

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

A 1990s Monthly Life Writing Column on Transgender Forum

Roberta Angela Dee

Compiled by Bethany Karsten, April 9th, 2026

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Compiler's Note

Huge shoutout to Cara Esten, @cara.city on Bluesky, for digitizing an old CD-ROM from 1999 of Transgender Forum and posting about it on Bluesky. Another big shoutout goes to @razorgirl.diy for going through the archive and randomly picking out a Dee article, which led me down this rabbit hole through keyword search.

The link from Cara Esten I used to retrieve these text files:

<https://infinitemac.org/1998/Mac%20OS%208.1?cdrom=https%3A%2F%2Farchive.org%2Fdownload%2Ftransgender-forum%2Ftransgenderforum.img>

When I realized that Dee's regular column on Transgender Forum, *Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady*, could be read as a somewhat chronological memoir of her life, I made the decision to present the full column as a single document rather than individual articles. *Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady* was published once a month. As we don't have good dates for these pieces, and don't have many archival snapshots of the site, it's impossible to know the exact order they were published. But it seems that the column began either in late 1997 or early 1998, and ran consistently until the CD archive was downloaded in 1999.

Given that Roberta lived for several years after this archive was frozen, it's entirely likely that this is only a fraction of the complete column, which may give us a more comprehensive picture of her life. Dee died in the spring of 2003; we could be looking at dozens of missing pieces. Despite its organized presentation, I would urge you to look at this as a fragmentary work, an assemblage and archive of a prolific writer making sense of her long and eventful life.

I have done my best to keep the articles exactly as they were on the original forum, with minimal alterations or commentary. This means that there are a number of grammatical errors throughout the text. In one or two places, I have left brief footnotes; but in general what you see here is the raw text scraped off the forum. I could not come up with a good way to take PDFs from the site itself, but know it was very early internet in its aesthetic. There were also occasionally photos included with the pieces, but as they tended to be visual décor rather than substantive pieces of the article, and rather difficult to get off the CD-ROM, I've left them out of this document.

This is an incomplete effort, but I hope it can give you a better understanding of Dee's life, as told through her own words.

Regards,

Bethany Karsten, Editor-in-Chief of The Transfeminine Review

April 9th, 2026

Part One – Long Island, New York

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

THE BLUE DRESS¹

By Roberta Angela Dee

Childhood

I rarely think about the fact that every cross dresser, every transsexual and every transgendered person was once a child. And as a child, each dealt with the developing dilemma: Who am I? What am I?

Am I male? Am I female? Am I some deviation of whatever it means to be gay?

As adults, perhaps we have found answers for these questions. But what were we thinking while we were on 7, 8 or 9 years old? the questions must have overwhelmed, or at least left us feeling a bit different from everyone else. And to whom could we speak? To whom could we present questions for which we had yet no words?

I was once a transgendered girl. Were there any transgendered boys - any anatomically female girls who wanted to be a boy. I don't mean just play like a boy, or dress like a boy, or act like a boy. I mean were there any little girls who actually wanted to be a boy?

I was 7 years old in 1956 - a time that the young people like to refer to as "the olden days" before color television, music television videos (MTV), Nitendo² video games, personal computers, and internet chat rooms. However, even at the young an age, I already knew I should have been born female. And I was certain that somewhere in the world, there were young girls who knew they should be born male.

Unfortunately, there was no way for transgendered and transsexual people to communicate. Transgender Forum did not exist, and any information related anything other than the most conventional information about sex was considered perverse, "dirty," and immoral. So, a little boy who believed in his heart of hearts that he should have been born a little girl had nowhere to turn for answers. And the same was true for that little girl who simply knew that she should have been born a male.

Even today as we educate our young people about the dangers of HIV infection, smoking, controlled substances, alcohol and birth control. And as we inform our young people about alternate lifestyles, gay parenting, pedophiles and drug pushers, we completely ignore the child who might be enduring a gender identity crisis. We completely ignore a child's most basic question: "Who am I?"

"What am I?" "Am I male?" "Am I female?"

The Blue Dress

I grew up in a household where there were four females - my mother and three sisters. Dad and I were the only male - and my masculinity was already highly suspect.

¹ The title was blue on the original webpage, which I have recaptured here.

² Roberta apparently did not know how to spell Nintendo lol.

Whatever the composition of family, one thing was certain: there was always a generous supply of female clothing in the house. And because my oldest sister was only a year younger than myself, and close to my own physical stature, I learned very early on that I could wear her clothes.

One of my favorite garments was a blue dress. Dresses are so distinctively feminine. Pants are masculine, but girls wear pants too. And while pants tend to be masculine, they are not as masculine as a dress is feminine. So, I don't know if a pair of trousers can be treasured as much by a transgendered boy as the "perfect" dress is treasured by a transgendered girl. All I know is that my sister's blue dress was like my wedding gown. Any time I could wear it, that moment became a special occasion and a reason for celebration.

I also believe that transgendered girls, like genetic girls, are more likely to form an emotional bond with clothes. Although I do know boys to have had a "lucky" or "favorite" tee shirt, the fascination seems to diminish as soon as they outgrow the particular garment. Whereas girls continue to have favorite articles of clothing throughout their lives.

In my case, it was not merely that the dress was blue but that it had lace and buttoned in the back. Every aspect of its design, texture and fit seemed to emphasize all that I loved about being a girl.

I would often take the dress down from my sister's closet and carry it into the attic, carefully closing the door behind me. Once inside, I would remove all my little boy clothes and slip into the dress.

With it on, a transformation occurred, as though by wearing the dress I had truly become female. And I can still recall how wonderful it was to - if only for a short time - look like a real girl.

Yesterday

It was hell growing up transgendered. I'm certain that not every cross dresser, transsexual or transgendered person shared my experience. However, for me it was so awkward not really knowing why my feelings were so different than those of other boys my age.

It was by chance that I saw Christine Jorgenson on television. She was being called America's first sex change, and for the first time I had a word to describe myself - transsexual: a woman in a man's body. Later, again by chance, I learned of Virginia Prince, on Alan Burke's television talk show. S/he introduced me to the word "transgendered" and that word too helped me to define myself.

How I wish that all of the information they had to share was more readily available.

Today

Today is a fabulous time for discussion of gender issues. Theories and hypotheses are emerging from a variety of sources. And although there is not always agreement, at least the issues are being discussed and we're beginning to look at gender in completely different ways than our ancestors. And it's about time.

Since the dawn of man, a male child was simply identified as male because the child possessed a penis. And because the child possessed a penis, an entire culture was imposed on that

individual. Today we're learning that there's more to being a woman than being an individual with the capacity to menstruate or bear a child.

Unfortunately, there are still large segments of the population that continue to harbor hostile prejudices against transgendered communities. Not surprisingly, few of these people are knowledgeable enough to distinguish a transvestite, from someone who is transgendered or transsexual. Like most prejudices, its basis is rooted in ignorance and an unwillingness to become better informed.

Such ignorance is painful to all of us. It is especially painful when it emerges from within the gay and lesbian communities. Unfortunately, when it comes to gender biases, the gay community is not very different than the straight community.

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, I hope we can find more just and equitable ways to define gender and to distinguish gender from an individual's anatomical sex. Somehow society must learn that a woman can be more of a man than even someone born male, and a man can be more of a woman. Gender is not fixed, it's fluid. I hope we can all learn that there's more than one way to see the day.

With a Loving Heart,
Roberta Angela Dee

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Transgendered Men, Transgendered Women

By Roberta Angela Dee

The memories of a crossdresser, or those of a transgendered or transsexual woman, are certainly different from those of most little boys. Our memories tend to be more similar to the memories of little girls. Similarly, I must imagine that the memories of transgendered women are more like those of little boys.

I can remember strolling into a Woolworth's store on Long Island. I was 9 years old and was already shopping for a bra and falsies. The sales women were of course curious. "What would attract such a young boy to the ladies department?" I'm certain they asked themselves.

Most of my female attire had been acquired by stealing clothes from my neighbor's clothes lines. It was 1958, and clothes dryers weren't nearly as popular, or as common, as they are today. Most women hung their clothes out to dry, and often let them hang overnight.

While walking to school, I would take mental notes of who had hung out suitable clothes. Later that evening, I would sneak out through my bedroom window, sneak into the backyards of several neighbors, and remove the clothes I thought would fit.

I perceived these clothes as being "used," liked hand-me-downs. So, inevitably, I eventually wanted "new" things, my own things.

Boys my age were buying toy guns, air pistols, basketballs and airplanes made of Balsa wood. These things were of no, or little interest to me. I preferred shopping for a new panty, stockings, anklets, a bra or a new dress. I, after all, was at heart a girl, and my interests were naturally feminine.

I also shopped for cosmetics. My complexion was flawless, but like most women I sought something beyond perfection. "One could never be too pretty," I thought to myself. There are feminists, and others, who in order to satisfy their own political, religious or social agendas insist that my behavior was nothing more than the result of my environment or the society around me. This theory has no basis in truth whatsoever. No one in my family encouraged me to be feminine. There was nothing in my culture, nor my environment, to encourage girlish behavior. Yet, I had felt the desire to be a girl since the age of 4 years.

Others argue that my behavior was the result of there being no male role model, or being in the presence of an overly dominant female parent. Still, these theories do not apply. I had a very masculine father and grandfather, as well as several very masculine uncles to serve as role models. And my mother was no different than most mothers and wives raising a family.

Neither society, nor family had anything to do with my wanting to be a girl. I wanted to be a girl because it felt correct, and because it felt natural. Theories about "social constructs" are nothing more than "rhetorical constructs" generated to satisfy or support a popular myth.

There are those who probably believe that there are "social constructs" that encourage a young girl to want to be a boy. Again, I cannot help but believe that this is utter nonsense. And I encourage transgendered women to voice their opinion through the TG Forum, whether it is to agree with me or not.

I imagine therefore that transgendered women sought to buy or make use of male undergarments and to participate in the activities generally thought to be boyish. Of course, in our society, it is far easier for a young girl to be accepted as a tomboy than it is for a young male to be accepted as a sissy. In fact, there is no such phrase as a "tomgirl." It is never considered acceptable for a male child to be effeminate, although it is acceptable for a female child to be somewhat masculine or boyish. At best, this seems very unfair, especially for the male child who is predisposed to being feminine.

I've found that lesbians, particularly those who identify as either butch or femme, are far more tolerant of variations in gender than the society as a whole. Some butch lesbians identify as male while others identify as female but butch... butch being a gender unto itself. And then there are variations even within the variations I have mentioned here.

It seems cruel to force children into culturally accepted gender roles. Rather than change children, we need to develop a culture that is better able to tolerate variations in gender. Every boy does not want to grow up to be Arnold Schwarzenegger, nor does every girl want to grow up to be like Tyra Banks. We must, as a society, come to understand that some boys will want to be more like Tyra as they mature, and that some girl will want to be more like Arnold.

No one should be ashamed to be transgendered or transsexual. No one should be ashamed to crossdress, simply because they have the desire to feel more feminine or more masculine. Democracy is based on rule by the majority, but we cannot ignore that the majority can be wrong, unjust and unfair.

Since logging onto the Internet, I've discovered that there are many people who feel just as I do about a lot of issues. I've discovered transsexual women who do not want to undergo sex reassignment surgery but who feel no less womanly and no less transsexual. I've also discovered that there are many people who do not define themselves as male or female, but who have invented alternative means of categorizing the way they feel along gender lines.

Unfortunately, the medical profession is still about 50 years behind the imagination of the general public. However, I have no intentions of waiting for someone with a Ph.D. to verify or substantiate what I already know to be true. After all, scientists still can't decide whether caffeine influences breast cancer, or whether beta carotene is a preventative. So much of the social sciences has proven to be anything more than speculation or an adaptation of prevailing social philosophy.

A perfect example is the idea of a feminist psychologist who must perceive all behavior in feminist terms, whether or not the perception is accurate.

My memories have led me to a place that science has not yet discovered. I became a woman long before science could even accept the idea that it was not abnormal to be gay. I refuse to die waiting for science to acknowledge who I am.

The End

With a Loving Heart, Roberta Angela Dee

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Two Wells

By Roberta Angela Dee

The Summer of 1959 -- La Plata, Maryland

Those of us who are old enough to remember the Summer of 1959 might recall the release of Ben Hur and its lead actor -- Charlton Heston. Others might remember that Alaska and Hawaii began American states, or that Frank Sinatra had the album of the year, "Come Dance With Me," while Bobby Darin's "Mack the Knife" was heralded as song of the year.

America was beginning an unprecedented economic boom. As a result, life was good for most Americans and most Americans can cherish fond memories of this era in American history. Regrettably, the experience was very different for African Americans. Nineteen hundred and fifty-nine was four years before the celebrated March on Washington, and for many who would participate in the march, their memories consist of racial tension, segregation, oppression, unemployment, and police brutality.

Perhaps, the greatest threat to democracy lies in the different experiences of its people, our different memories and perception of what is the truth.

I was only 10 years old in the 1959, and only just beginning to understand the difference between being homosexual and being transsexual. The word 'transsexual' was new to me. I had only heard it during a news report about Christine Jorgensen. The word could not even be found in my father's dictionary, and this occurred many years before there was a common appreciation for what's come to be called the information superhighway.

Whereas, for most people, Christine Jorgensen with little more than a news item, and most assuredly a sexual oddity, for me she was like Joan of Arc or Sojourner Truth. She was a savior -- a heroine who had arrived to lead me away from my confusion and personal hell.

That Summer -- the summer of 1959, I and my sisters were driven by my parents to my grandparents farm in La Plata, Maryland. They owned most of what is Charles County today. I do not know how they came to lose so much property. However, it was not long after they passed that all of the land was confiscated by the State of Maryland.

I'll always remember the stench of driving through northern New Jersey. For years afterwards, I maintained the belief that the entire state was comprised of oil refineries. I knew nothing of Princeton or New Brunswick back then.

The road that led to my grandparent's house was unpaved -- an old dirt road nearly half a mile long. It excited us as children to see the solitary home off in the distance. We grew more excited as we approached it and watched our grandparents step outside to greet us.

Grandfather stood 6-feet, three-inches tall. He was a massive man -- 200 pounds of solid muscle. He was a farmer and he looked like a farmer. I'd say he was a man's man. Surely, I would never grow to be like him. At least, it was my hope.

Grandmother stood dwarfed by her husband. She was a small and fragile lady who always saved her sweetest smile for her grandchildren. There was a light in her eyes that could bring a tear

to most hardened criminal. There is no way to describe her femininity and demeanor, except to say she was a lady and a very kind soul. If I grew to be like anyone, I hoped I could grow to be like her.

To me it was if they lived in a different century. There was neither indoor plumbing, nor electricity. Heat was provided through two wood-burning stoves. One was used almost solely to heat the house during the colder months. The other was used to heat the house and for cooking.

Smoke from the wood burning stove was pervasive. Everything was scented with the smell of firewood. It wasn't a bad aroma, but it was different.

Light was provided through kerosene lanterns. there was at least one in every room of the house. It fascinated me to watch them being lit and adjusted according to the needs of my grandparents.

And, yes, there was an out house used as a toilet. There was also a well not far from the outdoor bathroom facility. I was told that the well was contaminated and that the water from it could not be used for cooking or drinking purposes.

I could not imagine that such a remarkable well, with a functional pump, could possibly be unsafe. I pumped for water, filled the bucket and saw that the water was clear. How could my grandparents claim it was contaminated?

We were told that water for drinking and cooking had to be obtained from a different well. This second well was a quarter mile away from the house and was located at the base of a tree.

"A well at the base of a tree?" I questioned even the possibility.

Anyway, I was led by an older cousin to the natural phenomenon. I doubted this was possible each step along the worn path covered with incredibly huge insects and even a snake that slithered away as we approached.

Then, there it was -- the well, just as my grandparents had described it. Some underground source provide the coldest water imaginable and it collected at the base of an old oak tree.

I reached into it and discovered it was as cold as ice, although the atmospheric temperature was near to 100 degrees. How could it be so cold? This was clearly more than a phenomenon. For me, it was a miracle!

There was, however, a tiny frog that swam in the pool of water. The presence of a frog disturbed me. How could the water be any good, if it was inhabited by a frog? How could it be any safer than the well water so much nearer to the house.

My cousin called himself proving to me that the water was safe by drinking some of it. I believed him and found that unlike city water it was refreshingly tasteless and incredibly cool. It was, in fact, the best water I had ever tasted in my entire lifetime. And although my entire life was no more than a decade, I was as impressed as anyone could be even at 100 years old!

My cousin and I were called upon to fetch water several times during our stay in La Plata. On some occasions we were asked to go to the well during what seemed like the hottest part of the

day. This gave me an idea. I had always been told that I was incredibly bright for my age. Now, I would have a chance to prove it.

How thankful and appreciative everyone would be, if I could prove that the water from the well near to the out house was as safe to drink as the water from the well at the base of the tree. So, early that morning, before I could be asked to go to the well down the road, I pumped water from the well nearest to the house. After filling the bucket, I drank a full glass of it.

When my mother woke, I told her what I had done. Instead of praise, she scolded me and I couldn't understand why. Within 24 hours however I came down with a fever and was rushed back to New York.

Doctors came to the house back then, and when my doctor arrived he diagnosed that I had scarlet fever. The source of the fever was, of course, the tainted water. The good doctor explained that, although in both instances the water was clear, the water from the well nearest to the house had been contaminated by material from the house that had seeped through the walls of the well. And even at 10 years of age, I understood precisely what the doctor meant.

Now, some of you might want to know what all this has to do with cross dressing, with being transgendered or with being transsexual. "What is the moral of the story?" some might ask. I can't, however, answer that question. I'm a writer. My job is to write. I prefer that the Reader make his or her own interpretation.

However, if I were a Reader, I might think the story meant that one is best not to judge a book by its cover, nor to believe that everything that looks female and demure is actually female -- even if anatomically correct.

The End

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Eyes Speak To Other Eyes

By Roberta Angela Dee

Through my memoirs, I attempt to provide glimpses into the life of a transgendered female at various stages in her life. I understand, of course, that many of my readers are themselves transgendered. However, my memoirs are intended for both communities -- the community of those who are comfortable with their gender, and the community for whom gender has at some point their lives created a conflict.

Many of my accounts contain elements of eroticism, but only because the events themselves are erotic. One of those events took place in my seventeenth year.

It was 1966. Frank Sinatra had a hit record, singing "Strangers in the Night." Elizabeth Taylor acted superbly in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff." And while many Americans protested the Vietnam War abroad, many Americans protested for their civil rights here at home. And it was the year that Donna Taylor discovered me dressed as a girl.

I was attempting to sneak through her backyard to reach the streets behind my own house. I did so to see if I could be perceived as a female, specifically, a young woman. Donna was coming out her back door just as I was heading towards her driveway.

"Robert," she cried out, what are you doing? Why are you dressed like that?"

The fact that she called me by my masculine name made it clear that she recognized me. This made my heart pound at least a million times a second as the adrenaline flowed into my veins.

There was no way to deny who I was, nor that I was there. So, in response to her questions, I answered with a tone of desperation, "I want to be a girl, Donna. I want to be a girl."

To my astonishment, Donna neither laughed at me, nor threatened to reveal my secret passion to be a woman. Instead she simply commented, "Well, you're overly dressed for one thing. And you'll either need to let your hair grow or buy a wig. That scarf just isn't going to fool anyone."

"I'm not really trying to fool anyone," I replied. "I really do want to be a girl."

"I understand," she responded as casually as any normal conversation. "And I'm a lesbian. So we're both outcasts as far as society is concerned. So we might as well be girl friends."

There is no way to describe my emotional response. I believe it was a combination of joy, excitement, surprise and embarrassment. All at the same time. The shock of being discovered as a girl had led to being accepted as a girl!

In my wildest dreams, I never had imagined this could happen. Then again I had never imagined that Donna could be gay. Like many people, I perceived that gay women were decidedly masculine. Donna, however, was the most delicately feminine image of a young African-American grace, and the elegant manner in which she attended to others. She was no less beautiful than any model to ever grace the cover of "Vogue" or "Mademoiselle."

She and I did in fact become very good and very special friends. We had endless discussions about her passion for women and endless discussions about my desire to be a woman. There were never two better companions. We shared every experience.

One day she took me into the bathroom with her and showed me a sanitary napkin she had just removed from her panty. It was not a pretty sight -- blood and coagulated material, dark red and not at all feminine as I perceived femininity.

“Be thankful you don’t bleed,” she said. “The way it looks is only the half of it. It feels worse to go through it.”

As appalling as her revelation might seem to some, it was Donna’s way of expanding my understanding of what it truly means to be a woman. Not to suggest that one has to menstruate, but only to suggest that there are some elements of femininity that have nothing to do with being dainty or pretty. A woman, by nature, has to be beautiful on the outside while able to deal with all the ugliness of the world on the inside.

We were so like girl friends that it was nothing for Donna’s mother to leave Donna and I alone for hours at a time in Donna’s bedroom. We could even shut her bedroom door without arousing her mother’s suspicion. In fact, Mrs. Taylor would frequently comment, while I aided in her in the kitchen, that I would make some man a fine wife some day.

On an occasion when Mrs. Taylor was away from the house, and Donna and I were alone, Donna asked if I could respond to another female the way I had told her I responded to young men. I told her that I didn’t know -- that I had never kissed a girl the way I had kissed a boy.

“Well, let’s see what happens,” she said.

Before I could accept or reject her invitation, her lips were pressed to mine and we kissed in a way I had never kissed a girl before. I remember that it was really quite nice.

Being the more assertive partner, Donna wasted no time undressing me and then undressing herself. She commented that I would make a pretty girl if I had breasts. “Your face is pretty enough,” she said.

She placed me on my back and explored my body with her lips. A trail of lipstick prints could be followed from my mouth all the way to the most private portal between my thighs.

She ignored the part of me that was male, and directed her lips and tongue to the part of my body that men and women have in common.

The joy she delivered was exquisite. My passions were taken to a level I had never believed was possible with another woman. I suspect that 15 or 20 minutes passed. There’s no way for me to be certain. However, her kisses forced me to erupt with an orgasm without ever having touched the male part of my anatomy.

This was a few years before I started taking female hormones, so I was still able to ejaculate. She noted my ejaculation and commented that it was more unsightly to her than a used sanitary napkin.

We redressed quickly -- both fearful that her mother might open the bedroom door. But she had given me a gift I would never forget -- a gift that opened the door to my own bisexuality.

Looking at each other, after our intimate encounter, we understood that eyes speak to other eyes, as much as they peer into another's soul. I continued to focus my attention on young men.

The possibilities with other young women, however, was never a thought too distant.

It makes me sad sometimes, and should make all of us sad, that so few transgendered women ever know the love, beauty, and wisdom that our lesbian and bisexual sisters can share with us. For too long a time, I'm afraid, there has been this wall between our sisterhood based solely on our difference in genitals. Yet, what makes us all whole as women is not based solely on our genitals at all. Perhaps, some day we will all look beyond the limitations of defining gender solely on the basis of genitals and learn to define each woman on the basis of what is in her heart, mind, and soul.

One day, perhaps, we shall learn to define ourselves solely on the content of our characters, and not on the physiological definitions imposed on us all by men. We are not men. We are women. Let our eyes speak. Let our eyes announce what lies in our souls.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Crossdressed and Stranded

By Roberta Angela Dee

There was a period in my life when one could describe me as a cross-dresser. My aspiration had always been to live and to work as a woman. However, before I summoned enough courage to make such a commitment, I would still go out dressed in the most feminine attire with the hope that I would be accepted as a woman and return home without the embarrassment of a police record.

I had been cross-dressing all of my life. I began at the age of 4-years old, continued through my teens, and even managed to secretly dress while living in a college dormitory. However, my feelings towards cross-dressing changed after I had graduated. As an adult, living on my own, I more than understood that the consequences of being discovered would be far more severe than had I been exposed during high school or even while at college. I was violating a sacred social taboo. I was a man wearing a dress -- not just any dress, but a short, frilly and very sexy dress.

In fact, I can still recall the fear of stepping out from my apartment. My heart beat in my chest like an African drum summoning warriors to battle. I could almost hear its repetitive rapid thumps. Each step towards my vehicle seemed like an eternity: Would anyone see me? Would Mrs. Taylor be looking out her window? Would Sam Marshall recognize me wearing a dress, makeup and a wig?

People say life is more difficult for a woman. Perhaps they've never compared being a woman to being a cross-dresser. A woman can walk the street and not fear her identity and reputation being destroyed. This is certainly not true for the cross-dressed male.

Women can dress as masculine as they like, and one might suspect they are gay. However, they're basically left alone. The worse they can fear is an ugly rumor. This is not so for a man. Caught in a dress, he suddenly becomes a pervert, a sexual deviant out to molest anything with legs. It's unfair and certainly not logical, but it's the society in which we live.

I start the engine. My heading is already fixed in my mind. Will I risk stopping for a soda at the local convenience store? Why not? I'll only be a minute. "But it's not yet dark," I say to myself. "What if I'm recognized?"

"Don't be silly," I reply to myself, "What could possibly go wrong?"

I pull over to the convenience store, park, and exit from my vehicle. I display my best impression of a busy lady stopping for a drink before hurrying off to pick up her children or meet with her husband. There's a man in the store, and a second man behind the counter. There are also two women.

I enter the store, select a Coke, and sashay up to the counter. I'm careful to avoid eye contact with the male customer, just as any woman would in a similar situation. But I smile at and I courteously acknowledge the female patrons. So far so good. One woman is in her early thirties, but the other is only about nineteen. The younger woman is likely to be more accepting should I be read.

"Would you like a bag, ma'am?" the clerk asks.

"Please," I respond with a feminine voice and a smile. Women always smile when they ask for anything.

I accept my change, throw it into my purse, and exit the store. It had been a perfect event.

Now, I get back into my car and try to start the engine. It doesn't turn over. I mean, it doesn't make a sound. I'm instantly petrified. I don't want to attract the man's attention. I can't leave my vehicle and try to walk home. I'm cross-dressed and miles from my apartment. And now my heart is beat even more rapidly than before. I wanted to crawl under a rock and die!

I pretended to know what I was doing, as the male patron entered his pickup truck, backed out, and drove away. Then, I released the hood of the car and went to see if there was anything obvious that I could correct.

"What's the matter?" a young female voice asked. "Can't start your car? They're such a pain. Aren't they?"

"I know nothing about cars," I answered helplessly, as I looked at the younger female patron who had been in the convenience store.

My helplessness wasn't an act either. I knew nothing about cars, except where to put the key and the gas. Everything else about an automobile was a total mystery to me.

"Would you mind, if I take a look?" she asked.

"Oh, please! Would you be so kind? I'm too far from my apartment to walk back."

She leaned over to look at the engine. She touched a few wires and left me with the comforting impression that she knew what she was doing. But then she said, "I don't see anything wrong here."

My heart fell into a bottomless stomach. I knew that this was the day I would die.

"Do you have it in gear?" she asked.

"In gear? What do you mean?"

"Let's check."

She opened the driver's side door, looked in, and said, "Oh, you've got it in drive."

She switched gears, then said, "Try it now."

I got back into the car, turned the key, and it started up immediately.

"You just left it in drive," she told me. "I do the same thing all the time."

"Oh, thank you so much," I nearly cried.

She lowered the hood and then said, "You just be careful out there, lady. A pretty girl like you wouldn't want to get stranded in this part of town."

I smiled, backed out and headed straight for my apartment. Perhaps, I'd go out the following night. But at that time, I was too nervous to do anything but return to the safety of my humble abode.

Reflecting on the event later that evening, I suspected that the young woman knew I was cross-dressed. But by then it no longer mattered. The main thing was that she treated me like a lady, and I reacted like a lady.

For more than 30 years, I've been writing about the society and how we need to take a more open approach to gender. A man wearing a dress is not instantly depraved, nor is he likely to be a pervert.

He's just a male fortunate enough to be able to express a feminine nature more than most men would even dare. Is that so terrible?

The End

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

"It Ain't Necessarily So"

Roberta Angela Dee

The American composer, George Gershwin was born on September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn, New York. He died of a brain tumor on July 11, 1937, in Beverly Hills, California.

Gershwin shared the difficult, European-Jewish immigrant heritage of his contemporaries Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. It might surprise many to learn the Gershwin family did not own a piano until George was 10-years old. He took to the piano immediately, although it had been intended for his brother, and future lyricist, Ira Gershwin.

Piano lessons with local teachers led to George being accepted as a pupil of Charles Hambitzer. Hambitzer was a respected musician. George was 14 years old then, and it was Hambitzer who introduced the musical prodigy to the beauty of classical music.

George dropped out of school at 16 years old to earn a living as a 'song plugger' on Tin Pan Alley. The job entailed endless hours at the piano playing popular songs to promote sale of the sheet music. Gradually, Gershwin began including his songs.

"Porgy and Bess" was George Gershwin's last and greatest composition. The opera included such beautiful songs as "Summertime," "Bess," "You Is My Woman," and "It Ain't Necessarily So." The piece is the only American opera that has proved its ability to live beyond its time and the only one whose music has become widely known.

"Porgy and Bess" opens on Catfish Row in Charleston, South Carolina. The character Jasbo Brown plays the blues for a group of dancers. Clara sings a lullaby to her child ("Summertime"). A drug dealer named Sporting Life, Clara's husband Jake, and some other men play craps. Jake sings his child a lullaby of his own ("A Woman is a Sometime Thing"). The beggar Porgy comes in to join the game. He defends Crown's woman, Bess, of whom the others speak harshly. When Jake accuses Porgy of being soft on Bess, Porgy says that he isn't soft on any woman; God made him a cripple and meant him to be lonely.

George and Ira Gershwin had engaged in a bold experiment: borrowing from the music, language and experiences of African Americans. It was an attempt to capture the essence of the lives of an oppressed race, and present it to an aristocratic audience.

The song "It Ain't Necessarily So" suggests that the human experience is universal and that Fate can curse anyone regardless of race or ethnicity. The character Porgy might represent anyone unfortunate enough to be born different from the majority of the population.

Long Island, New York 1969

At 20 years old, I was still living as a male and had enrolled in a community college. Like many young people of the day, I was intrigued by political movements and the hippie subculture.

Because I lived in my parent's home, it was difficult finding opportunities to cross dress. I had grown quite skilled at putting on makeup and assembling a smart attire. Although I stood 6- feet tall, I had a thin frame and weighed only 145 pounds. My frail physique allowed me to be accepted as a woman quite easily -- at least in terms of outward appearance.

Like any young woman, I kept an eye on fashion. I was aware of the styles and preferences of both conservative young women and those young women more inclined to pursue the philosophy of free love and peace. My preferences was to be less than conservative.

It was 1969, when I met Phil. At first he seemed to be just one of the guys. He was a few years older than most of my friends and had already married.

Phil enjoyed the music of the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. However, his responsibilities as a family man encouraged a conservative wardrobe and conservatism in other aspects of his life. To Phil, I might have represented the person he might be if he were younger and still single.

Both Phil and I played guitar. It was not unusual for us to find an abandoned area of the campus and just jam. Jamming is a term used by musicians to indicate playing together for the joy of the music rather than to rehearse for a particular performance.

During our jam session, I mentioned that I had been giving some thought to seeing a psychiatrist. I wanted to document a mental illness in the event I was called upon to take a physical examination.

My fear was being drafted into the army.

Phil asked what sort of mental illness I would fake. I told him that I'd tell the psychiatrist that I was a transsexual. Being transsexual might not be as effective today as it was in 1969. Surprisingly, Phil was not concerned that I had elected to profess that I was a transsexual, but wondered why -- of all the possibilities -- I had selected being a transsexual.

Thinking back on that day, I can't recall precisely what encouraged me to be so totally honest. He was certainly my closest friend. Yet, it was as difficult to talk about being transsexual in 1969 as it was to talk about being gay -- perhaps more so. Yet, I told him the truth. I told him that I was transsexual and had intended to live full-time as a woman following my graduation from college.

Again to my surprise, Phil announced that he too was transsexual. I found it quite difficult believing him. There was nothing in his appearance or demeanor to suggest he was telling the truth. His eyebrows weren't neatly shaped. His hands weren't shaved, nor his nails neatly tapered and polished. I had never observed even the slightest feminine gesture, nor heard even the slightest feminine inflection in his voice. How could anyone as obviously masculine as Phil be transsexual?

Phil explained that it would be impractical for him to have sex reassignment surgery (SRS). Surgery, he insisted, would not enhance the quality of his life. It would diminish the quality of his life.

"I've seen people like me who have had the surgery," he began. "They don't look like women and they're not accepted as women. They look like halfbacks in a mini-skirt. They become freaks. Who, in their right mind wants to have surgery simply to become a freak and a social outcast."

Phil continued, "I'm no less a woman now that I'd be if I were to have surgery. Except now, my life is undiminished. I have a life with a wonderful woman who loves me as much as I love her.

I have a wonderful career and soon I'll have a daughter. I'm to become a parent. What would a sex change do for me at this point in my life? It would alienate a very wonderful and loving woman, disrupt my family, destroy my career, and set me out in the world to be labeled a freak."

I could see by the expression on his face that this had been an issue he had thought out well. He offered no apology.

"Surgery provides cosmetic changes," Phil commented. "That's all surgery does. It's all surgery can do. Some people need to have the surgery regardless of the effect it has on their lives. They are, however, never accepted as women. They become transsexuals. They become that individual who "used to be a man," or who "used to be a woman.""

"If anyone can live that way, I don't have a problem with it. We each have to do what's best for us. I have no right to insist that you live according to my definitions for a man or a woman. However, you have no right to impose your definitions on me. That, my dear friend, is the bottom line."

"What happens to most transsexuals and most cross dressers," he continued, "is that they try to conform to a very closed minded society. Inevitably, it leads to that individual perceiving himself or herself to be the problem. However, the individual was never the problem. The problem was, and might always be, the society. So, why should I be the one forced to believe that I need to be somehow altered?"

Since 1969, I don't know how many men I've met who were actually women. They appeared to be men, but like the song suggests: "It Ain't Necessarily So."

As an African American who lives in America as a woman, I am more than aware that America is a racist and a sexist country filled with enormous prejudices. I can't be real, nor true to myself and believe otherwise. As a sane individual, I must confront reality. Many people prefer not to believe that this reality exists. I have nothing to say to such people. They live in a world of fantasy and my situation doesn't afford me their luxury.

So, to all the male-to-female and female-to male transsexuals in the world, and to all the cross dressers -- drag queens and drag kings alike, I say, be true to yourself. Be proud of who you are and what you do. Define yourself according to your own terms and your own standards. Don't let anyone else define you simply because they've written some book or hold a degree from Harvard, Princeton or Yale. It's you who matters, not them.

I've been writing about gender issues for 38 years, and I'm patiently observing the scholars and the culture move towards a philosophy I've advocated for close to half a century. I must be doing something correctly.

Phil never ingested or injected a drop of female hormones, and never had SRS. Yet, even as a man she was one of the most incredible women it had ever been my good fortune to meet. She was a woman where it mattered most: in her heart, mind, and soul.

It's not the transgendered community that is destroying society. It's society that is attempting to destroy the transgendered community. So, it should surprise no one that I'm very proud of who am I, what I am, and what I do. I hope that everyone in the transgendered community can say the

same. You're among the most diversified, creative and beautiful people on the planet. Please, don't ever allow anyone to tell you anything different.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

“The Pretty Volcano”

By Roberta Angela Dee

It was 1977. Nixon had resigned and it was a period of disillusionment for many Americans. It was the year President Jimmy Carter granted amnesty to more than 10,000 Vietnam protesters.

I was 28 years old and had been living as a woman for only 3 years. I drew attention only because I was so tall -- six feet. Still, because I was thin enough and feminine enough few people had any problem acknowledging that I was a lady.

I had a two-bedroom apartment on Long Island -- acquired because I knew that if I could attract a room mate, preferably another female, I would spend considerably less for lodging than if I rented a one-bedroom apartment and lived in it alone.

Not long after I secured the apartment, a young woman by the name of Carolyn accepted my offer to share the residence and most of the expenses associated with it. Carolyn was quite the opposite of myself. She was short and almost boyish in her demeanor; and where I was shy and reserved, Carolyn was outgoing and assertive. It was not until we had roomed together for three weeks that I revealed to her that I was transgendered.

“You’re more feminine than I am,” she exclaimed when I told her.

To convince her that I was telling the truth, I had to show her an earlier photograph -- one taken of me as a young man. She looked alternately at me and then at the photograph. Finally, she said, “Well, I guess you really want to be a woman.”

Like most people, Carol wanted to know when I would have my sex change operation. You see, the criteria in the 70s was that anyone born male, who wanted to be considered a woman, would have to have his penis severed and reconstructed to form a vagina. The idea that someone could be born male, and live as a woman, in many ways overwhelmed her -- as it did most people.

Carol insisted that I could never be a woman, so long as I retained a penis. This was how most people defined a transsexual at that time, and to a slightly less extent, some 20 years later, it is still the way that most people define a transsexual.

A transsexual, for most people, is a man who is willing to have his penis cut off so that people will respect him as a woman. The problem was that few people accepted a transsexual as anything but a transsexual. And this too continues to be true, although to a slightly less extent, some 20 years later.

I was fortunate that Carol liked me as a person. My being male or female was not all too important an issue to her. She enjoyed the fact that I was well-read and could answer her numerous questions on nearly any topic. Carol, you must understand, was inquisitive by nature; and I was, to say the least, an oddity to her. And, if not an oddity, most certainly an enigma.

Most of the time, she respected me as just another female. We shared the household chores, took turns doing the laundry, and spent many evenings talking about men and how they contrived to entice women to have sex with them. Every so often, however, should you direct a question to me

that would come as a total surprise. For example, we were both in the kitchen, preparing dinner. She turned to me abruptly and asked, "So, how many guys have you slept with?"

Carol had no way of knowing that, as a prostitute for my first male lover, I had over three hundred sexual encounters with approximately 30 different men. These encounters all took place within a year, but were not what I would consider to be relationships as her question implied. So, I told her that aside from the man who had taken my virginity, there had been only one other man.

"You mean to tell me that you're, what, 28 years old and you've only dated two men?"

"Well, two different men," I answered, "but I've slept with each of them a number of times."

"Oh, so you like to stick with one guy at a time," she replied with an inquisitive tone.

"Basically," I answered. "It's just not safe sleeping around anymore. Haven't you heard about AIDS?"

"Have you forgotten that I'm a nurse?" she retorted. "I haven't seen very many cases, but the patients I've seen were in very bad shape."

"And there's no cure," I added.

"None," she replied. "But it mostly affects gay and bisexual men."

"Yes. I know"

No one could have predicted how drastically the population of people infected with the HIV virus would change over the next few years. In fact, at the time I was rooming with Carol, few people had even heard of the HIV virus. If they knew anything, they knew of it only as AIDS or as the "gay disease" -- as it was known for several years.

Even before Carol grew to accept me as a woman, she respected me as such. This made me feel especially close to her.

The aspect I regretted most about being a transgendered woman was having to explain who and what I was to people. The whole world was locked into a very narrow perception of gender. Far too often, it seemed that I was fighting a one-woman, uphill battle to change those narrow views.

Being transgendered in 1977 was a good deal different than it is today. There were no buffers to all the prejudices that could be directed towards one individual. There were far few support groups, books, on-line chat groups -- none of the technological and social advances that make it so much easier today. It's still a difficult transition, but not nearly as difficult as when I decided to do what today is called a real life test (RLT).

Carol returned to the apartment somewhat later than usual one evening. I guess it must have been about 9:00 PM, and I was just getting up to prepare for bed.

She walked right up to me, slid her hand under my skirt, and started rubbing my derriere.

"What are you doing?" I asked, a bit startled and perhaps slightly offended.

“You’ve made love to a woman before,” she answered. “Am I so unattractive to you?”

“You’re not unattractive at all,” I replied. “But we’re room mates, not lovers.”

“Why can’t we be both?”

Before I could answer, Carol had lowered my panty and pulled it down to my ankle. I stepped out of them like an obedient child.

She whispered that she wanted to my caress my “pretty volcano” -- the phrase she used to refer to my tiny erogenous portal. And how exquisitely she used her finger to part the lips that served as a doorway to my innermost pleasures.

Somehow our conversations coupled with my patience had encouraged Carol to explore her own bisexual spirit. And in doing so, she did not hesitate to let me know which of us was more dominant and more experienced. Still, what aroused me most was the gentle way in which she took my love. She fully understood that it was my nature to be a woman. And whether or not she understood everything that caused me to develop in such a feminine way, she respected how I had developed.

That night I learned that there is an enormous difference in the way that a man dominates a woman from the way that a woman dominates a woman. A man is aggressive, and aggression is quite different from assertive.

Aggression merely engages strength and force. Assertiveness, on the other hand, engages sensitivity combined with mutual respect. Given a choice, I will always prefer a woman’s assertiveness over a man’s aggression. It’s a concept that male lovers should think about for a good while before their next conquest of a lady.

In any event, Carol did everything she could to ignite the pretty volcano that evening, and for many evenings afterwards. I assure you, the result was always pleasurably explosive.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

The Secret Garden

By Roberta Angela Dee

June of 1977 -- Long Island, New York

It was a day from the pages of a fairy tale. The sun wrapped each blade of grass with a luminescent glow. Robins, sparrows and finches sang, cheerfully. It was a weekday for us, but just any day for the scratchy sounds of the crows.

The herbal scent of the pasture moved seasoned with flowery fragrances of lavender, elderberry, and wild roses. On this day, Nature provided its personal aromotherapy -- one no man-made merchandiser could ever hope to match.

"It's so wonderful to be away from the noises," Marilyn commented while taking fruit, drinks, and sandwiches from the picnic basket. We watched her and agreed how comforting it was to be away from the noise pollution that had become so much a part of our everyday lives. At any other time, it would not be possible to hear some form of artificial sound -- the hard drive of a computer, the motor of a printer, the hum of a stereo, the automobiles, telephones or televisions. No one was ever totally free from the noises -- not ever. Even at night, we would hear either the heater or the air conditioner, or the hum of an electric street light beyond a window. It was only here, in our secret garden, that every sound was natural, gentle and feminine. It was only here that music was not pushed along by the sound of a snare drum.

Debra wore a lavender baby doll dress that looked very feminine on her. I wore a sheer top that tied on the side. Its long skirt matched the floral print. Virginia³ wore a slinky knit dress. Its hem was high and the fabric was avocado colored.

We were all in our late twenties, had all graduated from college, and we each had a well-paying job. None of us earned as much as the men in our fields, but as women we were each doing better than average.

"I like your outfit, Roberta." Marilyn commented. "I especially like the top. It's very delicate, very feminine."

"Roberta always dresses nicely," Debra added.

"Why, thank you, ladies," I replied. "Those are very nice compliments. Not that either of you look the least bit shabby."

They both said, "Thanks," and giggled. Debra's laughter was genuine. I had known her for the three years since I graduated from college. Marilyn, however, was a much more recent acquaintance, and I could not tell from her behavior whether she was totally comfortable with my being transgendered, or if her kindness was merely a well-directed effort to be polite.

"Someone open the wine," Marilyn suggested.

³ I am 90% sure this is supposed to say Marilyn, given that Virginia Prince was multiple decades older than Dee, and stated later in the chapter to have primarily corresponded during their friendship. Though I do enjoy the mental image of Virginia Prince in a high-hem avocado-colored slinky knit dress.

"You open it," I replied. "You're probably the strongest."

"Why do you think I'm the strongest?" She asked, pretending to feel offended.

"I don't," I answered. "I just didn't want to be the one to open it."

Again, we all giggled like adolescents at their first slumber party as near-women.

"You don't think it's too early?" Debra asked.

"Listen, we've brought two bottles of wine," I replied, "it's not like we hadn't planned to get wasted." And, again, we giggled.

"Oh, that breeze feels so nice," Marilyn cooed.

I raised my arms over my head and exhaled all my anxiety. My breasts protruded and I noticed Marilyn staring at them, as if I had no right to them. Perhaps, my interpretation was more paranoia than reality. Again, I could not be certain. So, I evaded her eyes and pretended I had not noticed her stare.

That was our first picnic. It occurred nearly 20 years ago. I was only 27 years old and my face showed considerably more innocence.

Jimmy Carter was President of the United States. Rosalind was First Lady, and many of the young girls were trying to dress like the movie character Annie Hall. Few people had even heard of the word transgendered. I had heard it when I was 11 years old. I watched Virginia Prince on the Alan Burke talk show -- one of the first to be nationally syndicated. These were the early days of television when television producers exercised good taste and moral restraints. So to see a man with breasts and obvious cleavage was an astounding event.

Mr. Burke puffed on his huge cigar and asked Virginia if she was a woman. He asked if she had had a sex change operation. Virginia insisted that she was a man but that he had chosen to live as a woman. He was the first to use the word transgendered as a means of distinguishing himself from someone who would be called a transsexual. Today, transgendered is used in several different ways -- some more correct than others.

Virginia and I continue to be friends. We corresponded for several years. He mailed a photograph of himself to my post office box in Augusta. Even at 70 plus years of age, he makes for a striking woman.

Virginia's philosophy is more anatomically based than mine. He feels he can live as a woman and still be a man. I disagree, particularly if one takes female hormones as we both have done for most of our lives.

Female hormones do more than redistribute fat and decrease muscularity. They influence the emotional state of the individual and causes changes to the structure of the brain. A male to female transsexual might, under the influence of female hormones, become less aggressive, more emotive and intuitive -- more like a woman. Hormones combined with lifestyle obviously produces a marked change in an individual. He is no longer a man in the traditional sense -- certainly not in

terms of gender, regardless of anatomical difference with those of a genetic female. Consequently, I say I am transgendered and female, because it is who I am in mind, heart and soul.

It would, however, have been unfair to expect Marilyn⁴ to understand that I was a woman. She accepted me as such mostly because I presented myself as a woman. In her heart of hearts, however, I knew that she believed me to be a male. Marilyn continues to represent a majority of people who fail to distinguish between sex and gender. Yet, even under present definitions, one can be a male and a woman. In other words, one's sex can be male while one's gender is decidedly female.

Regardless of our different philosophies, I wanted Marilyn to like me as a girl friend. I certainly wasn't trying to impress her as a male while I wore a sheer dress with a floral pattern.

"This is like an outdoor slumber party," Debra commented.

"This wine really has me feeling silly," Marilyn added.

"Don't blame it on the wine," I said, smiling to assure her that I was merely making a joke.

"Girl," she replied, "you ought to go all the way and have your operation. You make a good woman."

I didn't want to argue with her. I smiled but thought to myself that had I a dollar for each time someone had suggested I go "all the way" I would ever have to work another day in my life. Somehow the idea that the primary distinction between male and female is rooted in the genitals has embedded itself in every lay persona and even the academic community.

Is judging a human being on the basis of their genitalia really any different or morally correct than judging that individual on the basis of their bra size, the color of their skin, or any other physical attribute? Does a woman who has had a hysterectomy somehow become less a woman because she is no longer able to bear children? Does a castrated or impotent male become less a man because he can no longer father children?

In spite of all our technological advances, we continue to be very primitive in the way we access each other as human beings. Sociologists have proven that we reward people for being attractive. This naturally infers that we punish people for being less than attractive or what is perceived as beauty. An attractive woman holds an infant's attention longer than one who is less attractive. Yet, as the child matures, he or she seeks more important attributes in a parent. Somehow, between childhood and adulthood, many of us lose that wisdom, and again weigh physical attributes above an individual's capacity to love and nurture. I think that's very sad.

The End

⁴ Okay I really don't know how to interpret this one. Marilyn and Virginia are blurred here. Make of that what you will.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Mirrored Erotica

By Roberta Angela Dee

I was born in 1949. World War II had ended only 4 years earlier. I was just beginning to adjust to life and could not know how much the world was changing. Nor could I know of the "sameness" that was sweeping across the globe as cultures began to assimilate one another.

Today, except for architecture and language, there is little difference between Moscow and Paris, or between Tokyo and Brasilia. The rich are rich -- their walls covered with expensive portraits and original paintings. The poor are poor -- their walls either covered with newspapers to keep in the heat, or with peeling paint chips to better illustrate their poverty.

The sameness I write of is mostly reflected in the people -- their aspirations, their needs, their ambitions, their dreams.

In 1953, I was 4 years old. This was the year that I first began to realize I was not like other boys, that I was different. The difference, of course, was that I did not want to be a little boy. I wanted to be a little girl. In fact, I was already convinced that somehow, concealed within my male form, was the body of a little girl. And that little girl wanted an identity, a way to express herself, and to be recognized as both real and human.

Younger transsexuals do not understand how terrifying these thoughts were for me back in 1953. People did not talk about transsexuals. They rarely even referred to homosexuals. Homosexuals were referred to as being "queer" or "funny." The writers of the day used the word "gay," and it's still used today.

The point I am trying to make is that there was no word for me -- no word for who I was, nor for what I felt inside. There was no internet accessible for me to do a keyword search. There were no magazines, nor references from which I could draw a better understanding of my nature. Physically, I was male. But emotionally, there was a void and abyss that desperately needed to be filled with answers.

Today, people take transsexuality for granted. They hear about transsexuals on talk shows. They see transsexuals and transvestites in the movies. VH-1 even has Ru Paul, the famous African-American female impersonator, hosting a variety show. But back in 1953, if there was another male-to-female transsexual, she kept it to herself. She did not confess it, nor could she talk about it. These things were not discussed. It was not as it is today. Today, everything and anything is discussed. It was not this way when I was a child.

I imagine it was even more terrifying for the female-to-male transsexual. For him, the idea of a woman becoming a man was simply unthinkable, unimaginable. It would be regarded as an even greater act against God than the idea of a man wanting to be a woman.

It was not until I was 10 that I learned of Christine Jorgenson and Virginia Prince. These individuals became my heroines. They were the pioneers of transgender exploration! They were, and continue to be, my role models.

I do not know who the role models for a female-to-male transsexual might be. I do know they exist, and that for the female-to-male transsexual, these transgendered pioneers are as important to them as Christine Jorgenson and Virginia Prince are to me, and those of my generation.

By 1979, at the age of 30, I had taken a position as a writer for a small publishing company on Long Island. The company maintained offices in the newly constructed mirrored towers on Hempstead Turnpike. At the time, they were the most impressive examples of modern architecture that Long Island had to offer, and provided a clear indication that Long Island was well on its way to becoming a major metropolis.

The twin buildings were not only taller than anything else on Long Island at that time, but their reflective windows gave the illusion that the building was constructed solely of glass – an impressive and equally impossible accomplishment. Both the employers and employees who worked there had a sense of working in the future, or at least of working in some futuristic setting that somehow made them superior to those who worked in less impressive structures.

1979 was an interesting time. It was the year that Ohio agreed to pay \$675,000 to families of the dead and injured in the Kent State University shootings. Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of Britain. Three Mile Island became the site of America's first nuclear power accident. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Dustin Hoffman won an academy award for his role in "Kramer vs Kramer; and the play "Evita" won the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award.

I was 30 years old and had been living as a woman for 5 years. There were a few who suspected that I was a transsexual. No one, however, knew that I had never had a sex change operation.

I had already decided that, for me, there was no need for surgery. I was already a woman in mind, heart, and spirit. Nothing a surgeon could do could "carve in" or "carve out" a greater measure of womanhood. I do not suggest that surgery is wrong for everyone. It was wrong for me, and wrong for some who commit to surgery only to regret it later.

I was in the office working late one evening -- working on an important book proposal for a friend of an agent associated with the firm. I was alone. I looked at my watch and it was approaching 8:00 PM. The building -- with the exception of security -- was vacant. At least, that was my impression. However, as I walked down the hall towards the elevator, a gentleman in an office a few doors down called to me by name. "Miss Dee," he yelled out. "Could I get your opinion? It will just take a moment."

The gentleman was very attractive. He had a European, almost aristocratic air about him. His dark hair and dark bedroom eyes was coupled with a beautiful smile. It made him quite nearly irresistible.

"How do you know my name?" I asked.

"My dear," he began, "it's common knowledge that you're one of the best writers in the building."

"I'm flattered," I replied while adjusting my bra strap and fluttering my lashes ever so subtly. "I hadn't realized I was the topic of conversation here."

"Oh, trust me, Roberta. May I call you Roberta?" he asked. "I'm Philip Capolinni. I'm a partner with this accounting firm."

"Kah Ching," I thought to myself. "Yes, by all means, Mr. Capolinni, call me Roberta."

"No, just Phil," he interrupted. "Just call me Phil. Please."

"All right. But, tell me, Phil, why am I the topic of so much talk?"

"Because there isn't another woman working in this building who is 6 feet tall and as attractive as you," he answered while fully employing his charming smile.

"Right answer," I thought to myself. But I simply told him that once again I was very flattered.

"How can I help you this evening?" I asked.

"I'd just like you to read the second paragraph in this document and tell me if it's grammatically correct," he explained while handing the document to me.

I looked at it and while I was reading, Phil approached me from behind and suggested that I pay particular attention to the third sentence in the second paragraph.

He was terribly close, and it didn't take but a second to realize that he was coming onto me. "But did he realize I was transgendered? Did he think I was a post-operative transsexual or a genetic female?" I wondered to myself.

Before I could protest, he moved even closer. I could now feel his manhood pressing between my buttocks. A part of me wanted to protest his physical advance, but the feminine part of me overruled any protest and I found myself pressing back.

His hand moved quickly to my chest and he began fondling my right breast.

"Mmmm, real breasts," he announced.

The fact that he had said "real" breasts and not simply "nice" breasts told me that in some way he realized I was transgendered. Again, before I could even think to protest, his hand was under my skirt and he inserted a finger under my panty. Doing so, he removed any doubt as to what he did or did not know.

"You're so exquisitely feminine," he responded.

"And you're so exquisitely masculine," I replied.

"I've wanted to make love to a woman like you my entire life," he commented, breathing noticeably more heavy than earlier.

"You're not afraid you'll be disappointed?" I asked.

"I'm certain I won't be disappointed," he replied.

I removed my clothes and laid upon his desk. Although I could see the people and the street below, I knew they could not peer into the mirrored building. Still, the fact that there were people visibly beneath me added to the excitement I felt while with Phil.

After a half hour of pleasing me orally, I reached an incredibly intense orgasm. He mounted me at this most perfect moment, and took me to erotic heights I had never even imagined.

Our relationship remained discreet and a secret. No one knew of our passions for each other. There was no pretense of being in love, and it only lasted for the eight additional months I remained in the employ of the publisher.

I am sure that most men would question the ethics of our affair, and that the majority of women might see it as a passionate expression between two men. I maintain, however, that there was nothing queer, funny, nor gay about our love. It was driven by the same lust, the same passion that draws any aroused man to an equally aroused woman. Consider it however you wish. For me, it was and shall always be a union between feminine and masculine, male and female, man and woman.

Part Two – Westwego, Louisiana

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

“To Tell or Not To Tell”

By Roberta Angela Dee

On several occasions, I’ve dealt with the issue of whether or not to tell a gentleman that I am a transgendered woman. What I share with you ladies here is only one of several such occurrences.

I began living as a woman in 1981 while still living on Long Island. I had not had surgery of any kind, but had a distinctively feminine figure from having already taken a combination of female hormones -- Premarin (estrogen) and Provera (progesterone) for three years.

In 1984 Ronald Reagan was President of the United States of America, Vanessa Williams was Miss America, “Amadeus” was a favorite film, and I moved to Westwego, Louisiana to begin my first job as an independent subcontractor for an electrical generating station still under construction.

I arrived in Westwego in October, 3 months before Mardi Gras or “Fat Tuesday” as it is sometimes called. The facility where I was employed was 40 miles away in another town, or parish, as they’re called in Louisiana.

The most wonderful aspect of being an independent contractor was that no one cared if you were African- American or white, fat or thin, or male or female. All that mattered was that you did your job and got the job done on schedule.

At the somewhat muddy construction site, I typically wore tight Western jeans and a white Poet blouse -- a distinctively feminine combination, when you considered my environment. We worked 12 hours a day, and usually, 7 days a week. Yet, I somehow managed to find time to take the drive from Westwego and over the Mississippi River Bridge, to spend some time in The French Quarter where people from all over the planet came to party all night long particularly during Mardi Gras.

At this time, I’m 32 years old 6 feet tall, weigh 155 pounds (very slender) and I measure 40B - 30 - 40 -- what I measure today, although I’ve added a few pounds. Still, I “passed” easily and had no problem on the streets of New Orleans. Nor did I have a problem showing off my breasts from a tavern’s balcony for the crowds of intoxicated males on the grounds below. They loved the exposure, and I loved the attention.

On one particular evening, I was dressed to attract even the most docile male beast. I wore knee-high shiny black boots, black hose, a white pleated mini skirt, and a white military style jacket opened enough to expose a generous amount of cleavage. And, ladies, did I ever get the guys attention.

Tourist and native residents of New Orleans are sashaying down the streets with alcoholic drinks in hand, singing and laughing -- with several couples dancing -- and everyone having a gay old time. It’s one o’clock in the morning and I slip into a bar called “Papa Joe’s” that caters to a mixed clientele of gay, straight and transgendered people. No sooner than I sit at the bar and order a black Russian, a young man of apparent German descent approaches me and offers to pay for my drink. He’s cute as a button, but I tell him that I’m just cruising and couldn’t impose on him, as I had no intentions of staying more than a few minutes. But he politely insisted and I graciously accepted.

His name was Andy. I cannot recall his last name. And, if I was to meet him tomorrow, I would not know who he was. What I do remember of him was his dirty-blond hair and that he had one blue eye and one green eye. This alone made him fascinating to gaze upon. But there was more than his hair and his eyes. He was a marvelous conversationalist, but also took the time to ask questions about me and to listen to my replies. Each gesture spoke of a gentleman cavorting about a lady. And that was the quality about him that appealed to me most: he never once treated me as anyone less than a perfect lady. And even in my rather sultry attire, I played the part as best I knew how.

Already a few minutes had become an hour. And so, when he invited me out to an early morning breakfast, again I accepted.

The waitress, I believe, assumed that I was just another girl picked up by a stranger to be a companion for a night. Still, she was professionally polite, as her position demanded.

Since we were in a very public place, I was less fearful of him reacting in any way that was hostile. So I merely told him that I was a transgendered woman, that I was born a male but had been taking hormones for several years. I also told him that in the masculine sense I was impotent, but liked both genders -- male and female.

I told him because I firmly believe that every relation, even one fated for a single evening, deserves to be initiated on an honest footing. More importantly, if he truly liked me for my personality, then my real or perceived gender should not matter. He had invited me out as a gentleman invites a lady out for the evening. And I provided the companionship of a lady. So, the only question of importance should be whether or not we would become intimate.

In this instance, the gentleman had already suspected that I was transgendered. And since he himself was bisexual, it did not matter to him.

On other occasions, the gentleman did not know and was astonished to discover my secret. Fortunately, I've always been careful about the demeanor of the individual with whom I've conversed. And, I've always selected a public place to reveal my secret. On a few occasions, the gentleman expressed some measure of disgust and left me to foot the bill, but mostly the outcome has been favorable.

That evening, Andy and I made love, and it was a beautiful exchange of physical passion and emotional eroticism. Some might say it was an affair between two men. Others might concede that for all practical purposes, it was a man and a woman.

I do not write to convince you one way or the other. This is simply my story for you to judge however it pleases you.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Women Are Like Rivers

By Roberta Angela Dee

July of 1982 -- Westwego, Louisiana

I was 33 years old in 1982. Looking feminine required more time and more effort. Perhaps, it even took a little more pressed powder.

Fortunately, a degree of wisdom followed the inevitable loss of innocence.

So while it was not as easy to look pretty, it was easier to carry myself in a way that better suggested being pretty.

My work at the construction facility went well. I was the “tall black woman” and little beyond that was rarely ever mentioned. I’m not so attractive that none suspected that I might be transsexual. However, no one ever approached me about it, and that was the best a woman in my position could wish to achieve.

Still at 33 years old, I remained a single woman. This alone drew a certain amount of suspicion. “Don’t you feel your biological clock ticking?” women would ask me in the lady’s rest room. And I would tell them that I could not conceive. This, of course, was quite true.

There were many days when I would be approached by my supervisor, and I wondered if he was about to tell me that there was a ‘discrepancy’ concerning my social security number or employment history. It never happened, but I knew that if my womanhood was challenged, I would simply leave and allow them to conclude whatever they wished.

Legally, I had no defense. I would be charged with misrepresentation, and the charge would be valid because “legally” I was still a man. So, the law was not on my side. I knew, however, that without my admission, an employer could not specify the reason for my discharge. This would allow me to pursue employment with another contractor within the area where I had the most experience. So, although a discharge would be a major inconvenience, my life would at least be repairable.

I knew that I was a woman, and Rebecca knew. She had never thought of me as anyone other than another female. Society was the problem. Stereotypes from the Middle Ages reined supreme in America. It was even prevalent among other transsexuals who insisted that the only means to achieve credibility as a woman was to have sex reassignment surgery (SRS).

I had a number of reasons for not having surgery. Good surgery by a well informed physician was expensive. It would easily have cost me \$12,000 dollars back in 1982, and \$12,000 dollars was considerably more difficult to come by than it is today. There was also the factor pertaining to the quality of surgery. No surgeon, even today, guarantees that the results will measure up to the patient’s expectations. Back in 1982, the expectations were not nearly as high as they are today. Yet, even if the surgery was perfect and there were absolutely no complications, the new vagina would still not be the same as that of a genetic woman’s vagina. The surgical vagina would be more prone to infections, lack depth, and was considerably more fragile. So, the question I asked myself was: did I have to exchange a satisfying sex life and a life as a woman, for surgery that was at best risky and could produce unreliable results?

“But how can you be a woman, if you have a penis?” transsexuals persistently asked. And I would tell them that my gender was determined by who I was, not how I was constructed. If you surgically added a penis to a genetic woman, she would in fact be a woman with a penis. The main point was that surgery could not change who I was as a woman. It could only change how I looked.

I had never challenged any transsexual’s decision to have surgery. For many I thought it was a fruitless measure, but I never disputed their right to make that choice. Over the years, however, I had begun to strongly resent the number of transsexuals and so called androgynous transsexuals who had questioned my right to make a choice that differed from their own.

A very close friend of mine named Gerald Saunders had been transsexual. She knew she was a woman. There was no doubt about it. Yet, she married a woman and fathered three beautiful children. He pretended to be a man until the day he died. He was never happy, but continued to be a man because he felt it was the right thing to do. For him it was a matter of respecting his parents and his religious convictions.

However, whenever I mentioned Gerald to other transsexuals, they would heartlessly dismiss his transsexualness. “Oh, he must never have truly been transsexual,” they’d say. “If he were a true transsexual, he could never have lived that way.”

I, however, will never forget the last day I visited him in the hospital. He asked that I make certain that he was buried with something pretty. And it was so sad. Here was a woman who had lived as a man her entire life, as a matter of principles. Could I dismiss her right to be buried with some form of dignity as a woman? I could not.

At the funeral, I slipped a pretty little broach into her jacket pocket. It was buried with her. And if there is a life after death, I know she’s happy in that life and that she has thanked me for being compassionate where others could show only disdain.

The moment induced an emotion I shall never forget. It increased my sense of humanity and my ability to be compassionate towards those who are different -- regardless of their differences.

American was a nation erected on the principle of tolerance. It deeply disturbed me that there were so many who advocated intolerance and spread their passion for intolerance to so many people.

I shared my thoughts with Rebecca, the woman I had come to love so dearly. She invited me to take a walk with her. And so, we walked for nearly a half mile. Our trek took us to a river far behind the apartment complex and not far from some swamp land. She and I sat along the banks of a river that was too wide to cross.

“We are like that river,” she said. “Women are like rivers.”

How are women like a river?” I asked.

“We just are,” she answered. “It’s what we are. We’re rivers.”

Rebecca saw the confusion in my eyes and then proceeded to elaborate.

“When a man mimics a woman, when he cross dresses or whatever, he mimics the waves of a river. He mimics the flow, the way it moves. A river, however, has more elements than just its waves. Where the river is narrow, it flows faster. Where it is broader, it flows more slowly. Some areas of the river may be very shallow and other areas may be very deep. So a single river will have many different characteristics. Just like a woman. One woman -- but what gives her depth is the variety within her soul, the textures within her being, the many different currents to the ways she lives her life. She like a river can have many currents, so can a woman, Currents within currents. Currents above and below currents.”

It was clear to me. As I had aged the depth of my womanhood had grown and had aged too. I was no longer just a river that mimicked other rivers. I too possessed the many currents and patterns that are all a part of being a woman. And it felt good. It felt good to be a woman -- a real woman!

“I understand you, Rebecca,” I told her, as we walked back to the apartment. “I understand every word that you’ve said. I understand you perfectly.

"Ah, yes," she answered, happily. "You are a woman. You understand."

The End

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

From Bourbon Street to the Boudoir, Part One

By Roberta Angela Dee

In June of 1982, I drove for 21 days from Long Island, to Gretna, Louisiana. Actually, I drove to a town called Killona where three nuclear power stations were positioned not far from the Mississippi River. The river provided cooling water.

Killona is an industrial town. Dow Chemical has a huge plant there. They manufacture an important ingredient added to anti-freeze. The entire area smells of chemicals and sulfur. Added to an already disagreeable smell is the stench from stagnant and chemically saturated pools of water.

The main roads to several of the plants are flanked on both sides by cemeteries. These cemeteries serve as the final resting ground for former employees. Most have died from various forms of cancer -- possibly a result of the chemicals they had handled and inhaled year after year.

Louisiana's high water-table makes it necessary to encase the bodies of the deceased in concrete caskets above ground level. Behind the fields of bodies, one can see fumes rise from tall stacks that rise above the production facilities. These stacks release the air-borne by-products of the production process. It all looks unhealthy and unsafe.

It appears that Mother Nature cursed this place and makes it obvious that she will not visit it again. It caused me to have a second thought as to why I had accepted a position here in the first place.

After parking, I walked to the security gate. I was greeted by an armed guard who -- after examining my driver's license -- called the production manager. Another armed guard issued a temporary clearance badge and escorted me to the manager's office.

The production manager was an elderly gentleman, slightly overweight, and with a full head of gray wavy hair. He introduced himself as Jack Frost.

"You're certainly a tall one," he suggested, after indicating that I should have a seat near his desk.

"Six feet," I answered, casually, as if reporting just another statistic.

He seemed a bit nervous, or was perhaps intimidated -- as some men are -- by a tall woman.

"So, did you have a safe trip?" he asked. "Did you fly or arrive by car?"

"I drove," I answered, confidently. "I completed the trip in 21 days."

"From where?" he asked.

"Long Island," I replied.

"Oh, a New York City girl," he announced as if my accent hadn't already revealed I was from the Northeast.

"Actually, Long Island is quite different from New York City," I informed him. "Long Island is a lot more suburban -- not as suburban as this place, but not nearly as populated as the city."

"You'll start Monday," he announced, abruptly returning his attention to business matters. "The hours are 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Ten hours a day, seven days a week. Can you handle that?"

"Not a problem," I answered. "I worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week at the Michigan plant."

"For how long?" he asked.

"Six months."

"This should be a piece of cake then," he replied. Then pointing out his side window, he said, "That's the trailer you'll be working in. You'll report to the Quality Assurance Manager."

He escorted me to the door and directed me back to the guard shack. The guard examined my badge, then recorded my departure time on his clip board.

When I reached my car, I decided that instead of driving back to the motel, I would drive straight out to The French Quarter in New Orleans. It would probably be my only chance to visit the famous tourist site for quite a while.

While strolling through the Quarter, I was fortunate to see and hear some of the most talented bands, singers, impersonators I had ever seen or heard in my brief and wonderful lifetime at the age of 33 years. Talent was everywhere. In the taverns, on the streets, and even in the shops. I worked my way up along Bourbon Street, and reached the gay bars.

At one of the bars, I met a most fascinating woman. Her name was Rebecca and she was originally from Detroit. She had only recently moved to Louisiana, and was looking for a roommate to share her two bedroom apartment.

I told her that I was transgendered and defined this to mean that I was transsexual and comfortably living as a woman without any intention of ever having surgery.

She looked down at my breasts, and asked how long I had been taking female hormones. I told her I had been taking hormones for several years, and she seemed absolutely amazed and intrigued by the fact that she had perceived me to be genetically female. She then asked if we could go somewhere where we wouldn't have to shout at each other. We immediately, left the gay bar and walked down to Gunga Din -- a club where female impersonators perform and often socialize.

Shortly after we were seated and had ordered drinks, Rebecca told me that she was bisexual and had always been intrigued by anyone born biologically male and could live and socially function as a female.

"Then, you fully accept me as a woman, although I've not had surgery?" I asked.

"Of course I do," she answered. "You're a woman in mind, heart, and spirit. That should be all that matters. Surgery has nothing to do with it. If you had cancer and refused surgery, it certainly

wouldn't mean that you no longer had cancer. So, why should I perceive you as any less of a woman, simply because you've not had surgery.

"I ask only because it's the way most people feel." "Well most people are assholes," she replied. "Taking a penis and reshaping it to function as a vagina does not make one a woman."

Pointing to her heart she added, "You have to be a woman in your heart. Pointing to her forehead she said, "You have to be a woman in your mind." And, finally, while pointing to her chest, she said, "You must spiritually be a woman."

I agree with you with all my heart," I commented. "You're an exceptional woman."

"And so are you," she replied.

It was very refreshing to talk to a woman with an open mind about the way I've chosen to be transgendered. She was equally open minded about crossdressers.

"I judge crossdressers the same way I judge anyone," she stated. "If a crossdresser dresses like a slut and behaves like a slut, then I don't try to treat that person like a lady. I treat them the way I would any woman or man whose behavior was socially unacceptable. I'd ignore that man or woman. But if I meet a crossdresser who dresses like a lady and behaves like a lady, then there's absolutely no reason for me not to treat that individual the same way I would treat any other lady. There's no reason whatsoever.

"Good for you," I exclaimed. "I wish you could talk to all of my transsexual and transgendered friends. So many of them have been brainwashed to believe that you must have surgery to be a transsexual. Or, they've been brainwashed to believe that crossdressing is wrong and somehow deviant. Your point of view is not only refreshing, it's healthier for the individual than anything I've heard in a long time.

She leaned forward, moving her lips very near to mine, and said, "Well, you seem like someone who would make an excellent roommate, sweetie, if not something more."

"I'd love to be your roommate, girl friend," I answered, "but when do I get to find out about the 'something more'?"

She smiled, gave me a sweet little kiss, and said, "You could find out tonight, if you're interested."

That same evening, I showed Rebecca just how much woman Roberta could be.

But I'll save the naughty details for a little later. OK?

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

From Bourbon Street To the Boudoir (part 2)

By Roberta Angela Dee

This is a continuation of last month's story, so many of you were kind enough to request.

June of 1982 -- Westwego, Louisiana

We left the lounge and drove away from the French Quarter. Rebecca rode in a Chevrolet Corvair, and I drove in a Mercury Capri. We traveled across the Mississippi River Bridge, through the parish of Gretna, and through the Harvey Tunnel. The Harvey Tunnel seemed familiar. Where had I seen it before? About midway through the tunnel, I recalled that I had seen the tunnel in a scene from "Cat People." I also recalled the scene where Nastassia Kinski runs through the woods naked while being transformed into a ferocious leopard. Somehow Nastassia was always able to combine ferocity with femininity.

A woman can be totally feminine and yet a complete bore. Femininity is always most intriguing when it combines with some element that usually not associated with it. For example, the super-intelligent feminine woman attracts as well as she repels men. Some find that such a woman serves as a delightful challenge. Others might fear her or be intimidated. Yet, all are intrigued by the combination of intelligence and femininity. It's perhaps the reason so many men dismiss feminists, particular those who appear butch or masculine. Intelligence is thought to be their only saving grace, but even then few are impressed.

Nastassia combined ferocity with femininity. What would I combine to intrigue Rebecca, or had I already intrigued her?

We were both able to parks our vehicles in front of her apartment. As I exited from my car, Rebecca made a complimentary remark about my long legs. I merely smiled, but I understood it was a cue. She was definitely asserting herself as the dominant female. Her comment suggested she was as intrigued by my physical dimensions as she was with my looks and my manner of dress. She was intrigued that a woman who looked so physically powerful could be so demure, delicate, and dainty. Fragility and femininity -- these were the elements I decided to combine for the sweet Rebecca.

The apartment was roomy and nicely decorated. The decor was decidedly masculine, but that was not a surprise. She wanted it to appear more like the bachelor's den than a lady's boudoir.

She was successful.

"You can spend the night, if you'd like," she offered. However, there's only one bed."

"I could sleep on the sofa," I suggested.

"Sorry, hon', but there's not enough room on the sofa for all I want to do to you."

"What, precisely, do you intend to do?" I asked, innocently.

Rebecca looked at me directly, and said, "I intend to make love to you the way a woman wishes a man would make love."

“But you haven’t the proper equipment.”

“Oh, but I’m full of surprises, darling,” she replied. “I’m full of surprises.”

She started to undress, hurling her clothes onto the chair in the bedroom, as if she were a man. She was already presuming my consent.

“I’ll sleep in your bed, Rebecca,” I told her, “but don’t expect anything more than that.

She smiled.

“I can respect your rejection,” she commented, “but I’m terribly disappointed.”

“Why so?” I asked.

She burst into laughter, saying, “Girl, have you taken a good look at yourself lately? I mean, do you he any idea how good you look? I started drooling the instant I laid eyes on you. I’d be out of my mind, if I didn’t come after you.”

“Is that right?” I answered, nearly whispering but sending my approval through a whimsical smile.

“Damn straight,” she nearly shouted.

She then invited me to freshen myself in her bathroom. A fresh face cloth and bath towel had already been placed on the counter top. It was clear that she had expected a guest. I washed and excited wearing only my bra, garter, panty, hose, and heels.

“Damn, girl!” she cried out. “there’s no way, absolutely no way, you and I can sleep in the same bed together, and I not touch you. I’ll sleep on the sofa. “Cause I’m freakin’ out just looking at your sexy body.”

Prior to her response, there was a bit of apprehension. As a woman, approaching a woman is a difficult choice. It’s easy to approach a man and to offer him sex. It’s easy to accept a man’s request for sex, provided that a woman is attracted to the man. Women are, however, far more observant and critical. If nothing else, Rebecca made me feel comfortable with her.

I approached her and kissed her, and then I ran my tongue gently across her lips. When I withdrew my tongue, she kissed me deeply. Her kiss left me dazed. Had she not steadied me, I’m certain I would have fallen. It was the first time I had ever received such enormous passion from a single kiss -- a kiss delivered by another woman. It was as frightening as it was wondrous.

The music of Chopin played sweetly in the background. The composer most definitely understood the harmonics of the piano, perhaps as much as he understood the harmonics of love.

Such comprehension is rare in a fast-paced society. I was deeply moved by the subtleties of her gestures.

While I had freshened myself in the bathroom, Rebecca had lit seven scented candles. Their scents had filled the room with a delicate fragrance, and the light was as soft and as sweet as Chopin's preludes. As do most women, I revered a lover who could display a sense of roman before making love.

"Excuse me for just a minute, Roberta," she said. "I'll be in the bathroom for a few minutes and then I'll join you."

"I'll probably be in bed before you get out," I replied.

"That'll be fine, hon'," she answered. "Make yourself comfortable."

I removed my heels and lied faced down on the bed. There was a book of poetry on the night stand and I began reading it.

I did not hear Rebecca as she exited from the bathroom. I did, however, feel her sweet kisses on my bottom. I ignored her, but then she began to lower my panty. Her kisses were more intimately placed now.

I returned the book to the night stand and turned over to face her. My bra had already been unfastened and as I turned over, she removed it.

"You have the cutest nipples," she commented and then giggled. I giggled too.

"And they're both so nicely erect," she said as she leaned forward and held my left nipple between her lips, pulling on it just enough to tease me. Then she began fondling each breast while nursing on my left nipple.

Something hard and firm brushed against my thigh. I moved back to take a look. It was a black strap-on that she had secured to her body while in the bathroom.

"What do you think of your surprise?" she asked with a smile.

"It's huge! It looks menacing," I replied.

Menacing?" she repeated with a questioning tone.

"Well, it's so long and thick. It arouses me just to look at it."

"I'll have to acquaint you with it on a more intimate level then," she replied.

I blurted out, "You have to remember ..."

Before I could finish, she placed her finger on my lips to quiet me, and said, "All that I remember is that you're just as much a woman as I. I'll be gentle with you. Trust me."

We looked at each other. No other words were spoken as she moved her surprise nearer to my lips.

She reciprocate my oral act of submission and brought me to a climax more intense than I had ever known. Her fingers prepared me for what would follow -- penetration. She moved slowly, expertly. Feeling her hugeness inside of me took me to a place where I could anticipate an even greater level of ecstasy. She did not disappoint me. In fact, she repeated her embraces three more times that night.

The sun was rising and we exchanged our final kisses and fell into a blissful sleep.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

A Lady's Passion

By Roberta Angela Dee

June of 1982 -- Westwego, Louisiana

The sun was rising, and as it rose, and as its light entered her bedroom window, Rebecca put her lips to mine and filled me with the taste of her sweet emotions.

I looked at her and smiled. She smiled back, then turned her back to me in order to take a few minutes more sleep. I moved closer to her and kissed the back of her neck. She giggled like a little girl with a new doll. She giggled as I did the very first time I was kissed by a boy. How strange it is the some childhood events stay with us, frozen in our memories like old leaves imprisoned by ice during Winter.

There was a fragrance to Rebecca that was as clean and fresh as dew on Spring apples. It was perfectly feminine, and remained so even after so many hours of passionate love.

Rebecca had made love to me using every part of her body to explore every part of mine, except, of course for that part of me that served as a reminder of the boyhood I once knew. How distant the memory seemed now.

She had heard me moan like a Bourbon Street whore, tempted me to part my thighs like a virgin bride intent to consummate her marriage. She had witnessed the most fragile qualities of my femininity and made me feel more womanly than the heroine of a romance novel.

I had heard women say that at the height of love they begin to feel like little girls again. It's a feeling that comes when a woman completely surrenders herself to her lover. It's the moment when she's most vulnerable, yet feels the most secure and protected. She's a little girl in her daddy's arms again, as vulnerable as she is safe. It was how I felt as I moved closer to Rebecca and savored the warmth of her flesh. I felt like a little girl.

Who was this incredible woman? I had never imagined that any lesbian would ever find me attracted. And there I was -- in bed with a lesbian who had made love to me so intensely that I would continue to be fatigued a full day afterwards. Lord have mercy! There truly is a God!

A part of me -- perhaps the more bitchy part -- wanted to invite every transsexual who had ever told me that I would have to have surgery before I could realize the splendor of the kind of love I had just experienced with Rebecca. I wanted to invite them to watch Rebecca dismiss all their silly theories while she made love to me.

Only 30 minutes later, Rebecca rose to shower. I made breakfast and then told her that I wanted to visit one of the dress shops in the French Quarter. The prior evening, I had seen a leather dress in a shop window. It was a rich tan color, absolutely beautiful. What impressed me most, however, was the intricate detailing in the leather itself. The impeccable detail combines with its design and drape would make it a dress no woman could see and not envy.

Westwego was about as rural as any populated area in America. It was comprised mostly of apartment complexes, small houses, shacks, automobile service stations, and a generous number of convenience stores. There was, however, a K&L Drug Store about a mile or two from our own

apartment complex. Rebecca reminded me that she needed to stop there before proceeding to the Quarter.

"I need tampons and a bottle of Scotch," she said with a sophisticated Southern voice so sensuous that it would force any gentleman to grovel at her feet. It was a voice as thick and sweet as a young man's ejaculate. And I was certainly a lady who found pleasure in the taste of gentleman's fluid of passion.

In Louisiana, one could purchase liquor in a drug store or a fuel pump station. It was not as it was in New York, where liquor could only be sold in state licensed liquor stores. K&L was an especially interesting establishment. I could liken it to a mini K-Mart or a mini Walmart. The store contained a wide assortment of trinkets and baubles. Going there made me feel like a school girl visiting a nickel and dime store for the first time.

For those of you too young to know, nickel and dime stores were once very popular across the United States. One could go there and find a wide variety of inexpensively priced items.

These stores frequently carried items that would attract children, inexpensive toys and such. However, they were also keen to address a woman's sewing needs during a time when women mended clothes and did not simply throw them away to buy new ones. Today, mass production as much as feminism, has caused us to lose sense of how precious an item can be. Today, we simply toss away those things that no longer entertain our senses or our needs. Our values and our sense of value has somehow been cheapened.

I spotted Rebecca standing in line with her box of tampons and a bottle of Ballantine's 12-year old Scotch. Scotch was supposedly a man's drink, but Rebecca and I found that it could also work for a lady. Besides, Rebecca was well aware that after a shot or two of good Scotch, I would nearly always be in the mood for her amorous pursuits. Just looking at the bottle, I could hear her say, as she had the night before, "I love the way your pretty little twat quivers when it senses my tongue approach." She had, however, understated the completeness of my response, for in reality, my entire being quivered.

I could barely wait to reach the Quarter. We proceeded immediately to the dress store. Before going inside, I admired it -- this wonderful work of art propped in the front window, displayed like a priceless heirloom.

The proprietress was a dark-complexioned woman. Her ethnicity was impossible to determine. However, what struck me most was that her complexion was flawless -- without a single pimple, pore, or imperfection.

I inquired as to the cost of the leather dress. She answered with a slow and a very soft voice, saying, "It takes a very special woman to wear this leather dress. I must measure the woman so that the dress fits properly. This is not a dress you pull from a rack at Macy's. This dress is very special."

"I can see it's special," I replied, still waiting for her to tell me its cost.

"You are not from this part of the country," she continued. "You do not understand the religions and beliefs here. You do not understand the earth and the plants the animal fed upon, nor how it becomes a part of this dress, nor how this dress becomes a part of the woman who wears it. This is not a dress one wears just to be a woman for a weekend. This is not a dress -- "

"I know this lady as well as any woman can know another woman," Rebecca interjected. "If I didn't believe she was woman enough, I would not be here with her."

"You are saying you are lovers?" the woman asked.

"I am saying that she is woman enough to wear any dress you have in your shop," Rebecca replied.

"Being a woman is not something that you can buy," the woman responded. "It is not something you have a doctor do to you so that you can walk around calling yourself a woman."

I told the woman that I understood what she had said far better than she could understand it herself. She smiled, then said, "It will cost you \$750.00 dollars, and I require a \$250 dollar deposit."

"That's not a problem," I told her.

"Then I will measure you today," she replied. "This is not something that I do for money. These dresses become a part of the woman who wears it. Trust me when I tell you that, if she is not a woman before she wears it, she will certainly be a woman afterwards. The leather is blessed that way."

She led me to a back room and had me remove my outer clothing, and then she started to take her measurements.

"You have pretty breasts," she said as she wrapped the tape around its fullest part.

"Thank you."

"Yesterday, a transsexual came in," she began telling me. He had just had a sex change operation a month ago. And he wanted to buy one of my dresses. I told him that I was no longer doing custom design work, that if he could find something that fit him in the shop, I would sell it to him. But I knew there was nothing that would fit."

She laughed, and I asked her why she had refused to make a dress for the transsexual.

"Because he was not a woman," she answered, sternly. She was very pretty and she certainly looked like a woman. But she was not a woman in her heart -- as desperately as she believed she wanted to be a woman, she had not yet become a woman in her heart, mind, and soul. She was nothing like you, and so I encouraged her to leave. I do not sell my dresses to pretenders."

"I understand," I told her. "The value of these dresses is far more than can be measured in dollars."

"Ah, yes," she answered, happily. "You are a woman. You understand."

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

The Mirror

By Roberta Angela Dee

I believe that each of us who ventures beyond the closet, at one time or another, has a moment of doubt. Someone looks at us a certain way, and the look makes us wonder if we are "passing in public" as they say.

The look may cause fear. It might cause the adrenaline to flow, our hearts to pound faster as we anticipate the consequences of being exposed.

Still, no matter how often it happens, the desire to be out is even stronger, as is the desire to be looked upon and accepted as a woman.

No one who has ventured out -- whether they are transgendered, transsexual or a cross dresser -- can say they have not shared this experience with me. It is the experience that bonds us whether we are African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. We know the look and the fear.

Of course, we all learn through experience and by making mistakes. So, the more often we venture out of the closet, the more comfortable we become.

I was 28 years old, and had been accepted as Roberta Angela Dee for only three years. But already I was earning an income as a woman, maintaining a household, shopping, socializing and gossiping along with other women -- all as a woman myself. I had eliminated, by this time, all traces and remembrances of my former self. As far as I was concerned, I was not a man, nor had I ever been a woman. I was a girl, a woman -- a female person, struggling like every other woman, to make it in a man's world.

And Roberta Angela Dee was a good girl. She played by the rules that govern every decent woman. For example, she would never date a girl friend's lover or a girl friend's former lover, never sleep with a married man, never go out immodestly or improperly, and never place a dollar value on the value of her femininity.

I learned very early on that if I wanted to be respected as a woman, and if I wanted to truly experience the joys of being a woman, I would need to play by the rules. Exceptions were not an option.

Being tall and thin, I knew how to dress to take advantage of my fragile yet feminine frame. I wore flimsy silk skirts. They were short and easily moved by the slightest breeze. And I wore elegant body shirts that caressed my newly formed breasts and announced to onlookers that I was indeed a very feminine creature.

During a night out at "Papa Joe's" -- a famous tavern in the French Quarter, New Orleans, I met a salesman from Nebraska. He was tall, distinguished, well dressed and he offered to buy me a drink, if I would sit at his table.

I glanced down for signs of a wedding ring -- either the ring itself or an indication that one had been worn. But there was no sign.

We chatted and within 15 minutes of conversation, I was thoroughly impressed with his demeanor, his wit, his intelligence and good manners. But I wondered if he knew I was transgendered.

When I felt comfortable enough to raise the question, I asked if he knew the difference between being transgendered and being transsexual.

"A transsexual is an individual who wants to have a sex change to be what they feel they are inside. And a transgendered person simply lives the way they feel inside, but never has the surgery."

"Close enough," I answered. And then, after pausing only a few seconds, I added, "And I'm transgendered."

He replied, "And I'm bisexual, so it doesn't matter. All I know is that you seem to be a very nice lady, and I'm very attracted to you."

Then, at that precise moment, I experienced what every woman experiences when the right man responds to her, and she feels herself responding to him as well. I could say it is magic, but that wouldn't explain it. I could call it arousal, but that would cheapen it. In reality, it is a beautiful surge in emotional femininity, a rise in the desire to shower a man with the very essence of your womanhood, to have him appreciate the love, and to return the love in kind.

I do not pretend to speak for all women, nor even most women, nor even those of us who are transgendered. But I believe all of us -- whether transgendered, transsexual, or woman-born women -- know this joy. And just as our fears bond us, our desire to be loved bonds us. It's something the feminists and Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization of Women (NOW), could never understand.

The truth of the matter is that Patricia Ireland, nor can anyone else explain why she was born bisexual anymore than I can explain why I was born transgendered. Fate is blind.

"There's a discotheque on the roof of the hotel where I'm staying," he said. "Do you like to dance?"

"I love to dance," I told him -- with all the happiness of a little girl who had just been offered a piece of candy from her daddy. "Let's dance!"

And I left with this man who made me happy to be a woman, happy to feel protected in the midst of his strength and power.

When we reached the hotel, he got out of the car and opened the door for me. He then helped me out of the car. "What a wonderful man he is," I thought to myself. And I strutted into the hotel as though I were a princess being escorted by her handsome prince -- home from a victorious battle. And already I knew I could do anything for him, anything to please him.

While we were in the elevator, he pulled me near to him and kissed me. Then he began kissing my neck and earlobe. At first my eyes were closed. But when I opened them I saw, reflected in the mirror that covered the elevator door, a very happy woman -- whether transgendered or whatever. All I saw and all I knew I could be was a very happy woman.

I do not write to convince you one way or the other. This is simply my story for you to judge however it pleases you.

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Lesbian Romance

By Roberta Angela Dee

I have never been able to explain the intensity of the first night I saw Selena Lopez. That night will remain inscribed in my heart for all eternity. It was a moment filled with magic.

I had only recently moved into a fabulous house on the hills of Colfax, California, and was standing out by the pool. Beyond the pool, there was about 200 feet of vegetated terrain. It rose to an elevation about 20 feet above the level where I stood.

It was then that I noticed a woman strolling across the top of the hill, her exquisitely feminine physique silhouetted by a full moon. Her short Georgette dress draped delicately over the fullness of her unbound breasts and sculptured derriere. She was the essence of everything feminine, the core of feminine power, mystique and beauty.

At times, she would disappear briefly behind a tree. When she emerged, it was as if an angel had appeared out of the night, the darkness. I had never before witnessed a more beautiful vision.

The woman seemed oblivious to my standing there, although I was very well illuminated and clearly visible through the shrubbery and trees. I hoped she would look down and see me. Another hope was that her stroll was intentionally staged to capture my attention. Whatever her intent, the beautiful woman, silhouetted in her sheer dress, filled my thoughts and dreams for the remainder of that eventful night.

The next morning while I was sweeping leaves in the backyard, I noticed a woman descending along a cleared path on the hill. She carried a tray covered with a kitchen towel.

"Hello," she yelled from afar, perfectly enunciating the word with a melodious voice.

"Hi there," I replied, as I wondered who she was and why she had decided to approach me. Was she the same woman I had seen and fantasized about the night before?

"Hi, I'm Selena Lopez," she announced, sensuously. "You and I are neighbors. I'm in the next house moving up the hill -- the house next to yours."

"Pleased to meet you, Selena," I answered, somewhat apprehensively. "I'm Roberta Dee."

"Nice meeting you too," she said, then extended the pan. "I've baked some yeast rolls. Hope you like them."

"Why thank you, Ms. Lopez!"

"Please call me, Sel or Selena. I detest formality."

I removed the kitchen towel from the pan. The scent of the freshly baked yeast rolls filled the air around us. They looked delicious! I invited Selena into the house. She took a seat at the kitchen table while I removed the rolls from the aluminum pan and placed them in a Tupperware plastic container. I then folded the towel and placed it in the pan, and placed both items on the kitchen table.

As I moved to be seated, Selena said, "You certainly are a tall one! I'm 5-feet, 10-inches, and you're the first woman I've had to talk up to in quite some time."

I'm 6-feet tall, taller than most," I replied.

"You look familiar," she commented. "What type of work do you do?"

"I'm a writer," I answered while noticing that her breasts were quite visible -- not only because of the sheerness of her blouse, but also because her blouse was left unbuttoned nearly to her navel. The view was intoxicating. I especially took notice of her large and unusually elongated nipples.

"You have no tan lines on your breasts," I commented -- partly to alert her to the fact that she was so exposed, but also to change the topic from my livelihood. "Don't you ever wear a bra?"

"Rarely," she answered, confidently. "I find that bras are usually uncomfortable and that their function can easily be replaced through proper diet and exercise."

"Well, you certainly appear to be in good shape -- and shaped well, too. But what about modesty?"

"Men bare their chests without being perceived as immodest," she replied. "What makes it immodest for a woman to exercise the same freedoms as a man? For me, the logic that makes it immoral for a woman to be as free as a man is nothing more than primitive and archaic."

"An interesting philosophy, Selena," I replied, then changing the subject asked, "Would you care to see the rest of the house?"

"I most certainly would, Roberta!" she confessed with an unexpected degree of enthusiasm. "I mean, I've seen the house before -- when it was occupied by that dreadful couple. I'm eager to see what you've done with it."

I hadn't done much, and told her so -- showing her each room and presenting it as a work in progress. I didn't inquire about what she meant by "dreadful couple."

Selena was not the least bit inhibited about offering suggestions. She seemed, however, to be most interested in my bedroom, especially the king size bed.

"A girl could reach multiple orgasms on a bed like this one, " she commented, "provided she had the right partner."

Selena then walked over to the sliding glass doors that opened to a balcony. "You can see my bedroom from here!" she shouted. "I'd better be careful to keep my curtains drawn," she added with a bit of girlish laughter, more sinful than feminine.

I did not reply but wondered whether she had sensed my physical attraction to her, my desire to bury my tongue into the very essence of her womanliness. It was, in the beginning, a quiet passion.

Now, it shouted throughout my body, echoing in the hollow of my nerves like thunder echoes through a desert night. I embraced passion but dared not show it so near.

Selena turned from the window and said, "I'm 45 years old, never married, and I've never birthed a child. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?"

"Not necessarily," I answered. "I'm 48 years old, and I've never married, nor have I ever had a child. Perhaps it only means that we're birds of a feather." I then added, "You know what they say about birds of a feather, don't you?"

Selena smiled but didn't comment. I led her down stairs back to the kitchen. She left only a few minutes later. I again wondered whether she had been the woman I saw strolling along the hilltop.

Frankly, I wondered about a lot of things -- most concerned Selena.

Later than evening, after I had taken a relaxing bubble bath, I slipped into a Kimono and entered the bedroom. As I walked towards the sliding doors, I saw Selena. She was quite nude and appeared to be fondling her breasts while standing on the balcony of her bedroom. In fact, she touched herself all over!

I quickly turned off the bedroom lights and, while standing in the darkness, watched her. Naturally, I felt like a voyeur but could not deny the erotic results.

The only illumination on her body came from the moon and her bedroom she seemed to emit only the flickering lights from several candles. We women do love our candles. Don't we?

The light was eerie and at times bathed her body in a soft light, while at other times it left her barely more defined than a shadow.

Selena paused for a minute and looked over towards my bedroom. She couldn't see me hidden in the darkness. A minute or two later, she disappeared into her house. Her performance, whether or not it had been intentionally staged, had come to an end. I retired and felt compelled to dream of the two of us intimately entwined on my king-size bed. I could not recall when I had ever craved for a woman as I craved for Selena that evening. Still, there was my concern as to how she might respond to a transgendered woman.

Whether Selena was gay or bisexual, was not as important as her willingness to have an open mind and an open heart. However, as I was more than aware, if she shared the opinion of most women, she'd insist that once you're a man, you're always a man. She'd never really bother to think beyond that simple thought and never really bother to think of all that attributes that truly make a woman a woman.

The next morning, while I was again seated at the kitchen table, I nibbled on one of the yeast rolls Selena had baked, sipped a cup of tea, and watched Forrest Whitaker and Sandra Bullock discuss a new film. The film was titled "Hope Floats." Whitaker was the director, and Bullock was to have a leading role. Sandra had been one of my favorite actresses, along with Vivica Fox. And I believed Whitaker possessed enormous potential as a director. All he lacked was the right script. With the right material, I was certain he could take film into the next millennium.

Suddenly, there was tapping at the sliding door. I looked away from the television. It was Selena. She stood at the door, sporting a meek smile. I motioned for her to come in.

"I'm not interrupting anything, am I?" she asked, apologetically.

"No. Not at all," I answered. "I've just finished sampling one of your rolls. It was delicious. Can I offer you something to drink?"

"No thank you, she answered graciously. Then, she seated herself while staring at me intently.

"You seem disturbed about something," I commented.

"Not disturbed, merely curious," she replied, as though she had been saddened by something. "I did a little research on the internet last night, and I came ...," she began saying.

I interrupted her, saying, "Your nights are very active."

"What do you mean?" she inquired.

"Well, the night before last, I could have sworn that I had seen a woman -- with a physique remarkably like yours -- strolling on the hill between our houses. She was wearing a very transparent dress.

Was she you?"

"Yes," she answered without offering any apology or sense of embarrassment.

"And, last night, you were nude on the balcony, apparently fondling yourself."

Selena laughed. "Ah, so you were watching me as I attempted to become one with Nature. I'm sorry with my communion embarrassed you."

"Not at all," I replied. "Harmony with Nature is very beautiful. Harmony, or the lack of it, makes us who we are -- sometimes roses and sometimes weeds."

Suddenly, Selena was very quiet. The light that had always seemed to fill her eyes seemed diminished. I didn't know why.

"So, what did you come over to tell me?" I asked, hoping to coax her back into a happier mood.

"Well, as I was saying, I did a little snooping on the internet last night," she began, "and I discovered that you're Roberta Angela Dee."

"And you didn't already know that from my having introduced myself?" I asked somberly while a bit nervous.

"Yea, but I didn't know you were born a guy, a male," she said excitedly. It struck me as though I had been hit with a cannonball.

"You're transgendered. You're a transgendered woman," she continued. "Do you still have a dick? Does it work? I mean, look at you -- your tits, the way you present yourself. You're every bit as much woman as I! Well, almost. But, I mean, how do you do it? Why -- why do you do it? This blows my mind!"

My emotional reaction to Selena's outburst of questions and comments was decidedly mixed but not the least bit confused. I had been writing about my experiences for nearly a quarter of a century and had perhaps reached a million people through my photographs, articles, novellas -- in print as well as through the internet. I had succeeded socially, artistically and economically as a woman, and had done so in a culture that made success difficult for women, and most difficult of all for women of color. I had, for nearly a quarter of a century, helped in the struggle for the social equality of lesbians, as well as bisexual and transgendered women -- and had done so most often without financial compensation, public acknowledgment, or even anything that could remotely resemble appreciation. Still, here I was being interviewed by a stranger in my own house -- a woman talking to me as though I were a bearded lady or some other sort of circus freak.

In my heart, of course, I understood that Selena did not intend to be disrespectful -- no more than the male co-worker who listens to a brilliant presentation by a female colleague, and then can only find it appropriate to compliment her attire or fragrance.

I understood that it was difficult for most people to understand how a male-born child could be so female in mind, heart and soul that 'he' could find no alternative as an adult save to live as a woman.

Still, as I sat there, I hoped, desperately hoped, that this stranger -- this human being fortunate enough to have been born female -- would somehow see the woman in me.

"I'm not a freak, Selena," I finally replied. "I'm not your bearded lady. I'm not an animal."

Somehow I struck a nerve deep inside her being -- perhaps deeper than she herself knew existed. "I'm sorry, Roberta," she answered, profoundly apologetic. "I didn't mean anything like what you're suggesting. This is just so alien to me, and I'm simply trying to put it into some sort of perspective. I'm no one of those judgmental types of people. And I certainly didn't mean to be ugly."

I sensed Selena's sincerity. It did much to diminish my anger and hurt. I started by explaining that I could recall a desire to be a girl as early as 4 years of age, and that I had begun living as a woman as soon as I reached 25 years old and had graduated from college. I told her that the hormones had left me impotent and sterile but that I could reach an orgasm if I were stimulated as a woman.

No -- I could not become erect, ejaculate as a man could, or even begin to think of being intimate as a man. Masculinity was as foreign to me as it was to Selena.

Selena listened intently. She took my hand and attempted in her own way to comfort and console me. As the morning passed, Selena grew to understand that, in spite of our physical differences, the same attributes that made Selena a woman had made me a woman as well.

When we completed our conversation, Selena leaned forward and kissed me. I returned her kiss. Our differences melted away. They no longer mattered. It made no difference that her heritage

was Latin, for that mine was African. We were simply women capable of loving each other -- women in love, prepared to embark on a long lesbian romance.

The End

Part Three – Augusta, Georgia

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady

Lesbian Love and Lust: Well of Womanhood

By Roberta Angela Dee

I had been skimming through a 1995 issue of Al Goldstein's "Screw" magazine. Pamela Anderson, the buxom bimbo and recent champion against domestic violence, was a feature.

The article included a few barely focused photos of the blonde. They were apparently taken from her pre-Bay Watch career at a time when she was just another porn puppet eager to suck any male's appendage propped before a photographer's lens.

She was not the first woman to market silicone-inflated boobs in view of lacking any other discernible talent. She certainly would not be the last.

Ms. Anderson couldn't be too bright either. After all, she had married Tommy Lee right after his well-publicized, volatile and quite abusive marriage to Heather Locklear -- another blonde with questionable talents.

While glancing at Ms. Anderson's nude and grainy photographs, I wondered how many drama classes were required for a buxom woman to run along the beach wearing a skimpy, loose-fitting swimsuit and to jiggle her tits while looking confused and dismayed. At any rate, I was sure it was neither her mind, nor her intelligence that encouraged her first spread in "Penthouse" -- an adult men's magazine.

At GTI Electronics, I'm known as "The Bitch." The name tag on my office door reads, "Roberta Angela Dee -- Manager of Human Resources," but most of my co-workers continued to refer to me as "The Bitch."

Naturally, I have no regrets regarding my insensitivity towards men with a propensity for thinking with their penises, nor any regrets regarding my bitchiness towards women who could admire such men. From my perspective, to be called a bitch simply meant I was being acknowledged as a superior woman. It was an honor and a compliment, and I worked hard to deserve that compliment each day of my life.

"Roberta Angela Dee is a bitch." Yes! I must confess that I enjoy hearing it and saying it, as much as I enjoy being it.

I'm certain that my co-workers realize that at 48 years old I have a figure that women half my age envy. They are also well aware that I haven't dated any men, nor provided any of them with the indication that I either crave or need the affections of a male. Whatever their private assumptions, I'm confident they are correct.

Neither my professional career, nor my bitchiness has anything to do with my mood as I lay sprawled on the couch. I am totally nude and hold a 12-inch marital aid in my hand. With my other hand, I slowly twist the dial at its base that engages its tiny motor. I use the tip of the vibrating toy to stimulate myself. Soon, my body quivers as the ecstasy begins to build. I feel wonderfully feminine as the spiritual forces of my womanhood grow strong. I feel wonderfully aroused and alive.

Eventually, I begin using the ivory toy as though it is a real penis. Penetration increases my arousal, and my increased lubrication heightens my sensitivity and moves me well into that pleasurable ride that inevitably concludes with an orgasm.

I am so intensely focused on myself that I fail to hear my roommate's key as she unlocks the front door. The expression on her face is quite memorable, but I'm sure it is no more memorable than mine.

As anyone can understand, I have never felt more embarrassed or humiliated -- laying there clearly masturbating with my huge and proportionately loud ivory toy.

"Oh, Felicia," I shout, as though I need to attract her attention.

Felicia is a gorgeous young woman. She had not been expected for another day. She had been visiting her sister, and I am somewhat curious as to why she has returned early. It is, however, a quite inopportune time to ask, considering my delicate and vulnerable position.

Felicia does not respond as I expect. Instead, after quickly closing the door, she lowers her suitcase, then rushes over to the couch. Once by my side, she kneels and begins an oral assault.

My instinct is to yell for her to stop. However, the combined sensation of the pulsating vibrator and her warm wet tongue, as it brushes against my private, creates a level of ecstasy that leaves me totally incapable of speech.

Within 10 minutes, I reach the most intense orgasm I had ever experienced. The towel beneath my body can barely contain my wetness and perspiration. Yet, I wonder what had possessed Felicia to perform this incredible, yet absolutely satisfying, act.

The answer to my question comes shortly after my orgasm and is equally as much a surprise. Felicia very calmly explains that her sexual preference had always been for women, and that a tall, shapely African American transgendered woman had, for a very long time, been her fondest fantasy.

Her revelation excites me, but it also leaves me feeling as though I am some sort of commodity. I am not a commodity.

Her physical display of her desires had undeniably altered our relationship. We are no longer just two roommates sharing a home. Felicia had caressed the most intimate parts of my body with her comforting tongue and hungry lips, and it is only natural that I want it to be more than an act of lust. Yet, everything about Felicia wreaks of lust -- nothing more.

Felicia removes the ivory sex toy from where it rests between my thighs. She smiles, then returns to licking me. Her mouth leaves me feeling intoxicated, and after a while I grow more comfortable with feeling as though I am a commodity. Still, I very well know the differences between lust and love. I had traveled the path of lust too often. This time, I want and very much need to be loved and to feel loved.

Felicia fails to bring me to a second orgasm. The possible consequences of this situation steal more of my attention than the situation itself. My feelings are understandably mixed.

One part of me welcomes the beauty and passion that can develop through a relationship with another woman. However, a different part of me demands the love, respect and loyalty that is not likely to develop from any relationship based solely on lust.

Felicia is 15 years my junior -- mature but still very flirtatious in the manner of many young women. She carries a degree of assertiveness that I much admire, particularly because my preference is to be submissive. However, as most submissives grow to understand, a dominant-submissive relationship can only work when the dominant partner truly loves, respects and possesses a genuine desire to be loyal to her submissive.

In writing about a dominant-submissive relationship, I do not mean to invoke images of leather garments, collars, ropes or handcuffs. I mean nothing so extreme. I merely refer to a relationship where one partner is essentially assertive and dominant while the other partner is essentially passive.

Over the next few days, I pretend to ignore Felicia's playful yet clearly flirtatious antics. I am referring to bath towels that accidentally fall from her nude body, as much as the bedroom door that is typically left partially open while she dresses or lays naked on her bed, pretending to be taking a nap.

I was once Felicia's age and had used all the maneuvers she presently used with me. I inevitably discovered that there is nothing new under the sun that is not its best unless cloaked with a measure of subtlety.

In the short time that Felicia and I had roomed together, I learned that her father had been born on the tiny Caribbean island of St. Vincent. Her mother was Cuban, born in Havana. Their child -- a mix of African and Latin features -- was a female human of exquisite beauty. Her breasts were so full that and that it seemed they might explode, and her derriere was perfectly molded and heart-shaped providing an hourglass figure for which any woman would conceal considerable envy.

Another attribute is her predatory nature. I confess however that it amuses me to watch her frustrated efforts to capture me. Dominance does not always equate with power. Power can sometimes be submissive.

Inevitably, and as I had so precisely calculated, her aggressive female strengths blossom abruptly. She confronts me and asks why I do not respond to her advances.

"Passion without love is a fragile fire, a cold fire," I answer. "Passion without love is like a flower without its petals, a tigress without her claws."

"I love you, Roberta," she replies with an impassioned tone. "You have my love, but as much as I am willing to give my love, I am also in need of your trust. In essence, I must demand it."

She pauses and looks at me with the piercing desperate eyes of a woman desiring another woman's love. It is an intense moment.

"Yes!" she continues. "Passion without love is like a tigress without her claws, a flower without its petals. It does not exist. It is only an illusion -- a delusion at best. But as much as love needs to be a part of passion, trust needs to be a part of love. Without trust, love too is like a flower without its petals."

With those words spoken, the room fills with the energy of an aurora borealis -- the famous Northern lights. My body fills with an energy equally as intense as the cosmic phenomenon. Time, for these few moments, no longer exists. I feel as though I am standing upon a cloud that drifts slowly across a boundless galaxy.

Enough has been said. Words no longer matter. We communicate through use of a silent language emerging from our souls -- souls, that as time passes, seem to join, effortlessly, until they become one spirit. It is the way one woman loves another.

Felicia and I kiss. Our kiss is sacred. It becomes a sacrament that delivers our consciousness to a place, perhaps to a being, far more supreme than anything either she or I had come to know on Earth.

Its honest innocence is so intense that I erupt with a joy that only comes with the most intimate embrace. Yet, I am fully clothed, my private untouched except through the divine spirit of our kiss.

Surprised, my eyes open, I am startled with disbelief. Felicia's eyes open too, and in her eyes I see the same sense of climactic wonder I had experienced. A marriage occurs, a very genuine marriage, unhampered by tradition or ceremony. The marriage takes us to a higher place -- a place where both our eyes and minds are opened!

How sad it is, even after so many thousand of years, that there are those who can not understand that love is love, and that it makes no difference whether a kiss occurs between a man and a woman, between two men, or between two women, so long as the kiss is honest, pure and between two willing adults.

Still, in my heart of hearts, I am more than aware of people who continue to carry -- within the very core of their moral beliefs -- words written eons ago by old men, words allegedly from a Divinity for which there is no specific proof of existence. How ironic that is through their God of love and mercy that so many people are comfortable to scorn, persecute, ostracize and punish. How ironic it is that through their loving and merciful God, certain human beings are told or forced to submit to genital mutilation and bizarre surgeries. Given this sort of God, where is the love and where is the mercy?

I fervently I wish for this age to end, and for priests, rabbis and ministers to cease making sacraments of hate, prejudice, ignorance and distrust.

The phrase "God is love" does not mean that God loves. It means that the idea of God and the idea of love are equal and should be perfectly interchangeable -- with or without a joyful noise or a theology.

Felicia lovingly leads me to the bedroom. She undresses me with a tenderness that leaves me feeling I am admired, appreciated and enviably loved.

When a woman feels loved, she also feels pretty. She feels she is beautiful.

Through Felicia's guidance, I am led to feel more beautiful than I had ever felt with any man or with any other woman. The beauty emerges from within. It is not merely a reflection or a delusion.

The sliding door is slightly open, enough for us to hear Nature sing as we embrace upon my bed. I look to my left and watch our reflection in the pear-shaped, highly polished silver vase on my nightstand. The vase is filled with a lovely bouquet. Its delicate petals seem to stand above our distorted image.

I continue looking at the reflection as her face disappears between my thighs. Her smooth soft lips press against my flesh causing a flood that fills my body with waves of pleasure. She strokes me like an ocean pets its coastline. So sweet she is. So sweet and so sublime.

What is the sin? What taboo is violated? What kind of people can contain no compassion for two people in love? If loving is a sin, if it can be called a taboo, is not the greater sin the act of degrading love?

Every part of Felicia's body becomes an instrument of love. Her arms surround me and bring me to a private rapture. She awakes passions that had never known life. For me, it is a miracle no less meaningful than the miracles of believers who claim to see tears flow from a religious statue, or the miraculous light that those who endure a near-death experience claim to see. Felicia is the miracle.

Her touch is the miracle. Her fingers, her lips are miracles too.

Love is an oasis somewhere in the desert we call Life. Felicia and I find our oasis in each other. We find it within ourselves and within the reflection of our bodies.

Love is an energy that causes me to quiver. I feel as though a tiny earthquake has focused its forces over my entire pelvis. Soon I begin to ride that incredible undulation of pleasure that carries me to my oasis of joy.

Love is my only 'true' religion. Love is joy! It is the only law, philosophy or belief worthy of my time and study, worthy of my life.

Real love is varied. It is organic. It is not mechanical. It is not fixed.

Our love-making lasts for several hours. We kiss, lick, touch, fondle and teach each other how to find those most sensitive parts. We writhe, moan, wiggle and quiver like young women being explored for the very first time. It is as awesome an experience for our bodies as it is for our minds. Later, we rest and gradually succumb to a deep restful sleep.

The next morning, as we regain consciousness, we return to a world that condemns us for having found the love that others seek so ardently. We, of course, are content to know that whether gay, straight or bisexual, love is love. We are content to know that love is love, whether one accepts their anatomical sex, or grows into the realization that he or she is transgendered. Most importantly, we are content to know that we will continue to bathe in the Well of Womanhood.

The End

Memoirs of a Transgendered Lady
The Masculization of Femininity
By Roberta Angela Dee

September of 1996 -- Augusta, Georgia

I received an electronic letter (e-mail) from an individual who had meticulously examined everything I had ever written. "Your work is flawed," the individual suggested, "I don't know how you can get away with what you write in this post-modern age." The letter was signed, "The Rhonda."

The letter included an invitation for us to meet the next evening at the Cafe de Tu, located on Central Avenue in Augusta. It's a fairly popular meeting place for professors teaching at Paine College – a predominately African-American school located in the heart of Augusta.

I replied affirmatively, and suggested that we meet at 6:00 PM. A few hours later, I checked my e-mail. There was a letter from "The Rhonda." It simply stated, "I'll be there."

When I arrived, I instinctively looked for a man. The writer's name, Rhonda, seemed masculine enough, and the harsh aggressive tone of the letter had suggested a male. However, the only individual seated alone was a short, somewhat stocky cross dresser. I walked over, introduced myself and said, "I am supposed to meet someone here who goes by the name of Rhonda."

"Yes! Yes!" the cross dresser repeated with some degree of elation, "I am she."

As I moved to assume a seat at the table, I tried to think of something to say. I would avoid commenting on the cross dresser's appearance -- the old fashioned and flashy dress, but in any event, before I could say anything, Rhonda spoke.

"I teach as a woman, you know?"

"Well, you're certainly dressed as a woman," I replied. "I had no idea that you were an instructor as well."

"A professor," Rhonda announced quickly and with a detectable measure of pride. "I'm a full professor. I teach psychology. And I have a particular interest in transgressive behavior, partly because I'm transgendered."

I didn't know what to say. I had thought Rhonda was a cross dresser. Now she was telling me that she was in reality a non-operative transsexual.

I could, of course, sympathize with her on many different levels. Still, it was to a degree quite humorous that this individual was teaching, of all subjects, psychology. Talk about sublime irony.

"Your signature is somewhat interesting," I commented, "You end your e-mail with "The Rhonda," as though you are the only individual who carries that name."

"No, the name is common enough," she replied, "but I am the only Rhonda who is truly Rhonda. Get it?"

I laughed very briefly. Somewhat uneasy by her manner of dress, I immediately decided it would be best that I stay clear of any topic that involved either her name or appearance.

A waiter came to our table. Looking at me, he asked, "Ma'm would you care to order anything?" And I replied, saying, "A vodka martini, please." He then looked at Rhonda, and with an inquiring tone, said, "And you?" It was obvious that the waiter wanted to avoid any reference to Rhonda's sex or gender.

However, if the waiter had any suspicions, Rhonda's voice removed any doubt. It was distinctively masculine.

"A glass of port," she responded, speaking softly so as to appear more feminine. Though the quietness could barely mask the maleness.

At that point, I wanted to ask how her students responded to her teaching psychology, but I suppressed the desire rather quickly.

"Are you familiar with queer studies?" she asked.

"No, but I imagine it would involve homosexuals," I replied.

"Not just gays," she answered with unsettling excitement, "transsexuals, and transgendered people too. It's really a study of all sorts of transgressive behavior."

"So, you're saying that you're transgressive because you've completed sex reassignment surgery."

"Oh, no," she replied as though surprised, "I thought I had explained that I have no intentions of having surgery. I'm anatomically male but my gender is female."

"That's a bit confusing," I asserted.

"No. It's not confusing at all," she answered. "Sex is the body. Gender is the mind. You mustn't get the two confused."

"I'm not confused at all," I replied, "but if your gender is female and you're living as a female, then what are you transgressing."

"It's more that my behavior is transgressive because I'm anatomically male."

Yes, but you're also anatomically female, at least in part," I added. "You at least appear to have female breasts."

"Well, I should have said genetically female," Rhonda suggested as a means of correcting her earlier statement.

So, then," I asked, "are you saying that sex is a function of genetics, and gender is a function of the mind? Are you saying you are genetically male but mentally female?"

"Well, yes, in a sense," Rhonda answered. "But you have to remember that I'm a scholar. And as a scholar, I perceive gender at a much higher level than you would perceive it. I perceive gender in a more intellectually sophisticated realm of consciousness."

I wanted to tell Mr./Ms. Rhonda Whatever that, as far as I was concerned, he/she was of an indeterminable gender. However, with considerable effort, I again managed to suppress the desire. I didn't want Rhonda to think that my emotions had clouded my ability to be rational and logical. Nor did I want The Rhonda to think that I was in any way anti-homosexual, anti-transsexual, or anti-anything.

Without a doubt, however, she was a difficult person to like. She was pretentious and pompous, and offered little in the way of meaningful discussion. She rambled on for nearly a half hour about post-modern intellects -- mostly European of course, and how the only way to achieve enlightened thought was to rid the mind of all emotional and sentimental pretenses.

I couldn't help but wonder how humankind had even managed to survive so many thousands of years, in so far as our thinking had been so imprecise, immature, and ineffective. How fortunate we are to live in the same century with persons like The Rhonda, and to be able to experience scholars so linguistically precise that they can simply dismiss any thought that conflicts with their own.

I listened for a full half hour, and then said, "So, you're a woman. Correct?"

"Absolutely!" the Rhonda answered, much as I had suspected she would answer. I knew that beneath the rhetorical tautologies and pseudo-intellectual dribble there was an unfulfilled human being who desperately needed to be acknowledged as a woman.

"So, are you dating anyone?" I asked, consciously mustering as much genuine interest as I could manage. If I had been an actor, and my performance filmed, I would certainly have been nominated for an Academy Award.

Oh, yes!" Rhonda responded, instantly -- her eyes illuminating as though a cool breeze had found its way beneath her floral dress. "I'm dating this wonderful British gent -- a scholar, of course, much like myself. His name is Terry."

"That doesn't surprise me," I responded, quickly resuming a forced interest in her affairs."

"Well, he was quite a surprise to me!" she replied and then giggled like a school girl. "He likes to give me the big one. He does!"

"I bet he does," I answered with an innocent smile.

"But I'm sure a woman like yourself can well harbor his manliness."

Rhonda giggled noticeably loud. The bizarre sound attracted the waiter. He came over to see if anything was wrong, but I explained that it was just the peculiar way The Rhonda laughed.

"I understand," the waiter replied. He otherwise displayed little concern, and soon walked away.

"I don't get out much," Rhonda confessed. "I'm a writer, really. I have a cleverness with words. It's very subtle but if you're as well read as I, you can appreciate the touch of humor I give to my scholarly prose."

"Sort of like prose with a purpose," I suggested, but I could tell she didn't appreciate my making light of her prose.

Rhonda began explaining what she felt were the weaknesses in my approach to gender. I listened, politely. However, I could not help but wonder if all her transgressive rationale would not result in a world where gender would have no texture or essence. In Rhonda's world the dramatic and subtle differences between male and female, or adult and child, would be synthesized into some homogeneous concoction that was as bland as Rhonda.

"Terry and I believe that queer children should be mentored by queer adults," Rhonda announced.

"You seem very fond of the word 'queer'," I replied.

"Well, it's because it includes both transgressive and non-transgressive behavior," she answered.

"What about untransgressive behavior?" I inquired.

"Excuse me?"

"Never mind."

It was definitely one of the strangest evenings I'm able to recall. Rhonda disappeared shortly after our encounter. I felt fortunate never to hear from her again.

The End