



## The Real Story About Gender

1. Either (biological) sex and gender are the same thing or they're not.
2. If sex and gender are the same then there would be no variation.
3. No variation would either make us all very plain people who know how to be Real Men and Real Women, or it would make us crazy from boredom.
4. If we're all very plain people then it's because there is no confusion about who men and women are, what they do and how cunts and cocks work, or it's not.
5. If all women act the same and all men do too, then it's because we've all become Real Women and Real Men, or not.
6. If all men are Real Men, then all men dress the same, do the same work, know the right way to be masculine, are heterosexual, or else they're freaks.
7. If all women are Real Women, then all women dress the same, do the same work, know the right way to be feminine, are attracted to Real Men, or else they're freaks,
8. But if we're crazy from boredom, confused, or freaks, then we're either deviant men and women or we're Real.
9. If we're deviant men and women, then we've strayed from the societal constructs of gender and being Real, or we're in-between.
10. If we've strayed from societal constructs, then we prove the existence of a set of rules that define and enforce what we know about gender, or not.

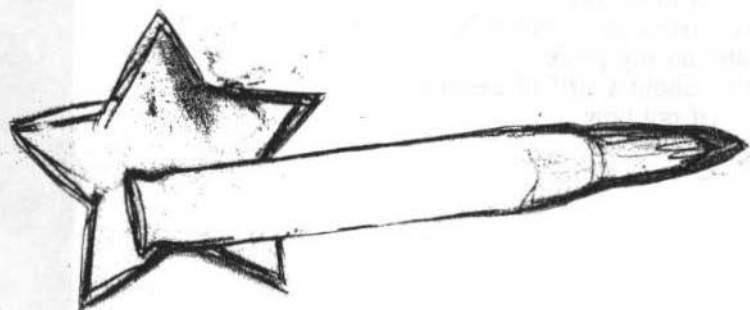
11. Either you believe this set of rules exists and is what creates Real Men and Real Women or not.

12. If you don't believe society sets up and demands adherence to a set of rules about gender then you're probably happy being a Real Man or a Real Woman, or you're working on changing.

13. If you're not happy then you're either working to re-define gender roles by trying to be a sensitive man or powerful woman, you're in-between genders, or you're doing drag, or you're a transsexual struggling to be seen as human, or you're a gay man, a lesbian or a bisexual, or you were born intersexed.

14. If you can't identify with any of these things, and you fit into the mold of a Real Man or a Real Woman then you're either telling the truth or not.

15. If you are telling the truth about being a Real Man or a Real Woman, then no one will assume you are lying or if you are not.



## Models

on the corner I whistle for a bus  
assessing differences between my lover's cock  
and mine my words whir  
    if not me for me  
    who for me?  
the same blackberry blood  
in our veins divides us like a cliff  
my lover's words prick  
    if not now  
    when?

on a corner Milk whistled  
for us  
his words prick my skin  
    if not me for me  
    who for me?  
blood like mother's blackberry  
jelly fell from the whir of his heart  
like a bus driving off a cliff  
    if not now  
    when?

Riggs and Hemphill whistle for a bus  
the blood of the Castro whirs  
their words like ripe blackberries  
    if not me for me  
    who for me?  
morsels from your mother's  
lips around my prick  
warning about a cliff of desires  
    if not now  
    when?

## Dreamscape of the Margin

Mama told me sex was like hot chocolate, not hot cocoa  
She and mom were Godiva in bed, not Swiss Miss  
Mama said she was the mug and Mom was the chocolate

At night I dreamed about Willy Wonka's chocolate factory  
Even his dick was solid chocolate, his cum the golden ticket  
Then I'd wake up alone and search the kitchen  
This was my secret: I fucked myself with 5th Avenue bars

And ran away from home searching for my own Godiva  
My legs swam, through muddy rivers  
My swollen cunt licking river banks  
They should have been chocolate rivers

I kept running, kept searching  
My cunt swallowed Butterfingers whole  
My lips sticky and contaminated  
This secret dripping between my legs

This secret: I want to be Allen Ginsberg  
My millions of genitals flying, 1400 miles per hour  
My genitals an unpublishable private literature  
Ginsberg howling into the night on my motorcycle

Allen will you be my Daddy?  
Take me, riding the corridors of America  
Take me, sucking the chocolate cocks of closeted boys  
Find a home for our chocolate

Let us cruise 5th Avenue  
Searching shadows down  
Stopping in hidden back rooms  
To taste this secret fruit

# **I Try Not To Respond When people ask me:**

*Transsexuals. Aren't they hiding in alleyways?  
You work the streets, right?  
Did you get a fake vagina?*

## **II.**

**Re-configuration of proportions  
and appearance confuse me**

Where do I fit in ?  
Where can I hide ?

## **III.**

**I know this burning desire to embody the requirements of the binary  
and melt into the norm  
will leave me dismembered  
with membranes stretched and strewn across jagged concrete  
of sidewalks  
like discarded sanitary pads**

**even if there is nothing sanitary about Transsexuals  
who view this bloody re-configuration from inside to outside  
when we buy vaginas  
and cocks constructed of our own skin**

**and like a hormonal side dish of the blue plate special  
we grow real-flesh breasts  
or big wet clit-dicks**

## **IV.**

**America wonders:**

*Why can't you just be a man 'cause that's the way you were born?  
Why can't you just be a woman 'cause that's the way you were born?  
I can't tell what the heck you are. But I know you're not right.*

## **V.**

**I lose my steam  
like the hiss of an iron  
and can fight no longer**

**so I retreat to bed  
where my sex is safe  
in the hands of my lover**

Epilogue:

When I read my writing I consider what's real and what's fake. The masturbation scene belongs to the author. The 5th Avenue bar doesn't. The porn belongs, along with *tampax fell out of my cunt forever*, and the *hormonal side dish*. If Ginsberg were still alive, I'd ask him to be my daddy. It's not true that if you make tortilla everything will be all right.

Of course in the realm of fiction it might as well be fake. This puts distance between the author and the words and provides clarity for the reader. Of course, it could all be real. It all could have happened, all could apply to the author, all could disclose something about the author's life.

Epilogue:

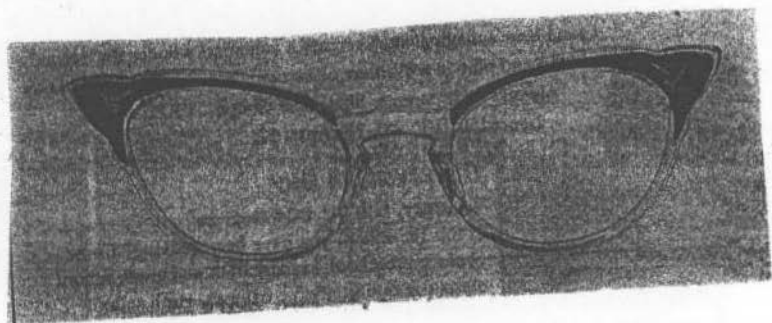
When I write, I sit naked in my grandmother's wicker chair at the desk. It is snowing outside, the cat is sleeping, the radio hums from the kitchen. While I write a mug of lukewarm coffee sits on the desk. I fold my legs beneath me on the rungs of chair. If I stand up to stretch my back, the neighbors can see me. The neighbors laugh and point at me. They smoke cigarettes in their garage.

Epilogue:

The readers will take care of themselves. The author is obsessed with pleasing readers. The readers ask questions. The author answers. The readers demand details. The author supplies. And supplies. And supplies.

Lynn Emanuel playfully flips them the finger. I invite them in for tea and cookies, then flip them the finger.

My work is confessional, I say. It's not meant to be pure fiction or pure truth. The cat licks salt from my fingers because it's there. You lick my words but they're not pure anything. They're simply words.

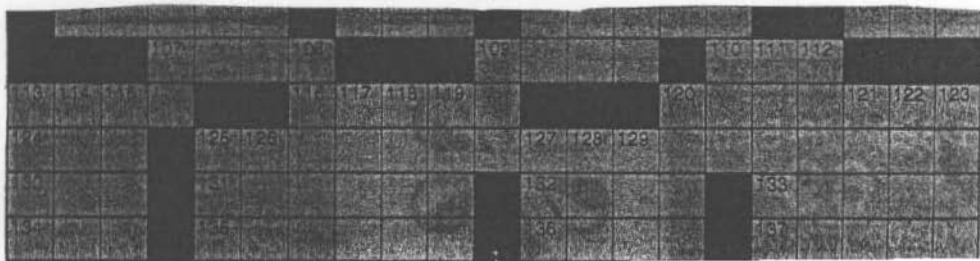


### Notes to the text:

Know that part in The Complete Hothead Paisan by Diane DiMassa where Daphne and Hothead are hanging out and Hothead comments on Daphne's poem? She says, "That's about people's tiny little brains and the fragility and the impact of appearance!" Then they begin dancing and scream, "Every day is Halloween! I wouldn't know myself if I bit me in the ass!" That's how I feel. I don't walk down the street alone. It's all about other people's reactions to people-- our judgements, our assumptions about race, class, gender, sexual orientation. Boy/girl, Straight/gay, White/black. The binary classification. The distinction. The division. The value in each judgement.

From Carole Maso's Ava: "Pears poached in red wine. French mirabelle plums and white peaches. Olives hang like earrings in late August. Strawberries in December. Black tulips. Basil in winter. Something so-- Something rare."

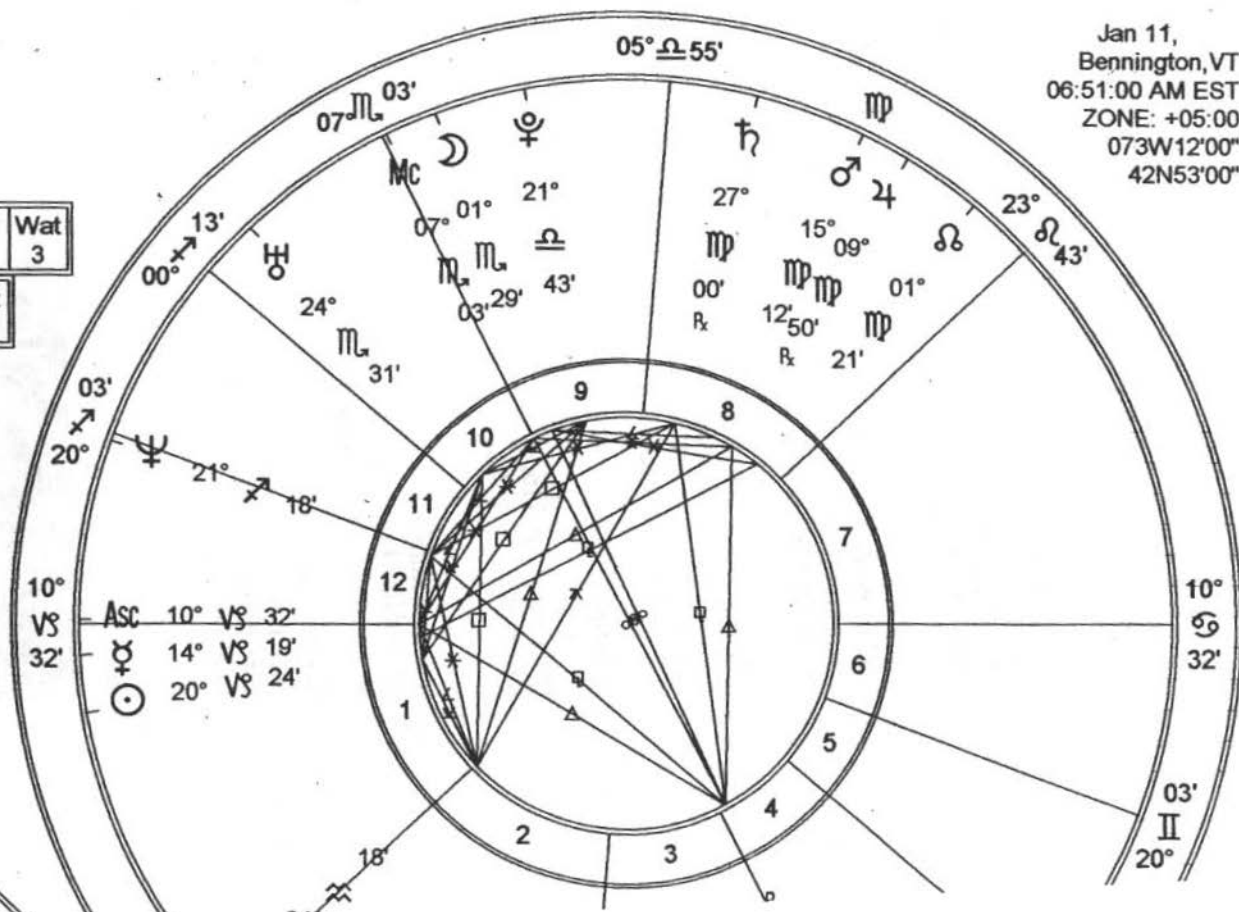
From Carole Maso's The American Woman in the Chinese Hat: "This was the truth she said: We would always be together. Everything would be OK. All she ever wanted was me. I see now that the truth is something that shifts and changes. The truth is not really the truth. That is all,"





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my mother's helper God-help-me  
burn-branded me girl  
into pink flesh once new  
since societal labels are literally brand names

burn-branded girl into  
an assigned name  
since societal labels are literally brand names  
when tampax fell out of my cunt forever

an assigned name  
through dick-tation or dictation or dic(k)tation  
when tampax fell out of my cunt forever  
to be re-written like a bloody dick

through dick-tation or dictation or dic(k)tation  
coming re-branded re-labeled re-assigned  
to be re-written like a bloody dick  
genitals have souls names and faces

coming re-branded re-labeled re-assigned  
we do not own it and  
genitals have souls names and faces  
we cut down our middles knowing

we do not own it  
we carry our wounds coming  
cutting down our middles knowing this desire  
for the chance to re-brand bodily assignments

we carry our wounds coming  
into pink flesh once new  
for the chance to re-brand bodily assignments  
by my mother's helper God-help-me



so much depends  
upon

a purple dildo

glazed with sweat  
and lube

beside the white  
lamp

so much depends  
upon

riding in

my red wheel  
barrow

as I push you  
and we

chase chickens  
across the field

so much depends  
upon

hips thrusting  
in rhythm

in the red wheel  
barrow

## Sex: an interview

Bondage  
D/s of the morals.

We're interrupting the Religious Right in a manner of speaking  
in the way that two people  
two cunts  
two cocks  
a Daddy and boy  
two trans fags  
two butches  
and two femmes  
constitute an organized attack on real American family values.

I had wanted to fuck  
like an interfaith service,  
No pressure  
No names  
just bodies in a room  
hand in hand  
(*open your mouth and scream*)  
stop short of taking the Lord's name in vain.  
(*Don't offend my grandmother*).

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## Epilogue:

The radio hums in the background. The author writes, the author sings. Readers pick up words that are familiar, phrases that mean something. The author waltzes naked around the page. The author tries new dances, jumps from paragraph to paragraph, dances with characters, dances alone.

Readers draw their opera glasses from their cases, pull them up to their eyes. They squint. They strain to see the author. They stop listening so they might see. They stop looking and concentrate on gazing. Their heads bob up and down, left to right and back following the author.

The author is obsessed. The author dances to make connections. The author follows a trail of chocolate truffles on the stage and eats them one by one. The author kisses a man here, a woman there. *What does it taste like? How does it feel? Who moans?* The author takes a nap, the author prays. The readers gaze harder through their glasses.

The author rises up, yawns, and exits the stage. The readers dance with the shadows.

Epilogue:

You wanted to bake an apple pie. You wanted to know what it felt like. *Feel* apple pie. You wanted to cut off your finger, bake it under the crust. A pig in a blanket. *That's not kosher*. You wanted to feel the apples baking. You wanted to wash among the warm juices, be confined by the crust.

You asked me to take the knives out of your hands. Cut off my middle finger, please. Cut quick, fast, cut above the second knuckle. One solid motion would do it you said.

Epilogue:

The apples were in the crust. I cursed you standing there with clean hands. I cursed your paste-white fingers holding the red peels. I cursed your flourless brow, clean apron. I cursed the need in your eyes.

Epilogue:

I love you. It's like this crack in the pavement-- is it supposed to be there? Is it wear and tear or abuse?



Questions, comments--  
want to contact the author?  
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