

one comments on her butt. When she sashays down the street, she kind of wiggles it back and forth. A lot of people stop to pat her, just because of that butt. And when we get to the park, the whole gang goes nuts for her. Even though she's been spayed, they gather around. You should see Bowser, for example — oh and hey, I found this poem that Shakespeare wrote about her.

LESLIE. Shakespeare?

GREG. (*Recites.*)

“Who is Sylvia? What is she,

That all our swains commend her?...”

LESLIE. Greg.

GREG. “Holy, fair, and wise is she ...”

LESLIE. Greg!

GREG. “The heavens such grace did —”

LESLIE. GREG!

GREG. Yes?

LESLIE. I'm afraid we're confined to the fifty-minute hour.

GREG. Sorry. I get carried away.

LESLIE. (*Leaving the desk, standing in front of him.*) Greg, I'm going to do something here which I normally do much further along in the therapy process. I'm going to put myself into the picture.

GREG. Yourself?

LESLIE. What's my name, Greg?

GREG. Kate said it was Leslie.

LESLIE. Leslie it is, Greg. Now am I a man or a woman?

GREG. You're a ... (*Hesitates.*) Woman.

LESLIE. You hesitated, Greg.

GREG. Yes. Well. Sorry.

LESLIE. No, no. I wanted you to hesitate. I wanted you to select my gender. That's why I call myself Leslie. It's a name which works either way.

GREG. It does, doesn't it?

LESLIE. And that's why I wear these ambivalent clothes. I may be a man pretending to be a woman, or I may be a woman pretending to be a man. I let my patients select my gender, Greg.

GREG. I thought you were a woman.

LESLIE. Because you wanted me to be a woman.

GREG. I did?

LESLIE. We project our needs onto the world, Greg. Life is shapeless and absurd. We use words, names, and categories to give us a sense of shape. We need that sense of shape to get through the day.

GREG. O.K.

LESLIE. You even see it in the Bible, Greg. God has Adam name the animals. So that Adam can construct his own order out of the chaos around him.

GREG. Hmmm.

LESLIE. Which brings us to your dog, Greg.

GREG. Sylvia.

LESLIE. Sylvia. You wanted your dog to be a woman, too. That's why you named her Sylvia.

GREG. She was already named Sylvia.

LESLIE. But you embraced the name. Because you needed a woman.

GREG. I already have a woman. Her name is Kate.

LESLIE. (*Becoming impatient.*) You wanted another *kind* of woman, Greg. You wanted the subservient little wife you once kept in the suburbs. You wanted the worshipful daughter who once hung on your every word. You wanted a Sylvia, Greg. If Sylvia didn't exist, you would have had to invent her.

GREG. You may be right, Leslie.

LESLIE. (*Sardonically.*) I think I am, Greg. (*All business.*) Now these are what we therapists call “the dangerous years.”

GREG. The dangerous years.

LESLIE. The years between the first hint of retirement and the first whiff of the nursing home.

GREG. Oh God.

LESLIE. No, we should make the most of these years, Greg. I, for example, am exploring the boundaries of gender identification. Kate is moving beyond child-rearing to a career in the public classroom. You, on the other hand, seem to have retreated into a kind of pastoral nostalgia.

GREG. Pastoral nostalgia?