

# TRANNYDYKEWHORE

an autobiography in parts



also: anarchy, gender and theory-like stuff

by  
sylvan

intro

welcome to issue one of what will hopefully be a series of zines by yours truly. I am making this zine for two reasons:

one: I can't afford therapy, and journaling hasn't ever really done it for me. I need creative output, be it music, painting or writing, and I've never made a personal zine. So I'm hoping that you dear reader may enjoy, learn or be inspired by my deepest darkest secrets and struggles.

two: Transwomen don't talk enough, and when we do it's usually either from a position of powerlessness (usually preaching to the choir) or from a position of artificial power (tokenizingly headlining a speaking gig). I'm not knocking the amazing women who have stuck their necks out to be in the public eye, or minimizing the contributions of Kate Bornstein, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore or Julia Serano. Not to mention the women and queers who fought at stone wall, and the many who have died fighting for the right to exist. I want another kind of narrative, and another kind of power... the kind that can only come from stories being told in brutal honesty, not speeches at a feelgood trans awareness ceremony or desperate whispers in the back of the feminist bookstore. I want tranwomen's stories to get read and recognized by the queer, feminist and radical communities, regardless of whether they fit or don't fit the dominant narratives of trans experience.

saying this I figured I'd start with mine.

Some issues I'd like to write about in the coming months:

- Dyke identity and dyke space
- Depression and Drugs
- "Sisterhood" and internalized transphobia
- Relationships
- Trans/Genderqueer enuff blues
- Sex Work
- Vag!
- Occasional happy stuff!

What would you like me to write about? Are you a transladytypeperson who's inspired by this zine? Email me and lets chat! Maybe I'll even turn this into a collaborative project of sorts.

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i think i'm just going to make this an introduction zine and write free form about who the hell I am, and then get into the politics in the next issue.

I'm a fucking loser. Also amazing. I can't really decide. My mind is engaged in this totally epic battle like some medieval war scene, some days I can only think terrible thoughts about myself, the mirror becomes my mortal enemy and I scarcely leave my room. Other days I can't help but sit back and reflect on how fucking awesome my life is, and how amazing it is that I've survived this far. Sometimes on those days I feel beautiful and legitimate and stronge. Those days are awesome. I'm working on having more of them.

So I can't really decide. My friends seem to like me a lot, but they also don't call me a lot sometimes I think they forget I exist.

actually I should add to that that I am a shitty friend in many ways. I mean, if you are in crisis or need something I've always got your back. Unfortunately I haven't ever been very good at the day to day relationship maintenance business. I suck at small talk.

I think this is because I grew up in my room. I'm the oldest child of two, with another two sisters on the side I don't know very well, and recently two young adopted brothers. My parents split when I was 2, my mother went on to marry and have the sister

I am closest to, and my father went on to have two more daughters with two different women before settling down with another and recently adopting her meth-addicted brothers' two sons.

Traditional family drama am i right? So I grew up in a pretty messed up home in a lot of ways. My mom had me when she was 18, and struggled a lot financially while she worked full-time and went to nursing school. I was totally one of those transkids who knows right away... but I also knew right away that this thing was so terribly shameful that I could never speak of it and that I'd have to take it to my grave. It was pretty heavy for a four-year-old.

So yeah, I followed what is now a pretty traditional trans-narrative. I was deeply depressed. Withdrew intensely by second grade. Started thinking about suicide by middle school, and started listening to a lot of punk and metal. Tool. Especially tool.

and thank fucking g-d for Tool. There's a couple of things that have saved me from the edge in my lifetime, and I credit Tool as the first. Angry and Bitter? Check. Kind of genderfucky? Check. I spent so much of my tweens crying into pillows screaming Tool lyrics with the volume waaay up.

of course, my parents had no fucking clue. That's okay, I still love them.

Having a mother that was always crazy with stress and gone and a step-father who was mostly useless meant that I basically raised myself in my room, playing videogames and as previously mentioned, screaming Tool lyrics into pillows. I watched MTV. I played drums in a punk/metal band. I escaped into my head with fantasy novels. I nerded the fuck out.

Which leads me to my teens! I did what most teens seem to do, I fucked around with my identity. I have always been a pretty serious nerd. I like learning, and thinking and debating. I love video games, fantasy/sci-fi and tabletop roleplaying (phew, that one is even harder for me to get out sometimes than being trans!). At the same time, I was smoking pot, skateboarding and playing basketball with a bunch of adorable skater dudes, joined the wrestling team, played football, skated some more, rode bmx and played drums or sang for punk bands. So my life was pretty split between Choir, Roleplaying, Debate Team, Drama, and getting fucked up and going skating.

I was mostly in the middle though, a pretty clean kid. My mom was pretty proud. I did well in school and kicked ass at debate, and so most people assumed that I was going to go on to become a normal heterosexual and well adjusted if slightly punk lawyer.

Holy shit were they wrong! I went on to become a totally mal-adjusted folk-punk dyke designer tranny wierdo!

A quick intermission to discuss the word TRANNY

my fucking god does this word get people into trouble. Just recently Blow Pony, this queer dance night in Portland which used to be really awesome got all besploded because some organizers decided to call their Halloween show NIGHT OF THE LIVING TRANNIES! the absolutely terrible response to criticism from the community pretty much broke it.

I've pretty much accepted that I'm old now, 25, near the edge of life itself, and thus people are going to reclaim words that I don't like. Like tranny. Holy shit I fucking hate that word. It makes my skin crawl.

Once I was teenage transwoman prostitute and porn model. True story, which I'll get to later.

You want to know who the fuck that word is about? ABOUT ME!

ugh. gross.

...anyway, don't use that word unless you are trans. If you are a transguy you probably shouldn't cuz it makes a lot of transwomen cranky (a lot of us feel like that's our word to reclaim not yours) and anyways its just gross.

This must be what lesbians in the 80's felt like with the word dyke. Cycles all up in this bitch.

where was I?

o. life story, right.

oh ok, this is a good story. I dated a bit in high school riding the glory of passing as an athletic smart punk rock playing skater boy, and eventually I met the "right" girl and fell head over heels in love. We met at the state debate tournament, she competed in after dinner speaking (a sort of stand-up comedy act) and I did public debate. We ended up chatting a bit and then we skipped the entire awards ceremony and hid out on the UofO campus pouring our souls out to each other. She lived in a smaller town about a half hour away from Portland.

We talked a lot on the phone, started meeting up in Portland a lot (she had a car!) and eventually I moved out of my parents house at 17 and in with her. We were a fucking awesome couple. We both loved and were saved as tweens by Tool and listened to the same punk bands. We went to shows together. She totally accepted my split nerd/punkdude persona. We got married when we were 18 at Voodoo Doughnuts by a guy named Cab-Daddy who was wearing a ghost costume. We jumped over a brick. It was sweet.

I look back at my wedding pictures and remember how much pain I was in then. I mean, I was pretty happy in a lot of ways. I was also secretly horribly miserable and suicidal.

I told her about being trans before we got married. She was pretty horrified, but after many weeks of intense conversation, crying, fighting, sadness, etc. We decided to just keep going and get married anyway. She was ok with me being trans so long as I didn't actually transition.

Funny that.

A year later we had moved down to Eugene, Oregon (technically Springfield right outside of Eugene), and settled into a pretty depressing routine of me trying to work out whether I needed to transition, us fighting about it, getting stoned and watching movies. And cooking epic dinners. Epic, epic dinners.

We were so well matched if it weren't for her being completely in love with me as a guy and completely uninterested in women. So one particular night that was topped by me hurling myself down a flight of stairs while crying miserably, I left her. We split. I lived in my car for a while before moving into the student co-ops in Eugene.

That story is for another chapter though.

So that's it! A very brief introduction to who the hell I am. I'll keep up with the autobiography till I run out of steam and then switch to some good-ole political thinking.

love and solidarity, Sylvan.



fight to win