the strap of the metal canteen hanging on the back. She unscrewed the lid and slurped the metallic water, trying to replace the sweat that soaked through her t-shirt and collected under her breasts and in every soft fold of her body. She glanced at the tent flaps that were down but not tied shut and shrugged off the wet shirt, exposing her body to the warm air. She wetted the t-shirt further and wiped her find with it. She held the stone up to the kerosene lamp to admire her handiwork.

Earlier her heart had beat fast with excitement as she realized what was being revealed by her careful dusting away of sediment. The smooth stone object was about eight inches tall. It was a feminine figure with large breasts and buttocks, what was commonly called a "Fertility Goddess." Iris was amazed at the resemblance between the figure and herself. The face and its curly hair could have been modeled after her. The difference lay in the lack of arms and the legs that lay together and were disproportionately long. The feet were curved up in a matter that seemed familiar yet different from any other figures Iris had ever seen.

Iris put down the figure and sighed. It seemed as if the only time her heart ever beat fast was over excavations. She was lonely and horny. Well, actually more horny than anything else. The student intern they had sent her, Karima was one of those unconsciously sexy women. Her hips swang and her breasts swayed whenever she walked. Whenever she knelt on the ground, removing dirt, Iris swore Karima's bottom was flirting with her. Karima also had these large dark nipples that showed through the white t-shirts and tank tops she wore.

Iris was making herself more and more frustrated. The heat seemed even worse and Iris took off her dirty khaki shorts and underpants. Iris sat back in the chair and started rubbing her clit. Visions of Karima danced through her mind. She rubbed faster and mourned the fact her last lay had stolen her dildo. She looked around the tent and her gaze settled upon the goddess. Why hadn't she realized it before? The figure was a dildo!

That would explain the size and the oddly shaped legs. Iris laughed out loud and picked up the figure. She slowly slid the legs into her hungry space. The curved feet could be made to contact her G-spot and she moaned. She worked the goddess in and out, holding the figure by her boobs and rubbing her clitoris with the other hand. The chair beneath her squeaked as she rocked her large powerful hips and squeezed the figure with her vaginal muscles.

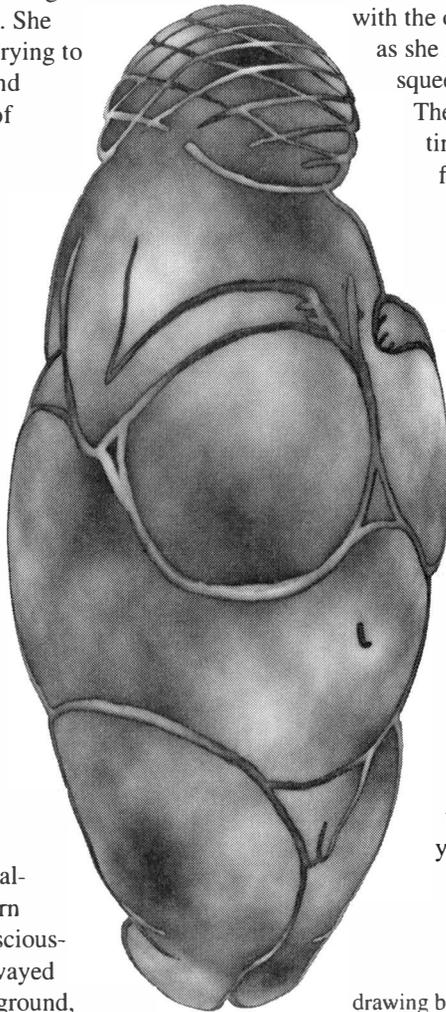
The squeaks came faster as she united across time with all the women that had worn the figure so smooth. She came and came and her juices gushed, covering the figure and her hand with their tangy wetness. Iris sighed in contentment. There was a knock on the tent pole.

"Who is it?" Iris called out.

"It's me, Karima. Can I come in?"

"Uh, sure. Wait a minute." Iris quickly wiped the figure and her hand off with the wet t-shirt and pulled on her shorts. She didn't have a chance to pull on her shirt as Karima came in suddenly, looking around.

"Oh, I see you're alone. I was afraid you were with someone." Karima met Iris' eyes and the full meaning sunk in. Iris' heart beat quickly again. "Yes, I'm alone. I've made an interesting discovery though. Come here and let me show you..."★

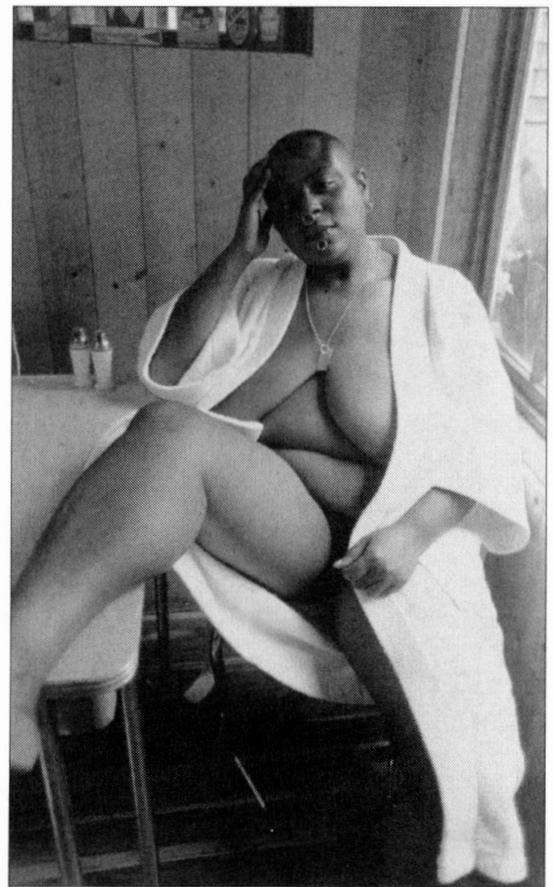


drawing by Selena

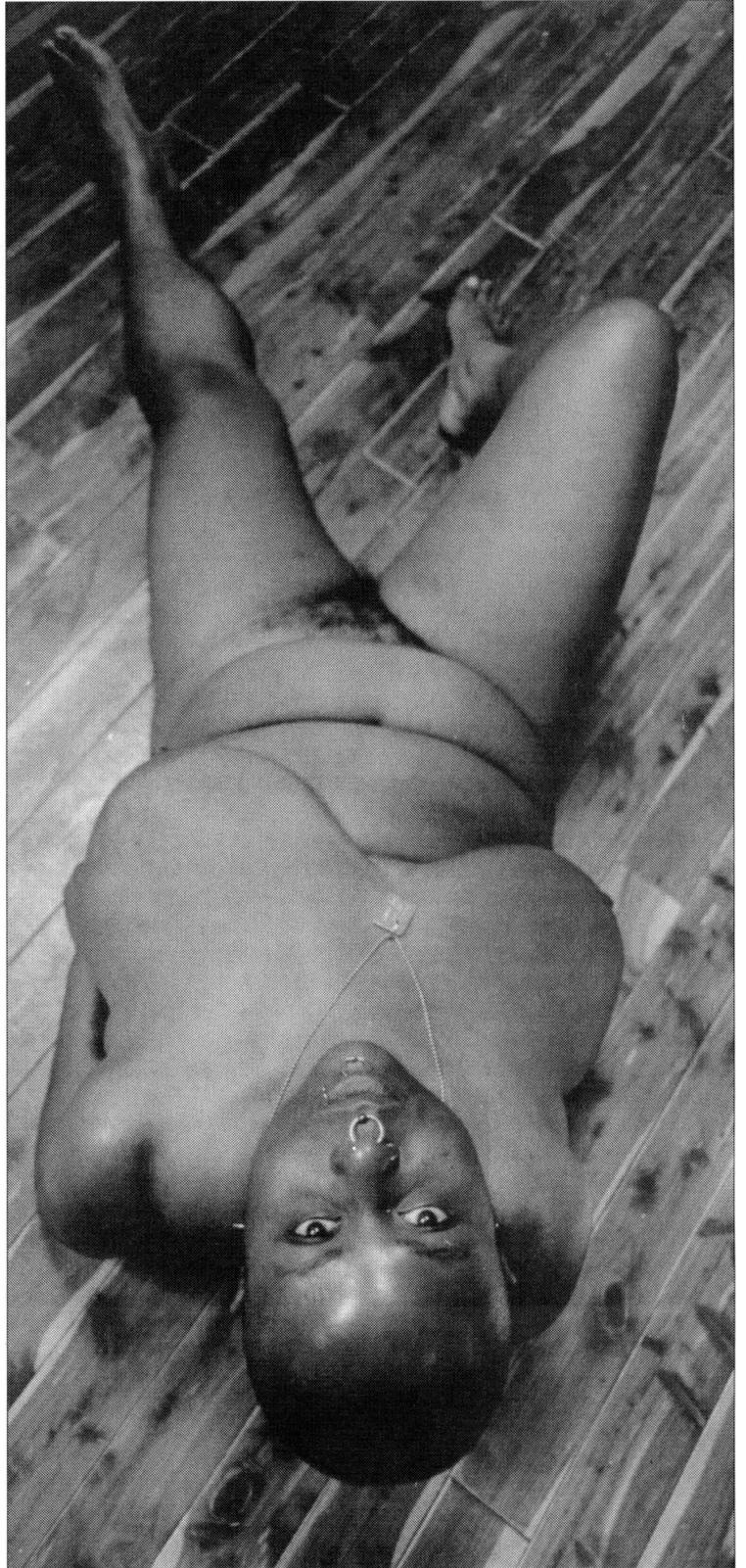
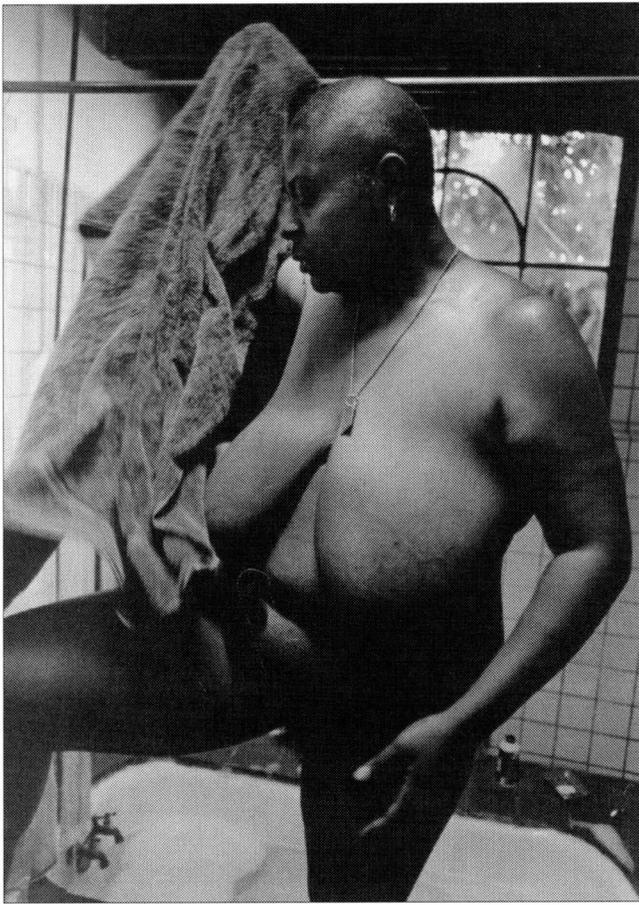
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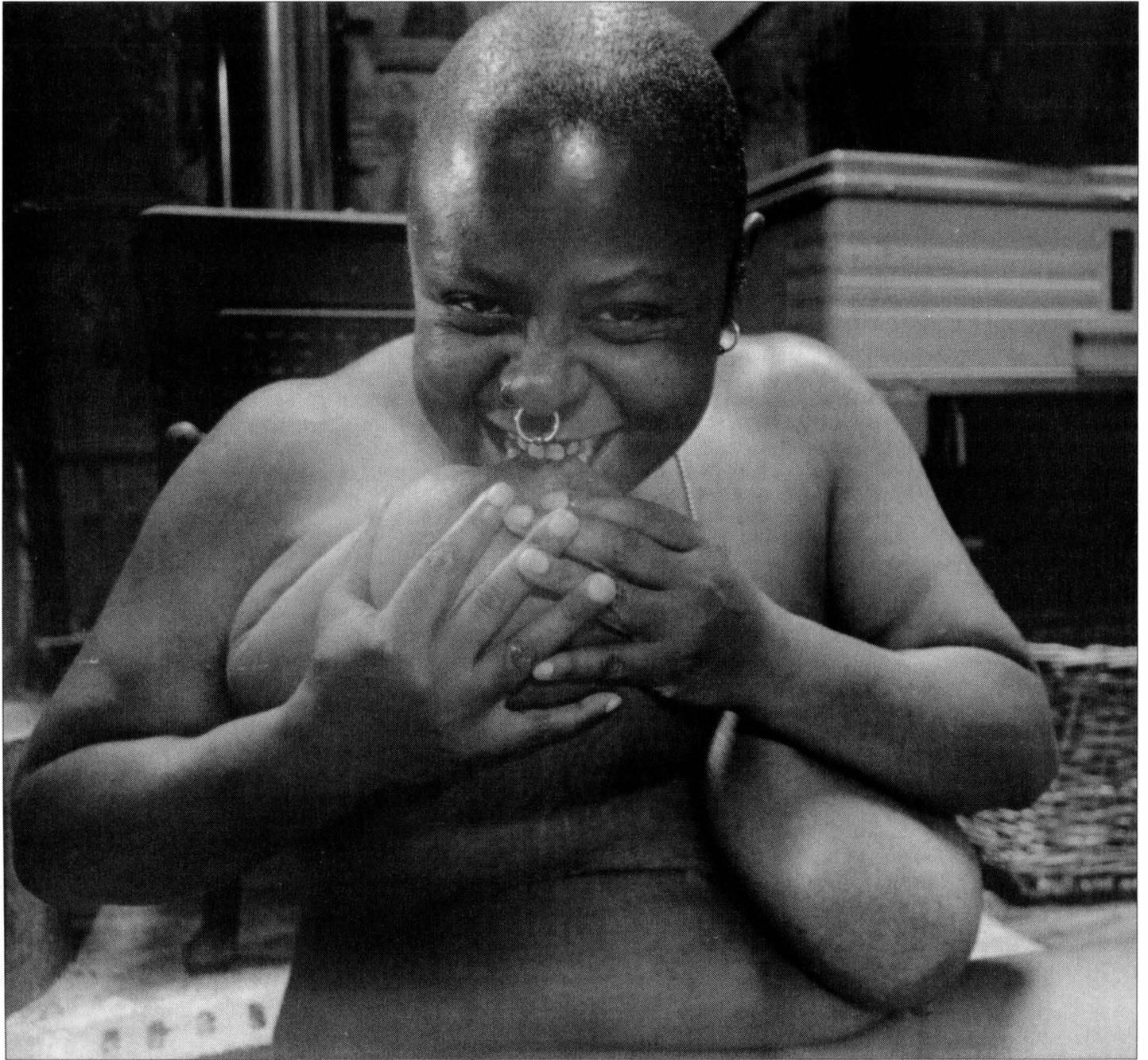
**Crystal**



**photos by  
laura johnston**



# wild pig of the desert



# Fat Girls on the Big Island

Once upon a time, there were three fat girls. The blond one was hardly fat at all; she was ripe and warm to the touch. The dark one was small and round all over; she was compact and cool. And the third girl: she was practically a giant—towering, expansive, always overflowing. These women worked hard in the world, they lived fat in the land of the lean, and they became very tired.

The three girls decided to take a trip to a place where they could rest in water and shed some skin. They went to the Big Island, appropriately enough; the island of Hawaii. Hawaii is the biggest mountain in the world, rising from the middle of the biggest ocean, and home of the Goddess Pele, who lives in the hot heart of Kilauea volcano.

The fat girls stepped out of the plane into the palm of Pele, and felt hot light pour over their heads like lava. They saw black rock, sharp points of a lava, pillows of pahoehoe. Pele, from her caldera on the other side of the island, was busy pouring new lava across old, turning ocean into steam, and building the perfect island. Busy though she was, she knew some substantial women had arrived, and warmed the wind to welcome them.

They wanted to get naked, those fat girls. They felt the urge to stand up, bare bellies and breasts to the wind from the west. They looked for the first nude beach they could find, and found a perfect spot.

Two of them lolled in the full tropical sun, towels spread over the salt and pepper sand. They squished ripe avocado into each other's faces and hair. The avocado was huge, the size of a melon, an ambassador for big islands everywhere. Big enough for a head to toe massage. The sun worshippers ate slices of hot avocado spread on hot bread, the sun baking everything to custard.

The narrow strip of beach slanted down from bow-legged bushes to the black lava reef. The third fat girl, the big one, sat in the patchy shade under the green fringe, a 99 cent woven beach mat wedged between the branches above her head to further block the sun. Her white skin was covered with whiter sunscreen. She wasn't a baker, she was a broiler. Her friends glistened, oily with avocado and sweat, out of reach just down the beach. She looked out of her vegetal cave at those browner babes, and somewhere in the upper right hand corner of her brain, she began the list.

Her friends were: thinner than her, shorter than her, had nicer breasts than her, smoother skin, less stretch marks. They were more confident than her, more attractive by any standards, more accept-

able, sexier. They had less body hair, less bumpy dimpled fat zones, less belly rolls. Their hair was curlier. The blonde one was blonder. The dark one was darker. Added together they probably weighed less than she did. And, of course, they could tan.

Now Pele had sent out her emissaries, her scouts, to check out these plump morsels. The green sea turtles loved the blond one, sleek-shelled and always secretly laughing like they were. The sweet plumaria blossoms fell at the feet of the lush dark one, sprang from the trees in hopes of pleasing her. Smitten, they sang their opinions through the air and water.

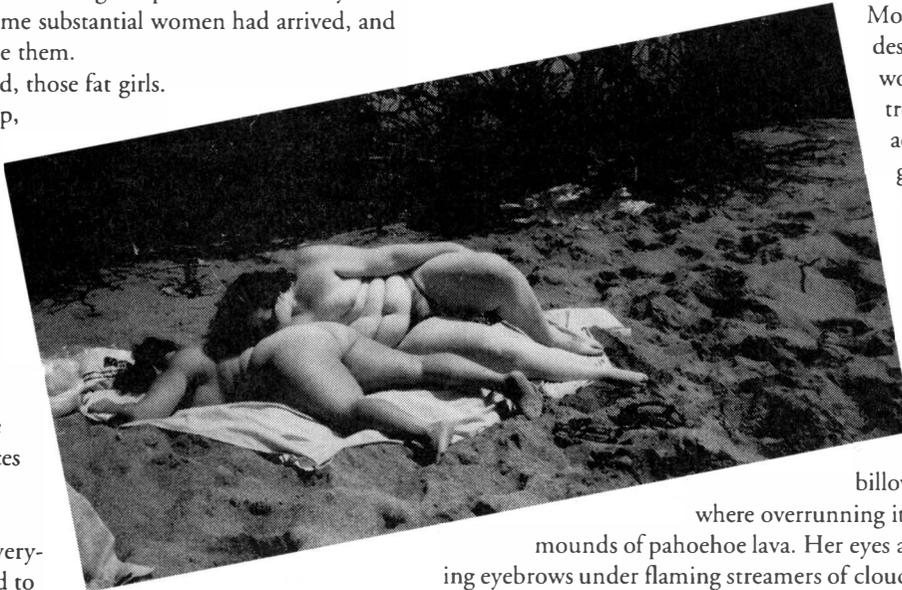
Then the big white girl hiding under the bushes from the sun was seen by the eyes of Pele. The fat avocados reported back in green oil language about her size and strength, the mango added something about the tang of her cunt juice. Humpback whales jumped out of the water about a mile offshore to get a better look, and sang a song to the goddess about her broad white flanks and cheeks. Sharp rocks of a lava trembled and tinkled, tumbled over themselves in anticipation of the big girl's step.

Mother Pele is the big goddess. She knows a big woman when she feels the tread of broad long feet across her body. She grows them big and brown all around her, in her image, big women with strong thighs and black eyes. She gathers them to her and ripens her fruits. She spreads wide across the fat blue waves. Her

billowing belly is everywhere overrunning itself in folds and mounds of pahoehoe lava. Her eyes appear at sunset, glowing eyebrows under flaming streamers of cloud hair. She looks out for her own.

The goddess parted her legs a little to shift the sand so that the big woman could be more comfortable. She blew a warm breath up from sea wave lips, up the long legs and between the huge thighs to tickle the hair there. The woman laid back, gave up on her list, closed her eyes. She saw flicking geometric hallucinations sparked by sun and shade.

The list in her brain fluttered in the ocean air, then curled up and began to smoke. The edges charred, and little flame mouths ate into the words. Ashes flew up and danced. She sighed, an exhale of vapor, of lists burning away, of fat waves washing over hot cunts and rocks, steaming. While her friends, bold and unaware, burned red, the sun sneaked around the leaves and licked the biggest girl's fat white belly, leaving little freckles of tan like sand. ✨



by Christine

Wry Crips Disabled Women's Theater  
presents:

# No Apologies

Review by Barbarism

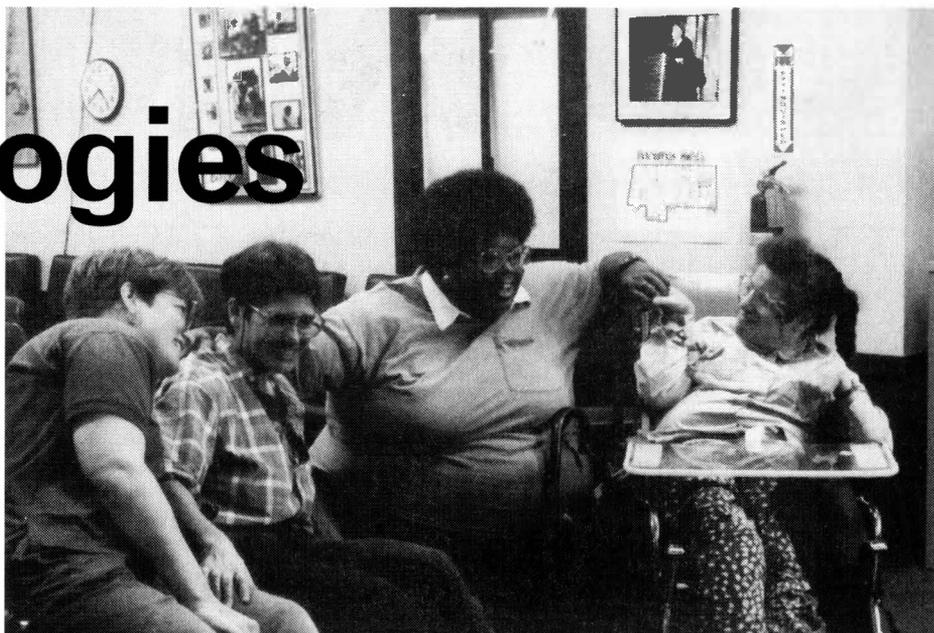
I had the honor of seeing Wry Crips perform in the fall of 1994 at the Fat Women's Gathering in Oakland. Their performance left me jazzed and itching to hear more, see more, know more about these talented women and the work they are doing. *No Apologies*, an open-captioned, half-hour video produced by Peni Hall, fulfills some of that desire, though it doesn't have the same impact as seeing them live. What it does do is create a new venue and accessibility to their work that didn't exist, documenting both performances and history.

Wry Crips is a performance group of diverse disabled women—diverse in disability, size (fat to thin), class, age, race (though predominantly white). It has been a place for diverse disabled women to educate about each other and each others' needs.

They have been around for about 9 years and, according to Diane Huss, call themselves Wry Crips because they are "dryly humorous disabled women."

This humor nuances itself throughout the documented performances from "Call 1 800- I'm a jerk" to "Super Crip Girl... prying open steel trap attitudes." But don't be misled—*No Apologies* will propel you through a range of issues and voices across the terrain of anger, joy, dignity, sensuality, frustration, and empowerment. The performers are dynamic, witty, intelligent, and sexy. *No Apologies* documents Wry Crips and the force it continues to create in the disability culture movement. The performances were filmed in 1990. *No Apologies* has won first place in the theater category at the Berkeley Video Festival 1994 and the "Bronze Apple" National Education Media Award Recipient 1995. The video is informative, political, and celebratory of the revolution of the disability culture movement.

This video is particularly important to fat women and the fat dyke community—fat women are a part of the disabled women's community as disabled women are an important part of the fat women's community. Non-disabled fat women need to understand the differences in accessibility issues for fat disabled women as well as non-fat disabled women. Fat issues and disability access issues are often pitted against each other—as if somehow demanding accessibility for one group will mean less accessibility for another. Fat people are often set up as the ones who can make a choice and change—we're morally corrupt, out of control—and are set up in opposition to the disability community who should be "pitied" somehow as not fully capable and unable to make a choice.



CURRENT MEMBERS: Beth Smith, Patty Overland, Pandoura, and Jan Levine. PHOTO: Max Dashu

In *No Apologies*, Peni Hall states it well:

"Part of how we are hurt as disabled people is the way we are treated around our bodies. How big they are, how small they are, how thin they are, what color they are, what shape they are, what we do with them, what we don't do with them. And I think a lot of that oppression comes from doctors."

All of the performances in *No Apologies* are entertaining and hard hitting, the writing well crafted, performed by eight disabled women and one non-disabled woman. "Trail Mix," powerfully performed by Pandoura Carpenter, attacks a presumptuous Doctor (played by Peni Hall) who tries to force the issue of dieting instead of communication and healing. Performer Jan Levine is eloquent in both her interview and performance of "Spastic Hands."

Three of the pieces also deal with sexuality—"She Says He Says" being about a lover's desire for their lover's disabled sexual body—a very hot and charged moment. "Crip Lovin" is a beautiful piece about the sex and sexual relationship between two disabled women, passionately performed by Patty Overland, "you cannot have this/they said/no one will want you/they said/we reach once again for hot sweet places." The delicious and amazing performance by Sascha Bittner and voice interpreter Amy Gup of "Self Celebration" rocked me the most: "But I think that the relationship I have with myself is at least as important as the one I have with others/I'm always around when I need me/I'm a great date/and when I bring myself home and I take advantage of myself/I don't feel taken advantage of..." Her timing and expressive eyes carry you to suggestive places.

Wry Crips are continuing to do vitally important work in creating access—from stages to revolutionary ideas—in an unapologetic stance.

CALL OR WRITE AND GET THIS VIDEO!!!

Wry Crips, PO Box 21474, Oakland, CA 94620. (510) 601-5819. Cost is sliding scale: \$25-35 for individuals, \$55 for institutions, plus \$4 for shipping and handling. ★

# COWRIE

With Cowrie, fat dyke author Cathie Dunsford has written a sensual, complex first novel of a fat dyke. Cowrie is tightly woven, textured with colors, tastes and smells. Though short in length, the journey of Cowrie is dense in tension and discovery. Cathie Dunsford evokes the spirit of Hawai'i through rich imagery of the islands, its Goddesses Pele and Laukiamanmuikahiki, turtle woman, along with the constant struggle of identity and the fight against current imperialism. It is an intimate book about the transformation of Cowrie, a fat dyke who travels from her New Zealand home to Punalu'u, Hawai'i to meet her extended family and trace the history of her grandfather. This difficult journey explores the tensions of kinship, cross-cultural identity, and the relationship between the sacred, the erotic, and the land.

The language in Cowrie is very descriptive and erotic. Preparing food, sharing food, eating are all important elements in the book. Food is both sacred and necessary, daily. This element of food creates a foundation for the cultural and spiritual ties to the land and ocean—fish, fruits, nuts, and flowers. The characters in Cowrie eat often and abundantly. Dunsford explores the complexity of this relationship within the current context of the land and waters of Hawai'i being poisoned and fishing waters being taken over by the U.S. government for military (weapons testing) and space programs.

Cowrie's characters are fat, round bellied, sensual, glorious, unapologetic. The issue of fat is woven through out the book in a way that honors and celebrates fat and the characters' traditional Hawai'ian culture—fat tension/phobia is presented as being modern, colonial, racist, and imperialist in its origin. Even the ancient rock drawings, Ki'i pohaku, that help Cowrie in her exploration and knowledge (they also are illustrated throughout the book) contribute to the richness of fat imagery:

"Cowrie is pleased to find some female figures that describe large body shapes rather than just the stick figures of modern anorexia. Some look as if they are about to burst into flight, soar off the rocks and into space."

The legend of one of the figures, Laukiamanmuikahiki, turtle woman, accompanies Cowrie on her journey, present

in Cowrie's dreams and nightmares. Her developing relationship with turtle woman provides Cowrie with clues to her identity and self-power along with an understanding of the forces of creativity and destruction. Discovering turtle woman is the tension and complication that pulls the reader into Cowrie in an intimate way.

Cowrie is the only dyke character in the book. She is a sexual, sensual, queer, funny, fat, complex character. (How many other characters can you name that can claim the same?) She has explicit erotic fantasies and a strong attraction for her friend and relative Koana. The sexual tension and friendship between the two women is realistic. Koana is both sexually attracted to and sensual with

Cowrie but is not ready to deal with the effect homophobia would have on her family life and children. Her rejection is painful; the anger and alienation that Cowrie feels adds to the tension of having multiple cultural identities, yet she finds a resolution to her difficult journey with the help of Laukiamanmuikahiki, turtle woman.

Cowrie is definitely worth the read, so go bug your local bookstore. Books with fat dyke characters are hard to come by and Cowrie is a

welcome addition to that too-short list!

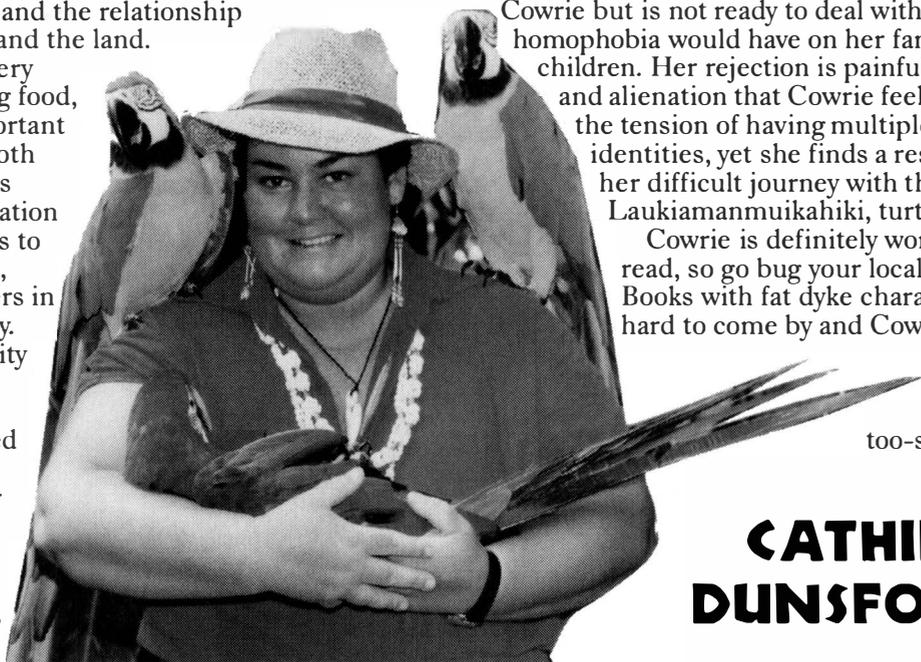


Photo by Pele Aloha, Hawai'i

## CATHIE DUNSFORD

*Author Cathie Dunsford currently lives in New Zealand where she teaches Creative Writing and Publishing. Other works include a bi-lingual poetry collection, Survivors: Uberlebende, and her most recent anthology, Me and Marilyn Monroe. Cowrie is published by Spinifex, 1994. For more information contact Michele Karlsberg (718-351-9599).\**

We want to hear what you think! Read any great books lately? Seen any good movies or porn? Got any hot fat dyke musicians, artists, performers, celebrities, brats, circus geeks, fashion items or new toys that you want to rave about? Produced any work or upcoming events that you'd like to have reviewed? Have any aliens or fat girl superhero sightings to report?

Send them to FaT GiRL, 2215-R Market St. #193, San Francisco, CA 94114 or call (415) 550-7202. (Nerds can email boot@sirius.com.)

## REVIEW BY BARBARISM

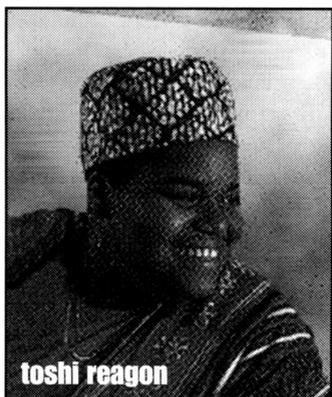
# Women I'd like to meet



the fat dykes in the circus

YAN DYKE ALTON

©Fotofolio, Box 661, Canal Sta., NY, NY 10013

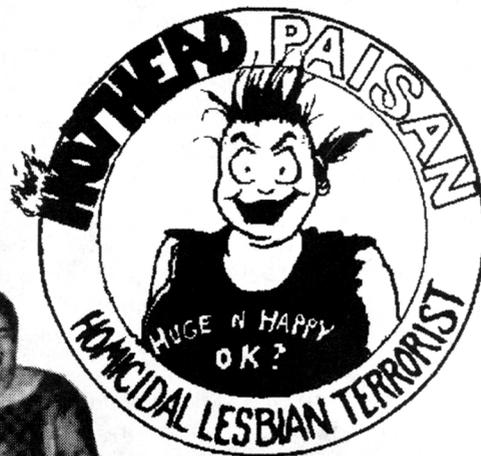


toshi reagon

photo by Susan Wilson



edith massey



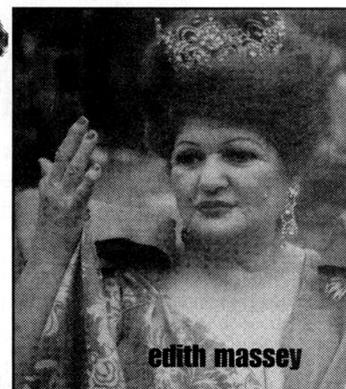
mary adams & three tons of joy

©1995 Diane diMassa & Grant Ass Publishing

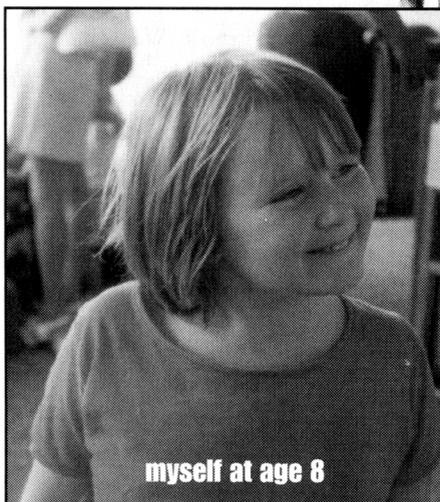


venus of fat!so?

©1994 Marilyn Wann & Debora Iyall



edith massey

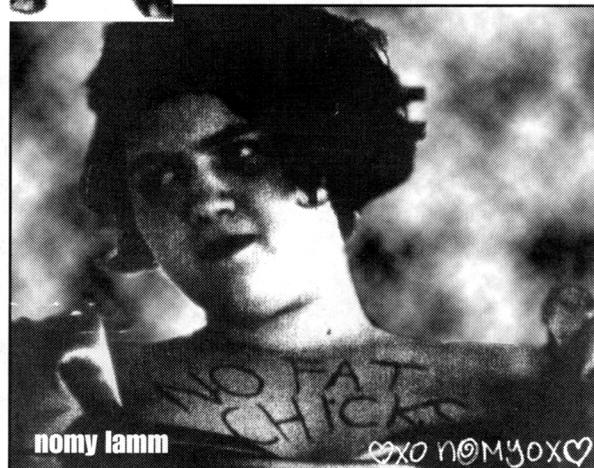


myself at age 8



edith massey

by max



nomy lamm

# Who's Fat Anyway? The Other Side of Fat

by Oso

We were in seventh grade when my best friend Mindy started calling me skinny. It wasn't necessarily a malicious thing, but considering I was the fattest kid in my class, it definitely felt strange. Everyone got a good laugh out of hearing her calling, "Skinny" out across the playground. Her rationale for doing this was that if you tell someone something long enough, it usually happens, or they at least start to believe it. I think she had read a book about the power of positive persuasion.

I was pretty much always the biggest back then, biggest at a party, the biggest in class. In my family I was not always the biggest, but that was on account of my age. "Give it time," they would say. So now, some years later, sitting around with the collective of *Fat Girl*, I realize I am not the biggest. Flipping through *Fat Girl*, I wonder, am I fat enough? Do I belong here? It's not that I think other people feel like I don't belong at *Fat Girl*; this is an internal dialogue that I have with myself periodically during meetings and whatnot. It's strange to walk this thin line (so to speak), going back and forth between being the biggest and then... I wouldn't say being the smallest, but definitely smaller.

At my work, the window display was so small that I wouldn't go in it for fear I would get stuck. I always sent the little clerks in for me. Yet, at *Fat Girl* meetings and roundtable discussions, I find myself waiting till others have chosen their chairs, making sure not to take a space that I don't need as much as someone else might.

Depending on the size of the woman in my bed, I find myself feeling different; not necessarily ever smaller, for no matter their size, I tend to have a large presence in the bed. But usually I notice the size difference when holding them in my arms. Although my fiancée is not a small woman, there's definitely a size difference between us. Late at night, I lie in bed next to her. I run my hand up her leg, to her fleshy thigh, and then over my thigh, which to my mind, in comparison, seems huge. And I think, God, my leg is big.

The size of me, in relation to different lovers, lucky for me, has always been a pretty positive thing. It makes the big ones feel not so big, the small ones feel safe, and the ones in the middle almost always feel smaller. So, with everyone feeling satisfied, along with that comes what has felt like to me, great appreciation for my size. I suppose it's a backwards way to compliment me, appreciating my fatness because it makes them feel skinnier. I get lots of comments, or shall I say, words of encouragement, not to change a bit. They love me just the way I am. I suppose for me to change would make them change too, in terms of their size in comparison to mine: the smaller I got, the "bigger" they'd get.

I remember sitting around one afternoon with some other fat dykes. We had just had a *Fat Girl* photo shoot, and someone turned the conversation to the idea of dressing up as Tweedle Dee, and they needed a Tweedle Dum. Someone else suggested me, and the fat dyke with the idea said, "She's too small!" I thought, "Wow, no one has ever really said that about me." But looking around that room, clearly, I was too small. Never before in my life, until *Fat Girl*, had I ever thought, am I big enough to fill this space?

I respect these fat dykes who I am working with: the ones much bigger, the ones somewhat smaller, and the ones pretty much my size. We have different issues, clearly, and at times, especially for those dykes bigger than me, that must be hard. I'm sure they look at me sometimes and think things like, "She could not possibly know how I feel." That is the same way I feel looking at skinny girls, and we are both right. ★

# Fat

## Tristan and

**DANA:** Tristan, how do you resolve your desire for a "small girl" with the issue of "internalized fat-phobia"?

**TRISTAN:** In general, I find myself drooling and swooning over big, luscious girls. That desire gets comprised, in part, out of identification and knowing the strength it takes to be a gorgeous fat dyke. I wanted to affirm that courage in my relationships. I wanted to date a fat girl to both encourage and mirror the love of my own body and to make a political statement about fat dykes loving fat dykes. What happened instead was that I fell head over heels in love with a thin girl. And so while I know that my total love of and desire for your body isn't about a rejection or hatred of my own, I do worry that other fat dykes will read it that way, as a kind of political slap in the face. I guess that at this point in my life I feel pretty solid in knowing that I do think fat women are hot and beautiful. The problem, of course, happened when I tried not to be attracted to you because you are a small girl. So in my relationship with you I had to work out two things: the first was allowing myself to be attracted to you, to find you really sexy while not feeling like I was buying into the stereotypes about what beautiful and sexy are and I also had to risk being rejected by you because I'm fat.

**D:** I often experience you as more comfortable in your body than I am (in bed and in the world) and I wonder how much of that ease comes from years of digesting pro-fat rhetoric. Were you always so confident, or did that grow out of your fat-activism?

**T:** No, that confidence was most definitely not always there. I had to work on it, and work and learn and relearn. It never really ends.

**D:** I don't think we'd talked about the big girl/little girl thing before we had sex for the first time—not directly at least. So we'd probably been together three or four more times before I consciously applied that information to my experience of our physical intimacy. Now, with that knowledge, I'm really fascinated by what that first time was like for you.

# & Thin together

**Dana\* tell all (well, almost).** \* Dana is now known as Daniel

**T:** There are a lot of different answers to that question, but as far as body image stuff is concerned...I was really petrified. As much as I know about my body, and why it's so great, there was such a huge chance that you wouldn't know how good the gettin' was. It was like handing my body to you on a silver platter, and I half expected you to ask the waiter to return your meal; you just couldn't stomach it. I was pretty defensive—that defensiveness that I think comes across as extreme confidence...because I have to do the loving of my body for the both of us; in case you weren't there to meet me, in case you couldn't love my body the way I do.

**D:** I'd like to be able to say that my obliviousness to your mindset was due solely to the intensity of my efforts that first time, but I know it's more complicated than that. I'm thinking about how I used to insist that we were the same size...

**T:** An incredibly humorous, albeit well-intended, gesture...

**D:** Yeah, and I was thinking about how it was a way of not dealing with the size issue at all on my part—sincere as the perception felt to me. It's similar to the time I was trying to talk to my mother about fat politics and her response was something like: "but Tristan isn't fat, she's adorable!!!" That conversation made the ways that well-meaning denial (of size, race, class, etc...) isn't benign so much clearer to me. I kept feeling like she was literally refusing to see fat as a legitimate social problem by distancing my cute girlfriend from the negative implications of fatness. So, while my initial size-denial probably made some things easier for both of us, I think it makes for bad politics and I actually think things got hotter and more interesting for me sexually when we started talking about it all the time.

**T:** I think the transformation in your thought process about all of this has been really amazing. From originally thinking that we were the same size, and I know that you believed that wholeheartedly. It was really funny and it eased my fear of rejection, but of course it was pretty frustrating because you also could not fathom the kinds of daily oppression I would talk about, and I knew that you didn't know what that was like. There was almost a kind of refusal to believe that I was the object of so much hatred, or that fat people are asked to leave planes because they are supposedly too heavy or can't get jobs for basically aesthetic reasons. But after a while you actually started to believe that our bodies are different sizes and that culturally, mine means "bad" while yours means "good;" and I now feel like I have a really strong ally, that you actually do see my body, and you think I'm the hottest thing in town.

**D:** I think that another part of my refusal to see our differences had to do with my metaphors about being "big" enough or "butch" enough physically or psychically to be intimate with you. Now, I really get off on the ways we can play with those dynamics—whether

you're performing big bossy girl for me or whether I'm dominating you as a psychically huge boyish girl.

**T:** In terms of butch-femme stuff, I thought on some level that the girl needed to be smaller than the boy, and I was worried that you wouldn't be able to hold me, or hold me down. Fortunately, there are so many images of older butch-femme couples with weenie boys and bodacious girls, and that helped a lot. And of course I soon found out that you are actually more than strong enough to hold me down, and that was really exciting to discover, too.

**D:** It helps to be a strong, weenie gal with wrist restraints...I want to ask you about what it's like to be a fat dyke. What's it like to be a big dyke in queer social spaces? Is it less empowering to have a small gal at your side? What about when we go to the mall?

**T:** So many questions, my little one...I've been disappointed often by A) the lack of knowledge in queer communities about fat oppression and B) the total rampant, unabashed, unself-conscious fat hatred in queer communities... "no fat dykes" personal ads for example. It's just that much harder when you expect a group of people—your friends or people you do queer political work with—to support you; the fat-phobic comments feel like getting punched in the stomach. The perception of us as thin girl and fat girl by either a dyke audience or a straight one feels really complicated. I think it's actually more about fat-phobia than queer stuff, although being queer is that much harder at the mall. I know you have friends who disapprove of my body, and my friends want to make sure that I'm o.k.—"how is she about body image stuff?" There's always the danger that people will think I picked you because of my internalized self-hatred, or that I'm being a traitor. So, in terms of being an in-your-face fat girl, yes, your presence as a thin girl at my side is less empowering. I guess I know that we'd get even more shit on the streets if we were both fat, and there's a certain amount of privilege that I've gained in being in a relationship with you. I can use you as somewhat of a buffer from all of the things about me that make me such a target. I'm not trying to valorize this, just be honest about that privilege.

I really like the fact that Fat Girl calls itself a magazine for big girls and the girls who want them, because I want to see more small fat-philic gals speaking out against fat-oppression. I know that this is tricky territory, but I get so frustrated with people who insist that my interest in this issue is 100% about loving a big girl and not at all about personally feeling really angry about a totally under-addressed form of discrimination. I still have concerns about my visual legitimacy as a fat-lib proponent—but I guess the ally issue shows up in every movement. ★

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*Itchin' to talk about something? Tape it, transcribe it, and send it to us!*

# FAT GIRLS

What's it like to make love to a fat girl? I can't really make a comparative statement. I'm a fat girl who's only made love to fat girls. I didn't particularly choose it that way, but then neither am I unhappy about it. Fat girls are nice, very nice. My ex-lover is fat, but the first thing that turned me on was her voice over the phone. She has the most incredibly sexy voice in the whole world. I also knew, from the beginning, that I was talking to a fat lesbian, even if I didn't know what she looked like.

It was my body, though, that surprised me when I first met this girl. I wanted to devour her on the spot. I wanted her so badly I shook. I don't know how I controlled myself. This sort of thing doesn't usually happen to me. It didn't work out there and then, though. It was years before we got together. From my point of view, we had a long courtship, although she would probably say it was short. We have different styles. Believe me, those differences were exciting in bed. We talked about sex a lot. We flirted. Then we kissed. Then we tongue kissed, although she wasn't sure she liked that sort of thing. Best damn kisser in the whole world. I'm surprised we didn't have blisters from all of the friction we put our tongues through.

One day we walked out of a boring reading on, of all things, sex. We went to her house to watch *Rosanne*, but it was canceled. Since her t.v. is in her bedroom, we found ourselves with nothing to do except what we'd already been doing. I guess it was the bed setting coupled with genital contact that made us officially lovers. It was only the beginning.

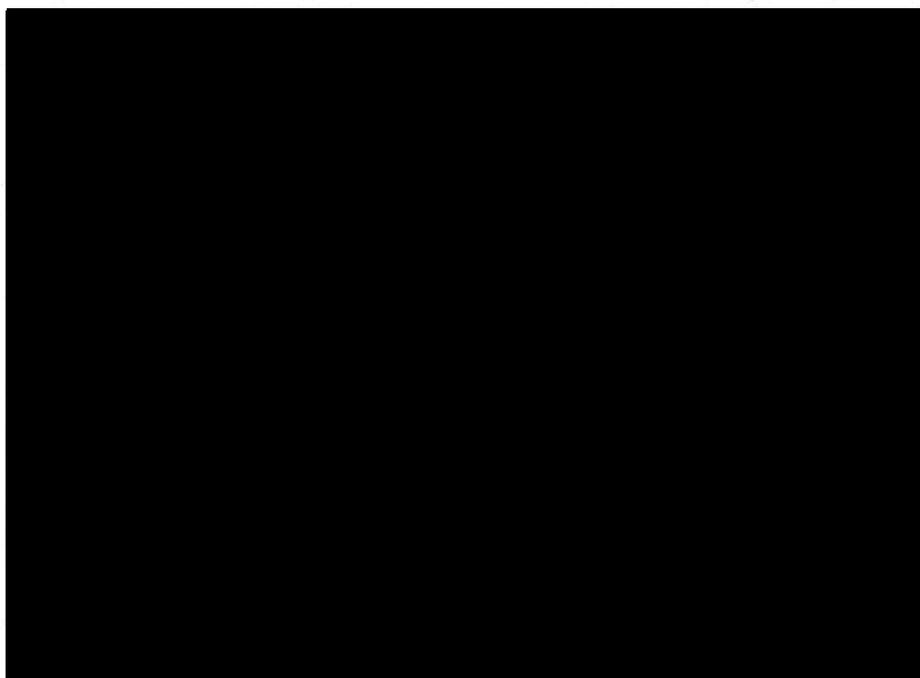
Touching anywhere gave us shivers. I loved to run a finger or my tongue through the valleys between the fat on her back, and she has this one spot that brings on earthquakes at my touch. And wet, oh how we made each other wet. If we had mountains of fat, we also had rivers of sweat and virtual geysers of vaginal juice. We didn't even have to touch to gush. We were wet by the time we got there.

She literally sat on my face once, on her living room carpet. Not an easy thing for fat girls to do. We went through the house throwing each other's clothing everywhere. I took her up the ass, and licked it, too. I licked down the back of her thighs and knee caps. And one incredible time I held her down and licked the soles of her feet while she screamed and came all over herself. Now feet have never been my thing, but it really was incredibly hot, because it was hers.

I used to have trouble letting her touch me in non-sexual areas. It tickled. Then one day she was mad at me, so she took charge and held me down and began by licking my eyelashes. Then she ran her tongue over my eyebrows the wrong way. She ran her tongue from the corner of my eye into my ear, then turned me over and ran her tongue from my ear to my neck and all of the way down my back, ultimately to my feet. It was the most incredibly sensual experience I've ever had. Maybe we weren't always 50-50, but we each got as good as we gave.

In the end, good sex was not enough to keep us together. It does, however, give me memories of the touch and smell of her, the same texture as memories of drinking fresh-squeezed orange juice or breathing in clean air after a big rain. Although there was a lot of pain in the break-up, in the end I think it is these memories that will make me whole again. In a world that hates fat bodies you can't have too many oases like this. ✨

BY BETTY R. DUDLEY



# BIG FUN

by Amiee Ross

**Dang** I hate riding the bus, especially in the summer time and packed. Finally arriving, I get the last seat available. It's next to a big strapping girl in a short dress with daisies all over. Her legs are crossed and enveloped in knee-high engineer boots. She moves over towards the open window. I take her seat, thanking her quietly. It's so warm and I'm sorta tired, so I nod right off. I am awakened when the bus driver announces the last stop and the big girl is gently nudging me off her shoulder that I had blithely passed out on. I come to, apologizing and rubbing my eyes. Smiling she sez, "No problem, you looked so out of it and kinda cute." I'm really embarrassed and thanked her again. That's when the driver shouts "All out!" again. I'm still feeling a little groggy and like a little kid cuz I realize I passed my stop. Exiting the bus, standing on the sidewalk I fumble for my smokes. When I finally get one to my mouth, that big girl is lighting up also. She reaches over, chuckling, and sparks mine.

"Are you laughing at me?" I ask. "Who me? No, it's just that you look all befuddled. Are you okay?"

"Yeah thanks. Just annoyed cuz I missed my stop and gotta wait for another bus headed in the other direction."

She laughs and sez, "Come on," while taking my arm within hers. "Let's go get some ice cream while we wait for your bus."

So off we go, down the street arm in arm with me grinning a big stupid kinda grin cuz I'm liking this big girl's attention and self-assurance. I dig the way her hip feels 'swinging alongside mine, the free hand wrapped over our linked arms. Suddenly I don't care that I missed my stop or that it's so friggling hot. As we round a corner, there is a paleta man selling his sweet popsicles.

"My favorite!" I say as I start to dig into my pockets searching for my wallet. The big girl has her pocketbook out and the money in hand.

"I'd like a tamarindo please."

"Strawberry for me, por favor."

She pays the man and hands me mine with another one of those amused grins on her face.

"You're gonna have to tell me what you're smiling at," I tell her.

"Why, you, of course," she grins. "You're like a little kid with a popsicle in hand, your big baggy shorts and the sweetest brown eyes that got all big when you saw the paleta man. It's great to meet someone who loves the simple joys in life."

"Sure, why not? I've got one of my favorite treats to eat. It's a beautiful day and a delightful woman on my arm. Who

wouldn't be pleased?"

We wander down the street eating our ice lollies, headed towards a park to sit down. I finish, sucking on the stick and stretching out on my back to stare at the blue sky above our heads.

"You live around here?" I ask without turning my head.

"Yeah, a coupla blocks away."

"Lived there long?" I glance upward to see her lips move as she speaks.

"About 4 or 5 months. I just moved here from back East. I'm one of the many who had to experience this crazy city of San Francisco for myself. Besides, the East coast is too stuffy for me. And you?"

"Oh, I'm just visiting for awhile. I lived here at least a million years ago."

We are both quiet. "Well, have you been over to the alley with those great murals of Central America, Haiti and Jamaica yet?" I ask with a grin.

"No," she sez with a smile.

"Come on, I remember them being beautiful." I stand up and offer my hand to her. As we stroll, she takes my arm into hers and I know I'm wearing that stupid grin again, but I don't care. "What's your name?" I ask.

"Lonna. And yours?"

"Boo." I tell her.

"Really? What's it short for?"

"Well nothing, really. I said it a lot as a kid. I'd run around and jump outta places trying to scare my mom yelling 'BOO!' She'd always yelp like I had, clutching her chest, telling me that one of these days I would her scare her to death. I thought I was real big and scary back when I was three, my mom jumping back and doing her 'Oh my gosh!' at least ten times a day. I didn't figure it out till I was six that she was humoring me and herself all that time. She started calling me Boo after that. My real name is Trisha Charlaine for my two Grand Aunts who never married."

"Good story, I like the name Boo. It fits you."

"Thanks Lonna."

In the alley, the murals are as vibrant as I remembered. We were standing in front of a newly finished one. A beautiful sistah from Haiti wearing a great flowing dress that encompasses and embraces the entire piece. Lonna steps up behind me, her belly barely pressing into my backside. She views the wall with me, arms akimbo. Leaning down into my ear and gently enfolding her arms around my waist she pauses, then

whispers, "Come play with me." I nod my head in consent and take the extended hand.

We walk to her house swiftly. She lives on the top floor; the place is quiet and just as hot as outside, even with all windows open.

"Come here Boo." she beckons me with a crooked finger. I move closer to face her 5' 10" frame. We stare quietly, looking brown eye to brown eye. She breaks the trance by turning her back, ordering me to unzip her. I obey. She steps out of the tight, short dress, kicking it aside, all that remains are those tall-ass engineers. Her backside is broad and thick, a huge spiral cutting spans between shoulder blades. Her butt looks tight and beautifully round. She turns to face me, hands on her waist.

Those tits are big and ride high with a chain from one tit ring to the other. Her belly appears round, tight like a drum. A thin piece of chain hangs a little lower resting around those thick hips. The mound is trimmed and shaved, revealing three fat-gauged cunt rings that remind me of bells. I take it all in, from boots to her head and back to those boots. I really dig her fucking boots.

Lonna smiles real polite and pointing to her big boot, sez "Lick it, I know you want to, Boo." I drop to my knees, one hand on each side of that hard leather, lapping as if it were ice cream. I don't want to drip, losing any of that hot flavor. I love the smell of leather as it fills my nose.

"Yeah Boo, make it shine real pretty and I'll give you the other one, okay?" I wiggle my ass in reply. I'm totally enjoying bathing this big boned gal's boots till they glisten with my spit shine.

"You're such a good Boo." she says as she squats down to me, her cunt gaping open. She reaches for my face to stroke my cheek raising my chin upwards towards hers, only to shove two fingers into my mouth. I'm still on all fours while she finger-fucks my mouth, cooing hot and sweet words at me. The sounds of smacking noises are downright nasty and I'm throbbing with it. Shoving a third finger in, I can feel that gag reflex kick in as she picks up her pace. My discomfort makes me whimper. Lonna smiles, "Take it for me, Baby."

I breathe and relax as another finger is stretching me wider and wetter still. Her free hand is pawing at my tits, milking and pinching them hard. Eyes closed, my breathing heavy, I go into my body; feeling my juices seeping out. They open only when she withdraws the fingers from my hungry mouth.

"I have a bit that will look perfect in your mouth." It's shaped like a horse's bit with long black reins through big rings. She fits the gag into my mouth, tethers me to the leg of her bed, then pulls off my oversized shorts and boxers. Drawing the muscle shirt over my head, only to wrap around my wrists so they are bound and I'm loving it.

She stands up and reaches for her cigarettes, only to settle down upon my back like a chair, with her legs crossed and warm butt smack across my backside. She smokes quietly, stroking my head absently. When finished, she rises to extinguish her cig and grab a couple of implements down from her wall, plus the basics from the bedstand. She unties me, the reins into hand, while placing a bandanna in between my bound fists. She tells me, "It's your safety, drop it to end the scene, you have no safe word to slow me down. Do you under-

stand Boo?" I nod my head.

She steps up behind me. When I turn to look she sez, "Absolutely no peeking. Keep your head up and arch your full ass out for me more, I like a big target." Nodding my head I take the pose. "Now that's a stance worth striking, thank you very much," then brings a leather paddle down on my rump. I moan but hold my position, which brings another smack down on me.

"Atta girl, Boo. I want to make your ass sing with heat." Saying that, she begins to beat me with the paddle; a heavy kind with a wide surface, so the pain is more of a heavy thud reverberating throughout my bones. My moans become grunts as she hits harder. Feeling the sweat dripping into my eyes, I

close them. I lose track of time, my body and ass vibrating with each blow. On an exceptionally heavy strike, I cry out around the bit

falling down upon my elbows. "You alright Boo? Should I continue?"

I nod my head as she strokes it, then wipes sweat from both her brow and mine with the bandanna from my clutched hands.

My breath is more rapid now as she begins to fondle my red, shining ass, making me moan and push back against her hands to let her know how good it feels.

"Yeah, I bet that hurts and feels good too, huh, Boo?" I wiggle my ass in acknowledgment. "I bet my cool tongue on your hot rump would feel really good right now, huh?" I can only groan in response. Lonna pats me on the head and sez, "I'll be right back, don't move." As if I had ideas of leaving.

Returning, she places her hand on my burning rump with a piece of ice cupped in the palm. I sigh, moving my hips until she forbids that. I cannot keep count of the many ice cubes, because close to their demise, she shoves them up my cunt to reach the final melting point. Lingered only long enough to shove the ice in makes me hungry for more. When they're all gone, she picks up a whip and is lightly stroking my entire backside; while warming me up in the shoulders and keeping me hot on the ass. The strokes are even on my back, the leather feels soft, like pigskin, flat strands and plenty of em. She strikes, hitting just the shoulders; I feel the heat rising as my ass cools. I wiggle my hungry butt for attention.

"Awww, is your bottom getting lonely, Boo?" She reaches down stroking and caressing, then smacks it solid and hard. "Yessssss!" she says doing it again and again till I am red hot once more. "There, that'll do you, my little fucker."

She reaches for my neck, rubbing for a coupla minutes. I hang my head and enjoy it. She continues the beating, with added gusto. I feel the heat rising all over my backside. The blows are consistent as the pain begins to sing and rise. Now begins that sweet natural high, coming only from pain and pleasure being released. Speaking soft and sweetly, "Hang on Baby, here come a heavy five strokes." Lonna concentrates on my shoulders with a vengeance. Getting all of my attention and a sound from deep within my gut. Taking a moment to lightly brush her fingers over my back, makes me shiver and sigh deeply around the gag.

Feeling her move away for a moment, I sneak a glance around me. Catching her smiling devilishly, feet spread, a whip in those crossed arms.

"Didn't I say no peeking, Boo?" She reaches for a tall mirror and a butt plug. Propping the mirror in front of me, I

**I take it all in, from boots to her head and back to those boots. I really dig her fucking boots.**

see myself and just about knee-high behind my round big bottom. I see her boots as she steps up to my ass and sez, "Now for peeking, Lonna's gonna have to put a butt plug up that ass as a gentle reminder, you may look only at what reflects in the mirror."

Admittedly, staring at my exposed bound self or her boots was somewhat scary, but totally hot. I feel her latexed hand in my crack, pulling and exposing the bunghole, only to push slightly in the tip of the lubed-up plug in the opening of my ass.

She says, "Look at me, in the mirror." I look up, "You deserve this, don't you, Boo?" Seeing her crouched behind me, face right near my ass, eyes grinning into mine, I nod while gazing back. She responds sliding the plug completely in. I close my eyes and hang my head, "Ahhh yesssss." She also moans with me as it disappears inside. We pause.

I am brought back quickly by another whip. This one is also cattailed, with heavier braids of leather. She trails it over my back for a few moments before beginning to really swing it. I am quickly taken to the fine line of pleasure and pain. The strokes increase in intensity, now I am hanging on that edge of pain, with pleasure being only a taste left in my mouth.

Close to crashing over the edge I'm riding, she senses it. The blows lessen, which ease me on to yet another plateau. All the while saying sweet words to me, allowing me calm down. My breathing is even as Lonna continues.

"Okay Boo, here's another deep Ten for you." I am ready, breathing and crying out through the gag. I am close to my tears now, but it's OK, knowing she is with me all the way. Not sensing the tiredness in my bound hands or ground-kissing knees, only feeling the kind of pain that comes from this woman's steady, strong beat and randy, encouraging words. They pull me along, taking me up to that razor-fine edge once again.

"Here's Twenty more for you, Boo Baby, cuz you deserve 'em." I take it only by crying as the lash hits my shoulders and ass, soundly. The blows come slowly and deliberately, yet I still lose count. She pauses and sez, "Last one Boo, hang on Baby."

That whip comes crashing down, making me buckle under it. The tears flow freely down my face, now buried in my arms. Lonna is caressing my back and butt with something soft, which helps to calm me. She removes the bit, unbinds my wrists and strokes my face tenderly, turning it toward hers, licking my salty tears.

"Hey, Boo honey, open your legs a little more for me. Let me put this under your belly." Shifting, she gently slides a pillow under me. She draws back beside me onto one bent knee, grabbing and touching where the marks are. I shiver and whimper. Her digging into my rump makes me grind harder into the pillow. "Come on Boo, open those thick thighs some more for me."

While propped up on my elbows, watching her every move, Lonna touches my bald puss from behind with a latexed finger. I shiver and sigh. Starting at the top of my ass sliding through my lips easily, stopping only when reaching the clit. I'm so fuckin wet. Smiling, she does it again with two fingers.

"Yessss. Gimme more, Lonna, please give me your fist. I can take it! I gotta have it! Please! I need your big strong hand!"

"I'd fucking love to, Baby Boo, give it up!" She grabs a handful of tender ass, shoving two fingers deep inside my cunt. I arch my back and groan, pushing against the hand for more. "Yeah Boo, take it, its all yours." My cunt widens, allowing a third then fourth finger in, pulling and twisting me further open. Her hand slowly balls up, rolling around the entrance, encouraging me on; fist sliding in as I back up completely.

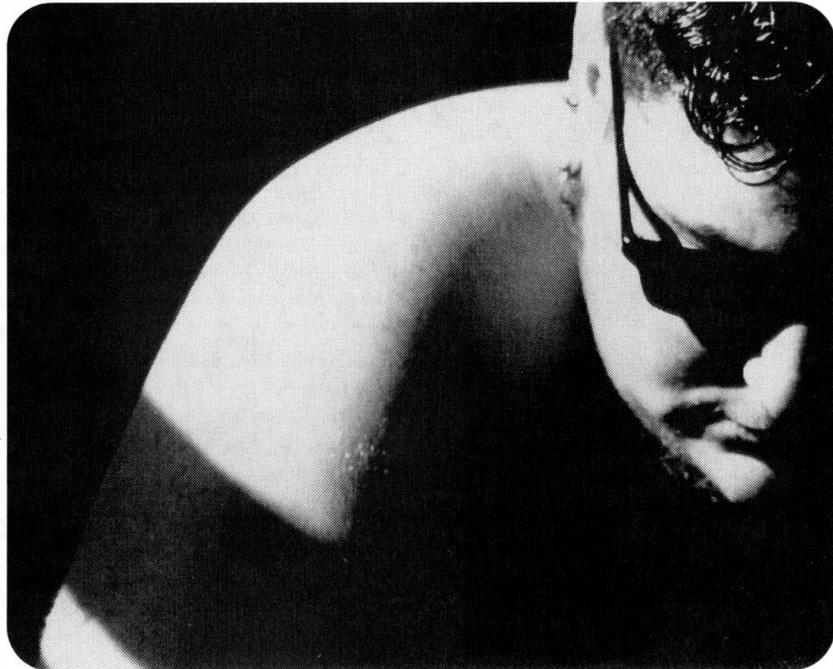
"Oh yeah," I say, "I'll sing for you now Lonna." She begins pumping me and tapping the plug still neatly packed up my ass; making me grunt and hump like mad. Viewing me with a wicked grin, sweat pours down her brow. "Oh yeah Lonna, harder pleeeeeeese!"

She complies, "Oh yeah you earned it Boo!" banging into me fiercely. I'm flying high now, seeing colors, my body singing for release. "Please Lonna, may I cum!?"

"Certainly Boo, but do it looking at yourself in the mirror." Glancing up with slitted eyes at my big self and deep cleavage cradled on my arms, I watch my body jerk on her fist. Orgasm hits like a ball of electricity all bright, fierce light radiating out every pore. I drop my head, biting my upper arm, shuddering as spasms of liquid head pound through my cunt, up through my belly and out of my mouth in a deep howl.

"Oh yeah, Lonna!" I growl, humping and trembling to a slow rolling stop, only looking up when she tugs on the now-stilled fist. "Thank you Lonna," I say to her through the mirror.

"The pleasure was truly mine," she replies, "And wel-



come back to San Francisco, Boo." She pulls her fist out slowly, removes the butt plug, then lays down stretching out on top of me.

"Let's go take a cool bath together, Boo," she sez softly into my ear. We do, but *Dang*, that's a whole 'nother story. ★

# What do you dislike about being FAT?

Society. Just about everything. The mainstream cultural attitudes. Other people's judgments and advice.



Not being able to look down and easily see my own clit. Also my tits are too big. And it's hard to find good butch clothing in my sizes.

Not being able to ride a lot of rollercoasters, not fitting right on planes or in movie theater seats.

Lots. Negative attention, attention period! Sometimes I want to be anonymous, walk around and observe. Not being able to buy clothes I like. More often than not, I

buy things that FIT. I have so much crap I hate and will probably never wear. I dislike hating my body. I dislike all the energy that struggle saps.

The feeling that people are looking at me, paying attention to what I eat. Not because I feel guilty, but because I don't like the attention.

Discrimination. Feeling awkward and clumsy. I feel unentitled to sex. I feel people judge me. Difficulty finding a girlfriend.

I dislike a lot of things about being fat. I dislike dealing with ignorant-fatphobic-insensitive-thinist-oppressive-bigoted people EVERY FUCKING DAY of my life! I dislike not being able to shop for clothes wherever I want for NO GOOD REASON! I dislike paying more for my clothes for NO GOOD REASON! I dislike constantly struggling to educate and/or ignore people who say stupid fatphobic and/or thinist remarks in my presence.

Not being able to buy clothes in most stores or to buy the clothes I like. Being considered unattractive by a huge percentage of the population.

Not fitting into seats or tight spaces and having to turn sideways to go through turnstiles. Being stereotyped. Wondering what people are thinking when I eat ice cream in public.

I dislike that any health problem i have is linked by my health care workers to my size and i have to educate them every single time! I dislike that i can't buy the clothes, styles, colors that i love because they don't come in my size. I dislike that theater seats are often uncomfortably small, also other seats (bus, train, plane, etc.) make me have to be closer to strangers than i prefer.



Sarah-Katherine Lewis of *Pasty*

Not being able to fit in a booth at a restaurant. Feeling totally cramped on an airplane.

I used to dislike the treatment I received from society—the stares, the comments. Now I can handle the comments—I am wittier than most. My ex-girlfriend drew out my feminine side. I am glad I didn't grow up traditionally pretty. I've developed and interesting inner self.

Sometimes, it would be such a relief to disappear, to not be such a visible walking 'target' all the time for people to project their shit

onto every single day. There's also that lingering and ever-present desire to 'fit in' (literally) and be considered normal, not aberrant. For the most part, I'm really grateful I don't... And let's talk commodity. Women's sexual value = personal power in this society—definitely to my own personal sense of self-worth—and fat women have that much less sexual value than smaller women. It's fucked up, but I feel angry/bad about myself that

my body is less valued than other women's bodies, and that that translates somehow into 'less power.' At a deep level, I blame being fat. Also, I'm a raging fashion-addict, and my options for self-expression are fewer than for smaller women (though requiring perhaps more creativity?). Clothes are harder to come by, with less variety, not really built for REAL women's bodies, and because of the limited competition of providers, way too expensive.

That I feel uncomfortable in my clothes sometimes, that I get out of breath sooner than I think I should; that it's hard to find comfy clothes that I like that don't cost a fortune.

Not being able to get clothes that fit off the rack. Uncomfortable seats. Dirty looks at restaurants and in the supermarket.

The way people will look at you and turn away with a look of smug disgust on their faces. The way you're never asked to dance. The way clothes designers think all fat women can only dress like dowdy old ladies. Come on—give us some clothing selections!!!!

The thing I most dislike has mostly to do with other people's prejudice. I hate knowing that there are people out there who would think less of me because of my size. I have insecurities about social acceptability (in general), and I feel that being fat just makes the odds against me even greater. But this has more to do with other people's attitudes - if I lived in a fat-positive world, this would not be a problem.

I'd like to tuck my shirt in once in a while.

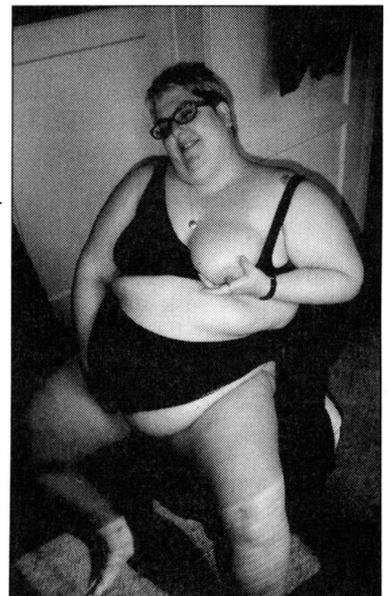
Not enough sexy clothes or clothes that fit in general.

Some problems I feel are intrinsic to being fat have to do with mobility. I used to love being physically active—riding my bike, taking long walks, going on hikes, swimming, etc. I still do all of these things, but they aren't as much fun, because it is much more difficult. Anything that is weight-intensive (where gravity plays a role), such as hiking, is much harder. I have to drag much more weight up that hill than I used to! So I have more limits now—I can't go as far, as high, or last as long as I used to. I know if I didn't have this limitation I would be much more active in the outdoors, and I miss that.

Internalized fat-phobic culture shit. The weariness of constantly being on guard for the words and actions of fat-phobes, the lack of clothing/shoe options smaller bodies have available, dealing with the medical and employment establishments.

I hate small tubs, chairs that break when I sit in 'em. I yell at skinny girls in the fat-girl stores to "get the fuck out." Also clothes are pricey and a bitch to find. Stupid men who yell shit out their cars passing by me. I hate turnstiles and theater seats. I hate it when I am rejected by a woman, and if I don't know 'em real well I can't help but feel it's cuz I'm fat, even if I'm told differently. I am pretty secure about my size, but it's still my Achilles heel sorta.

Sometimes I feel heavy, too big. If I gain 5 or 10 pounds I can't button my jeans. That sucks. I'd like to be 10 lbs. thinner. Feel a little too big in the belly right now.✳



Pudge photo: J. Halbig

Fat-phobia. Other people's shit. And the fact that I've internalized some of it.

# What do you like about being FAT?

My size!!! I feel powerful and immovable. As a woman, I've always been made to feel like I should shrink into the corner and take up less space; now that I'm comfortable with my body size, the very people who could once humiliate me are forced to be intimidated by me when I fight back.

I like the political education I get from it. It caused me to get hip about feminism earlier than if I was skinny. An almost universal hatred forced me to be strong. I found allies and wrote, made art, worked on loving my body (an on-going challenge). I like the filter it is. Some people, men and women, blow me off for fat—their loss. But, it's a litmus test for bigots. Love that.

I like big tits and big ass, curvy hips and meaty thighs, round face and soft skin. I love cleavage. I love to jiggle.

I'm soft. When I give my body to someone, I'm giving a lot. My breasts are very large (DD) and beautiful. Round. Cantaloupes.

I like my fat. I like being large, powerful, sensuous, heavy, sexy, intimidating, inviting, enfolding, warm, extremely soft, able to stare down big creeps, able to take up a lot of room and annoy people, able to be a tender pillow for a sad friend, or a soft playground for an exploring lover. I love being in bed with a lover, and being fat. As a fat woman, I am agile, graceful, and very flexible! I have almost 300 pounds on my side. I like annoying the health workers who think I should have high blood pressure, a dangerously fast heartbeat, diabetes, and a high cholesterol level. (Ha!)

I like exasperating the predictions of my mother's skinny family members that I would be loveless, jobless and in poor health at 30, when I fact I have the best lover(s), the best sex, the best job and the best health of my life—and my health, at least, is better than any of theirs!

I like posing for incredible photos, painting life-size full-body portraits, walking around my apartment topless with the shades up! I like being the fattest person on the beach, the only one who can go into the ocean without a wetsuit!

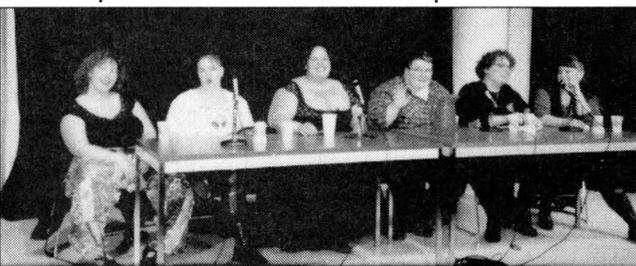
I don't get cold very easily—lots of insulation. My lap is very comfortable for kids and cats to sit on. I feel that my size makes me less vulnerable. And best of all, I and totally buoyant! When swimming, I don't even have to tread water to stay afloat, while my skinny friends have to kick and paddle constantly. Ha, ha!

I like being cuddly. I am comfortable in taking up my space. I like to wrap my big loving self around a friend or lover and give 'em that big warm smother love of a fat girl all soft-like.

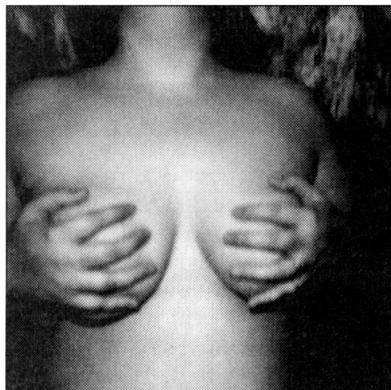
This is HARD...I'm not supposed to like anything about it, right? I guess I like that I can't ever just \*blend in.\*

The freedom of letting my body decide what size it's going to be. Not worrying about constant diets and where and what I can eat. I'm also a big scary bitch!

**Fat GiRL speaks to students at UC Santa Cruz** photo: Laura Johnston



My power within. Not a whole lot.



Stephanie M. photo: JAC

I'm warm, and men don't fuck with me on the street any more. I take up space, and people stay farther away from me.

I love my body. I am soft, warm, and curvy. I *feel* like the embodiment of pleasure and luxury!

I like taking up space. I like my softness and that I can be a soft pillow for those I care for. I like how some clothes drape on me. I like intimidating some people (especially the obnoxious ones who make fun of me and other fat women). I like being substantial.

Being and looking stronger...Although skinny women have a lot of 'privilege,' I like that I'm not treated as someone who is frail or weak. That I take up space in the world means I demand it. Also, having big curves feels like a big part of my femininity.

My presence is certainly known when I enter a room (I'm told that I look rather foreboding). Also, I'm kinda tall too so that adds to the presence.

I stay warm! I'm really curvy and I think that's sexy. I'm not usually worried someone's being friendly *just* cause they'd like to fuck me.

I like a lot of things about being fat. I like taking up space. I like being/acting proud to be fat to our society's dismay. I like saving on hot water bills (because I use less water in the tub than my skinny neighbors). I like feeling powerful and intimidating. I float really well. I like saying "Biggest butt gets the front seat," and not getting any argument.

Feeling strong & grounded. Being able to get flogged a lot. Feeling powerful and nurturing. Having a lover grab or bite into my flesh & swoon.



Syndee Branton

Non-conformity. Never needing a two-ply jacket. Resonating strength. Well, it gives me something to work on. It's important to have a cause so I have something to live for. It's not enough being an aging, disabled, working-class, Jewish Lesbian. Being fat gives me a movement to work in. It gives me an opportunity to be stared at in public places, made fun of on television, pointed out on the street by small children, berated by my mother, seen as stupid, lazy, and out of control. On the other hand, I like that I am allowing myself to be all that I can be, that I'm not torturing myself to fit into society's unreasonable mold. I like being big and powerful. I like the way I feel when I touch myself. I like to think of myself as an Orca, huge and beautiful and graceful.

I think I like being large because, when I was young, I was always very small. Not only short, but very skinny, and very young-looking. People always thought I was much younger than I was, and didn't take me seriously. Plus I got teased and ridiculed a lot for being so tiny. So I now have a feeling of satisfaction about being a person of substance. At last, I'm not smaller than everyone around me!

Lots of "presence". No one doubts I'm there. People listen. I don't get hassled on the street like my thin friends do. I intimidate men (heh, heh, heh).

The sense of having a large enough body to contain all that is within my mind and spirit. I feel I'm just the right size for who I am—and that's BIG. ✨

You, too can have your picture in Fat GiRL...just send it our way! Special thanks to all the friendly galz pictured here who sent in their mugs!

There is more of me for tattooing and piercing.



Amanda Hayman

Cuddly in a hailstorm.

They can't ignore me, I'm not insignificant.

Keeps the rain off my toes.

It's who I am.

# Racism and Fat Hatred

*There is no way we can begin to understand and end fat phobia unless we understand how deeply racism and classism work to sustain fat phobia and vice versa. You cannot discuss fat issues without also looking at the class and race dynamics. The following roundtable is an excerpted discussion among fat dykes from the bay area who do not know each other, but came together to share their personal experiences with fat and racism. This is but one conversation. The dynamic of the personal being political shapes this roundtable, which only begins to approach the many serious political aspects to racism and fat hatred. There are far too many more discussions that need to happen, both deeply personal and vibrantly political. Participate in those conversations—write about them, record them, sing about them, illustrate them—and submit them to FaT GiRL.*

**Barbarism:** One issue that I've been thinking and talking about with other people is where fat phobia and racism connect—where they interconnect both as experiences and also how they keep the community apart. In terms of *who* I am—I'm 29, and come from an Irish-Catholic/Protestant/Jewish background. My parents are first-generation middle class. And they have a lot of class conflict that has gone on with their parents being working class and their being middle class—creating a lot of disruption and confusion...

**Vicki:** I'm 44. What am I talking about, I'm 43! (I'm uh, 29, 29.) I'm 28. And I guess I'm interested in this because I did read the last roundtable and found it provocative—so I want to participate.

**Marian:** I'm 39 1/2...and I'm multi-ethnic, meaning more than one-race-identified. I identify with more than one culture. As a child, I was not raised in this country. So I had the opportunity to learn about racism for the first time as a child when I came to this country. It hasn't stopped since...I was really glad to speak with a couple of people from FaT GiRL about weight issues and gender issues...and the issues of race

and fat-phobia. Because I had wonderful experiences dating, and want to tell these stories! So look out girls, you know who you are! [laughter]

**Wolfie:** I'm 28 years old...I'm also bi-racial. I'm Filipino and Romany Gypsy. I really like the way the roundtables have been going, and some of the future ones look to be just as promising, like the one about fat-phobia and disability. And I'm really interested in talking about this, because I was adopted in the '60s, as a small child, by a white couple who

thought they were doing the whole thing about giving a bi-racial child a better chance at life. And I grew up in that context.

**Val:** Okay, last but not least. My name's Val, and I'm a gender-bending, 36 year-old Cuban dyke. I, too, came from another country and found out what racism was in a big way when I came into this country. The reason I came to the roundtable is I thought it would be interesting, I've never done one before. I love the work that FaT GiRL is doing, and it's long-needed. And I just want to shoot some ideas back and forth, and at least come to some self-understanding, or maybe help some other



**Marian**

people understand where we're from. And what it does to us when people have fat-phobia, or race-phobia, or whatever-phobia...So, where to start...

I've had situations where I've answered ads and we got along really great and we were having phone sex and then I get to their house and the person can't even deal with me. They just freak out! I always turn the other cheek—that's the way I was raised. "It's OK. That's all right." But it's not. It really hurts. That somebody could actually turn you away because of what your body looks like and, in certain cases, most cases, people can't help what they look like, no matter what—whether you're thin or fat. That's not always your choice. That's just sometimes how it is.

Marian, you've got some dating stories?

**Marian:** What I saw in this relationship was sort of an interesting mix of fat-phobia and possibly class issues...but also racism. This is a person who I dated and FUCKED, mind you, and we enjoyed the sexual relationship. It was interesting, because she would never introduce me to any of her friends. We'd be in social situations, and she would be an arm's length away from me, she would act like she didn't really have a relationship with me. We would have fucked each other silly the night before! I wondered about this. Certainly, I think at the time I was probably on the rebound from a relationship that had ended. But I called her on a lot of stuff, and there was a lot of denial on her part about what was really up for her. This is a white woman who had weight issues herself who couldn't really deal with the mirroring of weight. It was interesting, too, that she couldn't introduce me to her white friends. Finally, it became clear. I mean, this is a person who is very p.c., very involved with wanting to build alliances and bridges across cultures—and I think that's good. But I felt like when I called her on her stuff, not only fat phobia but clearly the racism, and the exclusion, and the denial of the relationship,



she tried to make it be something else. I just decided, "I'm good enough to fuck but not to have a relationship with? I'm sorry, no more fucking!" We parted company at that point. I wasn't going to be used as an exotic fat sexual plaything that couldn't be acknowledged except in the arena of the bedroom. Excuse me! Later we ran into each other a couple of times...at the gym. While she was on the bicycle, right? I'm on the bicycle next to her, and we're talking. This is really revealing to me, these are the small, little nuances that I think sometimes white people don't get. But we're talking, and we're having this conversation, and this white woman comes up and starts talking to her. She gives up the conversation with me. She begins [engaging] with this woman for half an hour... I'm so unimportant that I've been set aside.

**Barbarism:** Like you can wait?!

**Val:** "The fat girl can wait." Or she WILL wait, let's put it that way.

**Marian:** Then I called her on it. Actually, at the time, I got mad and just left her, and decided, Hey, I've got to go. But I did call her back, and said, "I've got to tell you something about this." She denied what was going on, and said that this was a person she didn't want me to meet. Which was that much more of an insult. She just didn't get it. When I look at that dating relationship, it made me really want to think about being in one...and then I had this dating relationship with this other white woman before. It was so strange. I had been involved with a woman of color—for three years! I think I took certain things for granted. So when I started dating, I didn't get any women of color to ask me out. Certainly, I feel that in my experience with white women, there's a lot of fat-phobia that's not acknowledged, that they're not being honest about.

**Val:** Especially within the fat community.

**Marian:** I think that among white women it's more prevalent than with women of color. I have to say, this is going to be somewhat modified by class. But with women of color, I think that generally, there's a better acceptance.

**Val:** I kind of disagree with that, because I think it depends on where you live, more than what race you are.

**Marian:** Well, there's class.

**Val:** There's class, also, but I've walked down the street and had black children call me Fat Bitch, and I said, "Excuse me, don't tell me your mama, your grandma, your aunt is not big! There's got to be someone in your family who's big."

**Marian:** Yeah, but you are not black.

**Val:** But they don't know that I'm [Cuban]. I'm still a person of color. But they don't know this. But they're insulting me because they have their racist

issues, or whatever. They're not realizing, "Hey, my mom at home is big. Or my grandma. And I love her." What's the problem here?

**Wolfie:** One of the things about what you're saying about acceptance or non-acceptance by white women...in my experience, having been basically a hippie for a long time, is that I found that it's more acceptable for women of color to be fat because we're the "Earth Mothers," we're more in touch with our "naturalistic feelings..."

**Marian:** Or Mammies!

**Wolfie:** And it's like, No, you do not get to automatically take comfort from my tits!

**Marian:** Yeah...

**Val:** But I've also had experiences...I've had an indigenous lover, and she was pretty much full-blooded Indian. And she had a REAL fat-phobia. She was the same size as me, and she would say that I was fat and disgusting, and that she couldn't understand why she was with me! I took that for 5 years. And then I had another relationship. A denial situation because she had her issues about being fat. She wasn't obese, she was chubby...she had problems with this, and I noticed this in the beginning of the relationship, and I was with this person off and on through relationships and affairs for 11 years. And she was in total denial over our relationship. And I used to say to her, You're ashamed of me. "Oh, I'm not ashamed of you." But now that she's got a thin lover, she shows her off to everybody, and I was just a friend. For 11 years, I was just a friend. And that's when, after all that time, I finally said, "I can't trust you. If you can't be honest with yourself, how can you be honest to me?"

And it's really sad to me when you go into a place, and there are other fat people—they turn away from you like you have a disease! And I'm like, "Yo, sistah, hey bro!" And they're [horrorified]. I mean, come on, be real.

**Marian:** That's not to say that we don't have our own internalized fat-phobia.

**Val:** I've lived with myself.

**Wolfie:** Whenever that happens to me, I keep trying to figure out, is it because of my hair...or is it because I'm a freak?

**Val:** Yeah, same here. They don't know Wolfie: boy, or girl, or what?

**Wolfie:** I used to have a haircut a lot like yours, and I used to do the jeans, and the white muscle shirt, and the serious butch thing. And I've noticed a big difference both in how I'm treated as a fat woman when I was being butch and not-but (or femme, or whatever, I don't tend to define myself as far as butch-femme goes.) But also, as far as being a woman of color goes, it's different—how people have responded to me as a "butch" woman of color as opposed to a "femme" woman of color. People are more afraid of me when I'm doing the short hair, and the biceps are out, and I'm wearing jack-boots. And really, I'm much more dangerous when I'm in a skirt, I have more range of motion!

[laughter]  
You don't know what kind of knives I may have strapped onto my legs under this skirt.

**Barbara:** My previous lover, who was my first fat lover, is a Chicana. When she and I were harassed, we weren't really harassed about fat stuff as much as we were harassed about racist things, and people ignoring her. And when I'm with my current, white lover, who is fat, we get harassed all the time for being fat. Now, my current lover is fatter than she, but I'm about the same size. And I think when people would see me and my former lover, they wouldn't look at her; they would ignore her. They wouldn't even look at us and see us as fat, or see us as together...and I'm talking about within the queer community, and about women in the queer community!

**Val:** One time I was walking down 18th and Castro with my sister and my nieces. We had just gone to Marcello's, and we had pigged out, and I was holding the leftovers. Some little queen comes walking down the street and says, "You really

don't need that, do you?" My sister turned around and chased his ass down the street! He didn't even know it was 5 people eating this, you know, it was just me having a snack in the middle of the afternoon, me and this big, gigantic extra-large pizza. And I'm just looking at him, like "What business is this of yours? Do you pay my bills, do you have to live with my weight and buy my clothes? You don't have to struggle with all my struggles? Go on and do your little white laundry and go away!" But I just can't believe...I mean, I've had people kick me, hit me. Literally. I had a guy just come up to me and actually hit me in the face, calling me a fat dyke. Actually. I had one guy come over and call me a faggot. I said, "You bend over, and I sure can be one."

**Wolfie:** But the whole point with that, is it's a symptom of the culture. That anything that is different, is obviously lesser.

**Val:** There's only one culture that I have seen accept me completely. Samoans. They absolutely adore me. They look at me, and go, FAMILY! They look at me, and go, Wow! She's big! And they're great. I'm ready to move to the South Pacific.

**Marian:** That's interesting, because my current lover isn't Samoan, but she's from the Fiji. And she's very athletic—she absolutely adores me—adores every inch, every pound, everything in abundance. It's a very clear difference, very different from anything I've ever experienced before!

**Val:** People who embrace it.

**Marian:** Absolutely. Incredible.

**Vicki:** Well, I'm just sitting here listening to you all's experiences; I have not had those experiences since...when I was in the heterosexual world, where there was a lot more fat-phobia. You know, again that societal "what's supposed to be considered acceptable" in terms of size. And I also experienced it from my family; more than I have from fellow lesbians. Most people that I wind up being lovers with like my size. My size has never been an issue in relationships. But the family's really interesting, because I feel empowered—especially when I spend a day with Fat Lip Theater, or seeing something really affirming. And then I go to my family's house for dinner, or a get-together like Kwanzaa at Christmas time. I mean, there is NO affirmation there, everyone is thin, they are all going to the gym and working out and concerned about the 5 pounds they've gained. No one has anything positive to say to me, and so mostly, they just don't say anything. And I just feel like the way that I dress and present myself is certainly worthy of a comment! Like, I had a green outfit on at one particular occasion, and no one said a word. And they were just oohing and ahing over this one particular member of the family...They don't just come out and say, "When are you gonna lose some weight?"

**Val:** My family does [bitter chuckle].

**Vicki:** ...but it's really implied. And I eat what I want, I go for second helpings. I think my father one time said, "Should you...?" when I went back for more apple cobbler. And I said, "I certainly shall!"

**Val:** "If THAT skinny little wimp can have a second helping, so can I!"

**Vicki:** For me, the dilemma is trying to assess where this...is coming from, is it because of color or because of size? Just like you were talking about walking into an arena, there's fat people there, there's other people there, and [both] are



**Vicki**

shunning you. Are they shunning you because you're fat, or are they shunning you because of the color [of your skin]?

**Val:** When it's other fat people, I feel it's because you're fat, it has nothing to do with color. It's their own problems with dealing with their bodies. For whatever reasons...For a while, the lesbian community would turn their heads. When I drive down the street and have my leather flag? The p.c. dykes turn their heads: "Oh my God, leatherdykes! Those are those perverts." People unfortunately turn their heads from what they fear, even if they have it in them. And that's what they fear the most. I might be that fat person. I might be a little sexually...perverted. Their fears are from within.

**Wolfie:** Perverts!

**Marian:** I guess for me, my experience with race and size is that it's a degree. It's a degree of difference. In other words, the amount of reaction is equal to the amount of difference. So in terms of race, the darker you are—truly, the darker you are—and the more features you have that distinguish you as being African-American...AND if I can throw in class there, of non-working class...and the fatter you are...those are the things people respond to if you're fat, you're poor and you're black. People want to run the other way. You can modify those adjectives with "oh, not so fat, not so dark, mixed-heritage, and money/class." That's just what I see.

**Wolfie:** Well, I think there's also an age thing to that. Because I've been thin since I was about 10. And I've found that—both with white women and women of color and other gypsy women—the younger [fat woman] is more unacceptable, but occasionally the older we get, the more acceptable it is, because you're a matron then, and it's okay to fill out a little bit. It's really twisted.

The family that I grew up with was very very white, and they were very very thin. And basically, my being fat was explicable because I wasn't "like them," I was genetically different. And I wasn't grateful enough, a lot of the time. The context that I was raised in was that I should be grateful for having the opportunity to live with a nice white family that was upper-class, and have all these privileges that I wouldn't otherwise have had.

**Val:** And why couldn't you conform?

**Wolfie:** Except that it was a dualistic thing, of "Why couldn't I try more to be like them," except that I was constantly reminded that I WASN'T. That I wasn't as good as them. And we'd have these huge family reunions. And this one dynamic happened between me and one of my cousins, who was this thin little blonde girl who had the metabolism of a rabid shrew. So she could eat as much as she wanted and still be this thin little frail thing. And we'd go up and get food together, and she'd eat twice as much as I would. But I'd be the one called the pig by all the boys in the family. And it keeps going on. My daughter is 9 years old, and I've done everything I could to make sure she's aware that her body is fine the way that it is, and that she's really beautiful. And she's 9 years old, and she's talking about going on a diet because she's too fat. Because the other kids in school are

telling her that she's fat, and that she's never going to have a boyfriend when she gets older.

**Barbarism:** With my mom's side of the family, her father was Jewish. And no one talked about it, they were very anti-Semitic, and he even complied with it. And I didn't find out about it until I was 21! I'm one of the few children from my generation who isn't blonde and blue-eyed, and I have curly hair...and everyone used to make jokes, "Oh where'd you come from?" And it was about my size, too. People would ask me when I was growing up, "Are you Jewish?" and I'd say, "No, I'm Irish-Catholic." And I didn't find out until later. I think part of why they're really against me and put me on a diet so early was because of not wanting to show my difference.

Every time I speak to my mother, it's the first thing out of her mouth: "Have you lost weight yet?"...It always comes back to that. And [about] my cousins (new generation), who are bi-racial—my uncle is black and my aunt is Colombian—the rest of my family couldn't deal with them, wouldn't go to the weddings, wouldn't go to the birthings...My uncle is a very fat man, and they were always talking about 'Oh he's too fat, he's going to die, he's not going to be able to take care of his family.' But I think a lot of what they won't come out and be explicit about—but really

what they want to say is—he's black and we're racist and we don't want him in the family. [giggles in the background] But they go on and on about how fat he is. And with my aunt [who is fat, too], it's how dirty she is, and how stupid and crazy she is! And on and on and on. I really think a lot of the fat-phobia out there is really tied into classism, it's tied into racist stereotypes, and people's fear of other people's bodies being different...

**Wolfie:** Well, if you're fat, then it implies that you have no self-control, and "only lower-class people have no self-control." Or only indigenous people, or people of color have no self-control.

**Val:** And no intelligence, either.

**Marian:** Control equals power. "You can never be [too rich or too thin]."

**Val:** I'd like to show them power.

**Wolfie:** I usually do.

**Val:** I bet you do!

**Marian:** Fat people, if they're repentant, and if they're working on it, and if they're attempting to change for the better, "we" can put up with "them" for right now. It's interesting to be talking about this, because I used to work for the Dept. of Social Services doing MediCal disability analysis for the state. There was this one woman doctor who thought it was very important for me to join Weight Watchers, and she had no qualms about coming up to my desk every week with her Weight Watchers literature! It's so interesting, because I got written up for talking loud at this job. I was the first black person that they had hired in 8 years. I got written up for talking loud on the telephone...and disturbing other people in the unit. [laughter] I certainly did disturb them, because I then went to everybody to survey who was being disturbed.



**Barbarism**

The only people who were being disturbed were people who were friends with each other. The people who [timeshared] desks and had split jobs didn't have a problem. It's interesting because this place had lots of women who worked there who were always dieting. And I was fat and juicy. I would have my ice cream...and I was happy! Hey, I was getting fucked every morning, I was a happy woman. I didn't really trip when these women were so fucking uptight. It seems to me, as I attempted to break into the professional world, or the semi-professional world, that there was more and more fat-phobia. Also more racism, because it became lighter and lighter. When I went to paralegal training and tried to break in as a paralegal, I found that I had difficulty. I found that the people of color who were accepted there were light-skinned and very thin, and presented a particular image that a law firm wanted to convey. Never mind my skills or my abilities, I didn't have the look.

**Wolfie:** Yeah, there's the assumption that if you're fat, you're sloppy or have poor hygiene, or whatever.

**Marian:** And so the closer you are to the corporate "norm," that's being fair and being thin.

**Val:** And you get pushed out...

**Marian:**...for the way that you are.

It's just incredible. But it doesn't seem to apply so much with white men. They can look like Rush Limbaugh, and be on t.v. and radio. It's a really interesting thing, fat white men don't seem to carry the baggage that we do if they're in positions of power.

**Val:** But even young, teenage boys. You see these boys, whether they're black or white—but especially white—or any other color, and if they're big, it's okay, it's acceptable. It's okay for boys to be big.

**Wolfie:** It's okay for them to be big as long as they're still moderately athletic. If they're not moderately athletic, they catch a whole bunch of shit.

**Val:** As long as they're "cool," is actually it. Because if he's a computer nerd and is big, no one will like him. But if he's got a nice carving on his head and good tattoo and weighs 500 pounds...

**Barbarism:** And if he's got a skinny girlfriend...

**Val:** And a skinny girlfriend, you've got it...then he's OKAY. It goes in so many different directions, how do you get to the heart of it all? Where does this animal get stabbed so that it can slowly start dying? Because it is, it's like a vicious animal. And I think it's good that Wolfie's teaching her daughter at a very young age and all her life, your body's fine and you're beautiful. And I always had that from my family, but they always added to it: "...and if you lose weight, you'll

have more..."

**Marian:** "You have such a beautiful face. IF ONLY..."

**Wolfie:** Yeah, the "if-only" thing. It was very weird. I was at a women's gathering and the topic came up of our nicknames when we were kids...and it hit me with this physical impact, that the only nickname that I had from my parents was "tub-o-lard." That was my official family nickname that I grew up with. That was how my father used to address my birthday cards.

...One of the dynamics that I've experienced with various lovers is that a lot of times there will be women who will be really happy to touch my tits, and they'll be really happy to touch my cunt, but they won't touch my belly, and they won't touch my thighs...and they'll avoid all those areas that aren't "supposed" to be soft.



**Val:** If they only had a friend like this one thin woman who made me feel so good about my body... she made me feel like it was a comfort to her. She would come and sit next to me on the couch, and she would fluff me like a pillow. And then she would squeeze into me, and sigh. Or when your little niece at 5 years old, goes, "Can your pillows be mine forever? You have big pillows." Those are the times that you rejoice and say, "Yes, I'm a big

## Wolfie

woman and I love it!" And it's such an empowering feeling, that you have wonderful parts to you just because you're fat.

For a long time, I used to hide my butchness, or whatever parts of my personality, because I thought I might offend people, because I'm FAT. And you know, after a while, you just go out there and say, "Let me scare a few people." I love scaring men. That's my favorite hobby now. A man gets insulting with me, and I'm right in his face. And I love seeing him cringe. It's just a charge, a woman in control and scaring a man...

**Wolfie:** I've done that just being out in the world in my wheelchair and not even getting in anyone's face. I've had people pull their children away from me! It's more because of the freak thing than anything else. But there's a dynamic that I've especially found having a child in school. She's been in several schools since we've been in the Bay Area, and she was in one Berkeley school which was in the hills, so it was mostly white kids. And their mothers got very weirded out by me. And this was when I just had dreds, I didn't even have green hair then, and I only had one nose ring. But they were still really weirded out by me, and Chandra was very noticeably darker than any of the other kids. So being both darker and bigger, she got flak from a lot of different sides on it. And then when we were living on the other side of the lake, she

went to a primarily Asian school. So the shade of her skin wasn't so much of an issue, but the fact that she was identifying herself as Filipino which is Asian...

**Val:** Well, I have Chinese blood, also. And when I tell Asian people that I'm part Chinese, they go, 'No way!'

**Wolfie:** I had a woman in the Mission tell me that I wasn't Filipino.

**Marian:** Yeah, that's interesting that you should bring that up, because my mother's Japanese. In fact, I was born there. Yeah, interesting to look at your family stuff. Like Barb, you were talking about your own family. Certainly, I would say that my mother learned racism very well from white men who came to her country. She was a woman who started smoking again because she gained 10 pounds. And she died of cancer. Colon cancer. But she felt that it was more important to not have those 20 extra pounds than to stop smoking. So all these stories we tell...As I grow older, and as I've had relationships with other fat women, I'm not the same person that I once was. I think going back to the woman who I dated, for instance. One of the reasons that I'm where I'm at in terms of my own fat politics, my own fat acceptance—and this is certainly a work in progress—is because of the relationship that I had with another fat woman. Loving another fat woman when you couldn't love yourself!... somehow, there's a lesson in that that comes back to you, in accepting yourself. It's really valuable, and it applies to people who go outside of their own race, and then come home one day. I think there's a bit of a lesson in that.

**Wolfie:** One of the things that I've noticed in reading a lot of fat liberation history, is that the beginnings of it was very clearly white-washed. And I think that had to do with white women's perceptions that it's more acceptable for women of color to be fat. But in looking at the early history of fat liberation in the '70s...

**Marian:** Well, it is more acceptable, I think, in our own communities.

**Vicki:** Or in Africa. It's more acceptable over in Africa. I have a lot of African men who see me and their faces just light up! And I've had other friends say that it's just more acceptable in some of the societies up there.

**Marian:** In some societies, fat is a wonderful bonus.

**Wolfie:** It's like, that's the desirable quality. Like in Hawaii. When I did my studies of the South Pacific Islands, and the Hawaiian Islands, the bigger the girl was, the more there were going after her. That was the prize.

**Val:** Because of the mixture of my cultures of African, and all sorts of cultures in Cuba, I've never heard one guy in my family say they wanted a skinny girlfriend. Never. They always say she's got to have some meat on her bones. Because they don't want her to be what they consider "unhealthy."

**Wolfie:** The only other thing that I wanted to bring up is that I think the combination of color and fat in the lesbian community is another...not so much form of invisibility...but it's like we're all the same. Like, specifically in the leather community, I am always mistaken for Deva! Because we're both fat, we're both s/m dykes, and we both have medium-brown skin. Except that she's 6 feet tall, and has long black and purple hair, and we look nothing like each other!

**Val:** No, you don't.

**Wolfie:** And I've seen that happen. I know Elizabeth and

Max talked about it in their first issue, but I think even more so in the lesbian community, because women of color tend to get lumped together anyway, that if we're fat, then there's obviously very few of us. So Deva and I must obviously be the same person. Or I've heard people mix up Crystal [Mason] and Dawn [??] before. Or Crystal and Cougar before. And that's just another of the many issues, that we all get blended together.

**Vicki:** That happened with me at the second Fat Lip writing workshop that I went to. A woman turned to me and said, "Hi," and called me the name of another person that wasn't there. And when that person came in, I was appalled. Because there was no way that we looked alike. It was just that we're both big and have the same color skin. Different height, different hairstyle...And I called her on it, too. During the break,



The gorgeous women shown above are (left to right, back to front): **Marian, Wolfie, Vicki, Val, and Barbarism.**

I turned around and said, "Now, do I look anything like that woman?" I just wanted to point it out to her that that's totally unacceptable, that because I was the only black woman there, and the time before she had been the only black woman there...so she just assumed we were the same person.

**Marian:** It's interesting, because we're talking about invisibility, in terms of being known for who we are, and at the same time, what's making us stand out is being the visible fat woman of color, or ethnicity, that we are. It's really a strange juxtaposition and irony, that we would be so visible and invisible at the same time. It's incredible..★

*If you are interested in participating in upcoming roundtables or facilitating one in your area please contact Barbarism at 415-550-7202. Future roundtable topics will include fat and disability, fat and class, fat and [your bone to pick here!]*

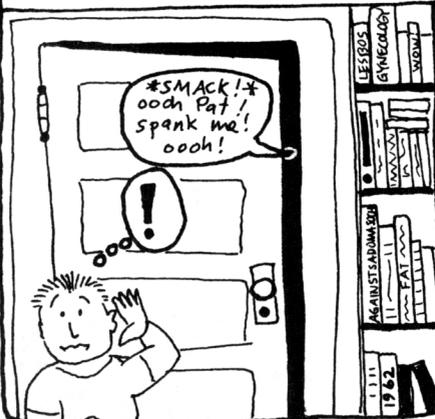
All Roundtable photos by Selena

# life in the FAT LANE

MY FIRST DYKE FRIENDS WERE REALLY COOL. I WAS 16, THEY WERE 30. THEY WERE FAT, ANGRY + POLITICAL. I WANTED TO BE JUST LIKE THEM.



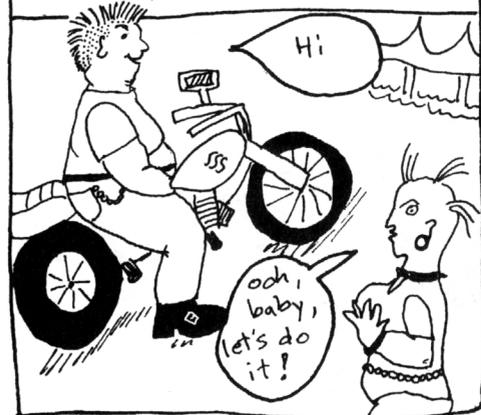
THEY ALL SPOKE OUT AGAINST S/M, BUT SIDNEY + PAT PLAYED WITH IT IN SECRET. I HAVE TO ADMIT I WAS CURIOUS.



AFTER A COUPLE OF YEARS I MOVED AWAY — ON TO NEW EXPERIENCES + FURTHER SELF-DISCOVERY. I DECIDED I HATED SECRETS.



I EVENTUALLY MADE IT TO SAN FRANCISCO, LAND OF SEXUAL FREEDOM.



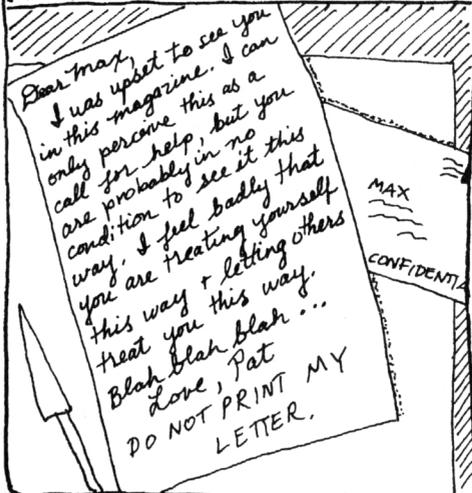
SOME FRIENDS + I STARTED A ZINE. THE IDEA WAS TO INTEGRATE FAT DYKE POLITICS + DYKE SEXUALITY.



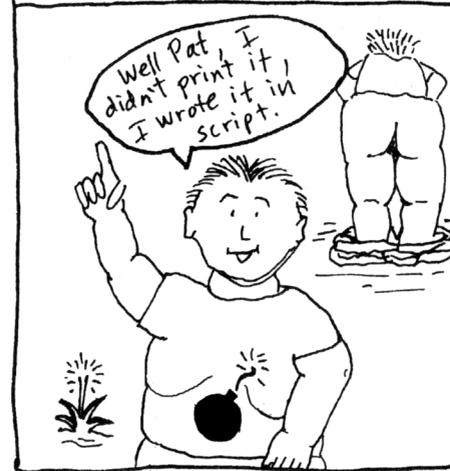
I HAD FINALLY DONE SOMETHING WORTHY OF MY TEENAGE HEROES. SO, I SENT THEM A COPY.



A COUPLE MONTHS LATER, PAT WROTE BACK.



I WAS DEVASTATED AND SHOCKED. FOR A MINUTE.



\* YES, THIS REALLY DID HAPPEN. THE NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED AS MY ONE CONCESSION TO DISCRETION. —MAX

*Gentle Readers, So you finally worked up your courage and asked her out on a date? Congratulations! Now your hands are sweaty, your heart is pounding, and in between questions like "What should I wear?" and "If I throw some condoms, gloves, lube, 2 dildos, a buttplug, and maybe some peppermint oil and clothespins into the glove compartment (just in case), will she think I'm a slut?" You're thinking "What if I do something stupid? What if I say something wrong?" You need help. You need the Gear Queen's:*

## TIPS FOR DATING FAT GIRLS

**T**he basic thing to remember is that as size increases so does the likelihood of running into accessibility problems with your gear (cars, restaurants, etc.). Here are some things to think about. How big is your dream girl? Where does she carry her weight? How mobile is she? Where have you seen her out and about? Where was she sitting? Did she look comfortable? Let's say that you plan to pick up your girl (in a car), go to dinner and a show, and then go back to your house. (To talk, of course.)

**DO** remember that your girl takes up space, and she'll need room on sidewalks, bus benches, in crowded aisles, etc.

**DO** move the car seat all the way back before you pick her up. It makes more room for her and the seat belt is more likely to fit.

**DO NOT** make a scene if the seat belt doesn't fit (unless it's a rented car and you're making the scene with the rental agency.)

**DO** remember that you get bonus points for having a seat belt extender. (Provided that it is already attached or stored right at hand. No digging beneath the soggy dog food in the sub-trunk to find it.)

**DO** park away from the curb or let her out before you park. Its easier to get out of a car if your stepping down onto the street rather than climbing up onto the curb.

**DO NOT** stand inside doorways while holding the doors open.

**DO NOT** open the car door and then stand in the corner by the hinges. Get out of the way so that she can get into, or out of, the car.

**DO** pay attention to your walking speed and,

**DO** allow her to set the pace.

**DO** call ahead to any restaurant you are planning to go to. Make sure that they have accessible bathrooms, moveable tables, and armless, **FOUR-LEGGED** chairs.

**DO** make early reservations at restaurants which are too crowded to be comfortable later in the evening.

**DO NOT** make her sit in the chair that sticks out into the aisle.

**DO** move the table so that it is centered on her body rather than off to the side.

**DO NOT** spend dinner talking about dieting or about how you used to be much bigger/smaller before you started/stopped exercising. Not even if you're trying to tell her that your glad she is the size she is and doesn't obsess about her weight.

**DO NOT** assume that she'd prefer to share a dessert.

**DO NOT** buy expensive tickets for a performance at any place you haven't actually seen her go unless you are certain they are willing to provide alternative seating or refund the tickets if necessary. (I'd be pretty specific about this point.

While it's unpleasant to have to leave the symphony because the seats are too small, its even more unpleasant to lose the \$140.00 you spent on tickets because the management won't refund them.)

**DO** tell your date where you are going. She can veto any places she knows she won't fit ahead of time.

**DO NOT** insist that she explain her reasons. But if she does volunteer that she can't go to X place because of accessibility problems **DO** try to think of solutions.

Perhaps you could go to the same movie at a different theater? Or see a different movie at her favorite theater? Maybe there is a way to fix the seating problem? (**HINT:** Try bringing your own chairs or making the ushers carry one of the lobby benches into the wheelchair area. It's worked for me!)

**DO** support her through dealing with difficulties. Go with her to talk to the manager, or go alone.

But **DO NOT** force your date to become a fat-positive, size-liberationist **ACTION** if your companion would really rather go and 'park' at lookout point.

**DO** make sure that your bed is sturdy (slipping some bricks or milk crates underneath can work wonders) and that there's something edible for breakfast. It never hurts to be prepared.

**DO NOT** offer to lend her your "really big" 1X t-shirt to sleep in.

Most of all **DO** think ahead, but don't worry too much.

No matter what comes up it won't ruin your date unless you let it. ✨

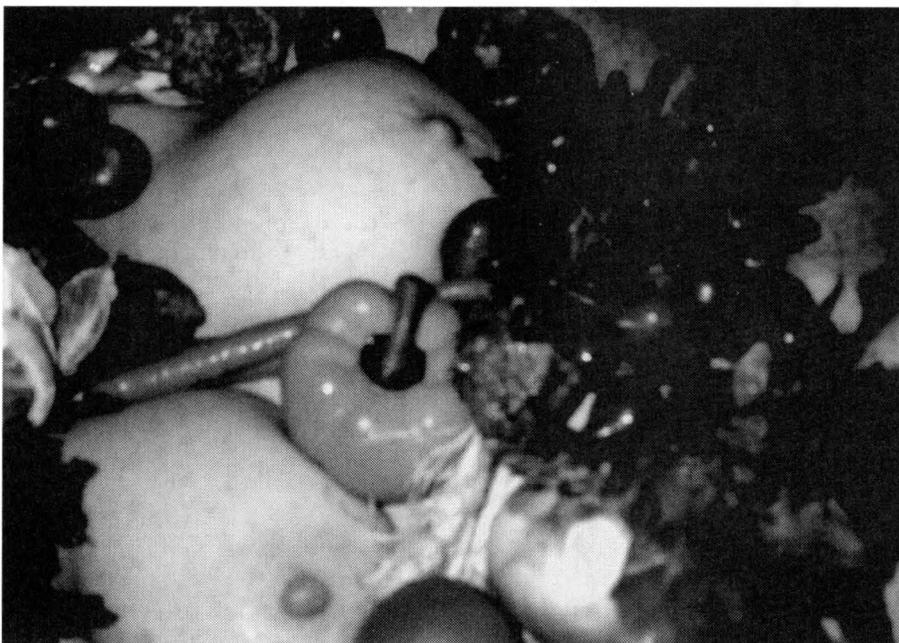


*p.s. My search for size 35L bras continues. The closest I have found so far are bras offered in the catalog Lady Grace which come up to band size 52 and cup size H! They also have small cup bras, nursing bras, and really kinky girdles. As to the dildo harness issue, G.D. (Greedy Dyke) Productions makes washable black denim harnesses which are fully adjustable on all the straps. They come in two sizes. One size for hips up to 52", the other for hips over 52". See the catalog listings (starting on page 65) for more information on these companies. Keep those cards and letters coming. —G.Q.*

**breast**



**plates**



Photos of/by those  
hot babes from Seattle's  
Sisters of Size



*The Kitchen Slut Presents:*

# *Breakfast In Bed*

*Because life is difficult (sigh!), work is difficult, emotions are difficult...my column this issue is dedicated to luxury and relaxation. Take some time this weekend and serve or be served breakfast in bed. Either way it's a break, a change of pace. And just imagine the possibilities...*

*As you are cooking my delicious recipes, the enticing smells wander into the bedroom while your lover waits patiently, mouth watering, senses tingling, waiting to be fed. Or she can feed you, your head resting on the pillow, eyes closed, savoring every bite, or smearing the food all over her body...an enticing platter. And when you're done, well, you are already in bed!*

*My recipes are very rich, intended to keep all the luscious curves on your bodacious bod. Treat yourselves to only the best ingredients and Enjoy, Enjoy, Enjoy!*

## **GREEN EGGS (NO HAM)**

Butter or olive oil  
1/2 onion, diced  
1 cup cut spinach  
1 cup sliced mushrooms  
4-6 eggs, beaten  
2 tbs. milk  
1/2 cup pesto (or more to taste) \*\*  
1 cup shredded provolone  
dash of parmesan  
salt & pepper

In a large skillet, sauté onions first, add mushrooms and cook 2-3 minutes. Add spinach & cover.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk eggs with milk, pesto, salt and pepper. Add some butter to the pan if necessary, then pour in the egg mixture and scramble. When eggs are almost done, top with cheese cover turning heat off. Serve immediately with:

### **\*\*PESTO**

2 bunches basil  
1/2 cup olive oil  
pine nuts  
1 cup parmesan cheese grated

Put all ingredients in a food processor and in a minute or two ...Pesto!

*So, write to me. Let me know if my recipes are encouraging sluttiness in your life, or send in some of your sexy delicious recipes or slutty kitchen tips. And if you are too lazy to cook, brunch at Red Dora's is great on the weekends. Till next time!*

*love, Bertha*

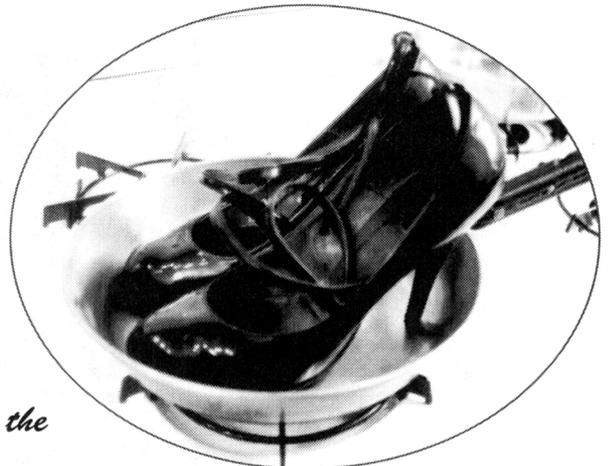
## **RED-TOP POTATOES**

olive oil  
4-6 red potatoes diced medium (Yellow Finn potatoes are also great, just change the name of the recipe)  
1/2 onion, diced fine  
finely diced garlic (optional)  
kernels cut from 1-2 ears of corn (white corn is my preference...so sweet)  
1 cup grated cheddar

Boil potatoes for one minute and drain. Transfer potatoes to an oiled cast iron pan, add onions, garlic and corn. Cover cook on medium heat turning frequently until potatoes are nicely almost burned.

Melt cheese on top

Serve with dill rolls, challah or onion bialys, kiwi, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, apricots and sweetened cream.



*The Kitchen Slut*



*that's when I fell for the leader of the pack*



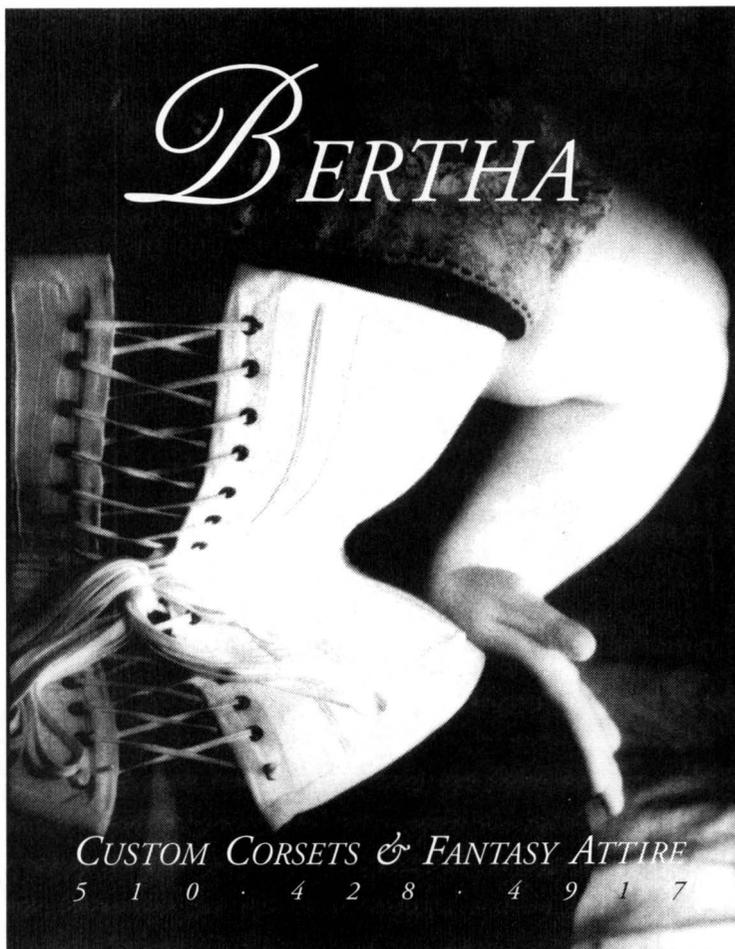
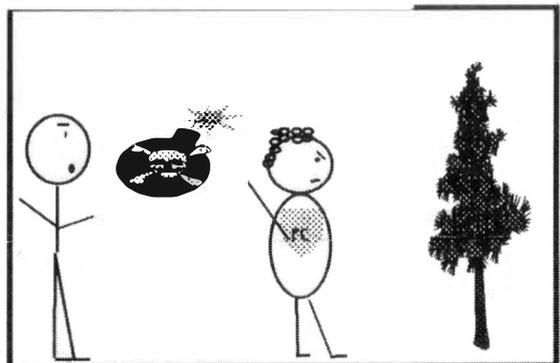
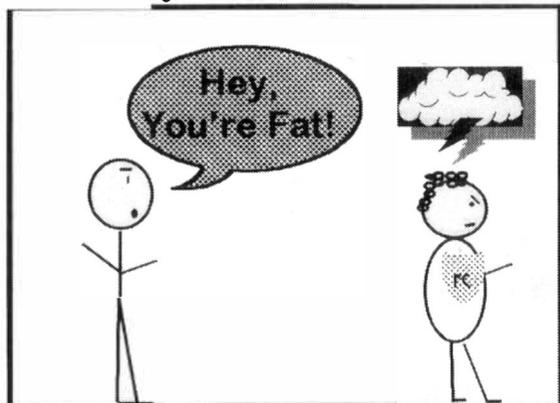
Photographer: Rebecca S  
Models: Val and Steph

*vrooom, vrooom . . .*

THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF

# FAT CHICK

by Laura Winton



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photo: Laura Johnston

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# A word to our "concerned" sisters:

This letter recently appeared in Lesbian Connection.

Dear LC,

I am concerned about the lack of attention given to obesity in the lesbian community. I work with a nonprofit health agency and know that obesity places a person at risk for a variety of health problems, including heart disease and back problems. But when I called the local lesbian and gay health project they had no information available on this topic. While I do not subscribe to the ideals of young, slim and beautiful, I do believe in good health. Is our community shying away from this issue so as not to offend big sisters? We talk about anorexia, drug abuse, alcoholism and safe sex, yet we ignore the issue of weight. It's time to talk about the health issues connected with obesity and support the dykes struggling with weight maintenance. Reconciling feminist/lesbian values with good health is a challenge that queer health-care providers need to address. Do fat dykes want services and information? What support are they looking for? What are lesbian and gay health agencies doing to tackle this issue?--Katherine, Durham, NC

## Here's what one proud fat dyke had to say.

Dear LC,

I am writing in response to the letter from Katherine regarding "obesity." I am a 43 year old fat working class Chicana Dyke who is also a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. I want to take this opportunity to say to all fatphobic lesbian supremacists that you are working for the patriarchal misogynist nazis. They have taught you self-hatred and this is the fuel for your fatphobic activities. I want you to know something Ms. Katherine, the blows of daily social abuse, because I am and have always been fat, have wounded me much more than either the racism, classism or sexual abuse. This is not to deny or diminish the destructive impact on the lives of those of us who suffer because of these bigotries. I want to acknowledge that all these things work hand in hand. They are all from the same father. He is white, he is rich and he is American. I suggest you stop doing his dirty work. I don't need your supervision regarding my weight. What I do need is for you and lesbians like you to educate yourselves. Fat people are not pathologies. This is the last permissible hatred. You know racism is not OK. I want you to know fatphobia is not either. It is a civil rights issue and for your amends I suggest you read *Shadow On a Tightrope*, 1983 Aunt Lute Book Company, Iowa City, Iowa. This feels like 1939 is breathing down my brown, queer neck. It is interesting how so many people are feeling it is OK to come out of the bigotry closet while the Christian fundamentalists are controlling congress. What privilege are you protecting Katherine? Also let it be stated for the record that I am not a compulsive overeater. I am not lazy. I exercise regularly. I am not uninformed. I (as most fat women) can dance circles around most thin people's knowledge regarding nutritional information. Most of us have tried every conceivable diet and nutritional program to ward off the hate attacks against us. Diets don't work and fat is determined by genes. Take that to your self-righteous bank called I am thin, I am better. It's more like I am thin I have lots of body privilege until I get old, or disabled or, Goddess forbid, fat! There was a study done that asked

6 year old girls if they had to choose between being disabled in a wheelchair or being fat which would they rather live with? The overwhelming majority said, "I'll take the wheelchair." Six year old boys were asked to choose between being a girl, or disabled in a wheelchair for life. Every boy asked chose the wheelchair. This is not to disrespect or marginalize people who use wheelchairs, but it does make a powerful point regarding fatphobia, female hatred and ableism. Please mujeres, try for just one minute to set aside your fear and take in this information so that we can learn to love ourselves and each other in all our sizes, shapes, colors, abilities and ages. I, for one, thrive on diversity. It is more than a concept and it must be created by each one of us. Look at who you love and support. How many of those lesbians are fat? You ask about what support we are looking for? I want to be respected and valued for all my fabulous qualities including my abundant body by healthcare practitioners and all people everywhere. Don't guilt trip about food or denigrate your body in front of me. If you are attracted to a fat dyke work past your fatphobia so you can enjoy the attraction. Don't lie or deny it when it is brought to your attention. Don't assume we are not passionate, sexual beings. The best lovers I have had have been fat lesbians. Support us and yourself (this is every women's issue) by speaking up next time a fat joke is shared or some other fat-hating statement is made. When people ask why you are speaking out against fatphobia take the time to educate them as I am educating you. Don't support the diet industry. It makes billions every year on women hatred. Thousands of fat women are mutilated each year by surgeons out to make a buck by stapling our stomachs, removing lengths of our intestines and liposucking our bellies and thighs. Not to mention Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig who are major rip-off artists. They are opening up the purses of women everywhere through humiliation and guilt. Read up on the health risks of eating sugar substitutes and fat-free products that these programs sell to their apologetic clients. They are loaded with chemicals that are much more damaging to your health than sugar and unhydrogenated fat (I don't endorse white sugar as a healthy food choice). Diets don't work and they create disease. Even your mainstream western medicine doctors are now copping to the fact that diets fail 98% of the time. Exercise is the key they say. Well, if we could all afford memberships to a gym and feel like it is a relatively safe environment things might be different. This doesn't mean fat women would be thin, it only means fat women would have access and some of us might be healthier (this is not to say fat women are generally not healthy, we are as healthy as our thin sisters).

It's an abusive situation for us to encounter the constant deprecatory dialogue many thin women have to coerce themselves into exercising and also to express their fatphobia when we enter the room. The story does by no means end here. I could write a dissertation on this and maybe I will. I'll close by giving thanks to the members of The Fat Underground founded in L.A. in the late 60's mostly by radical fat lesbian feminists. You politicized me around this issue and it is because of you I am not dead from some diet or stomach stapling or in some jail hell hole for fighting back with violence instead of the written and spoken word. Thank you. And to fatphobia: ¡Ya Basta! (no more!)

Politically Relentless, Lea E. Arellano, Berkeley, CA

# fat, fucked up & fucked over

I am depressed. When I say “depressed” I mean times, days, sometimes weeks, or moments, or an afternoon, or morning when I feel: there’s nothing worth getting out of bed for, tired and easily exhausted, often crying, alone, hopeless, extremely self-conscious, unable to perform simple jobs or make decisions, I can’t make sense of anything because it all seems so hugely complicated, I can’t ever imagine a time when I didn’t feel like this, transfixed with grief, horror, fear, ugliness. Big feelings.

My first memories of depression are of myself as an eight or nine year old girl crying, feeling desperation and loneliness, (coincidentally [?] this is around the time when I was first put on diets). I am now twenty-six and I’m beginning to realise that these feelings have not left me, that over my life I have experienced many cycles of depression; sometimes I feel up, mostly I feel sort of “medium,” often I feel total despair and emptiness.

I know I would still be depressed if I were thinner, some of the sources of my feelings, such as the deaths of my mother, Rosemary, and my beautiful brother Paul, have nothing to do with my fatness. On the other hand, I want to acknowledge that being fat gives depression quite a distinct flavour.

This period of depression, up-and-down roughly since Xmas 1994, is the first time I’ve spoken publicly about the way I feel. In the culture in which I grew up depression is taboo, it is unspeakable and shameful, and passed off as a kind of self-indulgent, trivial “pull your socks up dear” sort of thing. Therefore it has been important for me to show people how I’m feeling, to recognise my feelings as real and valid. The responses I’ve had have been mixed; some understanding and caring, others bemused, like it doesn’t fit with their image of me and what I’m like, or rather their image of me as a fat woman.

One woman wondered why was I depressed, she’s only ever seen me witty, wisecracking, and articulate, so how can I feel so awful? I am painted into a corner, like I’ve got to show them that I’m not this laffin’, eye-rolling, jolly lady stereotype they might have been expecting. I relate very much to what Lea said in Fat Girl #2, about having to be brilliant, and having to be endlessly adaptable to different environments. I feel this too, that I can’t be myself, and actually, that I’ve never really had a strong sense of my identity. So ... I’m starting to show people who I am, and that includes being depressed. My friends have to acknowledge the real me, not my mask, and because I often feel lonely I need to know that it’s the real me they know, and that I am cared about.

Being fat and depressed to me means harbouring overwhelming feelings of alienation and uncomfortable difference. I am different, indeed, I’m very proud to be different, but when I’m depressed I wonder if anyone could understand me and where I’m from, especially since a fat body is so widely regarded as indicative of a deep set pathology. No wonder she’s crazy, have you seen her size? Alienation is real too, even now, even after I’ve talked myself hoarse, many of my thinner friends don’t get it, they aren’t sensitive and I feel silenced. I keep plugging away, but it’s so tiring, and will I get any results? Like this: Someone invited me out dancing the other week. I love to dance. I haven’t been out dancing for a long time. I know that at this club I’m going to it’s very important to have the right look. Shit, I don’t have anything that would work so I set about making myself a new dress. At the last minute I cancel. I can’t face it. I haven’t told my friend why. I think she’d try and persuade me to go and I don’t feel strong enough, and besides, I don’t think she’d understand. I don’t want to go because I want to dance and I don’t want the shit and the stares and the comments that would go with it in this straight nightclub.

*continued...*

by charlotte cooper

# fat, fucked up & fucked over

...continued

When I am depressed I start to get agoraphobic. How can I face a world which shouts at me, or comments, or lifts its eyebrows disapprovingly?

When I'm strong I fight back, I shout and sneer and give them the finger. Last year I hit a man who was in a group making obscene fat-phobic comments about my lover and me;

I went up to him, jabbed my pointy fingers in his throat and kicked him hard, and I got away with it too, I fight back, but it takes a lot of energy, sometimes energy that I don't have or can't give, and I am shocked by how easy it becomes to just stay at home and avoid confrontation. Reasons for going out become fuzzy; I'll post that letter tomorrow, I can't go out without my bra cuz I don't want people staring at my tits clanging together and it's too cold to take off my clothes and put it on, I'll go out later when my lover is here.

Excuse me whilst I fulfill those lies about sad fat girl couch potatoes, friendless, unlovable, munching junk, with stains down the front of her badly fitting clothes. Intellectually I know this is a vile distortion, politically I know why these misrepresentations exist, but sometimes, emotionally, I can't undo it. I live in a fat-hating world which wants to destroy me. I start wanting to destroy myself. It's not that diets look attractive, it's just the pervasive myth that weight loss cures everything. I would never diet, but I still get those "what if" doubts, invalidating the empowerment I have fought for; what if I were thinner, what if they're really right about early death/heart disease/my knee joints?!

What if I'm deluding myself and living a lie? I want to wake up from this. I'm casting a spell to vanish my years of self-hatred. Another spell to disappear the insidious lies.

WAKE UP!

Here's something else: It's a couple of years ago, it's late and I'm on the phone to my father, Stewart. I'm blubbing, and I think he is too. He tells me words to the effect of "Buck up, or Simon will leave you."

Simon is my lover. I can't believe what I'm hearing. No matter how secure I am in my relationship, no matter how loved I am, Stewart gets to the root of it all. I'm fat, how can anyone love me? Fuck, and I know how difficult it was to find a lover who was so totally accepting of me. Fuck fuck don't leave me Simon, don't leave me, I am not worthy of you please don't

leave me. Fucker. Don't be depressed, fat girl, because it's not sexy or endearing and you are unlovable enough without any added hassle. Isn't this depressing?

Okay, there are some practical details to consider if you are fat and depressed. The bottom line is that, contrary to the images of fat cat capitalists and coquettish rich fat ladies, fat women tend to come from the poorest and lowest socioeconomic strata. Poverty is depressing. I live on Income Support and Housing Benefit, which is a sort of Brit version of Welfare. Where I live is expensive, has no adequate heating and my landlord (Mr. Slum, I call him) harasses me. I can't afford to move, I haven't got enough money for a deposit on my own place. I hate this.

Poverty also means I can't afford a private counselor or therapist. Programmes for free or very low cost counseling are few and far between and are either booked up and/or concentrate on specific social or ethnic groups (I am white). I have started co-counselling with a fat friend, but I feel angry that channels by which I might start to heal are closed to poor women. The National Health Service was a dead end for me; I was referred from pillar to post by my doctor, seen by a stream of professionals with clipboards, Doctor this and Doctor that. I got away fast, knowing how easy it would be for a psychiatric label to be slapped on this poor fat depressed woman. Knowing, also, that the hallowed sources of knowledge for mental health professionals would mean that they would probably have internalised pathologised definitions of my fat body. I didn't want the shrinks pressuring me to shrink.

So I'm depressed. I'm not a victim, not a two-dimensional stereotype, not a jolly dolly, not all powerful, not addicted to feeling bad, I'm mostly pretty ordinary, but I'm depressed. I've lived with depression for a long time, and probably will continue to do so, but I know I'm not alone with it, I know there are probably other fat girls who feel like this too, and I hope there is something useful to be gleaned from my experiences. ✨



KWS '94

*Amazon by Karen Stimson  
available on a notecard for \$2 from Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534*

# Fat Watch

## The obesity gene

In early experiments researchers mingled the blood of thin and fat mice by surgically joining the mice. They found that the fat mice ate less and lost weight. (You might lose your appetite too, if you woke up surgically attached to another person, but I am just guessing.) The gene that was recently identified might be responsible for or affect a hormone which is carried in the blood that could potentially explain the mouse phenomenon. The gene generates the hormone-like protein which might travel to the brain, thereby indicating whether the fat stores are big or small, and would then be regulated by the brain accordingly. There are probably many additional undiscovered genes which also regulate weight in humans. NAAFA director Sally Smith worries that genetic identification will be used to support the argument that "obesity is a disease, a genetic mutation requiring correction."  
—Sondra Solo

## You mean I can't be a cheerleader?

"Cheerleading Judges Accused of Bias: Scoring allegedly rated appearance over talent" From *The Daily Cal* (4/18/95): "Citing racial and physical biases, several participants and observers of recent Cal cheerleading tryouts plan to file an official complaint today with the chancellor and athletic director...attesting that selections for the 1995-96 squad *were not chosen on talent alone.*

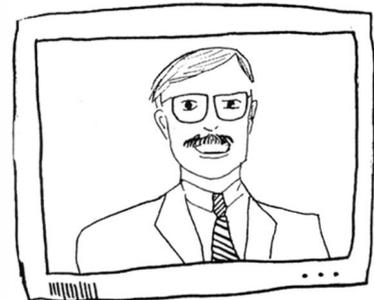
[Emphasis mine.] ...Opponents of the selection process say judges tried to choose women who would fit a certain "image" that unfairly excluded certain ethnic groups and physical appearances...Judges filled out scoring sheets for each competitor, on which one finalist was described as being 'large' and having 'big hips.'" SHOCKING! There go my career plans. What is this world coming to?—Candida

## NEA: gotta hate 'em

The NEA is at it again. The Urban Bush Women were recently informed that they would NOT receive a renewal of their grant to produce a stage adaptation of Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* next year. According to local weeklies, Gomez said that renewal is the NEA's standard protocol, and their refusal to renew mid-grant is extremely rare. I don't suppose this had anything to do with the group's producing a piece about LESBIAN VAMPIRES OF COLOR? Gomez had already spent several months with the SF performance group working on the project, and the collaborative team is probably still looking for alternate funding sources. [By the way, to those who haven't had the pleasure of meeting JG or seeing her read her own work, let me toot her horn for a minute. She's not only an inspirational writer, but a formidable speaker. Definitely up there on the list of literary talents that make me glad to live in the Bay Area, and a fat dyke at that! Invite her to your hometown.]—Candida

## Fat Girl Fantasy #66

by Sondra Solo



Police remain baffled this evening by the mysterious drowning death of C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General, and 'General' for the War on Fat...



Authorities have linked his death to that of Covert Bailey. An unidentified brown liquid was found in the lungs of both victims.

## My peers? Yeah, right.

California's 1st District Court of Appeal has upheld the Superior Court's decision to allow Alameda County Deputy District Attorney William Tingle to remove three jurors in an attempted murder case because one was "grossly overweight," one had braided hair, which he found "somewhat radical," and the third because of her "braids, obesity, size, and manner of dress." Tingle said he has "never liked young, obese black women, and I think they sense that." All three of the excused jurors are black, as is Tingle and the defendant in the case in question. According to California law, race is not a valid reason for dismissing a juror. Not so with fat: In 1989 there was a state Supreme Court decision rejecting a challenge to a prosecutor's removal of a juror. The court in that case said the prosecutor explained that the juror was "overweight and poorly groomed, indicating that she might not have been in the mainstream of people's thinking." —Max

## Sassy sells out

Remember how in FG #2, we sing the praises of a glossy teen-mag that makes good with their "10 reasons not to diet list" and a binder that said "If they call you a fat pig, say thanks"? Well, you can forget all that. They sold ownership, and it shows. Their April issue features such heart-warming material as "The truth about fat" (uh, right, and take one guess as to what that is), and a precious photo of a repulsed girl cowering near her salad at the sight of another girl (literally donning pig ears and a snout!) devouring a hamburger & fries. Junior Cosmo. —Candida

## Fat folks screwed — again

A recent study by researchers at Rockefeller University shows two results: 1) the body adjusts its metabolism to maintain its natural weight and 2) fat people get manipulated and short changed because of their body size by all sorts of people, including Rockefeller University researchers.

In what is regarded as a thorough study, researchers found that the body burns calories more slowly when weight is lost, and more quickly when weight is gained. The metabolism slows down or speeds up by 10-15% to return to the body's natural weight. The study rejects the theory that excessive dieting upsets the metabolism because the metabolic rate changes were consistent whether or not the participant had dieted in the past.

How was the study conducted? 41 people were recruited. They lived at the clinical center and for the 1st four to six weeks ate only a liquid diet. They then gained weight by consuming 5,000-6,000 additional calories per day. After they weighed 10% above their normal weight, they again ate only the liquid diet for 4-6 weeks. Finally, they lost weight by consuming 800 calories/day until they were 10% below their normal body weight and again ate only a liquid diet for 4-6 weeks. The "normal" weight participants received \$40/day. The "obese" patients received no money whatsoever, but were allowed to continue at the clinic on a special diet until they were not fat. Many of the 18 fat people got to within 20-30% of their recommended body weight, but none were able to maintain the weight loss.

That the fat volunteers were not equally compensated financially is not surprising—after all, fat women in the United States have a household income that is, on average, \$6,710 less than thin women and fat women are 10% more likely than thin women to live in poverty regardless of their teenage achievement test scores or how and where they grew up. —Sondra Solo

## 24 pounds too fat to emigrate

Girl meets boy. Girl marries boy. Girl tries to move to Australia to be with boy, but she can't because she's too fat. Yup, that's the '90s version of the story. An Australian librarian, Robert Boot, and an American librarian, Charlene Boot, met and fell in love on the internet. He came to the United States and they were married. The trouble happened when she tried to join him in Australia as a permanent resident. She was told that she would have to lose 24 pounds before she could emigrate. An Australian Department of Immigration Spokesperson said their policy is not to comment on individual cases, but added that the Department was guided by the Department of Health if a potential resident had health problems. She added, "Unfortunately, until the health problem is treated, we can't proceed with immigration procedures." Charlene was recently diagnosed with diabetes. —Sondra Solo

## Make the fundies pay: pick up the phone

You can call Capitol Hill to tell your CongressCreep or Senator what you think AND charge the religious right for your call. Far-right Traditional Values Coalition leader Rev. Lou Sheldon paid for a toll-free number so anti-gay supporters could call congressional members and express their political views. Well, anyone can use the same number and give whatever views they want directly to DC. Call 1-800-768-2221 and connect yourself directly to Capitol Hill.

And if you've got some extra bucks, call these TV stations and tell them what you think of their coverage: ABC: 212-456-1000, CBS: 212-975-4321, NBC: 212-664-4444, CNN: 202-898-7900, FOX: 212-452-5555. ★

Got some news? Something to get mad about?

Someone who deserves a prize?

We wanna know!!! Send Fat Watch items to:

Fat Girl, 2215-R Market St. #193,  
San Francisco, CA 94114.



# RESOURCES

edited by Max Airborne

We only list things we've received since the last issue of FaT GiRL or things with updated contact information. For more extensive Media Feast listings, get your hands on back issues of FaT GiRL. Send us your published work (book, zine, mag, video, CD-ROM, whatever) for listing in this section.

## Books, Mags & Zines

**Belly Songs: In celebration of fat women** is a magical book of poetry & short stories by Susan Stinson. Send \$9 to the author at PO Box 433, Northampton, MA 01060.

**conmoción** is a magazine for Latina dykes. We were happy to find this zine and its editor, fat dyke Tatiana de la Tierra, at the OutWrite conference. Issue #1 contains an interview with Cherríe Moraga, an account of Black Latinas getting together at Michigan, reviews, a Latina lesbian activist's survival guide, thoughts about suicide, poetry, a calendar, and much more. \$13/year for individuals, \$23/year for orgs to 1521 Alton Rd., #336, Miami Beach, FL 33139.

**Exorcism #2** is a fat, small-sized zine in which Marva (a fat feminist) intersperses her angry, honest rants about fat, body image, and the insanity of society's views of women with great clippings from various relevant publications, dream narratives, reviews, and some truly excellent poetry (even if you hate poetry!) about fat. Wow! You've gotta get it! Trade or \$2 + 2 stamps or \$3 to: Marva M. Holmes, 3209 NW Market, Seattle, WA 98107.

**Fat!So? #3.** Marilyn Wann is at it again with her ziney little antics—this time, a really groovy pull-out sticker page. There's a bumper-sized beauty of a very hefty mudflap girl and the words "wide load," a "Fat Power" fist, "Diets are Tired," and "I'm a Fat!So?," as well as the usual cavalcade of treats: a fatso goes

to Disneyland, fantastic news clips by Sondra Solovay, an interview with Patti Cathcart of Tuck & Patti, knees, the Body Mass Index of fat culture, and more! \$3.50 each, or \$12 for 4 issues to: Fat!So?, PO Box 423464, San Francisco, CA 94142.

**Food For Thought and Size Esteem** are two small publications from Largesse, the Network for Size Esteem. One is a quarterly newsletter, the other a bi-monthly issue-oriented bulletin. You can receive both publications for \$20/year. Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534.

**Get What You Want** is a truly amazing comic zine by Mary & Youme who did it because "there needs to be more stuff about freaky dykes & sexwork & SM & safe sex & different body body & havin' a good time living the dream. Living erotically. Yah." Contains really cool drawings of dykes of all sizes. \$3.50 to Mary Anderson, 418 Duboce St., San Francisco, CA 94117.

**The Hairy Legged Man-Hating Feminist Gazette** isn't kidding: "no more apologies for male-bashing (could you PUKE?!) for female anger, for wanting to establish MATRIARCHY, or being a feminist of any stripe...Let's party!" Finally! Inside you'll find The Adventures of Fat Chick and lots of ranting, ideas for actions, and inspiration. \$6 will get you the next 4 issues. \$1.50 for a sample. Any combination of cash, stamps or check (payable to HLMHFG) to: PO Box 2821, Iowa City, IA 52244.

**Her Posse.** I love this zine!!! Allow me to quote: "Gays and lesbians do not exist—

there are only queers and straights. Those known as 'gay and lesbian people' are essentially straight assholes who sleep with members of their same gender and have nothing to do with queerness except their fear and rape of it. Queers are twisted & disgusting, beautiful & glamorous, extreme & alive. ...[Gays & lesbians] don't exist anywhere & aren't anything because they don't know who they are...Their activism is about

getting more power, \$\$\$ and straight approval and leaves behind non-whites, S/M fetishists, fat dykes, transsexual/transgender people, poor people, etc. ...We cannot afford to settle for their bogus 'gay & lesbian' culture or believe their lies—it is killing us, drowning us in the pabulum, and numbing us to the point of invisibility." What more can I say? Send them your money!!! No price listed, but a buck or two should cover the cost of the zine. Her Posse, PO Box 15137, Boston, MA 02215.

**LFAN** (Lesbian Fat Activist Network) has a great monthly newsletter. Recent issues have included a fantastic serialized piece by Laura Tisoncik about being a fat jock. The March issue has an extensive article on fat-positive Internet resources, as well as several reviews. To receive it for a year, send a \$20 check or money order made out to Wendy Fydenkevez (\$5 - \$10 low income) to: LFAN, PO Box 635, Woodstock, NY 12498.

**Radiance** is a 10 year-old glossy magazine for large womenthat contains informative articles about fashion, health, famous fat folks, etc., as well as tons of ads for clothing and services for fat women. \$20/year, \$5/sample to PO Box 30246, Oakland, CA 94604.

**San Francisco Bay Area NAAFA** puts out a monthly newsletter with news and articles about fat issues, as well as local event listings. \$15/year to SF-BA NAAFA, PO Box 40298, San Francisco, CA 94140.

**The Size Diversity Empowerment Kit** is available from Largesse. You get LOADS of stuff: brochures, pamphlets, fliers, sample publications, news clippings, resource lists to die for, and more. And if you've got info that should be part of the kit, by all means, send it. \$10 plus \$3 shipping US, \$4 Canada and Mexico, \$14 elsewhere (mailed First Class in US, Air Mail everywhere else). Send your dough to Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534.

[Reviewed elsewhere in this issue: **Cowrie**, by Cathie Dunsford, and the **Lesbian Health Guide**, edited by Regan McClure and Anne Vespry.]

## Movies

**Dolores Claiborne.** A compelling and beautifully shot (psycho)drama about the relationship between a bitter daughter, her bitter mother, and the mother's relationship with her bitter-bitch boss. Kathy Bates was born to play this role. This

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# RESOURCES

film features contrasting portraits of her as both a young, radiant, loving woman (who first gets the life and innocence sapped out of her by having to live with a twisted, cold-hearted husband) and as a gorgeous, weathered, middle-aged, stubborn ox. Talk about sublimated and understated longing—this role really got to me. All this against the background of scenic Maine in unrelenting winter and a summertime lunar eclipse. Bates as Dolores Claiborne is fat and luscious and multi-faceted and BRAVE and not in the least bit concerned with dieting or changing herself in any way, for that matter! What, in a Hollywood movie? Since her Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in *Misery*, Bates has the star-power to pick and choose her roles, though she's been around for some time (anyone remember her from *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean?*) The strength of this character made me wet & squirmy, although I don't think sex appeal is what the director intended; I say, get your jollies where you will, I crave the sight of strong fat women on the silver screen. The film's "message" gets a little heavy-handed at times—need one use trite dialogue to spell out the hardships these women go through?—but it's still a great movie, and very compelling. Especially worth it to see Bates interact with a twitchy, ever-morose Jennifer Jason Leigh. There's also the dangling carrot of "just what kind of relationship did those two widows have over the years?" Adapted from the novel by Stephen King, directed by Taylor Hackford.

## Videos

**Fat World** is a 25-minute video about being fat, from a fat perspective. We haven't seen it, but it sounds fantastic. According to *New Attitude*, The topics covered include self-image, growing up fat, cross-cultural comparisons of attitudes, and experiences in intimate relationships. It was produced for TV by Vancouver's Lorna Boschman. Contact her at (604) 872-8337, fax: (604) 876-1185.

**Gracious Flab, Gracious Bone** is a 15-minute video by Evie Leder about Susan Stinson and her work. It has footage of Susan reading from her book *Belly Songs*, as well as an interview with Susan. This is an incredible video. Not only is it really well produced, but seeing Susan read is an absolutely incredible experience. Get it. Send \$12 to Evie Leder, 199 Riverside Dr., Northampton, MA 01060, or call (413) 586-9012.

**Masturbation Memoirs**, by House o' Chicks. What can I say? It's worth it to see surreal slow-motion footage of a woman sprawled out in an elaborate chakra-suit, and to experience the glitter-decked thighs & glistening twat of fat whore/activist

Scarlot Harlot, who also wears a stars'n'stripes outfit and refers to masturbation as her duty as an American patriot. Plus, an intense female-ejaculation shot that was achieved without vaginal penetration! An otherwise diverse group of mostly femme women talk frankly, in this first of a soon-to-be series, about what masturbation means to each them, and then they DO IT. Jill off, that is, in succession and by various means, if all in the "missionary" position. The camera person/editor in charge of the video special effects must clearly be either demented or over-ambitious to have envisioned this final product, where the mouths of the lengthy floating-head interviews in slo-time don't quite match up with the voices on the soundtrack. I found staring into a zoom shot of a woman's twat on a t.v. screen for five whole minutes while she dilated and contracted to be a new and meditative, if removed, kind of experience; I kept hoping The Hole would start talking, but that's a different video. I didn't find this video particularly informative or erotic, but Barb detected some moisture occurring over on her planet, so mileage varies. Warning: slow-moving; better viewed on pot than acid; and watch out for the disappearing Lee Press-On nail (ouch)! Perhaps best recommended as background camp material for parties.

House o' Chicks, 2215-R Market St., #813, San Francisco, CA 94114.

**Throwing Our Weight Around.** We haven't seen this, but the maker of it says this: "A ground-breaking documentary full of witty and thought-provoking insights into Fat Liberation." Cost: Individuals: \$30, Groups/Institutions: \$40 plus \$5 (s/h). Payable to Sandy Dwyer, PO Box 1836, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, (617) 491-1549.

Reviewed elsewhere in this issue: **No Apologies**, a video about Wry Crips.★

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  - Patty Powers trip through the cruising trails of Griffith Park, L.A. with performance artist Ron Athey
  - the rad-ass do-it-now text "Kill Your Parents" by Aragorn Moser
  - a brilliant piece on learning to deal with the dismal times we live in and Newt-chronies by Barry Paddock
  - an excerpt from (Lesbian Avengers co-founder) Sarah Schulman's upcoming book, *Fat Bohemia*
- Plus tons of stuff we're too lazy to mention.

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# RESOURCES

## Organizations

**The Body Image Task Force** is a task-oriented group that fights size discrimination and looksism and promotes positive body image for all sizes through events, workshops, actions, and public speaking to raise awareness of body-image issues. They need volunteers and interns. BITF, PO Box 934, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, (408) 457-4838.

**Fat is a Lesbian Issue** is a New York-based, fat-positive, anti-diet discussion group that helps queer women learn to accept their bodies at any size. They meet monthly to talk about food, clothing, healthcare, sex, exercise, self-esteem and other issues that impact fat lesbians and bi women. They meet on the 2nd Sunday of every month at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, 208 W. 13th St., in Manhattan. For more info, call Gail and Shira at 609-924-9321. Send email to [ConstanzaB@aol.com](mailto:ConstanzaB@aol.com).

**Fat Lip Readers Theater** is a women's performance collective that has been creating and performing work from a fat liberation perspective for more than a decade. To get on the mailing list, submit work, or inquire about membership, contact Fat Lip, PO Box, 29963, Oakland, CA 94604.

**FLAB, the Fat Lesbian Action Brigade**, is a New York-based activist group that fights for the visibility of fat lesbians within the queer community, the fat-acceptance movement and the world at large; works to discredit and destroy the multi-billion dollar weight-loss industry that threatens our survival; and celebrates the beauty and sexiness of fat women. See Fat is a Lesbian Issue above for meeting times and contact info.

**LFAN, the Lesbian Fat Activists Network**, is an affinity group for size-friendly Lesbians of all sizes. See the Media Feast listings for contact info.

**The Fat Women's Group** is based in London. Write to them at Wesley House, Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU, UK.

## Internet resources

Check out FaT GiRL's homepage on the World Wide Web at <http://www.icsi.berkeley.edu/~polacklfg>. There's a fat dyke email list (for women only): send email to [fatdykes-request@apocalypse.org](mailto:fatdykes-request@apocalypse.org) with the word *subscribe* in the subject line, and your name and email address in the body of the message. There are a couple sex/sm-positive dyke email lists with many fat dyke participants: *kinky-girls*, for women who do BDSM with other women, and *boychicks*, for butches and their supporters. For info write to: [majordomo@queernet.org](mailto:majordomo@queernet.org). In the message body, write: *info kinky-girls* or *info boychicks*. For general lesbian stuff there's the *sappho* email list. To subscribe send email to [sappho-request@apocalypse.org](mailto:sappho-request@apocalypse.org). There are also some fat-related (mostly het) email lists: The big-folks list (subscribe by sending email to [big-folks-request@abstractsoft.com](mailto:big-folks-request@abstractsoft.com) with the body of the message as *SUBSCRIBE <your email address>*) and the fat-acceptance list (subscribe by sending email to [majordomo@world.std.com](mailto:majordomo@world.std.com), with the words *subscribe fat-acceptance <your email address>* in the body of the message). Some news groups are: *soc.support.fat-acceptance*, *alt.sex.fat*, *alt.support.big-folks*, *alt.personals.big-folks*, *alt.personals.fat* and *alt.sex.fetish.fat*. Folks

Thanks to the studly women of Red Dora's Bearded Lady for hosting the release party for FaT GiRL #2, which featured readings & performance by Bertha-the-kitchen-slut, Fresh, April, Max'n'Jo, Barbarism, Devra, Daniela Yanai, & N. Drew Parkin. Thanks also to Deva, our stellar emcee, and to all who came and helped us partake of Aquarian birthday cake. This event helped pay off debts from #2 more quickly and print the fat bundle you're currently holding in your own sweaty hands. We love Red Dora's ("go for the food, stay for the pie!").

into IRC check out the #big-folks channel on the Efnetwork on Thursdays at 10pm EST, and on Sundays at 3pm EST.

## Announcements

**Largesse, the Network for Size Esteem** maintains a library of archival material on fat liberation dating back to the beginnings of the fat feminist movement in the early 1970's, as well as a computer database cataloguing resources in dozens of categories. They invite contributions, and offer free referrals, printouts from their database, and research assistance. They are currently seeking records of activities and events sponsored by groups or individuals for International No Diet Day. They are asking for news clippings, newsletter and magazine articles, photos (copies okay), and first-person accounts to preserve in their archives. Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534, (203) 787-1624 phone/fax (call weekdays between noon and 8pm EST), or 75773.717@compuserve.com.

**Let It All Hang Out Day (LIAHO)** will have a float in the SF Pride Parade this June. To participate, call (415) 285-1340.

**Los Angeles/Long Beach area Fat Girl rap group** forming soon. Contact Solara at (310) 428-3217.

**Making Waves** is a supportive recreational swim for women over 200 lbs, Sundays from 11 - 1 in the east bay. The first Sunday of each month is Friend Swim for women of all sizes. Swim fee is \$3 - \$5 sliding scale. For info, call Linda at (510) 524-6470.

**A Self-Defense Course for Fat Women** will be happening in Seattle sometime this summer. For more info., contact Alternatives to Fear: (206) 632-8547.

**South Bay fat women's support group** meets in Menlo Park at Two Sisters Books, 605 Cambridge St. It's open to all women who are interested in working toward acceptance of their bodies as they are. Meetings are from 7:30 - 9 pm on the following Tuesdays: June 6 & 27, July 25, and August 1 & 22. Starting in September meetings will be the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month. For info call Diane, 408-254-3905. ✨



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# RESOURCES

## Catalogs

### Decent Exposures

PO Box 27206  
Seattle, WA 98125-1606  
1-800-524-4949 (US and Canada)  
(206) 364-4540 in Seattle  
Mon-Sat 8am - 8pm PST

This company specializes in cotton bras, from sizes 28AAA to 58H. They come in cotton, cotton-lycra, double-layer cotton-lycra, or velour. Lots of different colors, two different cuts. They're sports-bra-type bras; no wires or hardware. I wanna order one but I haven't yet, so I can't vouch for the support level, but the catalog is full of quotes from women with tits bigger than mine saying they're the best thing since the advent of the vibrator (ok, so that's not an exact quote). Bras (they call them 'un-bras') are \$21 - \$46, depending on size and fabric. They also sell leggings, turtlenecks, and t-shirts in sizes infant to 4X, cotton velcro-on menstrual pads, and some other stuff. —Selena

### Desert Rain Mercantile Co.

4705 N.Sanders Rd.  
Tucson, AZ 85743  
1-800-771-9771

This small, specialized catalog has large-sized t-shirts and pant sets custom-printed with ornate glittery Native American and southwestern designs. They also sell "blanks"—undecorated versions of the shirts and sweat-pants—and handmade silver jewelry. Pant sets come in two sizes: A, for chests 36"-44", waists 28"-38"; and B, for chests 46"-54", waists 38"-54". T-shirts come up to size 5X (60" chest), sweatshirts up to 4X (58" chest). Prices: T-shirts \$24, sweatshirts \$36, Pant

sets \$48, blank pant sets \$26. —Selena

### Greedy Dyke Productions

2400 Rio Grande NW, #1-110  
Albuquerque, NM 87104  
(505) 345-8739

Dildo harnesses that actually stand a chance of fitting you! Two styles: one strap between your legs (\$20) or two straps between and around your legs (\$24). The straps are made of cotton webbing with a black denim/silk front panel that fits a 1 1/2" dildo (that's the diameter). The one-strapper also comes in a garter belt version made of cotton brocade (\$30)! There are two sizes: one for hips below 55", the other for hips above 55". And for \$16, velcro restraints suitable for wrists OR ankles! —Max

### J.C.Penney Big & Extra Tall Catalog (men's)

PO Box 2021  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-2021  
1-800-222-6161

Your basic normal department-store men's clothes. Sizes: waists up to 60", chests up to 64", necks to 21". Max got some excellent quality thick white t-shirts, Big Mac overalls, coveralls, and a flannel from here and is VERY satisfied. Good stuff for the butch on the go! —Selena

### J.C.Penney Big Kids

cool clothing in larger sizes  
same contact info as above

Basic, mainstream kid's clothes, mostly casual, at least in the spring/summer catalog. Most of the models in this catalog, especially the girls, don't really look fat, 'big', 'plus' or 'husky' to me. Ah, well. Sizes: Girls, from 10 1/2 (for bust 31", waist 28", hips 33", ht.

54") to 20 1/2 (40", 35", 43", ht 65"). Boys, from 8 (29" chest, 26" waist, 29" seat) to 22 (40", 33", 41") in 'husky' or 'shorter husky'. Prices \$10-\$50. —Selena

### J. Jill Ltd

Winterbrook Way  
Meredith, NH 03253-3006  
1-800-642-9989

This catalog says it has "uncomplicated style." I guess that's reasonable enough. Mainstream, tasteful, reasonably fashionable women's clothes. A lot like a lot of other women's clothing catalogs. Sizes up to 24W (50", 42", 53"), but not everything comes in the larger sizes. Prices: tops and skirts \$40-\$80, dresses \$70-\$160. Definitely out of my price range. —Selena

### Just My Size

PO Box 748  
Rural Hall, NC 27098  
1-800-522-0889

I was pleasantly surprised by this catalog -- lots of natural fibers, nice colors, and clothes I would consider wearing! They have a nice balance of casual and dressy clothes (to sizes 4X and 32), lingerie (bras to 50 DDD or F), stockings (including thigh-hi's!), and pantyhose to size 7X (75"-85" hips). Better yet, they list sizes—in inches—on almost everything! —April

### King Size

for tall & big men  
PO Box 9115  
Hingham, MA 02043  
1-800-846-1600

The same style of clothing as the JC Penney catalog, in general. You know, mainstream guy clothes, some nice, some dorky. A little more upscale than J.C.'s, perhaps, and more specialized. Almost everything comes in sizes up to 4XL (62 chest, 58 waist), and some clothes come in sizes to 9X (80 ch, 76 w). —Selena (Says Max: wow! They've got Levi's up to waist 60, cotton and silk boxers up to 7X, rain pants up to 8X!!!)

### Lady Grace Intimate Apparel

61 Exchange Street  
PO Box 128  
Malden, MA 02148  
1-800-922-0504

This catalog is a real find for fat girls of various body sizes. They have all sorts of bras (including maternity and athletic styles), bustiers, panties and some really kinky girdles (which unfortunately don't come in my 82" hip size). Sizes are pretty good though. They size their panties and girdles from small (25"-26" waist, 35"-36" hips) to 9XL (47"-48" waist, 57"-58" hip), and their bras include styles with cup sizes to H and band widths to 52. Not all the styles come in all the sizes, but I think you'll find this catalog worth getting. —April

## The Rainy Day Harness

In honor of expanding their fashions to fit slightly bigger women, Stormy Leather donated a bunch of assorted 1x leather and rubber fetish clothes and various accessories to FaT GiRL, ever on the prowl for sex toys and fashions and other fantasy materials. The Rainy Day Harness is an amazing piece of equipment that anyone can use, but it's particularly handy for fat women. Why? Because you can strap your dick to most anything or anyone that allows! It's a sturdy, washable nylon and velcro gizmo with a rubber cockring and ~50-inch canvas straps that can be easily extended, and will tighten around most anything that your imagination or libido desires. We accompanied Syndee, Queen of Catalogues, to Good Vibes on her last trip out here, and she was considering a thigh harness, but was concerned that perhaps it wouldn't be big enough. No worry with this thing! It's probably the most versatile use of 15 bucks I can think of. Why, just for authenticity's sake, I'm testing it out on my desk chair right now! [You think I'm kidding, don't you?] Why wait for a rainy day? Strap it to your cheeks and bump butts with a receptive friend. Doubles as a useful bondage toy if you strap it to two legs together (any two legs will do). Use that immobile piece of furniture for all it's worth. Strap it to your chair, to your coffee-table, to your toilet seat. Wrap it around your lover's forearm so you can ride her while she diddles your butt-hole and strokes your clit with her tongue....strap it to your belly, or your forehead if you want. Especially handy for girls with wheelchairs or motorcycles! Riding through the desert, or on a street crowded with surly women in tank tops dripping sweat in the summer heat, who pause to look at you as you rock at stoplights, clenching the bike and the woman driving it between your knees. If you're the shy type who prefers to dispense with the small talk, strap it over your mouth as a gag and let your hot bitch neighbor friend ride your face between her fleshy thighs. ...excuse me, gotta go. —Candida

*continued on next page*

# RESOURCES

continued from previous page

## National

"famous for first quality hosiery"  
400 National Blvd.  
Lexington, NC 27294  
(704) 249-4202

Mentioned here for their queen-size pantyhose and stockings, including one style that fits folks with hips up to 75 inches. \$2.50 to \$5.00 a pair. —Selena

## Pango Pango Swimwear

1905 E. Atlantic Boulevard  
Pompano Beach, FL 33060-6562  
(305) 786-0255

A *great* source for *really skimpy, really sleazy* swimsuits, mostly bikinis. I'd call the look "Trashy southern straight girl." They have cup sizes from AA to F and custom make the bra band to your measurements. The bottoms only come to an XXL (45" - 47" hips) but with suits this skimpy I doubt it matters. All pieces are interchangeable, all styles are available in 11 fabrics, they custom-make all their one piece suits and do special requests, and sequins are available on all styles! If anyone is brave enough to order, please let us know how it goes! —April ✨



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M-TH 12-6 FR/SA 12-7 SU 2-6. A woman owned co.

# the ever-growing bio page

**Amiee** has been writing since 1993, and hopes to keep her sanity as well as food on the table, money in her pocket, and girly-girls on her arm. She currently lives in Vanillaville, U.S.A. (a.k.a. Northampton).

**April Miller** would like to thank Sally, Edith and Marilyn for their help with the Gear Queen column. (And she sends kisses to all the rest of you!)

**Barbarism** boot@sirius.com, um er never finishes her sentences and on bad days feels like a freak and on good days feels like a freak. (And thanks her awesome housmates Lee, Jess, Anna, Farmer, and Malt for playing way loud music and putting up with all the commotion that FaT GiRL generates...) She also didn't get her personal in on time (bad girl) and is looking for someone to teach her how to flirt and be a better slut.

**Bertha** likes being the Kitchen Slut because she loves hot dishes, feeding people and playing with knives.

**Betty Rose Dudley** is a Bay Area cybersurfing slut originally from Missouri. She can be reached by e-mail at webrose@ix.netcom.com or bird@sfsu.edu. Feel free to comment on her writing or to start a discussion about almost anything.

**Cath Thompson:** Bitch Goddess extraordinaire, e-mail: Qtfatgirl@aol.com. The name says it all (well, \*most\* of it, anyway).

**Charlene** is a rad, bi, Sesame-Street-loving, girl/queen who has been known to stick food up her nose. She has lived in SF for less than a year and is happier than a pig in shit to submit to FaT GiRL.

**Charlotte Cooper:** I tend to sink into bed with a mug of cocoa, but being depressed doesn't stop me from fantasising about having my arse fucked by a big butch dreamboat.

**Christine** is a giantess, little girl, smart as a whip, and terrified brazen confessor of secrets. She has walked over 1700 dirty San Francisco miles in the last 15 months and weighs over 300 pounds, so there.

**Crystal Mason**, wild pig of the desert, doubles as a theater production diva, an HIV counselor, and a cutie pie at large.

**Dana Blumrosen** is a small, butch, fat-femme-fetishist who currently resides in Santa Cruz, exchanging needles and selling books.

**Candida** just wants dyslexics to note that she and [redacted] are separate entities! (Though a force to reckon with when we [redacted] t. Heh.)

**Dorothy Allison:** Born in Greenville, South Carolina, she now lives in Northern California with her partner Alix Layman, and her son, Wolf Michael. Her novel, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, was a finalist for the 1992 National Book Award, and won both the Ferro Grumley and Bay Area Book Reviewers Awards for fiction. The novel has appeared in translation in French, German, Greek, Spanish and Italian. A chapbook of Allison's performance work: *Two or Three Things I know for Sure*, will be published by Dutton in September, 1995. Her second novel, *Cavedweller*, is forthcoming as is a movie version of her novel, *Bastard Out of Carolina*.

**Fish** is a flamboyant drag queen intellectual torchsinger and student who is compiling a book of *Brat Attack* while we write about her.

**Jill Posener's** work speaks for itself.

**Karen W. Stimson** is a middle-aged 400-something pound radical fat byke and rugged individualist—writer, artist, polemicist, herstorian, archivist, third generation gourmet cook and Born Troublemaker who has been a thorn in NAAFA's side (or other parts) for 25 years.

She codirects *Largesse*, the Network for Size Esteem with her male partner, and dreams of a fat feminist community in the wastelands of Connecticut. You can email her at 75773.717@compuserve.com.

**Laura Johnston** will sniff no panty before its time.

**Laura Winton** is a 30 year-old activist and publisher of the *Hairy-Legged-Man-Hating-Feminist-Gazette*. She's sick of patriarchy, and is fighting back every chance she gets, all the while writing poetry and plays and working crap jobs to pay the rent.

**Lea Arellano:** Chicana intellectual, writer, truth-teller, and agitator. Living and learning in Berkeley, California.

**Lila Sophia Robinwood** lives in Berkeley where she makes sculptures of fat women out of clay and works on her novel—a subversive western. She encourages large women everywhere to take off their clothes.

**Lori Selke** is a voluminous reader, pun intended. She currently lives in Chicago and needs a better job and an excuse to move out to the San Francisco Bay Area. Her work is forthcoming in the anthology *The Second Coming*. A big, friendly, butch bi leatherperson, a friend recently labeled her "a stubborn cuss" in a complimentary tone.

**Maria Cimino** is a transplanted New Yorker who thinks being thousands of miles closer to Las Vegas almost makes up for the lack of bagels.

**Marian Bailey** will be turning 40 this year and is happily partnered in the east bay. A multicultural, multi-ethnic person, she often feels pushed and pulled into small, constricted spaces.

**Max Airborne** is seriously enjoying her recent state of unemployment, but is on the lookout for interesting methods of income she can do in between drawing and doing her daily Fat Girl chores.

**Oso** is a stone butch Chicana who loves her wife and thinks her cat rules.

**Rebecca** never thought of herself as a true artist until her photos were censored from an exhibit in a Santa Cruz women's bookstore. She lives in SF, and is always interested in new models: P.O. Box 425574, SF, CA 94142.

**Selena** eats, drinks, sleeps and reads, and doesn't do vanilla.

**Sisters of Size** was formed in 1986 out of a need for the fat lesbians of the Greater Seattle area to meet in a safe space. We meet monthly for swims, potluks, networking, and making new friends. We also go camping, eat in restaurants in groups, have parties, and in general, enjoy the company of other fat lesbians. Many life-long friendships have been made through this group.

**Sondra Solo** is a total freak working undercover as a law student.

**Syndee Branton** is a quintessential pisces from hell who can be reached at u\_branton@venus.twu.edu.

**Tristan Nathe** is a loud and relentless fat activist (even though she can also be a very shy femme). She's currently devoting all her time and energy to labor organizing, and is trying to figure out where all these things meet.

**Val & Steph** met between the sheets of a local tabloid and haven't come up for air yet! Living in the SOMA, they enjoy their wide circle of friends, perverts and saints.

**Vicki ("VyK") Hodges** is a recently "out" dyke who thrills to embrace all that lesbianism has to offer. She is an amateur movie critic and cat-lover extraordinaire who also enjoys "sick" humor, and trivial discourse in her spare time.

**Wolfie:** Pagan priest, activist, switch, mother, trouble. ✨

# PERSONALS

## HISPANIC LADY

43, 250, full large belly, very hairy between my large thighs, shy at first, but very dominant in personal life. Seeking skinny, compliant, faithful wife for laughter, lust, commitment. Must enjoy music, reading, homelife; be honest and financially secure; and enjoy being told what to do and how to do it, just to please your lover. Denver area.

**Fat GIRL** Box 14.

## NICE GIRL WANTS TO GET LAID!

Garden-variety vanilla dyke looking for a friendly fuck. I'm cute, funny, affectionate and really horny, and would love a casual fling with another nice girl. No strings attached, but I still think casual sex can be sweet and tender. Safe sex only. Want to play?

Write to me at. . .

**Fat GIRL** Box 15.

## I LOVE TO LAUGH

All too serious, cynical, gentle, stubborn, loving, domestic, butch survivor seeking new sources of laughter and intensity. Sense of humor, a good heart, and strong emotional presence absolutely required.

All else negotiable.

**Fat GIRL** Box 17

## IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A BIG, BEAUTIFUL BLOND

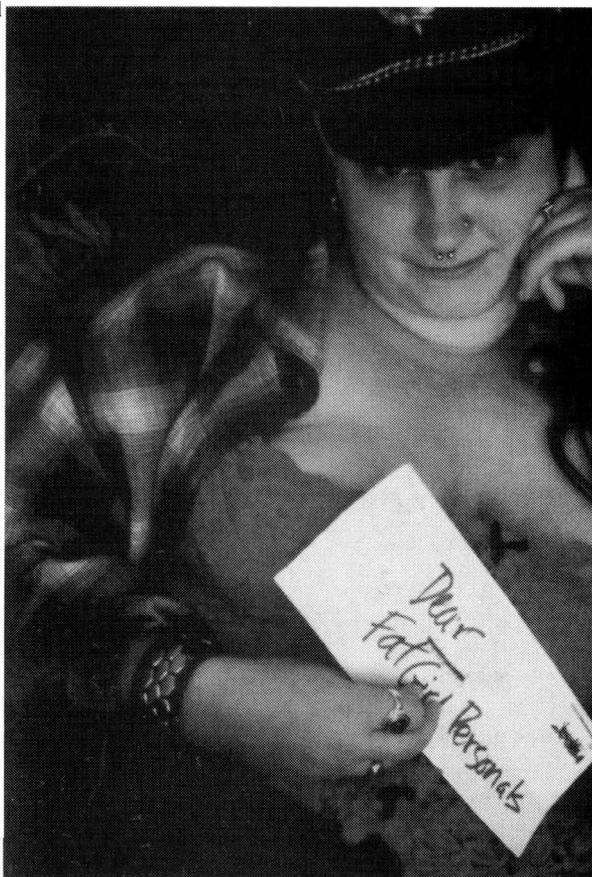
with blue eyes and a heart the size of Texas, I may be your woman. I'm 42, a Libra, into New Age music, the mother of two equally beautiful daughters (15 and 12), and live in the heartland of America. I'm interested in corresponding with women who are balanced, fun-loving, and open. I'm not necessarily looking for a relationship at this time, but I'm open to the possibility that Ms. Right is out there. My special someone will love children, be willing to relocate, financially independent, great in bed, and willing to accept all the love, nurturing, and support that I have to offer. I don't smoke/drink, am not chemically or co-dependent, or soured by too many "loves gone wrong." Would like to someday find someone to spend my life with. I sing, play guitar, write trashy dyke fiction, and love life. Movies, making love, horses, Native American spirituality are passions of mine but not necessarily in that order. Need someone who respects a relationship, wants monogamy, is willing to compromise and tired of playing games. I have a lot to offer that special someone. Are you out there?

**Fat GIRL** Box 18

## KINKY BOOKWORM

Young, eccentric, bi butch and insatiable reader seeks same and/or somewhat different for friendship and play. Chicago area preferred, but will correspond via letters or email as well. Offbeat sense of humor a plus!

**Fat GIRL** Box 16



## BI WOMAN IN PORTLAND, OREGON

Supersized with big belly and butt (the breasts aren't small either!). My hair is brown, my eyes are blue, I'm 5'5" and in my early 40s. I'd like to meet a fat-loving bi woman in my area for friendship, love and lust. I like women age 25-50, 150-300 lbs. of any race. Please be honest, intelligent, funny, loving and adventure-some. I'm a bit shy at first, be gentle with me, but I warm up quickly. I love to dance slowly to good music with the right woman.

**Fat GIRL** Box 19

## YES, THIS IS A PERSONAL AD

So I said yeah I am looking for a relationship even though I knew the R word was the kiss of death at that stage of a hot new flirtation and damn if she wasn't cute too just the kind of smart funny butch solid and sure gets me distracted all day at work sleepy eyed visions of her hand smacking my tongue in her solid fist between my and her eyes on me her eyes rolling

back as my teeth bite down on her but see that's the thing it's the eyes the intent volumes communicated words made real or exposed as lies and I will never again I mean why at this point when I finally know so then I thought well she's hot but she's not the only butch in the city who likes big femmes can see the lust and the love make me wet with a look is she and one of them will stick around for a while.

**Fat GIRL** Box 20

## BABY GIRL WANTS

5'10" teddy bear? 5'8" teddy bear? 5'6" teddy bear? Well that's as far down as I'll go. Down there? ...Daddy!!!

**Fat GIRL** Box 21

**TO ADVERTISE:** Send your headline, text, name, address, phone #, and a check for \$5.00 for the first 500 characters + 1 cent per character for each additional character to **Fat GIRL**, 2215-R Market St.#193, San Francisco, CA 94114.

**TO REPLY:** Pencil your dream girl's box # on the front of a stamped envelope containing your reply. Enclose that envelope in another one and send it to **Fat GIRL Personals** at the above address. We will continue to forward replies to all ads until further notice.

**RULES:** **Fat GIRL Personals** are for fat dykes and the women who want them. This description is intended to include bisexual and MTF transgendered women. It does not include men. **Fat GIRL** is a fat-positive, diversity-positive zine. Please keep that in mind when writing your ad. We do not accept ads with personal names or street addresses. We reserve the right to refuse to print ads we find offensive.

## CLASSIFIEDS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### HOUSESITTER/COMPANION

Warm, caring responsible lesbian. Companion -- cook, shop, laundry, light housekeeping. Housesitter -- will care for home, pets, plants. Refs. Contact Toni @ (408) 462-4432, PO Box 2968, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. SF Bay area.

## HOUSING WANTED

### LOOK NO FURTHER!

46 year old lesbian, going back to school, relocating to SF, looking for affordable housing. Humor essential, ND, NS. Contact Toni @ (408) 462-4432, PO Box 2968, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.



# Fat hatred won't die by itself. It needs help from you.

## TRY OUR "SPECIAL INGREDIENTS"

These "special ingredients" are just what you may need in some "special situations". Manufactured under contract by DSG Laboratories to fulfill the occasional unusual operational requirement of CIA and other federal agents, these products are now available for non-governmental sale for the first time. Use only with utmost discretion.

### BLOOD CAPSULES

There are hundreds of uses for these movie-quality blood capsules. The simple fact is that nobody wants contact with blood today. Simply pop a capsule in your mouth and tell the nice policeman that you're rushing to the dentist. Or if you need to make a hasty retreat from a restaurant, you could get cut on some "glass" in your food.



SI-2.... Blood Capsules..... \$9

### GREEN GAS

Empty this little vial into a hot drink or hot food, wait about 10 minutes, and stand back! The natural herb in this elixir will cause major "natural gas" explosions every few seconds. No matter how hard your mark tries to hold back, there's no stopping these embarrassing eruptions. Warning: do not use near open flame; do not use on others without their consent.



SI-5..... Green Gas ..... \$9

### STINK BOMB

These stink bombs are the ultimate "passive-aggressive" device. Someone illegally parked in a handicap zone? Rude behavior or bad service at a place of business? Leave an appropriate gift that keeps on giving for days.



SI-3..... Stink Bomb ..... \$9

### SNEEZING POWDER



You can get satisfaction without messy face-to-face confrontations by deploying this sneezing powder. Use the mini-tube launcher to dust your mark's office, car, or Kleenex® with powder. As soon as he starts moving around, the powder goes airborne and the effects begin.

SI-4... Sneezing Powder .... \$9

### EVACUATOR



The "Evacuator" is made from a unique natural bark which is ground into a fine powder. When mixed with food or liquid, it will cause total uncontrollable "evacuation." Via the natural route. Stand CLEAR! Warning: not to be used on others without their consent.

SI-11..... Evacuator ..... \$11

### LOCK-OUT DROPS



Just remove the micro syringe applicator from the bottle, select your target lock, and then inject the bottle's contents into the lock. One injection is all it takes to permanently render the lock inoperable. From car locks to house locks to padlocks, they're finished. Deploy only with extreme discretion.

SI-8.... Lock-Out Drops... \$11

### VOMIT FLUID

Just empty this nasty little vial into a drink. First, the unfortunate drinker begins to feel queasy. Then comes the projection vomiting. Warning: not to be used on others without their consent.



SI-1... Vomit Fluid... \$9

### UN-NATURAL GAS

This quiet little can fits in the palm of your hand. Just move in within a foot behind your mark and give his clothing a 3-second burst. After a minute's delay, this clinging spray will reach its full potency. No matter how hard he tries to fan the smell away, everyone around him will think something crawled up inside him and died. Not shippable by Air.



SI-9.... Un-Natural Gas.... \$13

### LIQUID NIGHTMARE

When the amazing Liquid Nightmare meets up with liquid, it takes on a life of its own. It quickly begins to convert the liquid into a mass of sticky blob-like gel material! The potential uses are limited only by your imagination and deviancy, but keep the cap on tight, because these nasty little crystals can lead to everything from very sticky plumbing situations to distressed goldfish owners. Works on water-based liquids.



SI-12 . Liquid Nightmare ..... \$9

### HELLFIRE & BRIMSTONE

Don't get this vial of concentrated discomfort on you! It itches, it stings, it burns. It's like thousands of fire ants biting you all at once. The only good news about it is that it eventually stops. For external use only. Warning: not to be used on others without their consent.



SI-6... Hellfire & Brimstone... \$9

### LIQUID KEY-SCRATCH



This stuff has an insatiable appetite for automobile paint. It eats everything it touches, right down to the bare metal. Once it hits bottom, it then starts spreading and devouring even more paint. Comes complete with mini-syringe applicator. Use only with extreme discretion.

SI-7... Liquid Key-Scratch... \$11

### THE BLOB



The BLOB is similar to Liquid Nightmare, except that it works on petroleum-based liquids, such as gasoline or oil. Warning: Keep this stuff away from your gas tank or engine oil unless you plan on walking.

SI-13... The BLOB... \$11

We found these items and more in Shomer-Tec's catalog of law-enforcement and military equipment.

Contact Shomer-Tec at (360) 733-6214.

Fat GIRL does not endorse these products or their illegal use.

# free your mind and your ass will follow

—Good Thoughts, Bad Thoughts George Clinton & G. Cook

