

**As Performed on 20th November 2008
at the LGBT Centre in Glasgow, Scotland**

Creative Writing For Transgender Day of Remembrance



TRANSforming Arts

SCOTTISH TRANSGENDER ALLIANCE

www.scottishtrans.org

EQUALITY NETWORK



About Transgender Day of Remembrance

“The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialise those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28th, 1998 kicked off the “Remembering Our Dead” web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Rita Hester’s murder — like most anti-transgender murder cases — has yet to be solved.”

“The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, an action that current media doesn’t perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. Through the vigil, we express love and respect for our people in the face of national indifference and hatred. Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers. Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who’ve died by anti-transgender violence.”

Quoted from <http://www.rememberingourdead.org/day/what.html>

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The names memorialised in 2008 by the Transgender Day of Remembrance and details of the events held around the world can be found on the website www.transgenderdor.org along with tips on how to run a successful Transgender Day of Remembrance event.

The names for 2009 will be gathered together by Ethan St. Pierre on the website www.transgenderdor.org.

Please submit details of any Transgender Day of Remembrance event you organise to www.transgenderdor.org so that the international growth of the event can be recorded.

www.transgenderdor.org

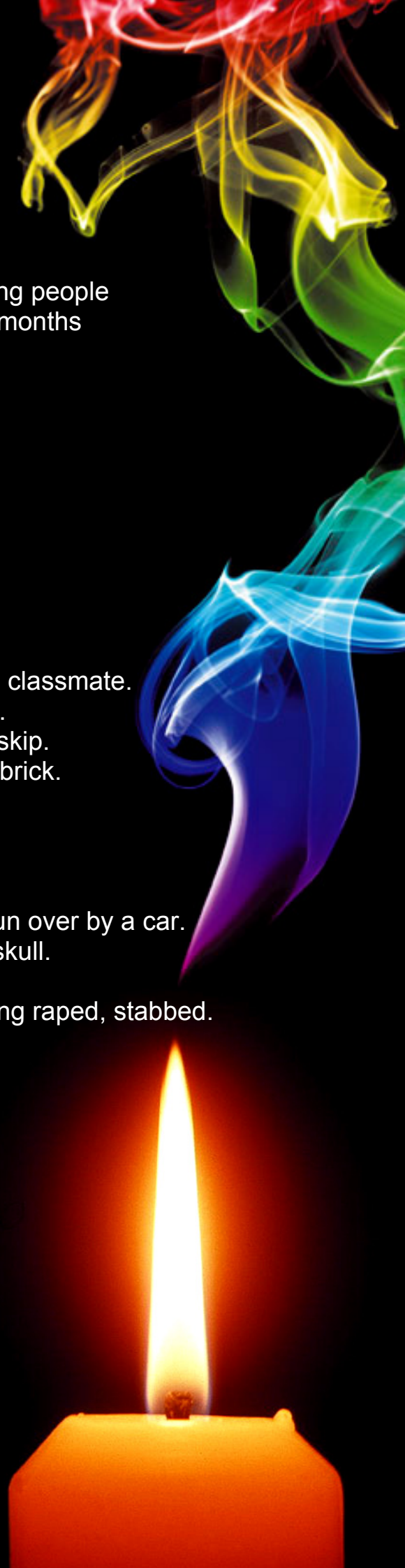
Remembering Our Dead 2008

Among many others, we remember the following people who are known to have died in the last twelve months as a result of transphobic hatred:

Kellie Telesford – UK. Strangled.
Brian McGlothlin – USA. Shot in the head.
Gabriela Alejandra Albornoz – Chile. Stabbed.
Patrick Murphy – USA. Shot.
Stacy Brown – USA. Shot in the head.
Adolphus Simmons – USA. Shot.
Fedra – Malaysia. Unreported cause.
Ashley Sweeney – USA. Shot in the head.
Sanesha Stewart – USA. Stabbed.
Lawrence King – USA. 15 years old. Shot by a classmate.
Simmie Williams Jr. – USA. 17 years old. Shot.
Luna – Portugal. Beaten to death and left in a skip.
Lloyd Nixon – USA. Beaten in the head with a brick.
Felicia Melton-Smyth – Mexico. Stabbed.
Silvana Berisha – Germany. Stabbed.
Ebony Whitaker – USA. Shot.
Rosa Pazos – Spain. Stabbed in the throat.
Juan Carlos Aucalle Coronel – Italy. Beaten, run over by a car.
Angie Zapata – USA. 18 years old. Fractured skull.
Jaylynn L. Namauu – USA. Stabbed.
Samantha Rangel Brandau – Italy. Beaten, gang raped, stabbed.
Ruby Molina – USA. Drowned.
Duanna Johnson – USA. Shot.
Dilek Ince – Turkey. Shot.
Moses Cannon – USA. Shot.

and

Cameron McWilliams – UK.
Suicide by hanging. Ten years old.



Introduction:

In October 2008, the SCOTTISH **TRANSGENDER** ALLIANCE started running a transgender creative expression course called **TRANSforming Arts**. During the 2008/2009 financial year, fourteen intensive **TRANSforming Arts** workshops were run, mostly held in the Glasgow LGBT Centre. Further **TRANSforming Arts** workshops are being planned for the new financial year by the SCOTTISH **TRANSGENDER** ALLIANCE.

The **TRANSforming Arts** participants performed a selection of their creative writing for the International Transgender Day of Remembrance on Thursday 20th November 2008. This booklet contains their creative writing as performed at the event.



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If you wish to perform any part of the material contained within this booklet as part of a FREE Transgender Day of Remembrance event, then permission must first be obtained by emailing a request including full details about the event to info@scottishtrans.org

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Welcome

By Jo Clifford

Thank you for coming this evening. It's lovely to see you.
I'm Jo Clifford, the facilitator of the TRANSforming Arts group.

[All the TRANSforming Arts group members also introduce themselves individually.]

This is one of a huge series of events that are happening all over the world tonight, and we're marking the Tenth Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance. We've devised and written this evening's event together, to remember our dead, and also to find our voices to communicate who we are: our lives, our hopes and our dreams as well as give thanks to everyone who supports and helps us on the way. And that includes the Glasgow LGBT Centre here who are hosting this event - we thank them and especially Joyce Drummond who has been really kind and helpful to us.

One reason to be proud to live in Scotland is that our Scottish Government funds a full-time Project Coordinator, James Morton, for the Scottish Transgender Alliance. This funding enables us to put on events such as this one and to address Transgender Equality, Rights and Inclusion across Scotland.

OK. Are we all sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin.

[Bell]

Hello ladies, hello gentlemen. Hello men, hello women.

Hello those of you who are not ladies and are not gentlemen, and not men and not women but like me maybe something in between or maybe something that's a bit of both or something or somebody that has never been thought of or imagined yet.

Somebody or something this evening may even bring into being.

Welcome.

Welcome to this precious time.

This time when we're going to celebrate who we are and who we will become.

When we're going to remember those of us who have been killed because of who we are.

And those who because of our oppression are not able to become themselves at all.

[Bell]

*[All members of the group take turns to read out the names which **remember our dead** for the current year.]*

[A candle is lit for each name as it is read out.]

We tend to die young.

We die young because sometimes the hostility we so often unwittingly provoke causes us to be murdered.

We can internalise this hatred and die through suicide, alcohol or drug abuse, self harm, or sexually transmitted diseases.
And so we know there are many, many others whose names are not recorded.

Let's spend a moment in silence to remember those whose names we know and the many more whose names we do not.
If there's someone you know you would like to remember, then you are invited to light a candle for them, and say their name if you so wish.

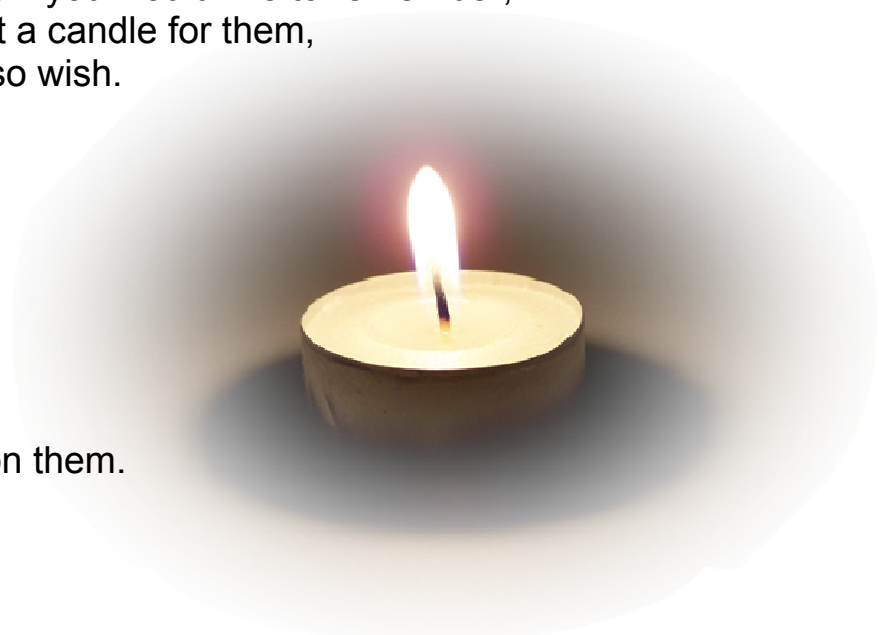
[Bell]

[SILENCE]

[Bell]

May they rest in peace.
And light eternal shine upon them.

[Bell]



How lucky do you feel today?

By Amy Redford

How lucky do you feel today?

I know how lucky I am. Very. I'm lucky to be happy, lucky to be loved. Lucky to be alive.

I know that I'm happy because I can smile, laugh, giggle, and joke around with the best of them. I know that I'm loved because I have many people in my life that tell me so. I'm lucky to be alive because I celebrated my twenty eighth birthday some years ago.

I'm lucky because, globally the average life expectancy of a trans person is 27 years.

I'm 42, which means that statistically someone had to die too young for me to stand before you today. Someone gave their life so that I might live mine.

How do you live with that knowledge? How do you ever repay that debt? How do you honour that sacrifice?

For every joy I experience in life, it is matched measure for measure by sadness. Like those who walk away unscathed from an otherwise fatal train wreck, I feel survivor guilt at the peace and happiness I've found in my transition.

I have many transgendered brothers and sisters all over the world. And yes, although I've never met them, they are my brothers and sisters. My family. For some of us, the only family we will know. So many of us are rejected like lepers by family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances.



Many of my brothers and sisters around the world know nothing of happiness. Or indeed of love. Freedom and protection are mythical concepts alien to their reality. And life? That beautiful miracle of conscious existence, that precious gift which is unique and so personal to each and every one of us, the one thing you have which is truly yours and yours alone, has been snatched away from them.

Taken.
Stolen.
Robbed.
Systematically defiled.

Some people die of old age, some from illness or injury. Trans people die from hate.

There is a silent holocaust happening each and every day under our very noses.

So many of our brothers and sisters know nothing of humanity, or of compassion. We are the sad, the lonely, and the desperate. We are the invisible millions ignored by our society and our culture. We die every day, and yet barely a newspaper column inch is spared to tell the story.

Today I tell their story.

Today I honour them.

Today I remember them.

And may we never forget.





The Bass Line

By B.

Picture a firm circle of
Resonant booming voice
Listen to the pride
We carry over to the audience.
Relax yourself onto the cushion of
Freely flowing sound
And see my eyes glow with
Power – I can do this.

I can sing!
I can belong!
I can hold my stance in front
Of your gaze.

I did not dare to
Before my voice broke –
To give me this chance
Of joining in the chant.
Now I take a fuller part
While I sing the bass line.

Amidst my tribal peers
And elders of my proud choir
I'll beat a steady da-dam
I am, I live, I dare.



FROCKWISE:

A Typical Night-Out For A Cross Dresser By Campbell Lauder

PARTY NIGHT MINUS TWO WEEKS:

Some friends invite you out and they'd like it if you came as your female self.

Current Expenditure: £0.00

PARTY NIGHT MINUS NINE DAYS:

Realise your nails are starting to get quite long – you choose not to cut them.

Top-up your mobile with £10. You phone to ask if you can get changed at venue – you can't.

Text around friends to coordinate a place to get changed at - one friend eventually agrees.

You attempt to style your long hair – and decide make an appointment at your hairdresser's.

Book a waxing session at beauty salon, vital if you have lots of dark body hair.

Current Expenditure: £10.00

PARTY NIGHT MINUS SEVEN TO THREE DAYS:

Start growing 'designer' stubble, so you can have a much closer shave on the actual day.

You eventually find the right dress, it costs £45, then realise you need a new bra it costs £25.

Current Expenditure: £80.00

PARTY NIGHT MINUS TWO DAYS:

Get legs, chest, back, lest forget sack and crack waxed – the cost is a more painful £60.

To aid healing process, you buy moisturiser, Paracetamol and Ibuprofen, as well as a new pair of stockings and some condoms, these come to £17.45.

To ensure flatmates don't notice your lack of body hair, you stop wearing shorts and t-shirts.

You break one of your not very long nails and then have to trim it back – bugger!

You get very little sleep that night with the pain still subsiding on your now corned-beef skin.

Current Expenditure: £157.45

PARTY NIGHT MINUS ONE DAY:

The pain and swelling finally subsides, so you spend most of the day sleeping.

When awake, you agonise over what shoes, accessories, and make-up to wear.

Phone friend to confirm you can use their flat as a staging post, they reply “yes, absolutely”.

You neatly pack your outfit into a heavy-duty rucksack, before climbing back into bed.

Current Expenditure: £157.45

PARTY NIGHT MINUS NINE HOURS TO ZERO HOURS:

Trim nose and ear hair and eyebrows then pluck remaining strands of leg and chest hair.

You shave itchy stubble off; your face is smoother than silk – despite nasty shaving cut!

You top-up mobile phone with £10, before getting bus, and buying a £2.50 day-ticket.

At hairdressers: your friend texts to say she’s had to unexpectedly pull-out.

You phone/text other friends, guiltily pleading to let you use their homes to get changed before – and after – the party, all while having your hair styled.

Your mood isn’t helped when a rude customer utters “oohh a Nancy-boy!”

You officially give-up caring; despite the salon’s staff ejecting said customer mid-bleaching.

You pay salon £20, a reduced rate – due to arsey customer’s comments.

You contact more mates, offering bribes of money, food, and drink (or all three).

A friend calls to say you can get changed at theirs. You buy friend an £8 bottle of wine, and top-up your phone with (another) £10.

You arrive at friend’s, who makes you dinner – you realise you’ve barely eaten all day – or for that fact all week.

You get yourself changed and made-up – you look gorgeous!

During the taxi journey, you notice your short of cash, you ask driver to drop you off at a quiet cash-point. Unsurprisingly; cash point is empty; you get back in the taxi.

The taxi draws nears venue when you see another ATM, but it has a huge queue, and you have no choice but join it. A passer-by shouts: “mister, did ye get dressed in the fucking dark, likes?”

You respond politely by promising to break the man's arm if he says anything else – he backs down. You take £100 from the cash machine and jump back in taxi.

You arrive at the venue, and hand £20 to the driver, before finally joining the party!

Current Expenditure: £227.95

THE PARTY:

You have a great time; spending only £13.50, as many friends buy you drinks, as does a sexy female who flirts with, and snogs you all night, she then asks “Your place or mine?” Sadly, neither is an option – you can't leave your stuff at, or bring the lady back to your flat via your friend's. You don't bother exchanging numbers - so much for the condoms in your handbag!

Current Expenditure: £241.45

PARTY NIGHT PLUS TWO HOURS:

You have 120 minutes to undo most of the previous 14 days of worth effort, including two more taxi rides that cost you £30 altogether – all the while you're exhausted and very drunk!

Current Expenditure: £271.45 – Change: £36.50

Writer's Block

By Amy Redford

It isn't easy having writer's block
When you just want to think
And others want to talk

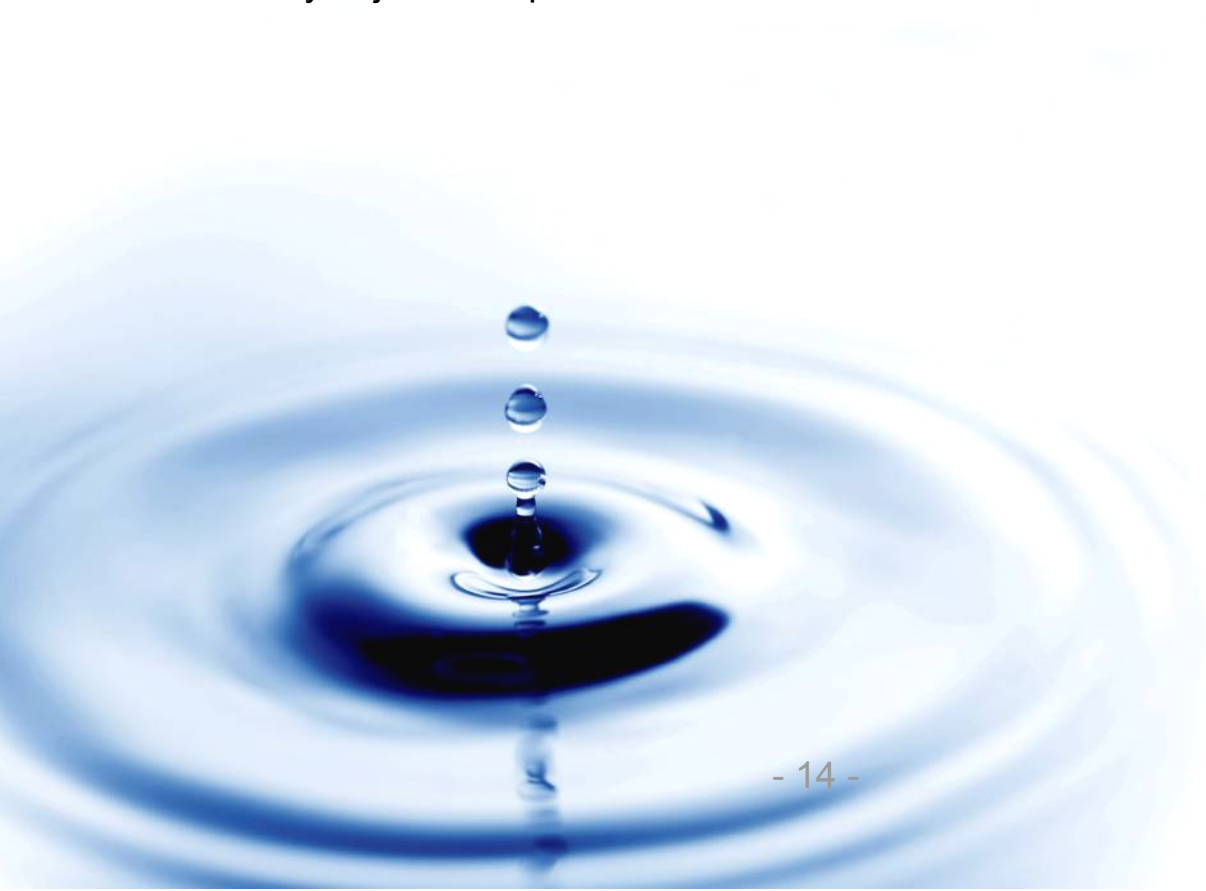
It's not so easy trying to jot things down
When you can't raise a smile
And you can only frown

It isn't easy staring at a blank page
Fighting tears of frustration
Feeling pent up rage

It's not too cool when you can't express
Your innermost self
And what's got you depressed

It's just too hard to let it all out
'Cos if I start with a whisper
I would end with a shout

And you think you've got problems displaying your emotions
Well I'm here to tell you
They're just a drop in the ocean



A Transsexual's A-Z of Antidepressants

By Kristiane Taylor

- A. Feel naff
- B. Take antidepressants
- C. Feel much better
- D. Experience nagging doubts about their affect on you
- E. Take more antidepressants
- F. Feel a little better
- G. Try to stop taking antidepressants
- H. Become really ill
- I. Take antidepressants
- J. Feel a whole lot better
- K. Tell the Doctor that you think you're addicted
- L. She dismisses your concerns
- M. Take more antidepressants
- N. Feel a little better
- O. Check Internet. It says that everyone who takes them is addicted and that Doctors dismiss concerns.
- P. Take more antidepressants
- Q. Feel a fraction better
- R. Try to come off them very, very, very slowly
- S. Very, very, very slowly become very, very, very ill and then without warning very, very, very quickly and quite dramatically
- T. Take antidepressants
- U. Feel a whole lot better
- V. Despair
- W. Take antidepressants
- X. Feel a little better
- Y. Consequently never finish anything you start



Running Away

By Campbell Lauder

It's about, oh...2.30am-ish.

Mum and Dad and my sister Mary are finally sleeping.
They just found me in my female clothes.
Dad's always said he really never wanted a son.
So I'd've thought he wouldn't've minded seeing me wearing girly clothes.

Shit! My eye's really swelling-up now!
Need to put more foundation and eye shadow on.
And where are those sunglasses?
Oh, there they are.
Why does Dad need to use his fists when he's angry?
At least he didn't bust my lip, so my lippy'll go on fine.
Mum tried to stop Dad hitting me, and she got herself hurt.
I'll so miss her.
Mary egged Dad on, she's such a bitch.
I wish she hadn't found me and told Dad.
Glad I had a wig and some clothes and make-up hidden away,
can't believe Dad threw most of my stuff-out - he's such a bastard!

I've just turned fifteen, and my name's Emily.
At least, that's what I'd like to call myself...in fact, I will, after I leave this place and get on that bus.
I'm looking good – apart from my eye!
I really look a lot like Mary, but a lot prettier to be honest, guess I'll need to ditch this brown wig, so I don't look like her.
And then I'll grow my hair long and dye it blonde.

I think I'd best get going now.
I'll put my heels on when I reach the bottom of the street.
I'm gonna miss my bedroom, and God; I'm really going to miss my Mum.
I'll just pop my head around my parent's bedroom door, see her one last time.
Why does she always snore?

Fuck, I'm crying now.
Hope Dad leaves her alone!
Damn it, my mascara's running.
Okay, okay - I've made it downstairs, I'm almost at the front door,
there's Dad's keys on the hallway table.
Just a few more feet, need to be totally quiet!

Phew – it's open!

No-one is outside; I'm finally off to London for good.
I step on the doormat for the last time - it jags at my feet, so I look
down.
What a laugh, it says: 'Welcome Home'.



Hosack Road

By Alex Rainbow

Daphne took the bicycle out into the little front garden and got it ready to go shopping. She was wearing black, blouse and trousers that were so tight they looked like a bodystocking and her long-haired wig was tied back into a ponytail.

She checked her appearance in one of the bicycle mirrors, gave me a cheery wave and set off for Balham High Street and the shops.

I waved back at her from the safety of the living room French window and watched her cycle away. I felt a mixture of admiration, worry and embarrassment.

I always did.

It was all a very long way from the tiny little town where I had grown up in the West of Ireland.

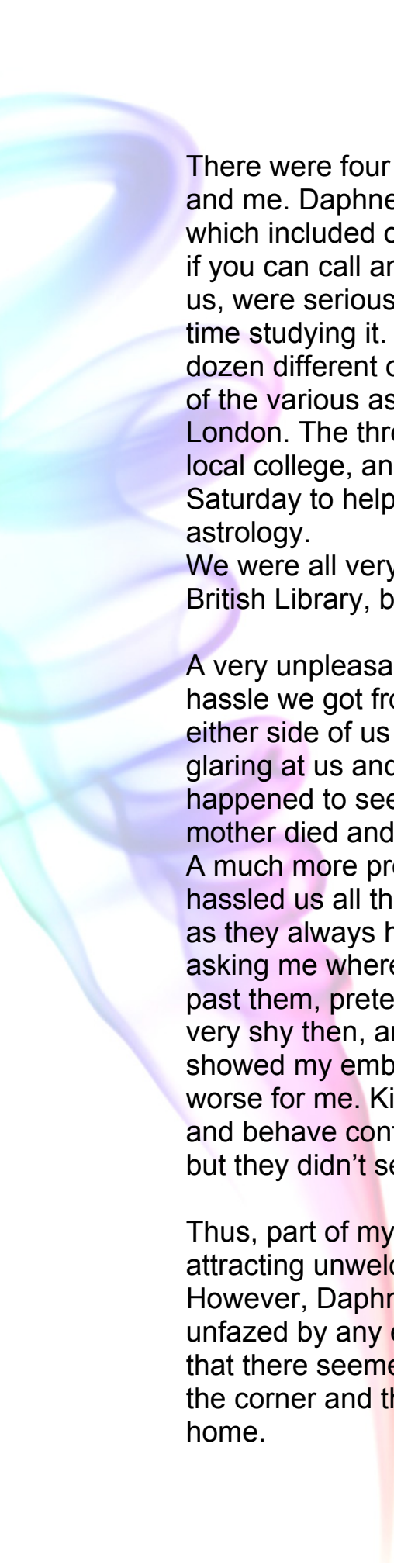
It was the Summer of 1976 and I was 22 years old. I had been living in this small, very shabby, mid-terraced house in Tooting in London for nearly a year now. In many ways I felt very happy. For the first time in my life I knew people like me and I was on the way to becoming the man I had always so desperately wanted to be.

I had become fond of Daphne, and felt very grateful to her, though I could not stop myself feeling embarrassed whenever we went anywhere together. Only the previous week we had been at a meeting of the Inventors' Union. They were nearly all very conventional middle-aged men there. I was a bit different because I was young and looked even younger, but Daphne stood out because she was so obviously a middle-aged transvestite...

However she identified totally as a transsexual. It was the now notorious Dr. Randell at Charing Cross Hospital who had refused to accept her as a "true" transsexual.

Jane, the other transsexual in the house was much more successful than Daphne in "passing" every day, thanks to her having cultivated the persona of a rather dowdy housewife.

Daphne's deep streak of exhibitionism, however, never allowed her to "pass" anywhere.



There were four of us living in the house then: Daphne, Jane, Kit and me. Daphne owned the house, and charged us a low rent which included our utility bills. Kit was the only “normal” one of us, if you can call an ex-shot putter bisexual woman normal. Three of us, were seriously interested in the occult and spend much of our time studying it. We regularly received magazines from about a dozen different organizations and we attended monthly meetings of the various astrological and theosophical associations in London. The three of us also went to various evening classes at a local college, and we went to suburban Surrey every other Saturday to help out on a huge statistical project to do with astrology.

We were all very poor. Jane earned money as a researcher at the British Library, but the rest of us lived on benefits.

A very unpleasant part of our lives, however, was the unending hassle we got from many of our neighbours. The neighbours on either side of us “ignored” us in a very pointed and very rude way, glaring at us and making comments about us whenever we happened to see them.. Daphne had got on well with them until her mother died and she decided to dress permanently as a woman. A much more pressing problem was the gang of local youths who hassled us all the time. I hated having to pass them on the street as they always hurled abuse at me about being a “tranny” and asking me where my dress was, etc. I had to force myself to go past them, pretending that they were not shouting at me. I was very shy then, and I used to feel mortified. However, I felt that if I showed my embarrassment – or my fear – it would be so much worse for me. Kit used to try teaching me how to be “street wise” and behave confidently. I did try telling them I was the other way, but they didn’t seem to take any notice.

Thus, part of my worry about Daphne was always about her attracting unwelcome attention from people.

However, Daphne soon returned from the shops, apparently unfazed by any encounters she had. She did mention, however, that there seemed to be more youths than usual hanging about at the corner and that they had threatened her as she had cycled home.

Kit and me had dinner together that evening, and then settled down to watch some television. It was coming near Halloween, a time of year when our little household was more “interesting” than usual to our local troublemakers. Daphne usually covered up the letterbox at this time for a couple of weeks. I felt more worried than usual and couldn’t shake a sense of foreboding.

We heard shouts from outside occasionally, but felt it best to just ignore them. If things got really bad we could call the police, though they certainly were not sympathetic and tended to blame us for any “aggro.” Things became quiet for a while, and then there was a very loud knocking on our front door.

This was ominous. We all came out of our rooms into the hall and looked each other, but didn’t say anything. The knocking came again, even more loudly, as though someone was trying to kick the door in.

Kit snapped. “I can’t stand this!” and went to open the door. Kit was nearly six feet tall, tattooed, still muscular, with long red hair and a ferocious temper.

She opened the door angrily and barked out “Yeah?!” Outside was a lad of about 16, wielding a bicycle chain. Behind him were maybe three slightly younger lads and a couple of girls. He looked taken aback by Kit’s sudden Valkyrie-like appearance. There were a couple of empty milk bottles put out for the morning near the front door. Kit grabbed one bottle, smashed half of it against the wall and held the other jagged half in her hand as she advanced on the boy, shouting “Come on!” as she did so. He turned and ran, the rest trailing after him.

I felt flooded with relief – and with admiration for Kit. How I admired her courage and strength! As she came back in she was actually shaking. The sudden rush of adrenaline had left her. But it still seemed such a victory to me. Our tormentors had been routed! We had fought back. And it was good.

Final Blessing

By Jo Clifford

(adapted from her play 'God's New Frock')

Bless the timid and the ashamed
For they shall be shameless
Bless the lonely and misunderstood
For she shall have everyone she wants.
Bless the poor.
For she shall be rich.
Bless the chairman of the board.
For she shall lose everything!
Bless the boy in the closet in the silk wedding gown
For he shall come out
Bless the prostitute
For she shall be honoured
Bless the frigid and the impotent
For they shall have sex for ever and ever!

Amen! Amen!

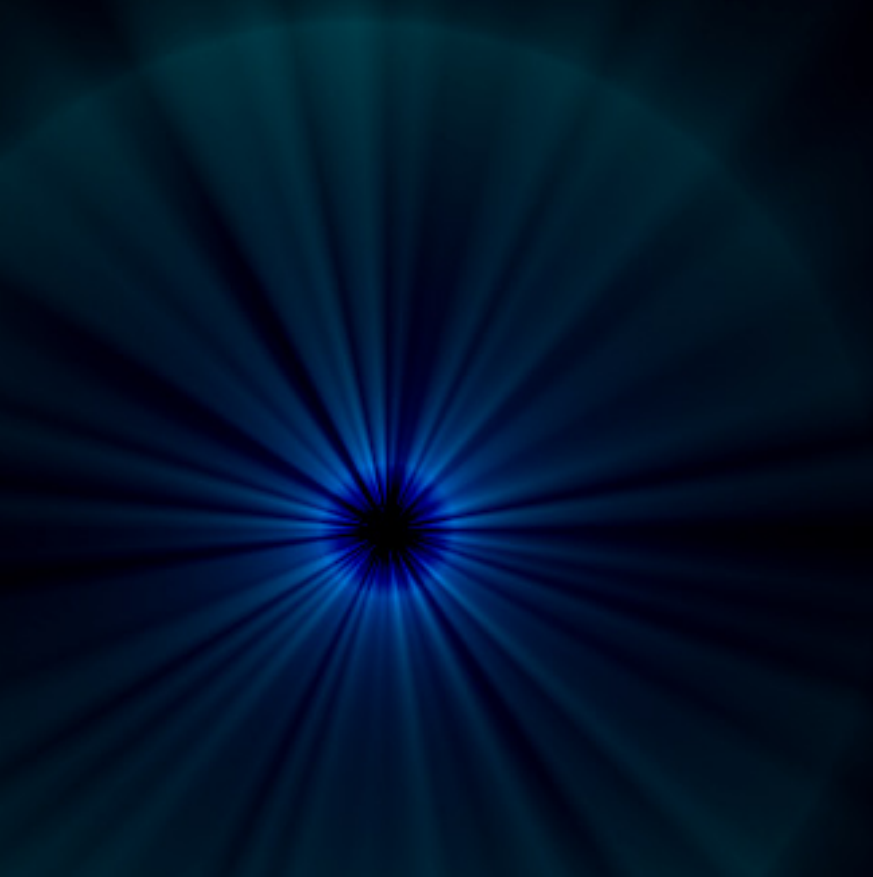
And bless the fathers who don't care because
they've never been cared for
For they shall be loved
Bless the mothers who hit
Because they cannot still their children's tears
For they shall be comforted
Bless the bully and the criminal
For they shall lose all fear
Bless the inadequates who go into government
For they shall lose their power
Bless the gangster who boasts of the women he's raped
and victims he's robbed and the enemies he's killed
For he is them
And they are him
And shall be for ever and ever.

Amen! Amen!



Bless this boy who cannot bear to be a boy
Bless this girl who cannot bear to be a girl
And bless these children who've been frozen in terror
Remind us we are not alone
Don't let us ever forget
for he is she
and she is he
and we are they
and they are we
and ever shall be
for ever and for ever and for ever

[END]



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