



feel me
by leslie bull

Thank you to Emi Koyama for your friendship, encouragement, and slutty ideas, and for publishing my zines, to Patti Duncan for your indispensable mentoring and support, to Janice Gould, for being my special teacher, to PSU for funding me, and to amazing authors Louise Erdrich, Linda Hogan, Leslie Marmon Silko, Marilou Awiakta, and Joy Harjo, who inspired me to write this poem.

what i don't know about

i don't know about that moment
that precious, all-encompassing moment
that loving, terrible, brilliant,
necessary moment
that moment when the air is still
expectant
empty and full moment
when the light is gentle
exquisite, velvet-clear moment
i can bite the air
swallow pure oxygen
some wonderful
sustaining moment
nourishing moment
moment of understanding
of clarity
of regret
moment of reflection
moment of change
of sameness, eternity
laid above and below
before and behind
in swirling moment
still moment
our moment

leslie bull 4/02

dedicated to mommy

Leslie Bull, age 39.

I was born into a both loving and abusive home, and had both white and middle class privilege until age twelve when my parents' divorce catapulted me into a lower economic stratum. After dropping out of school at fourteen and having three babies by nineteen I worked as a hooker off and on for a dozen years from age twenty to age thirty-two. I mostly worked the streets where dealing with a sexist culture, unsafe working conditions, police brutality, and whore stigma made prostitution a very difficult job. I played cat and battered mouse with the cops, dealt with sometimes difficult and occasionally dangerous tricks, and with the lowly street status of being white girl and ho, got raped, got beat up, got jailed, delved into real crime for awhile, and due at least in part to stigma and oppression got involved with a lifestyle that ate up my profits and drained my health. I also experienced power and control, made the most money per hour of any job I've ever had, became strong and independent in some very crucial ways, and forged and transformed an identity that always has and always will be a huge part of who I am.

Hooker. I take this name from those who would use it against me, to discredit me, to erase me, to make it impossible to rape me, or marry me, or let me be a mother. From those who would save me, those who would imprison me, and those who would dig my shallow grave. Hooker. I take this name, hold it tight, close to my heart. Take it as I cook oatmeal, kiss my husband, write poetry, feed the cat, study for finals, sell cum-filled panties online, and brush the hair from my son's eyes. I take hooker and absorb it, bathe in it, lick it, tease it, flip it, tip it, and insert it gently into my satin pink pussy. I take this name hooker and make it all mine, change its very meaning until no one can ever use it to hurt me again.



Stacey and Leslie Bull, 2001

Stacey's and My First Porn Stories We Ever Wrote (at Diana's Porn Writing Workshop for Queers PSU 4/28/01)

Stacey's Story; We Got Time

You tell me not now, we don't have time. We have time baby. We have time for me to kiss you hard, lick your ears and neck, bite your lips and suck your tongue. We have time to push your shirt up, pop your bra, and go after your tits. We got time baby. We got time to push up your skirt and push down your panties. We got time to spread your legs and tease your clit. We got time to slide fingers in and out, over and over again. We got time to make me so crazy to fuck and fuck. We got time baby, we got time to make you cum!

My Story; The Story of the Velvet Dress

I am a little girl, 5 years old, and no one has taught me that my body is bad, that sex is bad. Sometimes I press my wrists against my vulva and feel waves of pleasure. Without thinking I sensuously rub my tummy, touch my own bottom hole to see how it feels. I run around in the yard with no shirt just panties, and if my panties slip halfway down my bottom I don't pay any mind; giggling, rolling in the grass, touching myself wherever it feels good.

One day my mommy introduces me to a man she says is going to be my new daddy. He is so nice to me! He likes me right away, and he wants to spend lots of time with his new little girl. My new daddy is big and strong under his starchy white shirt. I feel so safe whenever he is there.

Me and my new daddy start to go lots of places together. We go to the park and the soy dream shop and he even takes me downtown and buys me dresses. We go to a fancy shop with rows and rows of pretty, frilly little girl dresses. They carry petite little panties with lace ruffles on the bottom, ankle socks, and shiny black patent leather shoes. The man who owns the shop is very nice like my new daddy, and he is always so happy to see us—me with my white blonde curls all done up in a big black velvet bow, and daddy with his fat wallet.

One day daddy and I go shopping and daddy tells me to pick out any dress I like. I run around the racks from dress to dress, my fingers touching soft velvet, scratchy lace, and smooth cotton. Daddy and the man from the shop are watching me, heads together they nod and smile. I'm a very good little girl. Finally I find the prettiest dress of all. It is black velvet with a white square lace collar. Daddy says we need to try the dress on. We go in the dressing room and daddy lifts me up on the stool in front of the big mirror and begins to undo my clothes. I look up and see that daddy has left the curtain partway open and the man from the shop is...

make 'em cum

act like a little girl
act like it hurts but you like it
like you're too little
to fit that big fat chunk of dick
up your teeny weeny little pussy
make little noises and wiggle around some
futilely resist
fuck, for that matter, actually become too little
if you can actually become a little girl
inside, and he can see it in your eyes
you'll have that trick spewing his wad
in two seconds flat
and even while he's bitchin' like hell
about how fast his greenbacks disappeared
down your bra
he'll be panting for more

leslie bull 2/02

forty bucks no condom

a woman walks down a gray street in the mission district of san francisco. part industrial district, part struggling immigrant business, part slumlorded residential hotel, part ho stroll, part sidewalk drugstore.

coca, mota, chiva, rocca, coca, mota, chiva, rocca.

outfits a dollar apiece, outfits a dollar apiece.

valiums, blues, get'm here.

rocca, rocca right here, veinte, veinte rocca

and the woman's hand reaches out quickly to grasp the small white chunk, pop it in her mouth, just a pinch between cheek and gum, she holds it there until she can get around the corner, reach into her bra and pull out her pipe, a 4-inch length of car antenna with a small ball of copper chore boy stuffed in the end for a screen. she breaks off a piece of the rock and stuffs it in the end of the pipe, flashes her lighter over the top to melt the whiteness onto the screen. finally, with anticipation, she inverts the pipe and holds the lighter to the copper while taking a long deep draw.

whooooobbbbbb!!! fuckin' a look at all that smoke. whbbbhoosbbb!!!! fuck this feels great. better than cumming. mmmmmmm. shit. who's that? 5-O. shit. let me start walking. duck the corner, adrenaline rush like you wouldn't believe, gotta walk around, walk around and around.

the woman is still pretty but getting tore up. skinnier. greenish, bluish, grayish eyes wild. her bottle blond hair, white skin, and curves still combine to mean a quick date any time she steps out on the stroll, although she's come down considerably from her 200\$ a date escort days. ever since she started getting high at work. gets herself into all kinds of fucked up situations she never did before. stuck up in some filthy hotel room, bath in hall, blood spattered on walls. condoms oozing on floor, needles stuck in sink drains. home to cockroach, rat, and despair. cans of ensure stacked in corners. fear.

the woman has been breaking the rules pimps once taught her. never use your real name. only date white, middle class, preferably middle aged tricks. always get the money up front, charge extra for anything and everything, no kissing, always use a condom, try to finish in five minutes or less, and unless it's a regular, steal everything that's not nailed down. she has even been breaking the rules she taught herself. her rules about not getting busted, about not banging dope with tricks, about not being drugged and photographed, kidnapped, jailed, beaten, raped, or just about dead.

the women's rock is gone and the dull, insistent, empty feeling of wanting more begins to throb deep in her belly, traveling through her cells, fractur-

ing her brain. she aches for more. hungry and tired some in her head begin to clamor for food and rest. they are shut up quickly, firmly, as the ache demands her attention, bends her to its will, forcing her to panicky action.

capp street. short little street just over from mission, the main drag of the district. dressed in tiny, ripped up cutoffs, boobs spilling out of white blouse, the woman walks purposefully atop shiny black spike heels. smears blood red lipstick on her mouth, tries to calm herself. *get more, now.* okay, okay. let's see. she looks around and spots an orange construction truck with a younger white guy behind the wheel. she gives him encouragement, a pouty come on, and he pulls over. she looks inside. he is sandy haired and lanky, folded up behind the wheel, open beer on the seat beside him. looks good but you can never tell. cops'll do anything. lie. dress up in disguises. drink beer. have sex with ya. steal your dope and smash your face into a brick wall. still, it looks pretty good. she jumps in.

*hey, what's up?
nuttin', what about you? you a cop?
na, I ain't no cop. you a cop?
na. can i touch you?
sure, touch me*

and he opens his pants and the woman touches his penis. doesn't mean much, but might weed out a few cops. she decides it's cool. takes the plunge.

*so what ya lookin' for?
head.
okay, head is forty bucks with a condom.
i got 25 bucks.
na, its forty. you're really gonna like it baby. i can deep throat.
forty bucks with no condom.
na, gotta use a condom. no condom is extra.
forty bucks with no condom, that's it.*

and the woman sees he might stop the truck and let her out and she will have to deal with another potential cop, another potential asshole more difficult or dangerous than this one. but on the other hand she could score a straight up trick, a decent john, respectful and safe. shit. what to do. she pauses, fights with herself. get out. no. *get more. now.* fuck.

*you want out baby?
na, its cool. forty bucks no condom.*

Why Is It Okay To Hate A Ho?

Why is it okay to hate a ho?

Have you ever asked yourself this fundamental question?

I don't want to be another one of those dead girls by the freeway,
those dead hookers.

"Well what can you expect?"

"A prostitute."

Hate speech
is hate crime.

Don't perpetrate on me.

Existing within cruel dualities,
false moralities abound.

Don't make me the bitch
to your good girl

'cause you ain't no better than me
at least not based on my status
as a prostitute

a slut

a ho

or any other name

you use to discredit me

lower me

raise your own hopes.

Existing within cruel hierarchies

I ask myself,

how do I participate?

Who do I hate?

Who is it justified to hate?

And why is it okay?

Because god said so?

Because the georges decreed it?

stole it,

desecrated it.

Rape an every day reality.

Who are you in bed with?

Whose ideas do you share?

Are they the same ones who hate on you?

For you to be virtuous

for you to be precious

for you to be wife

cannot depend

on my subjugation.

Don't make me the dirt to your cleanliness,
the bad to your good,
the other,
against which
decent women,
women worthy of love,
of security, of life itself
can be measured.
Don't make me the crumpled up body
at the bottom of your trash heap.
Judgment and hate
are toxic to all.
Be yourself.
Live up to your own expectations.
Have the courage to do it
without the obligatory other--
the dirty, trashy ho
that's me.

Leslie Bull
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Being a Junkie Ho in Sex Worker World

by Leslie 5/01

With just a few weeks left in the quarter, I have been reflecting on the process of choosing sex worker as the topic for my senior project. I have learned a great deal in the last three months. Shifted, in fact, some of the fundamental ways I view my own life. As a result of recent conversations (thank you to my friend Emi Koyama for starting me on this path to *the whore revolution*[1]), studies (thank you to my teacher Patti Duncan for your feedback, wisdom, and safe energy), reflections (my own and those of my partner Stacey Bull), writings (including many not mentioned in this essay, especially Dorothy Allison, Tracey Quan, Linda Lovelace, *Danzine*, and *On Our Backs*) workshops and films (Diana's Queer Porn Writing Workshop and *Live Nude Girls Unite*) I now have a clearer, deeper understanding regarding several issues; for example, sex work (I had never heard this term a few months ago), certain feminisms and feminist sex wars, street hooking, addiction, pimping, white, heterosexual, and middle class privileges, racism, police brutality, police state, class oppression, patriarchy, sex industry, choice, rape, victimization, power, and more.

For example I found out that while I grew up worker/middle class and have kept some of that even while living in poverty, as street hooker and junkie ho, I am low class in sex worker world. Invisible really. Exploited by anti-sex feminists as victim, and erased by some feminist sex workers as an aberration. Frankly, this is all new to me. In the first place I had never heard of or known about all the opportunity for high class prostitution. So far I have heard about empowerment, being a sex goddess, a sex therapist, and a sex healer, hooking around the world with the jet set, starting lawsuits and unions, marching, being queer, being trans, being unique. I've heard about sex positive, s and m, domination, whore stigma, and the idea that sex can be work like any other work. In general it has been good to hear these things. Thought provoking. Informative. Unashamed. I like the inclusion of queer and trans. I've also heard a lot about stripping and porn—two things I never got into much until recently.

What I haven't heard from is a single junkie ho. And the few street hookers featured sound different from what I know. For example Anastasia, a "street prostitute" and "outreach worker" interviewed for *Whore Carnival* says that among many options she freely chooses to work the street, feels safer on the street than in other working situations, and is quick to tell an aggravating "client" "Your money is not important to me." [2] Client? While Anastasia's experience is valid, I can't help wondering where the tricks, pimps, hos, and dope men are in sex work world. It seems the only ones who want to talk about this stuff are the MacKinnon and Dworkin style anti-prostitute feminists, and that really sucks. Often, throughout the femi-

nist sex worker anthologies I read I felt downplayed, ignored, erased, and portrayed as one of a small minority of desperate victims, downtrodden and used as a pawn for the sex-negative enemy.

I never knew all this.

I mean I don't have numbers, but I know there are a lot of us.

One thing that is really bugging me is the lack of complicated diversity allowed for street hooker and junkie ho on both sides of the feminist sex wars. Sex-positive side supposedly includes junkie ho, albeit in a "world of hierarchies, with street workers at the bottom,"[3] but then I am never heard from or described with any complexity or mobility. I am talked about in terms of AIDS prevention, murder statistics, scarcity, and pity. Held up as an extreme case far from the norm.

I never knew all this.

I mean I don't have numbers, but I know there are a lot of us.

The stories covered by anti-sex feminists are usually from former workers that believe the sex industry is all bad and likewise their experiences in it, although it is the one place I actually hear from junkie hos. It seems many sex-positive feminists only want to cover happy, empowered, successful whores. Neither one fully describes my experience. Once again I find my reality mixed. Power, pleasure, pain, coercion, choice, and so on all existing at once within my experience. Thank you to Gloria Anzuldúa for teaching me how to see everything existing at once and for telling me, "The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity." [4] There are no nice linear paths to success or failure in my story. Nothing necessarily follows anything else in any neat or predictable manner. For example, I was a junkie and I was a ho. Sometimes at the same time, sometimes not. I was also a wife and a junkie, a mother and a junkie, a girlfriend and a junkie. Sometimes at the same time, sometimes not.

During my first excursion into street hooking I was with a pimp and I didn't get high at all during that time. I have only recently been in touch with this fact, having, over the years, run the cult of the 12-steps and anti-sex feminist brainwashing gambits, alternating between the idea that I was a hooker because I was a junkie and its flip side, that I was a junkie because I was a hooker. Now I know I was a junkie and a hooker. The two things are not one, nor can they always be neatly separated, especially in relation to economics, stereotypes, and stigma.

Pimping is the same. I have heard from no pimps in my sex-positive readings, nor any women that work for them, and neither have any pimps been quoted by the anti-sex feminists and have instead been presented as uniformly evil; the hos with them helpless, damaged, incested, victims. Personally, I have worked briefly for a few old school pimps, played a few old school pimps, had a pimp who was my boyfriend, worked alone, and have been with varying types of men who I wouldn't call pimps but who

aided me in certain ways, and who also benefited from me in certain ways; our currency being cash, sex, drugs, protection, connections, and love.

Like pimps, tricks cannot always be neatly demarcated from friends, boyfriends, lovers, and husbands. Last time I left the life I married a trick from the street who I still care for as family even after our divorce, was the girl and exclusive property of a gangsta dope man to get money, jewelry, clothes, and crack, had a crush on, married, and had five teen pregnancies by a man who was a dealer off and on, and was married to a man that amerikkka presumed to be my pimp, but who never even knew my past. We married for sex and love. I had tricks I considered my peers who I not only traded sex for dope, but also hung out with, tricks I felt deserved a fair deal, and tricks I looked down on and would steal from or rob in a second. Especially rich ones that wanted to save me and worse; thought I should be grateful. I had paying tricks I never actually fucked and tricks I fucked for free (okay, rarely). Soon I will be marrying for the fourth time, this time for the nookie and a whole lot more, like love, respect, and a meeting of minds, along with plenty of hot queer monkey sex complete with me starring as the slutty vegan hooker of Stacey's dreams.

This is why I still call myself junkie ho. Because I cannot separate being junkie ho from the rest of my life, even as I attend college, participate in a monogamous relationship, and no longer shoot dope. Forever branded with a criminal record, struggling with health issues like ptsd, eating disorder, and rotting teeth. It took me three years to get the courage to be tested for HIV and I am still considering whether I want to know my hep c status. At one time junkie ho was just who I was, just my life; calling myself junkie ho now is powerful, political, and complicated. On the one hand, I don't want to imply I am still experiencing life as a working junkie ho, while at the same time I feel most connected to the identity of junkie ho. If I say x junkie ho I feel disconnected, or like I'm distancing myself. Old junkie ho works better. It doesn't seem a label like junkie ho can ever really be cast off in this world anyway, and why should I? I'm just as good as any whore.

I would also like to address junkie ho as opposed to junkie whore. I have heard from lots of feminist whores but few feminist hos, let alone junkie ones (with the exception of myself, and I have, I must admit, been hearing quite a bit from me). On the street I was a junkie ho, a white girl, a hooker, and a feminist in my own right. I was with pimps, tricks, and dope men. Sometimes I felt free and sometimes I felt trapped. I got hurt. Had fun. Felt powerful. Felt scared. I loved, screwed, stole, toked, and mainlined my way through life, navigating dangerous territories, and within certain frameworks, always choosing. I stayed everywhere from the hilton to the shelter and the sidewalk. I was and still am anything but a helpless victim. And this is some of why I say junkie ho.

With a few notable exceptions, for example, *Showing Up Fully*, five

women of color discussing sex work[5], white supremacy and privilege, racism, and classism are not talked about much in sex work world. Especially not by white people. How these dynamics play out on the street in the lives of pimps, hos, and tricks, how they effect policing, courts, stigma, etc is rarely, if ever, discussed. In my experience, race is a very relevant issue on the street, talked about and played out on multiple levels. Likewise class, while not as openly acknowledged, permeates everything.

And finally I ask, is sex work work like any other work? With so many meanings placed on it, in it, up it, and all around it, can sex be just work only when taken out of context? Yes, theoretically it is true that sex work could (and should) be viewed as Amber Hollibaugh says, “wage labor, service for a fee,”[6] yet within our culture, and throughout the world sex and sex work are rarely viewed in this light. What other type of work (besides wife and mother) has as many social, emotional, and biological meanings attached to it as sex does? Isn't it true that sex work can only be work like any other work when it is allowed to be that? And if some achieve this, who are they? Who is allowed and who is not?

References

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5. *Showing Up Fully* in Nagle, Jill, ed. *Whores and Other Feminists*. (New York: Routledge. 1997), 195
6. Hollibaugh, Amber. *My Dangerous Desires*.

Lion Man

There were times when I played pimps (and got played some too). I remember being newly arrived on the Hollywood scene. I came with a gorgeous pimp. Lion Man was on his way down but I didn't know any better. For years he had been with a stunningly beautiful ho who could steal like crazy and was a real professional street hooker. She brought him that 500\$ plus a day like clockwork and they had a baby together, a little girl who was about three when we hooked up. I only met Lion Man's ho a couple of times and I was in awe of her. In spike heels she was over six feet tall with a body that wouldn't quit. She dressed in super sexy hip clothes, wigs, jewelry, created an image. To me she looked like a sex queen. She was thick too, I don't think she smoked. He never said so, but I think she was leaving Lion Man because he was cracking it up. I know he expected somebody to work all night and him smoke it all, and it wasn't two weeks before I left him too.

My god he was beautiful though, and everything based on love. Tall and built like a god; burnished brown skin, wide lion's face, and intelligent, gold-flecked eyes topped by a huge mane of loose curls. No meanness in him that I ever saw, and sexwise we might've been great together if we hadn't been so high. Lion Man was disappointed about how square I turned out to be. At twenty-eight I could pull tricks like crazy but I wasn't a good sneaky thief. I found out later I could rob, but could never get my mother's middle class training out of my head long enough to develop into a good sneaky thief. It is interesting that for me robbery seemed much more honest.

I left Lion Man at an only slightly tacky motel on Sunset and flagged another pimp. A couple of days later when we went back to get my stuff he was gone. The motel manager had my suitcase, neatly packed with a letter from Lion Man saying there were no hard feelings and if I ever started missing his love to come and find him.

Lion Man wasn't my first. I had hooked up with my first pimp years earlier. His name was Sonny. We drove east across several Southern states in his big white car with the buttery soft leather interior. I would sleep all day while he drove, and then turn tricks at night out of escort services and hotel bars while he slept, business men, a hundred dollars a pop. Sonny skooled me on condoms (use for everything), always, always get the money first, and charge extra for anything over and above a straight hand or blow job or missionary style vaginal intercourse. Removing my clothes, touching my breasts, different positions, or anything else cost more, let alone anything kinky. Sonny also drilled me on one of a Black pimp's cardinal rules of the game—never, ever date a Black man.

All through Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and back to New Orleans again I remember Sonny's big hands on the steering wheel, and then the day he clubbed me in the head and threw me out on the street—accused

me of fucking for fun after I spent two hours tying up some trick in a French Quarter hotel room. Come to think of it Sonny also accused me of being square, laughed at my elaborate make-up removal and skin care rituals, regretted my lack of game. Yet I think he kinda fell for me too, wanted to screw me every night, got jealous—completely taboo for an old school pimp in his late thirties. I was twenty-one then.

Like Lion Man and his beautiful ho, Sonny was Black. I say it out like this because one of the things I'm thinking a lot about lately is the construction of race. I'm a white girl with a lower middle class childhood and a quick started adulthood of teen pregnancy, welfare mom, poverty, wife of poor working class and immigrant, waitress work, sex work, jails, streets, homelessness, and now impoverished academia and activism, although when I think about it I realize I did activism all along. Survival was my activism. Through much of it I have received regular to not so regular middle class infusions via my mother and other family, although for six of the most intense years I was completely cut off. In a sense, I'm mixed-class, and with Scandinavian bred white privilege.

On the streets I was Barbie gone bad, patriarchy's wet dream: blonde, slender, curvy, and willing. All made up. Often being the standard fantasy and having the white, mixed-class, and heterosexual privileges made things easier; from making more money, better treatment by the cops (although I still endured considerable brutality), tricks wanting to save me, and fine ass dope men wanting to date me, to communicating with social workers, lawyers, doctors, or the white clerk at the 7-11. Sometimes being white (especially white girl) made things harder (consistently being perceived as weak, for example); more than once it may have saved my life. Of course being white and mixed class didn't make up for or erase the fact that I was a ho. It just made things easier, especially when I could and did hide that fact.

What got me started writing here was a line I read in a book this morning, an article by Louise Michele Newman about Margaret Mead. Newman writes, "...we view Mead as an integral part of a nineteenth-century tradition that combined notions of white or 'civilized' women's sexual restraint and black or 'primitive' men's bestiality in order to reinforce the dominant cultural taboo against miscegenation." [1]

Nineteenth-century tradition huh? Miscegenation. That means Black and white fucking. Something's changed?

No. The same notions apply today. I am a prime example of what happens to you if you can't/won't/don't use that famous white woman restraint. I am purity's flip side. She is unable to exist without me. I am an example of what happens to you if you cross certain lines, and I've crossed some major ones into race traitor and whoredom, and now queerness too. Forever kicked out of white middle class respectability, or most kinds of

respectability for that matter, by those who discover my past. A criminal record that could prevent me from working with children, and generally be used to discriminate against me in employment. Shunned by academia on numerous levels (especially as far as becoming professor). Poor. Believed to be deserving of rape, or in fact unable to be raped only fucked. Unwanted by any “decent man” (read white and so-called “biologically” male). Victimized. Dirty. Used. Condemned to hell in the park blocks every noon. Some of it I care, some I don’t. I am very wanted by the one I love, and I know I don’t want to go to the same heaven with the bible thumpers and anti-sex feminists. I do care what my children hear about me. I do need to work. I’m sick of being poor. Rape sucks.

In my experience race was talked about in a much more up front manner on the streets than in mainstream. By everyone. On the streets I stopped being a girl and became a white girl, a hooker, and eventually a cracked out junkie ho. One of the lowest rungs on the street, yet still powerful by necessity, and still with its own brands of white privilege. Sometimes I was with Black pimps. Almost all the pimps I ever knew were Black and lots of us hookers with them were white, some were Black, with other hookers of color less represented. On the streets people acknowledged race and privilege more candidly. For the first time characteristics were openly attributed to me based on my race, rather than embedded in notions of monolithic unnamed white supremacy, and furthermore these characteristics were often negative; “square,” “nasty” (read: middle class, white girl).

One of the biggest concerns of some white tricks was whether I was “giving the money to a pimp” (and if no racial epitaph was attached one was surely implied, taken for granted). “No, of course not” I would reply sincerely. *Like I would tell you.* Some of these tricks amazed me that my affirmation was illusion enough for them. Like the way they would ask if I used needles and I would lift my sleeves not even half up, to below my tracks, and say, “No baby, look.” And that would be enough until he didn’t want to use a condom and sought more gauzy reassurances that “I’m clean.” A racially and physically “clean” whore, a patriarchal oxymoron.

Yes, it is interesting to ruminate on privilege, race, nineteenth-century traditions, sex, miscegenation, Black pimps, white junkie hos, and life in amerikkka today. I’m out of time for now, and realize I have sort of wandered around within these subjects (and more), attempting to get my bearings, memories colliding with theories in a book.

Leslie 5/01

[1] Newman, Louise Michele. *Coming of Age, but Not in Samoa in White Women’s Rights*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1999.

victim

my nerves ain't what they use to be. i use to have some nerves of steel. hop all up in some trick's car, just me and him. traipse through abandoned house paths garbage up to my thigh high. boo! who's that creepin'. hey! heads jerk 'round, body tenses, now, over there, hey! who's that with the painted beard growling from his den. grab the nearest protection. find the most likely helper. spell him. protect me. i like you, can't you tell. i honestly feel a great deal of like for you. yes, over there. i like you over there. protect me. sitting in the ally hearing "freeze bitch drop it" and i dropped it, precious last hit. the man's hands are shaking as he holds his gun on me. i just sit there, terrified in a very detached sort of a way, aching for my dope. he holds his gun on me with both hands and his hands shake violently, finger on trigger. i wonder if his finger will slip and he will shoot me. i was just sitting on the cement behind the dumpster getting high. i didn't resist. i was too scared to resist. they put the cuffs on me and took me downtown. a few days later they dropped the charges due to insufficient evidence in the syringe. that was san francisco ten years ago. today i'd probably go to prison. still, my nerves were steely, i'll tell ya that. 30-years-old. i'd drop a cloak of protection around me, use every bit of privilege i could muster, draw down my protection. mostly it worked. problems occurred, especially when high. still, i had a way of making rapos dicks go soft, a way of making them slightly queasy, a little uneasy. i have this ability to calm. i can only describe it as this incredibly neutral energy i can pull up to communicate the message that everything is just as it is, neither good nor bad, just as it is. waiting it out. seeking the neutral energy, doing my best to turn rape into a nonevent. i've actually had some men let me go, shaking their heads as they do it, wondering why.

twice i fought during a stranger attack (besides the time me and a cop got it on) once it happened at work, the other time was related to homelessness. ya, those two times my calming powers weren't enough. those two men wanted to kill me. the first time i was alone in the basement of an apartment building hitting my pipe, crackin' it up. nowhere else to go, nowhere to get off the street, get high by myself. didn't want to share. can't stand most people when i'm high. terrified of 'em. take a hit and feel the evil. become hyper alert, painfully alert, as i smile and nod, only dimly, marginally aware of what the other person is saying, all my heightened focus, my life or death focus on escape, slip away so quick you never knew what happened. "hey disappearing girl, how come every time i see you you disappear?" ya, i was down in that basement with a bunch of dumpsters and a narrow staircase the only way out. bare light bulb on low ceiling, floor littered with a rainbow of tiny discarded balloons that once held white or brown

powders, needles stuck with clotted blood, semen filled condoms, and the smell of old piss. i loaded my pipe, small tempered glass tube, with a fat chunk of white rock and took an enormous hit. felt myself begin to rise. the ecstasy mixed with terror, the feeling like i'm falling, falling so beautifully, rushes of pleasure, and then i see him. i am too high to feel him. he is large, older, 45? 50? he stands well over six feet tall and weighs around 260. he holds a cane, looming in the doorway, pausing on his way down the stairs he looks directly at me and says, "i'm gonna eat your pussy." and i was real high and i think i said "fuck you" and then he is on me picking me up like a rag doll, like a child, and slamming me on the ground. stunned, i turn my face to the side and see a bright red flower of blood blossoming from around my head and as the sickly sweet smell of my blood fills my nostrils i go numb. try, too late, to use my powers. he pushes my skirt up, his dick is hard and he uses it to rape me vaginally. i just lie there. trying to find the neutral power, trying to breathe. maybe i float out, afraid to see how much blood is coming from my head. maybe i hear my mother's voice saying "scalp wounds bleed a lot." i don't think so, i don't know. i'm not positive but i don't think he takes long, cums inside me. after, he gets up and stands over me. i try to rise but he presses me back down with the tip of his cane, pinioning me to the red cement. next he reaches in his pocket and pulls out a pair of creamy rubber hospital gloves. at this point i freak out. feel him. suddenly i know he plans to kill me. i know he has done this before and will do it again, he is going to kill me, me. as i react he reaches for the light bulb to unscrew it and i flip out. jerk out from under the cane and rise up like a wildcat, screaming bloody murder. i knock him off balance, take him by surprise after playing dead. i lunge for the stairs still screaming to the top of my lungs, so loud it assaults him, disorients him. he tackles me but i kick him off somehow, he grabs me by my shirt and buttons fly as i tear myself out of it clawing and hurling myself up the stairs with the force of my ancestors. i emerge onto the street bloody and shaken, naked from the waist up. i walk a distance to the hotel room of an acquaintance, a guy who later rapes my friend (after i introduce them) and who i am pretty sure is sick with aids. no one on the street will meet my eyes, no one asks if i need help. i cover my naked breasts with my hands. i am surging. i am alive. i pretend no one else exists. i pretend i am encased in a protective shield. and i am. adrenaline, shock. i don't remember feeling any pain, nor much emotion either. something nags me though. i know he will try to kill again soon. i know this with everything i know. i rinse my bloody upper body and borrow a shirt from that guy that later raped my friend, maybe got her sick. all those cans of ensure stacked up in his room. the way he looked. it made me wonder. i walk to the hospital and my head is down to a low ooze, just a few stitches and a sticky clump of hair on the floor. my mom doesn't get alarmed by cuts and stuff. i get weak and queasy, and my dad faints. hate the hospital. keep getting that nagging

feeling that he's going to kill someone soon. he is frustrated now. i feel i should do something even as i am sick with the knowledge there is nothing i can do. defeated, i decide to do a rape kit and file a report. defeated before i even ask for the kit. i do it to buy my peace, i am sorry sister, this is all i have. i have this. nothing. something. all i have. i spread my legs for the medical personnel. they are unemotional. the police come. i have warrants but for once they don't take me to jail, say quite a few women's been dying. they look bored. take a report. i get in the patrol car and we go to the scene. miraculously my pipe lies on the floor unbroken and i am tempted to pick it up but resist the urge. the police look around, bored. they scribble a couple of lines in their notebooks. i show them my blood. they don't attempt to collect any evidence or take any photos. i think one cop yawned. next we drive around in the patrol car, which triggers my ptsd, not to mention the pain shot i got at the hospital is wearing off and i am way past the point jonesin' for a hit. voluntarily placing myself in the back of a police car is a creepy move. hearing the door slam shut, knowing i can't open the door to get out. trapped in that close space with two cops just changes the air. low panic. no trust. will they let me out? willing myself toward the moment when i can shake them off with a long shudder and melt away quick before they change their minds. we look for the guy. one cop lazily drives around a few blocks. "do you see him?" "ya and he looks like your mama" i want to say. will never say. not after they smashed my face into the brick wall, not after they almost broke my arm and set me up to be killed. not after they yawned their way through my paltry peace, my better than nothing? peace. sorry sister, this is what i have. nothing. something. i cared, wish you luck sister, wish you strength with which to fight him off. after a couple more blocks the patrol car stops and they let me out, only too anxious to be free of even the slightest need to act interested. i really need to get high. exhausted, and with no place i feel safe to stay, i head to the track.

the second time i was working. high as a kite. out of control, walking a few feet off the ground, surround sound, around town life is a blur of sensation and wonder, painfully beautiful. beautiful pain. i was down on capp st., smokin' right there on the track. smack in the middle of a sunny afternoon, high as a fucking kite. i ducked in a doorway, took a big hit, rushing to the feeling of an orgasm with a very high value of k i walked to the curb and a small white car pulled up, and for the first time ever without so much as a glance at the driver i opened the door and jumped in. even as the car pulled away from the curb i saw my mistake. the guy looked young and street savvy, exactly the kind of date i always avoid. almost immediately i asked to be let out. "can ya pull over up here" he kept silently driving, a fucked up and determined look on his face. i noticed his arms were thick, he looked strong. "what's up?" "what are you trying to get?" "hey, let me out." and at this

point he begins to glide through the stop signs without stopping and heads into the industrial area. fuck. this time i flip out right away. start my siren scream. this one is also shook by the sound of it, i try to open the door and he reaches over and holds it shut while still trying to drive. i scream and bang on the window and people are looking “i’ve got a gun bitch” he tries to reach under the seat for his gun but has to let go of the door to do so and before he can grab it he has to reach back up and pull the door shut again as i try to jump out, and all the while him still trying to drive, and all the while me screaming so loud it sucks the air from the car leaving dry electric currents of panicked disruption in its wake. lots of people have seen us, heard me screaming. naturally there isn’t a frickin’ cop in sight. he is getting deeper into the industrial area, fewer people, i am screaming, he is holding the door shut, cussing me, telling me to shut the fuck up. finally, i turn in a swift movement and slam my back against the door, swiveling in my seat and bringing my pointed heels up to kick him, and as i kick him he swerves and i reach behind me and open the door while propelling myself backward, out of the car and rolling on cement i come to rest at the feet of two women, who ask if i am okay. do i look okay? actually i am miraculously unharmed for hurling myself backwards out of a moving car, a few scrapes and bruises and hey, my dope is still in my pocket.

leslie bull 5/02

whore revelation 21:8
—ode to deer woman—

nameless scared feelings
writing in bibles
visiting prison
placing her name
in your holy book.
the thrill of fear
motel 6
room 257
i want to be 254
cause it rhymes with more
yet 7
rhymes with heaven
and i am
after all, desecrating
a bible
as i write
the holy bible
containing old
and new testaments
translated out of the
original tongue
commonly known
as the authorized
(king james)
version
with quotes in 27
languages
read by
3/4ths of the world's
population
they say
in the cover
alongside
the page for help
in time of need.
i need.
need you
to stop threatening me
with your
lakes of fire.

i swim in lakes
and they found my sister
dead in a river,
but a lake
of fire?
no. my lakes
are wet
moist and cool
teaming with life
and death
but not by fire
or your puny god
not by your pale hands.
i've kicked you sideways
upside the head
with my sharp heels
my pointed hooves
kick, kick
back out of
the car
splayed on cement.
truth is, i got away

leslie bull 3/02

Prostitution is Just Life

I use to believe that all the men who fucked me, all the men I sucked off and jacked off, and spanked with a hairbrush, and wiggled up and down on (for extra money) got a “piece” of my ass, a piece of me—ya know, I bought into that drama about how they could wear me out, use me up, make me damaged goods. I believed the do-gooder, anti-prostitute cops, and the guy on the bus, and the voice on the t v, and the next door neighbor, and the u.s. government, and my mother when they told me that all those two or three or four thousand muscles, all those earnest, indifferent, throbbing, aching poles that have poked their way all up inside my satin walls, all those red, purple, thin, crooked, black, brown, blue-veined, banana-shaped, tiny, cut, uncut, huge, pale, long, hard, short, half-soft dicks that have pushed and strained and grunted and slipped and folded and rammed their way into my beautiful slit, my hot pink, honey-scented pussy, my moist, intoxicating, powerful, pulsing, make you lose your mind, open your wallet wide, and cum in ten seconds flat, little girl, big girl, dirty trashy slutty white girl, push me apart pussy, that all that glistening, salty, bitter, fishy (yes its men that smell like fish) cum I’ve swallowed and spit out, translucent seed glimmering on my tits, running between my legs, squirted on my face, and rinsed from my hair diminished me, weakened me, made me less—I use to believe this until I realized it just isn’t true.

I am strong not weak and my power just grows and grows, multiplying itself in dark night under streetlamp’s glow. We take. We take their semen, their money, and their monogamy, their orgasms, their lunch hours, and their guilt free conscience. We lodge ourselves in their awareness and they make the trip to the atm, head down to the track to find us. We absorb them and absolve them and let them save us ‘til they wake up broke. Their sexual energy spent inside us. Their future children contained in the tip of a pale yellow, green, purple, ribbed, smooth, lubricated, unlubricated, nonoxynal-nine-coated, medium-sized, double-strength, chocolate cherry berry flavored latex condom that I casually throw in the trash as I check the clock and feel for the comforting roll of green against my breast. As I dash out the door, as I don’t look back. Not the way they look for us, circling the block, hungry, anxious, urgent desires driving them around the block once more, stingy, generous, cheap bastards that try to get something for nothing, pay extra, end up begging, insisting, calling out, silently pumping, apologetically needing to hear us whimper to their final thrust. I whimper on command, deep throat, splay my legs out on motel bed, jack my ass in the air doggie style in the back of a van, and whimper a little more about how that big, fat dicky-wicky can’t fit up my little tiny down there.

Many have tried to defeat me, anti-sex feminists and social workers, liberals and conservatives, cops and robbers, dopemen and businessmen, pimps and politicians, good girls and wives and hookers like me taught to fear our own sexual power, and the pious who visit us on Sunday after church lets out and the stroll fills with the saved and their saviors dressed in fishnets and shiny black thigh high boots, glittery gold lame` bikini top, tiny slip of skirt can't quite cover big, small, flat, round, narrow, fat ass, no panties. The ones that want to do just a little more than they paid for, intimidate, wheedle, beg, cry the ones that want to lock me up, badge flashing rapists, handcuff wielding killers, lying thieves, inept yet incredibly endowed with the twisted power of the law, sneaking around with all the finesse of an actual trick, the ones who just want to irritate me, manhandle me, screw me, cost me money, humiliate me, put me in jail for an hour or two, a day or two, or five, or if you don't comply with the program and let us help you it's sixty days and ninety days and six months and are you ready to receive a little more of our help, exclude me from the area where I go to the free clinic, the area where I work, the area where I live, laugh at me, touch me, be near me any way they can be cannot easily be distinguished from the ones who want to rape me, beat me, rob me, 'nap me, maim me, chop me into little pieces and store me in the freezer, throw me in the river, the dumpster, the woods, tie me up first and torture me, consume me in futile attempt to control my power, steal our power, extinguish one more glow as another flames to life, lighting another dark alley across town, down the way. I survived.

And they are not us, and they cannot use the power, not like we do. How many men do you see marketing their sex to women? How many women do you see buying it? Circling the block like hungry gulls. How many hookers are cumming to the sounds of their trick's whimper? That happened to me exactly zero times. Zero out of two or three or four thousand orgasms lavished, and spurted, and leaked unto me. Don't get me wrong, tricks aren't all bad, I mean without them we wouldn't have a business at all. Some tricks love hookers, or at least like 'em quite a bit, lots of others are all about business, gettin' their nut, know exactly what they need and aren't afraid to ask it, some tricks are a royal pain, others are polite or shy or annoying or gross, some are handsome or plain, a few tricks are dangerous and a few others are real dangerous. About the same as all men, because a trick is all men. He's our father, our son, our brother, our grandpa, our boyfriend, and our husband. He's a coach, a teacher, an executive, a cab driver, a trucker, a dopeman, an artist, and a cop. He's the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker, working class, poverty class, street class, elite class, middle class, upper middle class, and so-called alien. He is from every race and creed just like we are and prostitution is just life. How could that rich white lady on easy street know her husband was going to black her eyes, and

she would have to wear sunglasses in the rain. How could she have avoided the cold metal that pierced her body, extinguished her captured flame. Street prostitution is just life. Like living alone in your ground floor apartment, crossing the dark parking lot, dating in college, picking a husband. Life is frequently a crapshoot and prostitution is just life.

The life. A just life. A life filled with stigma, shame, hatred, ignorance, injustice, and fear. A just life? Or just the life. Just the way it is. Illegal, reviled, revered, needed, wanted, and feared, looked down on, complicated life filled with a representative selection of every type of asshole out there, every kind of nice guy, irregular regular guy, every type of beater, rapist, murderer, cop. A life filled with more money in one day than we can make in two weeks at the no benefit temporary medical supply assembly position, at the diner where the manager pinches your ass and backs you up against a wall in the kitchen, out in the fields picking poisoned vegetables, at the maid job in the seedy motel where you have to be careful there are no needles tangled up in the sheets. More money in one day than we can make in a month caring for our children alone with only a grudging welfare check to make ends meet. Street prostitution is just life. A just life. A life filled with push up bras and creamy tits, hurried, frenzied fucking in the back of a brown sedan, dodging the cops, sore jaws, dope and licks, rent paid and a money order sent out for the kids, belly full, new shoes, boyfriends, girlfriends, pimps, a party, a pouty come on, power. Life emerges from sexual power. Prostitution is just life.

Leslie Bull 4/02

feel me

my friend emi says,
she'll bring about the downfall
of western family institution
with her sluttiness.
i am enamored.
repeat this to peoples
blank stares
uncomfortable silences
chair shifts
throats cleared
erggghmmm,
let me clear my throat here,
once more, uh...
look down people often don't get it
don't see the revolutionary possibilities
in sluttiness.
sure, its not for everyone
but some of us are gifted
really gifted baby,
if ya feel me.
and you may feel me
down somewhere under your clothes
in your belly
fingertips
the place between your legs
you may feel me
and cast eyes down
harden
gasp for air.
you may, quite literally,
say fuck it
three cheers for sluts
doing some of the hardest
(no pun intended)
work of the revolution.
taking it upon ourselves
to break down lies and institutions
fear-mongering anti-sex
anti-body, anti-mother earth
sentiments.
or we could just wanna make a buck.

or both.
or something else entirely.
because you see
we are all different
all classes, all races, abilities, genders, sexualities, and sexes
all opinions, personalities, regions, religions
all reasons.
we can all bleed
and breathe.

revolution.

leslie bull 3/02

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