

Joshua Aidan Dunn
Wreden Prize Essay

In my six years in San Francisco, the saddest day I can remember is the day of the flood. No human lives were lost that day, but something precious came close to disappearing forever.

I received the urgent phone call just after 9am, opening time: the GLBT Historical Society, where I was a volunteer, needed help – immediately. A plumbing problem in the offices directly above theirs had resulted in a flood in the Historical Society’s archives. I took the next train downtown, and joined the small army of volunteers ferrying soaking boxes of archival materials to dry ground. The periodicals had been hit the hardest. Many irreplaceable early newspapers had been reduced to a pulp. The acid-free archival boxes had become dripping wet coffins, powerless to save their precious contents.

As I walked home from the train that night, I took a mental inventory of the GLBT periodicals dating back to the 1960s that I had carefully stored in the back of my closet. It occurred to me that several of them might now be the only copies left in the world. The importance of private collections, even small ones like mine, hit me like it never had before.

My most extensive collection covers an extremely narrow genre. In order to be included, materials must meet three qualifications: 1) Written by transgender people; 2) Primarily intended for a transgender audience; 3) About transgender issues. I have collected mostly books, although I do have some periodicals, ‘zines, and even comic books. These documents span from the 1980s to the present. When taken together, they trace the trajectory of the transgender movement, particularly

through the 1990s – how individual and community identities, politics, and self-representation have evolved over the years. I have intentionally kept this collection very narrow; I am most interested in dialogues that were happening within the transgender community as it evolved.

Collections documenting the transgender community are fairly uncommon; collections like mine that focus the FTM (female-to-male) transgender experience are even more so. FTMs are often far less visible. FTM communities and support groups tend to be clandestine, and smaller than those of male-to-female (MTF) transgender people. This makes early FTM communities especially fascinating to study. Many FTMs, already keenly aware of the sexism and limitations that they faced as women, write about becoming more deeply aware of gender inequalities when they became men. I value reading these insights in the works I have collected. My collection reflects FTM takes on history, art, anthropology, and religion.

Lou Sullivan, an early FTM pioneer, is one of the inspirations for my collection. Like me, Sullivan was involved in the GLBT Historical Society. He published a groundbreaking booklet in the 1980s, *Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser And Transsexual*. Sullivan's publication, available by mail-order, reached FTMs all over the world, many of whom had never before known that others like them existed. In addition his extensive activist work, Sullivan published an FTM newsletter that still exists today.

I acquired some of Lou Sullivan's materials by being in the right place at the right time. When a transgender nonprofit dissolving its library, I obtained early FTM International Newsletters, as well as a signed copy of Sullivan's biography of Jack

“Bee” Garland. Every time I open the cover and see the careful blue cursive of the handwritten dedication, penned just months before his death, I am overwhelmed with a sense of nearness to the past.

My collection evolved organically, as I acquired more books that interested me. In San Francisco, I frequently prowl the shelves at Aardvark Books and Community Thrift Store. Because of the stores’ location in the Castro-Mission area, they are repositories for incredible books. I have found such out-of-print gems as *Dagger* for \$1.00 at Community Thrift, and my searches of Aardvark have yielded treasures like *Body Alchemy*. While I mostly use local sources, I occasionally purchase new or rare books online, including Rev. Justin Tanis’ transgender theology book.

Willie Walker, the founding archivist of the GLBT Historical Society, also inspired my collection. I had the privilege of knowing him for the last two years of his life. He taught me about keeping archives, and gave me some of his treasured books to begin my collection. I hope to learn more of what Walker knew about archives, especially proper preservation techniques and archival storage; I’m sure that some of the older, more valuable materials I have should not be sitting on a bookshelf. The memory of that flood haunts me – I worry about the potential devastation that another flood or an earthquake could do to my precious collection.

Walker collected materials for most of his life, even tearing down Haight-Ashbury concert posters from telephone poles in his final months. I aspire to build my collections as lovingly and meticulously as he did. When I have the resources to increase my collection, I hope to acquire several expensive and/or rare books. The

Routledge Transgender Studies Reader is one of these; it is the first and definitive academic work on the subject. Another is *Self: A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology*. Michael Dillon, an English doctor and the first person to medically transition from female to male, published this extremely rare book in 1946. I'm hoping that I have Walker's uncanny ability to dig up obscure works like this one.

Some teenagers have movie stars for idols, and dream of someday meeting them. My idols were the people in my books. When I moved to San Francisco, my version of this dream came true: many of them became my colleagues and friends.

Now, knowing many of the writers and photography subjects, I feel an even deeper personal connection to my collection. In some ways, flipping through my books and periodicals is like looking at a family history, or doing genealogy research. Through these works, I can see what my uncles, aunts, big brothers, and big sisters were doing and thinking in the years before I met them. Since arriving in San Francisco, I have become a part of this scene, and it fascinates me to know that my story will be written into the next chapter of community history.

Joshua Aidan Dunn
 Wreden Prize Submission
 Semi-Annotated Bibliography

Please note: All materials are listed in chronological order. Particularly significant books are annotated. Books are listed separately from periodicals, 'zines, and other works.

Books:

Sullivan, Louis. *Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser And Transsexual*. San Francisco: the author, 1985 (second edition).

Early booklet by Lou Sullivan, an FTM (female-to-male) transsexual pioneer who founded the organization FTM international. This illustrated booklet gives a history of FTMs and "passing women", gives tips for passing as male, and discusses FTM transsexual surgeries available at the time. This is probably the earliest resource guide published for FTMs. In the 1980s Sullivan mailed copies to FTMs all over the world, shedding light on a subject that was basically unknown at the time.
 (Out of Print.)

Sullivan, Louis. *From Female to Male: The Life of Jack Bee Garland*. Boston, MA: Alyson Publications, 1990.

This is a biography of Jack "Bee" Garland, an early FTM or "passing woman", who lived from 1869-1936. Jack, a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army in the Philippines and a newspaper man in San Francisco, was discovered upon his death to be biologically female. This may be the earliest biography of a "passing woman" where the subject is interpreted as FTM by the biographer, and also where the biographer is a transgender person. This was Sullivan's last book before his death of AIDS in 1991
 (Out of Print; signed by Author.)

Feinberg, Leslie. *Stone Butch Blues*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1993.

This novel tells the story of Jess Goldberg, a working-class Jewish lesbian growing up in a factory town in the 1950s. Feinberg tells the story of Jess coming out as butch in the bars and factories of the '60s, deciding to take testosterone and live as male in the '70s, and finally finding community in New York City in the '80s. This story has many parallels to author Leslie Feinberg's own life. Since publication, this book has served as a mirror for FTM transgender people, many of whom see their own stories represented here for the first time.

Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

This is Male-to-female (MTF) transgender activist Kate Bornstein's first book, and one of the earliest transgender books to reject the idea that transgender people must identify as strictly male or female. The book is a collection of Bornstein's thoughts, a play, and various quotations and photographs from the transgender community of the early '90s. *Gender Outlaw* provoked rage from those who

disagreed with Bornstein's ideas of non-binary gender identity, but was praised by other transgender people who had not previously seen their identities represented in print.

Dagger: On Butch Women. Burana, Lily, Roxxie Rosen, Linnea Due. San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press, 1994.

This book explores the identity of masculine (butch) lesbian women through a combination of photographs, essays, and poetry. It is one of the earliest works coming out of the lesbian community to explore the tension between butch and FTM identities, an issue that would explode in the early 2000s. The authors are members of the San Francisco lesbian/butch community. (Out of Print.)

Feinberg, Leslie. Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996.

This book examines transgender figures throughout human history. Feinberg (author of *Stone Butch Blues*, above) examines some well-known historical figures, as well as some more obscure personalities, and claims these people as "transgender warriors." Richly illustrated with photographs, especially of transgender people over the last 50 years, this work is probably the first study of gender-variant individuals throughout history, using the lens of the modern concept of "transgender."

Cameron, Loren. Body Alchemy: Transsexual Portraits. San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press, 1996.

This is a groundbreaking collection of photographs of FTM transsexuals by Loren Cameron, FTM photographer. *Body Alchemy* includes "before" and "after" transition photographs of various FTMs, individuals' portraits paired with their stories, some images of FTM surgery results, and some nude self-portraits of Cameron. This collection of beautiful photographs may be the world's first book of transsexual self-portraits, particularly nude self-portraits.

Queen, Carol and Lawrence Schimel, Eds. Pomosexuals: Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality. San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press, 1997.

As the title of this anthology reflects, *Pomosexuals* tells the stories of individuals whose gender or sexuality do not fit within the traditional categories of lesbian and gay identity. While not all of the authors included in *Pomosexuals* are transgender, this book was nonetheless a definitive work for the transgender community as it brought together the voices of many individuals at the margins to form a common queer identity. This book helped shape the way the LGBTQ community thinks about queerness, gender, and sexuality.

Scholinski, Daphne. The Last Time I Wore a Dress: A Memoir. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 1997.

As a young girl, Daphne (now Dylan) Scholinski was put in a psychiatric hospital with a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder – she was too much of a tomboy. This book tells Scholinski's story of the years she spent in mental institutions because of

her gender identity, but it also tells the larger story of many transgender individuals who have had similar experiences. Scholinski was the first writer to expose the horrific abuses that many gender-variant youth (and adults) endure at the hands of psychiatric care providers when they are diagnosed with “Gender Identity Disorder”.

Wilchins, Riki Anne. *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender*. Canada: Firebrand Press, 1997.

Israel, Gianna E. and Donald E. Tarver, M.D. *Transgender Care: Recommended Guidelines, Practical Information & Personal Accounts*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1997.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998.

Camilleri, Anna, Ivan E. Coyote, ZoeEakle, and Lyndell Montgomery. *Boys Like Her: Transfiction by Taste This*. Vancouver, BC, Canada: Press Gang Publishers, 1998.

Lagrace Volcano, Del, and Judith “Jack” Halberstam. *The Drag King Book*. London, England: Serpent’s Tail, 1999.

Judith “Jack” Halberstam and Del Lagrace Volcano are, respectively, a drag king and an FTM, English and American, and a writer and a photographer. They came together to produce *The Drag King Book*, a work that combines photography and text to document drag kings and FTMs on two continents. While the book sometimes conflates drag king and FTM identities, it provides an excellent portrait of a certain subculture and era.

Coyote, Ivan E. *Close to Spider Man*. Vancouver, BC, Canada: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000.

Raised in the remote Yukon territory of Canada, Ivan E. Coyote is a gifted storyteller and writer. In this book, Ivan tells tales of growing up as a gender-variant child in rural Canada. The story where Ivan removes the top of a two-piece bathing suit, and passes as a boy for a summer’s worth of swim lessons, is often retold in transgender communities. Ivan’s stories and public readings are very popular with FTMs across North America.

Kaldera, Raven. *Hermaphroditities: A Transgender Spirituality Workbook*. USA: Xlibris Corporation, 2001.

Hermaphroditities was written as a hands-on guide to transgender spirituality for followers of different Pagan traditions. Kaldera opens each chapter with a different myth that has a transgender hero, including Shiva, Aphrodite Urania, and Agdistis, and closes each chapter with a suggested ritual or exercise. Kaldera also delves into theology, discussing the place of spirituality in the trans community, and that of transgender people in spiritual communities.

Kaldera, Raven and Hanne Blank. Best Transgender Erotica. Canada: Circlet Press, 2002.

While an enormous amount of “tranny porn,” exists, it features MTFs exclusively and is aimed at a heterosexual male audience. Kaldera and Blank’s book is the first community-based anthology of transgender-produced literary erotica. This book encompasses a broad range of FTM and MTF writers and subjects.

Conover, Pat. Transgender Good News. Silver Spring, MD: New Wineskins Press, 2002.

Tanis, Justin. Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Rev. Justin Tanis’ book is the definitive work on transgender theology. Frequently cited in subsequent articles, books, and sermons on the topic, Tanis’ book sets the tone for the discussion of transgender issues in Christianity. The appendices include transgender baptism and name-change rituals, as well as other liturgical resources.

Green, Jamison. Becoming A Visible Man. USA: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004.

Roughgarden, Joan. Evolution’s Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.

This work by Stanford University evolutionary biologist Joan Roughgarden, explores the diversity of gender and sexuality in the natural world. Roughgarden’s work is one of the first to explore the topic of transgender from a biological standpoint. The book questions the common gender-studies notions of gender as a social construction, which has previously excluded serious consideration of biological contributions to sex, gender, and sexuality.

McCall Tigert, Leanne and Maren C. Tirabassi. Transgendering Faith: Identity, Sexuality & Spirituality. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2004.

Valerio, Max Wolf. The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transition from Female to Male. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2006.

Periodicals:

Chrysalis: The Journal of Transgressive Gender Identities. Vol. 2 No. 5, Fall 1997/Winter 1998. "Intersex Awakening Issue." Ed. Dallas Denny, American Educational Gender Information Service [AEGIS]. Decatur, GA.

FTM Newsletter. FTM International, Summer 1999. Issue #45: "Summer Reading Issue!!" Jed Bell, Editor. San Francisco, CA.

FTM Newsletter. FTM International, Fall/Winter 2000. Issue #46: "Youth Issue." Jed Bell, Editor; Shermin Wood, Guest Co-Editor. San Francisco, CA.

FTM Newsletter. FTM International, Summer/Fall 2001. Issue #49. Ben Singer and Garin Chad Wiggins, Editors. Philadelphia, PA.

Koyama, Emi. Interchange, Issue #1: "Emi Defends Falwell, WTO, Eminem, Dr. Laura, & OCAI!?" Portland, OR: www.eminism.org, November 2001.

Koyama, Emi. Interchange, Issue #2: "Haven't We Had Enough of 'Michigan' Yet?" Portland, OR: www.eminism.org, July 2002.

FTMi Newsletter. FTM International, Spring 2002. Issue #51. Garin C. Wiggins, Editor. Philadelphia, PA.

The Transsexual News Telegraph. Spring 1996. "A Special Issue On Body Image and Surgery." Gail Sondegaard, Editor. San Francisco, CA.

Zines and Other Materials:

FTM Resource Guide. Sixth Edition, October 1999. FTM International. San Francisco, CA.

Koyama, Emi. The Transfeminist Manifesto, and other essays on Transfeminism. Portland, OR, 2000.

TransProtection: Protect Your Parts! Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center (LYRIC). San Francisco, CA: published approx. early 2000s.

Koyama, Emi. Transfeminism: a collection. Portland, OR: The Feminist Conspiracy Press, 2001.

Kamentsky, Gina. "T-Gina: The Tale of a fabulous Transgendered gal and her search for validation and a decent cup of coffee." Somerville, MA: Pixeltoon, 2002.

Lindsey, Erin. "Venus Envy." #1. USA: Maniacal Platypus Publishing, 2003.