

Gaza's Suicide
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By Mitchell Koss

Primary Mullers
(Howard Blume &
Harold Meyerson)

John Grisham's
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By Oliver Stone

LA

Born To Act Up

The life
and times
of
transsexual
warrior
Connie
Norman

BY DOUGLAS SABOINICK

Plus: Our Health &
Duty Director

Born To Act Up

The life and times of transsexual warrior

Connie Norman

BY DOUGLAS SADOWNICK

Shorting oxygen through a tube and stealing "one itty bitty" drag from her so-called "last" Marlboro, Connie Norman asks, "What's there to fight, darlin'?" Already, L.A.'s respected (and notorious) transsexual AIDS activist has fended off depression, brain seizures and bad death jokes from the "tasteless queens" who've filled her lavish home for her last Christmas party.

She tells her friends that she fears death hardly at all, suggesting that her intention is to become a star, not in the Hollywood sense, but in the cosmic. "I've had a taste of pure spirit, and I'm done with the human condition," she insists. And on her intergalactic "star," only queers need apply for visas, and only if they ditch the self-hatred. "If you don't love yourself on my star," she admonishes, "your lesbian clits will shrivel and your fag dicks will stay soft. We'll keep the breeders in tents."

Some of the straight ladies of the AIDS world blush, but only a bit. "How long do you think you have, doll?" one asks. "I could go any day," Connie says. But her hope is to live till her birthday in June so that fellow activist Mary Lucey can drag her corpse to the Republican National Convention in San Diego, depositing it on Dole's podium. "My one last 'fuck you,'" Connie muses, laughing so hard she needs an oxygen boost.

The quick leap from the spiritual to the political is quintessential Connie Norman. It's something Los Angeles' queers have marveled at since her first moment in the spotlight of the AIDS movement, the January 1989 vigil in front of L.A. County/USC Medical Center. During that liberating, celebratory week of protest, Norman brought her own version of "the personal is political" to the steps of the largest hospital in California. By day she (along with the late Mark Kostopoulos, the late Larry Day, the late Cary Bobier) pressured county officials to install a long-overdue AIDS ward. By night, in her red winter boots, she regaled activists with anecdotes about "why I cut off my dick."

For Norman, learning how to bring her masculine and feminine energies together — a process that involved a sex-change operation two decades ago — ended up being as much a spiritual encounter as it was a radical statement.

At 47, Norman is still a big girl — nearly 6 feet tall and until very recently 215 pounds. ("I'm surprised I never got my skinny stage," she says.) And it's hard to imagine anyone — not a county supervisor, not a Christian fundie, not a quasi-liberal president, not even a virus — beating her down. But that, of course, is wishful thinking.

Anyone who's paid the least bit of attention to the local AIDS movement since 1987 has heard the name Connie Norman. During the first flush of ACT UP's demos circa 1988 to 1990, Norman's cigarette voice could be heard on radio and TV broadcasts, appealing in her trailer-park Southern drawl on behalf of the county's indigent. Her complaints to a local TV news reporter in 1989 about county Health Director Robert C. Gates made for choice soundbites. "Gates is stonewalling so much that he's gone past *stone*, darlin'," she'd say. "We're looking at something more carbonized and stunning." To county honchos, she put AIDS care this way: "I once saw a gentleman getting his chemo in the corridors [at the inpatient clinic 5P21] who had to toss his cookies. Now that's not public health care, that's public torture."

The former drag queen/street whore took to writing in a piqued style about queer life, in particular about the "trannie" kids she counseled during her stint as head of public policy at the AIDS Service Center. The manifestoes were printed in *Update*, a gay and lesbian biweekly. She assailed national AIDS policies on her talk-radio program and ribbed what she called the "self-appointed leaders" on her cable show, "being rather self-appointed myself." She performed in a series of monologues in AIDS US/Women. She became a lobbyist on Capitol Hill — "a real warrior," in the words of former AIDS czar Christine Gebbie —

and a real Sacramento bee for LIFE Lobby, instrumental in helping to push the California initiative that provided gays and lesbians protection in employment. She sat on every local AIDS panel. To many of her enemies and all of her friends, she worked too hard. "Had she slowed down a year ago, she wouldn't be so damn weak now," complains former ACT UP'er Peter Cashman. Norman found the time to fit a spiritual vision into her work, lambasting (with the Goddess' help) the spiritually vacant "WHUPS," otherwise known as "West Hollywood Uptight Fags," for their failure to see beyond "checkbox activism and a new leather coat." She saw gay people as living in a wrong-headed way, adopting the myth of their enemies ("capitalism, class competition, racism, not to mention, dick, dick, dick") as opposed to discovering and being true to their queer selves. That many gay men — in fact, most gay political leaders — disagreed with her only made her more vocal.

True, some found her too power-hungry ("She's still a man behind that sex change," one activist grouched). The Rodney King verdict and Clinton's election marked ACT UP's four-year anniversary — and growing pains. That's when Norman found herself facing criticism from a new breed of activists who repudiated her for abandoning ACT UP and joining "AIDS Inc." as a lobbyist and AIDS Service Center employee. She called her foes "rage queens."

Norman could be pushy. Three years ago, she elbowed her way into a 10-day-long gathering of the Radical Faeries, a gay spiritual movement co-founded by gay elder Harry Hay in 1979. Now, this was notorious. The only "girls" allowed in Faerie gatherings are "queens." What, Hay wondered aloud, was she doing at the gathering? She barked back, "Excuse me, but do you suck dick a different way than I do?" Hay took her under his wing. From him, she learned about the Native American tribes that revered those men who cross-dressed — the "not-man, not-woman." She rarely let a day pass without naming the historical precedent that's kept from most gay kids: that native people honored different ways of expressing gender. The precedent might have saved her a great deal of pain had she known about it: "In this society, if you are willing to castrate yourself, you can be as nelly as you want. But if not, you get shit — by the straights and many gays."

It's not that there's regret in any of her choices, including her sex change. It's just that it takes so long for many gays to work through buried self-hatred. "Gays," she maintains, "mark one of the few groups who are raised by people who are, at worst, the enemy and, at best, radically different."

Switching names in search of an identity — from Robert, to Neeka, to Connie Robin, to Connie Norman — she has gone from Texas nelly hick to ACT UP Los Angeles renegade, from boy to girl to trannie, from activist to leader to faerie.

One of Norman's greatest contributions was to allow gay men and lesbians to imagine a culture defined by something other than materialism and sex — thanks in large measure to ACT UP's celebration of participatory democracy and human eccentricity, as well as thanks (in no small part) to Norman's refusal to continue to live as a victim of the Myth of the Homosexual, the 19th-century medical model that reduced gay identity to a sexual behavior. She's lived to see those established gender roles exploded. She fought to replace the entrenched myths with something that was less about behavior and more about consciousness, a glimmer of self-knowing she traces from her earliest childhood memories.

Connie Norman was raised Robert Terry Zvorski near the oil fields in Highlands, Texas, a few hours' drive from Houston. (Her mother had lived in Ventura, California, when Robbie was born but moved to Texas to marry the man Norman would love and hate as "Daddy" — she never knew her natural father). Norman's first memory is sitting in the stroller and listening to her mother repeat out loud, "It's not a girl. It's a boy." She remembers sitting in the sandbox and taking toy ➤



NORMAN

soldiers and putting skirts on them. A picture of the young Robbie at the age of 3 shows the dimpled, sunsuited child looking like Shirley Temple in *The Little Princess*. It's what Norman calls "the 'they shoulda had a clue' picture." Despite Robbie's effeminacy, or perhaps because of it, her daddy insisted Robbie work each summer planting hundreds of vegetables on the minifarm. "I really was born a tranny doll," reminisces Norman, "despite Daddy's efforts to butch me up."

Had it not been for Robbie's wit and size ("I was a big girl, I'd kick your ass"), and involvement in plays at church and community theater, she would have met the fate familiar to many young gays and lesbians: suicide. She never once felt like a boy. ("I always felt clueless as to what goes on in men's minds, other than immaturity and brattiness.") The parents fought so bitterly over Robbie's limp-wristed routine that her mother grabbed Robbie and fled back to her family trailer park in Ventura. Although gregarious and pretty, Robbie felt alien: "The school kicked me out because I was too nelly. The priest said I couldn't be an altar boy because I was a sodomite. I had no self-esteem left. So I just said, 'Fuck it,' and left town."

As a teenager, she met "other fag folk" on the Ventura streets. They talked about going to Hollywood clubs. She begged, borrowed and stole the money for hormones to get little nubs. ("By the time I was 18, I knew my legal rights toward procuring hormones, and I certainly did.") Robbie dyed her hair black and started calling herself Neeka Paisley. ("It was the '60s, dear!")

At 14, Robbie/Neeka, fleeing her mother ("who tracked me down from tearoom to tearoom"), got on an Oxnard bus to Hollywood. "I was pretty nelly dressed at the time," she recalls. "I had on these gold lamé boots, skintight pegged jeans and some little blue blouse. I went into the bathroom and these three guys followed me in and started to fag-bash me. Well, all of a sudden, the door burst open and here's a sailor in full whites with a bullwhip. He got them outta there and gave me a ride to Hollywood. He was a gay guy. And he told me, 'Look, you don't have to be going out in public like that. You get with your own kind.' And then I blew him. And then he dropped me off in Hollywood. Who wouldn't be entranced by some guy wielding a bullwhip?" (As an aside: "I'd still blow him. If he let me wear my oxygen.")

With no job and no lover, Neeka had her share of scary nights, "wandering around Hollywood waiting for a trick to pick me up, and then praying he'd let me sleep a little bit." (Most didn't.) Neeka didn't think of street sex as "turning tricks but as surviving," but then she met "a big ol' drag queen who wasn't a sex-change" who taught her how to whore. Neeka would borrow "two hairpieces and a fall" and wear a dress that "looked like a Kentucky Fried Chicken server's outfit" and the guys would chase the lithe girl with broad shoulders. She didn't have to fake being a girl. ("The only time I have acted in my life is when I tried to be

a man.") But sometimes the johns would want to go down on her, and Norman would protest, in a falsetto voice, "I have my period." Not a few demanded, "Knock it off, I know you're a guy and I want some dick."

When it came to having sex with trade, Neeka's policy was, "If it got hard, it got wet." She thought it disrespectful for "someone to have me blow him and then fuck me in the ass and walk away." Like too many gay kids who learn from the homophobic culture that it's only sex, and sex alone (and not culture or affection or consciousness), that separates them from straight, Neeka opted for her last resort — sex — to shape her identity.

When the druggy street life grew unendurable, Neeka returned home to her daddy in Texas. After two weeks of his "na-na-ne-naing," she crashed with a bisexual couple near Houston. The man, who turned out to be a transsexual, called himself "Wheather Connie Wheeler." One day, dolled up in drag and forlorn, Neeka looked in the mirror and said, "Well, I look like a Connie." (She gave herself the middle name Robin to explain why her mother called her "Robbie.") At 15, Connie reached some identity cohe-



Before Connie: Growing up as Robert Terry Zvorski in Ventura

sion. That's when her parents locked her up in a mental institution — in part because she was too nelly for juvenile hall ("I'd cause a fuckin' riot").

If punishment was what Connie's parents had in mind, incarcerating her with 1,500 gorgeous men did not do the trick. "Oh, honey, I just spent the next 17 months being wined and dined — and fucked. I just kept my hair red and was the prettiest thing there." Her ward psychiatrist was "a closeted fag," and Connie was put on a butching-up regime, prohibited from sitting down while peeing. Within months, a doctor came who was doing group therapy and said to Connie, "You're a transsexual." He called Connie's mother and said, "Come get this child." It marked the lifting of a burden, "the first time somebody told me it was okay to be myself."

At 18, Connie hit the Hollywood pavement again. Sometimes she played the part of a high-priced prostitute; other times she numbed herself with downers. She was arrested for misdemeanors.



Acting Up: Norman in a 1992 Los Angeles demo

Once, because she talked back to a judge, she spent a year in a county jail, and, later on, a few weeks in the hole. Her prison exploits — sexual and otherwise — could make for a book. She began to crave a sense of self and purpose: a hunger to be "real." And in drag-queen culture, there was no higher virtue than to be real.

In 1886, the nation's capital hosted the "Zuni maiden" named Weewha, a rather muscular woman who demonstrated her elaborate arts and crafts to the Washington elite. She mingled with the speaker of the House and charmed President Grover Cleveland. Despite her over-large hands, none of the politicians suspected that Weewha — the tallest and strongest member of her tribe — was an anatomical man. In her New Mexico pueblo, Weewha proudly lived as a traditional Zuni berdache, a man who preferred women's work and adopted female dress. According to anthropologists (and modern-day berdaches), the berdache role provided a socially approved channel for the expression of sex and gender variance. Those who combined the two sexes in their lives received a certain honor.

It does not surprise modern gay scholars that it took a berdache to institute the cultural bridge between Anglo-Americans and the Zunis. It certainly

doesn't surprise Norman, who has much in common with Weewha: her wit, her physical strength and her love, as she puts it, of the children of her tribe. "Dozens of books by gay scholars have come out in the last 10 years to show me who I really am," she says. Chief among these gay-centered texts are Will Roscoe's *The Zuni Man Woman* and Jonathan Ned Katz's *Gay American History*.

But in the early '70s, just a few years after Stonewall and the start of gay lib, no such information was available. Had it been, Connie might not have gone through with her sex change, which would provide her with a life myth that made sense. Yes, she wanted men, but she did not want to be one. But later on, she'd find out that she didn't particularly like being a woman. Indeed, the middle ground of the berdache suited her to a T. But it would take her almost 20 years following her surgery to gain that sense of self.

So after Connie's last bout with jail after being caught with drugs, she called her mother and said, "I'm 22 years old, I'm a prostitute, I want to stop being one. I'm drug-addicted, and I want to get off drugs. I want a sex change. If you don't let me come home and get it, I'm never going to talk to you again."

Connie's mother was antsy about the idea of the sex change. But when, as Connie tells it, the neighbors told her, ➤

NORMAN

"Please, Betty, he looks like a girl," her mother just accepted it. But if Connie were to have a sex change, her mama insisted it be done right: "You have to go to work, and you have to get into a counseling program, and you have to pay your way." Connie lived at home for the next four years. Her mother helped her get her first job as a "tittie flopper." The parents didn't allow for prostitution, but they didn't mind topless dancing.

Connie wrote to the Erickson Foundation and was sent pamphlets providing

information on the transsexual. This legitimized Connie's struggle in her parents' eyes. Connie found a Houston doctor. He insisted on psychotherapy for two years and group therapy for a year and a half. Not only did the shrinks want to get at the psychodynamics behind the sex change, they wanted to prepare her for the enormous changes — and pain — she'd undergo.

This is how it works. The vagina is composed from the penis: "They turned the dick inside out, essentially." A cavity exists in all men already. As Connie says, "The basic biological form is the female." Hospital records concur: "An incision was

made, and a large vagina was found." Still, there was a hitch: almost half of those who receive male-to-female sex changes are not able to experience orgasm. There's no guarantee that the clitoris, "composed of skin from the base of the penis and nerves from the head," according to the records, won't be enclosed by skin.

After two years of therapy, Connie's parents gave her a cashier's check for \$5,000 and she was admitted into Houston's Rice University Medical Center. When the doctors, about to put Connie out, asked her if she was ready, she answered, "Yeah, and at these prices, I

want my lips candy-striped."

Nothing — not humor, not wise words — could have prepared Connie for the excruciating pain she woke up to. "You okay, honey?" Connie's grandmother asked. Connie responded, "Grannie, ever been fucked by a train?" Then came the fear that she had lost her climax. But relief came five days after the surgery, when, in the hospital, Connie experienced a wet dream. She phoned her doctor and screamed, "It works!" That said, it took her years to learn how to use her body. ("I'd get in these fuckin' contortions to masturbate.") But she was, as she puts it, "a good girl." She did everything the doctors said, including wearing her form, a plastic cone that keeps the walls of the vagina from closing up. "The last thing I wanted was tunnel pussy," she says.

The first time she had sex with a man after surgery, she celebrated by putting on Barbra Streisand's "I've Never Been a Woman Before." Intercourse hurt; for a while Connie went with lesbians. "Eventually my body acclimated, and I was quite the woman, honey." She moved to New Mexico and then to San Francisco: she had never seen a city filled with queers before. Neither had she particularly identified with gays, macho or otherwise. Predictably, as she realized that "gay community was sanctuary," she was wooed by a straight man — Jeffrey-Daddy. Like many gay men and many women, Connie loved the thing that hurt the most: a father symbol. Of course she told Jeffrey-Daddy about the operation. ("I never not-told anyone. If I had to be okay with it, then they had to be okay with it.") Engaged in a passionate romantic relationship — "He was the only guy who could give me a tap in the middle of the night and I was ready to go" — she had her first taste of what many gay men rarely get: passionate love from a straight man.

While Connie fell for Jeffrey-Daddy, she had become pals with Bruce Norman, a nelly gay man whom she had met at the famous dance club the Trocadero: "I was working at the coat check, and this man walks by wearing this shirt made from a curtain, and I just thought it was the prettiest thing." And they became bosom pals, accomplices in drug-induced "tweaking," creative-writing partners and roommates. Bruce shook his head at her friend's latest infatuation. For everyone could see Jeffrey-Daddy was worthless, a fact made clear when he and Connie returned to Houston to get clean. "I was living in this trailer with Jeffrey-Daddy," recalls Connie, "and I was doing all the work, and my daddy had gotten him a job, and then he quit the job. And that didn't set with my daddy. He got him a plane ticket and said, 'Get out of town.'" And so, here was Connie at 30, alone once again with her parents.

Bruce Norman tracked Connie down in Texas. When she picked up the phone, he proposed to her. "I laughed so hard," Connie reminisces, "I hurt his feelings."

He appealed to her. Hadn't the two formed an intimate bond not just shooting crystal, but surviving as two nelly people of indeterminate gender? "The world's hard on people like us," he said. "Marry me." Connie let the offer sink in. She saw the promise of what she never had: a roof over her head, a stable life with someone she loved, the ability to nurture a man ("even if he was a screaming queen").

Still, Bruce's family had to be convinced that Connie would be right for Bruce. (Bruce was living with his fami-

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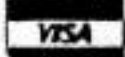
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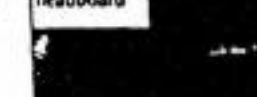
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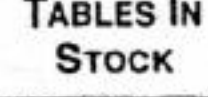
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ly: he had lost his property after bot-
toming out to drugs and alcohol.) Dur-
ing Connie's first visit to Bruce's middle-
class, Midwestern-bred family in Pasade-
na, his mother insisted that Connie take
a "nice, warm bath." When water was
heard splashing, Bruce's mother asked
if Connie might like a back scrub.
"Would you like to see?" Connie finally
asked. The mother took one peek and
said, "It's a vagina, all right." And the
wedding was on.

Bruce (who had been married
before) got loaded on their wedding
night and tried to make love to his
spouse. That was their first — and last —
roll in the hay. "Oh," recalls Connie,
"when we first got married, I had to
argue with him about going out to find
men. Yeah, he thought we were sup-
posed to play monogamy. I said, 'Oh,
please, be yourself. You may as well,
'cause I'm gonna.'" Still, the two shared
the same bed.

The test of their marriage came in
1987 when Connie and Bruce both found
out they were HIV-positive. They chose
separate paths to cope, with Bruce going
for the Course in Miracles and Connie
gravitating to ACT UP. It was at the 1989
vigil that Peter Cashman pushed Connie
Norman in front of a TV camera. Connie
found her words tentatively, but toward
the end of her "spot," she grew con-
tentious about the way "America dumps
on the poor." That evening, most local TV
stations aired her saucy interviews, the
captions describing her as "Connie Nor-
man, AIDS Activist, Transsexual, Altade-
na Resident." Bruce owned a thriving
interior-design business. He promptly had
a fit. Which he promptly got over, in
part because Connie rarely missed
preparing her husband dinner — despite
nightly AIDS community meetings.

"Once or twice I had to call out for
pizza," Bruce recalls.

"Once or twice," she snorts.

Connie and Bruce Norman's Altadena
home boasts upper-middle-class panache,
with linen curtains (designed by Bruce)
and Persian carpets. Pictures of the mar-
ried couple show the two white-water raft-
ing. Connie ushers me to a table on
which the wedding photos lie; weakened
from AIDS, she requires a cane to move
from one settee to another. That doesn't
stop her from tidying.

Bruce has suffered the peculiar fate
of being dismissed as "Connie's husband."
But he's no wallflower. At 50, he is rav-
ishingly handsome — with long, silky
strands of silver-blond hair, fingers
bedecked in jewelry, and a brilliantly
queeny sensibility that reveals years spent
in recovery, the Course in Miracles, and
no shortage of therapy. Indeed, it is this
California emphasis on "healing" that
holds the marriage together, a philosophy
that intersects with their own particular
brand of transgenderism. Connie
applauds Bruce when he dresses like a
gal; Bruce insists that Connie not bother
with wearing makeup or wigs. "You're fine
the way you are," he says. (Foes don't nec-
essarily agree, ribbing Connie for her
"frizz perm.")

Like many a married couple, they
made their pact: Connie would take care
of Bruce and provide companionship,
and he would sustain her financially.

"It's hard on our relationship," Con-
nie whispers tearfully while he's in the
kitchen, fetching her pills and toast.
"With his taking care of me, the tables
have turned. It's sad. I worry about him."
And she cries — for the two of them.

At the time of this writing, as a
gesture of love to Bruce as well as an act
of final "self-loving to myself," Connie
admitted herself into the Chris Brownlie
hospice, a facility to help PWAs die "good
deaths" founded and run by the AIDS
Healthcare Foundation. "The network of
hospice care we have here in L.A. is one
of the best in the country," Norman
says. "And I'm proud to have played a
part in that." Being a recipient of county
health care is profoundly rewarding. "It's
time for me to meet my Goddess," she
says. "With dignity."

Summing up a life is always hard,
especially when the end feels premature.

And what makes it even more difficult is
the knowledge that the divisions in the
movement, the hard feelings, will live on
after she's gone.

She has been attacked by members
of ACT UP and Queer Nation (and some
people-of-color groups), who accused her
of not being any more politically sensitive
than a white gay man. ("It's not that she
robbed anything from people of color,"
recalls Filipino AIDS activist Joel B. Tan.
"But being really pushy, it took her a long
time to be informed on people-of-color
issues. Ultimately, she did act on that
ethic.") To be sure, Norman has shout-
ed louder than most. She has represent-

ed a generation of ACT UP members
united by hatred of Reaganomics, the re-
lative silence of other gay groups and the
sheer volume of death. The media ate up
the kiss-ins, sit-ins and burnt effigies —
and Norman's wisecracks. In the late '80s,
ACT UPers like Norman demanded that
the Westside money queers — represent-
ed by the genteel Municipal Elections
Committee of Los Angeles, the Stonewall
Democratic Club and AIDS Project Los
Angeles — give over power to Eastside
groups like ACT UP, Being Alive, Minor-
ity AIDS Project and AIDS Healthcare
Foundation. Ultimately, with ACT UP's
help, gay community clout shifted ➤

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CALIFORNIA CLINICAL TRIALS
MEDICAL GROUP

NORMAN

eastward. But the 1992 Rodney King
insurrection and the election of a Demo-
crat to the White House stole ACT UP's
magic to wow the media, in the former
case because ACT UP was not the only
group now taking to the street, and in
the latter because the obvious AIDS
bogeyman seemed to disappear with
George Bush.

When there is no obvious enemy,
groups sometimes encounter the demons
more than ever in their own ranks. ACT
UP (like many AIDS groups) suffered
serious splits over whether to negotiate
with the county or not, whether to con-
done violence or not, whether to push
for big dollars behind needle exchange
or not. Too many ACT UP members
died; others fled to AIDS service organi-
zations; people like Norman kept their
pushy UP styles intact while trying to
earn a place at the AIDS negotiating
table. It was a hard balance to walk,
even for a trans.

Despite Norman's allegation that
ACT UP has been destroyed by sectarian
polemics, what she calls "rage turned
inward," ACT UP hasn't dissolved. Quite
the contrary. All the same, Norman's
imminent death represents the end of an
activist era around which thousands were
united in the first great Dionysian
onrush of gay community feeling since
the Stonewall Riots. "We have new, pow-
erful drugs coming out now, but who will
get them to the poor? Clinton? Gin-
grich? Burnt-out activists?" Norman asks.
"There are so many fires to put out," she
adds, "and so little clarity as to who the
real enemy is."

But the social movements of the
moment do not save oppressed people
from the demon of psychological injury.
In fact, extroverted group mobilizations
rarely provide more than a fleeting sense
of freedom. Those like Norman, who
have given their lives for a sense of hard-
won peace on both an inner and an
outer level, do not see much down the
road but stagnation — unless people
take to the streets and also look inside.
Too many gays refuse to come out. Many
others carry their wounds in secret and
can only live the status quo. The move-
ment remains split between radicals and
conservatives, between people of color
and whites, between the transgendered
and the hypermasculine, between the
rich and the poor, between those who
want to see the system give way to some-
thing more human and those who work
to prop up the technocracy, between
those who direct their rage against par-
ents inwardly and those who act it out
onto their lovers.

Connie Norman believes there must
be a third way. And she believes that,
despite all those who seem to die in vain,
the struggle itself is part of the healing.

"There is a great deal of difference
between hetero and homo culture," she
says. "But society has tossed our contri-
butions away. Yet look at society without
us. We are the voice that says, 'Don't
harm.' We are the voice that says, 'Bring
the feminine together with the masculine
— in each person.' We can't be hiding in
our ghettos. I had to cut off my dick to
be happy, but maybe if I knew more...
You see, I could not not be nelly. So can't
most men." She believes there's some-
thing of the transgendered in all of us. "I
could not be butch. And so can't most
women. I could not live without male inti-
macy. And so can't most men. I couldn't
live without loving my Feminine. And so
can't most women." ■