



Size Queen

for queen size queers
and our loyal subjects

art
smut
comix
politics
community
trading cards



nomy lamm
lori s
max airborne
marilyn wann
sondra solovay
charlotte cooper

dykes fags trannies queens queers kings others 3rd gender no gender fuck
gender ladies lesbians bears cubs allies boys girls bois grrrls butches

When i was a teenager i used to draw all these sad self portraits. i spent Lots of time RUNNIN' my eyes over myself in the MIRROR tryin' to make myself dissapear. i used to push my belly in with my hands, i used to Read diet books, i used to only eat sourdough bread, SLIVERS of cheddar cheese, and those diet shakes^{ew.} ORANGES, kiwis

No one told me to do this to myself. but No one told me to STOP EITHER. in 10th Grade i thought No one would ever Love me if i was fat. Thing is, it was a lot of heartache over Nothing. Now i'm older, fatter, and in Love. i'm happy. it makes me want to be A fat girl's FAIRY Godmother. i could stomp into a 16 year old's Life yelling, "HEY GIRL put down that celery! i've brought you hot fudge, i came to tell you life ONLY gets better from here on out."



Size Queen's full of it:

Politics

If a Bear's In the Woods...Steven Schwartz	24
I Am Not an Activist...Leah Strock	10
Post-Surgery=Post-Community?	
Four writers tackle weight, gender and transitions	
Nomy Lamm	29
Margo Rivera-Weiss	28
Sondra Solovay	31
Marilyn Wann	32
To Cut Is To Heal...Elena T	36
You Can't Say That...Charlotte Cooper	50

Art, Comics, Fun Stuff

Dainty Does Ballet...Allyson Mitchell	26
Fat Fairy Godmother...Alison Nowak	0
Movement...Susan Stinson	16
Shoot Me: Photo Tips...Kina Williams	11
This Is What 50 Looks Like	
...(photos by Daisy Chen)	12
Memories of 6 East...Max Airborne	17
Size Queen Collector Trading Cards	Back

Columns and Reviews

Pariah (fashion)...Amanda Piasecki	34
Fat Attitudes (review)...Tina Arroyo	7
Venus of Chalk (review)...Christine Ianieri	6
Contributor bios	52

Fuel for a "Special Nap"

It Takes a Real Butch to Admit What She Really Wants	
...Maxbear Finkelstein	38
Jukie and Papi D. (photos by Joe Samson)	42
Peach Meat...Zhaddi	48
Prima Donna...Joe Samson	25

Rants, Musings, Stories

The Face of a Fat Girl: My Path Into Sex Work	
...Lori S	8
Something for Everyone!...Amanda Piasecki	4
Torocoyori...Cholla	13
Why Size Queen?...Cherry and Maxie	2

Here at Size Queen we know that size does matter...

...every day, in every way. Size Queen is a place to explore what it means to be fat and queer. Our loyal subjects include loved ones, families, friends and allies of all sizes and orientations. Size Queen is a dynamic space for discussion, support, and enlightenment. A place to see ourselves. To reflect and reinvent ourselves. Size Queen is an expression of community that looks toward inclusion and challenges traditional notions of sex and gender. Size Queen is a manifesto, a document of the revolution, an invitation. Size Queens come in all colors, shapes, genders, ages, abilities, and sizes! If you are a Size Queen, or a loyal subject, we want you! We want your voice! Your story! Your picture! It's a rolling deadline, so send your stuff now.

Submit, submit, submit!

Size Queen

Oakland CA 94605

<http://www.sizequeenzine.org>

\$10 each, plus \$1 for shipping. Stickers available for \$1 each. Make check payable to Max Airborne. You must include a signed age statement with your order. Size Queen is for sale to humans over 18 only. Credit card users go to our web site.

Ten bucks seems like a bunch of bills to us. We're sorry to have to charge this much, but we really wanted to be able to publish the hot pics and beautiful art in their full glory. We were gonna do the kinko's thing in traditional old-school zine style, and just insert a page of pricey color photo copy. Then we crunched the numbers and realized for about same cost per issue we could do it all in lovely color. Only difference is we need to sell a heap of Size Queens to break even. So, please buy one for your friend, too. It's less than the cost of a movie and popcorn and we promise it will provide more to talk about. Donations gladly accepted.

Size Queen is a movement, a collaboration between members of a community that have not yet all met, a project about visibility with Max Airborne and Cherry Midnight at the helm.

Size Queen sends special thanks to all the contributors, Joe, the Thermalia family, Candida, Ky and Audey. Also huge thanks to all the activists who inspire us every day! We love you!

Front cover photo by Sondra Solovay. Model is Jukie Sunshine.

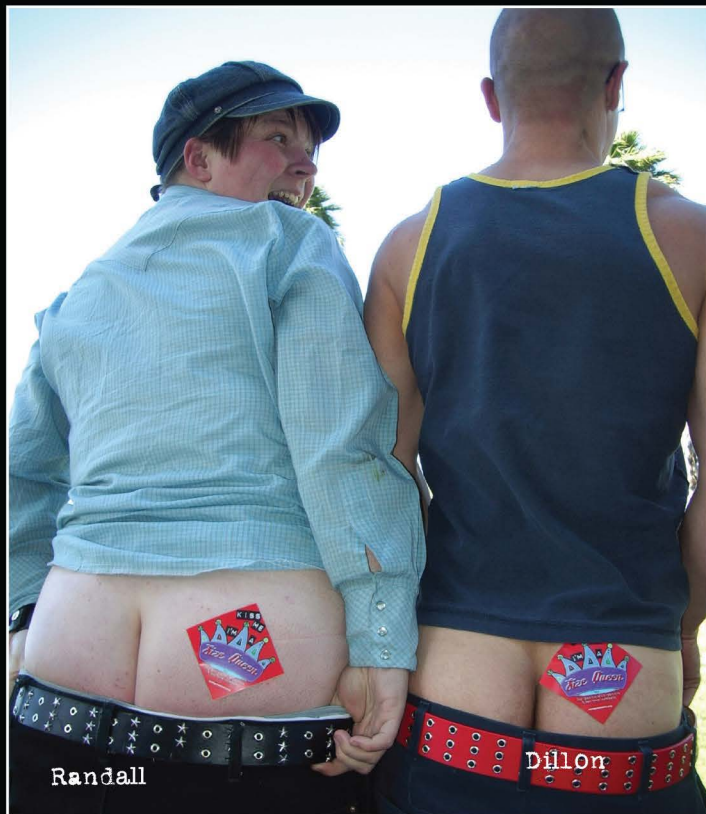
June, 2005.



Size Queen:

Because we are fucking gorgeous; Because weight loss tyranny affects all queers; Because body hatred is a crime against Nature; Because we are worthwhile; Because we are not satisfied; Because we can envision a world without racism, without hate; Because we want equal civil rights; Because we must create the world we want to live in; Because Size Queen is cool; Because we need it; Because the world is empty without it; Because we forget we live in community; Because it is everyone's struggle; Because it's hard to be a minority; Because it's hard to be a minority within a minority; Because we need smut that turns us on; Because we need erotica that includes us; Because we are part of fat culture; Because we are leaders in fat culture; Because we

can't count on other people to educate us; Because even when we are outnumbered, we speak truth to power; Because we want to be part of the solution; Because there is a place here for all of us; Because we know that it is possible to be at peace with our bodies; Because sometimes we forget that; Because we need to write our stories; Because we need to read our stories; Because we need to study fat issues; Because we create Fat Theory when we study our lives; Because we are not paranoid -- there really is a \$40 billion industry that is out to get us; Because the government is part of the problem; Because even PETA targets us with hatred; Because our health should belong to us; Because our bodies are not symbols of greed; Because our bodies are mini-revolutions each one saying 'fuck you and your weight loss



program'; Because some little kid somewhere still thinks she will never go to the prom; Because it should be illegal to lock kids up just cuz they are fat; Because we are most vulnerable when we are young or developmentally (dis)abled; Because women's bodies have been controlled for so long; Because now men are victimized, too; Because the rest of us get that shit from the gender police and the food police; Because it breaks our hearts that we export American body hatred to other countries; Because our own families can be so very cruel; Because we deserve love in our lives; Because we deserve yummy sex; Because we deserve respect; Because we deserve clothes that fit; Because we deserve

chairs that fit; Because we deserve jobs & opportunities; Because we deserve kindness and gentleness; Because we are hot; Because we are hunky and dreamy; Because recognizing the beauty of fat folx is a revolutionary act; Because great sex does not depend on body size; Because fat allies and admirers are harassed, too; Because fat hatred hurts people of all sizes; Because we are sexy; Because we are strong; Because we love difference; Because oppression is connected and no matter where you start fighting, it's all one struggle; Because we embody hope; Because, despite everything, we thrive; And, quite simply, because our survival is revolutionary.



Brooklynne



Theo



Randall

Timnah

photos by Cherry and Joe



Sexy



Recently some writer at the San Francisco Bay Guardian went to the new Ikea in Emeryville hoping to find it a yucky part of the same consumerist ethos as Home Depot, Big K, Walmart, et al. Despite his "I'm a Bay Guardian writer, so you can't call me a yuppie" thing - which suggests that he would have trashed Ikea's name even though he probably lives in a \$2,500/month live-work space reeking with retro Swedish charm - the writer found the blue-and-yellow monster and its affordably priced, euro-hipster offerings beyond reproach. What megastore could inspire such forthcoming class allegiance? I, too, have been excited about Ikea, since I'm moving in less than a month, but mostly I've been engaged in a delightful parody of Ikea's bus-stop propaganda with my friends, mocking the hep-cat stylings the ads beckon to. Oh how I love to shout the Swedish product names with mispronounced conviction - "Ahhh! Anslut! Mjukdun! Frolunda!" Despite my cynicism, Ikea sure seemed like paradise for all left-leaning exponents of retail therapy, even those of us on a budget. Upon visiting, however, I found that anywhere that there's folks who are cultivating some version of the American Dream - marriage, kids, and imported housewares - there's folks who will be threatened by my fat, queer, alien ass.

Historically my ass has been an object of others' scorn and my own consternation. I've weighed over 200 pounds for most of my life (except my anorexic and bulimic periods), and my rump is my fattest part. In the past, I've generally tried to keep it covered up as much as possible, but more recently my girlfriend and many sweet homeless men in San Francisco have convinced me that my ass is, well, Fine (yep, capital F.) Fine, fat ass.

The day I went to Ikea it was an ungodly 90 degrees in San Francisco. I hadn't worn a tank top since driving through Utah last summer, so I felt unusually over-exposed in my tight, sleeveless, waist-length shirt, jeans and flip flops. Still, I refused to overdress for this unheard-of weather and made my way to Rainbow Grocery to pick up some lunch before battling the traffic on the Bay Bridge to get to Ikea. Pulling my shirt down self-consciously as I climbed out of my car, I was greeted by a homeless man who did a double-take and then said, "God blessed me today because

you are so GORGEOUS! May I escort you?" I'm terribly shy, but was flattered, so I accepted his kind escort to the store and felt lovely on the arm of such a gentleman in my skimpier-than-usual get-up.

Ikea, however, was a different story. After spending a half-hour trying to park, I found myself on the escalator up to the "showroom" with a dozen overheated and already frustrated heterosexual couples, some with screaming children. The escalator was packed and much to her chagrin, my aforementioned Fine fat ass was in the face

of a trying-too-hard-to-be-cool blonde 20-something. "Some people shouldn't wear tank tops," she whispered, just too loud, to her boyfriend. He snickered with tattooed frat-boy hypocrisy. Fortunately my lunch at Rainbow allowed me to muster up a fat, vegetarian fart for me to summarily expel, silent but deadly, into the plastic faces of the of-

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

fenders. As they looked on, horrified, I purposely dropped my bag so they could get a better view and a better whiff for the next fifteen seconds. Maybe I reinforced a stinky stereotype, but it was sure fun to make them pay.

I got off the escalator with a large, sweet, and sick sense of satisfaction. Only the hardy would make it through the nightmare weekend traffic at Ikea, and I damn well would be one of them. I continued along through the life-size home dioramas, wistfully yearning for the not-too-far-off day when I would leave my passive-aggressive, smack-and-booze-head roommates behind for a studio apartment. Yes, I had pinned down that elusive bay-area apparition, even as a well-paid (but not for here) non-profit worker: an affordable studio. Sure, it was an illegal unit, sure it was in the basement without a stove or a bathroom sink, sure the landlord was a creepy old man who had multiple tattered, sticky-looking copies of the "Hef's Twins" issues of Playboy displayed prominently in his office. But it would be all mine! And I would furnish it, come hell or high water, cash or 20% APR, harassment or not. See, I too needed to live out my own fucked up version of the American Dream, and Ikea was going to help me do it.

Loft bed. Studio? Loft bed. Right? I beelined for it. Pushed

BY AMANDA PIASECKI

past pregnant moms and 3-year-olds out of my way. I asked the blue-vested salesperson: "Will this hold the collective 450-pound weight of my girlfriend and me when we are fucking?" Small ears are covered. Looks of horror are flashed! A path is cleared for me. I get to inspect the loft bed in complete privacy. Oh, the glory of being a pariah! I copy the product number.

After consulting the map every five minutes and successfully ignoring the puking claustrophobic feelings I'm getting, I make my way down to the first floor where the pick-upable stuff is. I get a cart and go to kitchen wares. A fat girl's gotta eat. \$1.95 cheese grater, fry pans, kitchen scissors, an adorable teapot for \$6.45. I'm in heaven. Except for the dark-haired, black-and-grey clad, skinny couple who are blocking my way to the dish towels. I roll right up to them as they coo to each other. Looks like they're getting ready to cohabitate. "Excuse me," I say. They look at me like I'm a piece of shit. I push my way toward the towels, ignoring them, and the guy says to his Bettie-Page-banged gal, "There's too much fat here." He must mean me and the fat Samoan mom who's behind me. She and I have a moment. Guess they don't need kitchen stuff, since they don't eat," she tells me. It's then that I begin to break down. Ikea is not all I hoped it would be. I shed a tear for the woman's fat Samoan kids who'll be in grade school with the spawn of those motherfuckers.

Then it was time to get out. I bought my "Anslut" and my kitchen supplies on credit. I'm living off of cash from a payday-advance place since I put a deposit down on my new studio. I roll my cart up to my parked car. It's then

that I realize something. Everyone is here in couples. All the women and femmey fags are holding open the hatchbacks for all the men and butch hombres. I'm the only person I see who is shopping alone. Then, despite all the harassment, I thank Jesus for my Fine, fat ass and the power behind it. Thank god I did not end up enslaved to some prick and bearing his offspring, trying to starve myself all the while. Thank god my girlfriend and I can be in love, live without each other and have good sex despite the apparent contradiction. Thank god I'm not a Christian, while I'm at it.

I drive home and am crying again, but this time about Ikea, the Bay Area, and myself. When I moved here from backward farm country 3000 miles away, I thought I was finally going to find my people. I had that idealism about Northern California and the queer/punk/activist scene here born out of growing up in the 80's and hanging out with my older brother and his pothead friends. San Francisco was the promised land, much like Ikea. Although there's some folks left who still remind me what I was looking for when I came here, most of the people here are living some kind of lefty lie, it seems, maybe even myself included. It costs so much money to live here, and everyone has to work so much to survive, that it's no wonder a fat, queer dyke like me would try to find solace by buying this time with a bunch of slick, over funded dot-commers, who would just as soon spit at me as they'd take my apartment, my job, and the last few vestiges of my promised land. Well, I say, fuck them. I beat them at their own consumer-culture game. Me and my fat ass got us the last "Anslut." 🏠



Take Me For A Ride

Christine Ianieri reviews *Venus of Chalk*, the latest novel by Susan Stinson



Susan Stinson's latest novel, *Venus of Chalk*, is a slim volume about a fat woman named Carline and her unlikely trip back to the memories and ghosts of her childhood summers in Chalk, Texas. Like a flood of juice from a seemingly innocuous pear, *Venus of Chalk* is sweet with details, fleshy and surprising. I was intrigued from the very beginning, beguiled by Susan Stinson's facility with language and images.

Carline is as vivid and puzzling as your vision of anyone you might know and love. That is, she feels real in a beautifully crafted kind of way. She has her moments of insanity integrated into her sensible sense of her self. Her relationship with her girlfriend, her job, her cat and apartment are left behind when she accepts an unusual ride to Texas to see her Aunt Frankie. She goes to comfort her aunt, who has just lost a close friend. She goes to escape her own life and the violations that intrude upon her within its mostly comfortable boundaries. She goes to take advantage of an adventure offered. She goes to feel the wind and dust of Texas on her skin and in her lungs again. She goes for all and none of these reasons. Why do we do the things we do?

I am filled with gratitude to Susan once again for an introduction to a character whose life situation does not require me to grit my teeth and overlook all the ways in which I can't relate. I love the rare read that actually includes aspects of my fat, queer life as the everyday existence from which revelations spring. Even so, Carline's experience, and this book, is anything but mundane.

The story begins with an unexpected journey, takes an unexpected turn when Carline departs from the bus ride, and

continues to turn us around with twists that reveal the depth beneath each character's skillful portrait. Susan knows how to avoid the pitfalls of romanticized fable, handling simple events, revelations and transgressions with grace and exacting language. Her images are clear, visual and tactile, like being there, only more beautiful.

Susan is a poet with a novelist's temperament. Her words pull at me to take a second look, slow down my reading until I am perusing carefully. Susan invites her reader to stop, read that phrase again, consider the unexpected loveliness and poignancy of her view. I was reminded of the way Annie Proulx quietly shook me out of complacency in *The Shipping News*, let me know to pay attention, this isn't just any family story, even if it is.

And in case you need to hear it explicitly, this is a book about being fat, about loving and hating fat, about living in a fat body and a fat soul, loving fat women, carrying around a fat Venus with a hole in her belly. Integral to Carline's experience, to Susan's voice, and to my welcoming this beautiful book into my life, is the deft portrayal of a woman telling her truths within a fat sphere.

Like the half-trance experience of looking for treasures within a crowded estate sale display, I found myself curious and wondering as I finished this book. Susan Stinson lays out the dust and rust of family relationship side by side with their jewels. Carline's visit home, her aunt's loss, her companions' dreams, all are transformed by secrets in plain sight, and the gentle way grief and love wash away dust for a brief time.



FAT ATTITUDES

review and photo by Tina Arroyo

Love, I felt wrapped in love, joy & warmth last night at the reception for **FAT ATTITUDES: A Celebration of Large Women**. Basking in the glow of the bodies surrounding me, I stood in the center of the room to take it all in. I turned myself 360 degrees & saw an abundance of large flesh around me. As if out of a dream I was surrounded by a variety of art, all featuring fat bodies, while smiling people moved around me in slow motion. Bits and pieces of their conversations floated by me. "Beautiful." "such strength." "So lush." Maybe it was my euphoria, but all I heard was praise and love for the work on the walls by artists who include Laurie Toby Edison, Laura Aguilar, Lynn Bianchi & Patricia Schwartz, to name a few. These works of art were stunning, showing large bodies in all their glory. The walls were graced by images from Laurie Toby Edison's acclaimed book *Women En Large*, and large scale black and white art from Lynn Bianchi's series "The Spaghetti Eaters."

Along with familiar images, the wall of the Macy Gallery at Teacher's College (NYC) displayed the work of less well known artists and even some first time artists. Neil Osbourne's "Leaves" called to me from across a crowded room. I maneuvered myself through all of the people to view a lovely round female body seated, her limbs moved just so, transforming her body to a nearly perfect circle surrounded by the yellow-brown leaves of autumn. Her pale skin was a soft and luscious contrast to the dry leaves that surround her.

The mixed media work of vocalist/artist Andi Bray states


triumphantly that she can be fat and beautiful, athletic, & talented all simultaneously. Her work attempts to show the world that there is more to her than her fat, and at the very same time, that her fat is an essential part of who she is.

Another photograph that had me entranced was entitled "Jody, 33," part of The Century Project by Frank Cordelle.

Frank is creating a body of work that includes photographs of women from ages 0-100. Jody is a large woman, whose expansive belly, arms and breasts are displayed for the world to see in front of a quilt with a star pattern that serves to crown her noble head. I stood transfixed as I stared into the eyes of this beautiful woman, so proud and defiant.

As if all of this celebration was not enough, we were treated to a sensual belly dance by super-sized performer Seleka. I was captivated by the movements of her large body, the flow of her belly and arms as she gestured toward the crowd. She flirted with and teased her audience, who hung on her every movement. There was joy and laughter filling the room while she tantalized us all. I found myself unable to control my own body as I moved my large frame in time, longing to create the same fluid movements with my hips and belly.



The exhibition, curated by artist Lori Don Levan, was a breathtaking collection of fat art, by some very talented artists & I consider myself honored to have been a part of it all. I can only hope that this exhibit travels, so that many more will be touched by the intensity of the work. 

THE FACE OF A FAT GIRL

MY PATH INTO SEX WORK

BY LORI S



When I was a girl, I dreamed of growing up to be a sex worker.

I could not make up my mind about being a hooker, a dancer, or a porn star. I had a hard time differentiating between them. I had an especially hard time figuring out why porn acting was legal and prostitution was not. In both cases women are being paid to have sex, right? When I was nine and ten, at the gate of puberty but not yet across the threshold, I would pore over my father's *Frederick's* of Hollywood catalogs to choose my working outfits. I dreamt of the penthouse apartments financed by my lifestyle. I read every account of prostitution I could find. I accepted dares from other children to stand on the side of the road and wink at passing cars.

I don't know what led me to my obsession. Maybe just loving sex, or at least the idea of sex. I did not learn to masturbate until I was an adult. I was just fooling around with my friends, playing truth or dare, tease and touch, nothing more than that. But I loved the seduction, the hot flush in my thighs, the tingle in my young pussy. I wanted to be good at sex. I wanted to do what I enjoyed for a living. I enjoyed those sexual games, more than I was willing to admit. It was supposed to be humiliating, forced by losing a sleepover dare into parading around the bed in my cotton panties, so the other girls could look at my body. Those girls especially wanted to touch my breasts, which budded early and didn't stop growing until my twenties.

As a teenager I never lost my "baby fat." I remained chubby and stopped feeling particularly desirable. My friends would all say, "Oh, no. You're just a big girl." I knew that comment to mean: "We still think you're cute." Cute, not sexy. My stomach was never flat. I never had much of a waist to speak of. I was thick. Broad-shouldered with big hands, big feet. A model-quality escort I ain't. Who would want to fuck me for money, or pay to watch me touch myself? They would be repulsed, disgusted.

I didn't like dressing in feminine clothes -- skirts that showed off my hammy thighs, binding and restricting me in uncomfortable ways. I was not supposed to anyway; I was supposed to hide my body. Drape it. Conceal it.

For years it was not such a big loss to me. I did not like wearing shoes that

pinched my toes, with heels impossible to balance on. I didn't like the way make-up felt on my face, clogging my pores, making me itch. These things were fine for make believe, theater play, or special occasions. I didn't date. I didn't get cast in the school drama productions. Suddenly, I had no excuses for dress-up and play, so I gave it up.

I still had a dirty mind and a dirty mouth. I started writing down those naughty thoughts. I wrote smut, dirty stories, finding my niche in the world of commercial sex. Although I met and befriended many women who were sex workers for real, dancers and porn stars and whores who came in all shapes and sizes, I kept apart. My desire to participate was dead.

Until I discovered specialty porn.

A friend of mine invited me to work with her on a series of tapes for men who liked big-breasted women. That was the only requirement. And boy, did I qualify. I can manage eight inches of cleavage without breaking a sweat.

The rest of my body -- its shape, color, abilities -- did not matter.

I've always had a difficult relationship with my breasts. They were too unwieldy and too attention-getting. It was too hard for most people to look past them and to the rest of me. I concealed them like I concealed the rest of my body, experimenting with binding, loose clothing, tight sports bras. I thought about having them reduced (and still may, someday); I have a lot to spare.

It's not that I don't like my body now. It wasn't an easy road to self-acceptance, but I'm very comfortable in my skin. Never tried a diet. It is hard for me to cope with the fact that I don't fit into the usual ideas of what a desirable body looks like. The inner furnace of my lust doesn't fit my outer appearance. Nobody, I thought, would ever look at a picture of my naked body and feel that tingle between their legs. Once they got to know me and my naughty little soul, of course, they'd be hooked, but until then? It would make no difference how I appeared, only how I acted. I was fit only for private consumption, not public display. Or so I thought. Here was my chance to change all that. It was just a masturbation video "for men who fantasize about their mother's underwear," as my friend put it. I would dress up in a lace bra and girdle, put my hair in braids, wear garish, ridiculous make-up

(it washes out videotape), step under hot lights and touch myself for the camera. Nobody else would lay a hand on me. It was safe, easy, and required only an afternoon's worth of time. In exchange, I'd get paid as much money as I usually make in two weeks. Of course I said yes.

And, of course, I adored it. I was nervous, but, unlike stripping for my lover or other erotic performance, there was no audience present to cheer or jeer, only the videographer-director and my friend, who sat quietly reading the newspaper for the four hours we shot. It didn't take me long to start having fun. I hope whoever bought the tapes could see the delight I was experiencing at realizing that, yes, there were people who would pay to see my hands upon my clit, touching my breasts, lifting my nipple into my own mouth. I would flirt with them from the videotape, tease them to frustration and then release. I had found my place in the sexual economy.

And that gave me a feeling of triumph, because this time nobody was looking past my flesh to my dirty mind and wicked tongue. They were staring right at my chest. And this time they were paying for the privilege. Not like on the street where I wasn't sure if the catcalls were taunts or compliments.

It's not about being reduced to a body part. My tits are a keyhole, and I've unlocked a place inside me that was sealed for too long. This space they've led me to, this place of erotic power and commerce combined, I may never leave.



In the January 2000 issue of the literary journal *The Sun*, Sharon Skelton writes to the editor:

"I would like to see these [sex] workers as proud women with a gift for sensuality, as sacred women: This is their path, their craft. They do it well. But let's also see these women as hungry. Let's see them as neglected. Let's say they have children and not enough money, and are trapped in a poverty mentality. Let's say that no matter how much someone looks at them, touches them, tells them they are beautiful, it will not be enough to make them feel loved, to make them realize their true worth. Let's say they are all addicted to something, just like the rest of us. Let's say their work is not spiritual all the time, but often just a way to get money.

And let's also say that they were six-year-old-girls once. Let's say they ate cinnamon toast. Let's say they lost their front teeth when they were seven. Let's say, when they were eight, they took their friends to the skating rink for a birthday party, and each of them got a package of M&M's, which melted in their pockets by the end of the day. Let's say those women have mothers, and their mothers have shoe boxes filled with crayon drawings of trees and smiling sons. Let's say these women were not always naked, but once were twelve-year-olds who read C. S. Lewis stories on their back porches, who got A's and B's on their geometry finals.

Let's say all of this is true. Let's widen our view of these women beyond their bodies, beyond the 15-inch screen, beyond even 'the red thread of passion.' Because for all of us humans there are many threads."

This is a compelling recitation of an old story: sex worker as lost innocent. Every whore was a child once, a child with crayons in her shoebox, M&M's in her pocket, cinnamon sugar smeared around her mouth. Something must have happened to that little girl to lead her astray. Something presumably terrible and wrong. Every time a sex worker proclaims in response, "But I feel empowered by what I do, and I like it!" she is shadowed by the question, "But at what price? What have you lost?"

What have I lost by learning to talk dirty, and getting paid for it? Nothing. Less than nothing. What I have gained is immeasurable. I have gained both a profound understanding of pleasure, and a certain amount of money.

If the Mammon that sex workers are chained to, and thus condemned by, is not sex, it is money. When we aren't to be condemned for getting paid for providing sexual services, we are to be pitied. If it's not that we're sinful, dirty sluts, it's that we live in a 'poverty mentality.' (What does that really mean, anyway? Our economic

woes are all in my minds? That women can think themselves free of wage inequalities?)

Or does it mean that in utopia we would not need whores, because whores (and their clients) are driven by need? Economic need, or course, and no other. We are hungry, and not just for love; we are starved for attention and affection.

"Let's say these women were not always naked." In this statement Ms. Skelton, after vividly imagining these women's pasts, reduces their present to an image on the screen. Their present and their futures are canceled out.

Let's say these women are not always naked. Let's say these women have boy-friends and girlfriends, a small apartment filled with books, a closet full of shoes (and not all of them 'fuck-me' pumps.) A bike on the rack in the hallway that she's just getting used to riding again. A favorite sweatshirt, cats on the couch. She eats sushi with chopsticks that she fumbles with, laughing.

Ms. Skelton wants to widen our view of these women, but her gaze focuses almost exclusively on their past. To her, these women have no off-screen present; they have been reduced to their erotic image, and no more. But it is not the screen that silences these women. It is Ms. Skelton's failure of imagination; she simply cannot conceive of a present for these women that's not delimited by hunger, by neglect, by addiction and want. Her vision of sex workers is of women thin of spirit. Yet she doesn't see herself living within those same restrictions? Living a complex life both of pain and joy?

I would like Ms. Skelton to hear the story of my past, my childhood, which is filled with neither horrific abuse nor innocence lost. My spirit, like my body, has always been fat. I did not chance onto this path by accident. I went to it clear-eyed and from an early age. Ms. Skelton, can you hear me? I am living my childhood dream.




I don't know the title or even the label of the first video I performed in. I don't even know the name I was given by the director. Since then I have done a few photo shoots, a few more videos, mostly masturbation and sometimes S/M scenes without sex. (No touching her or me between the legs.) I've never seen my work on video. People don't believe that movie stars never watch their own films, but I think I understand -- the process is more important than the result. I don't need the document to know what I've done.

I do own some of my photographic work. And I've even put some of my photos up on the Web. It's there that I got my first bad review. In Pif Magazine, reviewer Tom Hartman wrote, "[Co-reviewer] Ingrid liked the fact that the staff (self) portraits in Scarlet Letter's Gallery show 'real' women with flabby hips and pimples on their bottoms, and she 'loved the magnificent ivory layers of flesh' on Features Editor Lori Selke. Frankly (and I'll apologize first for my callousness here), I would have preferred not knowing what Selke looked like as I read her [prose]."

As bad reviews go, that one's pretty mild. But at the same time, it was a realization of my ultimate fear, one that used to be paralyzing. I was repulsive, Mr. Hartman is trying to say. It was gross to think about the sexual me when he read my words. Better that I remain anonymous, invisible. Or at least clothed. Certainly not crushed or devastated, I was a little angry, but mostly just annoyed. Tastes differ. Guess I was too much for you, Tom, in more than one sense of the phrase. Too bad...

But I've encountered even worse than that. I've had my face photo-shopped, inches shaved off my jaw, before my picture appeared in an erotic events calendar (and without asking my permission first.) I do not have the face of an erotic writer. I have the face of a fat girl.

This left me angry, but speaking out is the best revenge. I am a fat girl and an erotic writer. A fat girl and a sometime porn actor. My desires are big, and messy, and if you can't handle that, then stay away. Your words and your software tools can't reduce me to respectability, and they can't shut me up. 

I Am Not an Activist

by Leah Strock

My friends who live on the west coast are activists. They went in front of a billboard advertising a 24 hour gym that stated "when the aliens come, they will eat the fat ones first" My friends exercised, and carried signs that said eat me and were all over the media. They went on to get a law passed in San Francisco against size discrimination. When I went to the theater in SF and saw the back row was full of armless chairs, it brought tears to my eyes, cause those were my friends. I am so proud to know those activists.

My friends who live in Brooklyn are activists. They went down to Brooklyn's city hall and protested when the borough president put Brooklyn on a diet and called the program "Lighten up Brooklyn" They had people actually weigh in on a scale on the steps of city hall. My friends came back at them with "love your body Brooklyn" and had people get on a scale that was rigged to give no numbers but just cheer people on with things like - "you're beautiful" I am so proud to know those activists.

My friends led the million pound march off of Santa Monica Beach and came together to proclaim the unity of the fat acceptance movement in fighting discrimination and empowering fat people. I am so proud to know those activists.

And of course there is Lynn McAfee... Lynn McAfee has been there since the beginning of size activism and she has so much to say. I am so proud to know her.

You see, I never considered myself an activist. I don't get out in front of the cameras, I don't scream chants and I don't do the media thing - its not me...However, I want to tell you a story...

Last year, I was sitting at my receptionist's desk firing up the computer and I noticed this ad sitting off to the side of her desk. It was a picture of the back of three fat women walking down the beach in bathing suits. The text underneath stated, "Bad things happen when you move from the city". It was an advertisement for Manhattan Mini-storage.


I got really miffed about this ad and decided to call the corporate office. I asked to speak to the CEO. I got his secretary on the line and told her that I had two storage rooms at Manhattan Mini-storage and because of the advertisements; I was going to shut down my storage and move it elsewhere. (I really didn't have any storage there but I did know people who did). The secretary was really nice. I told her why I was so upset and then asked her if she were a large woman. She replied, "no" I asked her if the CEO had any large-sized people in his family and she said "yes". I suggested he bring the ad home and show his family members and asked them what they thought.

She asked for my phone number and I gave it to her.

The following morning I received a call from Stacey Stewart the VP in charge of advertising for Manhattan Mini-storage. I told her I was so happy to hear from her and thanked her profusely for calling me. I told her how upsetting the ads were. I asked her why she was trying to alienate potential fat customers. I told her that I thought her ads were hurtful and explained how our society tends to encourage discrimination against large people, especially women. I then asked her if she was a large woman. She replied no but she had put on a couple of pounds since the birth of her daughter. "Daughter?" I asked? (Hone in on the daughter thing!) I told her that the incidence of anorexia and bulimia rates in high school girls is at an all time high and that ads like this tend to perpetuate that kind of behavior and how would she feel if her daughter had an eating disorder. I then told her that I could arrange a large-scale (no pun intended) protest in front of all Manhattan Mini-storage places but I would rather have her know what it is like to walk in my shoes. She thanked me very much for calling and told me that the ads were not being run again and that they were pulling the existing ones. She told me that they in fact had received calls regarding this ad. (I did not tell her that I called everyone I knew who had storage space at Manhattan Mini-storage and gave them the CEO's name and number and they all called too!)

The following day I got to work and there was a message on my voicemail saying, "Leah, this is Stacey Stewart from Manhattan Mini-storage, I want you to know that I thought a lot about what you said yesterday. I was on the bus going home and I thought about my daughter and I thought about my daughter's teacher Trish, who is the most wonderful woman and that Trish is a very, very large woman. And I thought about how much we love her and how I never think of her as big, just as Trish. I also thought about how hurt she would be if she saw that ad and I thought about how glad I am that she lives in NJ so she will never have to see that ad. So I really want to thank you for opening my eyes to all of this and again, I promise we will never run an ad like that again."

Ok, so maybe I am an activist. And I am truly proud that not only will this company never run an ad like that again but that she got it! She really got what I was talking about. I do believe in grass roots activism. I think its important that people make noise but I also think that it is very important that people get what we are trying to say and sometimes yelling and screaming is not the way but it is a way to get their attention.

We are a nation of large size people. We are getting larger and larger and it is important for people to stop apologizing for being large and realize that they must take a stand on these issues. It is up to each one of us to make a difference even if it means simply making a phone call. 

SHOOT

ME!

KINA'S TIPS AND TRICKS

by Kina Williams

1: Appreciate your subject matter. If you don't enjoy fat girls, don't even bother trying to capture their image until you change your perspective.

2: Have a conversation with your subject. Once you know specifically what they like about their bodies you can compose pictures that highlight the areas they are most excited about. If they don't like their ass then don't shoot their ass, unless you both agreed that your photo session will be a photo therapy session.

3: Choose poses that your subject is comfortable in. If they are straining to make a pose happen, they will be uncomfortable, they will appear tense and neither of you will have any fun.


4: Pay attention to any possible physical limitations. This goes for anybody you are shooting, not just subjects of size.

5: Have respect for the person you are photographing. Doing portrait photography, especially with fat folk, takes a certain

amount of sensitivity on your part. If you have never been called names because you are fat, or discriminated against because you are fat, or been ignored because you are fat, then you really need to take the time to become educated first. Work to understand weight discrimination and be body positive with all your subjects.

6: Have an assistant to help you with posing. It can be very difficult to do all of the posing and the shooting.

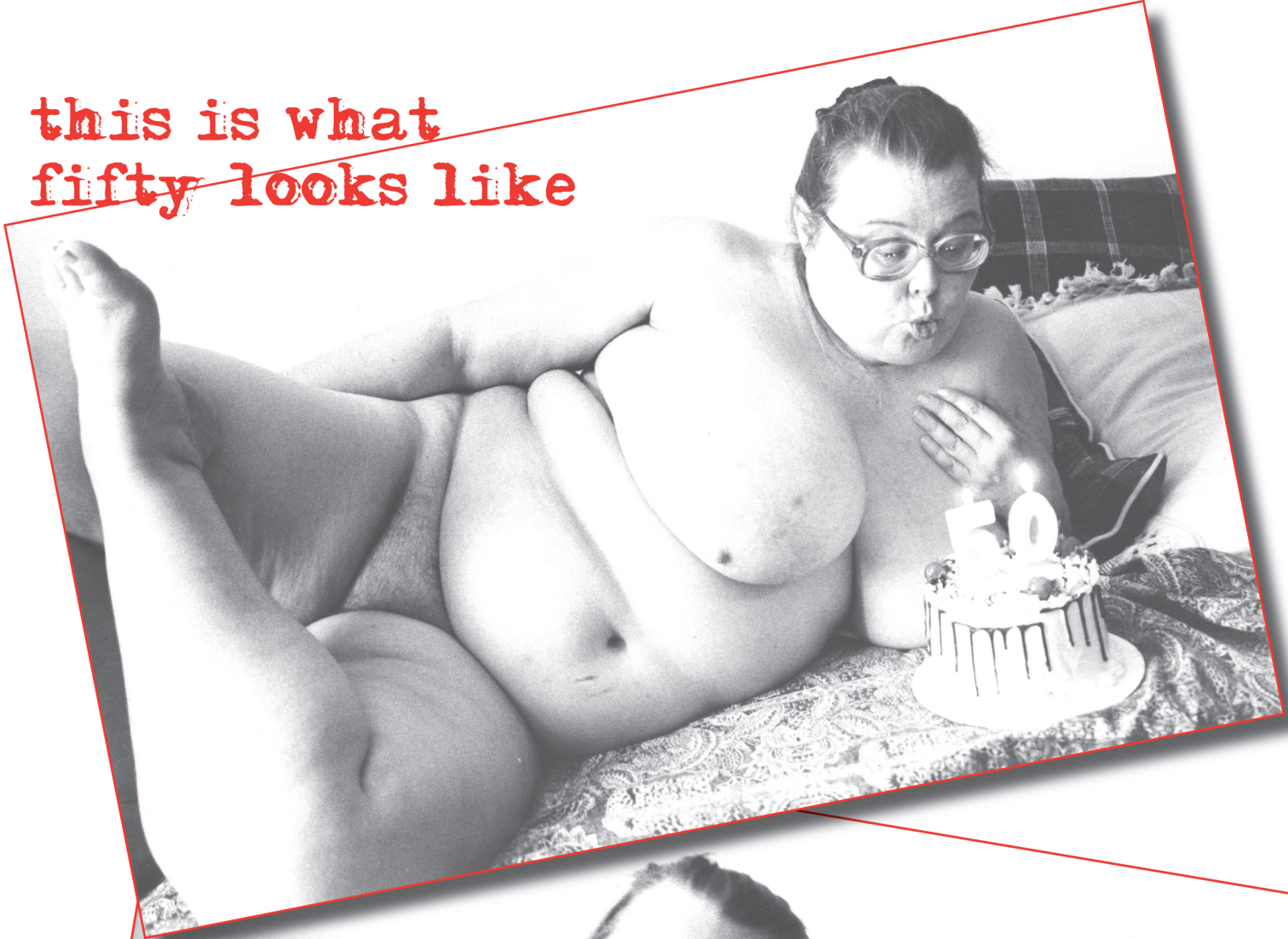
7: Composition: Drastic shooting perspectives, like the ant's eye view or the bird's eye view, rarely work. Be careful where you cut off your shot. If your subject has a large belly cut the shot off before you get to where the belly curves into the pubic area.

8: We can constantly improve the way the world looks at fat people by making good portraits, flattering images, and sexy pictures. Help change the world view one image at a time! 



Cherry and Jose strike a pose! Photo by Max

this is what
fifty looks like



photos: daisy chen
model: laurie avocado

TOROCOYORI

BY CHOLLA

I have always been fat and for most of my life I have been on a diet. It has been a fact of life for me, like getting up in the morning. I knew that my life was about striving from an early age, because I was not good enough. My mother made that very plain to me in every comment and innuendo. So I lived my life being the ugly daughter of a once beautiful woman, hungering for her love. Her honey colored hair and steely blue gaze were constantly appraising, and found me lacking. I would never be her little cheerleader, or marry the doctor she so desperately wanted me to marry. But most of all, I would never be white.

That is the tragic story of many a fat girl. But I am not just any fat girl. You see, I was a child of Achai Ta'a, Father Sun, and we were the most beautiful people in the world.

My father was Mexican and Yaqui Indian. When I was with my father's side of the family, I felt normal, a blessed feeling for any fat girl. This side of the family was proud of their beauty. I know that when I heard others waxing on about how tall and beautiful the Yaqui were, I too would feel that surge of pride. We were beautiful, with our cinnamon skin and almond eyes. We were tall and strong and fierce. The Yaqui are the only tribe in Mexico to have never signed a treaty, the only tribe to keep their own garrisons in the state of Sonora, to this day. In fact, our size was part of a sacred deal we made with the Talking Tree.

At the time of the Talking Tree (how all time is measured in Yaqui culture), we made a deal to defend the earth and wait for the return of Yo'Mommuli. Before that time, we were little people who only ate flowers, the Suremem. But the talking tree told of a time when the usurpers would come and rape the land and destroy the people. The old ones, the Surem, could not bear the pain of it, and earth's first children went to the north. But some, the Yoeme (what we call ourselves), stayed behind to eat meat and grow larger than all their neighbors, even the usurpers, so that they could defend the land and dance the world anew every spring until the old ones returned. So being big was part of what made us special. And being of the warrior caste, the bigger the better.



In my father's family, I was only one of many beautiful children, all of whom were "blessed." My cousin Leanna was about my age, and her gift was for sports and dance. Mine was art and music. Her brothers were artistic and mechanically inclined. My cousin Tino was brilliant and beautiful, as were all the cousins and cousins and more cousins. My younger brother, although not particularly good at school, was strikingly good looking, musically talented and artistically inclined. It was a sweet break from being on a diet. You see, we were all rather chubby, some of us downright fat. And yet, we ate and laughed and lived a life in a world where we were the blessed of Achai Ta'a. Father Sun had smiled on us.

So what happened? Well, I only got to live in the bubble during the summers. During the other months school and my mother slowly undid what my relatives worked so hard to create. I was lonely, ugly and unwanted. I was a shame to my family. And so I dieted, although it never worked.

You would think that after this many years someone would figure it out. If dieting worked, America wouldn't be getting fatter. After all, we spend 41 billion dollars on weight loss every year in this country. Ironically, that is enough money to end world hunger. But dieting for me was something different. It wasn't a "cure" for my "problem." It was a way of proving to my protestant mother that at least I was working at it. You see, if you are a fat person and you are unrepentant, like those heathens my father came from, you are lost. But if you are at least hoping to conform and are trying, then you might be fat and unwanted, but at least you are morally upstanding. People could pity you, but couldn't really hate you. That would be impolite.

Our bodies are not moral or immoral, but amoral. Ah, that was how Yo'Mommuli created us. When the Sacred Bee sang the world into being, she created it with a wisdom all its own. Then she became part of it, one with it, because she loved it and craved it and lusted after it so much. So inside every tree, every bird, every rock, every jar of peanut butter, every fat person, is beauty and wisdom. There is a little spark of Yo'Mommuli, the sacred word. It's not only in our spirit, it's in our bodies, because bodies and spirits are the same thing. In Yoeme all things are sacred.

Growing up in the middle of this constant struggle was not easy. It gave my life a surreal sense of limbo, where somehow I didn't really belong in either place. So, for many years, I tried very hard to be white. After all, I was half white, right? Somehow being Yaqui was just too weird, one more struggle for a fat, disabled, weird child. So I tried to fit in. I wanted to be beautiful and loved, even if I couldn't be blonde.

Part of fitting in was dieting. So I did. I lost weight and I gained weight. It always seemed as if the promise of being beautiful and loved was just around the corner. What is so sad to me now is that when I look back, I realized that I was beautiful and loved. I had absolutely no idea that I already had what I was fighting so hard to find. I was just too busy hating myself to realize it.

When I went to graduate school, I lost weight. A lot of weight. I was on Nutri-system, and it was awful. But I really did get thin, for a split second. In fact, at thirty pounds from my target weight, my friends asked me to stop losing weight, because I was looking scary. I also lost my gums, my hair and my gall bladder.

Of course, I gained it all back, the weight, that is. That is the way dieting works. I went from a size 22 to a size 32, via a size 12. I remember trying to change my target weight and the woman

said, "But you only have thirty pounds to go! Then you'll be perfect." She insisted that 150 is the perfect weight for a woman who was 5' 10". It said so on The Chart.

I need to say something about The Chart that you might not know. The Metropolitan Insurance Company calculated the ideal weight chart by measuring Norwegian men. That's it. No women were weighed in calculating the chart. No men of other races or nationalities were weighed. They just figured that women should weigh a little less than men. I mean, didn't you ever wonder why the formula was so simple? It's 100 pounds for the first five feet, then five pounds for every inch after that. The human body doesn't calculate in base 10, does it? Now you know. The charts are a lie.

But let's go back to these Norwegian men. We'd all be eating cheese puffs if they had calculated the charts in Samoa, or in Sonora for that matter. And no, we didn't all get fat because of our diets. People are different. That's what makes being Samoan and Yaqui, and even Norwegian, special. If Laplanders and Sri Lankans are different, why would we measure them on the same chart?

Because it's easy, and neither doctors nor insurance companies have time for diversity. There are more insidious reasons, too. Because white doctors are white (and most doctors are), and white is the standard, then everyone would be better off being white. And there you have it. Fat is about racism, and don't you forget it. Every Slimfast you drink goes to support a thin rich white person who has never been fat. Dieting was the perfect outlet for my internalized racism.

I don't think I realized it until my ancestors called me home. It began fairly benignly, with a book that fell on my head. I began reading about my own people, learning our history and realizing that the Yaqui world was bigger than my own family. Then I met several other Yaqui women who were beautiful and outrageous and made me feel like I was at home. Finally, I woke up one night, to hear a band playing outside my window. I leaned over to look out the window and there they were, old men playing accordions and violins and drums, old women singing in their strange off-tone way. When I rubbed my eyes, they were gone. There was nothing left but the drunks at the bus stop and the quieter sounds of night.

If I hadn't grown up Yaqui, I would have thought I was going crazy. But since I had, I could tell when something-big-was-happening. The old ones were calling me back to the desert; they had something for me to learn. When that happens, there will be no peace until you go. I would celebrate Wa'haema, the Yaqui Lenten season, and I made plans for my pilgrimage. I decided to go to Old Pascua, as that was the plaza in Tucson I had once been to as a young girl. I packed up the car and drove. Alone. After all, how could anyone else understand who wasn't Yaqui?

The desert in springtime is something everyone should see at least once in their lives. People always ask me why I go to the desert. They don't see any life or beauty there at all. But my people come from the Sonora, and it is so alive you can't take a step without encountering life. Everything whispers constantly, except at night when it screams. And in the Sonora, spirits do not have trees to hide behind. They come out in broad daylight and dance on your head. It makes driving alone on I-10 very interesting.

I stopped the first night at my friend Rene's trailer. He was an old college friend, a Morongo Mojave Indian. We walked up to the little hut he built facing the Santa Clara mountains. We

sat there and drank coffee in the still cold spring evening. "So, they called you, eh?"

I looked at him questioningly. Then it hit me. They had called him, too, back to his home and to his people. When we were in college, he had left his senior year. None of his friends, including me, had ever understood. I understood now. I held my cup to keep my hands warm and said "Yep." I looked over and he smiled, like he understood it was an apology.

He laughed, "It's not easy standing in the middle. You get all chewed up."

"No shit!" I laughed, "So what am I doing here in the middle of the desert?"

"Maybe learning to stand in both places one at a time, eh?" He got up and walked away.

I really didn't understand then, but I did have a sense that I had been living a life that was a betrayal of myself, my ancestors, even my friends. The feeling squirmed like a worm in my belly, reminding me of my dishonesty now that I was alone. I just didn't know what I had been dishonest about. I only knew that I had not been living with good heart and I had to trust that I would find out how to do what I had been called to do. Learning to stand in two places at once is what Yoeme queer folks do, it's their job. So far, I hadn't really been doing such a great job of it. I slept in the little hut facing the mountains, and dreamt that I slept upon the soft plump hand of a huge woman.

The next day I drove on to Tucson. I checked into the Motel 6 and unpacked. As I was a rather poor graduate student, I decided to cook in my room to save a little money. I also decided that this would be a great time to drink Slimfast for my breakfast and lunch. My mother bought me cases of the stuff, ever hopeful. I figured it was an easy and cheap solution. I could do my pilgrimage and lose weight, too! I got my suit on and went for a swim, enjoying the first warm sunshine of the year.

As I got out of the pool, one of the maids saw me. She said, "Are you here for the dances?" She was Yaqui, too. She gave me directions and said she'd see me that night. Something nagged at my back as I thought that she was very pretty. I could hear my Aunt Naomi whispering, "Of course she is, she's Yaqui." Their voices were getting louder here; their presence kept me company.

I drank my Slimfast, got dressed and went to the plaza. It's an old little village, and Tucson has kind of grown up around it. A central plaza and church surrounded by a few blocks of adobe houses surrounded by light industrial area make up Old Pascua. It looked like a party was getting started, and the paper flowers and confetti belied the seriousness of what was about to happen. But then that is the Yoeme way. Flowers are the blood of Christ, of the Little Deer that sacrificed himself before the Talking Tree so that the Yoeme could eat meat and grow large to defend the land. Flowers are the map of the underworld, the Sea Aniya, the home of the valiant dead.

Somehow I can remember it all so clearly, one of those moments when time starts running in slow motion and you can taste and see and smell so clearly you think you're waking up for the first time. The tell-tale sign that something-big-is-happening. The taste of wood smoke and dust on the air, the smell of Indian tacos

SHE WAS WALKING ACROSS THE PLAZA, A SHIP SAILING THE SEA. HER DARK HAIR FELL IN WAVES AND SHE WAS HUGE. SHE STOOD NEARLY SIX FEET TALL, AND A FEW HUNDRED POUNDS. HER EYES WERE LIKE THE NIGHT SKY FULL OF BURNING STARS, AND SHE WALKED AS IF TO SAY, "IF YOU DON'T WANT ME, IT'S YOUR LOSS."

and pickled lemons, the character of the light as the sun is setting. I stepped onto Yaqui soil like I was coming home. I sat on the bleachers, waiting for the Tenebrae to begin.

Then I saw her.

She was walking across the plaza like a ship sailing the sea. Her dark hair fell in waves and she was huge. She stood nearly six feet tall, and a few hundred pounds. Her eyes were like the night sky full of burning stars, and she walked as if to say, "If you don't want me, it's your loss." She tossed her head like a wild horse, singing at the top of her lungs. I was transfixed.

She looked just like me.

She glanced over her shoulder at my open mouthed gape and smiled. I didn't look away. I smiled back. And as the sun finally set and the Tenebrae began, I wept.

I wept for my sins, against my people, but mostly against myself. I hated myself for being fat, for being Yaqui, when it was my greatest gift and my most sacred obligation. Dieting was not only damaging to my metabolism, but to my soul, because in that act I was stating clearly that I wanted to be white. I wanted to be the same. I wanted to blend in and conform to the plastic version of beauty that the white people in the magazines said was the truth.

And when the black-veiled cavos came through the plaza and the people knelt in the dirt to be purified, I joined them with tears in my eyes. I welcomed the rope whips, the three strokes across my back as I knelt with my face to the ground. I could feel the cool dust in my hands. And when I looked up in the dark firelight, I saw her grinning at me.

Wa'haema is the season when the world is reborn. The Yoeme atone for the sins of the world, to ask Achai Ta'a to make the world anew. And so it was that I prayed for all fat girls, especially those beautiful dark eyed black and caramel and olive-skinned fat girls. I spent the night of weeping pouring Slimfast down the drain at the Motel 6. And on Looria, when the world is reborn, I knew I'd never have to drink another shake again, unless it had ice cream in it.

I never saw that woman again. But then, she'd done her work, and Yo'Mommuli was satisfied. I found out that my betrayal had been deeper than I knew. I betrayed my own power and beauty, my seataka, the gravest sin for a Yaqui.

In Yoeme, we have a word for such a person. Torocoyori. It means "race traitor," a Yoeme possessed by a usurper's soul. I did a lot of staring in the mirror on that trip home. And when I walked up to the trailer, Rene' hugged me and asked, "So did you get your butt kicked?" I just laughed.

That was many years ago, and I am no longer Torocoyori. I try to live with good heart, redeemed by the flowering blood of the Little Deer, like any good Yaqui after Looria. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes I forget, especially when I'm the only fat person around. But even then, I have to admit, I'd rather be half Yaqui than a Norwegian man.

After all, the children of Father Sun are the most beautiful people in the world.



MOVEMENT

for LYNNE GERBER

That I am fat brought
me to these wooden steps
by the river

I come down turned
to keep weight
off one ankle

This twists my knee.

A poet I follow
said pain in the body
is not the same as
pain in the streets

It's fifteen years since I left
my job at noon to listen
to her across another river

I loved her language already
then for its pressures
She seemed to ask
that I inhabit my politics
that I let a lesbian mind in me
sweat and stagger at least half awake
through my desires

but that afternoon
she turned our attention to pain.

Now, a heron turns and settles on the bank
and I am away

from a hotel full of other fat people
who might force me into the courage

to press my low breasts
against the air as if it were glass

to say we need our pleasures
but cannot be consumed.

by SUSAN STINSON



drawing by Olivia Edith

Size
Queen
Comix
presents:



by Max Airborne

memories of

Sixeast

EPISODE 1 by Max Airborne

Ever since I saw "the Magdelene Sisters" I've been flooded with memories of having been locked up in a mental hospital for a year and a half, when I was a teenager (ages 13-15).

This one I'm about to tell you now starts with me here, in this moment, sitting at my desk writing writing writing the same sentence over and over again. See, i fucked up the other day. But that's not what this story is about...

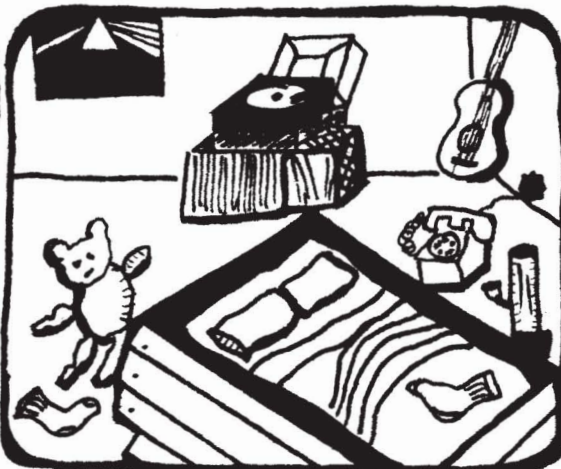
ma'am knows best and i will do as she says

"Your hands look thinner. I can see the weight coming off."



What?! I'd spent the weekend frantically transcribing song lyrics I wanted to learn, into the wee hours until my hands ached,

so **STIFF** I couldn't drop the pen. I'd been at my mom's on a weekend pass, revelling in luxuries like record players, my well-loved record collection, my waterbed with rainbow sheets..



"What!?!?" I asked, incredulous.

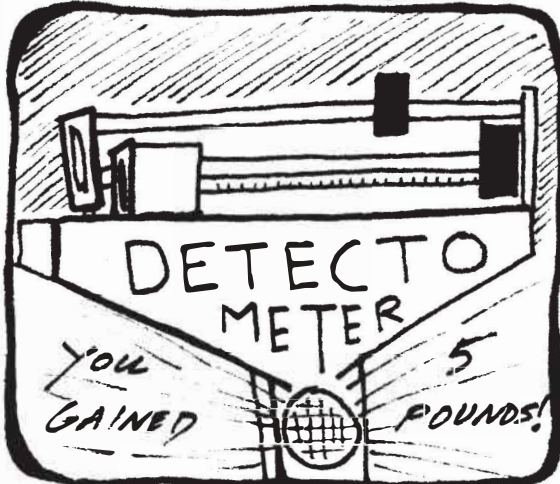
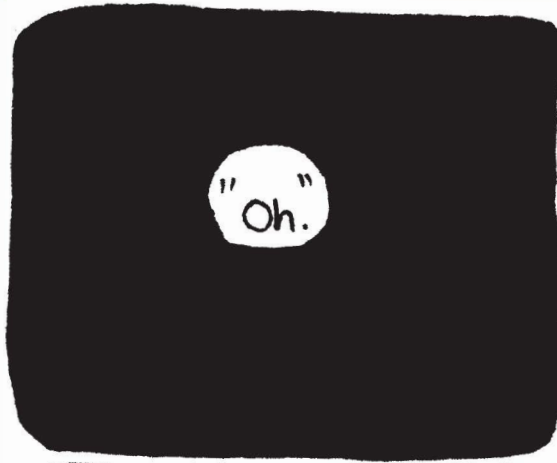


"Your hands. They're looking nice. They're getting thin."

The doctor's comment took me by surprise.

I HATED HIM.

Yet ... in his twisted way he was expressing pride in me, and I wanted it, which pissed me off.
 @*!m & ?!@*?!*!@?!



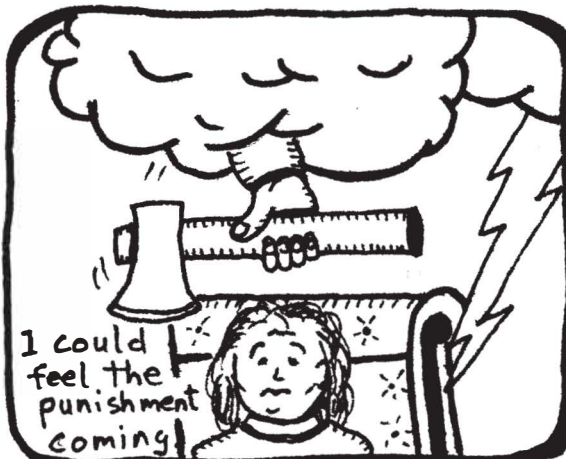
"... **B**ut, the scale tells a different story. You gained weight over the weekend. **WHAT'S YOUR EXPLANATION, YOUNG LADY?**"



He was so uptight you had to wonder if he ever took a dump. He was always hyper, authoritarian, and on the brink of being pissed off. **THERE WAS NO LOVE IN THIS LITTLE MAN.**

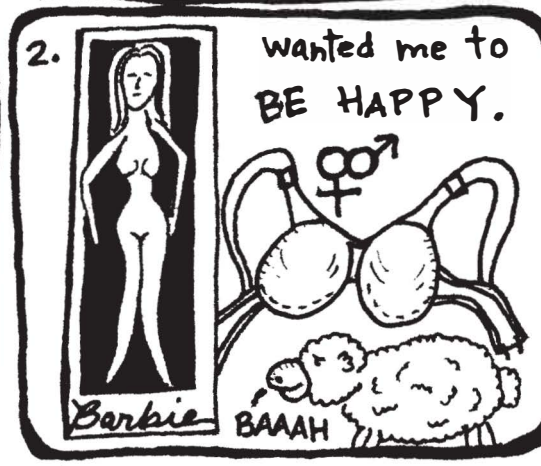
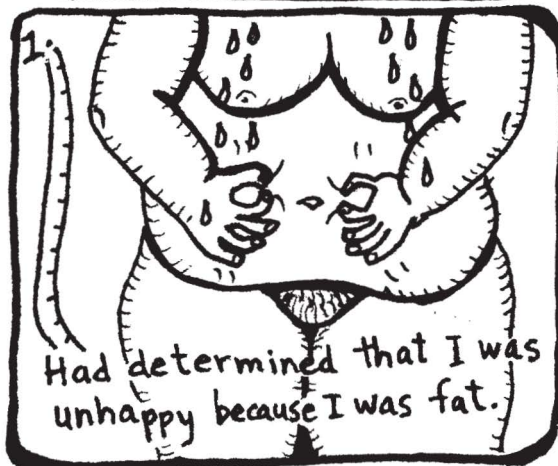
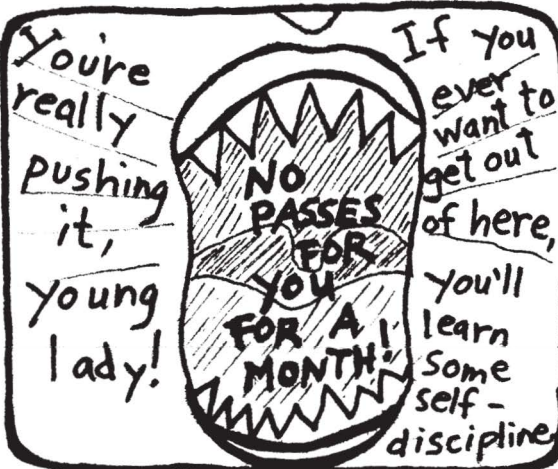
"I don't know."

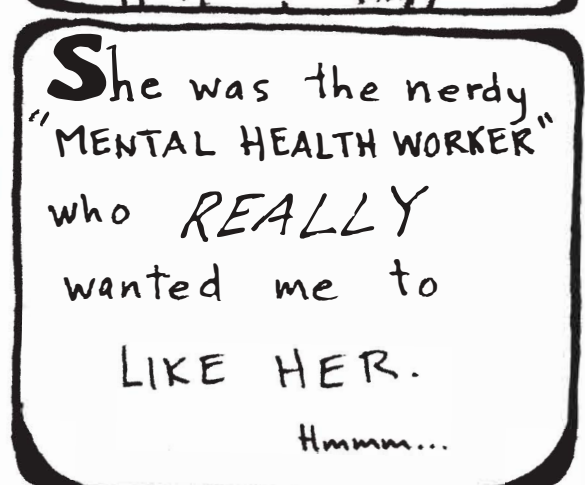
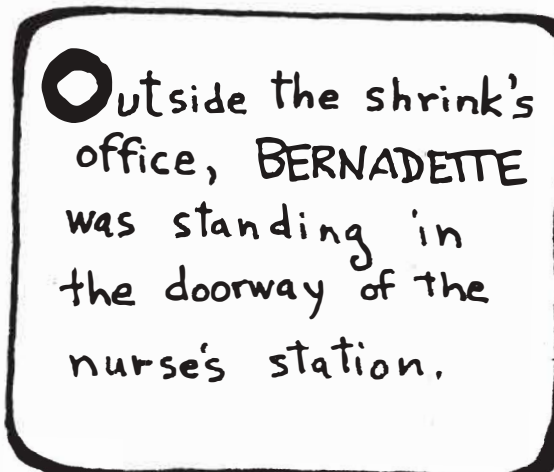
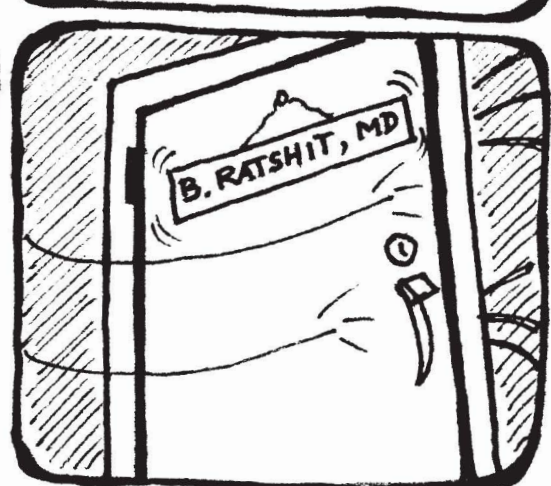
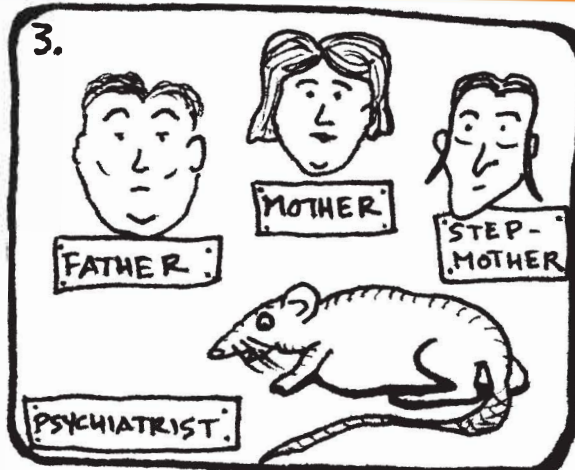
LISTEN YOUNGLADY!
"I don't know" is NOT a sufficient answer. I know you're LYING! WHY DID YOU GAIN FIVE POUNDS OVER THE WEEKEND?



You see, I was on a diet.
A BIG DIET.
 I was allowed 500 calories a day. Every privilege I had was contingent on the numbers revealed by the scale. The funny thing was, those numbers didn't always reflect what I had eaten.

This weekend, however, I had been drinking.
AND HE KNEW,
 he knew something.
 Bored with the game,
 knowing I'd lost,
I CONFESSED.







"Buy me a
Tab?"

I asked her, with a
pathetic look on my face.

I knew she would. It
was how she got me
out of bed in the
morning, her bribe,
a cold can of Tab
from the machine.



Now, it was no secret
that the bribe was mine.
She'd seen me slam the
door, and she'd seen me
in a door-slamming
mood before.

The Tab was
my implied
agreement not
to go there.





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If a bear's in the woods, and no one else is, does he make a sound?

by Steven Schwartz

When I was a boy I was bullied by two smaller kids. My teacher told my mother that I should just haul off and hit one of them -- then they would realize I was stronger and stop bothering me. But I didn't....

Because you don't pick on smaller people.

There are few things more frustrating than picky people at glory holes. At a sex club I frequent, if you are looking to get sucked, you can peek over the top of the stall walls and judge the person on the other side. To me this rather defeats the purpose of the glory hole. Only very rarely do the people who stop to peek over the walls at me actually stay to get blown. When they do they are almost always my size. Most people who cruse me and most that I cruse are big and fat....

Because you don't cruse smaller people.

It took me a long, long time to become comfortable in Asian markets; the narrow aisles, the people with much narrower concepts of personal space, and the fact that I felt like an outsider all combined to make me a nervous wreck half the time I was in them, trying to dance my 250-pound bulk out of the way of 90-pound Asian grandmothers who had no compunction about simply pushing past me if I didn't. So, why did I make such an effort to get out of the way, to leave gaps where they didn't need to be?

Because you don't block smaller people.

All the people I know in the fat-acceptance movement are women. I know a fair number of my fellow bears, and I've brightened up many a time at a well-meant and hearty "woof" from one of them, but that's not the same thing as working on the culture beyond the hearty gentleman. Why? Why do these big men keep themselves separate?

Bears (the animals) are, by comparison to most other animals -- otters, tigers, dogs, etc. -- fat. Underneath that fat bears are very, very strong. That is the image that *Bear* magazine ("Masculinity without the trappings") is after. Sure, we're furry. Sure, some of us are fat. But underneath all that, we're strong men. It was John Madden (notable fat man himself) who observed that offensive linemen tended to be smaller kids than defensive linemen, because the biggest kids were taught not to use that strength, lest they be bullies, while smaller kids with feisty attitudes were "tough." So there's strike one against the big men throwing their metaphorical weight around; they've been told often enough that they're not supposed to.

Then, add to that that we're talking about gay men here. We aren't supposed to talk about being gay, first off. (People didn't

believe I was queer because I didn't fit their stereotypes. Heck, I played football!). Some who don't fit into the mainstream of gay culture are even presumed straight at gay pride parades. So bears can get used to being invisible. Strike two.

The bear communities I've known have been among the most open-armed and accepting places I've ever been; I still cherish the memory of the bear in Munich who tugged my ponytail and asked if I was from San Francisco, or the table of bears who, even though I'd shown up hideously late for dim sum, insisted that I order some more, even if they were mostly done eating. In some places (like San Francisco) it's a big enough community that you can spend most of your time there. The need to move outside it gets smaller and smaller. You've spent your life being told not to use your strength, not to use your size, and now you have found a refuge. It's a grocery store of the mind with wide, wide aisles, and enough honey and condoms to last a long time. Strike three.

Why venture out? Why not let sleeping bears lie?

The answers are many: Because we can help, because we are suffering regardless of what sanctuary we think we've found. For me, it took a swift kick in the butt from two dykes of my acquaintance, and a long familiarity with the issues. I wish I had a prescription, a plan of action, a set of guidelines. All I have are some notions, some ideas. For several years a friend and I have batted around the idea of holding a Bear Petting Zoo at one of the street fairs, as a benefit for this charity or that one; perhaps finding the right fat-acceptance organization to help with that would be a good place to begin, to make an alliance between the two communities.

What I see as the problems are twofold: getting the bear community out of its shell (talk about your mixed-species metaphors), and finding a framework within which we can work. I don't, I fear, see a lot of leadership coming out of the bear community. We've been well trained not to be too noisy, except when about ourselves. The very tenacity that it takes to be part of the fat-acceptance movement has produced a generation of dykes who are quite prepared to be forceful in a way that bears have been convinced not to be, and which makes it hard for them to lead.

I hope I'm wrong on this, and that the fat-acceptance movement will be joined by a group of loud and formidable bears who've learned not to hold back too much for fear of being a little overbearing. Come on, guys, I think the rest of the movement can handle it.



The boy was hot. No denying it. He was thick and full in all the right places, with muscled arms and broad shoulders. He wore his jeans slung low, stretched snug across his ass. His tight T shirt had precisely cuffed sleeves. His carefully-cared-for boots were not too shiny for his perfectly weathered belt. You could tell without looking that his hands would be well manicured, but not too well. He stood out in the crowd of LL Bean-clad straights. I was overcome with the desire to pull him into the alley and wrestle him till he was pinned to the wall. In the midst of this early evening summer crowd I wanted to come up behind him all of a sudden and growl in his ear, "I know what you want..." while I pressed up close to him, felt the bulk of his body and my own familiar stirrings of response. So I did just that. I came up behind him in stealth mode. Reappearing at his curb side shoulder I took his upper arm and elbow firmly from behind, "Dirty boy, I know what you want." The way he gasped told me he was ready for whatever came his way. Or so he thought.

I directed him to the alley on our right. Just past the dumpsters I turned him around. Taking him in from head to toe, I was drawn to the curve of his beautiful belly and everything that lay above and below that equator. I wanted to be an explorer and lay my claim on all latitudes and longitudes of this boy. With close cropped hair and sunglasses he made quite a sight – sleeves rolled up just so, leather vest just so, levis full at the crotch just so. I walked up to him real slow, allowing him to get a good look at me. He held himself so beautifully, solid and strong. He was not gonna give an inch until he absolutely had to. Just the kind of boy I like to torment.

I circled slowly behind and enjoyed his response to my intake of my breath just before I swung my arm around his neck. Putting more and more pressure on his airway, I whispered in his ear, "This is what you want, boy, isn't it? Oh, dear, you can't answer when you can't breathe. That's quite a predicament, isn't it?" I felt his knees go out from under him and let him fall to the ground. Gasping, he scrambled to get up, trying not to let his good jeans get fucked up. Little prima donna. I'd show him.

As he got to his knees I pushed him over again, laughing. I pulled him up by his leather vest and got right in his face. He was so mad he couldn't think straight. Like a cat suddenly thrown into a bathtub, he struck out wildly, spitting in my face. I dropped his ass down on the ground again and kicked him in the gut. While he lay on the ground moaning, I wiped his spit off my face and goatee, trying to look tough and pissed off. (Really I was thinking about how it would feel to have him spit like that right on the head of my cock, or on my spread open cunt, or on my face...but I digress.)

I picked him up from the ground and muscled him against a grimy wall, all the while telling him how I knew exactly what he wants, even if he doesn't know what that is yet. My hands took control of his body. Across his chest I found treasures and some land mines. (He told me with his body where I could touch safely.) With my hands, my breath and my dick I listened for his sounds of pleasure. Working his nipples roughly, I described all the things I would do to him if we were at home: How my belt would feel landing on his already cherry red ass; How my fist would feel slamming into his chest; How the cane would zing through the air to welt and bloody his ass. The dirty talk sent him flying; his resistance was down.

That's when I reminded him of his earlier bad behavior. "Boy, you were on the right track until you spat at me. Do you have any idea how disrespectful it is to spit at me? Don't shake your head," I snarled. He showed a hint of attitude so I slapped him across the cheek and then spat in his face. He looked astonished until the back hand landed and he felt my hand grab a handful of his hair. I covered his nose and mouth with my free hand and told him to keep his bodily fluid to himself unless I directed otherwise. His eyes showed what I was after - the recognition that he had been caught by someone trickier, meaner and stronger than he was. He nodded and I released him to breathe again. But not for long.

Smiling, I pushed him down to his knees in a puddle of dirty water and begin to unbuckle my belt. I swear I saw him wipe away some errant drool that made it down his chin. He practically came when I pulled it out. From behind the dumpster but I could see down the alley and onto the fancy store-lined avenue. People were streaming by, totally unaware that this luscious, round boy was about to take my dick down his throat.

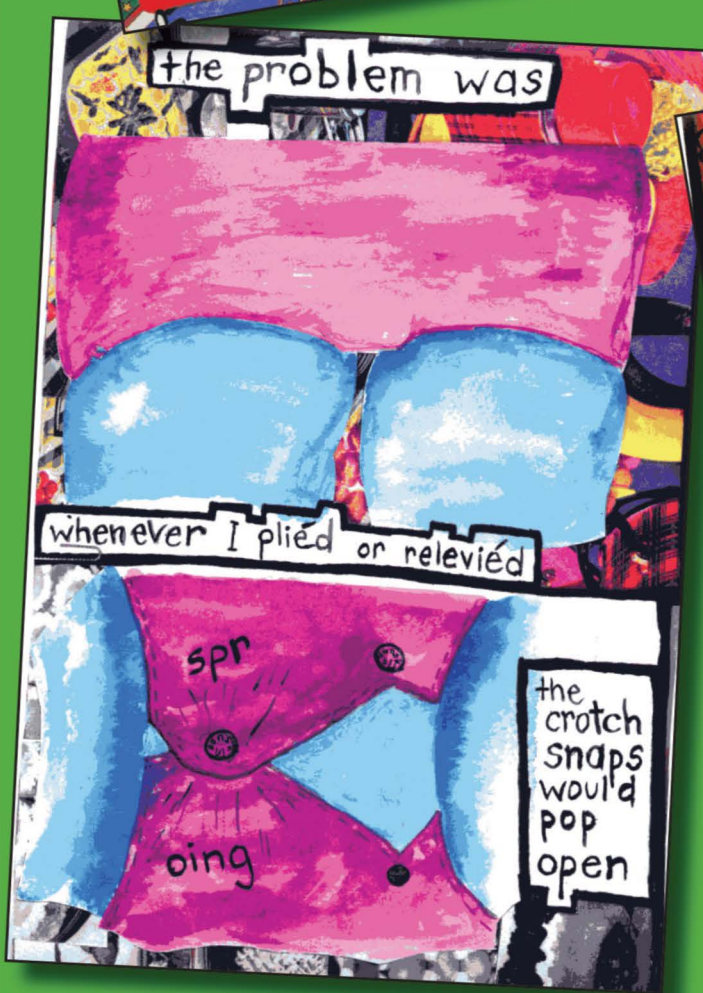
Before I let him have it, I told him to work my nuts a little. With his head resting on my thigh he cupped my nuts in his palm and pulled, twisting slightly, till I moaned. Then he kept working them like that while my dick twitched in front of his lips. Involuntarily his tongue snaked out of his mouth and licked at my slit. His hands roamed up over my belly around my hips and up to my tits. He worked my nipples while I fed him my reddening cock - inch by inch it slipped between his lips. My view was amazing - his head sliding over my cock, the movement of his ass while he sucked me off, belt glinting in the sun. He got really into it. "I told you I knew what you wanted...I was right, wasn't I?" He nodded, his head on my dick, swallowing the last inch down his throat, gag reflex repressed. It was delicious, but I was saving my come for something else.

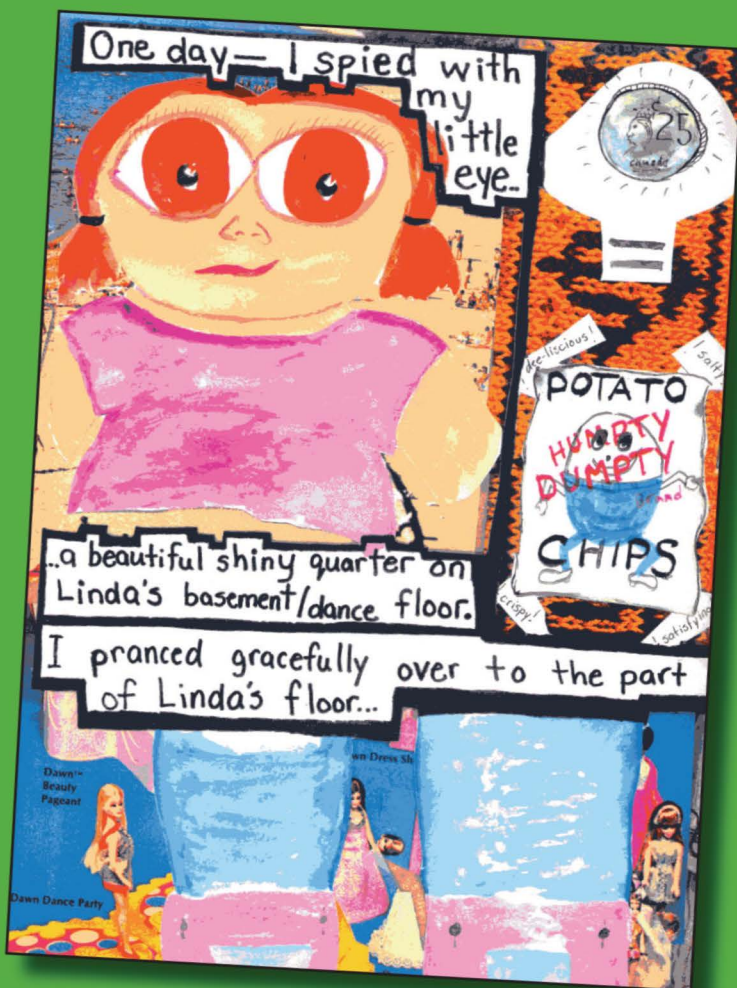
I eased him off my dick and pulled him to standing again. He looked dreamy from the cock sucking - lost in a throbbing, salty daze. I brought him back to reality with a fierce slap across the face. And a back hand to match. I tell him, "Boy, it was your ass that caught my eye walking up the street. The way you advertise it like that, with your belt and your good underwear and your falling-down-just-so-jeans. I'm going to have it now. Gonna take your ass right here in this alley, you don't even know my name and I'm going to cum inside your ass." He just moaned.

I pushed him against the wall face first. "Don't fuss and you won't get hurt," I promised. "Unbuckle your pants and drop them to your knees." He complied. "God, what an ass!" He filled out those 501's and the x-rated Hanes boxer briefs bellow. I ran my hands down his back and over his ass, easing his boxers down. I took a deep breath and started to drool, hungry to feel my dick slip into his tightest little hole. I spread his cheeks and twirled a finger into his hole, gauging experience.

I held his cheeks apart and spat on his pucker hole. The feel of the cold air on his ass, the awareness that he was about to get nailed, made him gasp and moan. With my dick in hand, I located his asshole with my thumb and then slid the head of my cock in. I popped it in and out, enjoying his moment of struggle each time. I directed the boy to work his own bits, "It'll make it easier to take my cock," I say, "It's rather wide." Without waiting for him to comply I slid the next inch and a half in and started to work his ass for real. With each stroke I moved a little deeper. Every 20 strokes or so he spread his legs a little more, working his dick/clit. He moaned, moving back to meet me and letting me know in all kinds of ways that he could come like this - dirty, in the alley, with my dick up his ass. So I told him to come while I fucked him. I knew the sound of him coming and the way his ass was going to tighten around my cock would make me come, too. I spread his cheeks to get that last couple of inches of dick in there. With him moaning and moving, I started fucking shallower but faster, working my thick dick, stretching his hole wide. I told him how dirty he was for taking it up the ass by this busy street. I reminded him that I kicked him around earlier, that when he came it would be because it pleased me, because it increased my arousal. His frantic words ran together: "I know, Sir, I know.... please, Sir. Oh, God. Sir, can I just come for you? Please? You were right; you did know exactly what I wanted. Thank you for showing me, Sir. I'm sorry I spat on you, Sir. So sorry. Please. Please, can I come? Please?" And I finally told him, "Yes, boy, come!" I stroked my last three deep strokes and right after his orgasm washed over his body I let loose with a hot, full load right up his ass.

Before he could catch his breath I spun him around, pushed him gently down, and made him lick my cock clean. I ruffled his hair and walked away. I felt his eyes on me and I didn't look back. 🐣





Post-Surgery = Post-Community?

Margo

I began wanting to be a boy around the age of four when I realized the limitations of being a girl - an older woman in my neighborhood was aghast that my mother let me run around with no shirt on in the summer. She gave my mother so much grief that I was never allowed to go shirtless outside again. At the time I had no understanding of why the neighbor was upset - my chest looked no different than the other kids. My mother told me that eventually I would grow breasts like hers. Even if that was true I couldn't understand why it mattered since I did not have breasts then!

I always liked boy's clothes. My mother gave me homemade short haircuts and I ran around in 501's and white t-shirts at home. At school there was a nightmare dress code and until 5th grade I had to wear a dress or skirt to school. I absolutely HATED it.

When I was out in the world with my mother people usually thought I was her son. I loved that. Once, when I was older, at the flea market with my dad, a couple of girls were acting really funny - they were looking at me and giggling (but it wasn't the laughing that I sometimes got at school.) I looked at him questioningly and he explained that they thought I was a boy and they were flirting with me. What a piece of heaven! I often thought about this episode.

Someone made fun of my size when I was in kindergarten. Looking back on the photos it is odd because I wasn't even big. Tall, but not fat. My mother was fat and I loved what she looked like. It didn't occur to me that fat wasn't acceptable until I got messages about being fat from kids at school. My mother was tormented about her size and was often on a cottage-cheese-and-grapefruit-type diet. When I started to get big she'd encourage me to diet with her.

As a child I did not hate my fat body even though I was teased about it, but when I developed breasts and got my period I felt that my body had betrayed me. There was some point where I wished fervently, numerous times a day, that I would transform into a boy. I never did that about being fat. Which isn't to say that I never had that desire - it was just that gender was a much more important priority.

In high school I became a jock. With that transformation I felt wonderful physically even though I was big. I was a really good athlete, but one of my coaches was always nagging me to lose weight and giving me diet tips. I overheard the coach from a rival team telling her how great I was and I heard her disgusted reply about how good I could be if only I lost some weight.

Being fat, being a gender airball, and being racially mixed are very intertwined for me. I walk through the world feeling very exposed as QUEER but depending where I am, even in the S.F. Bay Area where there are a lot of very gender savvy people, I am frequently read as male. It blows my mind how much better I am treated as a "fat guy" than as a "fat woman." But remember that I am not a fat feminine woman - so the contempt that people have for fat women is also shrouded in the contempt that there is for butches or women who do not gleefully embrace their gender role. My favorite way to suck up this privilege is with waitresses who think I'm a big guy who needs big portions.

When I'm out with my lovely fem wife, especially if she is all dressed up, there are times that we are taken for being straight. There was one time we were on vacation and I was wearing a big down vest that covered any evidence of my birth gender. We were holding hands and the oddest thing happened - all of these very conventional looking straight couples kept smiling at us - something that doesn't usually happen. We are familiar with stares, look-aways, guffaws, and scowls, but these people were looking at us like, "Oh what a cute fat couple."

If I were less big I think I would pass as male even more, thus raking in even more gender privilege. I also have to say here that I can rake that in because, although I am Latin, I am also very light-skinned. If I were as dark as my father and if I had his accent, people might do other things - like check their wallets. A dark-skinned friend who transitioned now has people cross the street and act scared of him.

At my present age of 45 I try to just be myself as much as possible. Years ago someone was painting me into a mural and I noticed they made me not look very fat - I told the artist not to be afraid to depict me as I really look. When I envision myself smaller it has to do with increased mobility or fitting into things that are uncomfortable like airplane seats. I feel very lucky and privileged that I can mostly find clothes that I really like and can afford to buy. I some-

Four Writers Tackle Questions of Weight, Gender & Transitions

times wonder if gender would be easier if I transitioned. I know that being totally male (or as male as I could be) wouldn't be quite right either in the way that being female isn't. It is hard for me to sometimes separate who I really am with how I am treated in the world. If there were more tolerance in general for the concept of gender to be fluid in presentation and action I think that I would spend very little time dwelling on the issue. And, frankly I'm somewhat tired of it. If I didn't have to navigate bathrooms and stares and issues of safety because of gender I think I could have a very leisurely approach to my identity. I feel like I spend more time than necessary worrying about how I will be perceived and accepted in the world at large and in the dyke, queer and FTM communities, all of which I feel a part of or at least on the border of.

I try to put myself as much as possible in places where I can just BE.

I think I gravitate to people who are like me in some way - a lot of my friends are fat, many are butch or butch/fem couples, most are queer, many are POC or mixed.

I came close to crossing a weight line ten years ago when I was having trouble with my gall bladder. I was very afraid of having surgery and I tried everything to avoid that - acupuncture, nutrition, herbs, etc. One of the other things I did was exercise a lot and I ended up losing about 70 or 80 pounds over about six months - probably one of the worst things I could have done for my gall bladder. I was feeling good from the exercise but kept having horrible, extremely painful attacks that would last 24 hours and would come with extreme nausea. I can't tell you how many people told me how great I looked. Of course I couldn't just let that be, so I would usually let them know that I was sick. I just hate the "you look great, have you lost weight" thing.

I cross the gender line constantly and reside on the border most times. I think this border is comfortable for me because I live there in race, too. I am racially queer or ambiguous - sometimes a chameleon. When with Latins I am perceived as Latin, when with Jews, a Jew.

I also feel much more comfortable at my size and being in a fat marriage around people from lower class origins. The higher the class level, the more uncomfortable about both fat and gender stuff I become, even if the folks are queer.

I like looking queer. I enjoy being public about who I am

- I know it makes some people uncomfortable but at least I know where I stand - I never have to worry about what people will think when I come out to them.

□ □ □ □

Nomy Lamm

When I was a kid I would rehearse awards speeches and give interviews in my head while predicting my future achievements. One of these was given on the occasion of imagining myself, after years of hard work and failing - finally, effortlessly, naturally - losing weight. Becoming not fat. Not too thin. Curvy. I pictured the hot outfit I would wear: cut off jean shorts with fishnets and garters. I would be hot and empowered in my sexuality. I imagined saying "Even though I'm not fat anymore, I will always feel like a fat girl." A valorous sentiment. Staying true to my roots.

At age 14 I could not imagine being empowered, sexually or otherwise, in a fat body, but I still knew that there was something about my perspective as a fat girl that was valuable. Not so different really from the valuable perspective that I got from being Jewish (in the Pacific northwest), or having a fake leg. It's the sensitivity that comes with the daily struggle of trying to feel at home in a world that wasn't built for me.

When you grow up fat, you pick up on certain vibes from people that may be invisible to others. You feel it in a specific way when you get ignored and your skinny friend gets smothered with attention. You know that you have to work like hell to get a tenth of the options afforded to even the most insecure thin girl. You know that those girls enjoy having you around because you make them feel more attractive. You know it and you resent it and you still play the game because you see when and where your presence is considered valuable, and those are the roles that are available.

After years of being a self-hating fat teenager, I was lucky enough to find a small community of fat friends who I could relate to. It makes such a huge fucking difference to

Post-Surgery = Post-Community?

have allies and cohorts. It meant that we existed, we could reflect ourselves to each other, and validate our right to be fat, to not want to lose weight, to make our own choices about how we treat ourselves. To eat "like pigs" when we wanted to. To take up space. To say the word "fat" in mixed company, to say it with pride. To laugh about it sometimes. To share clothes and reaffirm each other's hotness.

A friend of mine put it clearly, when talking about a thin nutrition teacher who used herself as proof that anyone can be thin. "THERE IS SUCH A THING AS A FAT PERSON!" my friend cried indignantly. Why the constant assumption that we can or should lose weight? That thin is a better way to be? That we would be happier that way? I am so grateful to have the space in the world to ask these questions. I am grateful to the people who ask them with me, and the people who listen without trying to brainwash us in response.

By creating a community that provided visibility and reflection, my fat punk queer friends and I managed to change the culture around us. Fat became a seen, recognized and desired body type within certain communities. We created a new aesthetic and a new social dynamic around it. Sure, anyone could argue that fat was ugly and unhealthy if they wanted to, but they would be challenged by our presence, not to mention our vocal response to that kind of judgmental bullshit.

It's always a shock when one of the core fat folks in my life loses weight and is no longer perceived as a fat person. It's shocking for me because at least part of our connection to each other has to do with being fat and then suddenly that's gone, and it's shocking for them because they suddenly get treated so different by the world. Everyone wants to tell them how good they look and find out how they did it. I find myself wrestling with my own emotions around it. Are they still my ally? Do I trust them? The whole power balance changes, the person who lost the weight feels on-display and isolated, and I feel the projections of their weight loss on my own fat body, which I work very hard to love and care for.

Why does this keep happening? It took me so long to accept that diets don't work and that thin isn't a goal. That I am a fat person, and fat is how I'm going to live my life, so I better make the most of it. It's been hard to watch so many of the fat people around me become thin and lose the status of visible ally. Their bodies changed for different reasons—depression, hormones, yoga, etc. In every case the weight loss seemed like a surprise or side-effect. I will never know for sure if part of their weight loss is not a manifestation of their internalized fat phobia, but I know that if I trusted my friends before when they were fat, then I should trust them now.

What is it that makes me trust a person anyway? It doesn't

mean we will always be together, we will always agree, we will stay this way forever. Trust means, I know you are a person who works to spread light in the world, and you are going to be that person no matter how you change. Of course there is the inner conflict of feeling betrayed when my fat friends "cross over" or whatever, a similar sentiment that I often hear from older lesbians who have "lost" friends and lovers to transsexuality. My response to that has always been, what are you losing? That person still exists and still needs support to be strong and stand up for themselves. And you need them too.

If ever you thought that you were just imagining that women get treated differently than men, ask a person who has been both to describe what it feels like to have your reality shift in that way. Likewise, if you ever doubted that fat people get treated different than thin people, ask someone who's made that transition. One of my best friends basically turned into a bitter bitch when she realized how different people treated her as a not-fat-person. "I don't have to do anything, people just automatically think I'm interesting now," she told me. "It's ridiculous, it makes me hate everyone. People really are as stupid and shallow as you're afraid they are."

I believe it. People often have a way of meeting expectations. Which is why I have to believe that these former fatasses are still allies. They still know the experience of being a fat person. They still see the oppression and prejudice and they still know that it's fucked. It is up to them to look at whatever privilege they now have, and figure out what to do with it. It's just like anything else—be honest about your experiences and about who you are. Stand up for the people you love. Know that we have your back if you have ours. This should be simple for strong-hearted creatures. And I have to believe that mine is a community of strong hearts.

Fat people are not going away. People's bodies change all the time. Sometimes we can make sense of it, and sometimes not. Sometimes it hurts. After ten years of being a fat activist, I realize that there is no perfect point of self-acceptance to work towards, and that kind of linear goal-oriented thinking is tied into the dieting mindset. We play into it all the time, by measuring our stories against each other, by perpetuating the idea that once we "get over" whatever is keeping us fat, we will become thin. By perpetuating the idea among ourselves that being fat is a terrible fate. The time is now to empower ourselves, regardless (and inclusive) of our identities.

Time to live,
time to act,
our bodies are perfect right now,
let's give them the lives they deserve.



Weight, Gender & Transitions

Sondra Solovay

The town where I grew up had one elevator. We only needed one since we only had one three-story building. On our eighth grade field trip to the nearest big city -- a three and a half hour drive -- many of my friends got to ride an escalator for the first time. Against this backdrop I explored gender and body image.

The look sported by kids in my church town was totally androgynous: levis, pastel polo shirts, and Nikes. I wore satin smoking jackets, men's suits with wingtips and spats, and lots of black. My gender exploration was not about fitting in and being average, it was about expressing myself and being fabulous. Sensing something queer was afoot, townsfolk called me "Boy George." I thought he was rather dull. Church pamphlets warned that my black clothing was proof I had turned to Satan, but my mother was always supportive of my clothing artistry. I remember her comment on my head-to-toe menswear: "You can get away with that -- you have a very feminine face." Her words did not sting, the way they would have for many of my tranny friends, but they stuck with me, a marker of privilege that I did not realize I needed in order to play with gender.

My expression of body size was a different matter. It was all about starving myself in the desperate attempt to fit in. I pursued it with all my heart, but I never made it. I dreamed of being the person the doctor told to eat more, but even when I was eating nothing at all, I never got that advice.

When I look at pictures of myself as a child I see a thin person. When the pictures were taken I saw a fat person. Both opinions are correct.

The lines between fat and thin, male and female, like so many other divisions, are cultural creations: Artificially erected borders with a very real impact. They can be a lot of fun, but they can also be very dangerous. A doctor, looking at the number on the scale, may condemn a child to weight loss surgery and a life time of complications (if the child is lucky enough to survive the surgery at all.) It is not unlike the measurements made by doctors holding an intersex infant, where a fraction of an inch determines which sex the child will be raised as and condemns many to a lifetime of hormones, surgeries and struggle. Cultural fictions are used to justify medical interventions.

I stopped trying to change my body. I recognize coercion

when I see it. The right to lead a happy life including equal access to civil rights should not be denied on the basis of weight, gender identity, or sex.

We have become accustomed to thinking about both weight and gender/sex as linear creatures where male and female, like fat and thin, are at opposite extremes. My friend Dylan Wade, brilliant co-creator of the Transgender Law Center, writes about a different concept: A gender galaxy. In the gender galaxy each person inhabits their own unique gender; separate stars in a galaxy, rather than points on a line. Similarly, our body does not express itself numerically, but rather through an individual, unique, and dynamic dance of size, shape, weight, proportion and composition.

Male, female, fat, thin are matters of context and perspective, not rigid definition. When you get close to the artificial borders they break down. A woman who wears a size 6 dress is fat and faces weight discrimination at work where everyone else wears a size 0 or a size 2. A 400 pound person is thin when the viewer weighs 650 pounds.

An acquaintance of mine had two surgeries and made headlines some time ago: "How a fat heterosexual man became a thin lesbian." This is the place where weight and gender differ and where "being post-op" has drastically different implications for our community.

To be out and transgender is to move away from societal norms: to do something that society says you cannot do. Some people use hormones and surgery, some do not. The effect is to disrupt artificial, static notions of gender. To play with gender. To fuck with gender. And it is no accident that that a transgender person gets legal protection in exchange for swearing allegiance to and reinforcing the artificial borders of the gender system. Imagine an FTM who has been outed suing over employment discrimination: "I had a girl's body but even when I was a child I played with trucks and guns -- I knew inside I was a boy." He will win. In comparison, the trans person who likes to come to work sometimes in boy drag, sometimes in girl drag, and claims to be neither a man nor a woman will get no protection from the courts.

Where size is concerned, being fat is the transgressive act. Letting your body express itself at its natural size, refusing to obsess over body size -- these are transgressive acts. Being a thin person who dates fat people, who fights for fat rights, that is transgressive. Expendng effort, time, money, or having surgery to become thin is not transgressive -- that is moving toward, and not away from, societal norms.

Moving from a place of oppression to a place of privilege is challenging. My childhood friend went from a fat teen to a thin adult and was disgusted and embittered by the difference in how she was treated. She was desired and respected

Post-Surgery = Post-Community?

in her thin body, ignored and despised in her fat body.

A formerly fat friend of mine confided to me she felt bad about fat people being forced to buy two airline seats, but felt physically uncomfortable sitting next to fat people on the plane. Another friend transitioned from F to M, bolstering his "M" by putting up nudie pics of thin women at work. A different FTM friend of mine liposuctioned his ass. Gender, fat, sexism -- they run together in complex ways. I want my friends to be happy and safe - fat, thin, trans, not-trans, whatever. Even though I understand that it's not fun to fly squished, that a nudie pic means bonding and even safety at work, that lipo gives more stereotypically masculine contours, these actions and attitudes have an impact beyond the personal. They uphold those artificial borders. They say that fat people, not too-small-airline-seats, are the problem; that "real men" have sexist attitudes; and that fat men can't be masculine.

I envision a world where our attitude, more than the snapshot of our current identity, gives us membership in community. I respect the work of activists before me and am so grateful that they shaped the current community. I hear people expressing loss, pain and judgment when butch dykes transition. I hear the loss, pain, and judgment when fat activists have weight loss surgery. The feelings may be similar, but the acts are not the same and the impact on community is different.

When a person has been part of the dyke community and they transition. I want them to continue to have access to the community that they helped build. I don't want to steal their work by virtue of my privilege as a non-trans person, and that is what I do when I accept their work and then exclude them. Purely selfishly, I want to continue to benefit from having an expanded community and broader gender options.

When a person has been part of the fat community and then becomes thin I still want them as a community member if they uphold fat ideals. Fat community comes in all shapes and sizes and there is plenty of room for allies. But, like a person who "converts" to heterosexuality, if the attitude is one of "triumph" it does not matter how the weight loss happened - surgery, dieting, Yoga, vegetarianism, exercise, accident, whatever -- that attitude is fatphobic. Formerly fat people must really educate themselves and understand that pursuing weight loss as a goal reinforces the very thing that oppresses fat people -- the idea that people can and should change their weight. (This is the backbone of decisions that take fat kids away from

I envision a world where our attitude, more than the snapshot of our current identity, gives us membership in community.

their parents, that force kids to undergo weight loss surgery, that allow employers to deny jobs, and that support social ostracism.) There may be times when the pursuit of weight loss is a reasonable choice. I try not to judge such a personal decision, but to acknowledge the consequences for the community.

I want a world where we have more gender choices than just two, where we oppose sexism, fatphobia, racism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and all the other isms no matter what our sex, gender, weight, race, age, mobility, and sexual orientation. I want a world where FTM fags are free to have a fat tushy and where one airplane ticket will be sufficient to fly that fat tushy to its destination.



Marilyn Wann

Lately, whenever some narrow-minded opinion about weight invades my little personal terrain of precious lived experience, my brief time in the quick, I want to yell, "My body is non-negotiable."

Non-negotiable embodiment makes all of those weight-hating words -- cruel jibes, greedy ads, pseudo-health advice, butt-bemoaning small talk -- sound like the wheedlings they really are. "Why don't you wanna conform? Just one teensy bit...pleez?" Fuck no. There's nothing in it for me. I know better. No matter how they wheedle, a carrot is a kind of stick.

For example: When I try on clothes, the authority in that little room is not some piece of fabric, my fat ass is the authority. If the pants don't fit, the problem is in the pants, not in my fat ass. Fat Ass Authority is a useful motto for all sorts of situations, fashion-based or otherwise.

Being non-negotiable: A woman in my neighborhood, who only knows me by sight, walked past me on her way to the corner store the other day. She said, "You're dieting!" I thought she said, "You're dying!" Uh, no. "Yes you are, you're dieting," she said louder, so I would share her glee. I said, "No, I'm not. I don't do that." She kept pushing her nasty little compliment on me as we walked. I said, "I don't diet. I would never do something so stupid." She tried again, "No, You look thinner. I can tell." I said, "No, I'm not!" If my neighbor wants to hit me with her carrot, I don't go along with that abuse.

Weight, Gender & Transitions

I don't care what you weigh. I don't care if you happen to lose weight. I don't care if you gain weight. I care if *you* care about your weight. Because I think your body is non-negotiable.

I was talking with Pat Lyons, RN, the other day, about death. (Pat co-authored the excellent book "Great Shape: the First Fitness Guide for Large Women" years ago and it's still in print.) She's been working in hospice care, recently. We got to talking about how Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grieving also describe the way people respond to being fat. (Given the surveys that find people would rather die than get fat, it's not much of a stretch.) Sure, there's some denial and anger, but as a culture, we're stuck in the bargaining stage. Being fat is a kind of code for all the bad, painful, scary things that can happen to a person, including death. The bargaining stage relies on the spurious belief that if we just drink this protein shake or follow this diet or avoid this carb or run this mile or do these Pilates crunches or eat enough broccoli or Chicken Caesar salads or lose this weight and make the number on the bathroom scale conform, that nothing bad will ever happen to us and we'll never die. If we get all those bargaining balls juggling at once, we'll be guaranteed heaps of money and sex and happiness, in perpetuity. That's some carrot stick. It leaves an ugly bruise.

Refusing to negotiate with terrorists: I attended a panel discussion at UC-Berkeley last year. The speakers were all people who believe, more or less, that fat is a Big Problem that needs a Solution. Kelly Brownell and Marion Nestle and Joan Dye Gussow spoke, moderated by Michael Pollan. Joan was the most sane about food and about fatness, of the bunch. The others were quite happy to advance their arguments for local/seasonal/organic food production by vilifying fat people and the epidemic of our existence (Because, of course, if no one ate fast food, there'd be no fat people -- yeah, right.) As a matter of social justice, I welcome the time when such arguments will be made on their won merits (which are certainly convincing enough, without mention of fat bogeymen.) The worst of the bunch in my opinion is Kelly Brownell, because he knows better, and he does it anyway. I confronted Brownell during the Q&A about how his medicalization of weight fuels the very real discrimination that fat people experience. His response was a paragon of doublespeak that claimed he and I were on the same side. I confronted him one-on-one after the talk and said, "Fat people are the target of a witch hunt right now. As long as I'm fat and you're piling logs on the fire, we're NOT on the same side." That's when he told me he imagined fat people would be grateful to have weight defined as a disease -- fat people aren't to be blamed, just pitied, for our condition. What condition is that, Kelly? Oppression! Every time I hear an O-word -- "overweight," "obese" -- I know fat oppression is involved. Every time I hear the F-word -- "fat" -- I know there's a chance to break free, to refuse a hate-based bargain.

I am heartbroken every time I learn that a fat person is negotiating with their precious body. I do understand it. These are dark times. People do what they think it takes to survive. I understand trying to pass. I have compassion. I also want nothing to do with it. There's a whole big world out there that will applaud and approve every time a fat person tries to negotiate. (Take my stomach in exchange for love? Take my health in exchange for a job? Take my ability to conceive children in exchange for a nice, new wardrobe? Take my joy in food, in exchange for nothing.) Sure, the game isn't always rigged, the house doesn't always win...otherwise, we wouldn't keep coming back for more "cure." There's a before-and-after photo; but what about after that?

Am I just being
a bitch, with-
holding my
approval from
my fat sisters
and brothers
who feel
themselves
negotiable
where I don't?

The latest "cures" are deadly. 1 in 50 die from weight-loss surgery in the first month, post-op. Chronic malnutrition and complications kill many more. Those who survive are all sales pitch about it (even when they're suffering horribly). I call it what it is: surgical starvation, stomach amputation, digestive bonsai, gut lobotomy, mechanically induced anorexo-bulimia...fat oppression. The gastric band? American Stomach Binding. The new gastric "pacemaker"? An internal cattle prod. Eww.

Proof they negotiate in bad faith: When my hero at the CDC, Katherine Flegal, did methodologically unassailable research on weight and mortality this spring and found that tens of thousands fewer people are dying above BMI 25 than below BMI 25 (the alleged magic cutoff beyond which people are "overweight"/"obese"), none of the "obesity" researchers -- who claim to care about fat people's health -- were happy about the good news. They were angry and argued energetically that it couldn't be true, that fat people really are dying in droves...otherwise, they won't get funded to research the "cure."

Am I just being a bitch, withholding my approval from my fat sisters and brothers who feel themselves negotiable where I don't? Maybe. I see it as self-defense. My body is non-negotiable, but I have to defend that certitude every day against the wheedling. I'm also working every day for a world where no one need negotiate with oppression. Hanging out with people who have weight-loss goals (negotiators) would just bum me out too much for me to be able to carry on, personally or politically. Obviously, what you do with your body is your choice, over which I have no control and in which I want no part. I won't get in your way. Please don't get in mine.



PARIAH

the bleeding-edge fat fashion column

by Amanda Piasecki

T*his is the first installment of Size Queen's fashion pages, named PARIAH after the author's one-installment fashion zine by the same name. The author is a fat clothing aficionado, who feels that when politics fail, fat people can often achieve solidarity around finding something cute to wear.*

XX

Madam X's Dirty Little Secret

An illustrious colleague of the author, Madam X, has a dirty little secret. Madam X compulsively steals from Lane Bryant. PARIAH does not endorse shoplifting or Lane Bryant, but feels that Madam X's story bears repeating.

M. X began her questionable hobby in the early 1990s in the heart of America. During this period M. X filled out a job application at the local Lane Bryant, housed within a dingy strip mall that had replaced the town's steel mill in the 1970s. She was beginning to develop some fat consciousness, and secretly hoped that she'd land the Lane Bryant job so that she'd be able to spend some time with her fat sisters. She saw Lane Bryant as the site for the gathering of an underground sorority, the sacred site of the shame, denial, and grudging acceptance ritual practiced by women size 14-28. She wanted to face her demons, to the tune of \$6.25 an hour. Besides, her alternative was working at Wal-Mart.

Lane Bryant had all the trappings of a place of worship. The pungent odor of perfumed polyester, the meditative soundtrack of demographically-targeted top-40 hits repeating once every hour, the disciples' confessions, penance, and self-flagellation all led M. X to believe that she was some sort of fat retail priestess. She began to think she had special powers, and since her manager began leaving M. X to close the store every night, our heroine began taking the occasional piece of plus-sized merchandise without paying for it. It was easy to rationalize: she was stealing from a corporate monolith with questionable moral standards itself. The first thing M. X stole was a pair of gold satin thong underwear, but she soon moved up to acetate floral-printed blouses, and then to bootcut jeans, two-piece suits, and leather jackets.

Her theft escalated. She began stealing for friends, before the merchandise even made it to the racks, fancying herself a fat lady Robin Hood. She still had no qualms about her avocation, but began to have more and more visions of In-

donesian children sewing size-28 Easter dresses as she hung them from the store's rickety, faux-chrome racks. One night M. X decided she better quit while she was ahead. The fat sisterhood of Lane Bryant wasn't all she hoped it would be. M. X realized she was compulsively stealing to stave off the seething self-hatred practiced by most of Lane Bryant's worshipers, and that she better get out of there before she became a felon.

M. X moved to a large coastal city and began working at a non-profit. She still had few clothing options, so would still occasionally make a trip out to the suburbs to Lane Bryant. Her non-profit salary was less than adequate, which led M. X's thievery to return, especially once Lane Bryant started making more fashionable clothing. She once made it out of a store with \$325 worth of merchandise underneath an ankle-length black dress, completely unhindered.

M. X still makes the occasional run on Lane Bryant, but her activity has slowed

PROS:

- 1) Stealing from a corporate giant like The Limited, Inc. (which Lane Bryant is a subsidiary of), has some redeeming value. You can feel like you're working against the man while you escape with cute clothing, if you don't think too hard about it. (Important note: M. X admonishes you to NEVER, EVER steal from small, locally-owned businesses or from individuals.)
- 2) Shoplifting leads you to question capitalist hierarchies in a more visceral way than we are usually able to as American wage slaves.
- 3) Shoplifting gives you an intense adrenaline rush, and can give you caché in many alternative cultures. Shoplifting makes you feel muy macho.
- 4) When you steal clothing, you can own it without paying for it.



Four of Max's favorite monster femmes: (L to R) Deva, Cherry, Pariah author Amanda, and Melissa.



considerably since she has aged, and since the store closest to her now employs an armed security guard. (Yes, it's true. Our fascist police state uses firearms to protect plus-sized merchandise!) More significantly, M. X also has come to understand the conflicting politics of shoplifting. She urges you to consider the following points before following in her footsteps (of your own volition, of course). 👑



CONS:

- 1) M. X is positive that the only reason she's been able to get away with shoplifting thousands of dollars in merchandise with only one mishap (She was caught stealing a \$3 makeup brush.) is because she is a white woman. In fact, M. X has been known to impersonate members of higher socio-economic classes than her own to even more abuse her white privilege in the service of successful and massive shoplifting. In this way, M. X has mimicked corporate CEOs who steal millions of dollars from those with less privilege. She no longer values cute clothes over being in solidarity with people of color.
- 2) Huge corporations budget in losses to theft, so the impact is truly minimal on the scale possible for one individual. Time and ingenuity is probably better spent on defeating global capitalism in other ways.
- 3) Compulsive stealing is a lot like drug abuse. You get high off it and then you keep needing more, whether you need the stuff you steal or not. M. X has come to realize that she is a person with many issues, shoplifting being the least of her problems, and has sought long-term therapeutic help.
- 4) Winona Ryder made shoplifting uncool and passé for truly talented thieves.

I decided to go to medical school because I was a science nerd and heard the call for abortion providers. During my junior year of college, I worked in a hellhole of an abortion clinic. It was somehow well respected by the academic and pro-choice communities. Everyone there (except for the beaten patient advocates) was a complete asshole. I decided I needed to become a doctor to save everyone else from doctors and somehow martyr myself for the good of humanity or some shit like that. (This is the kind of crap you have to deal with as an adult if you grow up in a suburb.) I hoped that the people who chose medicine were assholes, not that medicine made them assholes. So here I am now a third year medical student, doing clerkships in the hospital. This is the first time I am actually responsible for some kind of patient care; as little as it is - mostly writing notes in the patient's charts and having the doctors sign them because it is libel for me to sign them as my own work. I am doing the surgery clerkship first. I wanted to get it over with. It really sucks. I have to be at the hospital by 5am, wake up all my patients, do a physical exam, write in their chart, morning round at 6:30, surgery at 7:30, go to class, then afternoon rounds, and go home to collapse to a frozen dinner and 5 hours of sleep. This is how the brainwashing begins.

So I work with surgeons. They do surgery on everything they can fix, like, oh... "morbid obesity." What a nice term - you are fat, therefore you die. Unless, of course, the surgeons fix you. Thus, the gastric bypass. This is the surgery where the stomach is basically cut off leaving a pouch the size of a small bouncy-ball - smaller than a mouthful. It leaves all the nerves in tact so the stomach still feels full (early satiety.) It also keeps the person from ever eating a meal again in their life. It also helps that all the swallows they are able to take for the first two months are liquids only. (The liquid, of course, is being provided by pharmaceutical companies - since the person is going to need all their nutrients for the day in four swallows of food. This was only previously possible on the Jetson's.)

Most of the patients at the hospital where I work are poor women of color. It is the county hospital in a large Mid-western city. All the surgeons are older, rich, white men, trained by the army. Learned their trade in Korea! Nam! Now they have comeback to save the "US of A" from fat people! Excuse me, morbid obesity. The surgeon's motto "Heel with Steel" fits in so many ways.

When I first heard that my surgery team was doing a gastric bypass I almost threw up. I was disgusted. The other two students wanted to go and I told them I never wanted

to see one. Then more gastric bypasses were done and my turn came up.

The surgery started out with lots of fat jokes and racist remarks like "big mama." The closeted dyke resident said the big antibiotic pill Ms. W__ had to take were too big for her stomach, so she would have to sit on the pill and crush it under her big ass and mix it with applesauce. The complaints started with her urinary catheter - the smell of her crotch. The only thing I could think of was how much better it would smell after she had lost 100 pounds and had diarrhea all day. And then there were obligatory

remarks about getting smashed by her when we rolled her onto the table.

TO CUT IS TO HEAL

BY ELENA T

The gastric bypass is performed by stapling across the stomach (usually leaving it hanging there) leaving a small pouch into which the esophagus drains. Then past of the small intestines is cut and reattached to the stomach pouch. The rest of the stomach, which is just hanging out in the abdomen, is still connected to the first part of the small intestines into which the bile duct and pancreas drain. The end of that tract is reconnected into the small intestines where the food is draining.

The mortality rate for the procedure is 1%. Complications include wound infections, leak of stomach secretions, strictures at the new holes made, lung edema, and emotional disorders. Long term - outlet obstruction, depression, malnutrition, and dumping syndrome. Dumping syndrome is something that occurs after eating characterized by sweating, dizziness, weakness, flushing, headache and pain. This is a quote from the basic text, the essentials of surgery. "Bariatric surgery produces effective weight control ... Follow up in 502 of 519 patients revealed the maximal mean weight loss is achieved in two years with small increase over the ensuing nine years, reflecting those patients who had staple line breakdowns and a few other pouches with high calorie liquids or repeated snacks[but] the rate of rehabilitation of jobs or further schooling is high."

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Ms. W__ got her surgery. When she finally gets out of the critical care unit, she is all smiles. She asks, "When can I eat?" and then just laughs and laughs. She sits on the old extra large bed and takes occasional puffs from the smoking ventilator tube. Then Ms. W__ got a wound infection. Her wound is about two feet long, six inches deep, and gapes four to five inches wide. Oozing puss. We rinse it out and the water drips down into her crotch. None of the others want to dry her off. They think she is disgusting. A few days later we deem her ready to leave the hospital, with her infected wound. We arranged for a home nurse to come to her house and wash and pack the wound. Ms.

W__ has said she can not do it herself. We seem to have converted her into hating her body as much as we do. We tell the doctor who performed the surgery about the home nurse. He says: "No. She doesn't need a nurse to come to her house. Let me tell you something. The reason why they get this way is because they are lazy and manipulative. They need to take care of their own bodies now." He looks at me directly, "It is called tough love." I look down to keep from screaming and realize that I am adjusting my blood-stained blue polyester scrubs made for men to cover up my own luscious belly. I am living a nightmare. We go into Ms. W__'s room. Somehow, she did not hear the discussion, though it happened right outside her door. The doctor informs her that it is time for her to take care of herself. Dress her own wound — the one we inflicted on her. She starts crying. She has the ghetto drawl of a poor, black, Midwestern woman. There is no one home to help her except her two little girls. "I can't even look at this thing," glancing at her abdomen, "How am I supposed to do this?" The doctor replies, "No. It is time for you to do this yourself." "O.K., doctor," Ms. W__ says, "You know best." Everyone's thoughts are confirmed. She is manipulative and lazy. Though love is the best approach to these people, they really come around. There is absolutely no thought to why Ms. W__ hates herself so much (let alone why we hate her so much.) She is on her way to being cured and

becoming a better person.

There are two other people in intensive care now who have had gastric bypasses. They have both had complications. One is dying. She is 46 years old and has had many horrible encounters with medicine. She has permanent disabilities from some of the inert medications she was given years ago for diarrhea. She had bacterial sepsis twice. She also weighs 350 pounds. Gastric bypass is one of the few surgeries she has not had. She is now doped up on morphine, versed, ativan and whatever else to sedate her and keep her from feeling intense pain. She holds a stuffed animal when she can remember to ask or the nurses decide to give it to her. Her hands are tied to the bed because she can't remember where she is and pulls at her many drains and tubes. No one comes to visit her.

I said out loud in front of another medical student, "I really don't want her to die." My colleague replied, "I know, I don't really want her to die either, but bariatric surgery makes such an impact on their lives, and morbid obesity has a mortality rate of four to five percent a year. The literature really supports it." All I could respond with was, "I did not think she was going to die this year." The brainwashing has begun.



Melissa Moffitt, MD at the DC March for Women's Lives. Photo by Max Airborne

It Takes a Real Butch to Admit What She Really Wants

Maxbear Finkelstein

I left work that day feeling dirt tired from carrying twenty foot long 2x10's six at a time about a hundred times that day. There was a splinter in the palm of my hand and when I took off my work boots my body felt like I could take off and fly.

I kept my work clothes on at the end of the day, that way I got a seat on the subway or at the very least I got a little more standing room 'cause no wanted to stand by me. I stank and I was dirty. But I wore it proudly, ya know? This was the dirt of an honest day's work as opposed to the clean Carharts of posers who never swung a hammer or fit a pipe or ran a line. Anyway, stinky I got a seat, clean I had to stand. So I stayed stinky, looking forward to the shower at home.

I trudged up the hill to our apartment, which stood over a store that sold sheets and towels. We lived on an avenue in Brooklyn that specialized in cheap shopping, five blocks from Smith and Ninth station on the F train. I was tired. I was hungry. I yearned for a bath and I was damn grumpy. But I got off on construction work. I liked working with my hands and I liked using my body until the muscles rippled. Don't get me wrong, I am a fat bear, softness over the hard of my muscles. My body is a reflection of my ancestors, short, big bellied, not much of an ass. My Mexican birth mother's body was just the same when I found her in Texas. But then again so was my adoptive Orthodox Jewish grandmother's. I have no idea about my birth father's Irish ass (to avoid the cliché about beer bellies). When I find him I'll know.

But if you have ever really felt a fat body, known the luxury of laying on suppleness, then you also know just how many muscles it takes to carry a big belly around. That combined with swinging a hammer all day long and climbing up and down scaffolding made me strapping. Even the place underneath my armpits was hard. The men got on my last nerve persistently with all their talk about beating women and all their macho strutting. I hung out with the old guys who had to start using their heads, not their brawn, so they acted less absurdly. It wasn't a bad way to make a living and I figured I was better off with the up front hatred of the working class than the smiling soul killing and back stabbing of the owning class. At least I knew where I stood, and I didn't stand too close to the edge of a deck 12 flights above the ground as a result.

Finally home, after buying some plantinos at the local Cuban Chinese restaurant with the cute woman behind the counter who always flirted with me, appreciating my dirt as a sign that I took care of business.

I climbed the three flights wondering why I never found an apartment on the ground floor, opened the three locks, wondering why I didn't live in some small town where I could leave the door unlocked, and finally threw my green hard hat on the couch and stripped off my flannel work shirt. I left all these articles of clothing wherever I stripped them off. I bent to untie my red high top converse sneakers in anticipation of the shower that was soon to come and felt a hand on my ass. I stood up and leaned into her body.

"You've come home early" I commented. She kept her hand on my butt and said in a tenor smooth voice that sent chills down my spine,

"I wanted to fuck you before you fell asleep tonight."

These days after a long day I sometimes fell asleep at 7, and

since she got off at 6 and took an hour to commute home, that meant we didn't see each other much during the week.

"Well I am delighted you thought of me," I said and turned to look at her. She had on her work clothes too - a charcoal grey suit with a starched white shirt and a handpainted silk tie that I painted myself for her last birthday. Her hair was cropped short and her brown eyes danced with mischief and lust.

"Go take a shower," she said. "I'll get ready out here."

I was shaking with fatigue, but who could turn down such an offer from such a fetching butch?

I went to the bathroom and off came the jeans and boxers, got into the shower and scrubbed three layers of grim off me. I washed my own spiked hair. I stepped from the tub and took out my pocketknife and flicked open the blade to take the splinter out of my hand.

She had taken her jacket off and had her shirtsleeves rolled up in the steam.

"What are you doing?" she snatched the knife away.

"Taking out a hunk of wood. See, if I leave it in, it will get infected," going for stating the obvious because I knew what was coming.

"You'll get lock jaw and an infection using a blade that dirty."

I sighed. She was a public health nurse. I wouldn't win this battle. Like most people in relationship I had learned when to shut up and let the other person win. So, despite the fact that I trusted my own hands a lot more than hers I let her take out the splinter with a clean scalpel.

"You know I just had a tetanus shot a month ago when the 16 penny nail went up through my shoe and into my foot," I murmured. She just raised an eyebrow.

Her suspenders held her pleated pants up over her big belly and crossed her broad shoulders in back. She sat on the toilet lid and put her feet up on the side of the tub and watched as I put the shaving brush to my face.

"What's this?" she said, touching my hip.

"A black and blue mark."

"From what?" she inquired.

I shrugged, "Don't know. I get banged up a lot at the site."

She smiled and said, "So it's not my handiwork?"

I ignored her as I took the razor to my face. In the morning I was too tired to shave so I did it at night. I figured the more I shaved the thicker my peach fuzz beard would grow in. She picked up the shaving brush and was running it up and down my spine. I jerked away pretending to be annoyed.

"Not when I have a razor in my hand."

"Then finish up."

I wiped my face with a towel and reached for the robe. She grabbed my wrist and said, "I want you naked."

I looked at her, an eyebrow raised "Yeah, right. What makes you think I'm gonna let you fuck me or boss me around?"

"Because after you've finished being so butch in the world using those strong muscles and no-shit attitude you come home to me and want to give in. You're hard on the outside like a walnut but inside there is soft sweet meat, *eso es lo que quiero*."

She paused, "I'm gonna crack your shell a little tonight."

I didn't feel like giving in easily today. Actually, it is more ac-

curate to say that after a long day at work where I have to act like a stone bulldagger from the south Bronx where I grew up, I couldn't get to my gentle self. Not without her help. More and more I knew I was more a faggot boy than a strutting stone butch, but ingrained survival tactics don't just turn off in the bedroom. She'd have to take me, she knew how. I trusted her to do it. She liked the challenge. I was her bad boi street butch. Rough trade.

I walked into our living room and she touched my shoulder to turn me to her. I fell into her embrace and kissed her back passionately, then straightened up and pushed her against a wall. We did the dance of who was gonna be on top, knowing that it was a place I didn't really want. She reached for my right nipple and took it between her fingers and began to squeeze. This made my cunt get hard with desire and soon I wouldn't want to say no. I pushed her from me and flipped her onto the ground.

I straddled her big body on the floor. My legs barely touched the ground over the girth. Is there anything sexier than a bear of a woman transgressive enough to be a guy? I thought of the woman behind the counter of the restaurant, high femme all the way - and I am not unappreciative of her, a gender bender herself, she flirted with a transgendered bear after all. She made her own rules. Damn sexy, but not as sexy as who I had underneath me. Yup I am a faggot, I thought.

But I came back to our home, back to the rag rug I knotted myself, not only a faggot but an ever crafty Martha Stewart butch faggot, no less.

I smiled defiantly in compensation to this realization.

"Getting your shirt wrinkled, darling?" I sneered.

I laughed and held her arms out wide. I was stronger than her. Although any nurse can tell you about lifting patients like I can tell you about lifting sheets of plywood.

She was calm. I could see the spark in her eye and hear the edge in her voice.

"Off!" she ordered.

"Oh yeah? Make me." I countered.

"Yeah and you know why Jay? Because you want my cock up your ass so bad that you can taste it. Now before I was just gonna take you but now I see you need to be taken down a peg or two. So get up before you regret it," she said as though she were in control.

I looked at her. It was true I wanted her bad. I just had a hard time admitting it to myself and switching from being a strutting butch in the world to being a bottom in bed. I was afraid that made me femme. While I loved femmes I feared the feminine in myself, all those years of being forced to be a girl, an Orthodox Jewish girl no less, had left me split in two inside. So, like a whole lot of men in the world, I embraced machismo as a way of distancing myself from the feminine. I overcompensated and I knew it but I was afraid, you see, of showing vulnerability.

While I pondered how to give in while saving face she made her move and we wrestled around.

I was strong but she was no weakling and outweighed me by at least 75 lbs and had taken Judo. In the end I let her win, but not by much.

She sat on me this time. I used my core muscles and lats to support her.

"You know what is great? I can sit on you and not be afraid of hurting you because you are so strong. How about trusting me enough to lean on me and let me see your desire? How about deciding to give your fragility over to me for just a while and let me hold you while you do it? I love your strength but I also love your

tender places. Being a bottom isn't about weakness. Don't you know that by now? It's about giving and receiving. By the end of tonight you'll be opening up your core to me and I'll love that such a strong woman gives herself up to me. I'll love feeling your fine strong body and I'll love your softness too."

She got up. I felt quiet inside. Some scenes begin with a slap, ours often began with words and the look of protective fierceness I saw in her eyes.

Smiling she said, "But for now. I want to take you down a peg or two. Payback for giving me a hard time."

She pushed me over the couch and said, "Stay there," as she went and got the strap she uses to punish me. She had me drill the hole for the hook the strap always hung on in our house, always a symbol of her power, always a symbol of my submission. I oiled it to keep it supple.

I stayed put while she came behind me and began to slap my ass with the strap. I gritted my teeth against yelling and she responded by hitting me harder.

"Don't butch it out. I want to hear you yell," she ordered and began a slow and steady spanking.

The strap thudded against my ass. Damn I needed this. Damn, I loved the burn, I loved that she wanted me this way, over a couch, with my bare ass in the air, lifting myself to her to be spanked red and raw.

But I couldn't show her or anyone that kind of vulnerability without a fight. Secret shame, deep in my bones, made me act tough. If I showed that frailty...what was I afraid of? Being called a girl. If I cried when my ass burned I heard the old taunts of a school yard, "You nothing but a girl," the taunts of Yiddish School and words from the Torah, "Women shall not wear the garments of men," of being told I couldn't be a Rabbi, not because I was the bastard child of a Mexican and Irish Catholic, but because I was a woman. You can change your birth blood by

ritual immersion in Judaism but you couldn't change the fact that a woman couldn't be a Rabbi...the Orthodox still don't accept it.

How many boys did I hurl myself at, beating the shit out of them when they said that, even though I was nearly the strongest, nearly the best at punch ball and hand ball? How many times did I study the Torah in secret under my grandfather Tallis, pretending I was Joshua leading the People in the desert? How many tears did I swallow down when my father beat me, "Cry like a girl and I'll beat you worse!" with scorn for any humanness displayed.

I swallowed down his contempt for weakness shown. I swallowed the lie that vulnerability shown meant that you were weak. I acted tough rather than risk the chance of showing how scared I sometimes was. But that didn't make me strong. No that just made me afraid of showing that I was afraid, a kind of weakness that we teach our men.

I was determined to not yell while she beat me, secretly triumphant that I could take such a beating when she pulled me up by my hair and sat down on an armchair forcing me over her knee. More intimate, this position makes me feel most vulnerable and her hand always hurts more than a strap.

"No Ric, not over your lap..." I said.

"Oh yes, my boi, for a spanking, nice and long and hard. Until you give in... and then just a little more."

I squirmed as she proceeded to spank my cheeks with a leather-glove-clad hand. It hurt like hell and I was getting hornier by the second. My cunt was dripping. My cock was getting hard. I moaned.

"That's it. Let me hear it" she hit harder, in the same place over again without rhythm to surprise me. I began to kick against the pain but she held me. Finally, I screamed in anger more than pain.

"Fuck that hurts!" I yelled.

**I loved that
she wanted me
this way, over
a couch, with
my bare ass in
the air, lifting
myself
to her to be
spanked red
and raw.**

"Yes it does. You'll feel this all week. Your ass will be as black and blue as your hip," she said as she hit me again.

"Fuck you."

"Do you think it's a good idea to piss off your top when you're bare assed over my knee?"

She laid into me, "Not smart Jay, not smart."

I was getting the beating of my young life. I held out a long time, my body rigid against the pain, wondering why I ever thought that I liked being spanked. Thinking I was an asshole for ever letting someone do this to me. Finally breathing into the ache and just when I thought I couldn't take it a second more, my body relaxed a little. She felt the change. Nurses are good at observing the seemingly imperceptible.

"OW!!!" I yelled, my voice straining. "Please stop!"

She continued. My yells turned to screams, which turned to tears.

I didn't think that I could stand much more. I was almost sobbing and she urged, "Do it. You can do it."

I gritted my teeth and said "No" when her hand came down on my swollen cheeks and she growled.

"Damn, you are stubborn and I wouldn't have you any other way." I was crying then.

"All day long you work along side men doing hard work. You even spit furthest, *verdam!* But here with me you like to let go and let me be in charge. You like to let me inside of you and I love fucking your tight asshole. I love having you over my lap with your ass getting red. Somehow you think that makes you weak." She hit me especially hard

"Now!" she ordered. "Give in now, Jay. I'm getting bored and if you keep it up I won't fuck you. Then I'll be pissed."

Again she slaps me, moving me along closer and closer to my edge.

"Tell me who you are and what you want!"

I wanted to give in, my body craved her. I said quietly,

"I want you inside of me."

"Close but not quite," she said, rubbing my hot cheeks. "Come on, now, I want to get to it."

Her softness pushed me over an edge "I am your bottom, please let me give myself to you," I whispered and she sighed. "Good boi, Jay. Good boi. It takes a real butch to admit what they really want."

She released me and I went to my knees. She stood up and unzipped her pants, pulling out her dildo.

"Wet it," she ordered. "Show me how you love it."

I wrapped my mouth around the dildo and sucked with enthusiasm. She began to thrust a bit grabbing my head for balance. I grabbed at her ass and pulled her toward me and moaned in delight.

"Get up," she said, and I stopped sucking reluctantly.

She pulled me to her and kissed me, biting at my neck. We stayed in the embrace for a few minutes when she growled, "Turn around and grab your ankles."

I did and she commented "What a beautiful butt -- flat but so soundly spanked. She played with the hairs on my ass, "Hairy ass bear."

She took off the leather gloves and replaced them with a latex glove. She spread my cheeks. I widened my stance to cooperate and expose my hole to her.

"There's a boi," she said as she entered my hole with a greased finger.

"Such a tight hole even with all the fucking we do," she mused.

I was silent, all the voices in my head that taunted me were silent. I was in the moment. Some people do walking meditation to get to this place. Some chant or breathe, do yoga or fast. I get my ass whooped. Finally I am mindful. No past, no future -- it's only the moment with her finger greasing my ass. I breathe deeply to open my muscles to her touch. I breathe that sigh I have held

so long, all day, every damn day. I let my muscles go lax, I stop clenching against a world that feels assaultive to my kind. Halleluiah, with her hand in my ass, I come to know some enlightenment. Halleluiah, with a good spanking, she is my priest and guru, taking me to a place of peace. I am not a warrior over her lap. I am not a fighter when she spreads me wide. But I am no weakling either. It is a gentler strength that floods me now.

I love feeling her hand inside of me. She rubs the thin wall that separates my cunt from my rectum and touches my cervix through it. I moan in delight, relaxing and breathing. The whole long day fades.

"I'm gonna spread you wide," she promises, and takes her hand out of me.

She leads me to our bed and tells me to kneel; kicking my legs apart, I lift my ass to her. She places her cock at my hole and takes hold of my hips.

"Push back," she orders.

And I do, feeling the head pierce me, and slowly I inch back onto her long and generous cock. Sssssss. I slide along its length with her guiding me with slight pressure on the hips. I am full --too full, and think I can go no further. She has a long cock because she says I have an extra long asshole. She's about half way in me and is waiting for me to open further.

"Breathe and open for me, boi," she says as she leans over and plays with my nipples, easing the dildo in.

"There's a boi" she says. I feel like I have to take the mother of all shits and I grunt when she finally reaches home. She pauses, letting me get used to her inside me

"It's not easy to take me in. It's not weak; it takes determination. You have to be strong to take the fuck I'm gonna give you. Giving in, opening is some of the demanding, arduous and toughest stuff in the world to do. Its not weak, its an act of audacity and chutzpah, especially in this world." My ass opens up and readies for her. When she begins to thrust I start to moan. So good, I think. So good.

I hear her panting. Her fat belly slaps my fat ass with each thrust. I start to rock with her and start to moan with each long plunge. I am grunting with pleasure, growling with each thrust. She changes rhythm and begins short fast thrusts. And drives in deep and fucks me hard, I mean damn hard. She pulls out only to enter into me again, just so I feel her owning my asshole. She pushes in hard and long. I begin to thrust back to meet her assault but she pushes at my shoulders to hold me still, she is in control of me, my ass, her cock. She is riding me. I start to shout out, unintelligible sounds, I have no words. She is fucking me for all she is worth. She is intent on taking me, on owning my butthole, and at a certain point she starts to move her hips sharp and fast. I know she is close to coming then. She holds still for a moment, rising up in tension. I hold very still.

She unclips her cock and leaves it in me. She is spanking me again. Hitting the dildo again and again and she reaches for my clit and rubs it. My ass burns, my asshole is full and hurting just a little and I am building to a deep orgasm.

She knows it. I begin to scream and she hits me harder, leaning on the cock, and rubbing my clit with the deftness her many years of dykedom have taught her. I fly over the edge of my own walls, with her hand on my cunt and her cock in my ass. I collapse and we rest for a few moments.

"I'm not done yet," she says. She turns me over with the cock still in me. And places my legs on her shoulders She pulls her cock from me and opens my asshole with her hand. She puts two fingers in, but quickly puts in another.

"Open," is all she says.

I breathe in and she puts another finger in, I am already stretched so wide. With four fingers in, she is watching my face.

"Look at me."

I stare into her eyes.

Open, because I say so, open because you are mine, this ass is mine, because you were born to love the feel of another queer's hand in your ass ... open.

Her thumb is ready to be inside me. Her eyes are dark with desire and she wants to own me, to hurt me.

Her thumb goes inside me as I push out for her. She is in, her hand balls into a fist.

"I love you Ric."

She responds by pushing her arm up inside me, watching me intently as I struggle to find a way to fit her forearm inside me. It hurts more than a little. She knows, she wants it to. She wants to have me feel her stretch me wide, to struggle with making space for her. She wants to possess me.

"Open," she says. She rolls her arm, first to the right, then the left. And then pushes forward hard a few times, I grunt out each time. She begins to move faster

"Whose ass is this, Jay?"

"Yours, its yours." I say with quick determination and sincerity as though this might stay the movement of her arm, give me time to adjust. It accomplishes no such thing.

"I am fucking the shit out of you. And I will fuck the shit out of you any time I damn well please. I want you to remember that. I want you to remember how much you are sweating this moment, because I am fucking you this hard. Will you?" she says, and thrusts inside me viciously a few times. "Will you?" she says again. She watches my eyes grow wide when my sphincter tightens and sees me grow relaxed when I breathe into the fuck

Her pounding is taking my breath away. I gulp for air "Yes, I'll remember."

Again, thrusts. "Will you?"

Yes, yes I'll remember. She sodomizes me to the brink of coming once again. But she stops short of my going over the edge.

"This edge is the price you pay for being a smart ass. If you want off that edge, remember how to be in service." When she pulls out of me she does it achingly slowly. My cunt is left hard and wanting. She nods in satisfaction.

"What a sweet asshole you have" she whispers as she goes to bite my nipples. I never let anyone touch my breasts but her. I hold her head to me in a tender embrace as I gasp. I rub the naps on her head loving the lambswool touch of her head. I ease her pants off her and caress her ass. We fall asleep this way.

The next day I awake at five and go to shower. When I get out she is standing in the living room.

"Did you shit yet?" she asks.

"Good morning to you, too," I reply sarcastically.

"I want an answer," she says in a top voice.

"Yes, sir," I say meekly.

"Take down your pants."

"I have to go to work," I say, more in a whimper than a challenge.

"Then do it quickly and quit mouthing off."

I let down my pants, take down my boxers and present my ass to her. My ass has welts on them and she fingers them. She wants to spank me again but she holds back. I can tell.

"Grab your ankles," she orders and attaches a belt around my waist with straps hanging from it. She greases me again.

"Are you stretched?" she inquires, just to hear me say it.

"Yes sir, good and stretched."

"This doesn't come out till tonight" she says, and she shoves a medium sized butt plug in me and attaches it to the straps. "If it does I have a larger one you'll keep in tomorrow." I grunt when she pushes it home.

"Get up," she says. I pull up my mustard colored Carhartt carpenter's pants, feeling it in me.

She kisses me and says, "All day long while your being too butch, remember that I know you like getting fucked. Maybe next time I come home early I won't have to fight so hard to get you in the right mood. Just remember those boys at work are scared shit. They want to be able to cry, but they are afraid, so afraid of some words, like faggot. They are afraid of the word faggot like you are afraid of the word femme. Imagine though, being free enough in the world to risk looking vulnerable and soft, and strong enough inside yourself to know that doesn't make you frail."

I don't know what to say. I want to say it is hard enough to get by around those guys without a constant reminder of my softest self. I want to tell her how my ass will hurt. I want to ask "what if I need to shit?" I want to say go to hell. Instead, I remember the hardness of my cunt left wanting. I remember the moments of peace I had, so I go to my knees and kiss her inner thighs, my tongue searching for her asshole and I spread her cheeks, rim her out, my hand finding her clit as she tells me to use my tongue to fuck her asshole. I poke my tongue inside her, sucking, licking. Her hand rides my hand. I stay on my knees, with a butt plug in my ass, licking my master's asshole until she comes. When she is done she pushes me down on my ass.

"Good boi," she says as she walks away and shuts the bedroom door. I stare at it and get to my feet trying to learn to stand, let alone walk with this plug in my ass. It does the job of reminding me I am hers and I find just enough peace in that to be brave enough to walk out the door with it in me.

I pick up my green hard hat and thermos full of tea. I turn on the coffee maker and leave. I have to jog to the train to make it to work on time, the butt plug shifting in me as I run.

Each time I lifted lumber that day the plug moved again. Each time I sat down my ass ached from the spanking she had given me and I wondered each time a guy acted too butch if he wanted it up the ass too. I felt bad for them that they couldn't ask for it. I smiled as I thought of Ric. She knew my shit. She knew just where I needed pushing and just how far to push and then pushed me just a little further. Because of her I was learning about a new kind of strength. I laughed when I thought of how we fell for each other, two butches who could love each other for all we were. I was damn in love with that woman who, because she wasn't afraid of being a girl, was more of a man than my adolescent boi self was gonna be any time soon. But she was showing me the way with her cock and a fist and good forearm and a supple leather strap.

I got another splinter when I picked up a sheet of plywood. This time I took it out before I got home.



Jukie & Papi D



photos by
Joe Samson











XO



Peach Meat

By Zhaddi

5:00 p.m. I squint at the glowing numbers through the dusty sunbeam stabbing across the face of my clock. My stomach knots deliciously. It's finally time to go. I check myself in the lipstick-streaked mirror before grabbing my wallet and hastily stuffing it into the empty canvas bag slung under my arm. I skip out the door, anticipation sending little beads of sweat leap-frogging across my scalp as I head towards the Farmer's Market.

The street is transformed into a kaleidoscope of color, taste, and smell: rich, harlot-red tomatoes as fat and tempting as breasts; mountains of strawberries like sugary kisses; bundles of buttery basil leaves quivering like wild, green fairy wings. Vendors cry out their specials and pass out tiny slivers of glistening fruit as potential buyers busily fondle and sniff their wares. I'm engrossed, selecting exotic-sounding fruits as I anxiously hunt for the treasure that has hooked me to this market week after week.

"White peaches! Two dollars a pound!"

My heart thunders as her husky, melodic cry pulls me anxiously forward, a siren song luring me to her side. The Goddess Demeter herself stands in a vibrant tent, flanked by an army of peaches, nectarines, and plums, some smooth as glass and others nothing but fuzz, but all undisputedly hers. I watch, stomach knotting, as she hands out morsels on rainbow toothpicks. She glances at me and smiles, the stud under her bottom lip glinting like the bite of peach she offers me. I think I smile in return, but have no chance to speak before a customer demands her attention. As I savor the explosion of flavor spreading over my tongue, I shyly check her out again.

Demeter's body is round and powerful, her lush hips as wide as her broad shoulders. I can see her arm muscles ripple as she bags fruit, strength earned from lifting countless crates. Her large, ripe breasts rest comfortably on the smooth bulge of her meaty belly, showcased beautifully by the black tank top that clings to her sweaty, luscious body. Strength and sensuality are painted in mocha freckles across her skin, right over the bridge of her nose and forming little constellations around her full lips. I watch the way the seemingly hundred black- and violet-dyed braids dance over her plump neck, as the crush hits me

fast and furious all over again.

I want to bury my face in the salt-seasoned crevasses, nuzzle at the tender skin, lap her peach-and-earth taste until my tongue is raw. Instead, I slowly select some ruby plums and her signature white peaches. Waves of nervous lust rush through me, turning my body as warm as the sun-baked fruit she packs for me. With a peach-sweet smile, she sends me on my way with a full bag, an empty wallet, and a twitchy cunt.

5:56 p.m. Home again with precious cargo underarm, mentally kicking myself for my cowardice.

"All you have to do is say 'hello,'" my reason coaches as I carefully wash and arrange the fruit in a glass bowl. With a sigh, I carry my peaches and plums up to my empty bedroom.

Despite the hour, it's still uncomfortably hot in the room, and I strip off my carefully selected outfit before plopping down onto the unmade bed. Stretching out on the sheets, I randomly select a fat, rosy peach and bask in the summer heat in my crimson demi-bra and black cotton panties. I usually don't wear my best bra unless I'm on a particularly promising date, and it's soft padded cups are beginning to feel like an underwire prison in the unwavering heat. What was I thinking when I put it on?

"You were thinking maybe you'd be brave enough to ask her out. Maybe actually give her the chance to see this bra. To take it off you slowly as she licked your hardening nipples through the fabric. . ."

I distractedly sink my teeth into the virgin peach clutched in my hand. I realize too late just how hard I must have been grasping it as I was lost in my remorseful fantasy as juice squirts all over my face and onto my bra. With a sigh, I unclasp the bra one-handed, arching my back to aid the release of the sticky garment. My breasts are greeted by a gust of hot breeze swirling in from the window, and my nipples contract at the welcomed breath of freedom. Patches of peach juice still collect in sloppy puddles on my flesh, dribbling thickly down the curves of my body. I run my fingers up the swell of my fleshy breast in an at-

tempt to collect the juice, and only succeed in smearing it into a larger puddle that oozes onto my areola, tickling my pert, cinnamon-colored nipple with its sugary slime. I begin to rub in the fluid, to thin it out even more to dry, but my fruit-lubed fingers absently begin questing over the familiar topography of the rapidly puckering surface. Pleasure washes in lazy waves over my body, heightening the growing throb in my clit. Struck by inspiration, I bring the bitten peach down over my nipple, gasping as the cool, slick meat latches itself onto my breast as if it were a hungry, soft mouth. . .

It is Demeter's mouth sucking at my tit; no small wonder it feels like a cracked peach. I open my eyes and look down upon her dark tangle of hair, her braids snaking across my shoulders, hiding the hand carefully twisting and stroking my other nipple. I begin to moan, feeling her heavy heat envelop me. She looks up at me with that summer-hot smile, and I begin to melt into her.

I press the dribbling peach to my other nipple, slick as kissed lips as my hand traces over my body, and my cunt begins to release its own warm juice from my panty-clasped slit. The peach seems to be drying out a bit, and I quickly bring it up to my mouth for another bite.

I kiss Demeter fully, our tongues churning, and I hungrily lick the cold metal button of her labret piercing. I grab her chunky breasts in both my hands, squeezing them as if testing ripe cantaloupes. I burrow my face into the warm junction between them, inhaling her earth-grown scent as I gently pinch her nipples and feel her squirm delightfully besides me. I begin sucking at those luscious mounds, devouring great greedy mouthfuls of writhing, sighing melon-sugar flesh. Her excitement is clinging in milky droplets to the corn silk tangle of her bush, as she rubs the moist down against my smooth thigh. I'm sucking on a sinewy bite of that succulent peach as I roll my panties off my hips and onto the floor. I flip over onto all fours on the bed, wrestle one hand under my body in full reach of my sex. I tenderly arrange the much-loved peach, already a bit drained but still pulpy warm, into a deep fold of my fluffy pillow. I begin to feast again, not really eating, but lapping and suckling at the slightly sour tissue at the red heart, and my hand slowly strokes the outer mound of my fat pussy.

I kneel between Demeter's legs, her tough muscles undulate through their cloak of soft fat as I bite at the sensitive skin. Her belly ripples luxuriously as she responds to my kisses and nips, and I lap at the outer swell of her glossy cunt, staying maddeningly far away from her volcanic slit. I relish the sounds of this Goddess' cries as she bucks her hips in divine frustration.

It's too much to hear her throaty whimpers and bitten-back growls, to feel her python thighs grasping my busy face as my pussy pumps to its own supernatural heartbeat. I slide my tongue delicately down the outside of her magnetic slot, tasting the nectar of the soil itself. Demeter moans

again as the tip of my tongue is enveloped in her molten velvet, dancing in the heavenly region where sturdy skin melts into mango-soft tissue.

I spread her legs wider to more fully relish her pussy, which flows freely as my tongue delves into her, and she presses my face deeper into her sweet, gossamer nest. She's wet and burning, engorged with pleasure as I taste her deeply. Her inner cunt is the same garnet and gold color as the core meat of her peaches, and with each thrusting cry she fills my mouth with the juice of fruit, loam, and sunshine. My entire body has dissolved into gelatinous tremors, my imagination on fire, and I am hit with an inspiration so wicked I almost cum just thinking about it.

I scramble for the bowl on the floor, searching, finally rewarded as my hand closes around a warm, squishy plum. I hastily tear a tart hunk out of its unmarred surface, and pass it to the jerking fingers between my legs. As the juicy, exposed innards of the plum rubs across my bursting clit, I throw myself into the fantasy, praying to finish before I liquefy completely.

Demeter is moving, twisting her body like an oiled serpent until she has positioned herself underneath me. Locked in this endless circle, she clamps onto my gaping cunt, her tongue as thick and vigorous as the rest of her body as she feverishly drinks me in. When her tongue snakes up for a taste of my throbbing nub, it's too much for me to bear. A muffled cry breaks from my busy lips as my hips buck furiously. Lightning crashes through me, fierce and wild as a summer storm.

It only takes one last suck on her juicy kernel before she joins me, the burning deluge of her release flowing across my tongue. She shudders and screams wordlessly underneath me, clawing at my ass as I milk her orgasm out of her.

With a final lap of my tongue, which turns her descending moan into a surprised little cry, we collapse in a sloppy heap, the last lingering wave of pleasure running like rainwater off our spines.

6:44 p.m. The Farmer's Market will still be open for another sixteen minutes.

Maybe it was the crazy-good orgasm that is giving me confidence, or maybe it just robbed me of the ability to think clearly. But for whatever reason, I'm quickly dressing again in my strewn clothing, the aroma of peaches mingled with my musk increasing my conviction.

I check myself in the lipstick-streaked mirror as I leave, leaving my canvas bag at home.

God, I love peaches.



You Can't Say That!

This is an old story, but it's one that I've never really told in full until now. This was partly because I was afraid of the repercussions if I went public, but it was also to do with the fact that I was so outraged by the way I was treated that it was impossible for me to set down the story coherently without screaming FUCK YOU FUCKING BITCHES! at my computer screen as I typed.

The background goes like this: In 1994 I finished doing my MA in which I wrote about the nascent fat rights movement. I was also doing odd bits of volunteer work around fat, trying to get a group off the ground, and I had a minor profile for myself as someone who could talk publicly about this stuff. A British feminist publisher approached me and asked if I'd like to submit a proposal because they were interested in producing a book about fat politics. I did, and they gave me the contract in 1996.

I spent a year writing 'Fat and Proud,' and then it took another year to edit and to finally appear in shops and libraries. The reason that it took so long to get out was because the publisher and I were fighting with each other. The reason we were fighting is because, gentle reader, my publishers censored me.

I'm not talking about the editing that happens when you submit a piece of work for publication, I have no strong feelings about that, indeed I'm only too happy to get feedback which makes the language and arguments tighter. I also understand that in this day and age you sometimes have to be diplomatic in the way that you express things because people are litigious, and that publishers and editors have their own business interests which they will want to protect. You have to shut your trap and keep people sweet sometimes. But censorship is something different. What I'm talking about is the use of threats to remove language and ideas with which the publisher does not agree because of their ideological beliefs. Two editors and the then two publishing directors threatened me with non-publication unless I removed specific words and passages.

I know this is probably obvious but I'm going to say it anyway. I think censorship is a bad idea because:

- It creates a stagnant culture of disinformation whose only purpose is to support an out of date and brittle ideology.
- Everyone should be able to make up their own minds, we should be able to access all the information possible in order to do so, and it is patronising to deliberately hide material to control a dangerous opinion or protect a population.
- You can't remove ideas; you censor one reference which affects another, which has to be rewritten and so on, like a stack of dominoes falling.
- Social change for the better entails challenging set beliefs, not supporting them.
- Censors never look good, history always exposes them as the backwards-thinking power-hungry, coward-slash-hypocrites they are.

Why should you care about censorship? If you're interested in making the world a better place - whether that's because you're a fat dyke, or a queer of another stripe, or a member of a minority group, or just someone who wants to be understood - you're going to have to develop new ways of thinking and being. Some people are afraid of that

kind of change, they don't want to grow and challenge their own prejudices and they can be quite nasty about it. Sometimes it's the people you least expected who are the most obstructive. Bear this in mind, eh?

I guess you want to know what my publisher found impossible to print. Must have been pretty racy. Hmm, well, not really.

They wanted me to use the word 'lesbian' instead of 'queer' because "some women find the notion of queer unhelpful." My publisher subscribed to the argument that queer is anti-lesbian because it is a gay male construct that glorifies anti-feminist sex. Even though I have a non-straightforward sexuality and identify primarily as a queer they insisted I call myself 'bisexual' in my own book. Bisexuals are fine fine people, but for many complicated and personal reasons I don't happen to think of myself as bi right now. Queer is it for me, or dyke, and frequently I'd prefer no label at all. Anyway, this ruling meant that other women who call themselves queer were blankly relabelled as lesbians, which is kind of rude when you think about it.

I had to remove a whole passage questioning the traditional feminist argument that fat is intrinsically feminine because it mentioned butch dykes and transgendered people (my publisher produced an infamous tranny-hating book some years previously and I guess they never bothered to reassess their views on the subject or listen to trans-people's criticisms of that particular title).

They changed the wording of one of my arguments without telling me because it made a vague criticism of radical lesbian feminists, and now the sentence reads as though I am supporting those women.

They removed all positive references to pornography, and all positive references to non-vanilla sex. Not that the book was dripping with this stuff in the first place but there were a few mentions because I was talking about bodies and culture and, you know, this stuff comes up in that context. Anyway, this restriction actually meant removing all references to FaT GiRL, an incredible zine and major influence on me, because whilst they had never seen it they believed that it "promotes pornography," which, of course, is evil. Smut produced by small collectives of feminist dykes for similar women and in the context of boundary-pushing articles about fat politics was so reprehensible in the eyes of my publisher that they even refused to allow me to thank FaT GiRL in my acknowledgements list or within the quotes given by one of the interviewees in my book, a founding member of the FaT GiRL collective.

They removed substantial discussions of fat women and sexuality, which included references to SM and sexphobia amongst feminists. For example, a whole brilliant argument from Fish's excellent leatherdyke zine 'Brat Attack' went by the wayside. My publisher wrote to ask me if any of my other references included material which promoted pornography or SM. I said no. What did they expect me to say? "Oh yes, please destroy my work some more."

They removed suggestions that some fat women might be complicit with their own oppression. Women have to be victims, according to the argument. This meant a whole passage about power relations between fat women and Fat Admirers was cut, against my wishes.

Charlotte Cooper

Each of these things seems almost petty by itself, but taken together it is quite astonishing how deliberate omission can substantially alter the tone of a piece of writing.

When I politely questioned why they would want to ditch all this exciting material without giving me a good reason why, my editor responded:

We're a feminist press, you can't say this stuff because it's anti-feminist and no, we're not going to discuss this because we know we are right. (Oh, okay)

Your proposal said nothing about porn or SM, so under the terms of your contract we don't have to publish anything that mentions it. (Actually my proposal was pretty vaguely worded because debates around fat were developing like crazy at that time and I wanted to be able to future-proof myself by making a bit of space to record the as yet unknown.)

We also publish Andrea Dworkin, she's a bit of a cash cow for us and she'll be pissed off and go somewhere else if she sees one of our books saying that porn or SM isn't so bad after all. (But I was allowed to criticise Kim Chernin, and her popular book 'Womansize' quite harshly. Chernin was also published by my publisher)

If you don't like this, we can sell your manuscript to this other publisher we have lined up for you. (But they're an academic publisher, they have lousy resources, my book would be remaindered almost immediately. No thanks)

In typical good cop/bad cop fashion my publishers allowed me one small concession.

The editors allowed me to retain a couple of 'fucks' and two 'motherfuckers' used in quotes by women that I had interviewed, and whose rawness and integrity I wanted to preserve. It seems ludicrous now but they wanted me to substitute the word 'bloody' which, for those of you not familiar with English dialects, has a much milder and substantially middle class ring to it.

At this stage I could have tried to sell my book to another publisher who did not make these demands. I decided to stay and fight because this particular business had a good record of promoting and selling books about body issues. They also threatened me with non-publication about four months before the book was due to be published. At the end of three years of solitary slog, I felt burnt out and unable to do the rewrites that other publishers would probably need. I was frightened of taking the step forward into litigation. I felt bullied, powerless and alone. I felt that it was better to get the stupid book out, and out of my life, and to draw attention to the censorship issues afterwards. I continue to feel ashamed about these decisions, like a sell-out, I was naive and afraid of losing my book altogether. Some people have criticised me, but they didn't live through it like I did. I still don't know if I did the right thing.

Excuse me whilst I yell FUCK YOU FUCKING BITCHES! At my computer screen.

It was horrible working under these conditions. I was really angry. I couldn't believe that a publisher whose work I had previously respected could turn on an author with such ferociousness. There was no room

for discussion or negotiation, just one angry letter after another. They wanted me to produce a radical new work about women's relationship to fat, but they were not prepared to challenge their own outdated beliefs or support new debates. They were a deeply conservative radical feminist business, they did not want to help create a dynamic new discourse about women and fat, stifling it was obviously more lucrative since they constantly told me they knew what their readers wanted - but hell, I was one of their readers too! Their demands seemed like a ludicrous kneejerk reaction, I kept expecting them to admit that it was all a joke. Their censorship was so half-arsed, I offered to show them Fat GiRL but they refused to look at the source material so they had no idea what they were really censoring, and a lot of references slipped by their beady eyes. Bizarrely enough although the content was cut from the body of the book, the bibliography remains intact, with all the "pro-SM" and "pro-porn" sources intact - prizes for spotting them, my darlings.

So, the book came out, sold some copies and then quietly went to sleep. For a while I produced accompanying notes for people who wanted to read an uncensored version of events. I wrote and apologised to people who had been censored, I stopped publicising it, stopped calling myself a feminist, and cut down my involvement with fat stuff. Late in 1998 my publisher celebrated their 20th anniversary with a party at which everyone got drunk on free champagne, and the founder and one of the directors talked pompously about their policy of creating a forum for women's voices, breaking down women's silences. I nearly choked on my own bile - my voice obviously didn't count.

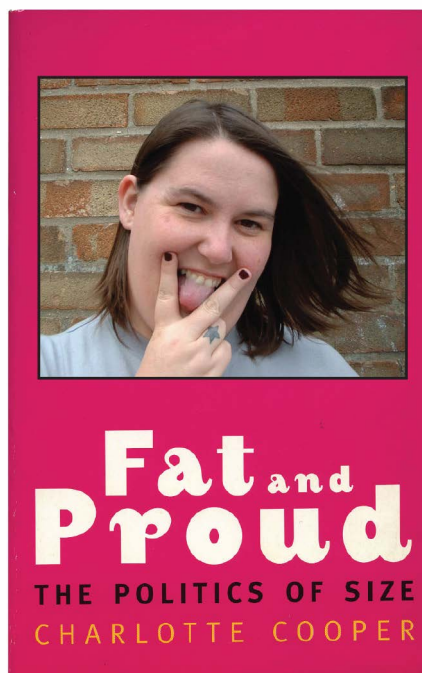
Five years later my book sits on a shelf at home but I feel estranged from it, like it doesn't really belong to me. I'm happy for people to read it, and I love talking to people who have felt excited by it. I think the book is important and radical, I think it's essential reading for anyone interested in fat politics, but my heart has left it. How would I do it differently now? I'd be less naive. I'd write a tighter proposal. I'd never sell a book to a publisher that has rigid ideological values. I'd ask a lot more questions before I started work.

As for my publisher, they're struggling along. Recently they approached a friend of mine to write a book about "the new feminism" for them but she turned them down and told them it was because she didn't like the way they had treated me. Ha ha! In the meantime they published a feminist diet book. Oh dear.

There's a funny coda to all of this. In 2002 I published my second book, a dirty novel. I was still contractually bound to my 'Fat and Proud' publisher, they had the right to refuse

my subsequent book. I sent them a letter asking them if they were interested in publishing a piece of queer dyke porn that features lots of brutal SM sex and hot tranny scenes. They said no and I was free, although part of me secretly wished that they'd taken it on, I think it would have been good for them.

In an ironic twist, 'Cherry,' the novel in question, got seized by Canada Customs and was declared obscene. It was going to be banned because it had a fisting scene in it, which, according to Canada Customs law, is anti-woman. This is a whole other story, I've written about it on my website if you're interested, but suffice to say: one day I'd really like to write a book that doesn't get censored.



Contributor Bios

Jukie Sunshine has been making kissy faces at herself in the mirror since she was three years old. She was the fat kid that liked to ham it up, onstage and off, and was always being sent home with a note from the teacher for disrupting class. Years later, she found her calling as a sex-positive, size-positive educator and glamour girl of stage and screen. Now all the notes she gets sent home with are from admirers.

Cherry Midnight is a femme-side-of-queer, goth-side-of-punk, switch-side-of-top, fat chick who loves and does not eat animals. She has danced with Big Burlesque, beaten many a corporate villain, and, come to think of it, she's beaten several loved ones who asked nicely, too. She adores her sweet boy.

Susan Stinson's third novel, *Venus of Chalk*, is a Lambda Literary and Benjamin Franklin award finalist. Her previous books are *Martha Moody*, *Fat Girl Dances with Rocks*, and *Belly Songs*. Though her work has been widely recognized, Charlotte Cooper still calls her "the most criminally underrated dyke novelist in the world." Find her online at www.susanstinson.net.

Allyson Mitchell is a maximalist artist living in Toronto Canada. She is a co-founder of the fat activist/performance group *Pretty Porky and Pissed Off*. She has produced 22 films and videos. Mitchell is currently completing her dissertation and she teaches feminist activism at York University. Look for her upcoming solo exhibition "Lady Sasquatch" at Paul Petro Contemporary Art in September 2005.

Papi D is a big ass bi-racial Genderqueer Butch from the SF Bay Area who has a weakness for sparkly fat femmes and close shaves. Papi D can be reached at papi_d@myway.com

Zhaddi has been writing erotic fiction for nearly ten years. Her writing has appeared in publications including *Libido* and *Growing Pains*, and she co-facilitated an erotica writing course through U.C. Berkeley's Women's Studies department while she was a student there. She currently lives in the S.F. Bay Area with her spouse and pet lizard.

Leah Strock is a queer fat femme bottom

as well as a Nurse Practitioner from NYC. She has been on the board of NOLOSE and spends much of her time trying to convince people how to advocate for themselves in their medical care. One of her biggest accomplishments was doing a size-sensitivity training for a health-care community center in NYC -- you think trying to tell doctors not to give lectures to people about their weight is easy????

Lori S is not a size queen, but some-times it's fun to pretend. Her work has appeared in the pages of *Curve* and *Girl-friends* magazines, as well as anthologies such as *Blowing Kisses*, *Glamour Girls*, *Homewrecker*, and *Bottoms Up!*

Cholla is a big fat happy brilliant tattooed pervert mestiza dyke witch with a bad leg and a good heart. She is a professor at a small Catholic college in the Bay Area, where she lives with her adopted family. In her spare time she makes trouble and demi-glaze. Although most of her writing is technical these days, she is a storyteller at heart. You can read her work in *Size Queen* and *Witch Eye*.

Alison Nowak is an illustrator and writer. She resides in Minneapolis, MN. She likes drawing angry cats, spending recklessly, and drinking cold beverages. She is currently working on a book about living well on little money. Check out more of her work at www.alisonnowak.com.

Margo Mercedes Rivera-Weiss is queer, mixed & creative. www.geocities.com/in-cajew

Charlotte Cooper lives in the East End of London. She's a writer/journalist/author/zine-monkey and part-time corporate whore. Charlotte is an associate editor of *Cheap Date* magazine and boss bitch of *The Chubsters*, a vicious girl gang. She wrote *Fat and Proud: The Politics of Size and Cherry*. Check out www.Charlotte-Cooper.net

Joe Samson is a tasty Canadian Tranny-boy who has been in the life, in service to his Mistress, for 7+ years. He is a switch who enjoys, among other things, being flipped, top-to-bottom. Joe believes in the power of language: to arouse, to stimulate, to transform our physical bodies/boundar-

ies, to reconfigure our communities, to terrify and comfort us both. He enjoys writing, photography, flirting and playing catch.

Sondra Solovay is activist/lawyer/writer/diversity trainer/performance artist. She is the author of *Tipping the Scales of Justice: Fighting Weight Based Discrimination* and her new essay appears in *Scoot Over Skinny: The Fat Nonfiction Anthology*. She is an Adjunct Professor at New College of California School of Law.

Olivia E is a print/textile designer, illustrator, painter living in the big juicy apple. She is an artjock and loves creating monster size sketchbooks documenting her travels in the U.S, Europe and Asia. She is fueled by red bean ice cream and chai, committed to rocking the boat one little pen mark at a time. <http://portfolios.com/OliviaDesigns>

Max Airborne loves you.

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www.nomylamm.com

We like **Christine**. She's a sexy, talented writer. Too bad she didn't write a bio.

Fish can be found somewhere on earth poking someone with sharp inky things.

Elena T works very very hard.

Tina Arroyo is the sweetest pea ever.

Maxbear Finkelstein writes sexy stories.





Celestina Meow Meow

Grew Up: LA and Eugene, Oregon
Past Triumphs: Performing
Claim to Fame: Porn star – Voluptuous Vixens
Future Goal: To be a naughty nurse
Likes: Eggplant
Dislikes: People cutting me off
Turn Ons: Knives
Turn Offs: Rudeness
Fave Sex Music: Anything by Prince
Identifying Marks: Yes!
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Have an orgasm!



Mo Kalman

Hometown: Da Bronx
Past Conquests: Susan Goldberg
Claim to Fame: Stage Producer, SF Dyke March, rabblrouser
Likes: Susan, Matzoh Ball Soup, hanging with young people
Dislikes: George Bush, corporate assholes, sticky lip stick
Favorite Makeout Song: Luther Vandross "If Only For One Night"
One thing everyone should do before they die: Make music



Lady Venus

Hometown: San Francisco
Claim to Fame: Troupe Member, Fat Bottom Revue
Likes: Chocolate, femmes, feathers, flowers
Dislikes: Fear of fat
Turn Ons: Cologne, secret admirers, dreads
Turn Offs: Not too much
Fave Sex Song: "Freak Me" by Silk
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Have sex with a fat girl!

Heather MacAllister



Grew up: Motor City
Claim to Fame: Biggest Booty in Burlesque!
Contributions to Society: Big Burlesque's Fat Bottom Revue
Likes: Passion, integrity
Dislikes: Over-priced food, too much cologne, bigotry
Turn Ons: Tall, dark, handsome butch not intimidated by a fierce diesel femme
Turn Offs: Hypocrisy
Fave Sex Song: Joan Jett's "Do You Want to Touch Me There?"
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Dance naked in the middle of a circle of people who think you are sexy.



Jukie Sunshine

Grew Up: Another nice Jewish girl from the Valley, just like Annie Sprinkle
Claim to Fame: Fabulous star of stage and screen – Don't you know Jukie?
Future Goal: Sex edutainment!
Fave Colors: Black like my heart, pink like my pussy
Likes: Wrestling, making people like things they think they don't like
Dislikes: Zucchini, raw tomatoes
Turn Ons: Competence, confidence, perfectly ripe armpit
Turn Offs: Lack of self-esteem
Identifying Marks: Yes, clearly, and looking for more!
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Have sex in public, fall in love, and take it easy on yourself.



Joe Samson

Grew Up: Vancouver, B.C.
Past Triumphs: Summa Cum Laude
Claim to Fame: 50 orgasms in 1 hour
Future Goal: 100 orgasms in 1 hour
Likes: Pretty ladies, dogs, low-slung jeans, leather belts
Dislikes: Olives, people who can't take a joke
Turn Ons: Kissing, punching, slapping, dirty talk, obeying my Mistress
Turn Offs: Bad breath, bad hair
Fave Sex Song: Led Zeppelin's "When the Levee Breaks"
Identifying Marks: Tattoos
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Fall asleep looking up at the stars



Cherry Midnight

Grew up: Yuma, AZ
Past Triumphs: FaT GiRL, Dancer with Big Burlesque, Fat Fuck
Claim to Fame: Size Queen!
Likes: Good clothes, punk kids, hot femmes, gender artistry, manners
Dislikes: Meat
Turn Ons: Rough play, good boys, bad boys, foreign accents, feminists
Turn Offs: Self-centeredness
Fave Sex Song: Nine Inch Nails' "Sin"
Identifying Marks: Fangs
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Make someone have 50 orgasms in 1 hour.



Mystery Artist

Homes: MKE, ABQ, SF, Oakland, Cairo, Boston, Putney (VT), and Tucson
Past Triumphs: FaT GiRL, Witch Eye, Bucktooth Varmints, Meter Maids
Claim to Fame: Size Queen, Creamy Goodness
Future Goal: Spread joy, satisfy my insatiable libido
Likes: Monster femmes, homemade family
Turn Ons: [REDACTED]
Fave Sex Music: George Clinton, Hole
Identifying Marks: Yes, some self-inflicted.
Thing Everyone Should Do Before They Die: Love. Then love some more.

SIZE QUEEN



MO KALMAN
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



CHRISTINA MEOWMEOW
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



YUKIE SUNSHINE
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



HEATHER MACALLISTER
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



LADY VENUS
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



MAX AIRBORNE
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



CHERRY MIDNIGHT
COLLECTOR CARD

SIZE QUEEN



JOE SAMSON
COLLECTOR CARD