

Last Man on Earth

Visions of bar women kept dancing in my head.



Where do lesbians come from? Are we born this way? Do we choose it? Is there a maniacal Dr. Dykenstein in some cliffside la-BOR-atory piecing together exhumed body parts and jolting them to life on stormy nights with a giant Hitachi Magic Wand?

Born, chosen or created, lesbians roam the earth trying to find each other. Not an easy task in a world where all our identifying hairstyles become mainstream fashion. If we are lucky enough to detect others of our kind, we must initiate contact.

But some of us are slow. I may have stayed lost in hetspace forever if it hadn't been for my final boyfriend. He was kind and gentle – nothing like the other overpowering, self-absorbed, clit-ignorant college boys I knew.

We hiked to our special woodland hideout where I braided wildflowers into his long silky hair. We pranced and spun in the meadow. We were stardust. We were golden. OK, we were high.

Boyfriend lived across from an all-woman communal household where he bought his monthly lid. Those women didn't like men coming over, so I was the weed runner. I crossed the street with his money folded up in the pocket of my long tie-dyed skirt.

The pot-women were friendly. I enjoyed visiting the commune but had to get back across the street to enjoy the purchase with my far-out guy.

Boyfriend was a good dancer, meaning he'd slip off into his own world while I did the same. We liked to go out dancing, but I always got hit on at straight clubs. Not being the "keep your hands off my woman" sort of man, Boyfriend suggested we try our town's only gay bar. I had no idea my own queer streak was as wide as k.d. lang's vocal range, but somehow I felt right at home among the bar's strong, confident, man-less women. But I also felt kind of sorry for them because they didn't have a great guy like my long-haired swirly boy groovin' over there in the corner of the dance floor.

When Boyfriend and I went back to his place, visions of the bar women kept dancing in my head. Boyfriend agreed to pretend we were both women and indulged my request for dickless sex. I had one terrific guy.

The next day in our woodland hideout, my dancing queen gently suggested I might be a lesbian. How could that be? Had I failed to conform to my het conditioning? Was I turning into one of those dirty queers kids joked about on the school bus? Boyfriend's comment stung. But the idea was planted.

Back at the bar, Boyfriend danced and I studied the bar dykes. Was I like them? I didn't walk or dress tough. I was terrible at shooting pool. I didn't even own one single bandana. I couldn't be a lesbian.

But I got all tingly imagining what kissing one would feel like. I kept dashing off to the women's restroom hoping one of those bar dykes would pounce and smooch me into submission. I never mentioned that fantasy to Boyfriend, but he had my number.

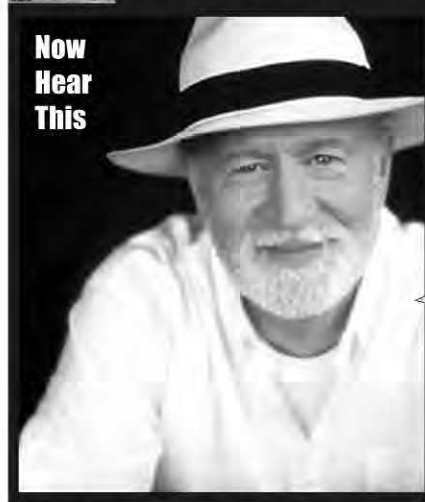
His requests for my weed-running services mysteriously increased. He sent me over to the commune so often, I ended up staying the night. One of the roommates shared her bed with me and taught me everything I needed to know about being a happy lesbian. Real happy!

After college Boyfriend moved away. I like to think his next girlfriend directed him toward the Radical Faeries with whom he traipsed off to dance in the woods with his kindred spirits.

The "born vs. choice" argument reminds me of him. Was I born this way? Did I choose it? Or did I just happen to have a wonderful boyfriend who steered me toward my natural destiny? If you run into him swirling around some dance floor, please thank him for me. I may have forgotten to do that.

"Living Out" began in EW and now appears in more than a dozen publications. To enroll in Sally Sheklow's summer term writing classes contact the LCC continuing education program at www.lanec.edu

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