

I Am That I Will Be:
for the transgender Christa who is coming to birth
(after Marcella Althaus Reid)

I will *not* be silent, nor hidden forever.
For I am a transgender woman and I will come to birth.
Though *my* birthing is painful, messy and rocks the cradle,
it offers tidings of great joy, and a more just, diverse and beautiful world.
It overturns powers and principalities, lifting up the lowly,
ransoming my people from darkness, silence and death.

My birth is from a well of deep shame and profound, tearful, struggle.
Like Mary of Nazareth's, it involves recreative will and imaginative response.
For I know only too well the cost and waiting for new creation;
time, spirit and dollars - a slow, *so* slow, process of transfiguration.
It has involved powerful life-giving hormonal change,
the growing of tender loving breasts, the delightful easing of skin,
the living purgatory of electrolysis, extracting puberty's ransom,
the taking of a beautiful new name, the uneven transformation of relationships,
and the tearing and transfiguration of intimate flesh.
On so many levels, it is about being born again
– so Nicodemus, Lazarus, the bent over woman and the Ethiopian Eunuch, come out!

For in the beginning there was an indecent kaleidoscopic God.
Beyond gender, and *in* all gender,
they were not immaculate in their creation, but fabulously messy.
So the universe was born of terrific explosions of power, as well as love.
It unfolds through such threshings, and perpetually increases in diversity.
Even the patriarchs knew to wrestle with God
as part of their own creation and continuing birthing.
Why should it be other for us?
Why are we so obsessed with purity, origins and order?
Pain-love is our invitation to life. It is cross-shaped with a bent to resurrection.
This is the indecent, messy God, the indecent Christ,
and the indecent God-story which has never been perfect, and may never be.

I am an indecent creation,
and also *intrinsically disordered*,
at least according to the Church of Rome,
the so-called Mother Church who casts off her offspring like me.
I am an abomination to many Protestants.
I am a puzzle to Anglicans:
to be expelled, concealed, or maybe permitted, often at arms-length.
I am mystification and a gender whisperer to a spiritually stunted Prime Minister.
Yet I am transgender and I will still come to birth, daily as I must.

I do not, like some mystics say, want to be recalled to *my* original name.
It *so* hurt and confined.

I want my own, authentic, name, and new names for so many, and so much else.
For I move to the beat of a God who calls us into the future,
not to an idealised paradise that never was.
Naming is thus part of becoming, not of an eternal recurrence.
I am transgender and I *will* come to birth.

Nor do I want to be recalled to a virginal state.
I seek to develop, flourish and mature.
For I too am a sexual being and, with my queer siblings, I *rejoice* in this.
Our bodies, and our pleasures, are Genesis good.
As an indecent sexual creation I am glorious just as I am, and will be.
For I am transgender and I *will* come to birth, with *all* that that involves.

I am not an immaculate conception. I am an *indecent* conception.
I was born out of desire and struggle,
through God-pleasing genitalia, blood, sweat and tears.
I do not want to exist in a perfectly clean, or neat cosmos.
My divine lover does not want that either.
I am transgender and I *will* come to birth.

Nor am I an addition to be made one day to Galatians 3.28.
I do not want unitive awareness, transcendence of difference,
without being named, *without* being born, *without* ever having individuated.
I am the shadow, the Other,
the embodiment of the twilight people who can help make our world whole.
For I am transgender and I *will* come to birth.

I am not *disordered*, but I pray to be *reordering*.
For Jesus too was trans (beyond) gender, and most certainly intrinsically *reordering*.
They hung around with, healed, encouraged, and learned from, other disordering
people. Let us then rejoice in God's messy conception,
and enter the terrors of the pain-love of new creation.
That is the true *one-ing*, the transcendent immanence, of kaleidoscopic divinity.
For I am transgender and I *will* come to birth.

Mother Mary, whisper words of wisdom. There will be an answer - Let it Be!

Josephine McDonnell Inkpin
from Retreat at Mercy Place, Bardon, Dec 2019