

The Amazon Trail: My Hundred Year "Plan"

I had a startling moment the other day when I realized who I am.

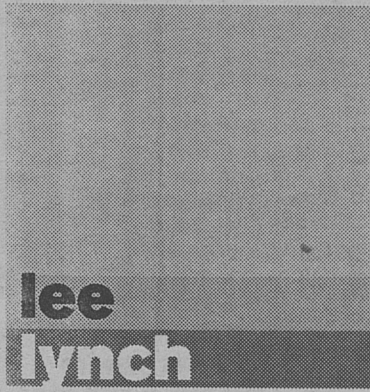
That may sound too weird, but I had a flash of how the person moving through the world under my name could be summed up. I think this was brought on because I've been watching the video that celebrates the life of my friend Dragon, who died two weeks ago. Each time I watch it, I discover something new about her. The contrast between her tiny tot years and the years in which I knew the tall, laconic, acerbic, unrelentingly funny, animal-loving college-grad-turned-motel-assistant-manager, was extreme.

How do we get from point A to point B? Why do some events and influences

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shape us more than others? Certainly our parents' plans for us are futile. I was supposed to be an ultra-feminine heterosexual. Sorry, I was way too fond of scrambling over rocks and playing cowboys and Indians to live up to that dream. I believe they gave up on me altogether at about age six when I started, with proud delight, wearing glasses.

From a traditional, Republican-leaning East-coast nuclear family consisting of my mother the housewife, my father



the overworking wage-earner, and my conventional older sibling, sprang this athletic, androgynous, single lesbian liberal peacenik West-coast writer with a New York accent who today can look out my upstairs window and see the Pacific Ocean. How did I come so far? How did I get here? How did my family produce such an odd duck? My friend the librarian told me that if you have a duck egg and no one to raise it, you put it under a hen. It's pretty common, she said. But, she added, "If you have a goose egg, you'd better find a pretty big hen." I think the mother hens who produced my generation looked askance on us goose eggs.

I'm not exactly the result of long-range personal planning either, but then, are any of us? My innkeeper friend told me how she had planned to work as a librarian in the southwest until she reached age 45. She then would become an administrator for the last ten years of her career and retire at age 55. Whoops - she and her partner have been running bed and breakfasts on the Northwest coast since she retired at age 51. No one could be more surprised at what life brought her than the innkeeper.

While Dragon was still well enough, she chose the music for the video about her life. The week before she died I sat in the living room of the home she shared with her partner and struggled not to cry as I listened to Tina Turner loudly - so Dragon could hear in the bedroom where her partner was

tending to her - belt out songs of love and survival. This is how our generation dies, I thought, to rock music at high volume - to Tina or the Beatles or to Bob Dylan or film scores. Not for us hushed funeral parlors and wakes. Who could have guessed, the first time we heard "YMCA," that we might yearn to hear it in our last moments and remember long velvet nights of disco dancing, bright afternoon tea dances in P-Town or in San Francisco, lovers and friends radiant with dreams of the future.

And here we are today, back in the old burg where we grew up, now with a same-sex partner and adopted kids, or running a company - or sitting in a tree to stop an old growth clear-cut, wondering how we found this path.

I never planned to be political at all, but my car is plastered with bumper stickers. I never planned to live out West, but I've been here 19 years. I never planned to be single, but I keep coming back to this solitude and a loving family of friends. I never planned to look androgynous, yet only yesterday I was called "sir." I never planned to speak with a New York accent, but after 9/11 I realized I'd hidden it for over 40 years. I only dreamed that I would write a novel, and yet a sister writer has honored me with "The Big OI' Stack of Books Award." I never planned myself, but I embrace who I've become. ▼

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with their pals several times a day - every day! They don't bother with romantic candles, oils or bubble baths. No long uninterrupted dates required, no complicated scenes to negotiate. They just look into each other's eyes and get it on. Those Bonobos inspired us, and our rusty mojos loosened up in no time.

If the two of us can do it, you can, too. So what if you haven't been between each other's legs since Sonja Johnson

ran for president? Sure, you might feel like your pilot light has been out so long you wouldn't know what to do if someone lit a match. But don't let inertia rob you and your honey buns of the sexual pleasure you once knew - and still deserve. Take a tip from the Bonobos. Swing right on over to your love object, clear away the cobwebs, and jump her bones. ▼

Sally Sheklow is enjoying her bananas at sally@wymprov.com.

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Mojo

continued from previous page

est, most peaceful and contented social animals on the planet. Why? They have lots of sex.

We were fascinated to learn that the females have giant vulvas with humongous clitorises right out front. They keep satisfied by engaging in every imaginable form of sex with each other. These big girls swing from limb to limb just to bump vulvas