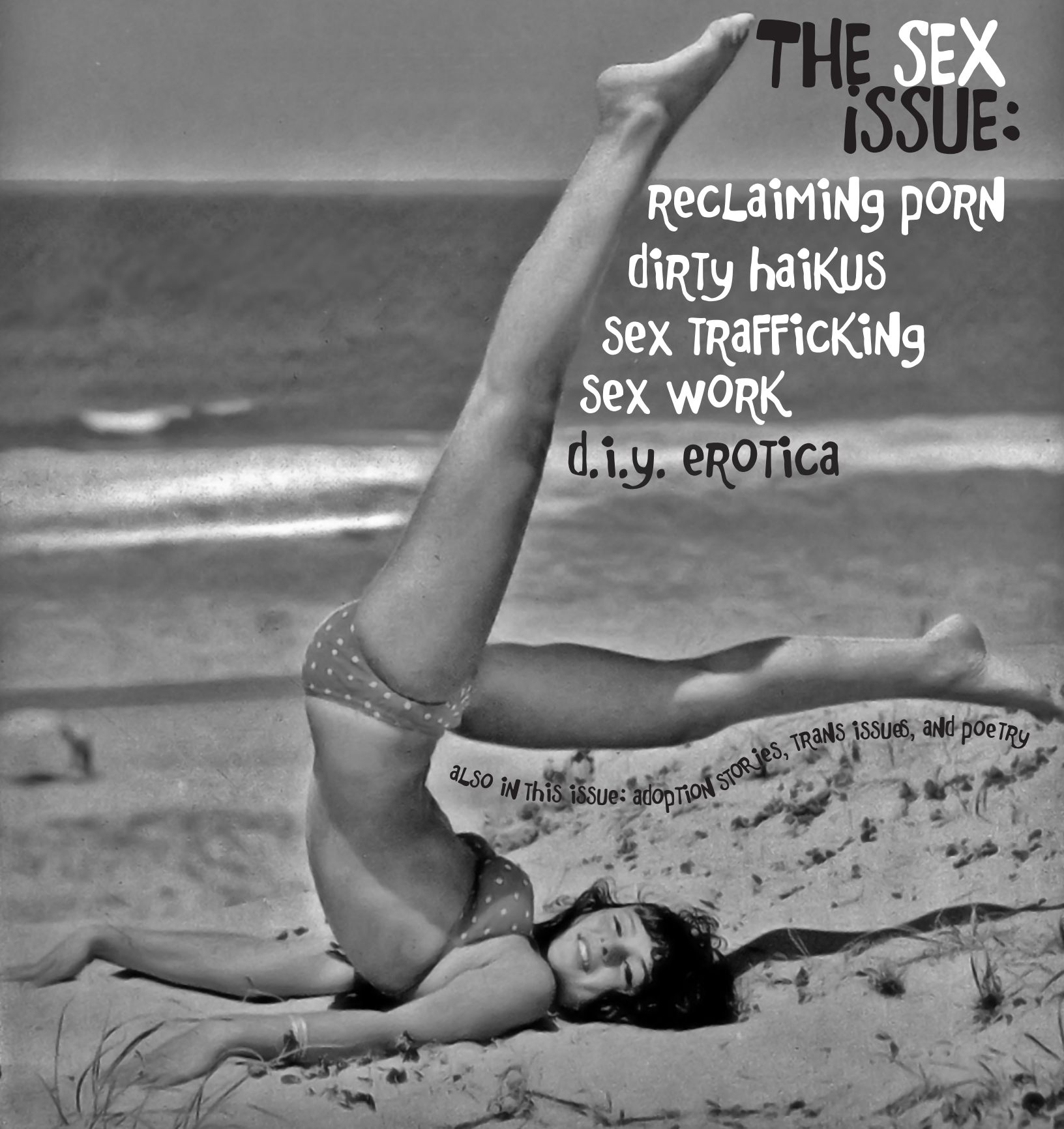


# the siren

**THE SEX  
ISSUE:**

RECLAIMING PORN  
DIRTY HAIKUS  
SEX TRAFFICKING  
SEX WORK  
d.i.y. EROTICA

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: ADOPTION STORIES, TRANS ISSUES, AND POETRY



## “have fun in the sun, get laid in the shade”

**M**id-June still brings back memories of the last days of school and the first days of summer, of emptied lockers, barbequed hot dogs, and mass yearbook signings. On the last day of the eighth grade, I remember the frenzied anticipation that filled the middle school gym as students swapped yearbooks, scribbling such sentimental messages as “keep it cool,” “call me! xoxo,” and “have a kick-ass summer!”

My yearbook filled with phone numbers of classmates I barely knew and would likely never call, I approached my 3-year-crush with purple gel pen in hand. Joe was, without question, the coolest, 14-year-old boy in all of Duniway Middle School history. He wore Vans covered with pot leaves before anyone of us knew what marijuana actually looked like. He played guitar. He wore Buddy-Holly-framed glasses and had a dry, ironic sense of humor. I have no memory of what I scribbled in his flimsy construction paper yearbook; most likely it was a song lyric that I was sure would impress. Joe was less deliberating. “Have fun in the sun, get laid in the shade” was written next to his hasty, unreadable

signature.

At the age of 13, I barely had any concept of what it meant to “get laid.” However, I imagined the sun and shade agenda to be typical of the teenage summer experience. While I didn’t actually “get laid” that summer, or summers after that, my newly-formed concept of sex that summer was blissful. Sunshine, trees, sprinklers, leafy shade, soft grass... what could better make for summer fun?

My sex positivity did not long outlast those three short months of summer. High school sex education filled our still impressionable minds with images of flesh-eating disease, horrifying teen pregnancy statistics, and abstinence-only agendas. Same-sex relationships, contraception, and domestic violence were off-limits topics in the classroom. I was seriously confused, scared, and unprepared.

Sex is a feminist issue. Feminism rejects the kind of sex essentialism that, when applied to gender as well as erotic sex, overdetermines the ways in which we talk about sex, have sex, are treated for having sex, and creates the sexual politics that inform our reproductive rights, sexual objectification, the right to sex education, domestic violence legislation, and anti-pornography laws. Sex positive feminism addresses issues of women’s pleasure, freedom of expression, sex work, and resists the patriarchal control of women’s sexuality.

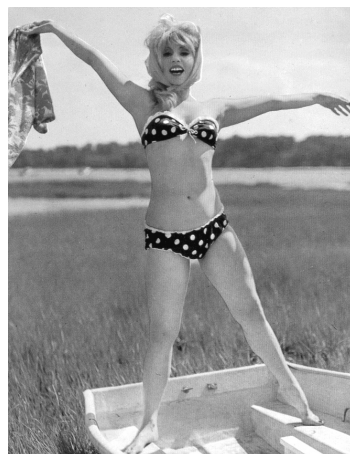
We need to talk, think, and educate ourselves about sex in our everyday lives. In the case of sex, the personal truly is the political.

**KELSEY ROOK**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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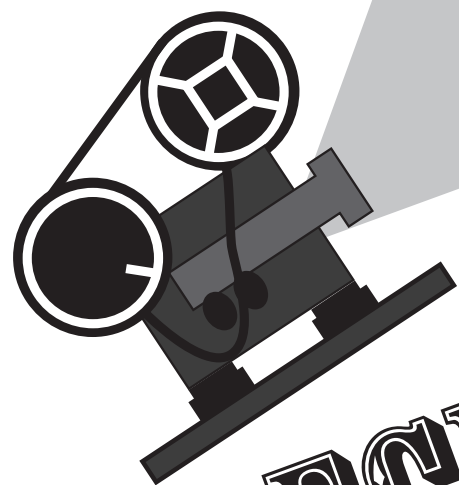
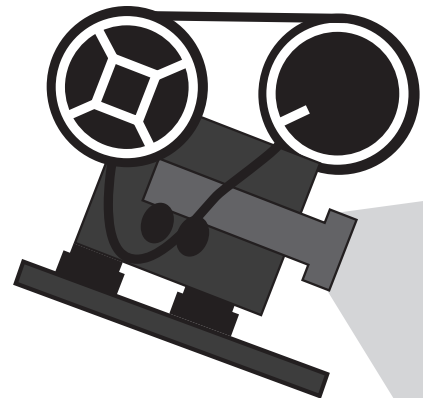


The Siren is published and produced by the ASUO Women’s Center. We are the only student-led feminist publication on campus. It is our mission to cover contemporary feminist issues and act as an outlet for the creative and intellectual development of women. Our staff consists of an editorial board of Women’s Center staff who solicit contributions from volunteer writers and artists.

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[www.uoregon.edu/~women/siren.html](http://www.uoregon.edu/~women/siren.html) and on Facebook



# RECLAIMING PORN

{WORDS BY TOBI HILL-MEYER}

66

## the answer to bad porn isn't no porn. it's more porn!

99

-annie sprinkle  
sex educator and activist

**M**ainstream pornography is a field rife with criticism about sexism, racism, objectification, and exploitation. There is also a fairly strong history of activists confronting these issues by stepping up to make porn that better suits a feminist and oppression-aware perspective.

Most people are aware that the mainstream representation of “girl-on-girl” pornography is grossly inaccurate. For that reason, the people involved are often thought of as “fake” lesbians. They include a variety of inaccuracies and stereotypes, but the problem does not rest with the performers. In fact, many actresses who do “girl-on-girl” are lesbian, bi, or queer, however, they rarely have any decision making power in the process. Straight men produce the porn for a straight male audience that thinks of the actresses only in terms of fulfilling a fantasy. The performers must conform to the unrealistic expectations of the straight male imagination or leave the job.

Built in response to that dynamic, there is now a decent infrastructure for queer-woman-made porn that offers everything “girl-on-girl” does not. It has real people, real emotions, real sex. There is even a recent growth in trans men-made porn. Yet trans women in porn are still represented only within mainstream porn production that is constricted by unrealistic expectations about what a trans woman is and a society that regularly sees trans women only as a more objectifiable kind of woman. The shelves upon shelves of “tranny” porn are just as twisted a representation of trans women as “girl-on-girl” porn is of lesbians.

Having been in mainstream “tranny” porn myself, I know just how unrealistic it is. While I appreciated the individuals I worked with, I resented being referred to in derogatory terms, held to requirements that my body perform on command, and asked to do things that are physically impossible for me but have become standard in the industry. I felt like I had to strip away every symbol of my queerness and do my best to mimic the way trans women and women in general are thought of in male fantasy.

The opportunity for something better has existed for some time. For one reason or another, trans women are virtually never represented in dyke -or trans men- made porn, and trans women have not begun directing independent porn themselves.

I've been writing and publishing a series of erotic fiction for a couple years now, and have received plenty of praise and encouragement, including my favorite “I learned more from your porn than from a trans 101.” I truly believe the erotic has the potential to create significant societal change. And for that reason I plan to make the jump from writing to video and spend this summer filming. Following in the footsteps of my sex-positive cis-dyke sisters, if I want something done right, I'm going to do it myself.

This particular set of circumstances and moment in history creates an opportunity to make great change. I envision creating

a film that continues the tradition of minorities reclaiming imagery of their own sexuality. I hope this film will begin to fill the void of feminist, oppression aware, and trans woman-made porn sold on store shelves. To my knowledge, this will be the first film of that kind.

My idea is to follow a vision where trans women represent themselves and have the support and freedom to do so accurately. I aim to shatter the stereotypes and misconceptions about trans women's sexuality. And I want to show how hot trans women and their partners can be. Hopefully, this project will open the door to the possibility of many others like it. ♀

Tobi is a colonized mestiza, queerspawn, genderqueer, transdyke. To see more of her work, visit [www.handbasketproductions.com](http://www.handbasketproductions.com).

### GOOD FOR HER FEMINIST PORN AWARDS 2008

For the third consecutive year, Toronto sex shop Good For Her celebrated the best in feminist pornography. Award organizer Chanelle Gallant offers the following criteria for “feminist” porn: that it depict real female pleasure, that it expand the range of female sexual expression represented in mainstream porn, and, ideally, that it be produced or directed by a woman.

“Good porn is a human right! Good For Her decided to establish these awards to recognize erotic filmmakers who are creating hot, sexy woman-positive porn that makes women and couples feel good about themselves and about sex,” Gallant said in a June 2006 press release.

And the winners include:

#### **Boundary Breaker of the Year**

Buck Angel

#### **Hottest Dyke Film**

Crash Pad Series Volume 1 | Shine Louise Houston; Pink and White Productions Blowfish Video

#### **Best Bi Scene**

Female Fantasies | Petra Joy; Strawberry Seductress Productions

#### **Most Tantalizing Trans Film**

Trans Entities: The Nasty Love of Papi' and Wil | Morty Diamond; Morty Diamond Productions

#### **Hottest Kink Film**

Bondage Boob Tube | Madison Young; Blowfish Video

#### **Deliciously Diverse Cast**

Trans Entities: The Nasty Love of Papi' and Wil | Morty Diamond; Morty Diamond Productions

#### **Indie Porn Pioneer**

Estelle Joseph; Stella Films Productions

#### **Movie of the Year**

Five Hot Stories for Her | Erika Lust; Lust Films

courtesy of <http://www.goodforher.com>

I was adopted from Brazil when I was 11 weeks old. The woman who adopted me consciously decided to become a single mother, one of the hardest and most loving decisions a person can make. She went through a nine-month-long process convincing an adoption agency and the Brazilian government that as a single mother, she could take on the responsibility of raising a child on her own and that using her personal beliefs and parenting methods and choices, she could raise an outstanding child.

To me, because of the ways in which

of these choices and my mother has

*I don't have parents. I don't have a dad and I haven't lived a single day of my life with a dad. I also don't have brothers and sisters. I am an only child who was raised by a single mom. Most people I have met have no idea what that's like.*

questions about my "parents," I would always just smile and answer their questions in whatever way I chose, but in my mind there was a real difference between the question they were asking and the reality of my life. I don't have parents. I don't have a dad and I haven't lived a single day of my life with a dad.

I also don't have brothers and sisters. I am an only child who was raised by a single mom. Most people I have met have no idea what that's like.

Yes, it's different from the upbringings many have had, but to me, there is something special and extraordinary about it. I grew up learning to be a feminist. I lived with a single mother and I consider that circumstance to be one of the most powerful examples of feminism in this world.

I am proud of my mom for how she raised me, for everyday that she spent making my life as wonderful as it is today.

She is my hero and my feminist. Her views of feminism and the ideals she holds taught me how to become a strong woman and to appreciate my fellow feminists and value their work.

To me, feminism means women believing that they are capable of anything and using these capabilities to bring about change in the world. Feminism is an integral part of my life, and when I came to the University of Oregon, I wanted to find a place in which I could learn to grow as a person and find my key interests. This desire led me to the Women's Center and in May 2007, I applied for a position as the Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator, and was responsible for planning Take Back the Night. My mom came to see my event and it meant the world to me.

My mother's inspiration and passion for single parenting and my feminist upbringing helped me to get to the point I am now at. I owe so much of it to her. ♀

Carmen Hinckley is a 2008 UO School of Journalism alumnae.

# FROM ADOPTION TO FEMINISM: *lessons learned from my mother*

{WORDS BY CARMEN HINKLEY}

proven herself from day one, I believe my mother to be the ultimate feminist.

I didn't always know what feminism really was and all that it entailed. Growing up, I started learning the gender stereotypes and discriminatory ideas of my peers as early as many of us do. I would often come home from school and tell my mom what other kids had been saying. She would sit me down and discuss what their words meant and why I shouldn't buy into them.

She always wanted me to know and believe, no matter what, that women are powerful individuals and that I should never be held back from realizing my dreams. To this day, she tells me, "never leave a stone unturned"—meaning if you want something, do everything you can to get it.

Over the years, when people asked me

*She always wanted me to know and believe, no matter what, that women are powerful individuals and that I should never be held back from realizing my dreams.*



the siren

refridgerator haiku

i masturbated

today and yesterday but

it wasn't the same

- a. s.

like words?

contribute to

the siren

[sirenwc@gmail.com](mailto:sirenwc@gmail.com)

# transformation



by victoria KOCH

I am a sixty old, white, heterosexual, protected-childhood-from-the-fifties female. Though a baby boomer, I was too naïve to understand the sexual revolution of the sixties and was studying abroad during the Vietnam War demonstrations. I met my husband in my home state of California over thirty years ago. His earthly wisdom balanced my classically informed intellect and we broadened our horizons by moving together to Eugene, Oregon.

Our first years here were occupied with the necessities of procuring housing, jobs and establishing community connections. Then I decided to attend graduate school at the University of Oregon. Women's studies and women's literature were part of my core curriculum. Though continually striving to be an independent woman, growing up and attending college, I had rarely heard the words lesbian and gay, let alone bisexual or transgender in any of my conversations. As far as the Eugene women's community was concerned, I was a tabula rasa.

It was during the above time period I mysteriously became dear friends with a young lesbian woman. With no link to the women's studies department and beyond my regular circle of friends, this meeting simply happened. The fact that she was a lesbian had very little to do with our friendship and yet everything to do with my education. She had a girl friend who I also adored. We spent hours talking about our childhoods, our education, our travels and feminism.

The more we talked, the more I realized I had to learn. Through our conversations, my friend lost her lesbian label and

I my straight one. We were women. I needed to do a project for one of my psychology classes and I decided with my friend as co-leader to coordinate a Lesbian/Non-Lesbian Group. This was in the early eighties, when the Eugene women's community suffered from fractious separations. We brought together eight women of various orientations. I was scared out of my wits. I knew none of the women except my friend.

Our group met weekly for months. A strange transformation evolved over the course of our gatherings. Slowly, everyone softened and everyone confessed to insecurities and everyone connected with everyone else on one issue or another.

We became what I will call "Group Friends." Even after twenty-five years, whenever we see each other around town, we smile and unconsciously acknowledge this bond. This group was one of the first steps I took to understanding and appreciating others who on the surface appear to be completely different from myself.

Sixteen years later, a family member came out as a lesbian. The political was becoming personal. Although we were totally accepting, this was closer to home and I felt compelled to join PFLAG (Parents, Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Intersex and Transgenders) and become more consciously supportive. Little did I realize then how much more PFLAG would give to me than I would to this incredible organization.

During the first meeting I attended we sat around the circle and introduced who we were and if we so chose we shared a "PFLAG Moment" anecdote: This is a life experience describing an amazing acceptance of one or another's diversity. I listened



intently as one transwoman talked about getting ready for her operation in Thailand while receiving total support from her current wife and her place of employment. Another male-to-female transperson spoke about beginning her process of changing from over fifty years of being a man to becoming the woman she always wanted to be.

I admit I was both touched and overwhelmed by all the stories I heard. Changing gender? Going through operations? Continuing to stay married? I wasn't sure I understood or could fully "accept" what I heard. But I came back to future meetings.

“ i admit i was both touched and overwhelmed by all the stories i heard. changing gender? going through operations? continuing to stay married? i wasn't sure i could fully understand or “accept” what i heard. but i came back to future meetings ”

Though I knew of deep prejudice towards the lesbian and gay communities, I had little idea of how unfathomable a transperson's experiences could be.

I first became more knowledgeable about Risa's life as we walked together during an HIV fundraiser. She and I both did this in support of PFLAG. She walked by my side and all I knew was, here was this masculine-looking person wearing a head scarf and earrings.

We talked. She was in a thirty-year marriage with three grown children. Her wife and family were honoring her change. She'd always known she was a woman; as a child gravitating to the conversations of her mother's circle of friends, she knew these voices were her voice. Baffled, I listened intently and silently questioned: Could this work in a marriage to change gender mid-stream? What kind of transition were Risa's wife and children going through? Is love this strong? Here was a whole new meaning for the words unconditional, supportive and accepting.

During our work on a PFLAG fundraising project, Risa and I walked and talked and put in lengthy organizing hours while sharing life stories. Risa was continually gentle, kind, and a patient listener. I learned about her hormone regime to bring out the feminine and suppress the masculine. She endured painful electrolysis sessions to rid herself of unwanted facial hair. She had a voice coach and weekly counseling sessions. In order to obtain the right to officially change her identity on her driver's license and other personal documents, Risa had to live as a woman for at least a year. Labeled as having "gender identity disorder," she would be allowed to have "sex reassignment surgery" only with the sanction of her psychologist.

When Risa was in Florida recuperating after the long-awaited surgery, I sent her a card saying she had completed the journey of coming home to herself. Isn't the role of each human being to acknowledge our authentic self and become that person?

Seeing Risa's tears after a difficult counseling session, watching her endure week after week of painful electrolysis, seeing the time she spent in changing her voice to a more feminine timber, observing her courage as hormonal supplements transformed her body, experiencing her gentleness, her intellect, her compassion for sharing with others why she was doing what she had to do, I

am mystified by the violence, hate and cruelty that can be aimed at the transgender community. And I am baffled by the "pervert" label transpeople are often given, especially concerning the use of "gender appropriate" bathrooms. Why would anyone enduring hours of pain, hours of counseling, hours of daily physical, emotional, and mental changes as well as surgery have as their motive the harm of another?

"Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." It is time for America to become truly free. We are not a homogeneous melting pot; we are a nation of ethnically, racially, sexually and gender-diverse human beings. There are at least 300 transgender individuals in Eugene and 600,000 in the United States.\*

On the day Risa had tea at my house before leaving for Florida, we once again walked and talked. Risa informed me that a pre-op transperson has a 20 percent chance of committing suicide, but after sex reassignment surgery, this suicide rate drops to two percent.

Risa told me that knowing she was soon to have her operation made her feel like Henry David Thoreau, who metaphorically wrote in *Walden* about lightening his material/consumer load. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could lighten the hate- and prejudice-filled judgment that America carries on its back? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get to know each person from the inside out: who they are and who they were authentically meant to be?

I have come to see, through the heroism of transgendered people, that we are moving beyond pigeonholing and limiting gender labels towards personal authenticity. I have never wanted

to be described by typical female characteristics just because I happen to be born a female. I want to be assertive and strong and compassionate and nurturing. I, too, want to come home to my complete and multifaceted self.

I do not pretend to understand, really, what made Risa change her total physical and emotional make-up. I admire the bravery of her wife of thirty years to unconditionally stand by her side. All I know is that I have been honored to get to know and admire an incredible human being. And through Risa's transformation, this sixty year old, fifties-raised woman has also been transformed.

As Risa finished her counseling and was "allowed" to change her gender on her driver's license and other personal documents, I suggested she was undergoing a new birth and deserved to have a "Naming Ceremony." She took me up on my offer to plan such a ritual. Surrounded by friends and family, the middle stanza of a poem I wrote titled, "Blessings for Risa" speaks to what I believe to be at the heart of humanity:

it is never too late to be wise  
 it is never too late to love  
 it is never too late to be beautiful  
 it is never too late to be you. ♀

[\\*ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/Conway/TS/TSpivalence.html](http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/Conway/TS/TSpivalence.html)

Victoria Koch is a PFLAG mother and freelance writer who supports diversity.

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## TRANSGENDER AND GENDER QUEER 101

The following are a collection of terms and phrases in common usage within the trans/gender queer community. Just as gender identities are fluid, shifting, and constantly evolving, so are these definitions.

**TRANSGENDER:** Transgender is the common umbrella term for people who transgress gender norms or cross society's idea of gender lines. Transgender folks can identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

**GENDER:** Self-expression, performance, actions, behavior, dress, and grooming determined by culturally prescribed norms and binary constructions of male and female.

**GENDER IDENTITY:** Inner sense of 'being' male or female, both, or neither; includes gender expression and presentation. Cisgender people maintain a gender identity consistent with their assigned sex/gender. Transgender folks do not.

**ASSIGNED SEX/GENDER:** Based on physical anatomy of genitalia present at birth.

**GENDER BINARY:** Culturally-defined code of acceptable behavior based upon two-gender system of male/female. Men are to exhibit masculine gender presentation, behaviors, and social roles. Women are to exhibit feminine gender presentation, behaviors, and social roles.

**MTF (MALE-TO-FEMALE):** Transsexual woman; person whose assigned gender at birth is male and transitions to live and identify full time as female.

**FTM (MALE-TO-FEMALE):** Transsexual man; person whose assigned gender at birth is female and transitions to live and identify full time as male.

**LIVE FULL TIME:** To live and identify in the gender one has transitioned to or self identify as. One may or may not use medical intervention such as hormones or sex reassignment surgery (SRS) depending on financial ability, health, and access, but does transition socially by identifying and living as

the "opposite" gender. Social transition can include changing name (legally or through common usage), dressing in gendered clothing, and using pronouns of gender they identify with. Sexual orientation may or may not change with the person's transition and transsexuals can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

**DRAG KING/QUEEN:** Person who impersonates famous individuals of the opposite gender, usually for performance.

**GENDER QUEER:** Those who identify their gender as outside the gender binary system of male and female. May be fluid with gender presentation or not conform to gender stereotypes. May use gender neutral pronouns such as "sie, hir, hirs, hirself" or "zie, zir, zirs, zirself" or choose to use the pronoun closest to the end of the masculine or feminine spectrum they are presenting. Some may undergo some or all of medical transitions or none at all. "Gender queer" is also used by some to describe both one's gender identity and one's sexuality as queer.

courtesy of <http://www.gendercrash.com>

# \$9 BILLION DOLLARS MADE TRAFFICKING IN THE US EACH YEAR

## 27 MILLION PEOPLE ENSLAVED AROUND THE WORLD

### 80% OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS ARE WOMEN

It's a silent epidemic. It's the second biggest industry for trafficking in the world. Women of all ages are taken from their homes and their lives and sold into the sex slave trade, being forced to live in unfathomable conditions.

It's called human trafficking and it is much more prevalent than you can imagine.

Nearly 50,000 women are trafficked in the United States every year. Eighty percent of those trafficked worldwide are women. Four years of being forced to have sex everyday and being sold from one owner to another is

about all these women can take before they die from the conditions in which they exist.

Just behind the drug trafficking industry, human trafficking has grown over the years and we must do something to stop it.

Trafficking is essentially a sex slave industry where women are forced to have sex with the people who run the brothels. Oftentimes, women watch money get exchanged right before their very eyes for sex with someone they've never met or who already treats them terribly.

Trafficked people are considered "reusable" because they can be moved from one location to another, depending on the desires of those moving them and the amount of money being offered to take them to another place.

Human trafficking is considered the "perfect crime" because it can go unnoticed for years, money can be exchanged quietly, and if the victim tries to leave the situation, they are often killed, therefore silencing any voice they have, any way out.

In order to try and put an end to this worldwide problem, the U.S. Government passed a law called "The 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act" (TVPA). From here, a tier system was devised that evaluated whether worldwide countries were meeting the requirements of the act in their efforts to stop trafficking.

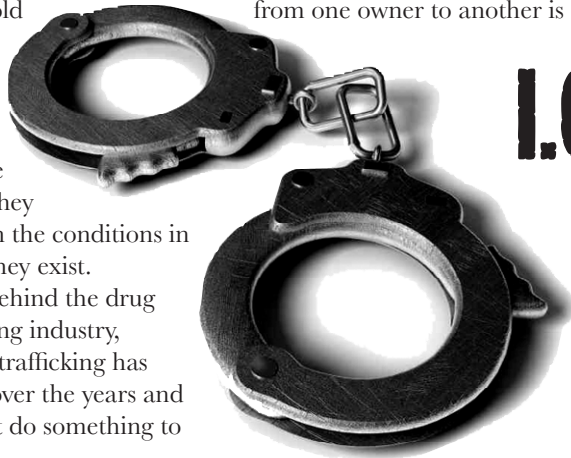
Countries in the first two tiers are considered excellent at combating trafficking. Countries in the third tier are considered to be not making nearly enough effort to stop trafficking. When countries are placed in the third tier, it means they may receive economic sanctions as a consequence for not stepping up their efforts.

Human trafficking is increasing and does not show signs of stopping. The ways in which the money made in this industry

supports the economy of various countries where it exists makes it difficult to convince those in the industry as to why they should stop. They get to have sex as often as they want, they get money in exchange for selling sex, and it helps their economy to grow.

Human trafficking is truly an example of modern day slavery and a way in which to prove that humans will go to extraordinary lengths to abuse others, with no remorse whatsoever.

The end to human trafficking begins with simply telling others about what's going on and spreading the word so that



## LOST IN TRANSIT: the face of modern day slavery

{words by carmen hinckley}

more people will want to combat this terrible crime. Contact the local government and encourage them to take further steps and legislation to increase the power of legislation like the TVPA and the tier system. ♀

**OTHER TYPES OF SLAVERY**

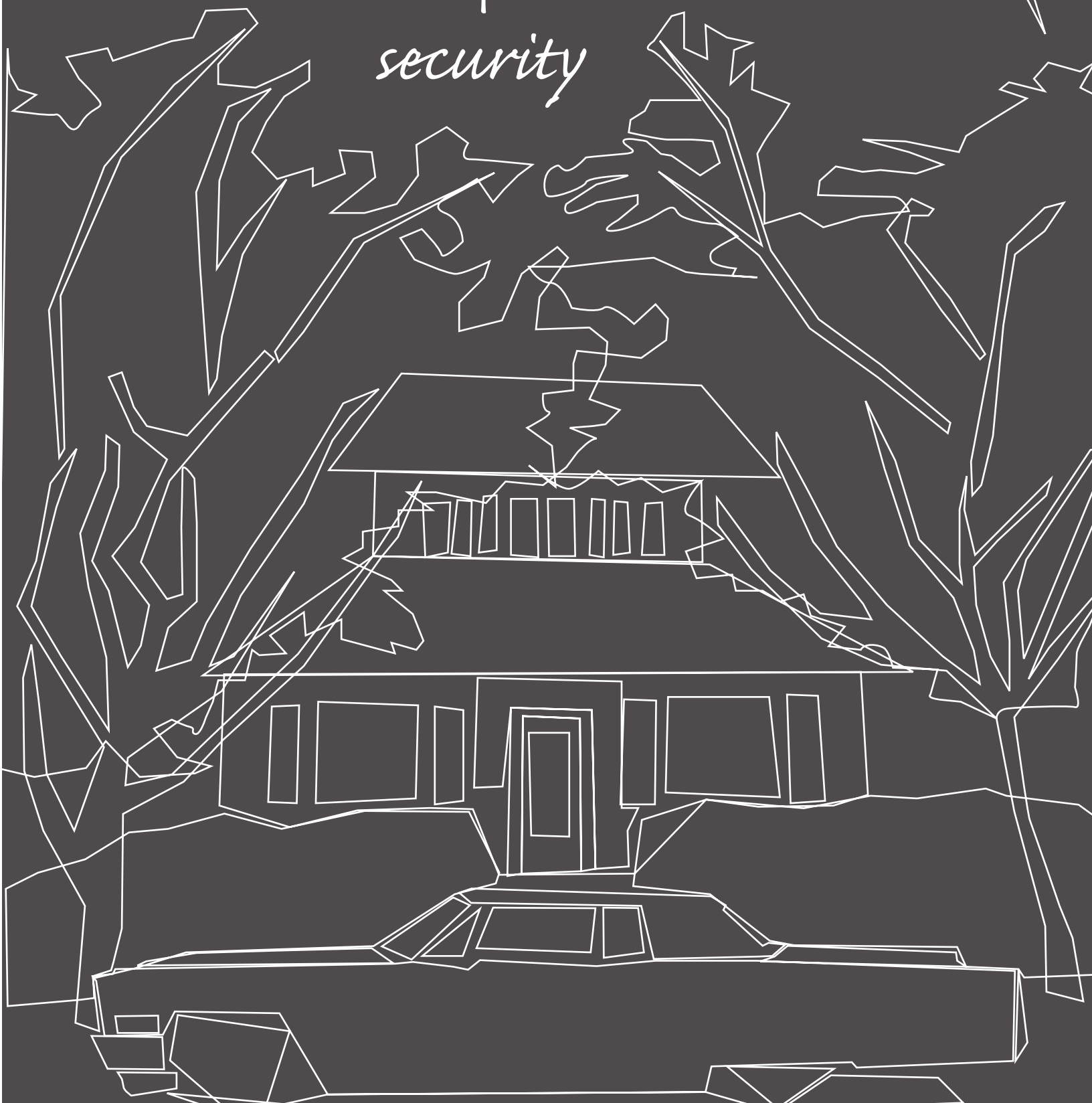
**FORCED LABOR**  
Victims are lured by the promise of a good job but instead find themselves subjected to inhumane treatment— work without pay, hazardous conditions, and physical abuse. Those affected include domestic workers, construction workers, and even human mine detectors.

**DEBT BONDAGE or bonded labor**  
The most widely practiced form of slavery around the world. Poverty leads parents to offer themselves or their children as collateral against a loan. But the debt is not easily repaid. These debts can be inherited by the bonded laborer's children, perpetuating a vicious cycle that can claim several generations.

**CHATTEL SLAVERY**  
 Chattel slaves are considered their masters' property — exchanged for things like trucks or money and expected to perform labor and sexual favors. Chattel slavery is typically racially-based; in the North African country of Mauritania, for example, black Africans serve the lighter-skinned Arab-Berber communities.

*source: <http://www.iabolishslavery.org>*

*support*  
+  
*security*



{WORDS BY MIRANDA}

The first time a friend told me that she was whoring was over coffee at Roma. We had known each other, and been crushing on each other, for a while. After falling out of touch, we were meeting to catch up. I wanted to be careful about my reaction. I had a dozen questions flood into my mind but I realized there would be time for those later. In that moment it wasn't about my curiosity, but about her. "And how is that for you?"

She told me that she and her partner were both working together. She did it to pay the bills and get through school, her partner did it to save up for sexual reassignment surgery. There had been drama when their housemates found out about it. Right now they were pretending to have stopped.

Not long after that she and I started dating. Perhaps she told me in part because she sensed we were getting closer. Over time I learned more about the business of sex work from her. And for anyone who doubts it, it really is a business. As she told me once, "It's too bad I can't put this on a resume. Starting a worker collective, running a web page, doing reception, managing people's schedules, and... customer service."

One night she called me up "Do you have time to sit in a car for an hour? I'll pay you." She and her partner usually did security for each other, but her partner was busy with something else.

It wasn't about the money or the time, my first impulse was to help. Her safety was important to me. "Sure."

"Great. Basically, you sit in a car outside the house in case there's any trouble. If I don't check in or call you by the time we've set up, then you call the cops. But also, you have to know that if that cops do show up, for whatever reason, what you're doing is illegal and you could be arrested."

My enthusiasm dropped, but my resolve didn't change. However, that was not the night I got to test it, as the client called her back to cancel half an hour later.

We dated for a year. I watched as the femme dyke before me became a genderqueer boi, then eventually a trans guy. All the while, continuing to put on makeup and a skirt, putting a beret in his short hair, and meeting clients as the cute little girl they were helping put through college. We broke up just before he started taking testosterone and finally switched to doing calls as a guy.

.....

Years later, now dating another person, my partner had just dropped out of school because ze wasn't able to pay tuition anymore. After spending quite a bit of time looking for work without any luck, ze asked me if I'd be upset or jealous if ze started doing sex work. "It's not a job I'd recommend to someone, but of course I wouldn't be jealous, it's much more like work than it is like sex."

Ze took the initiative, posted an ad, and when ze had a client ze came back and asked me if I could drive hir. Of course I would. That was the beginning of our work together.

It quickly became clear that I had

*"As the months went by, during the dozens of hours I spent staking out hir calls I sometimes contemplated the legality of what I was doing. Security isn't about getting in fights with dangerous clients."*

picked up a lot more from my other relationship than I had realized. I was able to advise my partner about what would be reasonable rates to charge, I knew the security protocol, and I knew what to say after ze had a hard call. I offered to help without any kind of pay, but ze felt like that would be taking advantage of me and refused.

As the months went by, during the dozens of hours I spent staking out hir calls I sometimes contemplated the legality of what I was doing. Security isn't about getting in fights with dangerous clients. While I have to be prepared for that possibility, security is mostly about making sure that never has to happen. Nothing I was doing was inherently illegal, it would be fine to do security for a friend having an anonymous internet hookup. Nonetheless, what I was doing could fall under some anti-pimping laws or I could be seen as an accomplice to prostitution. I didn't pay too much attention to it though, because when it came down to it I was going to do what I could to support and protect someone I cared about regardless.

However, the legal risk I was taking was one of the larger concerns my partner had. Ze wasn't too afraid of the consequences ze might face, and while ze was growing increasingly upset at the sexist and just plain inconsiderate behavior

*"People doing sex work are real people with their own voices."*

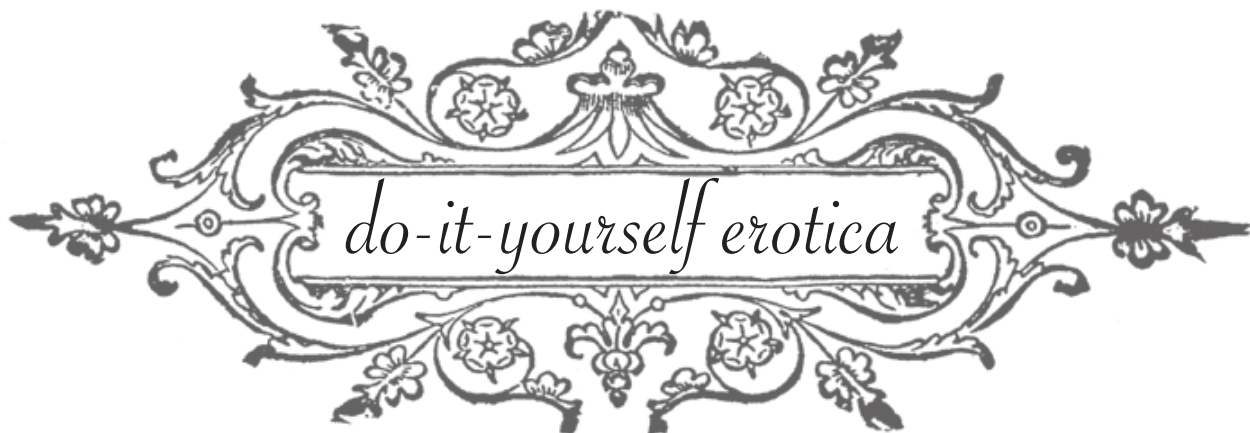
of many of hir clients, ze probably would have put up with it a lot longer if it wasn't for hir concern of putting me at risk. After several months, ze told me that ze wanted to stop.

Ze managed to get a full-time minimum wage job. It required more of hir time and gave hir less money, but it was an alternative to sex work and that was what ze wanted. Yet the new job was hardly the saving grace that it was hoped to be. Hir boss would find some reason to yell at hir every day. Often ze would come home in tears.

Ze had saved up some money and was hopeful of returning to school, but even with a private student loan, the compiled interest on unpaid tuition and required loan payments were too much for the minimum wage job. Ze returned to doing sex work, although less frequently, and joked about being pimped out by the UO collections department..

Ze managed through a term or two, but was having a hard time with the new job. After working there long enough to get health insurance, they started giving hir fewer hours so that ze wouldn't be eligible for it. "I know my new job was supposed to be the way out of sex work," ze told me, "but I'm beginning to think sex work is the way out of my new job."

All too often I hear academic debates on sex work that are completely devoid of personal connection. People are either so focused on a moral prohibition of sex work that they want to end sex work at any cost and the needs of sex workers are forgotten, or they want to be so sexually liberated as to prove that sex work is free of consequences. But neither of these reflect or represent the experiences of people in the industry. People doing sex work are real people with their own voices. Doing support and security, there's one thing that couldn't be more clear to me: if you want to help, don't have a debate,



# do-it-yourself erotica

## step one: determine your medium

There are a lot of possibilities here. An erotic zine is a relatively cheap, easy, and accessible option if you want to sell/distribute your work to others. If you have access to a camcorder and editing software, (even as simple as a web cam and iMovie) film is another way to go. Erotic photography is yet another option. Fancy yourself a poet? Write an erotic poem. Loved those "Choose Your Own Adventure" books as a youth? Write a "Choose Your Own Sex Adventure" novel in the same style.

## step two: what are you/your audience in to?

The obvious benefit of "doing it" yourself is that you get to decide what is sexy. Your kink not represented in mainstream erotica? Unhappy with the representation of women/queers/transfolk? Find most erotica to be unrealistic, silly, or even boring? Not a problem. Erotica gives its creator (and audience) license to explore a hedonistic wonderland where usual social conventions do not apply.

## step three: choose your "equipment"

Obviously, if opting for written erotica, all that's needed is pen and paper (or a computer word processor) and a proof-reader. Some things to consider if you're going visual:

- If you're using digital equipment: digital files are easily stolen, copied and distributed limitlessly on the Internet and to your grandma, so password protect!
- If you're using film/manual equipment: do you have access to a darkroom or discreet film processor? Some photos should not be developed at Rite Aid, ever. Unless you want them to wind up in the employee break room or underneath the mattress of a pubescent teen employee.
- You need good lighting, period. No night vision, strobe lights, or disco balls. A strategically placed floor lamp will do the trick.
- What props will you use? A tripod or sturdy shelf/table is essential, especially if/when there's nobody behind the camera. Other props include, well, use your imagination...

Zinesters require little more than a pair of scissors, adhesive, images/drawings/etc, access to a copy machine, staples or thread and needle, and paper (duh). For more on how to make a zine, check out [www.zinebook.com](http://www.zinebook.com).

## step four: distribute!

Is your erotica intended for a larger audience? Do you want to make bank with your mad erotica skills? Or do you want to be published/screened in a small literary publication/film festival? Whether your finished product is intended for a small group of friends or the New York Times bestseller list, there are a number of venues available for distribution.

**FILM:** HUMP! is an amateur and locally-produced porn festival hosted by Seattle's *The Stranger*. This October marks the fourth annual "Hump-O-Ween." See [www.thestranger.com/hump](http://www.thestranger.com/hump) for more submission details and deadlines.

**PRINT:** A simple browser search can connect one to numerous user-submitted erotica ezines and websites.

For starters, check out Clean Sheets ([www.cleansheets.com](http://www.cleansheets.com)) Much of the work published there is picked up by major erotica anthologies, and their independent publishing arm, Samba Mountain Press, publishes user-submitted literary erotica in print.

Oysters & Chocolate ([www.oystersandchocolate.com](http://www.oystersandchocolate.com)) offers \$10 for published erotic art and stories.

The Rauxa Prize for erotic fiction offers annual \$1000 prizes for erotic poetry and fiction. See [www.rauxafoundation.com](http://www.rauxafoundation.com) for submission details and deadlines.

**VISUAL ART:** [www.scarletletters.com](http://www.scarletletters.com) is one of the longest-running women-owned, women-run sex-positive ezines on the Internet. They have an extensive photography and visual art gallery, with both erotic and non-erotic content, or what they call "genrefuck".





a poem to a dyke like you  
by nix

he stuck his  
finger in me  
and i tried not to wince  
as he shoved through skin  
that—given a choice—would have  
said not today, please  
with rough nails and marginally  
clean hands

tapping my g-spot in just that way  
i don't like  
i gasped  
in my best imitation of a woman in ecstasy  
the sooner he thought i'd come  
the sooner he'd knock it off

he shoved his cock into me  
he'd said,  
don't laugh, it's small  
god i wish that were true  
skin that hadn't wanted the finger screamed  
my belly cramped at the jabs but  
it came again and again

he wanted to save me from you, you know  
afraid that you were pimping me out  
threatened to propose to me  
then asked me to lower my rates

you held me close and stroked me  
and i am yours completely  
surrendered  
you read me stories  
and let me lick and suck and kiss you and  
stare into your face  
you pushed me down and

held me there  
and your eyes are glowing  
and your smile is shining  
you snap on a latex glove  
and you ask if i can feel your gentle touches  
and you ask what i want  
and you ask me how i feel  
and make me answer  
and i can tell you the truth  
you ask if i'd like you to put a finger in me  
i answer no  
partly because my skin is sore  
mostly because i can  
and you hold me and i am all yours and i can  
feel everything and  
you won't slide your finger in until i ask  
and you won't slide another finger in until i'm  
begging  
and you fuck me and talk to me and let me  
just feel and just be  
and when i want to keep going but need to  
stop you slide your fingers out and hold me

thank you for caring for me  
i feel safe and alive and at peace with you  
i want to be tied up and bound down in your  
love  
i want the biggest thing in my body to be your  
hand  
i want to belong to you  
i want to be your boy  
because it takes  
a dyke like you  
to love a boy like me

**one! two! three! four!**

**gender roles are such a bore!**

**five! six! seven! eight!**

**we think trans folk are real great!**

**fuck your blue**

**fuck your pink**

**fuck your gender roles**

**they stink!**

**{happy pride month}**

