

# To a friend

BY MICHAEL HENSCHEL

I would like to go on about a few things; nothing original. I'm not sure if there is anything original to say — only new ways to say it. I hope.

Today I have a resource. I have a friend who is trying on the new-ness in herself. I think I have just attached a new meaning to that word. I could go on, for her, about lying to herself, to yourself. And I could ask why do we lie? How? What do you lie for? To protect yourself?

To protect yourself.

That's a good theme. Protection from what, from whom? From the *them* who don't even know who you are; from the *us*, our *friends* and family? How about protection from ourselves so that we don't reject ourselves because of the lies *the them and the us and we* have spread, about you and me. I could go on about the methods we use to hate *them*; then what *they* use to hate everything — when the hate serves no one and never will *serve*.

I could talk about what all the secrets do to you. (or my favourite) What it is like to never walk down the street holding hands; because you're afraid (some think that fear is healthy). I could talk about how people forget that you are gay — just

because you don't look it and you're not a misogynist, or the female equivalent.

I could talk about a thousand things, as you can guess. I could write about how important it is for you to be vocal about who you are, for the *us* and especially the *them*.

I could talk about all of those things and more. But I'm not sure of the audience. Why should I waste

*"What it is like to never walk down the street holding hands; because you are afraid."*

my time and energy on "preaching to the converted". Don't get me wrong, I think things like this supplement are of extraordinary importance, but the only people who really read the supplement are gay and lesbian. I know I wouldn't want some amateur, or even professional for that matter, telling me what it means to be gay. Telling me how to face the closet door. I've been through the door, my door. No one else will ever go through the same thing. No one will have my mother reject them and then come back even to the point

where she likes the man I lived with, until recently. Unfortunately, my mother still likes him.

But some things must remain constant. All doors open in and I can see you there, standing with your foot braced against your door trying desperately not to open it. And at the same time hoping without hope that the warmth you feel from outside will be something of which you may become a part. maybe you don't even realize you are gay.

Then once the opportunity arises, there is no sound from outside, you consider:

you read a newspaper article or see something on the news, maybe this article. You're sure everyone thinks you are gay, for no reason. *They* don't even notice that you are alive! They will not notice that you have read the whole *Gazette*. slowly; slowly turn the door knob. Hold fast with all your might but you take the risk.

you see your first gay film or read a book. Something concrete something that you have to spend money on. I bought *Maurice*. Maybe you bought *Ruby Fruit Jungle*.

Then through frustration and courage and hope and need you pull the door a little, with all your might

still braced against it. you write it down. or tell someone off the cuff as a joke or just to be eighties — of course they never believe you, or do they? And no one ever finds the stories you've written because you could never have the courage...

Then the poking and prodding that you have done through that minute little crack in the door has not been rewarded with pain, and you ease the pressure of your foot. A larger crack, a ray of sunshine.

You stop laughing at gay jokes, or at the very least you stop telling them. You think more seriously about who you are. You give up dating because you realize that you will never find the right member of the opposite sex — except as a shield to use against *them*.

You get scared. You try to put a little more pressure against the door.

Your parents talk about marriage or about someone who is queer (not queer nation) and they don't know how much hurt they have caused, because either word is damaging. You read the walls in the bathroom: KILL FAGS. DEATH TO QUEERS.

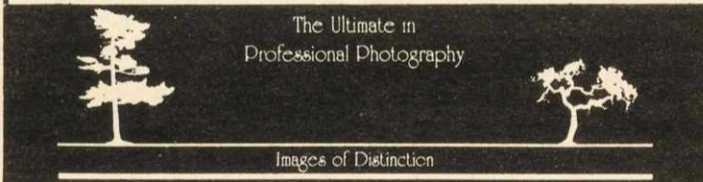
You hear that all the feminists are dykes that all waiters are gay. You're told that you won't be accepted, ever.

But the door won't budge backwards because every push makes you feel sick to your stomach.

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## GRADUATION PORTRAITS

The contract for DAL PHAROS Yearbook Graduation Portraits has been awarded to Robert Calnen, Master Photographer of Halifax. Sitting Fee : for four poses - \$10.50 and up. For an appointment call 454 - 4745 Calnen of Canada Ltd.



## CAMPUS COMEDY FINALS

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 15th  
See Us in The Grawood  
La Laughs are on Us



## Writing on the wall

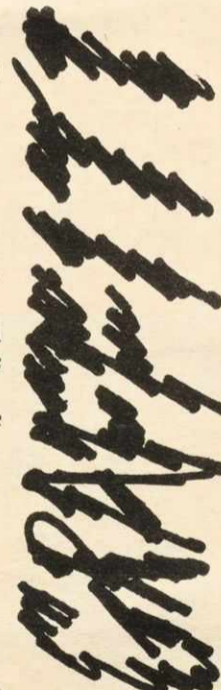
Graffiti on the theme of gay white men are...

full of shit. Gay white men are full of shit. Why are gay white men full of shit?

Gay white men are full of shit because they enjoy lives of privilege and don't give a fuck about Others.

Oh sure, relative to straight men, gay white men have it tough. Others have it tougher. Others? Imagine "women" (strange that women would be considered "Others", no?) *you boys still don't have to feel like a piece of meat when you walk into a hardware store, or be treated like you can't possibly know what you're talking about* and "persons of colour" (don't you love that for the sheer beauty of its awkwardness).

The gay white male experiences a peculiar paradox indeed; a life in equal parts diminished by homophobia and enhanced (by virtue



of genitalia) by an assured if somewhat marginalized place in the ruling councils.

A warning: because of this paradox, gay white male shit is particularly noxious. Because gay white men have experienced lives of privilege and oppression, they should (a moral imperative) understand and do everything they can to abate the oppression of Others.

They don't. Notwithstanding a functioning brain and a caring heart, empathy alone should like gay white men to Others. *After all, it's only your dick and skin colour that separates you from all those you're ignoring.*

The questions (and they're pregnant with recriminations) are why gay white men are not turning their special Power to Others' s advantage. Why gay white men are not swelling the marches and the fora exploring Others' experience. Why

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### FIRST AID COURSES OFFERED

St. John Ambulance Emergency First Aid Courses will be held at Dalhousie over the next few months. There is a \$25.00 charge which covers the cost of the work books and pamphlets. The one day sessions are scheduled for:

February 19th      March 7th  
February 21st      March 21st

From 8:30 am. to 4:30 pm. Registration and payment must be made prior to the day of the course and a confirmation will be made.

For more information, or to register, Contact the Safety Office at 494 - 2495



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