

An open letter to my parents

I am possessed by the spirit of Jeremiah and I fear what I see.

BY NOVA BEGONIA

Dear Mom and Dad:

This will be the first letter I have written to you in many years. This will also be the first communication we have had of any kind. I have come to realize just how much you have attempted to influence me over the



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years, and how wrong you were. I have only to look at the conclusions your life has brought you to, to know how wrong you were. I have avoided those pitfalls so far. I remain childless; I do not drink, smoke cigarettes, or swear at women (unless they deserve it). I do smoke pot, and I am infatuated with psychedelics. I am a gifted artist. My art is not a standard one.

We have known for many years now, as I face my 32nd birthday, that I was a queer little thing, almost from the beginning, I think. It's only too true. My queerness lies in the fact that I am not only willing to perform "unnatural" acts, but that I am willing to bring them into the open, to flaunt my "unnaturalness" for all to see. My defense is that I am not ashamed of what I do (why should I be ashamed of something I enjoy?) and that I have no choice. Once you have learned something, it is yours forever, and you can never go back again not knowing. But what have I learned?

At all times and in all cultures there have been others like me, people who know the pain of alienation and isolation from their peers. The reason for this, I have learned, is that peers are rare, and precious when found. I have learned that my isolation was caused, not by my queerness, but by my honesty.

We are all queer at some time or other, but most of us simply refuse to own up to it. I am viewed as a threat for calling people out on the issue, simply by being present. My pain is caused by others' projections onto me. I can escape by not accepting the role of a walking

embarrassment. I accept. I am free of them.

I love you both, but I cannot love those who are afraid of me, for I am a lover of courage and beauty, and I find fear an ugly thing. If I had not been born into your family, I would never have known you, for I am attracted to my peers and I do not consider myself responsible for an accident of birth. Some fate I accept, but acceptance implies freedom to choose.

I didn't choose to be born to you, you were simply agents of my birth — you have said you didn't even want me. So why did you do it? To impress your friends and family? How unfair. I remain childless, proof that it can be done. I will at least want my own children, for their own sake, if not my own.

If I wasn't convinced of the urgency of the situation, I would have children, and I would tone down my act; but I am possessed by the spirit of Jeremiah and I am afraid of what I see. We must change the nature of man, or our next war will be our last one. I cannot stop a fatal accident, but anything I can do to control disaster I will, and I believe the first step is to have the courage to be honest with myself and with others, even if the honesty is painful. Pain is still a better option than oblivion. I know, I've been there. I can no longer allow others to take the responsibility for my actions and decisions. Balance will be restored, with our cooperation, or without it. Nature will have Her due. There are deeper laws at work here than the ones you have dedicated your life to, Dad. Sex is certainly stronger than Honor. Love is above justification.

Part of the reason I have the radical courage necessary to write this is that I know you do not have the courage to read it. Created by you, I am a monster that you have watched grow in the crucible of your home, an alien being who threatened to strip away your comfortable illusions and present you to yourselves with pitiless truth. In a sense, I have done that. But you should at least take responsibility for the fact that I did not create you, and I did not create myself. I am your doing, in deep and subtle ways, and I am sorry that you did not have the wisdom to stop and consider more carefully before embarking upon the experiment that led to my creation. You should have had more respect for your own power. But since you didn't, I must. I will find my own path into Night. Trust me!

Nova

Nova Begonia is a past member of GALA. He also served on the Newsletter Committee. He was instrumental in establishing our 24-hour Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. Nova has lived in Eugene the past few years while attending the University of Oregon.

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