



DUDE

M A G A Z I N E

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Editor

Jez Pez

Deputy Editor

Lia Incognita

Assistant Editor

Kath Duncan

Graphic Designer

Elwyn Murray

Photography

James Mepham
Morgan Carpenter

Advertising Sales

dudetranszine@gmail.com

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ABOUT DUDE

Dude is a not for profit creative resource designed to celebrate positive representation of trans guys and to share skills and knowledge.

Dude explores sex, relationships, bodies and diversity between trans guys and the wider community. Sex represents an intersection of bodies, gender, identity and desire which intrigues us, not just because sex for trans guys is underrepresented, but because erotic encounters can be seen as extreme and explicit examples of general interactions we experience every day—with a potential and capacity for awkwardness, intimacy, confrontation, education and adoration.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Lia Incognita

Trans people deal with way too much bullshit and hate. You also get a lot of love. I don't believe that love is all you need. Personally I'm courting some pretty major changes to law, medicine, media, culture and society too. But love counts for a lot—more than I'll readily admit. When you have support and understanding from the people you care about, you can approach everything with guts and calm resilience. And when you max out on romance, bliss or just really good sex, the rest of the world matters a bit less. The flipside is that relationships can break us with the same incredible force they have to elevate us. So this third issue of *Dude* is for the lovers, cos lovers change everything in a heartbeat.

It's been a delight to be involved with *Dude* and deliciously tough to narrow down so many fantastic submissions. My co-editors and I wanted to include a wide variety of topics, approaches, styles and subject positions. I'm proud to bring you a selection that I feel reflects the breadth we sought, and also simply impressed: in Rex's poems of prickly stillness, in Shaun's sweaty and tender stories, in Mason and Dorian's insightful conversation, these are the pieces that stung my nerves and churned my mind. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have.

Jez Pez

I felt it was important to provide a really inclusive space for all of our lovers to share their own journey. As complex as it can be to be a trans person, especially when first confronting our own emotions, new identities and new bodies, it is equally as complex for the people who are significantly close to us. The wonderful people who support us and see us at our best and our worst. The lovers who mutually and sensitively navigate our bodies, negotiate our boundaries and even sometimes keep us alive. The fear, the sex, the love and the heartache. We all somehow thrive from it, almost crave it. We see this issue of *Dude* as an opportunity to learn from our experiences, whilst also celebrating the connections we have formed and the intense magic we are all capable of. We recognise that all relationships are different, completely diverse and unique, but we can all share some insight about working towards healthier dynamics. We feel honoured to be able to present a collection of voices in our third issue who touch on the pain and beauty of being connected to us. I'd like to thank our guest editing team who whipped this issue into shape and also pay respect to everyone who contributed. I hope this issue resonates with some of you fondly and for others, I hope it blows your mind.

CAMO OVERALLS AND A TRUCKER HAT

Callum Roper on passing

Early in my transition, I wasn't passing well, if at all. So every little moment that I did was wonderful.

I remember when my non-trans gay male partner, my mother, my younger brother and I were in Wal*Mart buying stuff for my dorm. I was leaning against my partner when this elderly man passed by us. He wore faded camouflage overalls and a trucker hat (the usual uniform for old men in Wal*Mart in West Virginia), I was in my oversized bright gold and blue jacket, and the boy was wearing his own black jacket. I still remember the sneer the old man gave us as he walked past. That old man made my day.

I still don't pass and it's been a year since I started transitioning. I don't mind as much anymore. Oh, people still stare but not because we're two boys; usually it's because I've forgotten to wear my neutral hoodie for the day instead of my own college colors. My hair's short and his beard tickles when we kiss and we're just two guys snuggling at the bus stop.

—



Your eagerness was endearing.

FIRST: AGAIN

as told by Shaun Barclay

I saw you first but I knew who you were already—my best friend’s ex from years ago, “the one who’s now a dude.” You were in town just visiting for the weekend. You were chattering away with all our friends. I saw you first but had never seen you before, only heard about you. I saw you—long eyelashes, marble blue eyes, wide grin. Goatee, flat chest, angular body.

We were backstage before a drag king show. You were popping with excitement to be back on stage for the first time in years. Since before you transitioned. You were unconcerned with the audience’s reaction to a man performing on their drag king stage. It was your stage long before they even came out as lesbians.

I didn’t just tip you as you performed—for the first time, I was bold enough to shove my wad of bills in the waist of your tight jeans. You smiled, winked, held my hand on your waistband for a moment before moving on.

The next day, you came home with me after a party. You were my first, but I didn’t feel like a virgin. Your naked body on top of mine, your thigh between my legs, your tiny tender bites along my neck and breasts all felt exactly as they should. Your goatee tickled and scratched me a little but I liked it. I loved it.

There are always fumbles in first times. You had top surgery but I didn’t know if that meant it was ok to touch your chest. You smiled at my anxiety and took my hands and placed them above your nipples. Feeling was just coming back, you told me. You were proud of your chest, you wanted to me trace, rub, squeeze. I lightly bit at your nipples, still unsure but you moaned immediately.

As you fucked me, you kept stopping and looked agitated. I didn’t know why, I told you everything was great. You told me you had just bought a new harness and dick that day because you didn’t think you would get laid on your weekend trip to see old friends and hadn’t brought your own. You could only afford the cheapest harness and it kept moving and you couldn’t keep your balance. I didn’t tell you but I thought it was adorable you went shopping the day after we met. I pulled you back closer to me and flipped you over to ride you instead. You smiled again. And again.

•••

We both joked about it, we had been just friends for so long, but now we were both single and why not? You had only come out just a few months ago. You hadn’t started T and the thought of surgery was inconceivable because of the cost. You had only recently begun wearing your binder daily and though you were much happier with how you looked, you complained privately about it to me, the restriction in movement and in breathing.

And then it happened. We were drunkenly making out but as we sobered up, again—why not? As we peeled our sweaty clothes off, I told you that you could leave your binder on, it was not a restriction for me. You decided to remove it anyhow. You said you trusted me. You knew I saw you as you saw yourself, as a man, and wouldn’t whine about wanting to touch your breasts the way other women did. And then, unexpectedly, you asked me to tie you up. I was surprised, for our first time, but you said again—you trusted me.

After you came, you immediately moved down, burying your head between my legs. You kept popping your head up to ask, “Is this ok? Do you like this? Do you want something different?” Your eagerness was endearing. As we snuggled together after I came, you told me that you hadn’t orgasmed with any partners in years, because they saw a woman’s body. Even when you tried to show them you, they didn’t want to see. You wanted to make sure I was as happy as I made you. I held you tight, tucked your head under my chin, and stroked your face, where I knew you saw yourself one day with hair. Mutton chops, you sometimes joked. I kissed you lightly. I love you, I said. I always did.

•••

I promised you it would work, even though I was nervous it wouldn’t. I knew how to spread wide the skin about your cock so that it jumped up even more and to slowly hold it as I lowered myself onto you. You had been on T about six months and you were, like everyone, proud of the quick growth of your cock but, of course, like everyone, wanted it to be bigger and doubted its utility. I was your first partner since starting T. You didn’t know yet how to stop thinking about it as a large clit and actually use it as your cock.

Our bodies were in sync now and I didn't fear losing you or if I did, I knew I could find you again.

I promised you but of course I was nervous. Sensory feelings are different in everyone. I had done this many times before—with my ex and no one else. I was afraid you wouldn't feel it as he did. Even if I did feel you inside me, would you feel it? Would you believe me? I just reassured you I'd done this before and tried to think of myself as some older lady seducing a young innocent school boy. I didn't tell you that though. And you looked nothing like a school boy. You were a barback and house painter so your arm muscles were sculpted, flexing sinew and vein. Sexy, I wanted to lick them down to your always sweaty armpits. I loved the way you smelled.

You agreed and I smiled confidently. At least your cock seemed to trust me as it was all set to go. It felt almost like I was releasing an animal in a cage as I pulled the skin around it taut so that it could proudly stand tall. With my other hand, I pulled open my own skin and felt for the inside of my cunt, while still smiling with my faked confidence. You looked so hopeful. I pulled open my cunt and slowly lowered myself down. As I slowly felt you inside me, you let out a deep long sigh, like you had been holding your breath. Your face actually glowed with one of the biggest smiles I ever saw on you as you exclaimed, I can feel it! I can feel it!

I slowly began rocking my body with yours, gripping my cunt around your cock to hold it in place. And because it felt good. What does it feel like? I whispered, licking your ear.

You are so warm, so hot and wet, all around me, you said. I just—I can feel you. You.

I smiled. Our bodies were in sync now and I didn't fear losing you or if I did, I knew I could find you again. While holding my hips, moving them with yours, you kissed me so hard, my lips stung. I could feel you gaining your own confidence and pushing deeper within me. And now, how does it feel now? My urge to know felt as strong as your urge to reach further within me.

You smiled. It's perfect.

—





OTHER HANDS

Amanda Kennedy on change

For the most part, it was easy for me. I had secretly loved him for years, and it wasn't his gender I was attached to. I swapped out pronouns, started using his new name, and had a sweet conversation with my parents. My dad told me how he had gone to see Christine Jorgensen speak at his college. He was surprisingly trans savvy.

The sex, which had started out great, only got better. I was excited because he was excited. We dressed up in fifties outfits and went on dates. He was the nicest, most handsome boy I knew, and I was proud to be on his arm.

When we read about all of the possible effects of testosterone, I had already anticipated most things. Hair. Voice. Emotions. Sex drive. Muscles. Acne. But hands had never entered my mind. It made me cry. I had known those hands since high school. Those were the hands that had furtively held mine when we saw *Shakespeare in Love*. That same day, he had driven all the way home using only his left hand, so that his right fingers could stay laced with mine. The fingers, attached to those hands, were the first ones that had ever been inside me. The only ones.

He was an artist and a jack of all trades. I liked watching him use those hands. When he explained mechanical things to me, he drew pictures in the air with them to help me understand. Those hands had made some

of the art on my dorm room walls. They had folded hundreds of paper stars for me and sewn the bag to keep them in. They touched my face when we kissed. They found me in the dark as we slept. I could close my eyes and see those hands perfectly. I didn't want them to get bigger, to not fit the same way in mine. I didn't want strange new hands in my pussy. I didn't want them to get more muscular. And hairy.

When I laid my head on his chest and cried, confessing that I was sad about those hands, I think he was confused. Out of all of the things that he had considered, everything he had thought might be scary or distressing or awkward, hands had not occurred to him. But he held me. He kissed my head. He let me cry and didn't make me feel like a rotten girlfriend for being so preoccupied with the hands. He let me look at them, examine them, commit them to memory. And I got over it eventually, of course. My pussy liked his new hands just as much. His new hands still held me and made things and fixed cars.

So it wasn't the hands that broke us up. But it happened nonetheless. It's been nine years. I don't see those hands too often anymore. But he texts me silly pictures. We talk often. I went to his wedding. His art is still on my wall. I still have the stars.

—

UNTITLED

by Genevieve Danger Berrick

because I frequently present 'femme' to people, and my sexuality includes desire for male and female bodies among others, I often have the weird experience that is other people handing my bodily and desiring identities to me.

—"I don't date fucking bisexuals"

hmm... contentious, sure. but what's that to do with me? does this statement thrown at me mean my desires should suddenly commit to a binary gender norm? does this mean my cis-bodied performance of a camp femininity in which all clothing feels like 'dress-ups' is no longer queer? oh, and it's got to mean that I don't daydream of fucking with my cock throbbing between my thighs?

once I had a lover, a lover who was toying with their pronouns. sometimes boi, sometimes grrrl. and smaller than me. and vivid. we met and fucked and talked and talked and talked. we discussed bodies. and pronouns. and delicious embodied theory.

another lover. new to male pronouns. shy. bold. sweet. spiny. he fucked with his binder on. and I wondered out loud as the room heated up and sweat dripped everywhere if it ever came off, if there was a kind of heat or intimacy that made that feel okay. but I never needed a reply. and I wasn't sure it had even been said.

slowly I came to realise that these two needed to meet. and meet they did. and it exploded into meanings between them, and I was elsewhere – pre-occupied, and pleased. but somehow the thing that made they-two made me the friction that caused the pearl of them. and now we don't really speak, we three. and I feel the space in the silence. but have no words to make it otherwise.

but when I catch glimpses of those two, I am pleased to have been a beginning.

—



IS THIS 'THE NEW NORMAL'?

Elsbeth Brown makes five suggestions for coping with the tough parts of your partner's transition

I love my trans guy partner. He's smart, funny, and hot. After 13 years together, as some sort of version of a lesbian/queer/whatever couple, he decided to have top surgery and start hormones in the Fall of 2010. Neither of us anticipated many bumps in the road. In retrospect, we can't believe how naïve we were. It's been very hard for the whole family (we have a son, who was four at the time, and is now six). Only now are things starting to settle down; we're all returning to our old selves, newly embodied, with some new hair and muscles to celebrate.

Shit happens during transitions, and partners are often wracked with anxiety and fear. Most of us, from what I've learned, want to do all we can to support the transition—even those who eventually break up. When scary and painful stuff happens, partners are often afraid that this is how things will be post-transition: 'Is this "the new normal"? Because if so, I can't handle it.'

Transitions are unmapped terrain for everybody. Normally, in a healthy relationship, when scary things happen, the partners can turn to each other for clarity and reassurance. But in a transition, the trans guy often doesn't know the answers either. He's overwhelmed himself and can shut down or act out, further freaking out the confused and anxious partner.

So this is a note to partners who connected with their trans guy before his transition, who want to make it through, together, and who are in the first 18 months of the 'transition,' however you define it. Here is a list of five suggestions on how to deal with the difficult patches, drawn from 28 interviews.

1 Be patient. Whatever is painful and unacceptable probably won't last past the first year. Mark your calendar if you have to, but don't try to make any big decisions during the first year—whatever it is you're experiencing is not usually the new normal, just a phase as the trans guy gets used to his new being. Some of the most difficult relationship developments that the partners have noted include:

- a breakdown in communication as the trans guy withdraws, intentionally or not, as a way to cope;
- emotional hardship, including depression, anger, anxiety, fear, frustration, arrogance, narcissism;
- sexual withdrawal, as in some cases the trans guy's libido seems to evaporate for a time, despite T;
- the emergence of the trans guy's interest in having sex with additional people, usually men; and
- a pressing need to hang with other men, trans or otherwise, which may mark new patterns of socialising.

2 Don't take it personally. It's not usually about you, even though it might seem like it is at the time.

3 Pick a confidant, someone besides your partner, to talk with regularly about the tough stuff, who has your back without judgement about what you and your partner are going through. Join a group for partners if you can. Don't expect your partner to meet many of your emotional, psychological and (sometimes) sexual needs during this period, as most simply can't, much as they wish they could. Partners usually report isolation, as they often feel they don't fit any of their former communities and unfortunately the 'trans community' is often not welcoming of partners, and

continues to define 'trans' narrowly, as specific only to the trans-identified person. So partners have to build their own support network, without violating the confidentiality needs of the transitioning partner.

4 De-centre the transition. Be present for your partner in his needs around the transition, but try not to let it be the only thing going on in your lives together. Make time for other things; talk about other topics; don't bring up the transition unless he does; avoid interrogating him about every little nuance.

5 Take care of yourself, most important of all. If you're doing a lot of the care-taking work (emotional, financial, medical), ask for help from friends—don't be a martyr and do it all yourself. You may later resent your partner for it, especially if, due to his own crisis, he can't see or appreciate your work in this area. Make sure you keep up your own interests outside of the relationship, including connecting with friends and family, exercising, eating well. This is especially important if your partner has had a major surgery, if he's on medical disability, or is dealing with newly diagnosed depression or anxiety. You won't be doing either of you any favours if you get overwhelmed and consumed: avoid your own nervous collapse in year 2 when your partner is out of the transition woods, so to speak, by taking care of yourself, too, in year 1.

Good luck!

—

What are the usual things guys get angsty about disclosing?

QUEER LOVE & FRIENDSHIP

as told by Nathanwi

We were on a Mardi Gras date: dinner, a film, catching up. Our friendship is solid. He mentioned a lot of his mates ask him for advice, as something of a mentor: stuff like “Dude, I’ve started transitioning ... and I think I wanna try it with another guy”. He wondered if I’d ever read about anything like that. I thought we could do better; we could write about us.

...

We met on the Club Kooky dance floor. We would dance across the floor from each other, making eye contact, acknowledging each other for the fierce, joyful dancers we were. He was hot.

Neither of us made a move. As the weeks passed I noticed we had mutual friends. I asked them, “Who is that guy on the dance floor?”

“Oh him! He’s hot!” Hawt. Finally we both plucked up some faggot gumption and started chatting. We swapped numbers.

There was another night not too long after that when he walked across town, in the rain, through the back streets from Paddington to Newtown, to sit on a couch with me in a muddy backyard, under a tent awning. To hold hands. And chat. And just talk.

And I have a crush. Normally, I’m a slutty, forward, faggot. But a crush is different: he walked through the rain to spend time with me, his eyes sparkle when we chat.

He invites me to an art gallery opening. We’re in a cab with a mutual friend. This cab ride is funny, because at this stage there are things I don’t know. I and the mutual friend are talking about transitioning, and common issues trans-men face. My experience is based on another good friend. I’m moving in a social scene where trans guys are increasingly present. In this situation, though, there are things I don’t know. He’s a bit quiet during this cab ride. I don’t think about this till later.

The gallery opening has devolved into a raucous party, with DJs, dancing, a bar, and it’s busy. It doesn’t take long before we both make a move. Snogging on the dancefloor. Pushing each other up against the wall.

Then ... “What do you know about me?” he asks. He’s stepped back. There is a deliberate distance here. We’re still on the dancefloor. “What?” I feel a bit clueless. What’s going on? What had I done? He’s clearly not happy about something. He repeats the question.

“I don’t know—”, there is a bunch of stuff going through my head; what are the usual things guys get angsty about disclosing? He’s bi? I know he’s got a history with womyn—it can’t be that? Maybe he’s HIV positive? But that can’t be a big deal in the circles we move in... All this is going through my head, I’m furiously thinking back over the few conversations we’ve had, and I feel like an idiot, inadequately addressing his distress.

The question comes again, and still I don’t know what to say. He takes another half step back, extends a hand, I take it. He gives my

hand a pump in an overly formal handshake. “Hi. I’m a transsexual.” “I’m getting some water”, he adds, and walks off.

I was a bit floored. Gob-smacked. This was not anything I’d seen coming, and it must be so much more awkward for him, I think, especially given the conversation in the cab ride over here. I sat down for a bit. My mind was racing. The worst bit was that he obviously thought I already knew and so I had forced him to disclose. And I felt sick to my stomach, because that would be awful, to force someone to come out, or disclose, if you knew already. But I hadn’t known. Did this change how I felt about him? Was my expectation of five minutes before, changed? Did it change my desire to pursue a friendship or intimacy, or preferably both, with him? I remember looking across the room—he was still the same hot guy I’d been making out with five minutes ago. I decided whatever the differences were, we’d deal with them when we were confronted with them. So far, everything was business as usual—he was a guy, and I’d been with loads of guys before. I had no reason to act as if anything was different. I didn’t know if this was adequate. I was unsure if this was respectful enough. But it was what I had to go on.

He came over to tell me he was going home with the mutual friend. I think I managed to get out something about wanting to see him again, something about one-step-at-a-time, my feelings weren’t changed. I can’t remember exactly what I said. I hoped it was adequate. He left.

There were quite a few text messages between us. I was still pushing to hang out. He wasn’t against it. This was reassuring. Life got in the way for a bit—work, etc. Eventually we were both out, at the same party, we had a good time dancing together and then we were in a cab going back to his house.

I was nervous. He was hot. I guess that's the magic of the first time. It was great. There were misunderstandings, which became things to laugh about as the passion and bodies and pleasures got hotter and hotter. It was fierce.

Neither of us talked much about where we thought this might go. I was happy to see him when I could. And that didn't turn out to be as often as I'd hoped. Things died down a bit.

I moved away. Lots of things changed for both of us, in our lives.

But we kept in touch. And time has meant a friendship has grown. He is a great friend.

I love him, and still lust for him. But whatever happens, we have a friendship.

•••

We had lunch during the summer, and after a good couple of hours of intense sharing of stories about where we were at, I walked him to his bus-stop. Spontaneously our lips locked. It was a great few minutes of affection, made sweeter by the knowledge this was no longer a trepidatious crush, but the icing on a cake of solid friendship. I almost skipped home afterwards.

—

PRIDE

by Rex Leonowicz

i guess it makes sense
that these things would happen—
happiness, friends
on riis beach
and the free scarred chests
of trans men on the sand in the open

it is 2011, june 26th
and i guess i am proud
in my neon
loud pink short-shorts
when an old acquaintance
hugs me
dodges pronouns and says,
"who is this cute colourful munchkin?"
instead of "lesbian."
maybe we do get a little bit closer
every day.

i am proud
and we are all
so proud and out
but
humiliation has had us
just as wasted

and i know because i was there,
passed out on another beach in spain,
i hadn't eaten that day, either

waking up naked
even in a safe place
never feels okay
if you don't know how you got there.

and i don't know if i'll feel as good
looking this gay
on monday.

ALL THE LOVERS, ALL THE BABES

Tallace Bissett on chasing trans babes

Years ago when I was working in a busy city bar my manager gave me a present. She had been down to Corky Saint Claire and, especially for me, brought back a little button badge that said 'tranny chaser'. My colleague was straight but not prejudiced and she'd obviously noticed my appreciation of trans-masculine types. On the other hand, she was not enough part of my world to realise that being called a tranny chaser was not actually complimentary. I never wore the badge and I think it remains buried with various badges mainly from the trove of the Lesbian and Gay Archives ('Sodom today, Gomorrah the world' being my personal favourite).

At the time of the badge gift I was dating (in a painful, long-distance way) a beautiful androgynous dyke. At the same time I was living with a genderqueer person who changed their name to a male name during the period we dated. Since I came out to my Mama at nineteen, I have self-identified as a dyke and had my own journey of gender exploration. For my thirtieth birthday, said Mama gave me a set of photos of me over the years. By the time I was labelled a tranny chaser by my insensitive colleague, I was sporting very short hair and binding regularly but not every day. It's an awkward thing to reflect on, one's gender progression, not to mention one's steady stream of questionable fashion choices. But it was a timely reminder that my current feminine presentation isn't something that just happened – I chose this, I actively made myself in this mould and that involved a deliberate decision that I was not going to transition myself.

So back to my role as a lover and alleged chaser of hot tranny arse... In fact the people I have dated have tended to the butch dyke type and only three to five of my lovers have actively identified as trans while we dated. The slippage there, between three and five is the question mark that hangs over time lines, the overlap between dating and transitioning that happened with at least two of my former lovers.

Which brings me to my other grave fear, even worse than being accused of fetishising gender. I worry that supporting surgery fundraisers might make it look like I am inappropriately invested in people getting surgery! I have helped a number of trans men organise benefits and as I said, I've experienced more than one lover transitioning while we were dating. I am definitely not shy to say I will always be an advocate for people doing whatever the hell they want with their own bodies. But I want to take this opportunity to make a declaration: I love you all, handsome gender queer and trans people. I think there have been times when butch dykes in my life have expressed defensiveness around others' decisions to transition, like the fact of others transitioning was a sign of disrespect to the version of masculinity they chose to embody. I think that tension has lessened now but just in case there are butch dykes out there who feel like there is pressure for them to transition just because more people have been choosing to do that in our world, I am putting my hand up as an avid fan of you all, in all your butch, androgynous and trans beauty.

—



ANDREW AND PAUL

as told by Paul McMillan

My partner was in a different physical form when we first met. There was the shoulder length red hair and D-cup bra for a start—spooky similarities to a girl I dated as a teenager. Following that first awkward relationship, I identified as gay and I'd had a long-term relationship with a cis male, but spent most of the 25 years since curious about people's abilities for serial monogamy. The unexpected nature of our mutual attraction miffed a few people, probably even those at the dingy Smith St bar where we met.

He told me up front about the impending Transition, but having never consciously known a trans person before, it took a while to sink in. It's still a continuing process. I think I was definitely a bit naïve. That said, I'm sure that my step-dad's first wife Hannah would have preferred life as a man. She was never in feminine clothes, but quite beautiful, we were always very close, I loved her. My mother would say that George always felt as if he were in bed with a man during his first marriage. This was said with not a great deal of compassion. Hannah really encouraged my mum and step dad's relationship, but that's another story!

Then there were those who were thrilled that I'd landed back in what looked like the heterosexual world. A close friend exclaimed one day to a long-haired Andrew "So glad to see you bring him back into the fold!" It was strangely comforting to blend into 'normal' society, it suited my internal homophobia. The coming months seemed like several different coming ins and outs. Mostly people were thrilled to see

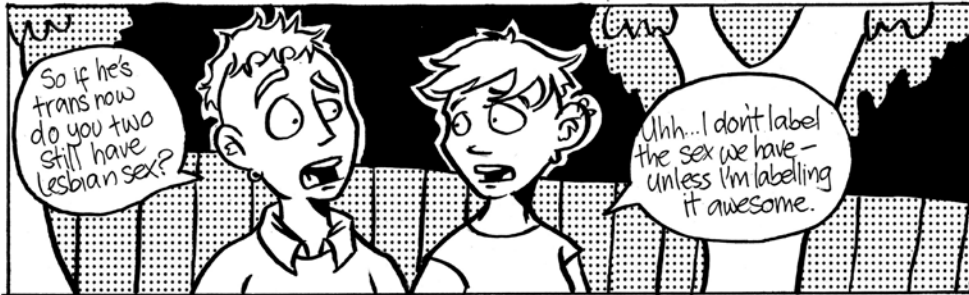
me so happy after so many years of being single (Andrew had been single a long time as well, we also share a birth date!) but I was surprised at the levels of prejudice we encountered. Some of it was quite strong from within the gay community. This included "Why are you going out with that funny lesbian?", and, upon learning of my partner's transition, a slightly sneering "I suppose people can do what they like". There was even a physical altercation between a seemingly confused or jealous straight mate and Andrew.

Transition had its own peculiar stresses. Menopause and adolescent T surges in the same week—when and what would people find out? I wondered if I really wanted him to transition at all, did I prefer things to remain as they were? That of course was just a purely selfish construct. I am not 100% prejudice-free either, but I am just so proud of what Andrew has done to affirm himself. The thought of not sharing my life with Andrew because of transition was never entertained.

Six months after we met, I was there in the clinic for the first T injection, and also the following year for the upper surgery. Life post-transition is becoming easier and more settled. Issues remain around disclosure, but less pressing, whilst the family slowly accepts our 'New Look'. We had never known any other trans men until mid last year, but feel lucky to have made new friends and met some inspiring people through Zoe Belle Gender Centre and *Dude* magazine.

AWKWARD STUFF

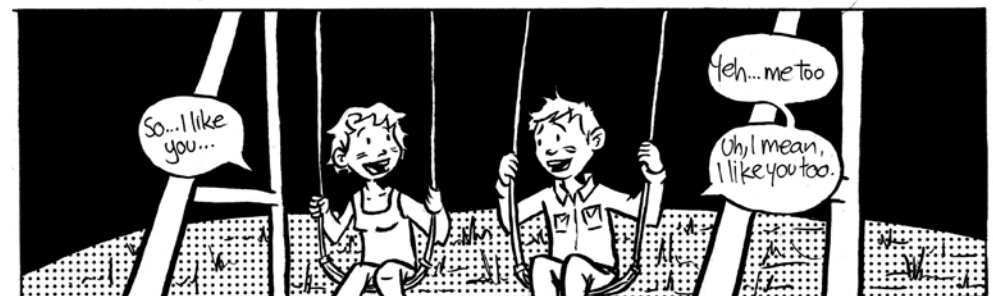
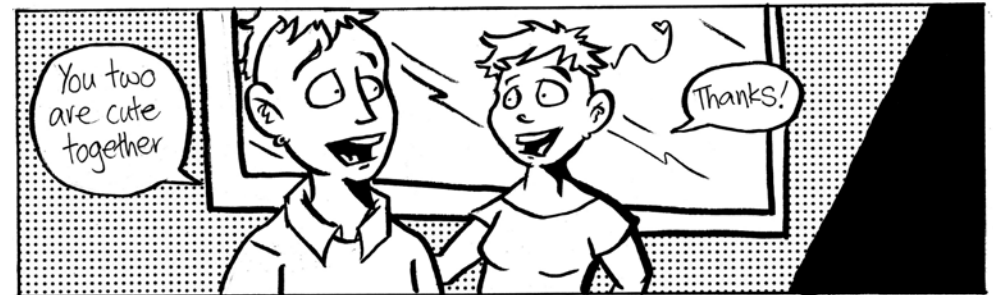
That's been said to us...

The stuff that might BE BETTER TO SAY...



Or, are at least less likely to make us cringe.



I thought I was just falling in love with the man of my dreams, and it was as simple as that. But I was wrong.

ETHAN AND PLUTO

as told by Pluto Savage

When I was invited to write a piece for *Dude* I sat with the idea for a long time before I could start, thinking at first that my relationship had been dissected enough already and feeling reluctant to invite further scrutiny by opening up a window into our lives. And besides, so many assumptions and judgements have been made about us already, why bother dispelling them with fact? Never let the truth get in the way of a good story, as they say.

I didn't want to write a soft porn account of how great the sex is or some cheesy testimonial of the joys of loving a trans man. Nor did I want to exclaim that after extensive research I can say with some authority that loving a trans man is as rewarding as loving any other man. Surely we have reached the point where all the above are pieces of assumed knowledge. So I decided to write about how it is for me to live as a partner of a trans man.

At the beginning there were many varied enquiries into what was going on in my bedroom and my mind. Some seemed to come



from a place of genuine interest and excitement that the world presented so many opportunities to the enquirer for new ways of understanding - they were positive, supportive or simply curious. Then there were other enquiries that clearly came from a place of judgement or prejudice: "Do you find it weird? How do you get your head around it? How does it work? What has he got down there?" And my favourite: "Have you ever been with a woman before?" I would look puzzled and say, "No I

haven't, but I'll let you know if I ever try it, I've heard it's amazing."

And then one day a very dear old friend really let me down. He showed me a picture on his iPhone of some guy he was going to go on a date with who bore a crazy resemblance to my partner Ethan. He said, "Check out this guy, he looks exactly like ..." and paused for me to fill in the obvious gap. I said Ethan, and we both exclaimed with shock and laughter over

how striking a resemblance this guy bore to Ethan - that fun moment when mates are able to laugh at how similar their taste is - then my friend said, "Yeah, crazy huh ... but much hotter because he's got a dick!"

We aren't friends anymore, obviously.

Of my close friends and acquaintances, some people were happy for me but were concerned that my falling in love with a trans man was

going to bring me trouble—meaning that they didn't want me to suffer prejudice. Others didn't see my partner's gender as a liability or even a topic worthy of a second mention. But in the eyes of some I'd instantly become some kind of queer superhero, my Queer Cred had gone through the roof. I was Pluto the brave and heroic, the gay man who had the courage and the broadness of mind to date a trans man. Suddenly strangers or people on the peripheries of my circles who had previously paid me no heed were now tipping their hats, friending me on Facebook and offering a warm smile that seemed to be filled with praise.

It was this last response which was the most difficult for me to handle. My falling for a trans man seemed like no big surprise to me, and this notion that I was paving the way into some brave new world in which trans men could be loved by cis men was an enormous shock to me. It didn't sit well with me to be seen as a trailblazer or a hero for doing something that came so naturally or that seemed in my mind to be completely normal. I was just falling in love, I've done it before and no one kicked up a big fuss about it then. Ethan is the man of my dreams and he is as much a man as the men I've loved before who happened to be assigned male at birth. I suppose the finer details of anatomy are not what my heart is tuned too. Queer sensibility privilege? Probably! Lucky me.

When things started to feel serious between myself and Ethan, he warned me. He said, Pluto, the trans community isn't something I'd ever wish upon someone else, it's a lot to take on. At the time I don't think I really knew what he meant. I thought he was warning me of the judgements or negativity directed toward the trans community from outside it, like some of those things I've mentioned above. But driven by love and determined that nothing was going to stand in its way, I swore to myself and Ethan



that I would take on whatever drama or judgement was necessary to make room in the world for me to love him.

I know now that what he was actually talking about were the judgements, rivalries and negativity that exist within the trans community: the warring factions, the viciousness with which any difference of opinion or ideology is met. The assumptions that will be made about any individual who wants to fuck a trans person

and the suspicion they will sometimes face. The tightly coiled nature of the politics around gender which always seem ripe to explode. The silencing that a cisgendered partner of a trans person may experience within the community because no matter how entwined they are in the life of one trans person, how active they are in the trans community, or how warmly they might be welcomed by some trans people, they will never be fully acknowledged or respected by all because they themselves are not trans.

It would have been nice if Ethan and I could have fallen in love and gone about the wonderful business of living happily ever after without forever knowing that someone, close or far, is passing judgement on our love. Turns out, there was nothing simple about it at all.

—



Ethan and Pluto by Morgan Carpenter



MARKUS

All I wanted to do was to feel 'normal' for just a few minutes. And it hit me that the internet was the perfect cover. I didn't want to change my gender, I just wanted to know what it felt like to be a man for a little while. Until I met her. She was so sweet, and she just got me right away. It was love.

Everyday we would trade emails and I'd look forward to seeing a new message every morning and every night. I was so comfortable. I never wanted to deceive her. I felt like I was meant to be a man, and now after all these months she was asking to speak to this man... but I couldn't do it. If she found out now that I wasn't born this way, she'd never want a freak like me. I put it off and stalled as much as I could but the guilt built up. I had to tell her. I wrote it all out. I was born female as Jessica, and I was a lesbian ... well maybe, something still didn't feel right but a gender change was just for desperate people. I wasn't desperate, I was 'normal'. We spoke on the phone a lot. I tried to explain it all but it just got stuck in my throat. I felt ashamed of myself. I'd talk myself out of it, talk myself down and just push it away.

And she noticed. She felt me hiding my true self and she pulled away. I was so confused. I just wanted to be the person I had always felt I was. I wanted to be comfortable in my own skin. I needed to tell her I wanted to talk about changing genders. But she couldn't take all of the emotion walls I had put up, and so she left for the sake of a friendship.

LAURA

I found myself fall for someone living in the shadows. Markus seemed such perfection; caring and sweet, yet he wasn't afraid to speak his mind. Most details of our lives were shared, until I asked to hear his voice. Weeks turned into months and there was still no verbal communication, only emails.

My initial guess was that the love that I felt for him wasn't a mutual feeling. I was then informed that Markus was Jessica. Admittedly I was in shock, unsure of what to say or rather, how to mend the emptiness.

Eventually I agreed to get to know Jessica and hear her reasons for acting as someone else. It didn't take long for me to realise I was in love and without her my world didn't exist.

Weeks went by and I noticed distance between us, as though we were withdrawing from one another. The mention of a sex change soon tore us apart. I was scared after losing Markus that I would soon lose Jessica. It seemed selfish but I wasn't mentally prepared for more emotional stress. After attempting to be friends it soon felt uncomfortable and all communication was gone. It's best to be honest from the beginning.



For MJ
Miss Pinup Kit

I remember the first times. The first time your mother told me you should have been a boy. The first time a woman backed out of the bathroom as you exited a stall to check where she was. The first time someone called you my boyfriend as an insult. The first time someone called you my boyfriend as a compliment. The first time my sexuality was questioned. The first time we were with the boys and you complained about your lack of hair, and I wished I could transfer mine to you. The first time I called you “my useless husband”. The first time I heard you help a friend to pee standing up, so I tried it. The first time you got me pregnant. The first time I saw you pass: we were at a bar and a 50 year-old queen in aubergine told you,

“You will just love my friend.” You blushed and introduced me as your girl. He apologised profusely and said, “I thought you were gay.” You mumbled, “Yeah I am—with her.” The first time I was sucking your big cock, I looked up at you and you said, “You make me feel so real”. The next morning I waltzed in and announced to our friend, “So, turns out I can deep throat” and you laughed. One first chokes me up, even now. The first that gutted me and I felt you fill my rib cage. I overheard you tell a friend, “I’m lucky to have a partner who accepts all of me, I guess.” That moment became a first for me. The first time I looked at you in all your butch, boi, genderqueerfuckery and realised the gift you gave me. You.

I DIDN'T FEEL HETERO

letter from an unknown femme

My identity for years had been tied up with being a femme lesbian with a butch partner. We had been living together for a year when D told me she was transitioning to male. And I was told: it wasn't a discussion. Without my knowledge, D had seen a psych and been approved for hormones. I felt backed into a corner where I had to accept 'him'. And I didn't want a 'him', I wanted my big strong proud butch 'she'. D also planned on being 100% percent stealth, and overnight, with no explanation, we disappeared from our lives in the lesbian community, and along with that went my sense of identity. Within months of being on hormones D was passing all the time and we were accepted as a normal hetero couple. I didn't feel hetero. I was queer as a unicorn and all of a sudden no one knew that part of me.

We were committed to staying together, and as time went on D came to understand where I was at with transition. He became open to hearing me and my emotions and has given me time to feel them, given me time to grieve, and given me time to adjust. Every surgery he went through would raise this stuff for me again and again. We recently returned from overseas where D had a full phallo. This was the biggest challenge in our relationship thus far, almost threatening to derail us completely. Any last part of his 'femaleness' (and I have his permission to write that, and it doesn't detract from the man he is) was gone, or that's what my head told me. I struggled being away from home, I struggled with the language barrier of being in a foreign country, I struggled watching

him in pain, and I struggled seeing the joy he found in his penis while I was repulsed by how 'manly' it was. I felt guilty for feeling all of this. I felt I should be doing more, saying more... being more. D again, gave me time and space to process.

It's been a few months now since his operation and we are still committed to staying together. In some ways he is still my big strong butch and in other ways he is more, less, better, and different. He is still the same person, but a better version, a happier, more confident, open and honest version, and to be honest, he is a better partner to me. And, I'm sure you are all curious, we have tried out the latest addition to his body, and as much as I always stated I was opposed to penis, our sex life is fantastic. He is so much more confident in bed, the phallo looks great and feels even better for both of us, and he is still very committed to making me happy. Looking back at that day five years ago when he gave me the ultimatum that he would transition with or without me, I couldn't have foreseen where we would end up, or if we would survive this process. I am so blessed that we have. I feel it had made us both better people. We are currently planning our wedding for July this year. Although I lost my butch 'she' I gained something much better, oh and I have a new identity. I am me!

DYSFUNCTIONAL EUPHORIA

an extract by KW – read the full piece at dudemag.org

You are telling me about how you feel in your body and as I am listening to you describe your feelings and experiences, it all makes sense to me because you are the person you are and those are the things that have happened to you to make you the person you are. And I am the person I am and the things that have happened to me have happened and I feel the way I feel in my body, but this is not about that and I understand that in this moment I must be the adult otherwise we will be two lost children and it will get very dark and we won't know how to find the light and we will be clinging to each other and we won't understand how, but our fear and shame will be the thing that binds us and I do not want that to happen because you are beautiful and I am tired and there is a chance to feel normal.

You keep using this word about your body, dysphoria, and it keeps making me think of dysfunctional euphoria and I am wondering if that is what you mean, and you are explaining to me as I imagine you have had to explain to every lover that you cared about to patiently help them see why you are the way you are so that we will be gentle with you and not frighten you or disturb you and there are invisible lines on your body and these are the lines that I cannot cross, and when we fuck it will be impossible to be truly lost because I must remember these lines otherwise everything will suddenly have to stop because your excitement will turn to fear and your beauty will turn to shame and our breathing will continue to come

in gasps, but our hands must be still. So you are telling me the map to your body and I am trying to pay attention and you are telling me as if you are guiding me to a country that I have never been to and I am trying to put myself in your position and I am wondering why everything you describe feels so familiar, and then I know but I cannot say.

Our body is the place where we cannot lie. But it is also the place where we cannot handle the truth. Bad things happened to me in dark rooms and in bright sunlight when I was too young to realise that they were seeds being planted inside me and I could never be the person I could have been if those things had not happened. Bad things happened to me and then I made bad things happen because I did not know any better and I did not think it mattered anymore what happened because I was already bad, and then when I realised that I did not have to feel like that and tried to stop making the bad things happen they just happened anyway and somebody who seemed like they might love me would take the mask off and rip me apart. And that is where you found me. And that is where I found you.

TWO POEMS

by Rex Leonowicz

Causes for Alarm

all my poems are crapshoots / i'm lonely / someone used my old name today / he stared at my crotch on the bus / my high voice / my mom wants to visit / i'm out to my friends, but not my mom / my friends want to meet my mom / i told the right people the wrong secrets (about my mom) / walking home alone at night / holding hands in public / taking the subway / taking a cab / going to the bathroom / my passport at airport security / my back hurts, & my neck, & my shoulders / the likelihood of bruised ribs / the thought of an unflattened chest / my posture / being too much or too little of either

—

Roommate

her brother left porn up on her laptop when he was visiting, like he'd done at home on their family's desktop in the living room. it led to a sit-down about what real lesbians are. he left the stout male bottle of his cologne cap unscrewed on the windowsill, *everyone's gotta smell good, right?* he was prepared for me, she said. my new name, changed signifier. *oh, i know someone like that, don't worry.* his nose blubbered in his sleep—he had polyps, the dry heating bothered him. i stood at the wall, between my desk and dresser. he sat on her bed with 700 pages of king arthur in his lap. i tugged off my binder, shuffled into boxers. *he watched,* she said.

—



Fuck the movement! Queer attraction and the fight against gender essentialism.

MASON AND DORIAN

Dude magazine's own Lia Incognita talks to Mason and Dorian.
Read the full interview at dudemag.org

Lia: How did your friends react when you guys got together?

Mason: My friends were more bugged out about Dorian being poly than anything else because of my less than stellar dating history but over time they've come to accept us with open arms. It hasn't been easy and I'll admit it's gotten way better since starting T (which I hate) but everyone in my network of friends and chosen family gets that Dorian and I are a queer male couple, even the straight ftm misogynists who think I'm bad for the movement for shying away from a cis girlfriend.

Dorian: Fuck the movement! My friends were taken aback to hear me flinging around the word 'boyfriend', despite the fact that I've always been adamant in my fag identity. It makes sense, though: in my lady-days, I definitely slept with men and sometimes even fell for them, but I wasn't trying to bring

them around or brag about them. The guys who took up with me were working out their own shit (plenty have come out since), but most presented as straight cis guys who would've been a liability in any of the queer spaces I craved. My queer cred was already in question because my femme identity in that body was usually read as 'straight lady', because I was unrepentantly attracted to men despite socialised difference that felt akin to a language barrier. Once I started T, I found myself exploring that attraction again in the most fumbling, furtive way. Mason was the first guy I dated in over a decade that I wasn't totally mortified to call my boyfriend and I think all my friends could see why right away.

Lia: Do you think there's pressure from other trans guys to be a certain way, like to partner with women (especially cisgendered, femme women) or maintain a masculine appearance?

Do you think that's coming from internalised transphobia or a kind of strategic essentialism or something else? How do you deal with it, personally and politically?

Mason: Oh totally! There's a whole group of people who seem to feel a need to resort to essentialist and ridiculous anti-femme stuff to dissuade anyone from ever grouping me in with women so they tell themselves they're helping me out, the funny thing is though it's never consistent advice. For instance I've been told to butch up by white gay cis men and brown trans men/aggressives and also told to fag out by black gay cis men and white trans men and lesbians. Usually people who read me butch and male don't understand why or how I am in a gay male relationship and people who read me queer and gender variant tend to think my not being flamboyant, glittery, or 'fierce' somehow negates any chances of me having a hard femme identity—which I can only guess comes from a place of not knowing how masculinity in communities of colour isn't necessarily an indicator of one's politics or sexuality.

It's not so much transphobia as I would call it misogyny and heteronormativity. People think, "Oh Mason is transitioning so he has to exclusively like women and dress like a straight man because that's what cis men do". You can even take it a step further and use my fave Buck Angel ideology that roughly states that by identifying as a 'genderqueer, polysexual, fagboi androgyne' rather than an 'ftm, bisexual, transsexual, tranny, man with a pussy', I am confusing people with my language because I'm making their minds work in unorthodox ways they don't have time to learn. With ignorance like that still coming out of the mouths of supposed educators, I'd say we still have a lot of work to do as a community to make it clear that there isn't one trans narrative just like there isn't one cis gender narrative and that language isn't

the divider between cis and trans communities, it's class and access to medical treatment.

As for how I deal with that personally though—um, I guess education, of myself and others. I really have found the best way to shut someone up is to just explain what I am doing and inform them if they don't like my Banjee Realness, they can suffer and since 95% of queer people using the word 'realness' these days are using it incorrectly, this also allows me to segue into other q poc interests like ball culture, reading them to filth, and asking them to sashay away if they want to continue preaching whatever culturally appropriative, gender essentialist, or straight/normal acting garbage they're spewing.

Truth is, I don't want acceptance or validation from lesbians who 'really appreciate ftms', nor do I want it from gay cis men who won't suck trans cock or dislike my glitter dildo which leaves me with little else but other gender variant people to choose from which means I'll probably be skoliosexual until dating options for queer trans men aren't rooted in fetishization, body hair/height supremacy (I'm just over 5'2" on a good day but hunched about 2" shorter in a binder), or centred around exploring the differences between cis and trans genitalia because I resent a lot of the language used to try to convince cis people or gays/lesbians to 'give trans men a try'.

I've got the partner for me now; whatever pressure or social norms I am being forced into are irrelevant.

Dorian: Oh, surely! I think for a lot of guys, people who are living stealth especially, it serves some kind of affirming purpose: my cis lover chooses to be with me and, thus, recognises me as equal[ly-desirable] to cis guys. I never understood that, perhaps because I've never had (or sought) it:

One by one, my exes are coming out trans and it's really no surprise to me that I've always sought reflection and understanding, people who weren't trying to make me choose.

I'm pretty much exclusively attracted to queers, people whose notions of gender and sexuality are some kind of complicated, so most of my lovers are open to some measure of gender variance. I mean, duh, they dated me. One by one, my exes are coming out trans and it's really no surprise to me that I've always sought reflection and understanding, people who weren't trying to make me choose.

Everything I saw and read about trans people growing up made the process sound so prescriptive, so focused on passing; it doesn't surprise me that so many stick to that trajectory. The mainstream LGBT movement has always seemed to stress assimilation, seeking permission to take part in institutions that have served the straight world for so long. I have never imagined myself living as a straight person, have never wanted to be let into a world that will not recognise the whole of me. Coming into my trans identity was complicated by the fact that I am unquestionably femme and feminist. I had so many people giving me tips when I came out on how to stand, dress, speak, and carry myself 'like a man'. Most of this advice

came from other tranners, which I found pretty crushing. I had to make it clear, again and again, that I didn't alienate my family, wheedle reluctant doctors, pick fights with my bosses, and invite slurs and scrutiny from strangers just so I could cling to a different bullshit gender norm. When I walked away from my half-assed efforts at lady living, it was because I saw that there was no room for me in the widely-recognised, heavily-enforced gender binary. Affecting a butch stance and 'taking up more space' (the most frequent suggestion I heard) would have been as much a lie as wearing a dress and going by Jennifer. My transition has no pre- or post-; it is my daily process, the ways I find to keep true to myself in a world that would rather not acknowledge me. When I catch myself in an insecure moment wondering if my daily ensemble is going to get me mispronounced, I dare myself to nelly it up even more. Lately I've been rocking gold glitter nail polish to remind myself that passing is not my aim. Unless it's a matter of physical safety (and let's be honest: sometimes it really is), I just can't allow myself to make concessions for people who aren't ever going to get it.

—



 A black and white photograph of two men in a close embrace, one with a mohawk hairstyle.

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FTMFucker

is a brand new porn site directed by Heart Throb James Darling that features gay, straight, & queer porn with at least one trans man in every scene.

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 A black and white photograph of a group of people in a pool setting, with the text 'FTMFUCKER.COM' overlaid.

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