

## **Walking the Gender Line**

I started down this road  
In those forgotten moments of childhood.  
I've always wondered how I got this way,  
How I began with the soul of a boy  
Trapped in the body of a girl.  
I began fighting for my soul early on,  
Asking too many questions why.  
I want to play baseball with the boys,  
To wander the woods, to climb the tallest tree.  
I want to soak up my math and science.  
Why don't boys like smart girls?  
Why should I play with dolls?  
And when challenged, what else but to fight back  
With fists and bloody noses,  
So I pointed the bullies' BB-gun back at them  
And dared them to doubt my sincerity.  
I soaked myself in math and astronomy  
And did everything they said I couldn't.  
Alone if they made me, too.  
I could not be chained and I refused to obey,  
And so my childhood went to the world,  
Paying only token homage to my girlhood  
With ballet lessons and crochet.  
Often I wished for the body to match my soul.  
I saw the difference it made to others.  
So much less resistance to my intellect,  
Fewer warnings about my fragile safety,  
And the independence of "boys will be boys".  
Then came the horror of puberty  
And all I could do was protest louder.  
My boyish soul found itself in the picture of female fertility,

Large breasts and wide hips—and groping hands—  
And not even the height I needed to disguise it.  
My body screamed of womanhood  
And all I could do was crave my lost boyhood.  
I tried giving up the outward trimmings of femininity.  
No more dresses. No more make-up. Cut off the hair.  
A man’s watch, but no more jewelry, and on...  
But it made little difference,  
And mother called a halt to my efforts.  
Little has changed since that time.  
The world has asked me to behave as they expect  
But their demands are more subtle.  
To my dismay, I have forgotten to object,  
But my soul inside my head is still that lost boy  
That aches to be one of the guys  
And objects to the idea of a “relationship” with a masculine soul.  
Only friendship, at arms’ length, is tolerable.  
I’ve walked this path a long while,  
Straddling the line between masculine and feminine,  
Fighting for balance and acceptance,  
Unable to fully live in either world,  
A lifelong mate to confusion and loneliness.  
And what is it I want from this road?  
What will satisfy my divided life?  
You know I’ve sought you out  
Because you’ve walked this road, too.  
Your feet on both sides of the line, trapped like me.  
We stand opposite each other, like mirrors.  
We know each other even before we’ve met.  
You or someone like you will always be my shadow.  
Only thus can I share my confusion,  
Knowing that you’ll understand the special strain  
Of straddling this line beneath our feet,  
And the futility of the efforts to change us.

Walk with me a while if you like.  
Maybe together our journey won't seem as lonely.  
Maybe we won't feel so lost.  
But at last, this line that brings us together  
Stands between us as it doesn't for others.  
I already miss you,  
Because alone we will walk again  
As we seek the rest of ourselves, instead of just reflections.  
But it's a long road.  
Stay here with me a while longer.