

*Cris:* Not so much now. Because you were damned if you did, damned if you didn't. If you didn't say it out loud, people would think you were homophobic. In fact, I began to wonder that myself. What it always felt to me, mysteriously, was that by saying you were, so all these women could feel good about themselves, made me feel like they were putting me in a closet. And I'd never felt like I was in any closet in my whole life until that time. I don't like anybody to force me to do anything. I want to say it, but I'll get real stubborn if you try to force me to say one thing or another. And yet here I am - my neck's out on the line all the time. It's a very visible place for me because I'm a very private person. And I've always thought that's the least interesting part of my life. It is not what I write about. I write about the human condition. Yes, I am a lesbian. Yes. But I knew a million men, and my life could have taken a whole different turn. And sometimes I think I'm not a lesbian like some of the lesbians I know. I don't easily fit into any category. My music doesn't. I don't know that that's women's music I'm making; I wouldn't describe it that way. But I don't know how to describe it either. So I'm a person who doesn't fall easily into categories.

*OITM:* How do you reconcile living a very public life and being a very private person?

*Cris:* That's just the nature of it. By being unafraid. By wearing no armor. By walking out as I am. I'm the same person on-stage that I am right here, sitting with you. People have learned to believe that. By the fact that I do what I do, I take it up on the stage. And all that does is take it up to a level, not better than, but more visible. And you could say, more of a target also. It's the best seat in the house, though. I love it. It's a very powerful place to be. I just did Carnegie Hall all by my little self.

What a night. I don't know if I could ever explain to anybody what a grand feeling that is. To be so present at your own birth. That's what it felt like.

*OITM:* And you filled it?

*Cris:* Yes. I just walked out. I hadn't done anything, and I stood for five minutes. Just walked out there, my heart thundering in my chest. People stood, and I thought, "They're looking at me. I've done something in my life already." And that's magnificent. If I never do another lick, I've done something that's made a difference. The little album that could. *The Changer and the Changed*. Wow. That's something.

*OITM:* Do you ever wish there were certain questions people would ask you?

*Cris:* I can talk about my influences, the people I listen to and love and what I think about, what I like to do, other things I like to do in my life, like fishing, or smelling a horse - the things that set me right, make me feel at home on the earth. That I think about dying constantly. Always have. It's the one thing around which my work centers.

*OITM:* How does it do that?

*Cris:* In that it's all temporal, our existence here. And I don't see why people struggle so hard and are so hateful on this earth when we could just get along. It's so simple. Give it up. Give up the borders. Give up the struggle, the greed, the struggle for money, which is meaningless. You know, you just fly real high above the earth - that's my Aquarian nature - and you look down and you go, "This is just fruitless." I've got work to do. And music is my hope - that we can change the world somehow. Every artist hopes for that, I'm sure. And by artist, I mean anybody who does anything artistically, with

an eye for beauty and structure and design...But we live in these times. We're forced to look at horrible things. We're forced to know horrible things. And you can't go back once you're on the path of knowing, of knowledge. Where do you find your path? Mine is right down the middle. I walk wherever I want to walk, I say whatever I want to say.

*OITM:* So how can you live in that kind of world?

*Cris:* By making music. By picking up this piece of garbage. By straightening up my area everywhere I am. Everywhere I go, I'm in my environment, and I try to keep it clean everywhere I go. You can't fix it all up, but if it's true that fixing the small thing is like fixing the large thing, that's what I'll do, because that's something. Better than nothing. It's something.



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