friend had a large say. She was quite a mocker, and I remembered all too well how she had railed against my "idiosyncratic, touchy misinterpreta-
tion of such a silly little children's story as The Little Mermaid." (I had said that I didn't like the Disney version of the story because the mer-
maid gave up her culture and her people merely for love.) Realizing that I had accidentally revealed myself, I quickly retreated and therefore did not challenge her interpretation of my "habit." I kept quiet and seethed at her call to normalcy, knowing that—whatever her wishes—I would write what I wanted to. Being quiet was easy because in a world larger than that writing group I had allies. I was writing for them.

From the moment of my arrest in 1976, and then through my stay at county jail and the California Institution for Women (CIW), I was pointed at and whispered about by both staff and inmates. It seemed that their personal goal in life was to inform anyone who would listen, "There's the girl who used to be a guy," casting doubt as to whether I belonged in a women's prison. It made no difference that in county jail I had been locked in the women's facility. And when I was sent to the women's penitentiary, it was apparently beyond their cognitive abilities to accept my presence as legitimate.

I entered the reception center at CIW and gave my name to the nurse who would take my vital signs and perform a physical examination...
and a Pap smear. Instead of examining me, she immediately exited the office. A few moments later, a female guard came into the room and told me to follow her. When I asked why, she stated, "That is none of your business. When you are given a direct order here in this prison, you obey it without hesitation. Do you understand?"

I responded that I did, but that I also had the right to know where I was being taken. She remained silent. I followed her down several hallways and through several doors, into the parking lot. Then she led me through the gate, toward a building that looked like a hospital. Again I asked her where we were going. She replied, "It is for your own protection, because we have had several threats made against your life."

I knew that she was lying and I confronted her. "I don't know how that could possibly be the case, because no one even knows that I am here."

"Oh, if you only knew how many people know you are here," she said.

She led me into the hospital and took me to a caged-in cell, unlocked the door, and ordered me to enter. Inside sat a bed frame with a mattress on it, what looked to be an open shower stall, and a toilet and sink. I sat down on the bed with my back to the doorway. I wasn't going to let anyone see me crying. Nearly an hour later, a man came up to the door and started talking to me. I remained silent.

He said, "Do you know who I am?" Again I did not answer. He continued, "I am the chief medical officer here. I am also the chief psychiatrist, and I am here to tell you that this is a prison for women, not for those who just think they are women."

I stood up on that note, turned and faced him, then very quietly said, "And psychiatry is a profession for qualified doctors, not just those who got their licenses out of a Cracker Jack box." Then I turned my back to him.

About an hour later, another man came to the caged doorway and said, "I am the chief deputy warden here in this prison and your fate rests in my hands. I can and will send you to the Vacaville medical facility. They'll know what to do with you there." Vacaville was the men's prison.

I stood and faced my adversary. "You may be the chief deputy warden, but I am the great-great-great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of the chief medicine woman of the Huron tribe of the Iroquois nation, and I am certain that the superior court judge who sentenced me to this seven-to-life sentence at the California Institution for Women would not take too kindly to you snubbing his decision and sending me elsewhere. He ordered me to be examined by a doctor and a nurse, who deemed me female, and I was housed with the other females in that county jail for my nine-month stay. If you insist on negating his decision, I will advise my attorney to inform the judge." I turned my back and sat back down on the bed.

My next visitors were two guards who told me to approach the door and turn around with my back to them. I was to be escorted elsewhere. I did as I was told. They handcuffed me and took me to a doctor's office. A doctor and two nurses entered the room and told me to disrobe, so they could determine if I qualified for placement at CIW.

"I will not disrobe with two male officers in the room," I told them. "You can read the report submitted by the doctor and nurse at