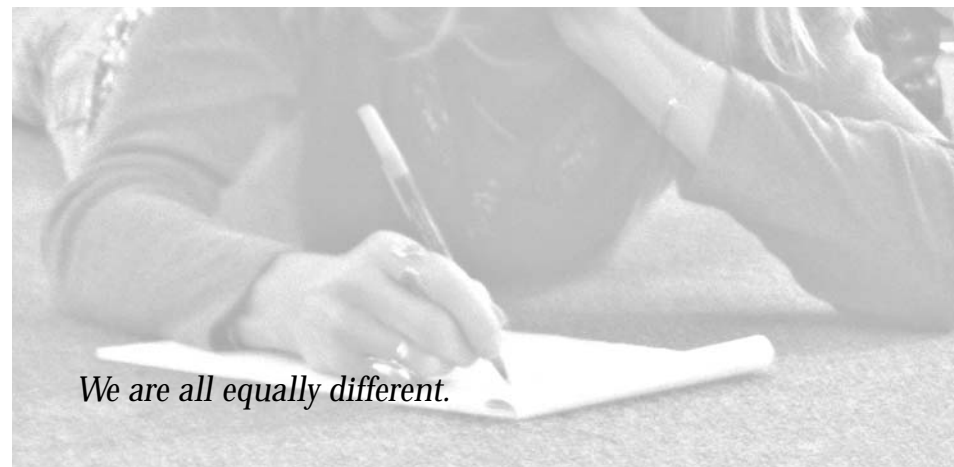
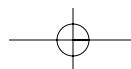


**“Girls in Disguise”**  
by *Kelly Ann Marsh*

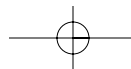


*We are all equally different.*



See that girl over there behind the disguise?  
It's too bad she listens to all of the lies,  
Cause each night she just stays home and cries.  
Living her life just makes her want to shout,  
Cause the testosterone society just won't let her out.  
That shorthaired white male seems to have the clout.  
If she could come out for just a single day,  
And give herself fresh air and a little play,  
But she can't cause she knows she'd just want to stay.  
Heaven knows what would happen if she were found out.  
Her views, ethics, and morals would be in doubt.  
Though she could still survive if her heart was stout.  
If she ever gets the courage to look around she'll see,  
Life's full of support from you and from me.  
For if we all band together, then we'll truly be free.

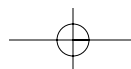
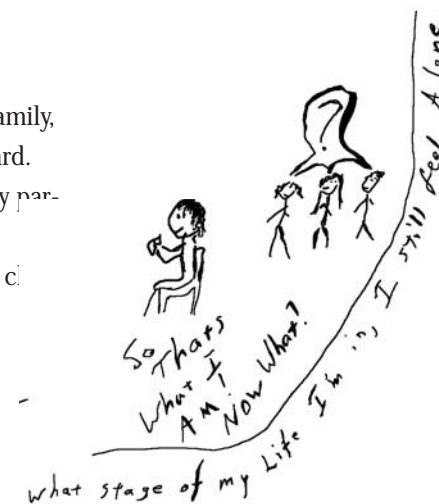
But this sad girl remains blind to the fact  
That she can't break free of that out-dated pact.  
You know the one she made with her dad way back.  
That boys are stern and hard, and they don't cry.  
Far away from their emotions they do hide.  
They cut their hair and to soft things they deny.  
To this lonely girl my heart doth weep,  
But there are also those who emerge from the sleep.  
There's a place in my heart for each of them I keep.  
So when you speak to some "guy" and happen to see,  
That behind the eyes there's a soft frailty,  
Give courage and support that their soul may be free.  
By aiding each in the world to realize,  
The truth of our identity inside,  
We'll never again have to mourn another girl in disguise.

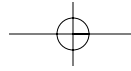


Gender identity is how you perceive yourself. When I was a child growing up, I felt like a random puzzle piece. I was a stereotypical boy-not emotional-living in a "man's world," but I related more closely with females. I wanted to be a boy to balance with my sister. I wanted to be a namesake for my father-it was what my parents thought was supposed to happen.

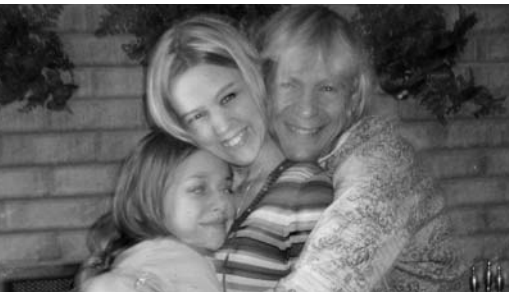


I agreed I would try to fill the apparent void in the family, however, I mostly remember being alone and awkward. There was little informative communication from my parents, little positive reinforcement. I wanted to be me, but to be this; I felt that I would disappoint my parents out of what they wanted. I am tired of being what others want. I want to be me. I feel guilty that I am alive.





Confidence, faith, and awareness help me feel safe.  
I grew up in the south.  
To coin a phrase, I will not move to the back of the bus.  
to raise the awareness of the general public so that in turn  
they realize, "wow-it's not right to take a segment of our  
population and treat them as if they are less than we are."



I know that I don't have to fit into someone else's box.  
I can be free to be me.  
I am a gender outlaw.  
I am not alone.  
I will open my soul and my heart; leave them vulnerable to the  
world so that the world may better understand that its fears are  
irrational and unfounded.  
To be oneself, is to be true.

