

Bobby Miller

## My Life as I Remember it & Other Poems

### ↵ My Life As I Remember It ↵

At two years old I whistled at the mail man  
and set a pattern for years to come.

At four I danced in the sunshine of our front yard an interpretive dance, to the Gods.  
The neighbours swore I was retarded.

At six I told my classmates that I was from another galaxy light years away.

Mrs. Jackson our first grade teacher thought it necessary to alert my parents.

By ten Mr. Grady the art teacher was alarmed by the colours I chose to paint with;  
red, black and purple. In junior high I was considered weird and neat

at the same time because I dressed funny  
and my parents had tattoos and Harleys.

My ninth grade report card was all D's and F's except for art and music class.

All written reports from the faculty stated "Talks too much and daydreams."

Some things never change.

I watched the Beatles arrive in America

and decided I wanted to go to England.

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I saw hair grow over ears and down over collars and onto shoulders and backs all over the country.

I walked with the first protest march in Washington and every other for twenty years and we still have crooks running the country.

I sat in streets, cafes, corner bars and coffee houses and listened to the beat of a new generation

being born.

I went through puberty with Janis and Jimi and took LSD when it wasn't cut with speed or poison.

I smoked pot in fifth grade and laughed all day at a fat substitute teacher named Mrs. Potty.

I dated black boys at fifteen in an all white Klan neighbourhood.

I hitch hiked to New York from Baltimore

with three queens in hot pants, clogs, and long bleached shags at sixteen and blew truckers all up and down the turnpike.

I've been addicted to MDA, tequila, LSD, speed, dope, coke, pot, Quaaludes, mescaline, nicotine, sex and the mysteries of the night all my life until I hit twenty-eight,

since then it's only night life and sex.

I've walked barefoot on twenty-four hundred degree hot coals and not been burnt.

Greta Garbo grabbed me from behind in traffic and saved my life.

I've had green hair, blue hair, black hair, red hair, no hair, long hair and all before 1973.

I'm happy to still have hair.

I've walked Sunset Blvd., Polk St., Forty-second, Hollywood and Vine, Christopher St., Fire Island, Provincetown, Key West, Bombay, Miami Beach, London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Montreal and every gay ghetto listed in the book,

and I'm still looking for the perfect lover.

I've lived as a woman for a solid year and had tits. Thank you.

I've dated black men, white men, brown men, red men, yellow men. and several delicious women. I've been engaged, married, in love, divorced separated and broken hearted.

I've had syphilis, gonorrhoea, crabs, scabies, haemorrhoids, hepatitis, appendicitis, dermatitis and the flu at least fifty times,

I feel better now at fifty-five than I did at twenty-five.

I've spent the last eleven years meditating, concentrating, contemplating, applying, educating, investigating and instigating a higher ideal.

I've been a born again Christian, a crystal holding new age visualisation-ist, a Buddhist, a Hindu,

a Christian Scientist, a universalist, a bullshit artist, a seeker of truth, a charlatan. a holy roller,

a shamanistic dancer, a guru, a disciple and an enigma to my friends.

I'm a triple Gemini natural blonde who loves God and takes time out to smell the roses.

I've been around the block at least ten times,

and I'm ready to go again until these feet won't carry me anymore.

I have always believed in the power of love

and that the groove lies somewhere between the heart and the genitals.

I have never been deliberately cruel and I've never hit anyone with my fist, I hope I never have to.

I've been a whore, a saint, a sinner, a healer,

a heathen, an actor, a poet, a drag queen, a straight man, a teenage zombie, a punk rocker, a greaser, a clone, a faggot, a street walker, a sky writer,

a vegetarian, a teacher, a student, a wanderer,

a caretaker, a wild thing, a father, a son. a yogi

and a fierce hairdresser.

I've been lost, found, confused, absolved, punished and rewarded.

I've stared death in the face and wondered why not me, yet?

I've talked and listened and heard and seen and been shown the way.

I've played follow the leader,

pin the tail on the donkey,

five card stud

and Russian roulette with a silver handled 38. I've lost eight thousand in cash gambling

and won five hundred on a bet in less than a minute.

I've seen the eye of God,

and been touched by her hand.

I've seen miracles happen

and been disappointed dozens of times.

I've been almost everywhere, met almost everyone,

seen almost everything, done almost all of it,

and I'm still waiting to be discovered.

The night has a thousand eyes and I'm a gypsy dancer

who's still hungry for more.

### ↳ **The Race is on** ↩

*Where did all the time go?*

Like yesterday when I was full of the future?

Laying plans out loud

with hope blaring in my ears.

Dreams of becoming the whole thing.

Up to here with destiny.

A new outfit to wear you and me out.

Caught now in the cross fire of change,  
standing at the entrance to middle age,  
trying to adjust to the new music I hear now  
in my inner ear,  
as I step from the mirror to gag at the sight of  
the rapidly arriving chicken flesh  
on my hands and crow's feet on my face.  
Protruding middle,  
a spare tire on the road to the future.

No time, no energy to tackle the fate of my ever changing body.  
Lazy from the freedom of a beautiful youth  
that showed the promise of forever.

The race is on now.

The game remains the same.

The rules are different than before.

The stakes are higher now.

from jumping jack flash

to flash in the pan.

Remember when?

How old is old anyhow?

To lift or not to life,

that is the question.

Pull it taunt and tight enough to smile a seamless smile

that reels in the younger men.

Going fishing at fifty.

Baiting the hook with collagen injections

and a brand new hair weave.

Running the race against time.

What come first, happiness

or running out of skin to stretch?

Work to pay Dr. Dream weaver  
Help buy his wife a new Cadillac  
and him a bigger cigar.

Great plans for the golden years?  
Nah, I'd rather just sit and watch the sun set.  
Watch my middle age spread,  
spread with ease and comfort.  
And know that the reward is  
just being alive after all these years.

### ↳Ode To Fallen Heroes↳

*Wearing my gay badge of courage*  
I thrill at the call of,  
“Hey Miss Thing”  
Makes me proud.  
Years spent dodging  
rocks and beer bottles,  
insults and injuries  
have made me

a veteran

of the gay holy wars.

For I still remember

the lost days of

dancing between men.

To travel the streets

of any small town or city

in 1965

without a minimum

of two pieces of I.D.

was a guarantee

of harassment and possible arrest.

Any man dressed as a woman

needed three male garments

to meet the legal limit

of approval.

Two socks

and a pair of BVDs

was a foolproof formula

for escape.

That and a twenty  
kept you out of the paddy wagon.

We called the police Alice

Then, now and always.

Drag shows were

the only entertainment,

complete with trophies,

cash and a cute guy

waiting at the home stretch.

Every queen dreamed

of being crowned

goddess of the night.

Barbara, Judy, Bette and Ethel

were the Madonnas of the day.

Glamour mixed

with cheap perfume

filled the air

as we dodged

the hatred of our abusers.

Heads low,  
voices in a whisper,  
we were beaten back  
into the shadows  
to lick our wounds.

Living the lie  
in daylight,  
of a life so full  
of laughter,  
as we awaited each day's end.

Safety in the dark.  
Safety in numbers.

Like nuns we travelled  
Two by two.  
The years spent hiding.  
The lives lost to the shadows.  
The names call to me now from the sorrows.

DeeDee, Kathy, Lil Bit,  
Shelly, Christine, Chrysis.  
Their voices crackling

with electric laughter,  
the world will never see their smiles.

Taken too soon.

Not by an illness  
that knows no shame,  
but by stupidity and hatred.

Inhuman mortal souls  
without heart or compassion,  
stomping flesh and lipstick  
into the sidewalk  
and spitting out  
the venom and hatred  
of generations before them,  
passed down through  
ignorance and fear.

So long ago,

Yet somewhere tonight

Out in the heartlands

A high pitched voice

With a low growl

Is calling out for help.

Can you hear it?

Sleep not my sisters.

There is work yet ahead.

Sleep not children,

for if we love the glitter

the magic,

the celebration

found in the portrayal

of the goddess,

we must help

to keep the dream alive.

## Author Bio

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