

BIRLZINE!



Issue 1, Volume 1, Winter 2004

Editor's Note!

First off, visit the birls' community at www.livejournal.com/~birls! Mad respect to the community's moderators, H. (piratepug), Nik (boiface), and Evin (evinboy)--thank you for all that you do for the community.

Also, thanks to all the beautiful, gorgeous, handsome, talented, intelligent, brave, interesting, unique, label-busting, amazing birls out there. Y'all are incredibly inspiring. And I mean all of you. Much appreciation to all birl-lovers, too! You're welcome in this birl's house any time.

Thanks to Ellen, H., and Steffi for your support, inspiration, encouragement, and help in this project. It's awesome when I have people like you who've got my back in things that are important to me.

-Julie

Masthead

BirlZine!
Winter 2004

Contributors:

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H.
Rachel DiSaia
Rebecca Noland
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With Respect:

Guerilla Girls
Kavan Peterson at
Stateline.org
Publishers Weekly
Daemon Records
Center for the Advancement of Health

Assembly and

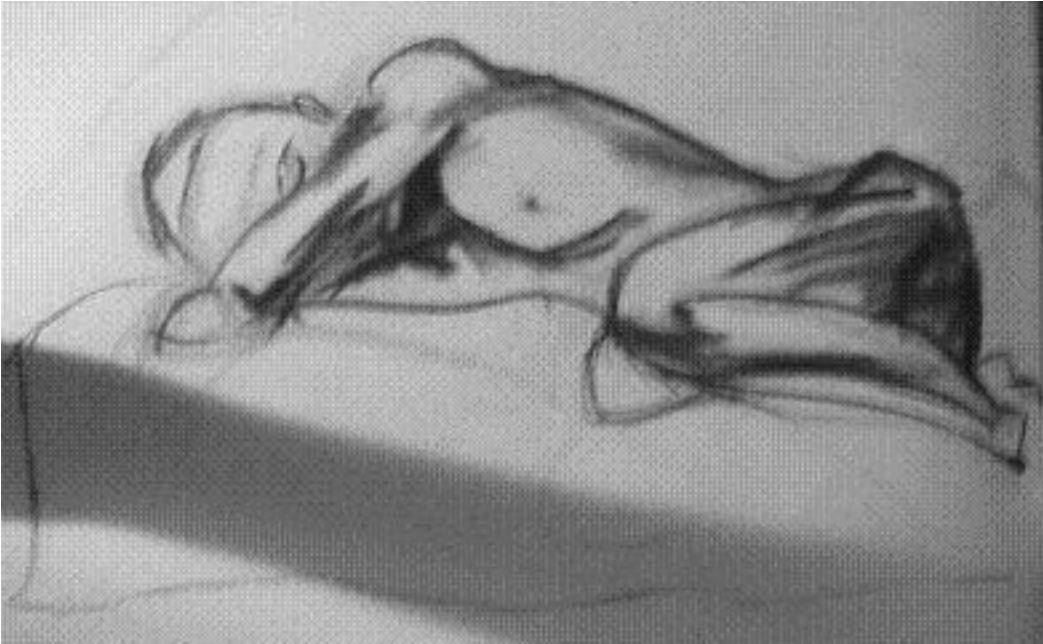
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Julie Elefante

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Art by Ellen (~lostinant)

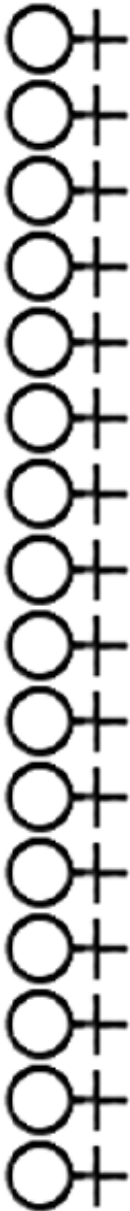
Sketch and Monoprint



Ellen's Art (continued)
Monoprints



An Article by Jessica LaFrank (~jekkisa) originally published in her school newspaper



Contrary to what many people think, homosexuality is not a choice, a disease or a phase. As a lesbian, I am both healthy and comfortable with who I am.

From my point of view, I have had an easier life than many of my fellow GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer) youth. My mom is a lesbian, so acceptance at home has never been a problem. She supports me unconditionally and is my best friend. Because I have never been silenced about being myself, rather encouraged, I have grown comfortable with myself quickly. The only fear I have lived with is of people: the ones who want to fix me or alienate me for something I have no control over.

And for the record, homosexuality is not something that can be fixed because it is not something wrong to begin with. It is just another characteristic of a person. Therefore, sexual orientation is not a substantial trait to judge anyone by. Disliking me because I am attracted to the same gender or the same sex is exactly like disliking me because I am short or Caucasian. None of these characteristics are chosen.

Anyone who thinks being homosexual is a choice is mistaken. Most gays would agree with me when I say that regardless of loving who and what I am, I would not have chosen this blessing. Being spit upon, talked about, glared at and hated for purely trying to be myself is discouraging and then some. And why, because God created individuals who do not fit into society's imaginary norm? Or perhaps because we are going to make you and your family gay? But check this out: homosexuality is not contagious.

I was born this way, like heterosexuals are born liking the opposite gender. Generally, it is a misconception that something corrupts you and turns you gay because more adults are out (openly gay) than teens. This is because it takes time to realize and accept this concept; perhaps because we are confused for a long time, or fear informing the world of our realization.

As long as it took me to identify with the term "lesbian," I could actually be considered a prodigy. It is hard to say that someone knows who they are, ever, especially in high school, but I do know what I like (that's girls), and I know what they call it (that's homosexuality), and I'm happy—even gay—about it all.

An Interview with H. (~piratepug)



1. What makes you a birl? When did you realize you were a birl?

What's your favorite personal birl story?

hhmmmm?! well i would say what makes me a birl is the obvious fact that even though my body is female physically, i def. don't act female mosta the time.. i dress like a little boy, i tease people when i like them, i like to punch people jokingly + push them around so that they'll play-fight with me, i love looking at the toy section in any store & old skool NES games are my secret passion.. i had never heard the word "birl" until i came across this community & since *boiface AKA Nik* rawks so hardcore, he fixed the community up in terms of aesthetics + then that just got the ball rolling.. i always knew i was a lil different from early on, i would dream of being "friends" with another girl & i would detest playing barbies + wearing dresses.. i would give all my barbies haircuts (punk style yo!!) & then play with them and my he-man/transformers all together.. i remember being so damn sad when i got to that age where my flat chest was starting to get lil bumps & my mum would have to tell me not to walk around w/o a shirt on & it just made me so mad/upset not to be able to be like all the other boys who were out playing in the sun shirtless..

2. What does art/writing do for you? What piece(s) of yours is your favorite? Who and what inspires you?

art + writing have always been a means of escape for me.. i would write my own poetry to escape the pain of being different in high school & from an early age, any art class was my refuge from being different from other kids.. i love any piece of mine that i did on a whim & it turned out amazing.. i like trying new ideas with my ceramics/pottery + being amazed how damn awesome it looks.. i like sketching something out, while i am supposed to be paying attention in class *yawns* + feeling like i can rawk out any image + make it all mine!! things that inspire me; people: my grandma, my sister, the memory of my mum, the family that loves me over in England, my pugga Mr. Mops, my bebe boo who is my puzzle piece, my awesome art teacher Ms. Becker & things: the greens of nature,

real smiles + well wishes from strangers, finding amazing things thrifting, the ocean + waves, the perfect blue of the FL sky + the amazing colours of its sun-rises and sun-sets, being me + not compromising.. and if you'd want a list of all of the artists (being musicians, writers, film + physical art) that inspire me, well then i'd be here forever!!

3. Tell me about your awesome hair! How many incarnations has it seen? What's been your favorite so far?

ha ha! since i always had to suffer through having mad-curly hair when i was young, i always promised myself that i would do something special to it when i was "of age".. after high school my hair slowly got shorter & it has gone through every natural colour you can think of & every dyed colour except for green+orange.. i've had my hair in so many styles, but i def. loved my DA & my dreads & my mohawk.. no matter how i have my hair i like it to be as short as possible coz this FL heat/humidity is too much to bear sometimes!!

4. Describe your favorite outfit.

my fave outfit right now would prolly be one of my corny snap-button western shirts -or- an XS *American Eagle* polo w/ snaps (i love tha snappies!!) & a pair of *Old Navy* khaki cargo-shorts -or- these rad no-name, long azz khaki shorts i got from a flea-market adventure.. and studded belt -or- my seat-belt belt, my ratty looks-like-chucks-but-they-are-not black canvas shoes -or- a pimpin' pair of old skool Reeboks & i'd prolly rock an *Enjoi* Boy-Genius short-brimmed hat!! ha ha! can you tell i am a fashion dork?! ~;-]

5. Put together a set list for a birly H mixed CD for me!

wow! well you'd def. have to have some faggy new-wave like Depeche Mode, Erasure, Pet Shop Boys, Bronski Beat + Yaz.. lemme think of what songs exacty...

Strangelove - Depeche Mode; It's No Good - Depeche Mode; Everything Counts - Depeche Mode; Love to Hate You - Erasure; Opportunities (Let's Make Lots of Money) - Pet Shop Boys; Small Town Boy - Bronski Beat; Why? - Brinkski Beat; Space Age Love Song - Flock of Seagulls; Only You - Yaz; You Think You're A Men - QAF Soundtrack; Once in A Lifetime - Wolfsheim; NIN - Ringfinger oh geez! i seriously could go on & on & on & on..



On the edge

Something feels undeniably wrong
And I can feel myself sinking

...Deeper...

Into the bed beside you
Your warmth does not entice me
Does not draw me near
I'm watching your chest rise
With each breath
And I feel every slight movement you make
The comfort that we used to have is gone
It all changed
And I want to leave
But this is my bed
And I refuse to let you win this game
So I turn and hug the cold cement wall
While you teeter
On the edge...

**Poetry by Rachel DiSaia
(~happykid72853)**

A'ine

see, i think there is beauty between us
between our bodies
me wrapped around you
my tears falling into your hair
your fist clenched around my arm
your trembling fear and abandonment
i'm here to pick up the pieces he left behind
i'm here to scramble and save
to catch parts of you before they blow away
trying to convince you, to rinse you
to show you you're better
you're worth more
trying to fight the urge to say "i told you so"
because who am i to say that
who am i to brag
i didn't hear his whispers to you
i avoided his lies
i blocked them with anger
so he fed them to you

see i love you
more than he ever did
and i will
more than he ever can
but i'm different
i have no expectations
you're never letting me down
i know you're giving me all you got
and fuck, that's more than i could ever want

NINA

You are beautiful
And mysterious
Curious
And a little bit devious
You walk along the water with me
Teasingly tossing your hair over your shoulder
Like some seductive game you used to play
You look like that girl that comes to me in my
dreams
Who sings to me perfect melodies
And while your voice is far from perfect
it hits me
It hits me like a wall I was too distracted to see
And makes me
Makes me happy
And complete

And you move
You move like ice
Ice melting on my...my...my skin
Dripping in through my pores
Becoming one with me
Yet disagreeing with me
And rolling
And searching
A little bit lost
You slide into a childish mode and invite me to
join
you
In play
And your touch is so gentle
So innocent
Yet my heart races and jumps
Like you,

Into puddles
And acts surprised when there is movement
around
It is at this moment where everything is perfect
You turn to me and ask me if I've ever felt like
this
before
And I know you mean the freedom you're feeling
The way the water is so clear
And the sun is setting perfectly
And we're alone on the beach skimming through
the
water
But when I say yes
I mean I've never felt more at home with some-
one
Never felt more into someone
I want to explain that when I say you're beautiful
I don't really mean you could get that guy you
want
Although I know you could
I mean that I want you
I want you more than anything
In my arms
I want to strip away the innocence in your touch
Just for a few moments
I want to search your body and understand you
But I leave you, I let you be
As you talk about him
And the butterflies inside me subside
Things aren't as perfect as I pretend they are
Because I go home without you
And you end up lost in his arms...

Photocollages by Calli Baroni



time



civil liberties



tribulation

Guerilla Girls

www.guerrillagirls.com/

Since 1985 the Guerrilla Girls have been reinventing the “F word”—feminism. Still going strong in the 21st century, we’re a bunch of anonymous females who take the names of dead women artists as pseudonyms and appear in public wearing gorilla masks. In 19 years we have produced over 100 posters, stickers, books, printed projects, and actions that expose sexism and racism in politics, the art world, film and the culture at large. We use humor to convey information, provoke discussion, and show that feminists can be funny. We wear gorilla masks to focus on the issues rather than our personalities. Dubbing ourselves the conscience of culture, we declare ourselves feminist counterparts to the mostly male tradition of anonymous do-gooders like Robin Hood, Batman, and the Lone Ranger. Our work has been passed around the world by kindred spirits who we are proud to have as supporters. The mystery surrounding our identities has attracted attention. We could be anyone; we are everywhere.

I'M NOT an
aunt jemima, ballbreaker, biker chick,
bimbo, bitch, bombshell, bra burner,
bull dyke, butch, call girl, carmen miranda,
china doll, dumb blonde, fag hag, femme
fatale, feminazi, geisha, girl next door,
gold digger, good catholic girl, harem
girl, ho, homegirl, hot tamale, indian
princess, jewish princess, lady boss,
lipstick lesbian, lolita, mother teresa,
nympho, old hag, old maid, pinup girl,
prude, slut, soccer mom, squaw,
stage mom, supermodel, tokyo rose,
tomboy, trophy wife, valley girl, vamp,
wicked stepmother or yummy mummy!

**DON'T
STEREOTYPE
ME!**

STICK THIS UP WHERE IT WILL DO THE MOST GOOD.

A message from **Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers:**

The Guerrilla Girls' Illustrated Guide to Female Stereotypes

Penguin Books www.penguin.com
Guerrilla Girls www.guerrillagirls.com



Gay Marriage Milestone Marks Widening Divide

By Kavan Peterson, Staff Writer, Stateline.org

November 18 marks the first anniversary of the landmark ruling that opened the door to same-sex marriage in Massachusetts but also fueled a conservative backlash of anti-gay marriage measures that continues to gain momentum one year later.

A year ago, the same-sex marriage movement appeared to be gaining ground. Although three-quarters of states had outlawed same-sex marriage, advocates had won state-sanctioned civil unions in Vermont, expanded domestic partnership benefits in California and New Jersey, and won a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court striking down state anti-sodomy laws. Then their biggest victory came in a landmark decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court making the state the first to legally sanction same-sex marriage.

On Election Day, voters in 11 states overwhelmingly approved amendments to their state constitutions banning same-sex marriage. Now, 17 states - more than one-third of the country - have marriage amendments. By 2006, that number will likely top half of the states.

Emboldened by the election results, conservative lawmakers in at least nine states (Alabama, Arizona, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Washington) where constitutional same-sex marriage bans failed to pass the legislature in 2004 say they will renew their efforts when legislatures go back into session in January.

Efforts also are under way to challenge some of the new state constitutional amendments that not only ban same-sex marriage, but also prohibit granting civil unions or any other legal status that approximates marriage. Such measures were adopted by nine states in 2004 - Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma and Utah - and Nebraska in 2000.

These challenges so far have been limited to legal technicalities and do not ask courts to legalize same-sex marriage. In Louisiana, for example, a state judge struck down that state's amendment in October on the grounds that it improperly dealt with more than one issue - marriage and civil unions. A similar challenge is pending in Georgia's state courts, and lawsuits have been filed in federal courts in Oklahoma and Nebraska.

Republican leaders fell far short of the necessary two-thirds majority needed to pass a federal amendment twice this year. But just days after the election, Bush's top political advisor, Karl Rove, said that the president "absolutely" would push Congress to pass the amendment.

Although the election signaled that there is a consensus on limiting marriage to heterosexual couples only, exit polls indicate that a majority of Americans do in fact support gay unions in one form or another. Combined, 62 percent of voters favored either civil unions or same-sex marriage, far outpolling the 35 percent who wanted no legal recognition of same-sex couples.

Even President Bush, just days before the election, said that he supported civil unions and flatly disagreed with the Republican Party platform on that issue.

Saying he viewed the definition of marriage as different from the legal arrangements that give same-sex couples the rights of marriage, Bush told *ABC's Good Morning America*, "I don't think we should deny people rights to a civil union, a legal arrangement, if that's what a state chooses to do so."

Photography by Rebecca Noland (~columbusbecky)





Read this Book!

***Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg**

www.transgenderwarrior.org/

From Publishers Weekly:

“Published in 1993, this brave, original novel is considered to be the finest account ever written of the complexities of a transgendered existence.

“This compelling but uneven first novel follows the sexual travails of lesbian Jess Goldberg. At its start she is a girl who feels confused by strict ideas about gender and who wonders if she might be a “he-she” since people often ask whether she is a boy or a girl. Constantly searching, she quickly moves from trying on her father’s suits to visiting bars and transforming herself into a full-blown “butch,” complete with her own dildo. As police crackdowns on gay bars result in more than one night in jail, Goldberg decides to begin taking male hormones and have a breast reduction in order to pass as a man. Although she delights in visiting the barber and being able to use the men’s room—and even manages to make love to a woman without being discovered—the emotional complications of changing her sex (and hence her identity) build up until she ceases to take her hormone shots. Certain transmutations, like her lowered voice, cannot be reversed, however, so she is

now even less defined as a member of a specific gender. Goldberg and her like-minded friends who have embraced the butch/femme dichotomy find they have no place in either the nascent women’s or gay pride movements. Feinberg attempts to present Goldberg’s life as the personal side of political history, but the narrative seems unattached to time despite the insertion of landmark events like the Stonewall riot and the mention of Reagan and the Moral Majority.

“Leslie Feinberg is also the author of *Trans Liberation*, *Trans Gender Warriors* and *Transgender Liberation*, and is a noted activist and speaker on transgender issues.”

Listen to this CD!

Rhapsody in T by The Athens Boys Choir

from: www.daemonrecords.com/beta/athens/:

“The Athens Boys Choir is a queer, political, poetry spittin’ duo that jointly and individually creates spoken spokenword. Two jeans wearin’, sailor swearin’, bend and tuckin’, gender fuckin’ dudes, we write spoken-word pieces covering subjects from sex with cowboys to our dear President Bush - a certain cowboy we do not like. The pieces are personal, societal, and political, designed to make

you rattle your cage, pound your chest and stand up and roar “We’re not gonna take it, no we ain’t gonna take it.” Thank you Twisted Sister.

We want change. We’re fighting for change each time we are furious or content enough to find a pen and a piece of paper. We treat our performances as a forum for activism. We raise awareness about transgender issues, our nation’s current and historical racial prejudice, and our “bummer” of a government, among other things. We push our audience to realize their responsibility to their community and selves. As our favorite bumper sticker says, “Vote if you love your country, any asshole can honk.” As the amount of people attending our shows has grown in number and diversity, we have become more enthusiastic about each performance and its ability to open dialogue in the South.

The Athens Boys Choir is comprised of the gender queer Rocket and Katz. We became friends while attending the University of Georgia. Through rugby party mishaps and quite a few spectacularly fun road-trips, we found a common interest in writing and activism.

Part serious, part fun, our debut Daemon Records release *Rhapsody in T* is straight-up spokenword from the heart and gut. It is our honest account of the world we know.”

People and Things To Learn About

***Rosa Bonheur: A Life and a Legend* by Ashton, Dore and Denise Browne Hare**

Biography of 19th century french painter Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), known as one of the foremost animal painters of her day. Her most famous work is 'The Horse Fair' (1853-55) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. She was given governmental permission to cross-dress, and made animal studies in markets and fairs while dressed as a man. In 1894 she became the first woman to receive the Grand Cross of the French Legion of Honor. This Monography carefully explores her women relationships with Nathaly Micas and Anna Klumpke, questioning descriptions like 'sistery' and 'close freindship' of earlier publications, documented by statements of the artist.

Dawn Brayford

www.dawnbrayford.co.uk/
A fabulous artist based out of the UK.

Dyke Action Machine

www.dykeactionmachine.com/home5nop.html
(DAM!) is a public art collaboration which critiques mainstream culture by inserting lesbian images into a recognizably commercial context.

Pheline

www.pheline.com/
Independent site created to empower talented lesbian and bisexual women of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds by helping to promote individual talent, as well as showcasing facets of art and literature that may not otherwise get recognized.

Photo Betty

www.photobetty.com/
A great site featuring famous and up and coming women photographers

Sequential Tart

www.sequentialtart.com/home.shtml
"A web zine about the comic book industry published by an eclectic band of women." Finally a place with real reviews...

T-Gina

www.t-gina.com/
The tale of a fabulous Transgendered gal and her search for validation and a decent cup of coffee.

Dykes to Watch Out For

www.dykestowatchoutfor.com/
from the Web site: **Alison Bechdel's** comic strip *Dykes To Watch Out For* reproduces the texture of 21st century life, queer and otherwise, in exactly high resolution. From foreign policy to domestic routine, breastfeeding to

chemotherapy, postmodern theory to parenting practice, the finely-drawn characters of *Dykes To Watch Out For* fuse high and low culture in a serial graphic narrative suitable for humanists of all persuasions. The *Comics Journal* says, "Bechdel's art distills the pleasures of *Friends* and *The Nation*; we recognize our world in it, with its sorrows and ironies."

The Advocate

www.advocate.com
The award-winning national gay and lesbian newsmagazine.

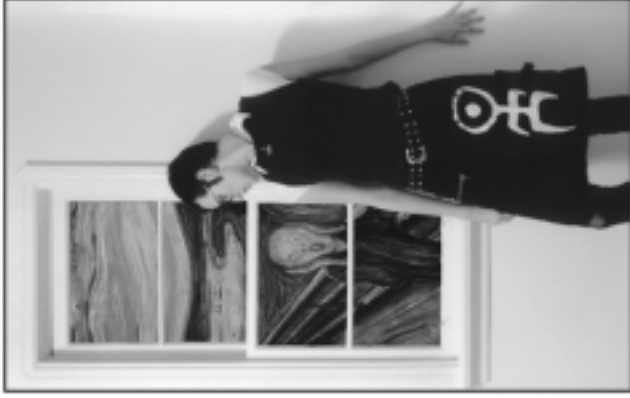
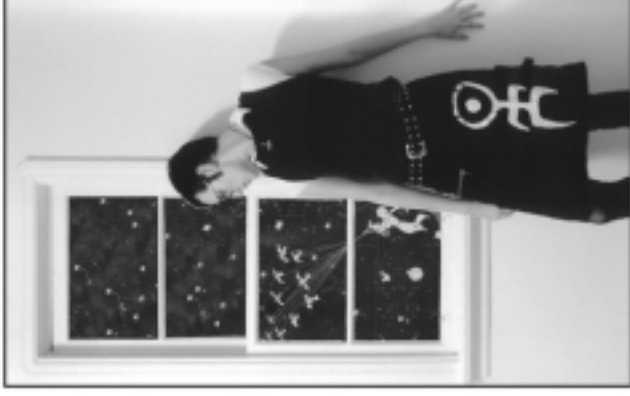
The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide

glreview.com/about.html

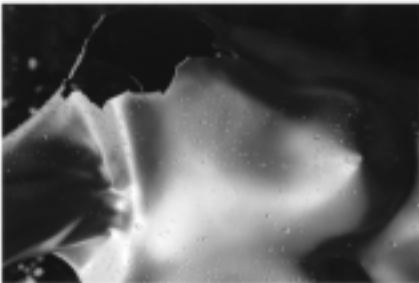
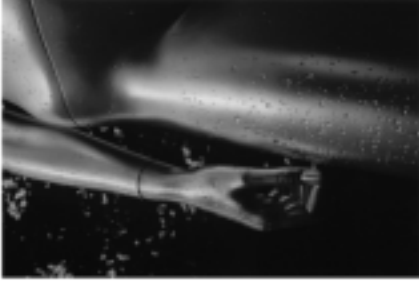
The Mission of The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide is to provide a forum for enlightened discussion of issues and ideas of importance to lesbians and gay men; to advance gay and lesbian culture by providing a quality vehicle for its best writers and thinkers; and to educate a broader public on gay and lesbian topics.

My Favorite Word #8

virago: n. pl. viragoes or viragos
1. A woman regarded as noisy, scolding, or domineering.
2. A large, strong, courageous woman.
syn. Amazon



Reactions
Photocollage by Steffi
(~conformistsheep)



Self-criticism
Photography by Steffi

I Am Not
by Julie Elefante

I'm going down the list
filling in the bubbles
confirming my identity.
I am, I am, I am
just.
fine.

the goal, then, is to be greater than what I already am—
to keep me going,
it's what I'm NOT that I MOST need to know
and I am NOT
stopping here

some may say they are the product of many
elements from their environment

But I am not just
The soot and civil seizures
of the city I grew up in
cuz if I was, I would've been lost in the gutter sweep

I am not
just the catcalls, name calling, and crowded
classrooms of my public school education
cuz if I was, I would've been scraped off the
bottom of a desk and tossed like sweaty gym socks
and I am not just the all-night fights and uneasy meals
around my dining room table growing up
cuz if I was, I would've been brushed away with the
crumbs and inhaled in a scream

I am more than my yesterday
I did not stop there.

I WILL. BE here. tomorrow
because I am NOT
The end of the line

I am more than my lineage
I am more than my mother's
small town, small-minded upbringing
or her pillow-smothered sorrows—
I did not evaporate to be left as salt

I am more
than my father's blue collars and bleeding knuckles
more than a smudge on a shop rag

I was not tossed in the pile and set to flame
I am more than my grandmother's slender hands

Clenched by decades of family building
I am more than can be salved away and soothed with heat
I don't stop at my ancestors' tragedies or triumphs
I am more than my culture!
I was not there at the protests and the marches
and I did not brush the dust of unfair fields from my hands
my historic heroes did not live that time
so I could dwell on their sacrifice
but to use their sweat and time oppressed instead
as a diving board, and I will fall face first
and earn my own badge of honor instead of
gripping and ripping the stitches of their's
I will be progress beyond injustice into
unbound books waiting to be written
I am greater than potential
I will be someone's inspiration,
someone's challenge,
someone's nemesis—
the force of flow that aids
to shape what is to come

I will be the first smile you see to start your
day or the embrace you get before you end it
I will be the reference for your dream job
the hand you need when you least expect it
I will be the end to the next season's war
I am MORE than I used to give myself credit for

I am NOT just a stereotype, a social group, a gender—
I am greater than the tone or mix of my skin
I am more than just "from the block"
more than just a decade of slang
more than hip hop or guitar rock
greater than the kink, color, or straight-hanging
weight of my hair
am I just compounded identity?
That other stuff is not how I want you to remember me
if those single bits are all I can claim to be ...
Then I am less of a person than I thought I was
and I should just lie down and die quietly
cuz if I can't see past what I already AM
then I am NOT goin anywhere ...

but fact of the matter is ...
I've already moved on.

Airbrushed Sneakers by Shelly (~babydyke 87)



Resources

Birl Clothes

chocolatebabydesigns.com/studded/about.htm

Queer Info

www.advocate.com
www.gayagenda.com
www.queernet.org
www.butch-femme.com
www.thetaskforce.org

www-lib.usc.edu/~retter/main.html

Links to lesbian history, documents, photographs, biographies, etc. Excellent resource if you are researching a specific lesbian-related topic. Not too much here for the average browser, although what is here is quite interesting. (ie. some vintage photos)

Transdender

www.genderesistant.org

www.transgenderlaw.org

One of the most useful sites for information on transgender law around the country

www.ftm-intl.org This site is the internet contact point for the largest, longest-running educational organization serving FTM transgendered people and transsexual men.

Study Suggests That Tomboys May Be Born, Not Made

from the Center for the Advancement of Health, November 12, 2002

Levels of testosterone during pregnancy appear to influence the gender-role behavior of preschool girls. Researchers measured pregnant women's levels of testosterone, then evaluated the behavior of their children at age 3 1/2. The greater the maternal testosterone level, the more likely girls were to engage in "masculine-typical" gender-role behavior, such as playing with toys typically preferred by boys. No correlation was found for boys' behavior, however. The researchers based their hypotheses on animal studies that have shown a correlation between maternal levels of testosterone and behavior in female offspring.

"Because hormones influence basic processes of brain development, they also exert permanent influences on behavior," says lead author Melissa Hines, Ph.D., of City University in London. "In both rats and rhesus monkeys, genetic female animals treated with testosterone during critical periods of prenatal or early postnatal life show increased levels of ... male-typical play behavior as juveniles." Hines and her co-authors note that girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), a genetic disorder involving prenatal exposure to high levels of male hormones, tend to prefer masculine-typical toys and activities.

Participants were part of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, a long-term study of biological, environmental and social factors associated with pregnancy outcomes and child health. A total of 13,998 pregnant women - who represented 90 percent of all pregnancies occurring in the Avon, England, area during an 18-month period in the early 1990s - enrolled in the study. Data from 679 offspring of the 14,138 children born during the study were analyzed.

The researchers obtained blood samples from the pregnant women during routine prenatal medical care; 55 percent of the women had blood taken between weeks 8 and 24 of the pregnancy; a quarter of the women had the samples taken between weeks 5 and 7, and the remainder after week 25. The samples were analyzed for levels of testosterone and a hormone that limits the ability of testosterone to act, called sex hormone binding globulin. Once each child reached age 3 1/2, a primary caregiver completed the Pre-School Activities Inventory (PSAI), which assesses the child's engagement in various sex-typed behaviors, such as play with certain toys, games and activities. Higher scores indicate more masculine-typical behavior. The questionnaire was completed again when the child was 3 1/2.

The authors found a link between testosterone level in mothers and girls' scores on the PSAI, with high testosterone levels related to high "masculine" scores. No relationship was found between testosterone levels and boys' gender-role behavior, however. The researchers note that "sex differences in childhood gender-role behavior, including toy, playmate and activity preferences, develop as a consequence of numerous influences. ... For instance, parents, teachers and peers provide more positive reinforcement for sex-congruent play than for play that is not sex-congruent." They therefore identified background variables from the data that may be linked to gender-role behavior, such as maternal education, the presence of older brothers or sisters in the home, the presence of a male adult living in the home, and parental adherence to traditional sex roles.

"These background variables cannot account for the observed relation between testosterone and PSAI scores in pre-school age girls," writes Hines. The authors suggest that the effects were not seen in boys because boys ordinarily are exposed to higher levels of prenatal testosterone. "Compared to girls, boys are more strongly encouraged to behave in sex-typical ways and are more strongly discouraged from engaging in cross-gendered behavior," they write. "Thus, girls may be more likely than boys to manifest hormone-related predispositions to gender-role behaviors more characteristic of the other sex, because these predispositions are less likely to be counteracted by other influences."



It's Times Like These, I Wish I Was a Lesbian
by Steffi