

ABSTRACT

BOY PANTS: A MEMOIR OF MY BODY

This present work was completed with an abundance of resistance. What started out as two manuscripts converged into one, multiple aspects of my life that I tried desperately to keep separate: my gender and lesbian identity and spending my formative years with my father. Instead I separated or compartmentalized where I could, salvaging my lesbian identity as my own and my gender identity as my creation. I thought by reading my life through gender and through a lesbian lens, I would come up with a certain version of how I came to be, one that I could live with.

I ended up with a pretty narrow version of myself, one completely divided, one that desired integration with that childhood self who was so influenced by my father. It wasn't until I realized the depth and complexity of the ways in which my gender identity was shaped by my childhood with my father that I realized the damage of living such a split/divided existence, one where there is no clear narrative, one where I had to make it up as I went along—narrative by necessity.

As I began writing with an honest lens, I saw how my narrative converged with others who shared the same or similar experience, straight and gay alike, and my sadness about my loneliness and difference as a child eased. Once I let these multiple narratives converge on the page, I gained a deeper understanding—a much larger compassion for my own existence and for the many others who share in this journey.

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