

A of the

I knew it was all about love. ~~Like~~ my mother could only love one person. ~~Like~~ I had to be worthy of love. ~~Like~~ my mother had to put up with being put down in order for her lover to go down. ~~I mean~~ Its all about being loved and being afraid that you won't be or can't be or shouldn't be.

WASN'T WARRPED BY

Who I am and how I love ~~absolutely nothing to do with~~ my parents- ~~my mom and her lover~~- being lesbians. It ~~has nothing to do with~~ my grandmother & my mother not knowing who the other really is. It ~~doesn't even have to do with~~ the woman that fears I'll take my mother away from her.

Came

~~I came~~ from a place inside of me that knew I was my own separate person. I had my own identity. And I could form my own definition of love and loving because what happened in my home was not what happened on T.V. or in my friends homes. So I didn't have to be what anyone else was. (The one thing my mother always told me to do was to love myself.)

I want to believe that I have broken the cycle. I have taught myself how to love. And that I have given that love to my mother & my grandmother and even a little to my mother's lover.

I think the day my mother said she was proud of me and ~~that~~ she loved me ~~when she wasn't drunk~~ and heard me say that inspite of everything I loved her -- I realized the war was over. I had the battle scars to prove it. I still hear the sounds of mortar fire and strafing runs going of in my head.

But I am here. I'm alive. I am loved. And I love. And it doesn't matter what sex, size, shape, or shade. Love has no prejudice. No borders. Once you love the other in you, you can love the you in others. That's what I learned in my different-than-normal-slightly-screwed-up-desparate-to-be-loved family.

Helen enters through Door 1.

HELEN

ENT
D 1

My dad was out for eight years in France in the '60's but he came back to the states and met my mom and apparently they fell in love I mean I suppose they really did but it was more like with the pressures in society, my dad really wanted to have children in the '60's you kind of only did that in the context of a family so anyways they got married and had me and had my sister and they stayed married for, like, probably almost 12 years.

I think they thought they could make it work and they couldn't.

[REDACTED]

What I am more willing to believe is that my father didn't couldn't really find the courage in himself to stand up for who he was or he thought the world was too much against him. I mean the other relevant point is that when my father came out to me and my sister basically he said, "I'm gay and there are people in this world that want to kill me for that and you need to know that."

Those years were so weird. No body was giving us any clear information and my parents didn't really have clear information to give us. And my sister and I ... children will adapt to anything. So like my parents had separate beds and we you know made up stories to try to understand that, not only for ourselves but for our friends and so we'd say "Oh well you know my mom tosses and turns and steals all the covers and my dad lies still when he sleeps and so they need separate beds." And that really made sense to us, I think at a really innocent level we bought that.

At the same time my father was also very consciously introducing me and my sister to his gay friends so we were getting this idea of gay men and who they were and that they were totally cool and great and it was shown to us as something separate like my father was not relating it to himself at all and for a long time we were going on the assumption that all of Dad's friends were gay but dad's not. Of course he's not because not only was Dad not saying he was gay but none of his friends were fathers.

My mom was totally behind him, maybe more behind him than he was behind himself. She was just like the mom, the wife. And all the men loved her. "David's got the cool wife that's putting up with everything." My mother did not give us any negative

stuff about my dad being gay. Ever.

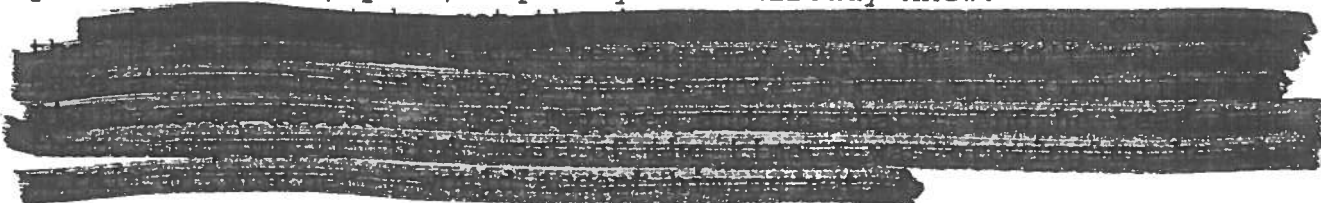
I was fifteen and I was getting in trouble and that woke my mother up to the fact that there was something really wrong. And we all went to family therapy because of me and that was kind of a real trip in itself cause I was clearly not the family problem. But for what ever reason it got us there and I just remember the therapist hearing what my parents were doing and just looked at them and she said "Do the two of you know the meaning of the word separate? You're not doing it and you've got to do it."

So at that time my mom and dad really separated and started having separate dealings with us. By the time I was in high school, my dad finally met his lover, Bob. Bob did not want to meet my mother. Later, it turned out to be very important that everybody had their own boundaries and their own clarity about who they were in this picture. It was like a foreshadowing.

MIKE

I'm not sure if it occurred to me whether to think of him as family or not, but Bill and my dad were living together for about five years. That's a long time for my dad-he doesn't have such a hot track record. It was when they started living together that I figured out my dad was gay. For one thing, they had a one bedroom apartment and both their names were on everything. Soon after that, when I was 13, we took a vacation, my father, his mother and I went to France and England. And he came out to me a Paris hotel room.

It was kinda like when your parents talk to you about sex. "There's something I've been meaning to talk to you about." And your like "Well, yeah, I pretty much already knew."



NATALIE

I know everything about my mother's life like what she's feeling and I can really empathize with her and so therefore my Dad was always made out to be the bad guy. My father is a great guy my mom is a wonderful woman they just don't mix.

In fourth grade, my parents were getting a divorce and around the same time she told me "I love Lani like I would love a man, like two people love eachother and that means I'm gay" and she explained the word gay. "And so we're going to be together" I asked her a lot of question -"Do you get married?" she said "Well we're gonna have like a ceremony but not a real big one because you know people don't understand. Now I suggest that you

don't tell your friends, but we are leaving it up to you to make that decision yourself." I think my mom was worried that my dad would use it against her. But I thought this was great 'cause this was one more secret I had about my mom. And I asked "How do you have...what do you do, you know, sex with a woman and stuff?" She said "I don't think that you'd understand that right now, but you can ask me that when you're older but it might make you feel uncomfortable."

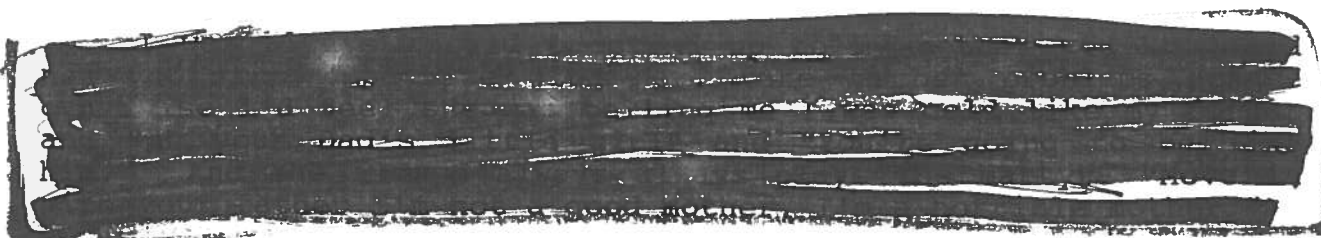
MIKE

My dad's divorce from my mom had as much to do with his alcoholism as it had to do with his homosexuality. It's almost like the sex isn't as important to her - like she would have stuck with a marriage to a gay man who loved her but she couldn't stick with a marriage to a guy that was abusing her, who was an alcoholic.

When he began actually physically abusing her, we had to just leave. I don't really remember when it started, but it had started with spats and like throwing...wine. It was like classic ugliness. Actually on the night we left, I knew, I mean I was waiting...All the clichés about kids feeling like they are to blame if their parents split up or just wanting their parents to be together. I think for me I was just like - "Let's get out of this situation. This is awful." It took awhile, actually, it was a dysfunctional family situation for a long time.

m
Chair

NATALIE



She always told me she was an alcoholic. "I'm not allowed to drink." ~~She said~~ "You can do anything you want, talk to me about any sexual experiences" and I was always open to her about everything. "Don't you dare ever drink. Cause there is this problem in the family." And everyday I had to hear about statistics. But she still drinks.

See her lover Lani and I, we don't talk about these things. Lani still has a problem believing that there is such a thing as alcoholism. She sees it as "If you loved me you wouldn't"

But I walk in, see my mom, drunken stupor, folding laundry to Mozart. (laughs) You go upstairs and you think "Well that's her and I'm me and I'm gonna go to bed now. Thank God I live on the third floor."

It's bad when Lani's away, cause she feels lonely. And it makes me feel like shit, "great, I'm not good enough."



NAT
SITE
CHAI

GUY

GUY
ENTR
1000

My mother has always told me that I'm special which did two things. It kind of sort of gave me a big ego but at the same time it made me feel like I had to live up to those expectations. And it made me feel different from other people. So I was always the outcast. At the same time, I have a really high charisma. So there was always a core of people who really like me or hated my guts. But people almost never fall in the middle with me. Because I hate mediocrity.

I mean my mom would say things like "You know, Guy, you're so much smarter than your little sister." "No, it's just that I'm living with my grandparents and Jennifer's living with you and we we are being raised in two totally different environments."

Sara

I think mom thought she was encouraging me. I think the end result was a kid who was on this tremulous balance between, "Well, okay, mom says I'm better than everybody else, but nobody really likes me. So I mean, how much sense does that make? You know?"

So seventh grade was a really bad experience. Plus my mom had - not just - but like six months earlier separated with my step-father and she was going through lover after lover and they were all pieces of shit. And at one point there was this woman living with us by the name of SUE...

GUY
ENTR
1000
SUE
Betsy
am

SAM

When I was younger, after my grandfather died, my mom told the whole family that he had done stuff to her... She started going to support meetings and that's where she met Betsy. Um, Betsy and her became good friends.

She never really told me...I went to my parents' room to ~~use~~ borrow something of my dad's and there was Betsy and my mother on the bed hugging each other and...I...I...was surprised...so I left. And my mom came after me all "Why did you come into my room? We were just upset we were just hugging each other because we are both going through a divorce...blah blah blah." So I said "Okay that's no big deal."

Then my mom and Betsy started living downstairs in the basement apartment and Betsy's son, my little brother and me and my father were living upstairs.

Then that summer, I went to San Francisco to visit my grandmother. My uncle is gay and um, I overheard my grandmother reading a letter to my uncle admitting that ~~she~~...um... was in love with this woman and she was going to divorce my father. I mean my mom was breaking up our family. I said something to her about it and she said "You're just crazy." It was a really screwed 'cause I knew it, you know, I knew it was true. I mean I asked my father and he knew it was true. And then she was telling me I was crazy and I was making these things up in my head.

One day I came home and she had left with Betsy and her son and my younger brother. They figured I wouldn't have gone. I probably wouldn't have but how could she leave me without even asking?

SAM
COO

MIKE

My relationship with my dad was not good. We were not close. I considered him kind of a let down. He was not doing the dad stuff at all. Pinewood Derby I had to make my own damn car. I never did Little League. I think it was a combination of his trying to come out and not being happy with his work and everything else. He was very caught up in his own problems.

M
CHO

And I remember after they split up, he made an effort to spend some time with me I think he was really afraid that there was going to be no connection. And then he'd do all the big ticket stuff, we'd go to amusement parks and movies and all that stuff that I never did with my mom or with him before. And I kinda saw through that..

GUY

I have a really really selective memory. I just realized, I swear to you, I had no idea, my mother was married to my step-father, Stuart, for eight years. I have enough memories to fill up about a month. This is a man, who started as a truck driver, addicted to speed, smoked pot, serious sugar addict -- I mean he'd pour sugar on his beans, okay,-- he'd drink coke's like water, eat Lucky Charms four times a day, and he had all the energy of a three-toed-sloth on valium. He was a nice guy, don't get me wrong, but he was not there, he was not there.





00
C13

NATALIE

By chair

Lani is such a saint to me. We're not close close, but we would both do anything for eachother. Lani and I don't have a separate relationship. My mom is the kind of person that needs to know that she's number one. And Lani will let her know that. Its okay to Lani that my mom needs attention from other people and that she loves me and that she has a daughter and Lani doesn't...

Lani's whole attitude has always been "The girl's confused enough, I'm gonna stay back. If she needs me I'm always there for her. I don't see Lani as Mom I see her as Lani, I don't see my father's wife, Tracy as mom. I have a mother a father a Tracy and a Lani.

GUY

I never looked at my mother's partner's as parental figures. But any man who is older, who I find attractive, who is talented, I latch onto as father figures with the speed unrivaled by a Japanese train. But my mother's lovers or partners were just that. They were usually addicts in a passive way and then she found the active ones. It was really unhealthy for a long time.

NATALIE

When the three of us are together, it's very comfortable. They don't display any physical affection in front of me. They pinch each other on the hinny and they kid around but that doesn't make me feel uncomfortable at all. I've never seen them kiss and they're not gushy "Oh honey, you're so wonderful, I love you." And I thought about it and I hate it when my Dad and Tracy are like that. At first I thought it might be wierd and I tried to imagine it, but they're just not that type of people.

GUY

I think my mother was a little embarrassed to be affectionate with women in front of my little sister Jennifer and I. Before with my step-father, Stuart, they'd kind of hug sometimes or kiss a little bit. Then once a month they'd say "We're off to the submarine races." For the longest time, I actually thought of them at the Golden Gate Bridge watching submarine races...

TURN
180

Sara
Weta

NAT
sit
chair 2

GUY
sit
chair

MIKE

Then by the time I hit adolescence, I was still really bumming at the lack of a father and all the stuff that I'd come up against that was much more of an uphill battle without a father. And also, I went to a boys' school when I was in 7th & 8th grade and the ultimate put down was like "Eh you FAG!" It's like I couldn't just let that go. I was real sensitive. I mean it would stick. So I became kinda of closeted in a way. I don't ever recall that I couldn't accept it myself but I think that my father took it that way. My issue was more telling other people or their response.

VP
Ch

+

0
0
0

Pool
to

SAM

Everybody gets called a fag...it doesn't mean...It's just a way to diss someone. I mean I know my mom says it isn't cool. I mean, yeah, I've called people it before 'cause if I didn't they'll start to wonder what's wrong with me. They already wonder about my mom. My dad remarried so I usually go to school stuff with him and my step-mom. It's not that I don't want my mom to go...but I don't want her to bring her friends...

MIKE

I remember once on they had parents day, I was like "Oh man, don't put me though this." Not only did I have to deal with my parents spending this day together but also my father was still in his fashionably obvious stage. Mid-life crisis is almost too trite. It was a little hard to explain why my father was wearing purple spectacles...but then again...even some of the most homophobic people are stupid about picking up clues like that. And I've even met a lot of gay people who don't even consider it possible that he could be a gay parent. It doesn't add up to them.

CX +
Pool

NATALIE

in 7th grade I went
VP
25
by she'd handle it, I
CX +
Pool

GUY

One summer, I went to an arts camp...and there were lots of gay and bisexual teens there. I didn't know that many gay or bisexual teens, so I thought that was pretty cool. And I wrote a play about two teenage lesbians and I was reading it to a friend of mine and she says "How do you know shit like that?" "I don't know, I watch people." "No, no it's something else. Are you sure you're not..." "Oh, yeah, that's right, my mom's gay." "Oh! See. I knew it had to be something."

UP
CEN

Sara

I mean its not something you bring up in casual conversation, "Hi. My name is Guy and by the way my mom's a lesbian, pleased to meet you."

But when you're in a situation where you are making art, due to the incredible confessional nature of art, you don't have much choice.

My mom was convinced that my teacher in junior high was gay. She was pretty sure everyone was gay. It's like this little dyke radar.

This is something that I find so humorous. I'll be sitting in a conversation with someone that is gay and they'll say "Oh, so and so is gay." How do they know? Like some famous celebrity, "Oh, honey he's gay!" "Richard Gere and Cindy Crawford...?" "Oh she's a lesbian and he's gay, they just got married out of convenience."

clar

It's like the only person in Hollywood the homosexual population won't claim is Sharon Stone.

Clar
Stone

NATALIE

It's real easy too because my mom doesn't look very dikish, Lori does but my mom is really cute and my guy friends always have a crush on her so they are not gonna think "God forbid she'd be that awful thing a lesbian, ahh" And she's a real feminist she's got stuff everywhere that men suck and so they just thought that my dad upset her so badly that she just couldn't deal with men and so she never wanted to remarry or that "She's probably still in love with your father." and I'm like "yeah maybe," whatever. People have their theories. People don't see what they don't want to see that's basically what it comes down to.

SAM

I can't deal with that feminist stuff. Almost every girl I have ever met says she wasn't a feminist. But if you give them a chance, they'll eventually say something you could call

SAM'S
ATTN

feminist. Like people who go nuts when they see car ads or beer commercials with women in bikinis. I mean they do that 'cause it works and people respond to it ... It's not something I need thrown in my face.

I remember once I was waiting in the van for my mother to be done with this women's meeting, and this one woman ran out crying and she started screaming at me "F^{uck} you you male-chauvenist..." and all that stuff. I was five. I mean my mom wasn't like that but some of her friends were.

Strad
SIF
Chai

GUY

Anyway, after a series of shitty relationships, my mom met Tara. Who is wonderful. And they are still together. Five and a half years. Tara is a totally cool human being. But she is also incredibly tough. You know? To people who threaten my mom, Tara is basically "Kill them" you know? 'Cause my mom can be incredibly irritating. She's the person who gives people the finger on the freeway. "Mom they're pulling out an UZI for God's sake."

So Tara, I mean Tara is just wonderful. She got offered a job up in Portland. And they found a gorgeous house...so cool, I love going up there. But I was into high school in the east bay with my best friend and my mom said "We're leaving now, would you like to come?" I said no. She said "Well, talk to your grandparents." So I did and I stayed with them.

NATALIE

My mom told her parents, but ~~Lori's~~ ^{LA's} mom still doesn't know and her dad never knew and its never gonna come out and its really sad she has to hide and god forbid if anything happens to Lori my mom won't be allowed to keep the house. My grandmother thinks its fine, she doesn't quite get it but it's okay and she's little out there. The other day she was making my mom laugh because she mentioned something about maybe being a lesbian. "Whatever Grandma" "And if I was I, the woman down the street is always coming over, you know these things happen." "Like what things? Oh I don't want to ask."

2007

MIKE

I was really on my own a lot and I think I would have benefitted from having someone to work this stuff out with. My dad wanted me to send him clear signals of how I felt and how I felt wasn't clear.

CX
C@
C@
RAC
Dec
2007

I went down to LA this one time when I was 16 to visit my

dad and he took me to Alcoholics Together, the gay AA, with the leather queens and the whole thing and I was like, "Yeah, I'm this straight young teenager and your making me hang around these gay alcoholics? What are you doing?" And he took me to this party and it was completely gay people and I don't think it even occurred to him what this would be like. It was 90% gay men. And it was the '70's so people tended to wear it on there sleeves. It was somebody's birthday party and he was getting gifts like phallic soap that everybody was passing around and I'm like "I don't want that." So stuff like that was really hard. You know I was just like in kinda of in shock 'cause it was really in my face.

SAM

I don't like hanging out in the Castro with my mom and stuff. 'Cause I am not gay, okay?!

My mom's always telling me it's okay if I am. She tells me what it's like..."If you ever have feelings for any of your guy friends you can come talk to me about it."

I mean being gay is their gig, it ain't mine.

MIKE

I remember the first time I came out about my father it was horrible. When I was in high school I was really miserable. I wanted someone that I could be open with about these issues who would be more mature than I was. Someone who understood. Well, I was in this youth group at church so I went in and talked with the Rector and told him about my dad. What he came up with as a response was "Well of course you and I both know that this is unacceptable." ~~It was almost like "Well you and I are innocents against these gay people that are trying to foist their lifestyles on decent people like us."~~ And that wasn't my take on it at all. If he had blamed me for it, that would have been better because it would have seemed more ludicrous where as this seemed almost plausible. After that I just I couldn't risk what other people's reactions would be. Well the Rector subsequently had a mid-life crisis and he ended up cheating on his wife and it was this horrible scandal.

NATALIE

We had all explanations about who Lani was planned out. The house was all set up, you know, we'd close certain doors. And we

had all the Lani jokes for when I started dating. Lani goes in the closet for the Prom. Lani said "Oh like I'll get a maid suit. Or I'll say 'I'm just the janitor. I'm just fixing the pipes here, can I take a few pictures while I'm at it?'"

I didn't feel like it was keeping anything from them because why do they have to know what my mother's sexual life was. I knew that they would make decisions based on their parents and it wouldn't be them deciding they couldn't hang out with me. I didn't want to have problems with my friends it wasn't as if I was ashamed of it, it was that I knew that they came from families and lived in an area where ~~being~~ a lesbian was like having 5 heads. So I didn't want people to feel uncomfortable like, "Oh your mother's a lesbian, it must run in the family, so you must be a lesbian too. So not only are you jewish, you're a dyke. So you're a kyke-dyke."

Clas
HAR
ENC
DOO

GUY

I mean the problems we have do not stem from my mother being a lesbian. For the most part the family, my family's been really cool about it. My grandfather, I really don't think he cares. My grandmother thinks it's weird but but but doesn't think it's bad she just thinks it's weird. But my Aunt Wynona and her husband John--they don't mention it at all. You know it's like if you don't talk about it then it isn't real.

GUY
CX
21

My Uncle John, I mean he's a nice guy, but his beliefs are screwed up. He thinks that all gay should be killed. It makes me feel like he's a moron. I mean I mean...I I I understand that he grew up with a really conservative family in New Mexico. And I can't fault him for that. But at the same time when I go to visit them and we're watching, you know, this thing on the AIDS Conference. "All those fags fault." And I say "Excuse me, John." And I talk to him for awhile and he says "Well you're stupid." And I say "Well, you are misinformed." And and and I mean you know...I'm not going to hate him for it. But I'm not going to let him get away with it while I'm with him. I mean if he ever said anything bad about my mother...but he wouldn't first of all lesbians aren't really gay. That's what he thinks.

And then I argue with some of these incredibly militant homosexual people, who drive me up the wall. ~~"Oh all heterosexual people are bad"~~ and "You hetero piece a shit I otta urinate down your throat!" And I tell them that are some really nice and open heterosexual people. ~~And their all~~ "No, nah nah" "Oh yeah, did I mention that my mom is gay and I'm heterosexual?" And it is just like the H-bomb in the argument. You know? It's mean, but it works.

Clas



GUY
ENC
DOO



NATALIE

I remember just telling everyone at Hampshire about my mom. I'm older now it doesn't matter and I don't have to deal with the suburban mentality. Now if they're going to be like that now I can call them an asshole. Before "Your parent's an asshole I understand."

When my mom drove me to Hampshire College there were these women kissing, and my mom's like "Look at that! I wanna go to this school. That's not fair I've gotta go back to suburbia and you're going to be living here!"

MIKE

My second year of college, [REDACTED] waiting to find [REDACTED] of the crappy rooms we got because we were at the end of the waiting list. [REDACTED] beautiful people had gone off together. [REDACTED]

Paul and I first drew the worst room on campus, a one room double with no closet. It was the kind of place where you would really be stuck with who ever you were with. So I went back to my freshman roommate and said "Well I got a room but there's this problem." And he said "Oh who are you rooming with." "Paul blah blah." And he's like "Oh I think I know the problem." I was just like "Well wait I haven't told you the problem yet. The problem is that we got a lousey room. What were you going to say?" "Paul's gay." And I was like, oh great.

07
07
this

MAF

And I was just bringing back all the old fears about what other people would think. I don't think I was really worried about sexual issues, except the same thing I would worry about with a straight roommate "Is he going to bring a lot of people back and is it going to be a drag?"

But anyway I went and saw the Dean of Residential Life and he was this really tough black guy. And uh, I mentioned it to him and he's like "Well I don't see anything different about living with a gay person or living with a black person..." I was like, Oh great, as soon as he said "black person" I was like okay, he is not going to sympathize at all. And then I told him the situation with my dad and I basically told him, you know I'm open to this but it's really hard for me. And he just flipped, he couldn't believe it I think I blew his mind. And he was like "Okay...well we'll see what we can do for you at least in terms of getting you a room with a little more privacy." So he ended

up giving us this sweet room...and it ended up being a great situation. I grew up a lot from that. I was a lot more out about my father too. Paul, my roommate, thought that I must be much more mature with my own sexuality and it was probably because I had to confront that aspect of "Am I gay?" And that ends up being a big bonus point because there are people with tremendous stuff to work out having to do with that issue.

END
DODG
1

GUY

My relationships tend to be...I'm very co-dependent in the classic meaning of the term in that I like people to depend on me. So I hang around with very dependent people who depend on me because I enjoy them depending on me. So I depend on them depending on me.

GUY
GUY
GUY

And I'm good at finding them girls. You know what I mean? I mean I walk into a room, it's like (sound effect) "I'm taking her. I'm taking her now." I don't want to mention any names, because you might know some of these people...but these relationships, they are really good. They love me and I love and I love the fact that they love me. You know? But I'm not a very touchy-feely guy. And um, sex still scares me. Which is...which is my mother's fault.

NATALIE

I talked to my mom about the guys I was seeing. She didn't male bash all my life - she had that undertone so that I would be careful and then she realized that I was so criticising and she was always "Give him a break" If a guy's a nice guy, she's thrilled "Thank God there's some."

GUY

It's weird 'cause I've been in situations where I could have had sex but I didn't and like the girl was, not so much disappointed, but really really really surprised. Because apparently a lot of guys are real shitheads. And and and I'm a shithead, but in a sort of special subtle way that takes about three months to notice. But apparently, guys are real fucks about sex.

MIKE

Now, it's great to talk to him about issues about sexuality because he has such a unique perspective and I think I really understand where his is coming from and I think I understand him a lot as a gay man. And I understand gay men a lot through him.

Its funny in recent years, people have thought that I'm gay and I now I think it's kind of an honor. I think having a gay parent sort of includes me in the gay community. I mean I go down to the Castro and I'm very comfortable there and I'm not uncomfortable about getting looked at or whatever which is what most straight guys just can't handle. I know they're not going to make a pass at me. Most of these guys flatter themselves with what they think gay men are going to want to do to them. It's like my father says to straight men who fear queers, "With so many willing ones out there why would I go for you?" MAR

NATALIE

I remember telling Brad, I was with him for three years, I trained Brad, he's a great guy, too bad I'm not in love with him anymore but he's not like everybody else in that little town. Especially around gays. He's been dehomophobed.

GUY

I have only had sex with two people in my life. Patti, which was pure fun and pure sex. And after awhile she got really dependent, and as much as I like people who are dependent, I can't stand dependent people so after a while it made me really sick. So we broke up. And now we are really good friends. But the sex part was really good. The two times I had sex with Kelly were for all the wrong reasons and at the wrong times and it was really really really bad. It was really bad. So that was bad. So the last tiem I had sex, was what, a year and a half ago? I don't know. And I mean I don't crave sex. I mean I could masturbate until the sun goes down. What I like is the intimacy, the touching, the cuddling...and strangely enough it's a lot easier to get. 'Cause for some reason having sex with your friends is bad. When you're cuddling or messing around with your friends it's okay.

NATALIE

Dad was always afraid I was going to turn out like my mom cause my mom was always telling me about "men are bad and your father was a man and he did all these bad things."

GUY

My mother went into painstaking detail about how any sexual contact with a man was hell. And any time the penis enters the vagina it hurts. And anything is rape. And everything is bad. And male-female sex is like shit. And I really, I don't know what the fuck she thought she was doing! I mean here I am this

pubescent kid, who who who loves looking at girls, I mean, I mean, I mean, I do! And she was telling me this stuff. And I don't know if she was purposely trying to make sex a living hell for me. But that's what she accomplished.

GUY
EROT
LOOK

MIKE

[REDACTED]

?

(HELEN ENTERS DOOR 2) HELEN

In 1988, I was in my second semester in college in D.C. and my mother appeared at my door at five o'clock in the evening to tell me that my dad (pause) had AIDS and that he was in the hospital. And (long sigh) I mean it really came out of the blue. Three months before, over Thanksgiving, I had asked him "Are you sick? Do you have AIDS or something?" ~~And he actually looked at me and said "No, I don't. And I don't every want to hear you say~~ that again. Bob nor I have AIDS."

HELEN
SHE
...

MARV

We walked in the hospital room and there was my father lying on the bed and there was Bob. He saw us and started to cry. "Thank you so much for coming." ~~And my sister and I were like "Of course. Of course we're here." And he said "I didn't know. I wasn't sure. Some children might not have come to the hospital." I just remember thinking to myself that his perspective is so skewed about this illness. There had never been any question of homophobia--never, never, never. But he was so obviously moved by the fact that we were there.~~

MARK

I mean...(sigh) It was so awful. It was so awful. My dad was so afraid. And um, he was such denial about it that by the time he got sick, he got sick with everything. He had KS, he had toxoplasmosis, he had pneumonia, he had been in bed for ten days in fear ~~days~~ and hadn't eaten for ten days so that by the time he got to the hospital he was like totally dehydrated and had no energy, he was just a mess.

Bob was waiting to getting his test results. His sister was his only living relative and she had blown him off when he came

out. My mom and my sister and I sat him down and said "In the event that you are actually positive and in the event that you ever get sick the three of us will be there for you the way you've been there for my dad." (sigh)

My dad had known that he was positive or a year and a half. And when I found out I was like "What! OH MY GOD!" I was furious that I had been worrying about it because I knew he was in a high risk group. And he kept saying "Don't worry, don't worry" as if that's going to make me not worry. I was totally mad that he had lied to me.

So one day I went in his room, god he was so sick, and I said "Dad I want you to know that I really wish you had told me that you were positive." And he said "Well, I didn't want you and Andrea to deal with it any sooner then you would have to. And somehow in that moment all my anger got let go of. I realized that love is about more than just the little things that drive us crazy, Some how it is bigger than us. And my dad's whole illness turned into a series of events like that. Logically it didn't make sense that his former wife and his lover would both take care of him without conflict but somehow they did. We all knew that what was going on was bigger than us.

Bob took really good care of my dad for 16 months until he died in May of 1989.

We and Bob spent that summer trying to get through it because my Dad was why we were all together so without him it was really hard.

So six months later, early winter my mother met and fell in love with Betsy. And that was the saving grace for our family. Betsy was perfect she balanced us all out. I don't know if she filled an empty space or gave us something to distract us, I don't know what but with the addition of Betsy, the five of us were a complete unit again. She just came in and connected with all of us and made my mother so happy and that was so long overdue.

big country house with all kinds of...
...side... where was wonderful...
...one day he said to my mom and son...
...could live through this...
...with you all being...
...the people who don't know...
...search of 1989, an organization called...
...in terminal love...
...the final stages of AIDS. It provides...
...and food and physicians...
...for them. And it is partially funded...

~~totally taken off~~

~~...only ... had during my father's illness ... that I
... in school and my father ...
... some time ...
... year ... of the D.C. - New York ...
... rooms and flying back ...
... And then just like praying ...
... could get back ...
... that would not let us ...
... kept saying ...
... to be here ...
... you have ...
... had made ...
... going to be there with ...
... worst case of AIDS related dementia on the East Coast
...
... and I went ...
... the way ...
... like "It's ...
... eyes looking at me ...
... look up ...
... what is that? It's ...
... a huge ...
... times and ...
...
... and I'm like ...
... and he ...
... and runs out of the room and ...
... the way you ...
... "Bob put it down trying to ...
... story~~

Thinking about all this there is no way I could have gotten through that experience without my sister. We are really close in age but we have really different outlooks on the world. But we just could not have gotten through that without each other. And to this day, she is the one person I admire the most in this world. I have so much respect for her; she is so strong and so incredible. We just rescued each other like right when the other was going to lose it.

Three weeks into his illness, I went to the National Lesbian Conference in Atlanta, the Gay & Lesbian Parents Committee International, GLPCI, was paying for me represent them there.

My mom called me to tell me that Bob died. I remember sitting there in the hotel room at the National Lesbian Conference realizing that the last man in my nuclear family had died and that my family was only women and here I was at the National Lesbian Conference and it was like an epiphany.

3/1/02

MIKE

My father pokes a lot of fun at male couples that are long term committed because he thinks that they are grimly paired together because of AIDS and that they are getting the worst of heterosexual lifestyle. He sees this horrible tension and people hating each other and all the awfulness.

MIKE
C...
C...

There was that joke about "What does a lesbian show up to the second date with? A U-Haul. What does a gay man show up to the second date with? What's a second date?" I mean that is definitely a big stereotype. Because certainly there are gay men I've known who are dying for committment and there are dykes that are so independent I can't imagine them committing to anything.

I do worry about my dad getting sick. When my dad was an alcoholic, he was very careless and he's been very lucky. We always joked that he has a guardian angel. And his HIV status would kind of jive with that. He's still really healthy. We assumed when his lover, Bill, died in '86 that he'd probably been infected since the early '80's, but he'd refused to get tested until a couple of years ago. He's a doctor so he was more interested in monitoring his T-cell count...

He says he's not afraid of death. He is afraid of losing his mind. He's really afraid of AIDS demensia cause it so undignified. Right now he's just trying to prolong his period of health. He's of the opinion that he can either be depressed or he can be glad that he's got the day that he's got and enjoy it. He says its a pretty simple choice.

Eric
10001

(C... 2003)

HELEN

I definitely spent those years of my childhood protecting my dad because of his orientation or his identity. I was always watching out for homophobia because my father was gay but I never really thought about it in terms myself. Lesbians weren't really an issue in my father's community. The images of women I saw in that community were straight, beautiful women who were there to serve cocktails at parties or whip up food or escort these men to their company parties and stuff. But I never ever ever ever met a lesbian until I went to Washington.

HELEN
ENTER
DOOR

Earth Day in D.C... There was a huge march on the Mall with 500,000 people, stars, celebrities. And a friend of mine was coordinating the sign language interpreters of this event. I was a new interpreter. I hadn't even interpreted before 50 people let alone 500,000.

And I met the most incredible woman I'd ever seen in my life. I didn't have too much time to think about what was happening but we ended up really connecting that day and very soon after that ended up getting together.

2003-11-11

I didn't really come out to my mom in a "Mom, I'm a lesbian" kind of way. Actually a while later my mom finally said to me, "So do you want to tell me what's going on with your girlfriend?" And I was like "No, not really."

Bob was alive at that time and was a total jerk about it. He told me I was just going through a phase and he thought the woman I was involved with was actually dangerous because she was somewhat butch and drove a truck. There was incredible misogyny and lesbian phobia and a very hard thing about that was that both my mother and Betsy were convinced that had my father been alive he would have had the same reaction. And I remembered that I couldn't handle the thought of that.

When this woman and I broke up, I got completely heartbroken. I spent like three days in bed crying. During that time my sister was scheduled to come for a visit. I hadn't come out to my sister and I really and I would have done anything not to come out to her because I was really so afraid that she was going to feel isolated and it was going to be all gays and lesbians in her family except for her and I didn't want her to feel alone.

So she showed up at my apartment door and she was just like "What's wrong?" ~~And I said,~~ "Oh my god, I'll tell you but I have to tell you something first." ~~And she said~~ "Oh well I know that you and ~~so and so~~ have been together since April so what is it? Did you break up or something?" ~~And I was like (sobbing)~~ "Oh my god, how did you know?" "Hope I like totally know you. What do you think, I'm totally ignorant?" She spent that whole weekend with me and there is nothing better than a sister through a heartbreak.

And now I have come out with my extended family. And they have been very accepting. Some of them told me that the reason things were strained with my parents and them was because my parents never came out and told them what was really going on.

What I have come to call the "second generation of gay and lesbian children" ^{is} those of us that are gay or lesbian that have gay or lesbian parents. And there is a definite invisibility being playing out in straight mainstream society and also more unfortunately really playing out in the gay and lesbian community. It wasn't like there was negative talk about it, there was no mention of the fact that they might be having children who might be gay and lesbian, quite to the contrary what they would be doing is assuring each other that their kids were going to be straight and that in some way that was validating the fact that they were indeed okay parents because their children were coming out as straight.

MIKE

My dad's always said that he would never wish his son to be gay because it was such an ordeal. Even if your family is accepting of it you still have to go through society. I think

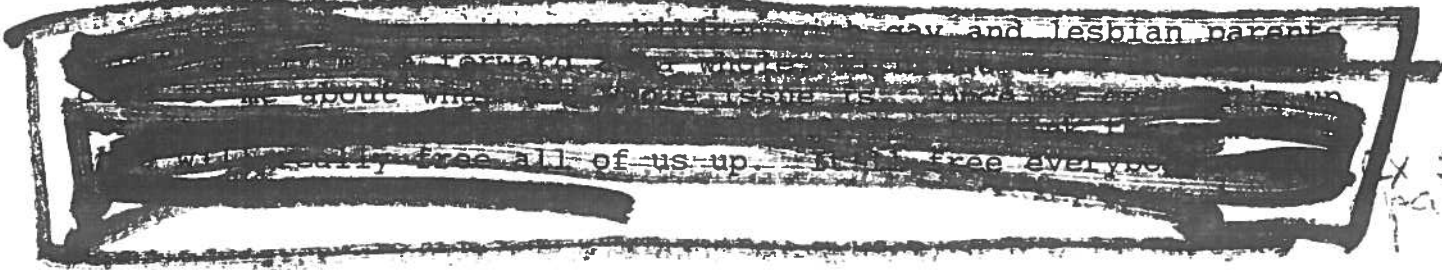
Help
CWA
2

MIKE
born

most gay people feel the same way. They are proud to be gay but if they had a choice for someone else they wouldn't wish it on anybody.

HELEN

And that only perpetuates homophobia even in the gay community because it perpetuates that it is somehow bad to have a gay child. It's frustrating...what good is it really to have these gays and lesbians dealing with issues of acceptance if they are not going to broaden it out for the next generation. I mean that comes out all over the place, like gay parents go "Oh I hope my kid is straight." Or they tell their kids "Oh it is so much easier to be straight in the world."



MIKE

In terms of my relationships, my father's homosexuality has always been a point of pride and enlightenment. And with most women I've been involved with we kind of laugh at how homophobic and awful most American Culture is. And I've never encountered a woman who had a problem with my father being gay. It would be hard for me to imagine being attracted to somebody who thinks like that.

HELEN
CYS
Chair
MIKE

NATALIE

I think that my mom and Lani are the best couple I've ever seen. I think that women make great couples, that's just what I have to say.



It's been really calming to grow up with my mom and Lani's energy. A sense of sisterhood. And it's been great because my mom has a whole history with men so it wasn't like I felt completely removed from their life.

CX D001
2
NAT
CX
CON

She hates dykes. Well a lot of them are ^{screwed} fucked up because of society and they feel like they have to be loud and prove themselves and it's hard to be this hated minority so if you are going to come out you've got to come out all the way and prove yourself all the time. And she thinks that in the gay community they're all sleeping around she thinks it's childish. "I'm not a

dyke, I'm a lesbian

2-10-10
SATS
Chair
2

[REDACTED]

GUY

I haven't ever asked my mom why she said those things to me. It was a long time ago when I was still pretty young and she was still pretty unhappy. I mean I know my mom loved me but I think for a while she wasn't sure about how to explain what love and affection meant in a positive way, because maybe for a long time it wasn't so positive.

Ex
on

Now she and Tara have this disgustingly healthy relationship. It's so adorable it's terrible. They're so cute. I mean they're really cute. They make little bunny faces and they make jokes about dental dams, and oh god...

Sit
Cha

I love seeing my mom happy.

HELEN

Community is so important. Gays and Lesbians know that and experience when they come out and start meeting people that have had similar experiences and similar struggles and that very thing is true for their children.

[REDACTED]

I think it is like an epiphany. The same way coming out is like one door shutting and another door opening. For children with gay and lesbian parents it is like one door shuts and huge gigantic line of doors open.

(SAM enters door 1) SAM

I mean I love my mom and everything. It's just this is her choice to be gay and stuff, but it affects my life too. She tells me that she knows it is hard for me and that she's proud of me and stuff. (pause)

SAM
EN
D

NATALIE

Everything in your life changes and shapes you so it is a big part of who I am. I like to open up to new things and I always had friends that were really different from each other. Cause I always liked understanding people, I felt like the more I experienced the more I could relate to people.

St

I never felt like it was a burdon on me, actually I felt guilty. My mom felt guilty because I had to hide it. But I felt guilty because my mom had to hide because [REDACTED] of me.

to
Doo

~~_____ live somewhere and not _____~~

MIKE

I think when I was younger he expected a lot of me, I think he wanted me to show some leadership. We didn't get along well then. But now that our relationship is between two adults, it's a lot better. We have a really good relationship now -- which I never would have expected ten years ago. I definitely value it and I feel like I'm closer with both of my parents than most people I know.

See, I think here in San Francisco, I think a lot of the kids have gay parents who by choice are having children. And I think the issues are different because I think they've got parents who are aware from day one that they have got to deal with this stuff.

HELEN

My identity is in a large part that my father was gay and my mother is a lesbian absolutely. I am also a lesbian who wants to have a child one day ~~and I envision myself wanting to be the first lesbian president. But there is a stage that needs to happen before that. I have to do something about it.~~ Right now, I am figuring out how all this applies just to me. I'm not for my parents, I'm not for my children.

MIKE

I guess in an ideal world, people would just accept that there are certain things about people, like their sexuality, that aren't their choice, and aren't good or bad but they should be welcomed as differences because we can all benefit a lot from the experience. That for people who are as young as I was, it can be traumatic to have your assumptions about sexuality challenged. Its like cold water in the face. What does not kill you makes you stronger. But its more than that. I think it's something that everybody has to confront sooner or later. So those of us who are in whatever way on the fringes have a lot more insights about that.

COUL
C/O

Reg

END
Brow
12/2

SAM

I remember once when I was younger, I asked her if it was hard being a lesbian. And she said being a lesbian was tough but being a feminist was tougher. And I kinda think it's cool that my mom is doing the hardest thing there is to do.

C/O

END
Brow
2/2

NATALIE

Its really good that people understand that this is just a way of life and its not going to warp people and its not something to get through, I mean it is in a way its a hurdle and there is a lot to deal with in society, but it can work ~~over a~~
~~pl...~~ ~~next door~~ ~~on a gen~~ if they
~~...~~ If you ~~...~~ ~~...~~ I think
 we're getting somewhere in this world. I like telling people
 especially who've never ~~...~~ ~~...~~ see look I made it.
 I'm ~~...~~ Its like ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
 And the problem is with society not
 with lesbian parents its with society telling those lesbian
 parents that they're wrong. I even went to catholic school for
 Christ sake people telling me that its a sin and "oh my parents
 sinned when they got divorced now my mom's sinning every night
 when she goes home with Lani. Oh well. ~~You guys~~ are all stupid.

~~They~~

ENE
 5/1

GUY

I mean the thing...the thing that I really hope someone gets
 out of this is that when it comes right down to it we all
 basically have the same fears you know and the same love. And
 people are people and we are products of our environment. My
 environment is just a little different from yours.

60
 10
 5
 17

HELEN

The first women's festival I went to, this woman did my
 astrological chart and she looked at it and said you're not going
 to change the world by like writing a book or being a public
 speaker, she said you are going to change the world just by
 living your life and people are going to learn simply by your
 example. And that's like, not enough for me. I think my sister
 is changing the world incredibly just by living her life as a
 straight woman with all gay and lesbian people in her family.
 But I would like to somehow change this world on a little bigger
 scale than that. But then again, I can't be responsible for
 everyone's epiphany. Maybe just a few more...

Hele
 @@

Chai

Tago
 But I am ~~...~~ I'm a ~~...~~ I
 loved and I love. And it doesn't matter
 has ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
 the other IN YOU, ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~

Top 5 Reasons to Join COLAGE

1. Daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents will be the best spokespeople for lesbian and gay issues in the years to come -- so long as we have the support of the community.
2. Even if you or your kids know other kids with lesbian and gay parents, many others are isolated: COLAGE is the only means for hundreds of kids to connect with one another, the more members we have, the more outreach we can do and the more kids will know they aren't the only ones.
3. You or your children will receive the Just For Us Newsletter, info on Pen Pals, our Writer's Program, our newsletter for groups, our conference, opportunities to make a difference by speaking to the media, providing testimony for custody cases like the Sharon Bottoms case, etc.
4. You'll hear about our program for young kids that will debut this summer.
5. So we can continue to do more events, like Children of Stonewall, for lesbian and gay families.

COLAGE Membership Form

Membership to COLAGE is \$10 annually in US funds. Please allow 6 weeks for delivery of your new members packet. No one will be declined for lack of funds.

Return to:
COLAGE
 2300 Market St. #165
 San Francisco, CA 94114,
 USA

Name(s) of
 Child(ren)

Mailing Address

feel free to make copies of this form.

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere
 and Piper Dreams Productions

Presents:

THE CHILDREN OF STONEWALL: A COLAGE EXPERIENCE

Featuring the play

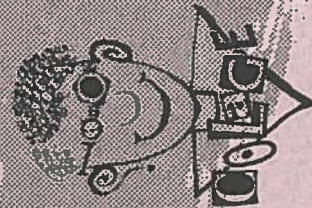
Out of My Parent's Closet

by Suzanne Pullen

A Benefit for COLAGE

Mother's Day Weekend 1994

Warner's Building in San Francisco



The Children of Stonewall: A COLAGE Experience

In the twenty-five years since the riots at Stonewall propelled lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered movements and cultures out of the closet, hundreds of thousands of children have been born into openly lesbian, gay, bi, and transgendered families, or to parents who would later come out. Having queer parents poses numerous problems and creates numerous joys. Many of us go through our own coming out process as kids with queer parents. Many of us remain hidden. And still others come out twice: as queer children of queer parents; truly our community's second generation. Despite our numbers, our voices are rarely heard, even within lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities. To mark the anniversary of Stonewall, kids with lesbian, gay and bisexual parents are coming together on Mother's Day weekend to make our presence known; to each other, to queer communities, and beyond.

Children of Stonewall includes material submitted by daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents from around the country. It features the premier of a play, "Out of My Parent's Closet" by, about, and starring daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents.

Children of Stonewall Contributors

Alex Fagelson

Anna Heller

Dorothy Atcheson

Jennifer DiMarco

Maraya Massin-Levey

Melanie Gold

Michael Beebe

Molly Heller

Noel Black

Shannon Bowman-Sarkisian

Stefan Lynch

Suzanne Pullen

Veronica Lacquemont-Worcester

A Note on Diversity:

Daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered parents are an incredibly diverse group of people. Although we cannot represent everyone, we would like to have had, and will strive to include a broader range of experiences as this work in progress continues. The experiences we do represent are each quite different, but due to time and circumstances, different family structures, race, class and ethnicity, and disability, all factors which can greatly influence someone's experiences with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered parents, are not adequately represented. We apologize for the absence of diversity, and COLAGE and Piper Dreams Productions is already working to represent as many of our families as possible in future presentations of Children of Stonewall. If you or someone you know might be interested in submitting art, being interviewed for, or acting in future productions of "Out of My Parent's Closet," please contact Suzanne Pullen at (415) 664-1589 or Stefan Lynch at (415) 206-1930.

Out of my Parent's Closet

an oral history play by Suzanne Pullen

Actors in Order of Appearance

Dancer:

Helen:

Mike:

Nataife:

Guy:

Sam:

Beth Elaine Teper
Suzanne St. John
Mark Christensen
Sarah Stein
Jesse Wonder Clark
Jesse Levey

Director:

Producer:

Videographers:

Child Art Facilitator:

Lighting Consultant:

Doors provided by:

Suzanne Pullen
COLAGE/Stefan Lynch
David Meanix
Jacqueline Leal
Richard Board
Theatre Rhinoceros

Special Thanks to the Women's Building

The Director Thanks:

Stefan Lynch and COLAGE without whom this play would not have happened. All the people who were willing to share their stories, without whose stories there would be no play. Christina Augello and the Exit Theatre; Richard Board; Everyone at Channel 8; Nancy Deetz and the Eureka Valley Community Center; Lee Jenkins for exposing me to oral history; Floyd LeBar; Jason "Truck-Man" Loren; Dana Poras, Jonny McPhee, Iva Walton, and Theatre Rhinoceros; Val Van; and to Zay Amsbury for being my guinea pig, and Mike Norelli, George Crow, Paul Hellyer and Talespinners Theater for helping bring the guinea pig to life.

And special thanks to my friends who have supported me on my creative journey--you know who you are--and finally thanks to my mom for having the grace under pressure to let me come out of her closet and for her loving - keeping me warm night and day.

GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTS COALITION INTERNATIONAL

*There are over four million lesbian mothers
and gay fathers in the United States
and countless more around the world.
Together, we are a powerful and unified
voice to combat prejudice and homophobia
in our communities, and to teach the world that...*

LOVE makes a Family!

- **Support and Resources
for Parents and Children**
- **Information Clearinghouse**
- **Educating the Public**
- **Newsletter for Parents**
- **Fighting for Our Rights**
- **COLAGE -- Children of
Lesbians and Gays Everywhere**

On June 24-25, 1994, GLPCI will hold our 15th Annual Conference in New York City as part of the Stonewall 25 Festivities. Join this international gathering of parents and partners, prospective parents, and our children!

Our 1995 Family Conference will be in Los Angeles California over July 4th weekend. Plan now to attend!

And don't miss the highlight of New York's Gay Games/Stonewall festivities -- The Real Family Values Show with Karen Williams and the Flirtations. A benefit for GLPCI and COLAGE -- June 23, 7:30 pm, The Town Hall, New York.

For more information, call or write:

GLPCI • P.O. Box 50360 • Washington, DC 20091 • U.S.A.
(202) 583-8029

The Producer Thanks:

Anne Dillon/
PFLAG SF;
Berkeley Child Art
Institute; Betty
McCaul/PFLAG
East Bay; Bonnie
Haley and Al
Kielwasser/
GLAAD; Bud
Robbins/BANGLE;
Charlotte
Thompson; Cheryl
Deaner/
Alternative Family
Project; Diane
Amos; Dr. Tamar
Gershon;
Elizabeth Rivers/
The Kids Club,
Chico; Gail Lynch;
Hope Berry; Kim
Lawton/Lesbian
and Gay Parents
Association; Lea
Brown/Spectrum;
Lisa Orta/Family
Next Door;
Michael Lynch;
Paul Goetz/Gay
Lesbian and
Bisexual
Independent
School Caucus; Saralie Pennington/Operation Concern; Shannon Minter/
NCLR; Terri Massin and Lynn Levey; Tim Fisher/GLPCI; Ziadee Price.

About the people involved

Suzanne Pullen's (writer, director) most recent credits include stage managing Theatre Rhinoceros' "The Man With Straight Hair" Exit Theatre's "Food From Trash", Tale Spinners Theater's "Watershed" and Assistant Directing Talespinners "Candlestick Tales".

Although several of her shorter works have been produced around the Bay Area, "Our of My Parent's Closet" is Suzanne's first full-length play as well as her directorial debut.

Beth Elaine Teper (dancer) is a proud native of San Francisco - born and bred. Beth's mom and dad were married and then divorced when she was 2. (She hasn't seen, heard from, or looked for her dad since.) Her mom, active in the Women's Rights movement of the 80's, "came out" when Beth was ten. That is to say, she/they were out in the SF gay and women's communities and

Come build bridges with us



The 13th Annual
International Convention of
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc.

Hyatt Regency Hotel, at the Embarcadero
San Francisco, California
Labor Day Weekend
September 2-5, 1994

Co-hosted by the

P-Flag Chapters of the
Greater San Francisco Bay Area
PO Box 640223
San Francisco, CA 94164
415-921-6902



AUG. 7-13, 1994

CAMP LAVENDER HILL

Providing children of lesbian / gay / bisexual parents an alternative to traditional summer camp

✧ ✧ ✧ ✧
please call (415) 457-3523
for more information

Sponsored by Spectrum, Center for Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Concerns

THOUSANDS OF PASSIONATE WOMEN UNDER ONE ROOF

Alice Walker, Chrystos, Susan Faludi, Terry McMillan, Zora Neale Hurston, Molly Ivins, Cherrie Moraga, bell hooks, Irena Klepfisz, Susie Bright, Audre Lorde, Lillian Faderman, Linda Hogan, Adrienne Rich, Xam Cartier, Amy Tan, Ana Castillo, Virginia Woolf, Jewelle Gomez...

OLD WIVES' TALES

Feminist Books, Periodicals, Music and Gifts
1009 Valencia at 21st Street, SF • (415) 821-4675

two. He also found this opportunity to rekindle his love for performing, which just doesn't seem to die no matter how much time he spends in front of a computer screen. He is pleased to be in a play whose subject matter is so close to his heart.

Sarah Stein (Natalie) is the daughter of a lesbian who moved to the East Bay last summer from Virginia. She has been acting most of her life, but says this has to be one of the harder roles she's taken on. In acting it's always much easier to depict a character who is not close to yourself, because it gives you the gift of invention. But this is acting from actual experience. Reality is always much harder than the imagination. She feels that this conglomeration of stories needs to be told, and needs to be heard. This is a consequential part of her life that she feels passionately about, "This is what I am, this is who I am."

Jesse Wonder Clark (Guy) was born in San Francisco to Ellen Margaret Clark. She was active in Feminist and lesbian political movement during the 60's and 70's. She died of intestinal cancer in 1980. This is Jesse's first step in re-connecting with her beliefs and lifestyle. He studied acting at Ithaca College for 2 1/2 years before becoming a computer nerd.

PLANTERS FURNISERY



GARDEN SUPPLIES • PLANTS • FLOWERS
LISA RAPHAEL & BELINDA DOBBS OWNERS

285-9087

3817 24TH STREET SAN FRANCISCO

to immediate family, but not in the straight world (i.e. to Beth's school, friends or temple.) Hearing about COLAGE and this play came as a shock of relief. "Finally a chance to symbolically and publicly come out of my/my mother's closet(s). A real rite of passage, better than any Bat Mitzvah I might have had more than ten years ago."

Suzanne St. John (Helen) has been acting and singing since the third grade. After receiving a BA in Inter-Arts at SFSU, Suzanne began working at Pacifica Community TV as operations coordinator. She produced a cable access show for two years addressing women artists and women's issues. She has produced video installations at several galleries in San Francisco dealing with dysfunctional family and eating disorder issues. In 1993 she received an MA in Inter-Arts and is continuing to produce cable access programming and video installations.

Mark Christiansen (Mike) is the "straight" son of a "queer" papa. A couple of years ago he decided he wanted to march with his father in the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day Parade, but found it difficult to locate a group with whom it was truly

appropriate to march. They ended up with PFLAG, which eventually led him to COLAGE. There he met a small handful of the (doubtless) millions of souls who happen to have been born to a gay parent or

SARALIE B. PENNINGTON, M.S.W.
LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER #4116

PHONE 550 2413 / 564-1711
4093 24TH ST
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94114

INDIVIDUAL COUPLE
FAMILY PSYCHOTHERAPY

COLAGE GENERAL

INFORMATION

OUR MISSION:

To foster the growth of daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents of all racial, ethnic and class backgrounds by providing education, support and community on local and international levels, to advocate for our rights and those of our families and to promote acceptance and awareness in society that love makes a family.

WHAT IS COLAGE?

COLAGE is a unique organization that operates on local and international levels. We have a variety of services for children with lesbian and gay parents provided by children with lesbian and gay parents.

We give children an opportunity to meet, see, talk to, read about, and become involved with the community of which they are a member. Being connected to this community helps us learn more about, enjoy, and better deal with specific issues that affect our lives.

WHAT DOES COLAGE DO?

Support Groups

There are currently many groups around the U.S. and Canada providing community, a sense of belonging and ongoing support for school age children, as well as fun on a regular basis. For more information on groups in your area, or for our booklet, "YOU can start and run a group for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents: A Guide," write to us.

Newsletter

The Just For Us Newsletter is a way for nearly nine hundred children with lesbian, gay and bisexual parents to keep in touch with each other, to gain insight into events that affect our lives, and to have a good time reading. We feature articles, letters, interviews, cartoons, book reviews, and other tidbits of interest. To subscribe, send us your name and address. We request a ten dollar donation for a subscription and all our mailings are discreet.

Conference

A once-a-year intensive opportunity for children to learn from each other while exploring issues of identity, self-esteem, homophobia/heterosexism, gay and lesbian community pride and heritage, AIDS, spirituality and our own sexuality. In June, 1994 the conference is in New York City. The conference is held simultaneously with the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International's conference, and some activities are shared with those conference goers.

Pen Pals

COLAGE offers a pen pal connection service to enable isolated kids with lesbian, gay and bisexual parents to talk with each other. Requests for pen pal information may be sent to our main addresses.

Writer's Program

Growing up in lesbian, gay and bisexual homes can be a very special experience. Many of our members are writing or have expressed interest in writing about their own experiences, or other subject matter related to daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents. COLAGE works with several professional editors and writers to provide a constructive forum for such work to be critiqued, and strives to have works produced/published for the benefit of other people in similar situations, and the general public.

Leadership Opportunities

We do not rely on professional help, we are run solely by daughters and sons of lesbians and gay men. There are many opportunities for children to become actively involved in running the organization, from participating or leading a local group, to membership on the COLAGE Steering Committee which is responsible for the newsletter, conference planning, and other programs.

Media Contact Coordination

We are directly in touch with more sons and daughters with lesbian, gay and bisexual parents than any other organization. We can connect members of the media, writers, and researchers with a great variety of our membership. Please write to us, or call the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International at (202) 583-8029 to be directly referred to our Media Coordinator.

OPEN THE DOOR

TO...
Lesbian & Gay
TRAVEL &
ADVENTURE



AIRLINE TICKETS • CRUISES • TOURS • HOTELS
LESBIAN AND GAY TRAVEL EXPERTS

YANKEE CLIPPER TRAVEL

260 Saratoga Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95030

408.354.6400 800.624.2664

Let your travel dollars go further than you and mention RAINBOW DOLLARS when you call. A percentage of your booking will be donated to a community group of your choice.

Jesse Levey (Sam) was born in Los Angeles and moved to the Bay Area when he was 5. He decided to work on this project to find out about other people's experiences. He's learned a lot from it. This is his first public performance but he hopes to do more acting in the future.

Stefan Lynch is the Co-Director of COLAGE. His dad came out when he was one, parents split when he was five, and his mom fell in love with a woman his dad introduced to her when he was seven. He defines himself as erotically straight and culturally gay.

Hope Berry is a freelance interpreter in the Bay Area. And board member of NorCRID (Northern California Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf). She is also former co-director of COLAGE.

Dan Valtri is a certified sign-language interpreter.

The Family Next Door

for lesbian and gay parents and their friends

ALL FAMILIES FACE STRESS SOMETIMES ...

The Alternative Family Project Offers Affordable Counseling for Our Families

"In this era of public mental health services for the 'truly sick' - where do non-traditional families go when they're in trouble? Where do lesbian/gay parents and their children go when they can't afford \$70 an hour" asks Carmen Vazquez, co-director of Inland County of health services. In a letter to "The answer" Alternative Family Project. The Alternative Family Project (AFP) for Bay Area residents is set: The Alternative Family Project (AFP) is a counseling center in San Francisco which provides affordable family therapy services to non-traditional families in the Bay Area. Coproduced by the Center for Parent and Child.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

By Ph.D.s Valery Mitchell and Diane Wilson, lesbian parents and mothers, who have a psychotherapy practice in Berkeley, California. Valery is also director of the Family Services for the the California School of Professional Psychology in Alameda, California.

Considering Parenthood - From Your Child's Point of View

Spring is in the air, summer around the bend. This time, gay pride, the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York and the birth of militancy such as the Rights movement, 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its manual of mental disorders. April Martin, in her excellent reference book, *The Lesbian and Gay Parent*

■ Finding my birth mom Page 4

■ Alisa comes out at the office Page 8

■ Taking care of our children Page 12

■ Dykes to watch out for Page 21

The Family Next Door — a national bi-monthly newsletter for lesbian and gay parents and their friends — offering useful, timely information to improve parenting skills and affirm our roles as mothers and fathers.

"A very readable and useful publication that fills a distinct need in the parenting community." Parent Newsmagazine

Mail us this coupon; we'll send you a free copy of *The Family Next Door* After you have read it, we hope you will want to subscribe.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Send to Next Door Publishing, P.O. Box 21580, Oakland, CA 94620

We do not sell our mailing list. All names and addresses are kept confidential.

INSEMINATION SERVICES FOR

The Non-Traditional Family

The decision to become a parent through donor insemination too often results in a frustrating search for supportive and qualified resources, particularly for an individual or couple seeking to have a child within a non-traditional context.

Pacific Reproductive Services specializes in providing comprehensive insemination services to non-traditional families. As such, we place strong emphasis on providing the personal attention needed to make every step of the insemination process easier and more enjoyable for our clients.

Sperm Bank

- Varied Selection of Donors
- Sperm Freezing and Storage for Individual Clients
- Frozen Semen shipped throughout US and Canada

Insemination Services

- In-Office Insemination
- Self insemination instructions
- Technical Assistance: ovulation detection and insemination timing

Reproductive Services

- Semen Analysis
- Screening of Private Donors
- Pre-Pregnancy Physicals
- Infertility Testing and Treatment
- Professional Reproductive Medical Advice
- Co-Parenting Connections

Pacific Reproductive Services

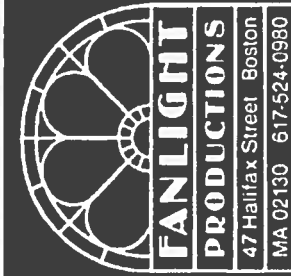
- 542 Castro Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
- Call 415.861.3558
- Fax 415.863.4358
- Contact: Sherron Mills, NP

Pick up our brochure on the Children of Stonewall Resource Table.

Hello BABY

About the Play

Around four years ago, I came out about my parents to a Women's Studies professor and the seed of this play was planted. I watered it every now and then by talking about it, until last summer when I mentioned it to a friend who then introduced me to a "guy" with a lesbian mom, and the seed sprouted. From that point to this, that sapling has been growing in a communal garden due to wonderful people watering it with their experience and feeding it with their energy and nurturing it with their support. What they, what you, what we have created is magic. It isn't just art or theatre, but is something that has brought us, most of who might never have met, together. It is something bigger than us. Yet without each magical contribution it would still be just a seed. Silence grows nothing but more silence; sharing can grow anything exponentially....Just like magic.
Suzanne Pullen, May 4, 1994



Presents

Love Makes a Family

a video about
our families

A lesbian mother, a gay father and a son.

A Deaf lesbian couple and their Deaf children.

Two gay men and their adopted children.

Set structures and roles no longer define family, if they ever did. The families in this video have had to work out how to explain their non-traditional natures to their children, teachers, friends and extended family. Each has watched how their children have worked to understand their family in the context of a popular culture that is predominantly heterosexual. A clinical psychologist and a therapist who work with lesbian and gay families and their children are also included.

16 minutes, video.

Purchase \$195, rental \$50, shipping \$9.
(800) 937-4113

Operation Concern

on-going openings for
gay, lesbian and bisexual
family therapy

If you are a single lesbian mother,
gay father, a gay or lesbian couple
with children, a step or blended family,
children of gay or lesbian parents,
considering parenthood,
or in a mixed sexual orientation
relationship, or a parent,
sibling or other close relative
of a lesbian or gay person,
please call for an appointment:

Saralie Pennington, L.C.S.W.
(415) 626-7000 ext. 173

1853 Market Street,
San Francisco, CA 94103

Professionally trained therapists
Confidentiality assured
Sliding fee scale
Wheelchair accessible
Affiliated with
California-Pacific Medical Center



WHAT'S COMING UP? (make sure you're on our mailing list by filling out the form at right!)

Look for COLAGE's booth and bring the whole family to march with us for **Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day** on June 19th.

Watch for the debut this summer of the **COLAGE Kids Club**, our new program for kids 10 and under: you and your kids won't want to miss it.

Karen Williams and the Flirtations perform June 23 in the "Real Family Values Show" in NYC as a benefit for COLAGE and GLPCI. For more info, contact Tim Fisher at (201) 783-6204.

The **COLAGE conference** is June 24-25 in NYC and coincides with the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International's conference. For more info write: GLPCI '94, PO Box 2553 Church St. Station, NY NY 10008-2553

March with COLAGE and GLPCI in **Stonewall 25**, June 26th in NYC. We're expecting to have a huge group of kids on stage for a speech at the rally!

You won't want to miss our next **family event** in the Bay Area, coming for the winter holidays.

Three social/support groups are forming in the Bay Area for kids. For 18+, call Stefan at (415) 206-1930. For kids 12-18 in the East Bay call Stephanie at (415) 386-4381; in SF call Hope at (415) 647-4223.

Brief History of COLAGE

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, formerly called **1st for Us**, started in 1988 when several kids at a conference their gay and lesbian parents were attending, decided to run their own workshops. Their gay dad and his daughter in New York decided to start a news letter. It was and still is, the only national organization run by and for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay and bisexual parents.

Since then, the conferences have grown bigger and better, the newsletter circulation has doubled every year, and COLAGE has laid the foundations for a strong organization in the years to come.

COLAGE is an autonomous program of the Gay and Lesbians Parents Coalition International (GLPCI). It is run by a steering committee of eight people with lesbian, gay and bisexual parents which is elected annually.

Children of Lesbians and
Gays Everywhere and
Piper Dreams Productions
invite your family to

THE CHILDREN OF STONEWALL: A COLAGE EXPERIENCE

Works by daughters and sons of lesbian, gay
and bisexual parents from around the
country will be presented, featuring the
premier of the play, "Out of My Parent's
Closet."

Mother's Day weekend:

Friday, May 6 at 7:00pm

Saturday, May 7 at 6:00pm and 7:00pm

Sunday, May 8 at 6:00pm

All shows are at the Women's Building in San Francisco,
3549 18th St. (415) 431-180.

Admission is \$10 per person, or \$25 per family.

No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Childcare will be offered during the afternoon
performances. Or as reservations demand (please call)

For info on Children of Stonewall or Children of Lesbian and
Gays Everywhere, call (415) 206-1930.

This really cool event is also a benefit for COLAGE



Sunday will be
interpreted



Jesse Levy

was born in Los Angeles and I moved to the Bay Area when I was 5. I decided to work on this project to find out about other people's experiences. I think I have learned a lot from it. This is my 1st public performance but I hope to do more acting in the future.

COS performer

with Elaine Teper is a proud
native of San Francisco -
mom + bred. Beth's Mom + Dad
were married ^{and} ~~about~~ then di-
vorced when ~~she~~ ^{she} was 2. (She
didn't see, heard from, or
looked for, her dad since ~~then~~.)

Her Mom, active in the 7's Rts
movement of the 80's, "came out"
when Beth was ten. ^{That is to say,} ~~she~~ ^{she} / ~~they~~
were out in the ^{SF} gay community
to immediate family, but not
the straight world (i.e. ^{Beth's} school, friend
Suzan.
mple). ^{hearing about} ~~finding~~ COLLEGE ^{+ a} ^{this} ^{Shock} ^{Eight}
gay ~~represented~~ came as a sign
of relief ~~for her~~ "Finally a
~~safe~~ ~~place~~ of chance to symbolize
it + mother's closet."

his'll be better

real rite of passage better

an any Bat Mitzvah I
right have had ^{more} 10 yrs ago " _{more than}

~~eth has had no experience
acting (as an adult.)~~



name

at rent 10/1/86
Call me at

(M/R)

024-1280
024-1280

SSS
Calif. at Kearny
Morgan Stanley

Stefan Dyck's is the Co-Director
of COLAGE. His Dad came out when
he was 1, parents split when he was
five and his mom fell in love with
a woman his dad introduced to her
when he was 7. He defines himself as
erotically ~~gay~~ ^{straight} and culturally ~~straight~~ gay.

^{in Program}
~~Ask~~ Ask people if they are
~~asked~~ interested in acting or
being interviewed: especially younger actors.

Suzanne St. John has been ~~producing~~
acting and singing since the third grade.

After receiving a BA in Inter-Arts at
SFSU, Suzanne began working at Pacific
Community TV as operations coordinator.

She produced a cable access show
for 2 years addressing women artists &
women's issues. She has produced
video installations at several galleries
in San Francisco dealing with dysfunctional
family ~~issues~~ & eating disorder issues.

In 1993 she received an MA in inter-Arts
& is continuing to produce cable access
programming and video installations.

JESSE WONDER CLARK WAS BORN IN SAN

FRANCISCO TO ELLEN MARGARET CLARK. SHE WAS
~~A~~ ACTIVE IN FEMINIST AND LESBIAN POLITICAL
MOVEMENTS DURING THE 60'S AND 70'S.

SHE DIED OF INTESTINAL CANCER IN 1980.

THIS IS JESSE'S FIRST STEP IN ^{RE-}CONNECTING
WITH HER BELIEFS AND LIFESTYLE.
HE STUDIED ACTING AT ITHACA COLLEGE
FOR 2 1/2 YEARS BEFORE BECOMING A
COMPUTER NERD.

My name is Sarah Stein, I am a daughter of a lesbian. I moved to the East Bay last summer, from Virginia. Recently, I have become active in the organization COLAGE. Through COLAGE, I became involved in this production.

I have been involved in acting most of my life, but this has to be one of the harder roles I have taken on. In acting, it is always much easier to depict ~~another~~ a character who is not close to ~~you~~ yourself, because it gives you the gift of invention. But this is acting from actual experience. Reality is always much harder than the Imagination.

I feel that these conglomeration of stories need to be told, and need to be heard. This is a consequential part of my life, that I feel passionate about. This is what I am, this is who I am.

MARK CHRISTIANSEN

IS THE "STRAIGHT" SON OF A "QUEER" PAPA. A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO HE DECIDED HE WANTED TO MARCH WITH HIS FATHER IN THE GAY FREEDOM DAY PARADE, BUT FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO LOCATE A GROUP WITH WHOM IT WAS TRULY APPROPRIATE TO MARCH. THEY ENDED UP IN THE PFLAG GROUP, WHICH EVENTUALLY LED HIM TO COLAGE. THERE HE MET A SMALL HANDFUL OF THE (DOUBTLESS) MILLIONS OF SOULS WHO HAPPEN TO HAVE BEEN BORN TO A GAY PARENT OR TWO. HE ALSO FOUND THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REKINDLE HIS LOVE FOR PERFORMING, WHICH JUST DOESN'T SEEM TO DIE NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME HE SPENDS IN FRONT OF A COMPUTER SCREEN.

< MARK HAS ALSO BEEN SEEN LOCALLY IN THE OPERA "STRING OF PEARLS" LAST SUMMER AT THE MARSH, SINGING WITH MUSIC IN THE BLOOD AT THEATRE ARTAUD (AND MORE RECENTLY AT THE S.F. COUNTY WOMEN'S JAIL) AND IN 1992 IN HIS PROFESSIONAL DEBUT IN "AT THE CABARET (CHAT NOIR)" (WHICH WAS REALLY AT THE CABLE CAR THEATRE). HE HAS BEEN SEEN ONSTAGE IN LOS ANGELES, IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN ENGLAND AND AT THE 1991 EDINBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL. HE IS PLEASED TO BE IN A PLAY WHOSE SUBJECT MATTER IS SO CLOSE TO HIS HEART.

Possible
Contributors.

Contact List

Company Name	Name	Contact Title	Phone	
	Noel Black		708 -735-5791	Sendin Somethin
Playboy	Dorothy Atcheson	Editor, Non-Fiction	212-261-5000	Sendin Somethin
	Michael Beebe		303-440-0673	his there, maybe find else
	Kathleen Wilkinson		415-824-7143	
	Suzanne Pullen		415 664-1589	
	Lisa Ross		718 382 5175	Yes
Gaybies-c/o First Unitarian Church	Shannon Bowman-Sarkisian		408-356-0196	Yes Gaybie
	Mark Christiansen		731-6332	
	Chet Spahr		415 221-6634	
	Katrina Holmes		415 897-0985	
	Kate Ranson-Walsh		703-715-9570	yes
	Gunnard Doboze		821-2204	
COLAGE SF/East Bay	Hope Berry		647-4223	
	Stephanie James		386-4381	
	Andrea Heinly		510-521-8949	
	Linda Columbus	Member relations/Group	413-585-6209	
	Alex Fagelson	Outreach Newsletter Editor	814-862-4047	
	Emily Gmerek	Co-Director	310-396-2191	
JFU Boston	Anna Heller	Conference	617-628-3251	
	Molly Heller	Co-Ordinator Conference	617-666-1344	609, is there something else?
	Tara Rose	Co-Ordinator	213-934-1338	
	Jennifer DiMarco			
	Melania Gold			
	Sara Stein			
	Dee will submit.			

26244-420.

\$ 50 page (5x8)
25 1/2 page (5x4)
15 1/4 (3 1/2 x 4)
\$ 10 business card.

Contact List

Company Name	Name	Contact Title	Phone
* Yankee Clipper Travel	Jim Boin	Travel Agent	1 800 624-2664
Operation Concern C	Saralie Pennington		415-626-7000
Rainbow Clinic	Dr. Tamar Gershon		pager
Partners (u. book 145)			(206) 784 1519
Alyson in Wonderland C	Sascha Alyson		617-542-5679
Toto Tours NO	Dan Ware		312 935-9933
Beyond the Closet Books			
Camp Lavender Hill C	Chris Van Stone		707-544-8150
Alternative Family Project C	Cheryl Deaner		415-641-5566
Lyon-Martin Women's C	Cynthia Chan		415 565 7667
* The Family Next Door	Lisa Orta		510 482 5778
Momazons			
PFLAG 94 Conference ^{maybe}	Julia Thoron	Conference Chair	(415) 921-6902
Mountain Meadow C	Rebecca Subar		215 843-0332
Camp It Up! C	Ellie Schindelman		510 524 6945
Berkeley Child Art Studio ^{institute}	Miriam de Uriarte	Director	510 849-3385
Family CampOUT ^{maybe}	Miriam Callaghan		503-223 6281
Pacific Reproductive ^{for info table}	Sherron Mills		415 861 3558
Just Dessert C	Katherine Grant	(for food donations)	330 3600
Tapestry Books	(Laurie)		1 800-765-2367
Peek a Boutique			?
(ori Feldman C			(415) 586-1904
(counselor)			
BS Faden Attorney at Law			(408) 236-2963
(custody)			
Castro Dental Group C			(626) 4124.
Aun E. Menacche			(605) - 6746
(attorney, domestic partnerships) <u>NO</u>			
My Best Friend			864-0661
Diana Manly (Jeweller)			(510) 5270511
April 20, 1994	Glenda Queen (Jeweller)		776-8048

Children of Stonewall
Site Related Issues

WE NEED:

Partitions (Susan has one)
Cork Board
Push pins
TV/VCR & CART
Stereo/Boombox
Child Care (call Leanne - J.J. Hernandez)
Make tickets

Closets

ASK ANITA:

Do they have some one for childcare? Do they have to be certified?

Do they provide CHAIRS? *Yes*
Do they have a locked storage space?
Is there someone on site during event? Who? *Yes*

Can we sell refreshments? *Yes*

CAN WE:

Charge a small fee for child care?
Can we make buttons to sell? (Dan MacKaben)

INSTALLATION

We will need to
-Prepare the space.
-Prepare the artwork (mounted, trimmed, etc)
-Hang the material using
-Partitions - 3D, can shape to space, and sturdy enough to hold art work (I have a wicker type one)
-Cork Boards - hang on walls
-Strike it
-Move it

CONSENT FORM
"OUT OF MY PARENT'S CLOSET"

I _____ do consent to the recording and reproduction of any or all portions of this interview taken on _____ . I give Suzanne Pullen permission to use any or all portions of this interview in conjunction with the production of "OUT OF MY PARENT'S CLOSET" and for any future productions she is associated with.

- ___ Yes, my name may be used in connection with this or any future productions.
- ___ No, I would not like my name used in conjunction with this or any future productions.
- ___ I would like to be consented prior to the use of my name in conjunction with this or any future productions.

I understand that the rights to this interview belong to Suzanne Pullen and that this interview may or may not be used as either background information or as material for the play "Out of my Parent's Closet" or for any future productions.

Signature of Interviewee

DATE

(Parent/Legal Guardian of
Interviewee if under 18yrs)

Address of Interviewee

Signature of Interviewer

DATE

CONTRACT
CHILDREN OF STONEWALL

This is a contractual agreement between COLAGE and its co-founder STEPHAN LYNCH and SUZANNE PULLEN (PIPER DREAMS PRODUCTIONS) for the production of CHILDREN OF STONEWALL: A COLAGE EXPERIENCE.

BOX OFFICE PROFITS:

\$ 400

50% of the Gross Box Office profits to be given to SUZANNE PULLEN.

20% of the Gross Box to be divided among the actors/crew not including Suzanne Pullen or STEPHAN LYNCH.

10% of the Gross Box to be given to STEPHAN LYNCH.

CONSESSION PROFITS:

100% of the profits from consession sales of all items purchased or produced by COLAGE shall go to COLAGE.

CHILD CARE PROFITS:

90% of the profits from the monies received in exchange for child care go to the persons providing child care.

10% of the profits from the monies received in exchange for child care go to STEPHAN LYNCH.

The rights to the material collected and used in "THE CHILDREN OF STONEWALL" is jointly held and may be used in the future by STEPHAN LYNCH, COLAGE or SUZANNE PULLEN as long as the consent of both parties is given.

The rights to the play "Out of my Parent's Closet" shall remain with Suzanne Pullen and any future use of it or any portion of it must be by the consent of Suzanne Pullen.

STEPHAN LYNCH

DATE

COLAGE REPRESENTATIVE

DATE

SUZANNE PULLEN

DATE

Sunday after 11
for March 27

~~FOUR-PART~~ Joyce Miller

(408) 270-8182 PFLAG

Bring something
Champagne +
Strawberries

Children of Stonewall Promotional Plan

~~Bad Robbins -~~

Saugh/SF 648-8488

~~scribbled out text~~

Lora

Time Line:

- April
- 4-6 Stefan obtains access to as many queer parent's/families mailing lists as possible.
- 9 Stefan delivers draft of final press release to Suzanne to go over
- 9 First Draft of Poster finished by Ava
- 10-13 Press releases faxed and mailed
- 13th Final Draft of Poster finished by Ava and Stefan
- 14th Poster is adapted to a 8 1/2" x 11" flyer and a 5 1/2" x 4" invitation by Stefan
- 15-16 100 Posters, 100 Flyers and apx. 200 invitations are photocopied
- 17 Posters are hand-colored by a group of people assembled by Stefan
- 18-22 Invitations, flyer's and posters are sent out by Stefan and help
- 23-24 Posters and Flyers are distributed by a group assembled by Stefan

May

pray

at some point: Call all those parents groups in the Bay Times

Mailing Lists of individuals to send invitations

✓ COLAGE

✓ GLPCI

PFLAG East Bay, South Bay, San Francisco (North Bay??)

EB. Betty (510) 547-4657

✓ Family Next Door

✓ NCLR's list from the brunch

fill up from Lora 870 Market St.

✓ Spectrum's Parents

South Bay Gay Parents

~~AFD 550-2621 20 invites~~

✓ Tamar Gershon

Lyon-Martin* 565-7674

✓ Santa Cruz Lesbian Mother's Group send 10 to Po Box 5296, Santa Cruz, CA 95063

The Kid's Klub, Chico

Amity Pierce Buxton's list operation concern

Posters/flyers to Paul Gaulty
2324 Abadford
SF CA 94114

Places to Poster and Flyer by Area

Castro

- Cafe Flor, Noe and Market
- Whiptail Lizard Lounge 18 at Noe
- Josie's Cabaret and Juice Joint 16th at Market
- Different Light Bookstore
- Bagdad Cafe, Market St. at 16th
- Bella's Bistro, 2367 Market
- Leticia's, 2223 Market St.
- The Sausage Factory, 517 Castro at 18th

50-60 minutes
tia Brown

the Mission

Women's Building, 18th and Valencia

KPFA Box 51 1929 Martin Luther King Jr. way

Stefan —

Wonderful to hear from you earlier this week and to come home to your letter/package. Hope the enclosed non-fiction is right on course— It would be such an incredible honor to be included!

As well as the three pieces, also enclosed is: a "self" published book list (my self-published works are now carried by "Pride Publications), and a small donation to "COLAGE".

Again, if there is anything I can do to help your marvelous organization.

I look forward to hearing from you. Take care.

In Pride—

Jennif

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT

Children of Stonewall Submitter Information

Thank you for your submission to Children of Stonewall: A COLAGE Experience. The show will go up Mother's Day weekend 1994, and we are hoping to have over a hundred people attend. After that, the work will hopefully go on display elsewhere in the Bay Area for the following months, and then as much of the material as financially possible will be brought to the COLAGE conference in New York at the end of June. After the conference, your work will be returned to you if you indicate that below. Please include a check for return postage if your submissions are heavy.

Please complete the following information as soon as possible. What you write below will be an important part of the production. We need to start putting together the installation and finalizing the production as soon as possible, there are only a few weeks left, so please send this back to us as soon as you get it.

Video tapes of the event will be available, we'll sell them at cost to contributors, we'll let you know how much that will be.

Thanks again!

Instructions: *Imagine you're telling a group of lesbian and gay parents and their kids about yourself and your work. You may fill this in or send us separate pages. Please be sure to include the last page of this form, however.*

Please print your full name and age Jennifer Anna DiMarco 20

Please print your address and phone #'s 6246 Thomas Road,
Radnor, Ohio 43066. 614-494-2793.

2) Please talk about your submission (possible topics: why you did it, it's significance to you, what it has to do with lesbian/gay families, meanings, processes, etc.)

"Survivor" was written for Barbara Findlen "The Young Feminist Anthology" forthcoming from Alyson Press. It is a non-fiction account of how my parents' strength and love helped me through a very difficult ordeal in my life, and how they continue to stand with me.

"Ready Or Not..." and "A Message To The Warriors" are two examples of the pride my parents have instilled in me. I have given these two short speeches for thousands of people all across the United States. My parents taught me that often when people are faced with difference, with what is unknown to them, they are afraid because they don't understand. Fear can make hate and hate is the darkest human emotion. These two speeches are about who I am, who my parents raised me to be, so that everyone will understand better, and above all, so that others who are different will stand strong and brave in the face of hate. To me, these words are pride.

Surviving
by Jennifer DiMarco

When I was three years old, my father was killed and his body was never found. I learned very quickly that living is harder than dying.

Two years later, my mother married a woman and told me what the word *survivor* meant.

"My daughter was born during an incredible thunder storm. She was energized at birth by the Goddess' electrical light show." --Mama

I remember the studio apartment. The wallpaper had tiny flowers beneath the dark stains. The carpet was worn thin and scratchy on bare feet. There were four of us: Mama, Mumu, baby Angel and I. Life was over-alls from the Salvation Army, parents who worked more for less pay, and an eldest daughter with long, wild hair and eyes full of dreams. Full of pride.

"Remember: As a woman, nothing is ever handed to you. You have to fight for everything. And a fighter faces the world head on." --Mumu

We had nothing, so we took nothing for granted. I never expected more, didn't know what more was, but was taught to always reach for it. Always demand better. And we did have love. I knew what love was; The power behind holding hands as readily as you could make a fist. Strength through protection.

"My daughter told me something today. She said, '*Mama, only a coward hates, so I'm going to be brave.*' And I told her, '*You don't ever hate anyone, except a bigot.*'" --Mama

I never knew what school-shopping was, and new clothes meant Mumu's old ones. Everything was shared, from toys to tea to time. Even working double shifts, one of my parents always seemed to be home to tuck me in, kiss me good-night. And when exhaustion found them asleep on the couch, I would be the one to bring in the blanket and wish them sweet dreams.

True, at dinner time there wasn't always food on the table, but we still gathered together.

"Dear Goddess, thank you for this time together and for our strong girls. Bless and guide them with courage, strength, faith and love. Walk with them as they grow and face the world." --Mumu.

Courage, strength, faith and love. These are the things that made my soul. These are the things that my parents gave me. I knew they were important. I felt them and lived them. But I never knew that they could be weapons and armor as well, until I was ten years old.

I went away for the summer. I had always dreamed of traveling. My parents wanted the world for me. The trip seemed perfect. I would stay with family and family meant safety. I felt perfect. I stood an

inch over four feet, my eyes perpetually wide, taking in everything about me -- a young owl, ready to try out her wings for the first time. I flew from Seattle in a huge plane to the huger New York city, and into the arms of my great uncle who had offered and paid for it all.

'*She'll learn culture,*' he had told my parents with a wide grin that showed his teeth. But his idea of culture had nothing to do with Broadway plays or art galleries. '*She'll see all of New York.*' But all I saw were the three rooms of his house, drawn blinds, locked doors, hard walls and harder floors.

He never had any intention of showing me New York. No intention of showing me anything outside the darkness of his home. He had lied to my parents. They had no idea the danger their daughter was in. He was the first person I ever knew who lied.

"God lets bad things happen to good people to test their faith, but the Goddess knows the faithful and knows that bad things make people stronger. And there's nothing wrong with stronger." --Mama.

And so it was with *courage* that I held my head high, even when my chin trembled. With *courage* that I kept breathing, living, even when I was terrified.

'*You feel free to call your parents when ever you want. The phone is right here.*' He sneers as he speaks. His eyes gleam shadows. He stands so close to the phone that his shoulder touches it. He watches me. He is always, forever watching me. When ever my parents call me

he stands with his hands on my neck, locking our eyes. He knows I'm too afraid to even touch the phone. With his sneer he pounds a slice of beef for dinner.

Blood splatters on the phone...

The wall...

The floor...

The sheets...

All summer long.

Once more, there is a shadow blocking the doorway, sucking the safety from my borrowed room. The shadow says, *'I pray to God every day, and light candles at my church, so that I'll never do this again.'* But every night 'again' happened, and so it was with *strength* that I lived, even when I was too scared to open my mouth and scream, *no....*

During the night, my blue eyes would stare into the darkness for hours. I would measure my breathing, slow it down so it made barely a whisper. My body ached but I did not move from my tight, curled position. I worried if my thundering heart was making too much noise. I knew I mustn't make a sound. Never must the blankets rustle or the headboard creak, because that would tell him I was awake. That would bring him to my room, to me.

And then it would begin again...

His hard hands...

His crushing weight...

His thick breath...

All night long.

During the day, his deep set eyes watched me. To say he watched me constantly, would be an understatement. I was never left alone. He was never more than one, two feet away. I was always where he could reach me. Eating, bathing, walking aimlessly from room to room, using the toilet: I was never without his stare.

Never without his presence...

His snarls...

His glare...

His ugliness...

All day long.

I was not allowed out of his house. I was not allowed to open the blinds or unlock the doors. Day was not safe. Night was not safe. I was not safe. But I fought despair and fear to stay alive. I fought the living, breathing horrors my life was suddenly made of. I fought by living. By opening my eyes each morning. By continuing to breath.

And it was *faith* and *love* that brought me, scrambling, sobbing with joy, to the phone, after he finally went out, finally left me alone, nearly sixty days after it all began. *Faith*, that even after so long, the sun still shone beyond those dark shutters, and that beyond the

locked doors, the world still existed. *Love*, that told me I would have enough time before he returned with his threats and violence, that there would be enough time for Mama and Mumu to answer my phone call, to hear in my voice everything, to believe me, and bring me home.

And they did.

"Everyday heroes go unnoticed. They look darkness in the eye and still shine their light. Everyday someone goes without recognition. My daughter will never be over-looked." --Mumu.

There were long nights after that summer. Too much fear to explain and a lot of denial. I questioned life, '*Why?*', and death, '*Why not?*'. There were night-terrors instead of nightmares, skin-memories instead of safe memories. I wondered if there would ever be an end to the hurt, to the haunting darkness. I wondered if I would ever find myself again, if I still knew who I was.

"This is for you. A real book, but with blank pages, for you to fill with anything you want. And you can keep it all to yourself... or you can share it with the world. Because I love you." --Mama.

Words. Words had become more and more sparse for me. Words were truth and the truth was hard. So hard. But my parents made a space for me, and place where the truth could be my own. They did not ask me to forget my experience or stop me from realizing that others felt pain

as well. They let me see the world as it really was. No, it wasn't all safe, but there were still safe places.

So, it was words. My parents' teachings had been the reason for my survival and now, surrounded by their love, words became my healing. Words became my expression, my voice, my activism, joy, rage and release.

By the time I was eighteen, I had filled up dozens of journals and notebooks. I had written twelve novels and four stage plays. First I would write, face my emotions on paper, then I would be able to live them. I reclaimed my power, my energy and my life with a passion. I wrote until I cried, until I laughed out-loud. I wrote books about strong women, and men, facing the world head on, demanding that it do better. I wrote stories that never got told, the true ones. Stories that reflected life, that weren't always safe, because life wasn't always safe. I wrote for me. I wrote for others. I wrote to make a difference.

With words I battled issues of abuse, of bigotry, of hatred. They allowed me to deal with the world around me, to make sense of it all, to put it in perspective. I wrote to continue to live my life, instead of relive my past. I told my parents, *'I write to bright light to the shadows and voice to the silence. To shed light on misconceptions, bring light into the darkness. To speak for those not spoken for, to speak the truth.'* They held me tight. They told me I was brave and bold, that I was their warrior.

I said, *'I'm not afraid.'* And my truth was bright.

"Healing comes from inside. From within. Healing is a constant, shining, powerful process." --Mumu.

I went on to speak at high schools, conferences and community centers. I spoke about crossing over the boundaries of prejudice to embrace each other, about the power of challenging the world, reaching for your dreams and accepting only the best. I shared the courage and faith I had grown up with, the fear I had fought with strength and love, and the words I had used, and still use, to reach out and touch the world.

"From the fires my daughter has risen. She was born in lightning, she fought with lightning, and now she will live like lightning: bright and brilliant." --Mama.

And when I fell in love, I fell with all my heart and soul. Unconditionally, loyally, completely. Just like I had been surrounded with, just like I felt inside my whole life.

My Love, she turned to me with pride in her eyes, beneath her wild curls, and told me she was dying of cancer. She waited for me to run away. She said, *'It's a risk to love me.'*

I took her hands in my own and returned, *'It's a bigger risk not to.'* And I ran no where.

In my twenty years I have learned that the world can take women's rights. It can invalidate our love, beat us down, rape us, make up our minds for us. The world insists, that if we are strong women who love men, than we're really Lesbians. And if we're Lesbians, than we hate men all together. If we're beautiful, we must be stupid, and if we don't kill ourselves to stop their rape, than we are to blame.

A lot can be taken away from a woman. A lot can be done to break her. Fear is a disease, and hatred and violence are the symptoms. There are those who wish to crush us, defeat us. But we must not, we will not, grant their wishes. Instead of crushed, we will stand strong. Instead of defeated, we will be victorious. I will never forget these facts. I will never for an instant doubt. Because through the fear, the hatred and the violence, we are indeed standing strong in our victory. We are surviving.

I was raised by two women. I was raised in a feminist household. I am very proud of my family and my herstory. My parents taught me more than I could ever tell in one story, perhaps more than I could tell in one-hundred. But my soul is still made of courage, strength, faith and love, even as it is tested by fire, by pain, by struggle. My parents gave me these tools of survival and someday I will pass them on to a child of my own. I will continue the fight.

Even if I could, I would never change anything about my life. My life has made me who I am today.

I was raised to survive. And I will.

A Message To The Warriors
of past, present and future

by Jennifer DiMarco

© 7/8/93

Power. Strength. Courage. Pride. The four commands of a warrior. In a world where people are so afraid of difference that they have made hate a family value and bigotry a blessing, we are in constant need of Warriors. Those who are afraid of nothing -- but inaction.

As a nineteen year old Lesbian daughter of Lesbian parents, I know a lot about bigotry, prejudice, censorship, lies and hatred, because I fought them before I was old enough to attend grade school. I know that cowards can hide anywhere and they usually travel in packs under banners of their holy words, repressive politics and segregated morals.

But more than all of this, I have seen those who stand against them. Those who stand for choice, freedom, truth, voice and love. Those who raise their fists, their words and their wills against discrimination. Those who fight fiercely. The warriors.

It is not always easy. It is never easy. But it is needed. Having the power to live, the strength to match blows, the courage to love and the pride to stand up and tell the rest of the world --

We will not be conquered.

We will be victorious!

J. DiMarco
Ready Or Not...
c 12/02/92

Ready Or Not...

There is a difference between what we are told, and what we know.

There is a difference between what we are taught, and what we learn.

And there is *no one* who can tell us that difference is wrong.

No one who can tell us who to love.

I knew when I was ten years old that I was different. I knew that people hated difference because it wasn't what they knew, and people are afraid of what they don't know.

I knew that I would never let anyone stop me from being me. That I was going to make my difference into something beautiful, something powerful. And I did.

My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I write Gay and Lesbian Fiction for a living, and I am a Lesbian. I am also nineteen years old.

I'm five foot two, with auburn hair and blue eyes. I teach martial arts and work construction. Besides novels, I've been known to write poetry, plays and songs. I was raised by my Italian mother, a truck driver, and my Irish mother, a psychologist.

This is who I am. No one can take this from me.

As Gays and Lesbians we are told our whole lives what we can't do. We can't hold hands. We can't touch. We can't even love each other. We are told that we are an unfortunate minority and that we deserve the names we are called, the bashings we receive and the prejudice that we live with.

Sometimes, we are told that we don't exist.

But we do. Here we are. In every color, every size, every shape and, every age.

Whether we are ten or one hundred and ten, we can still be Gay or Lesbian. Our age does not govern our heart or limit our love.

The first thing I taught myself, is that before anything, I am Jennifer. I am a human being. I am a woman. The first thing I am is not a writer. The first thing I am is not a Lesbian. But, Jennifer is both of these, and without either she would not be Jennifer.

I learned that I don't have to be butch or femme, aggressive or submissive. I learned that I don't have to have short hair, wear purple triangles or call myself a dyke. But, if I want to, I can.

I learned that despite what some try to tell me,

I do not have to be closeted.

I do not have to be afraid.

I do not have to be ashamed.

I have no right to be. I have no reason to be.

When I was growing up, I was told that I would never amount to anything because I was a girl. I have had people tell me the same thing because I am a Lesbian.

I laugh at these people.

Just living is victory enough.

Sometimes you have to go against what you are told to embrace what you love. To embrace the truth. Your own truth.

The way I love is right for me.

I am a Lesbian. I am nineteen years old. I grew up poor. I never knew the 'right people'. But now I speak to auditoriums full of students. My books sit next to Dickens'.

I have fought for the right to walk down the street arm-in-arm with my partner. I have turned the other cheek to prove a point and matched a stranger blow for blow when he attacked a Gay friend.

Despite the hate,

Despite the bigotry,

Despite the discrimination,

I am victorious.

I will never let anyone stop me from being who I am,

loving who I love,

living how I choose to live.

Nothing can stop me from being Jennifer. Nothing.

Don't let anything stop you.

Make your difference beautiful.

Make your difference powerful.

Make it your own.

You do not have to be closeted.

You do not have to be afraid.

You do not have to be ashamed.

There is no reason.

You have the *right* to love who you want to love. You have the *right* to be who you are. You have the *right* to stand up and be proud.

Turn to the world and say, ready or not, this is who I am.

You cannot change me.

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT

Children of Stonewall Submitter Information

Thank you for your submission to Children of Stonewall: A COLAGE Experience. The show will go up Mother's Day weekend 1994, and we are hoping to have over a hundred people attend. After that, the work will hopefully go on display elsewhere in the Bay Area for the following months, and then as much of the material as financially possible will be brought to the COLAGE conference in New York at the end of June. After the conference, your work will be returned to you if you indicate that below. Please include a check for return postage if your submissions are heavy.

Please complete the following information as soon as possible. What you write below will be an important part of the production. We need to start putting together the installation and finalizing the production as soon as possible, there are only a few weeks left, so please send this back to us as soon as you get it.

Video tapes of the event will be available, we'll sell them at cost to contributors, we'll let you know how much that will be.

Thanks again!

Instructions: *Imagine you're telling a group of lesbian and gay parents and their kids about yourself and your work. You may fill this in or send us separate pages. Please be sure to include the last page of this form, however.*

Please print your full name and age NOEL ANDERSEN BLACK 21 YEARS OR THEREABOUTS

Please print your address and phone #'s 502 N. 31ST ST. COLO SPRGS, CO
80904 (719) 633-9786 or at school - (708) 735 5791

HI STEFAN -
I FINISHED MY
THESIS! ONWARD I FORWARD
TO GRADUATION -
GIVE ME A CALL
- NOEL

2) Please talk about your submission (possible topics: why you did it, it's significance to you, what it has to do with lesbian families, meanings, processes, etc.)

(Read November 9, 1993 at Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church for the memorial service of Phillip James Black, March 2, 1945 - November 7, 1993)

I have been struggling for the past few days to put a few simple words together to honor my father publicly. I saw Dad at the beginning of the summer. He looked terrible. His weight has dropped to around 130 lbs. and he had aged considerably. But for some reason even the morphine pack he had strapped to his waist was still a fashion statement: Dad always did things with class. Ironically, he and I struggled in the past two years to overcome this outward trademark of style and elegance. We both had to put away our pride in order to meet as human beings, father and son for the first time; to meet beyond all appearances after a tremendous amount of difficulty communicating when I was growing up. We struggled to connect: struggled, as Matthew Arnold says in "The Buried Life", "to unlock the heart, and let it speak."

"Blessing" is not the first thing that comes to mind when one hears the word AIDS. Indeed it was the furthest thing from my mind when my father told me that he had the HIV virus five years ago. The pain and grief that AIDS has caused men and women around the world could hardly be thought of as a "blessing." But, like most "appearances," we should rarely and reluctantly take them at their face value. My father's AIDS, despite the pain and grief, was, in my eyes, a blessing. It was a key that allowed us to "unlock " the doors of our hearts and see, as Arnold states again, the "unregarded river of our life. . . our buried life." We had a limited amount of time to know one another and I want to thank my father now for opening his heart to me in the face of great pain and inward strife. Last Christmas he spent four days telling me his life story in installments, and on the last day, after the infamous New Year's flood, we walked to the Sabino Dam as we talked, listened and watched the flood waters sweep away the years of

confusion and miscommunication. I would like to read the last letter that I wrote to my father two nights before his death. He never got it, and so I read it to him now:

Dear Dad-

It is important for me to tell you how much I love you. We have come so far in our relationship and I couldn't have done it without you. I feel so lucky! Some people never get the chance to put aside their differences and see one another as human beings. I am so proud of you Dad. You have lived courageously, compassionately, and deliberately. I will never forget the sound of your voice rising above the flood waters barrelling over Sabino Dam. You told me everything I needed to hear, honestly and sincerely. This was all I ever wanted and so it is with great confidence that I tell you now that I have little else to say. I feel that we have reached an understanding beyond anything left unsaid, an understanding beyond words. I love you! and that is all that matters,

Your son, Noel Andersen Black.

I would like to thank friends and family for being here today, and especially David Johnson for his undying love, care and commitment to my father as friend and partner. He couldn't have done it without you.

In closing, I would like to read one of my father's favorite poems: "The Swan," by Rainer Maria Rilke:

This laboring through what is still undone,
as though, legs bound, we hobbled along the way,
is like the awkward walking of the swan.

And dying--to let go, no longer feel
the solid ground we stand on every day--
is like his anxious letting himself fall

into the water, which receives him gently
and which, as though with reverence and joy,
draws back past him in streams on either side;
while, infinitely silent and aware,
in his full majesty and ever more
indifferent, he condescends to glide.

--1907/1908

Translated by Steven Mitchell

1. Please tell us about yourself and your family.

I am six feet tall, though I often feel shorter. I have green eyes for the most part--sometimes they are blue. I am Danish and Irish and Welsh--I'm white, and 1/16 Native American. I date women though I think some men are very attractive. I like to telemark ski, write poetry, sit in front of my computer for long periods of time, take my shoes off and feel the grass between my toes, watch people, and think about form. My mind is a hand. Most of the time it is clenched in a fist--holding on to my worries and problems like a baby blanket. Sometimes I can let go and spread my fingers, feel the sweat in my palms evaporating and the cool wind filtering through webs and creases: I am alive.

My father, Philip Black, died of AIDS on November 7, 1993. I have his ears, his build, and his hairline (high forehead with slightly receding cul-de-sacs.) My father asked my mom how she knew that I was really his child. "Look at his ears," she said--that was all the proof anyone ever needed. My father was an architect. He liked a good bowl of artichoke bisque, a nice even-yearred Merlot, Armani clothes, and anything that he couldn't afford. The last words he said to me were, "Hi Noel." He died in his hospital bed 24 hours later. He took me to see the Mexican poppies blooming fire engine red in the Arizona Desert--Spring Break, 1992. He told me his life story as we watched flood waters pour over the Sabino Canyon dam--Christmas, 1992. I forgave him for 20 years of silence and he gave me every word in the English language. His last gift to me was *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*--the only true treasure I own.

My mother, Nancy Wilsted, is a lipstick lesbian who spends her summers on her hands and knees in the dirt, whispering to Iris, Gladiola, Violet and Black-Eyed Susan. She raised me by herself--no father, no live-in partner. Her lovers were often abusive.

Cille--charcoal black--drank Wild Turkey and smoked reefer that was hidden behind the prescription pills in the kitchen cabinet. She had the Playboy channel, and once she threw me up against a hook when I talked back. My mother wields a speculum from 9 to 5. She was the first Registered Nurse in Colorado Springs to start a private practice for women's health issues. The greatest thing my mother has ever done for me is nothing--she let me discover my life.

My grandparents on my father's side live on a farm in Oklahoma. My grandmother, Trudy Black, hunts water moccasins so that they don't bite the cows' ankles when they go to drink at the slough. My grandfather made stilts and rubber band guns from old 2x4's and innertubes, taught me how to catch catfish, and lost all of his upper teeth by the time he was 55. He traded cars and trucks like baseball cards, but managed to hang on to the blueberry Ford tractor with the red brush-hog for 15 years. My grandparents did not know that my father was gay, or that he had AIDS until a year before he died.

My grandparents on my mother's side learned how to live during the depression when the only way to eat was to work and work harder. My grandfather, Donald Wilsted, owned a furniture and carpet store. He drove a yellow forklift and moved rolls of carpet like a true Arthurian in a joust. When he retired to Green Valley, Arizona he learned the art of delivery--joke delivery--and told every waitress the latest. He never let on that he had read each joke in the back of that week's *Reader's Digest*. He died two years ago--March 14, 1992. My grandmother, Barbara Wilsted, creates *abelskivers*--Danish pancake balls--with the dexterity and timing of a true artist. When she drives, she twiddles her thumbs on the steering wheel as though she were keeping time with the anxieties of the world: the conductor of one vast symphony of worries.

I have three aunts: Laura and Linda Black, and Mary Wilsted; one uncle: Tom Wilsted; and three cousins: Trudy and Charles House, and Jeff Wilsted. But friends, teachers, and creatures are all a part of my extended family, and I give a gracious nod to all those who have supported and loved me through the years: John Eastham, Barry and Marc Huebert, David and Elinor Johnson, Shelle Chasnoff, Pam Johnson, Christopher Bland, Sara Voorhees, Heather and Colie Campbell, Irene and Rosalinda Del-Mogus, Doug Shakel, Derek Riker, John Newlin, Julie Goff, Wendy Pillsbury, The Abeyta's, Chet Huntington, Frosty, Cally, Blanche and Toby Jo, Tim and Carla Muskat, Phil Simmons, Ron Miller, Ben and Jacquie Goluboff, and Josh "the Pfeffel" Pfeffer.

2. Please talk about your submission.

I submitted the two elegiac poems and the elegy I read at my father's funeral because I think it is important that I, and others, start talking openly about homosexuality and what it means to be children of gay parents. The process of coming out, as many children of lesbigay families know, is not limited to the parents. For 20 years I was just as closeted about my parents' sexuality as they were. Writing poetry is, for me, a way of coming out of the darkness of my own homophobia, and a way of dealing with the grief of my father's death. I believe in the healing power of the word. Unheard voices become diseases. AIDS, I believe, is only a metaphor for those unheard voices--a direct result of the silence caused by homophobia. Only when all people end the silence of oppression and taboo will we begin to understand the true nature of AIDS. AIDS is not a punishment--it is the disease of repression proliferating in our society. Everyone will die, that is no secret. But not everyone gets a chance to live. When you have no voice you cannot live. I spent years of my life believing that my parents weren't good enough because they were gay. I spent too long thinking that other kids were lucky to have straight parents they could be proud of. I had other friends with lesbian mothers, but I didn't know anyone else who had a gay father. As a result, much of my own "coming out" process has been facing and giving voice to my father's silence. This uncovering was the primary impetus for the poem "Prayer for My Father's Secrets." I wanted to present and re-present all of the clues and objects that led me to discover my father's homosexuality and contraction of HIV. Much of my anger toward my father comes from his inability to effectively communicate what it meant for him to be gay and what it was like for him to have AIDS. Children suffer when they do not hear the stories of their parents and ancestors. I had to create my own story for too long--I lied to myself. "Remembering You on the Train from Chicago" was a poem that I wrote shortly after my father died. The poems significance, I believe, lies in the simplicity of remembering. Our memories are our only true link to identity. Even if we try to hide our memories, they will remind us--"tap" us on the shoulder. We can only lie to ourselves about homosexuality and AIDS until the memories themselves demand to be told truthfully. The elegy was written to publicly honor my father at his memorial service. Although our relationship was difficult and brief, I did come to love my father profoundly. I hope that the text of the elegy can speak for itself.

To all children of lesbigays, parents, and friends: write, write, write, and let your voice be heard!

Noel Andersen Black
Lake Forest College
April 18, 1994

Prayer for My Father's Secrets

Noel Andersen Black

My Father's love for men lay quietly
Beneath his bed, hidden in
Drawers: magazines and books and
Three XXX videos on the top shelf.
And the HIV he kept concealed in letters to my Mother
Only whispered in his withering body--
Secrets dying ten pounds at a time.

NOEL ANDERSEN BLACK.

Remembering You on the Train From Chicago

Rooftops shuffle past
Like faces in a deck of cards
While the incantation of the
Click-Clack
And the rhythmic droning of the track
Remind me like a gentle
Tap
That you are gone.

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT

Children of Stonewall Submitter Information

Thank you for your submission to Children of Stonewall: A COLAGE Experience. The show will go up Mother's Day weekend 1994, and we are hoping to have over a hundred people attend. After that, the work will hopefully go on display elsewhere in the Bay Area for the following months, and then as much of the material as financially possible will be brought to the COLAGE conference in New York at the end of June. After the conference, your work will be returned to you if you indicate that below. Please include a check for return postage if your submissions are heavy.

Please complete the following information as soon as possible. What you write below will be an important part of the production. We need to start putting together the installation and finalizing the production as soon as possible, there are only a few weeks left, so please send this back to us as soon as you get it.

Video tapes of the event will be available, we'll sell them at cost to contributors, we'll let you know how much that will be.

Thanks again!

Instructions: *Imagine you're telling a group of lesbian and gay parents and their kids about yourself and your work. You may fill this in or send us separate pages. Please be sure to include the last page of this form, however.*

Please print your full name and age Melanie Ariane Gold, 0.0.

Please print your address and phone #'s 116A Johnson Street, Lake Peekskill,
N.Y., 10537, (914) 525-6109

1) Please tell us about yourself and your family.

My name is Melanie A. Gold, D.O.. I am 31 years old, a pediatrician/adolescent medicine specialist and one of three daughters of a lesbian mother and gay father. My parents met through their families as teens, and in their early twenties married each other. My father recalls always feeling "different" from other boys as he was growing up - he knew he was sexually attracted to men. However, he also felt he had to please his parents and live an "acceptable" lifestyle. He did as he was expected - he became a doctor, married my mom, and had children (me and my younger twin sisters), but he always continued his sexual liaisons quietly on the side. My parents loved each other, but more as friends and companions, than as lovers. Externally we had a quite "normal" looking family. My mom never acknowledged or expressed her feelings for women until after my father "came out" to her about his sexual orientation and they moved into separate bedrooms.

When I was 15 years old, I told my dad I knew he was gay. I suspected he was because he had a large number of very attractive male friends and spent a lot of time hanging out with them in Greenwich Village, NY. Both my parents were relieved that I told them I knew about their orientation and were completely "out" within our family six months later when we told my sisters. Because we had been raised outside of New York City, and my parents had taken extra care to teach us about many kinds of people, my sisters and I easily adjusted to our family uniqueness. For most of my teens and early adulthood, I had a large, supportive, extended family composed of my parents, their lovers and circles of friends from the Village. Gay Pride Day became a family holiday and every year we watched, and later marched in the parade in NYC.

Ten years ago, my mom moved out to New Mexico and my parents divorced a year ago. Although my mom and dad are no longer close friends, my sisters and I remain in close contact with each of them. Both of my parents feel the best thing that ever came out of their marriage was my sisters and me. We three believe we had the most supportive and openly communicating family in which to grow up. Ironically, despite our parents assurances that it was fine to be gay or bisexual, my sisters and I all turned out straight.

1) Please tell us about yourself and your family.

2) Please talk about your submission

During my medical school and residency training, I became increasingly aware that there was little, if any, mention of the gay or lesbian family. As a pediatrician, I knew that physicians were not receiving any training in how to approach the unique challenges facing gay and lesbian families, although the needs of other challenged families such as single-parent, poor or divorced families were addressed. My article "Children of Gay or Lesbian Parents" is the result of my longstanding belief that gay and lesbian families can be exceptionally nurturing and supportive environments in which to grow up.

The article will be published in August 1994 in **Pediatrics In Review** which is a nationally subscribed journal for pediatricians and pediatric trainees. The article is the product of research I did during my adolescent medicine fellowship for the Committee on the Psychosocial Aspects of the Child and Family from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The committee wanted to produce a statement on the positive impact of the gay and lesbian family environment on child growth and development, yet no one on the committee knew if there was research to support such a statement. The article reviews the existing literature on gay and lesbian parents, and more importantly provides guidelines for pediatricians caring for the children of gay and lesbian parents. This article is the first one of its kind in the pediatric medical literature, although similar such pieces exist in the nursing, psychological and social work milieus. Even more exciting, I have just submitted a chapter commissioned for Robert A. Hoekelman's text PRIMARY PEDIATRIC CARE, 3rd edition, on gay and lesbian parented families which should be published in 1996.

2) Please talk about your submission (possible topics: why you did it, it's significance to you, what it has to do with lesbian families, meanings, processes, etc.)

I understand that my submission to Children of Stonewall will be displayed in public, and my name will also be used in conjunction unless I initial below.

Melanie A. Gold, D.O. 4/16/94
(name) (date)

Please do not use my full name for Children of Stonewall _____ (initial)

I understand that Children of Stonewall, COLAGE and Piper Dreams Productions will make all reasonable efforts to secure the safety of my work. However, they are not liable should my work be damaged, lost or stolen while in their possession.

Melanie A. Gold, D.O. 4/16/94
(name) (date)

I would like to donate my work permanently to COLAGE for subsequent shows of Children of Stonewall and other educational and entertainment purposes.

Melanie A. Gold, D.O. 4/16/94
(name) (date)

(check here) Please return my work in July, 1994 . I have enclosed the cost of postage.

Please return this form to:

COLAGE
2300 Market St. #165
San Francisco, CA
94114

Questions? Call Stefan Lynch at (415) 206-1930

If you are in the Bay Area, please come to Children of Stonewall. The show goes up four times: Friday, May 6 at 7pm, May 7 at 1pm and 7pm and Sunday at 1pm. All shows are at the Women's Building in San Francisco, 3543 18th St. at Valencia. Admission is \$10, there will be childcare available both afternoons, and one performance (yet to be determined) will be sign-language interpreted.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Melanie Ariane Gold, D.O.

PERSONAL DATA:

Address: 110A Johnson Street
Lake Peekskill, N.Y. 10537
Telephone # 914-526-6109

Birth Date: October 2, 1962

Social Security No: 070-38-1100

EDUCATION:

1980 - 1984 Smith College, Northampton, MA
Summer 1982 Fairleigh Dickinson College
Summer 1983 William Paterson College
1984 - 1988 New York College of Osteopathic Medicine

Rotating Internship:

1988 - 1989 Delaware Valley Medical Center, Langhorne, PA
Sept - 1988 St. Christopher's Children's Hospital, Philadelphia, PA
Pediatric Endocrinology
June - 1989 Methodist Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, OB/GYN

Pediatric Residency:

1989 - 1992 University of Maryland Medical System, Baltimore, MD
1990 Francis Scott Key Medical Center, Baltimore MD,
Adolescent Inpatient Detoxification Unit
1991 Union Memorial Hospital, Baltimore, MD., Sports
Medicine
Summer 1990 - 91 Camp Glyndon, Camp physician and lecturer
1990 Sexual Assault Recovery Center, Baltimore, MD

Adolescent Fellowship:

1992 - present Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, N.Y.

Melanie Gold, D.O.

Major Research Interests :

Adolescent Attitudes and Acceptability of Subdermal Contraceptive Implants and Depo Provera

Stress, Coping and Illness in Late Adolescence (West Point Project, Long Term Stress and Illness Project, United States Military Academy)

Hypnotherapy and Genital Wart Therapy

Adolescent Substance Abuse and Chronic Illness (especially in Diabetes and Asthma)

Physicians' Attitudes Towards Post-Coital Contraceptive Pill Use in Adolescents

Adolescent Post-Traumatic Rape Syndrome

License and Certificates:

NY State Medical License: New York 188526 1992

DEA Number: BG 3454369 1993

National Osteopathic Board of Medical Examiners 1989

Pediatric Board Certification: Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics 1992-1999, October 28, 1992 Completed requirements

Publications:

Substance Use Among Diabetic Adolescents: Preliminary Findings, Journal of Adolescent Health, 14:80-84, 1993.

Children of Gay or Lesbian Parents, Pediatrics in Review, In Press

Melanie A. Gold, D.O.

Reviewer and Editorial Activities:

Manuscript Reviewer for Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
(1992,1993,1994)

Consulting Editor for Annals of Behavioral Medicine (1993,1994)

Professional Memberships:

1988 American Osteopathic Association

1989 American Academy of Pediatrics

1992 American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians

1992 Society for Adolescent Medicine

1993 Society for Behavioral Pediatrics

1994 North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology

INVISIBLE CLOUDS

Between my father and me there was much, and distance, too.

We spent a winter in Boston when I was younger, though it wasn't really cold. I complained that there wasn't snow and there were no big parks with hills, anyway, so we couldn't go sledding. He wrote a poem about it; that time in Boston, not my complaints. I didn't like the poem, but when you're thirteen you don't like poetry, especially if it doesn't rhyme. That's part of the deal. Reading the poem now, it's more complicated than that, like him. It does rhyme, though, in a different way. He also didn't let me read all of it when he wrote it. I found that out later, though.

You stretch out on the other bed, big
and unrefined as a W.P.A. sculpture
called *Big Boy Reading*.

You are a big boy. This is not poetry.
You read a book on children and their
parents I gave you with my marginalia,
jotting with a hotel pen your own.

Your legs transect the air like the
lines outside the Hirshorn. You sway
them practicing your teenage-
hood which begins all too soon
next week.

I think he made up the sculpture part. I would've done that. And "marginalia." I didn't know what that meant, but I use it now, borrowed like the hotel pen.

Sometimes when I reread the poem it's like I wasn't there, like it's someone else's father writing about someone else's son. But other times, especially now, if I ignore the words and concentrate on other things, I know that it is me. And it's him. Big words and all. No one else, I think, could write with such big words and strange references; maybe that's how most people, or poets, write, and I just don't know it. I kind of don't want to know. He always said I didn't read enough.

Boston is a fun city, even if you do have a big rental car. In Toronto,

where we live, there is the CN Tower. No one except tourists and school groups go up it. I only go when my relatives visit. They're from North Carolina, but they're nice. They have to go up the tower whenever they visit, because where they live the tallest building is three stories high. The CN Tower, in case you don't know, is almost two hundred stories tall, although you can only go up to about the hundred and sixtieth. My little cousins used to aim the pay-per-view telescopes south, hoping to see their house, but it was always cloudy. My uncle would say that they'd have to wait til next time when the weather was better. Then they'd be able to see it.

In Boston they have the Hancock Building. My dad and I went up twice. The first time we went it was too foggy to see much, so we watched the movie re-creation of Paul Revere's ride, and saw the model of the British and Americans fighting in Lexington or wherever. My dad told me the real stories afterwards. We sat in a corner, right up against a window, and he told me how the only reason Paul Revere's ride is so famous is because someone wrote a poem about it, and that there was actually a woman before that who had done a longer, more important ride. I snuggled up between him and the window and he told me about the slaves that the American forefathers owned, the pox-infected blankets that George Washington sold to some Native Americans who were supposed to be allies, and about the rich Boston merchants who got their money from the slave trade. We looked around to see if anyone was listening, and then he said how silly it was that no one except opera singers could sing the U.S. national anthem. He tried, but couldn't reach the high notes; he kept switching octaves. We sang the Canadian anthem after that, so loud I think people stared.

The next time we went up it was clearer. He took a green pen and one of those black notebooks he always had. He wrote his dreams in those, and thoughts, and poems. I haven't got to them yet. And he wrote while I looked out the windows and sucked on peppermint Lifesavers he bought me at the gift shop. While I was watching the planes land at Logan, and thinking that one of them should have been Bill's plane, though he was in the hospital, I think my dad wrote some more of the poem.

This trip as never before you chasten my
quirks that might
embarrass you in public, but sitting
beside me in a cab, or on a marble bench,

or anywhere, you rest
one hand on my knee or throw an arm
around my back and say
how glad you are we're
together even if our feet
are sore.

Not many really big words in that stanza; he was in a simple mood, I guess. Maybe he was thinking about me reading it while he wrote. This is the part of the poem that embarrassed me the most, and I think that's why I didn't remember it until now. Psychologists would call it repression, and they're right, it is, but the word sounds bad, and I don't think it was bad that I forgot about the poem. I'm glad I forgot he studied me like that, like sculpture. Like I would study him.

Another time in Boston I remember (why is it I remember *us* and he writes about *me*?) we were in Faneuil Hall buying bagels. We always got these very gourmet pumpernickel bagels that cost ten cents more each. Some Bostonian with a real heavy accent walks in through the double doors leading a troop of tourists, probably his relatives, and he's telling them that this is Faneuil Hall, only he's pronouncing it more like "flannel" than anything else, totally mangling this pretty French name, and not a head turns, like what this guy has said is perfectly natural. Our Canuck ears couldn't handle this, and we both laughed out loud at the stupid American. Well, the stupid Americans certainly didn't see anything funny, so we took our bagels and left, giggling at all of them under our breath, laughing out loud when our eyes met. It was that night, I think, that he wrote the last stanza of the poem, at least the last stanza he showed me. I always thought it was the end of the poem. It's not. I haven't figured out how I feel about that.

Tonight as we dawdled along Commonwealth
Avenue
yakking about cabs
a shopwindow backlit you and cast on me
your figure, grown:
a sculptured pickup idling
by my blousier sedan.

That would have been a good ending. I think he carried the sculpture thing a bit too far, though. And I never quite understood the last few lines, especially the "your figure, grown" part. I asked him once and he said that it was foreshadowing. I didn't stop to think that you have to foreshadow *something*. Maybe I repressed that, too.

Bill died while we were in Boston. His parents were there, and he went quickly, but my dad never forgave himself for being away. He didn't know, of course. That Bill was dying. He was just under observation. My dad called Bill's parents on the phone every week. They didn't tell my dad that Bill was in intensive care. They didn't tell him about the morphine drip that kept Bill unconscious for his last week so the oxygen tubes running through his nose and into his lungs didn't hurt as much. They were too ashamed that their son had AIDS, and jealous that Bill was ours and not theirs. We made it back for the memorial; my dad wrote the eulogy on the plane. It wasn't the first time, he said. Then I had to go back to school, and we didn't talk much about Boston except when he let me read the poem.

I do remember one more time in Boston, though. We were at an Italian restaurant in the section of the city called Back Bay, and my dad's friend Tom (he's dead, now, too) was telling us about when he used to teach sailing on the San Francisco Bay. All the stewardesses would come to get lessons when they had to stay in San Francisco, so Tom met all these women from around the world. The funny part is that he found out years later (this was in the fifties, I think) that the stewardesses really didn't care about sailing. They just came to flirt with him. Apparently he had gained a reputation as one of the cutest available men in San Francisco. Well, Tom had no clue about any of this, and of course couldn't have cared less. My dad thought the whole thing was terribly funny, but I didn't even smile. My dad asked me what was wrong, and I was going to tell him I was hungry and we hadn't even ordered yet. I didn't want to tell him the truth then. I told him that I didn't think it was appropriate table conversation; I did it to spite him. The rest of the dinner went all right.

When my dad died is when I found the rest of the poem in his files.

The line of your chest brooded
as the black of the rectangle
in the Rothko we saw today

shook against vividest apricot,
the outline of your chest our future
if I'm here. Tonight marks four weeks
of coughing, I've begun
to fret: pneumocystis, its velocity.

He wrote more, but it ended there for me. The memories of Boston were pulled from their place, like they had been ripped down from the corkboard covered with pictures of friends and funny newsclippings, like they didn't belong there anymore. He knew *that* early.

My parents sent me to a therapist while they were breaking up. I was young, and when he asked me to tell him what I was thinking, I told him. When he listened to me, and nodded some, and asked more questions, I talked more. I visited him for a while, and he was always nice and he had toys and he played with me while I talked or drew pictures. I had good memories of him, and always called him "my friend, Jim." After the divorce, I learned that my parents had paid him to be like that. I hated thinking about those visits then. Memories are not sacred, no matter what people say. He knew that early.

At the airport, there was a mix-up and we got sent to the wrong gate. By the time we checked in, there were no seats next to each other on the plane, so he sat by the wing and I sat near the tail, where he said it was safer. When the seatbelt light turned off, he came back and knelt in the aisle beside me. I said I was scared of flying, so he started telling me about the first time he'd flown in an airplane. I'm not sure why, but after he finished the story I didn't want him to tell me anything more, so I said I wanted to take a nap. He looked at me like there was something else he needed to say, but I pulled the airplane blanket up closer around me. He looked out the window for a while, coughed, and went back to his seat.

Stefan Lynch

Southern California

Dear Gerald,

(Revised)

College is going all right. Southern California lives up to all the stereotypes. I met this really neat girl, and I like my classes. I'm spending a lot of time thinking, so people think I'm depressed, I don't argue; I get attention. Please take care of yourself and Jonathon. Write soon.

Love Justin. Los Angeles 9/12

Dear Justin,

It's good to hear from you, it sounds like things are working out; a great relief for all of us, especially you. I remember when I went to college, it was a shock. I guess the most surprising thing was meeting other gays. Remember when you, Jonathon and I went to my parents for seder when you were little, and you called me "dad" and my father coughed up a matzoh ball? He's gotten more liberal than when I lived there. Not an easy place to grow up knowing you're different and not being able to tell anyone because you have a legitimate fear of being kicked out of the family. Jonathon's family was a lot like mine, I think. But I guess you'd know more about that, you used to visit them before didn't you? Anyways, Jonathon thinks you must be the biggest stud on earth to have a girlfriend already (or what did you call her, a "neat girl"? Come on, were not that oblivious.) Of course I reminded him how when I met *him* it was at a bar called The Spike, and he was wearing nothing but black leather, and he's accusing you of being a stud. Never fear, I shall defend your honor while you're away. I have to if you keep using euphemisms like "neat girl". (Is she "neat" in bed? I won't tell Jonathon.) Well I guess I'm rambling. Quick up date on everyone's favourite invalid, the night sweats have decreased so he's getting a lot more sleep, Dr. Phillips says it's probably the AZT. Write soon, it's like you don't exist; Jonathon can't wait to hear all the dirt he thinks you don't tell me.

Love Gerald. NYC 9/18

Dear Gerald,

How are you? You talked about Jonathon's health, but you didn't say how you were doing. Ever since you moved out of the house, you don't talk about yourself. You haven't told me about your apartment, you haven't told me how Fiscus is doing (shedding as usual, of course, stupid me.) You haven't even told me if you've met any "neat" boys yet. (Okay, Phoebe (that's her name) and I slept together once, and yes she is good in bed, and yes if say one word to Jonathon I'll bash your head in. I'm totally serious. Like, totally.) The relationship is purely hands off now (until she dumps her old boyfriend (!!!)) So besides the momentary lull in that area, things are pretty good. The weather is incredible (or should I say "awesome"?) and even though I'm one of the worst

players on the Lacrosse team it's pretty cool. They recruited all these Canadian players thinking it was going to be the next big sport in Southern California. They were way wrong, but at least I can learn a lot from them and we get to travel a lot because only a couple of the schools around here are at our level. Speaking of travelling, it looks like we'll be in New York for a couple days in December to play some of the schools around there, and I was wondering if I could stay at your apartment? The coach says it'd be all right, and I just don't think that I could live at home after being in college, so get back to me if possible. Whatever works out, it'll be nice to see you (it'll be really nice to see you; it's only been a month, but it's been the longest month in recorded history, and I miss NYC.) Well, my psychology paper beckons, so take care and be good (or don't be, I certainly haven't been!)

Love Justin. LA 9/30

Dear Justin,

Tell me more about Phoebe, will Jonathon have little grandchildren running around soon? (I'll probably end up babysitting.) You have to tell me more about her, actually you have to tell Jonathon more about her. I was over there today and all he did was bitch about not getting any letters from you. He said he's mailed two letters, have you gotten them? I checked and he has the right address (or at least the same address I sent my letter to, and apparently you got that one.) Maybe you should phone him.

Yes, you can stay in my apartment, Jonathon said he had the exact same reaction to going home after his first semester in college (I still think he was a little disappointed.) We're both looking forward to seeing you play lacrosse again, especially without those stupid high school crowds. We never really got along with the parents of those jocks and cheerleaders (that one woman, the mother of the head cheerleader was so unbelievable at homecoming. She's the one with the cheap rhinestone necklace and immovable coiffe that was going on about Future Homemakers of America and how good it had been for her daughter. I got this vision of all these bleached-blond cheerleaders in Home Ec. making tuna casseroles and talking about the appliances they wanted when they got married. I almost)

No news on the boyfriend front, I'm too busy and too disinterested to make a concerted social effort. I'm really glad that Jonathon and I managed to stay friends. I miss you!

Love Gerald, 10/10

Dear Gerald,

I'm real pressed for time because Phoebe and I just about to go stand on line for a few hours to get tickets to the They Might Be Giants concert (they're this band that write the craziest songs. They have one called Youth Culture

Killed my Dog which everyone here listens to constantly, and they're Phoebe's favorite group.) Anyways in response to your incessant questions about her, she's a soccer player, one of the best on the women's team (she plays forward.) She's from Vancouver, Canada (and has a really adorable Canadian accent that she's totally self-conscious about.) And she's wonderful and not blonde (one of about three.) I miss you too!

Love Justin,

LA 10/15

Dear Justin,

I'm really glad to hear about you and Phoebe getting along so well. You had such a rough time last summer with Jessica. It has to be one of the most frustrating things for parents when their kids get older, that they can't just say a few comforting words and make the boo-boo (or feelings) all better. Please tell Phoebe hello and that she's welcome in New York anytime.

Jonathon has been having a hard time getting through to you, after you didn't call last week (and he still hasn't gotten any letters, did you send any?) he tried phoning your dorm, but it sounds like the guys on your hall didn't take these messages. He was in the hospital all day today, he made it there himself and called me to take him home because all the tests they took wore him out. He said he wrote you another letter that should be in the mail (it's probably already there by now.) It looks like he might have to go off the AZT, he's probably among the fifty percent of people that can't take it because of bad reactions. His is anemia; the drug's fairly toxic and it seems to be suppressing his bone marrow (he says it's suppressing his brain, because he can't write poetry, but it's probably due to the complete lack of energy.) Just to let you know, Graham died last week Thursday. That's one of the reasons Jonathon tried calling. It was quick, Allen said he'd be all right without Graham, so he just let go and died a few hours later. Herb Spiers (remember him from Fire Island?) doesn't look like he'll hang on much longer. Allen said that he caught Graham's parents going through all his things and putting stuff in a big cardboard box. He asked what they were doing and his father said that they were taking what's rightfully there's. So Allen snuck into their room while they were out at dinner and took all the stuff back. There was still a vase missing though, and Allen casually asked about that the next morning (apparently Graham's parents were too afraid to bring up the re-taken items) and Graham's mom said that the vase had been something Graham had always cherished, and that they couldn't do without it. The next day Allen picked up the phone to call the funeral home, and Graham's dad was one the other extension, yelling at his mom for only getting \$45 for the vase; he told her to polish it. I still have hope for your grandparents. What are you doing for break?

Love Gerald, 10/22

Dear Gerald,

The amount of work I have is inconceivable. Phoebe's a lit major, and has been helping write some of the papers, but I still don't know where some of my teachers get off. We went to the symphony last night and she wore this incredible deep blue dress with a very low cut back (and front.) Quite a difference from muddy shorts and a t-shirt. Actually it was sort of similar to that dress you wore to the party at Alan Berubé's house, except she didn't get smashed and puke all over it (you dufus-head.)

I'd forgotten how damned stoic Jonathon can be sometimes. Why doesn't he take care of himself? I feel like I'm the one doing all the work to stay healthy (counselling and all that B.S.) while he's the one that's sick. I wish you could talk some sense into him, or maybe just some emotion. He can be so damned devoid of affect even when he writes.

I'm going to Vancouver for break with Phoebe. That starts in a couple weeks (if I get through all this hell-sent homework.) I'm looking forward to clean air.

Love Justin,
LA 10/22

Justin,

This is short because things here are hectic right now. Your father was in the hospital for almost a week. He's out now, but he spent a day in intensive care. I've been phoning you every day, I even tried Phoebe's extension (you never told me her last name, but she's the only Phoebe enrolled there) and I haven't found you and you haven't called back. I don't know what you're doing, but you should call your dad now, he's not very well. Apparently the fatigue was due to PCP (he's recovering) and it was a scary few days. Call.

Gerald 11/2

Dear Gerald,

I just got your letter, and I have two things to say: 1) As I told you before, I have a lot of homework, and I'm sorry but it's been hectic here too. I can't play bicoastal nursemaid to every one of Jonathon's little illnesses. 2) Please don't call Phoebe, she's not a part of any of this.

I just tried to call Jonathon, but someone's on the phone and I have to go to class. I'll try later if I have time. If I don't get through to him by the time you get this, tell him I'm glad he's out of the hospital, I know how much he hates it. I'll also try calling from Vancouver next week. Take care of yourself.

Love Justin.
LA 11/8

Dear Justin,

Jonathon and I want you to come home for break, the enclosed check is for airfare. We both know how much you want to be with Phoebe, but he's not doing well, it's not just one of Jonathon's "little illnesses," they've readmitted him to the hospital for observation. I think Herb's memorial upset him too much.

Pneumonia finally got Herb. Thank God.

I don't understand what you think is going on here, but Jonathon really needs you. Get the plane ticket, call Mt. Sinai (he is room 612) to tell him which flight you'll be on, and I'll pick you up at the airport.

See you soon,
Gerald 11/6

Gerald,

I called Jonathon before I left and explained that I already had the plane ticket to Vancouver and that Phoebe's parents were expecting me etc. He sounds awful. All I did was try to make me feel guilty for coming to school in California which really makes me angry because I thought we'd all be through that already. You both have to understand that I'm in college now. I have my own life, I have finally met someone who loves me without a lot of strings attached. Jonathon will be fine. He always is. You should know that by now. I'll call you when I get back to school.

Justin 11/15

Gerald,

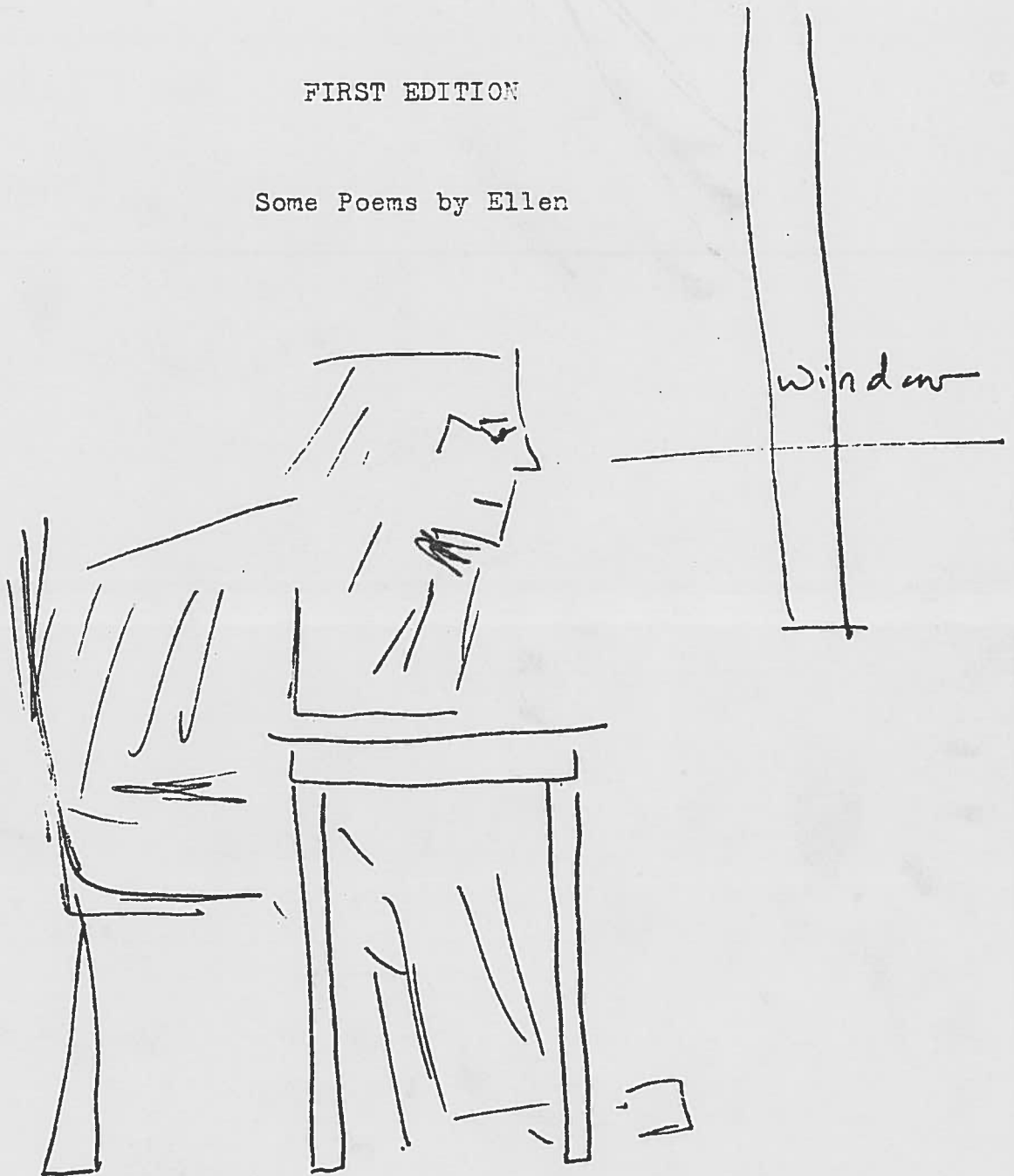
I don't know what the fuck you thought you were doing, but this is the last letter I am writing you. I told you that Phoebe plays no part in these problems three thousand miles away. You had no right to call her and tell her what you did, no matter how sick you *think* my dad is, she hasn't spoken to me since you told her about Jonathon. She probably thinks I've infected her or something. The next thing you'll be doing is calling my Dorm Director or something. I know he's sick, and just because he has pneumonia again doesn't give you or him the right to screw with my life. It's not like he's on his death bed, I'm sure I'll know when it's time for him to die, and it's not now, no matter what you think or what you think Dr. Phillips thinks.

Tell Jonathon I love him, and I'll visit him when the lacrosse team comes there in two weeks.

Justin 11/18

FIRST EDITION

Some Poems by Ellen



The table is too small for
this poet.

I will if you will.

NO. NO.

I will whether you will or not.

pressed in the pressure cooker

NOT I

at least I tried not to be.

wish I could say what I found out

The frying pan, the fire--?

its not quite like that

Its given to us.

Life is given to us.

Our choices, our courage, our downfall,

all given-out stories,

webs inborn in us to spin,

my web, my center, my fire

Credit? take credit?

I can't take credit

all is given. on the ellen-

certificate.

according to
in accordance with
(charm, wit) of
alone in a tempest
delighted
alone for myself
alone with struggles
opened up apple barrel
hang on to aloneless
hold on to the center of aloneness

Diamond

Lone-ly

three conversations...

1. Listen Ellen I believe in non-monogamy.

I just have to grow in different ways
with different people.

Well, I don't want to do it. I think it
just turns into a lot of pain...but I'll try it.

2. Listen Ellen I've just fallen in love that's all.

I have to leave town & go be with her.

3. Well, ---

We destroy

We re-write

We re-make

We smell & touch & make love

breathing is good

we smell so good together

we argue so good together.

I shall argue my desire of her.

She is green plants to me.

She is a socialist revolution to me

(and not just my own private one)

Where are the po-em words

for her from me?

THEY'RE COMING

If I want to reach Amanda

where do I reach for?

O.K.

closed face,

open up to me.

I will weasel around you

and seduce you.

Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday

I been yer lover, honey

almost fer two years

and two of yer birthdays,

and I like it, bein with you,

it's got substance.

I'm writin' a poem to you
I'm writin' a poem to you.
Don't believe what I say
Don't believe what I say
Believe what I do.

Look at who holds the power, the power
and look at how it gets used.
Look at who holds the money, the money
look what it makes us do.

Believe what I do

Believe who I love.

Lets let it all come through.

She drinks

She reads books

She is alive.

* * *

I am a detailer, a chronicler of my time.

I've been through a lot of my times'
groovy trips, not as a success or star
or even solid middle line upholder in
any of them.

I am a woman with my mind made up.

My writing is uneven

Soon, it will not be

(Where do the words
come from inside of me)

The spiritual lover woman
who offers you intensity
and a home in the country
is workingclass!
must be something political in that.

She's not into groovy trips.
She got real angry when I tried
to talk about
the economic basis of your leaving

me for her--

how long I shall say in my letter,
do you think your intense love will last
given conditions for lesbians now.
given our need for groovy trips
[what else is there but pain].

In your home in the country
Four walls and "her"---

how long do you give it?

our "co-munity" is young, (white, middle class)
our co-munity is in big cities.

What bonds can we make

beyond romance, substitute for security?

and lesbian cultural capitalism

substitute for community

beyond the cities

San Francisco

beyond the graveyard:

tomb of Sappho.

What bonds, longtime lover of mine. The letter ends.

What we do in joy
what we do in despair
what we lack, what we are
how we can complete
what we have begun
with ourselves.

How we can order our own desperation
how we can sustain
ourselves, ourself, the very own,
breath and body,
dream and delight.

How we can
command and contain.

How, indeed, and what
can we then walk this earth,
go through all the stages
that are required of us,
pass through the ages we
are offered
and, then, all the time
what can we be
when we can't answer to the
time
to the day, to the hour
the hour envelops, disorders
awakes us, forces us, causes us
to draw the line

ELLEN'S POEM

Wu Wei

Letting be; cherishing being and time; being in it.

See the positive intent and action of the Way.

Sits drowsing in the sun

Me-Me-Me

Sings on mesa

Bringing up the sun

Me-Me-Me

Warm sun, warm blood

Singing

Desert/city/desert

San Francisco window on the sun

Green chair, carrot juice, healing

Going toward that desert

Mesa, singing for the sun

Singing for the world

The children, the people

I am singing for the world also

Me-me-me-me

I, the same warm skin, warm blood

Wearing this dance as we go

Around the sun

This skin, this daily self, these acts

Poems and songs of the desert

Are in my mind. Deep in me

Later note. I have to live with my own record.

I have to live with my own journal. If it embarrasses me, its part of it. Maybe its the whole of it. I have, I must reveal myself to myself. Live with its shame, fear, self-hatred, ugliness, POVERTY.

Reuven Goldfarb, Cynthia O'Connell and Julie Roberts are responsible for selecting the material for this collection. It is a representative sampling of Ellen's later writings. Other collections may focus on earlier periods in her life.

Ellen Margaret Clark was born in Schenectady, New York on June 6, 1944, was raised in Syracuse, attended Barnard College in New York for one year, lived in Japan for several months in 1962, and received a B.A. in English from Syracuse University in 1967.

That same year she moved to San Francisco, worked as a mail delivery person and did many other kinds of work over the next thirteen years. She was a founding member of the Mother Courage Commune and the 29th St. Feminist Day Care Center, and an active participant in many cultural and political movements.

This is her first published work and, regrettably, it is being printed posthumously. Ellen died of intestinal cancer in San Francisco on December 10, 1980.

Publishing date: June 6, 1982

This is 10 of thirty-six numbered copies.