

**VOICE, from page 8**

homeless, because they are LGBT and they are already vulnerable, and because they are alienated from social service support in the first place; we can guess that they don't perceive police as their friends and so they are more likely to become victims of crime and less likely to report those crimes to the police or other authorities.

**B.B.:** *What is being done to help change that?*

**S.H.:** We have advocated for a number of responses, particularly with the federal government, to assist homeless youth in service training for social service providers so that they interact better with and better serve LGBT youth, so that they have an understanding of what it means to be young lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender and living on the street. There are also programs to not just do in-service training but also to actually change and rewrite the policies written at emergency shelters and social service providers. They must have a written policy banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

There are developed model programs to improve service delivery to LGBT homeless youth. The Home for Little Wanderers has made a particular effort to organize and present these training programs for youth providers and The Waltham House in Waltham, Mass., does a lot of working and collaboration with the office of DSS to train program staff who work with homeless youth so they are serving better the LGBT homeless youth.

**B.B.:** *So do you work with other service providers?*

We don't work with the service providers, we work with government agencies and government leaders to ensure better policies. Some examples of that are:

(A) It is very important that youth who are unaccompanied minors receive primary and specialty healthcare services without the written consent of a parent or guardian. These are young people who are on the street. They don't have parents who can sign off on forms for them to receive healthcare services or mental health services.

(B) Federal funding to target LGBT youth for prevention programs around sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, mental health issues and intervention programs for the same sets of issues that they face on the street.

(C) Federal and State minimum wages need to be raised to livable wages so that when young people are able to get a job they will be making enough to support themselves.

(D) The United States Department of Health & Urban Developments' definition of a homeless individual should include living arrangements that are common to homeless youth. Homeless youth are

sometimes in group houses, formal group houses and in informal group living arrangements with other peers and young people. They need to be recognized as homeless individuals who are entitled to services from the federal, state and local government.

(E) Funding streams and housing opportunities, housing provisions, low-income housing and access to low-income housing has to include homeless youth. Young people who maybe aren't old enough at this point in their lives to make lease contract agreements with landlords (private/public) must be able to have access to that option irrespective of their age.

(F) There should be space dedicated to shelter space for LGBT youth. They are vulnerable to sex abuse, criminal victimization and they're vulnerable to living in a place with adults that is not geared to the needs of young people whether they're LGBT or not.

**B.B.:** *I thought there were teen shelters for young adults whether they were gay or not?*

**S.H.:** There are, but the bed space available does not meet the need of the numbers of youth and LGBT youth out on the street.

**B.B.:** *So they're prone to the same problems as adults?*

**S.H.:** Exactly. There's not enough for them. When they get there sometimes they're in an environment that is completely inappropriate for them. They're in a shelter space that is primarily utilized by adults who are homeless.

**B.B.:** *We have battered men and battered women's shelters in Massachusetts, but they don't take in transgender people. What do you think about this issue?*

**S.H.:** Shelters should serve on the basis of their identity. It's not who I think you are, it's how you identify. One of the problems is these layers of interpretation get in the way of service providers just perceiving a human being who needs help that (they) can give in the way that is most appropriate for him or her.

**B.B.:** *In closing is there anything you'd like people to think about?*

**S.H.:** There's a failure to see transgender people as human beings in need of help. Instead people are looking at them like... Who are you again? What are you again? Instead of just saying; how can I help you? What kind of services do I have that will be most appropriate for you? It's a matter of education.

*For more information on the Gay and Lesbian Task Force visit, [www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org)*

*[www.streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org) / Spare Change News (USA)*

## The secret

By Wallace E. High

There's something about a secret,  
A separate entity unto itself  
That breathes and stirs and writhes  
Like a creature hidden in hibernation  
Buried still vita dark and deep  
At first unwilling to forsake its cocoon  
Of sheathed integrity and purpose  
Intently defiant of its revelation  
That would lead betrayal by the hand  
At the moment of sinister exposure  
Yet trembling at the choking retention  
Of information compressed, suppressed,  
Its kinetic force growing, expanding,  
Wanting to shout from the rooftops,  
To howl at the fullest of moons,  
To burst into orgasmic heights of relief  
Even as the bonds of trusted confidence shatter  
Like and eggshell at the moment of fracture  
To release its contents into the open air,  
Into the swirling elements of the universe  
Beyond deceit, never to be retrieved,  
Never to resume the sanctity of silence,  
Never to reenter the womb of privacy  
Where it could languish in obscurity;  
Still it always vibrates with pent-up power  
Its potential unmarred in waiting  
For the inevitable conduit of human urge  
To divulge, to boast, to expose and destroy  
To set free the awful forces that propagate  
Sorrow, regret, violence, greed and death,  
The wobbly lips unsealed, sneering, loosening  
Clouds of hurled, thrusting dagger-points  
Flying in all diverse directions  
To inflict the swift, deadly stabs of treason,  
The rumors leaping like startled birds,  
The mouth already tasting sweet and sour,  
Already suffering the awful breath of meanness  
From the foul decay of private confidentials  
Now violated, a sacred covenant destroyed,  
A good name scandalized, besmirched, denigrated  
Beyond the reach of any damage control,  
Beyond the stretch of mortal emotion  
As even God's reluctance to intervene  
Grants the uncaging of the secret.

## Open the Book of Dusk

By Mary Lou McAuley

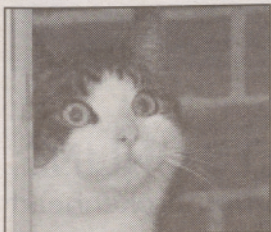
Open the book of dusk  
to the page where dreams  
crowd the corners  
of that vast room  
where things as yet unmade  
are already fading.  
These pages are dressed with  
silver paint and gold curlicues with  
diamonds of red and purple near the bottom and  
you must place your thumb  
and you must strike your  
skin against the door  
to enter the silver and the diamonds and the gold  
and catch the first scent, the rustle, the sigh  
of all dreams  
shrinking from your timid touch.

# coffee bean

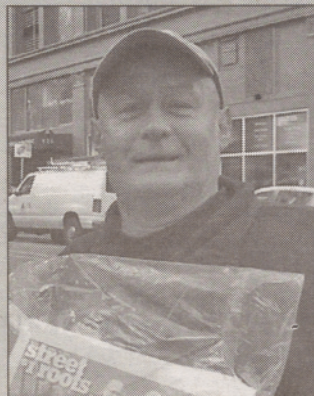
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