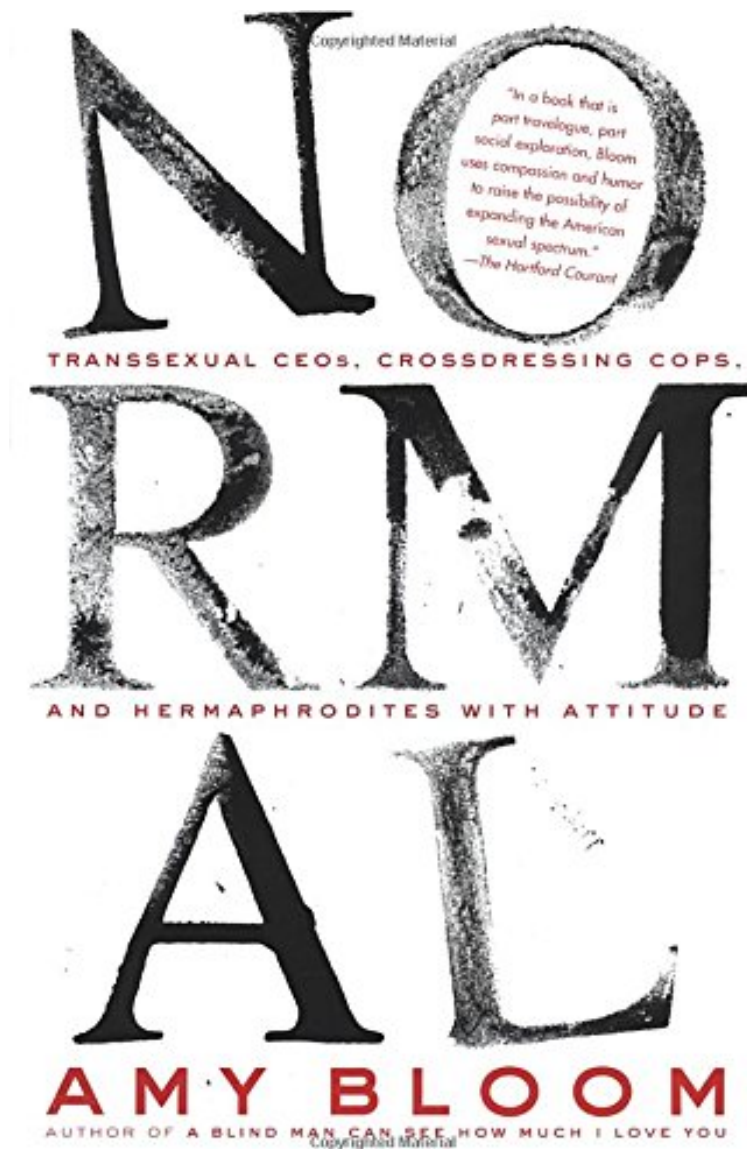


Normal: Transsexual CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude

Amy Bloom

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Amy Bloom : Normal: Transsexual CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Normal: Transsexual CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Gender what?By Kindle CustomerWow, this was eye opening and

fascinating! I first read it back in college in a gender studies class but then again last year. It is something I would recommend to all people because gender is never black and white. Never just girl or boy- guy or gal. :)0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy CustomerIt's just ok nothing new. But does shed light on intersexed in the individual0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good readBy CustomerInteresting though getting outdated

Amy Bloom has won a devoted readership and wide critical acclaim for fiction of rare humor, insight, grace, and eloquence, and the same qualities distinguish *Normal*, a provocative, intimate journey into the lives of people who reveal, or announce, that their gender is variegated rather than monochromaticfemale-to-male transsexuals, heterosexual crossdressers, and the intersexed. We meet Lyle Monelle and his mother, Jessie, who recognized early on that her little girl was in fact a boy and used her life savings to help Lyle make the transition. On a Carnival cruise with a group of crossdressers and their spouses, we meet Peggy Rudd and her husband, Melanie, who devote themselves to the cause of ordinary heterosexual men with an additional feminine dimension. And we meet Hale Hawbecker, a regular, middle-of-the-road, white-bread guy with a wife, kids, and a medical condition, the standard treatment for which would have changed his life and his gender. Casting light into the dusty corners of our assumptions about sex, gender and identity, Bloom reveals new facets to the ideas of happiness, personality and character, even as she brilliantly illuminates the very concept of "normal."

From Publishers WeeklyTaking in an amazing range and diversity of the human experience of gender and sexuality, novelist Bloom (*Love Invents Us*) devotes an essay each to three phenomena: female to male transsexualism, heterosexual cross-dressing and the intersexed, or those with ambiguous genitalia or confusing chromosomal balance. But she is most interested in examining "why the rest of us struggle" with gender and sexual experiences we do not share. Bloom interviews people from each of the above groups (as well as doctors, social scientists and gender activists) and brings together, in graceful, readable prose, a plethora of facts, ideas, arguments and personal responses to help us reconsider received ideas about gender. While some of her information is surprising (babies born with "confusing" genitals are more common than babies born with cystic fibrosis), she never uses the lives of her subjects to titillate. Bloom is happy to confess her own, and others', confusions and lack of information, pointing out that there is no reliable information on the number of heterosexual cross-dressers, for instance. And she allows her subjects like the female-to-male-transsexual who has not undergone phalloplasty and claims, "I can live this way, as a man with a vagina" their complicated lives. Fascinating without being prurient, detailed without being overly scientific, the book opens new ways of viewing not only gender but our own inability to accept difference. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library JournalExploring territory that lies beyond the dichotomies of female and male, gay and straight, Bloom, a National Book Critics Circle finalist for her story collection, *A Blind Man Can See How Much I Love You*, introduces members of three very different groups who challenge common definitions of gender and sexuality. For her first nonfiction book, she interviewed women who have surgery in order to conform physically with the male gender they have always seen themselves as having; heterosexual men who satisfy a sexual fetish (they prefer to call it a hobby) by dressing in women's clothing; and the intersexed, whose prime political objective is to do away with the unquestioned cosmetic surgery on children born with ambiguous genitalia. A practicing psychotherapist, fiction writer, feminist, and lesbian, Bloom dares the reader to be willingly confounded by her always engaging, frequently humorous interviewees while also airing her own reactions, particularly her outrage at the brutal surgeries whose benefits have yet to be proven performed on unwitting infants. As an accessible, nonsensationalistic introduction to a fascinating and controversial subject, this volume is recommended for all collections. Ina Rimpau, Newark P.L., NJ Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From BooklistBloom's understanding of gender changed radically after her remarkable odyssey into the hidden worlds of female-to-male transsexuals, heterosexual cross-dressers, and hermaphrodites, and so will her readers'. She is uniquely qualified to tell the perplexing and poignant stories of gender-benders by virtue of her work as a clinical social worker and empathic fiction writer (the exceptional *A Blind Man Can See How Much I Love You* [2000] reflects the invaluable revelations sparked by this inquiry), not to mention her curiosity and piquant sense of humor. Lucid, frank, and compassionate, Bloom succinctly recounts her illuminating conversations with straight men who feel compelled to dress as women and their amazingly supportive wives; individuals who were born with a woman's body and a man's soul who underwent excruciating and expensive surgery (which Bloom explains in detail) in order to live as their true selves; people born with "ambiguous genitals"; surgeons who perform the complicated, sometimes controversial operations that "correct" these confusing states; and the activists and entrepreneurs who support them. Beautifully done, Bloom's fascinating and enlightening disquisition greatly extends our perception of humanness. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved