

REG JOHANSON / from Mortify

Dad said I had to go with the men but I wanted to stay with the women
Mom said I could the women said I was hiding
Behind my mom's skirts I don't know what the men said
Did they think I was peculiar was it very odd for me to want to stay with
The women? Why did I want to stay with the women? Was I afraid of
The men what was I afraid of why did the men frighten me
I know the answer I know why I didn't want to go with the men but
I'm embarrassed to say it I don't want to admit it
To myself I don't want to explain that to admit that I had a feeling
About it a negative feeling an aversion a lack of desire to go with the men
I should have wanted to go with the men I
Should have wanted nothing more than to go with them
It should have been like, you can't hold me back I don't want to stay here
I want to go with the men and the boys because
That's more natural, that's a more normal desire it's healthier it makes sense to
Want to go with the men there weren't any girls there just
Women so I don't have that excuse I can't say, oh I stuck around to pick
Up chicks I was only five years old my best friends across the street were girls
two sisters
We played house and doctor they were the husbands and my brother and I were
The wives or babies I'm taking a risk in admitting this it's a great risk to
Admit that as a boy I was prepared to pretend to be
A wife, well, we did have dolls my parents
Were quite progressive in that way they thought it was fine for boys to play
With dolls that's probably why I'm so sensitive now that's probably why women feel
Easy around me they feel safe I dreamt once that
I was surrounded by beautiful women who said to me
We like you because we know you don't want to have sex with us
Because I was taught that girls can do anything boys can do

And vice versa though no one said that no one said “boys can do anything girls can do” it
Was always the other way around it was always “girls can do anything boys Can do” I must have inferred the corollary myself I was very sensitive I wasn’t precocious as
A child but I was very I would say sensitive not particularly smart not very bright not gifted
I wouldn’t say I was gifted
Just not a brainiac not a brainy child I was just rather sensitive, and rather sweet I think,
I could ask my mom to tell me what I was like as a kid
I could ask my dad to tell me, was I sweet? Was I sensitive? Unusually Sensitive? I know I cried a lot I know I didn’t like to be left with the baby Sitter I didn’t like to be left in the car when my mom ran in
To the store to get something quick I cried when my brother and I went
On the plane to visit my dad my brother had to look after me, me, the older brother had to be looked after by the younger I never forgave him for that
He knew my secret he knew why
I didn’t want to go with the men and the boys he understood why
I wanted to stay with the women he
Never used it against me but I used it against him, I held it against him
It was dangerous information I was
Always taught that girls could do anything boys could do that girls and boys were Equal anything boys could do girls could do too and I inferred the corollary,
That boys could do anything girls could do but maybe I was wrong about
That this might have been where I made my
Mistake it might be here that I made a crucial error
In my thinking it was the seventies
And it was a feminist moment I was raised from an early age to be a feminist
But not to be queer I’m not, I’m not queer, this isn’t the big secret
This isn’t the reason I didn’t want to go with the men that’s not why I wanted to

Stay with the women the reason was that I was afraid of the men
I admit it I'm not ashamed to admit that I'm comfortable expressing my
Fears I do not find it difficult to express
My emotions I can say that I was afraid to go with the men but there was something
wrong with
My decision that day the women remarked on it they implied that it was
Peculiar they didn't know I was being raised as a feminist they didn't know
Girls could do anything boys could do but they did know something
They were correct in one
Respect they were right about one thing: that boys could not do anything
Girls could do they were farm women
My mom was protecting me from the knowledge the farm women had about
Boys being raised as feminists my dad wasn't protecting me though
He wasn't very good at protecting me he had a double standard
He was a manly man when he was with the men and a pussy at home now hey
Stop now listen to me listen to
My language here and here I was raised a feminist and listen to me
Talk he was whipped the man had
No balls my mom didn't wear skirts she was a feminist hiding me from the farm
Women and their men and boys but not their daughters why should she I
Had nothing to fear from them they were just like me but one thing I missed
One thing here I didn't get I wasn't just like them that was not made clear that was
Only hinted at it was implied it was intimated that girls and boys were different
Maybe I got confused here this explains a lot this really makes sense to me did I
Conflate "equal" with "same" I was just a kid I was five years old that's an easy
Mistake to make and I wasn't especially gifted I was a little sensitive and that's
What sensitive people do that's just the kind of mistake you might
Expect from a sensitive person that's a sensitive person's kind of thinking,
If we are equal we must be the same