

The Transformation Journey

* Transformation: to change in character, or ~~state~~ condition - a major or startling change.

Quora I ~~want~~ ^{planned} to talk with you ^{today} about transformation in my own life, but I don't know ^{exactly} where to start.

Angel you don't need to tell ^{them} everything. Just start ~~begin~~ when you were 15 years old. ~~Why don't you start back at the beginning?~~

* *OK, OK.* Well, ~~that~~ ^{that} was in the summer just following

my 10th grade ~~year~~ year. Every summer I ~~accompanied~~ ^{went with}

my grandmother to a 2 week camp meeting in south Mississippi.

All of the Methodist families in that area had cabins in a

~~scenic~~ campground, with a cold stream ^{nearly} surrounded by tall

trees full of hanging moss. The half circle of cabins were

built with a big tabernacle in the center, and every night,

all the people would come to the tabernacle to sing hymns,
pray, and listen to the ~~good~~ preacher.

(Angel) You need to stop all of the blah blah blah and ^{just} get to the ^{POINT} point.

(Judge) I was getting to the point. One night, something happened

to me. After everyone had gone to bed, I was still awake -

thinking ^{thoughts} new thoughts. I kept asking myself: "What are

you going to do with your life? Who are you going to become?"

And finally the answer ^{just} came, I should become a minister.

Someone who can help a lot of people. And from the next day

on, I changed completely! Some people refer to something

like that as a calling. Well, whatever it was, it changed me!

When I started eleventh grade, ~~I was very quiet & reserved~~, I ^{studied more, & practiced} became friendly ^{playing clarinet more,}

to everyone, saying hello in the hallways, and I ^{was chosen} ~~was chosen~~

the eleventh grade
~~that year~~ favorite ~~boy~~ that year.

(C) Every day
 There's a joy throbbing within my soul
 And my heart is fancy free!
 It's a good morning, a better day,
 And a ~~jolly~~ good life for me,

And I dated girls and went to dances and parties

with dates, but I knew, deep down, that I was ~~romantically~~
 really
 attracted to boys, and not to girls.

(Angel) But you just experienced your first real transformation,

becoming an outgoing and ~~open~~ person who knows where
 he's going.

(Julian) Yeah, but I ^{still} knew I was different. †††

(Angel) And I warned you ^{that} ~~at that time~~ that at some ^{time} ~~time~~ in the
 future, you would have to deal with who you really are.

(Julian) But I couldn't. When you're born in Meridian, Mississippi,

you can't be gay, so I just shoved it down inside me //

ANGEL
~~Angel~~

Someone's looking over your shoulder, ^{ABSB} ^{Ab} ^C ^E hearing your worries

Seeing your stuff

Seeing you

Someone's looking over your shoulder, watching your actions,

Judging your life

Locked in a prison of shame.

Julian
A

That's right

finished high school in grad school

Yeah, I ~~know~~ But I went on to college, and everything

was going fine for awhile. I joined a fraternity, and every

year, we invited new pledges in, ^{knowing that} some of them would be

chosen as members. That year, my ^{FRATERNITY} little brother was Harmon

Lewis ~~Smith~~, a guy I already knew from our state Methodist Young

Fellowship, and within three months, the two of us made a

scary discovery — We had ^{very} strong feelings for one another. In fact,

We really loved each other.

Eh

① el reach out to you and you reach out to me
Across the space that separates and keeps our hands from touching.
Love comes slowly, Love comes hard.

Angel's

You move cautiously along the road
Where people come and go, reluctant to encounter one another,
Love comes slowly, Love comes hard

Julie's

So we kept our secret very secret and all ~~was~~ ^{went} well.
Assurance

But in my senior year, I became President of our Fraternity,
and at a meeting one night, one of the brothers claimed he heard

from a friend that Jimmy Ford, a new pledge, was gay. Well,
my frat brothers ~~just~~ ^{just} went crazy. They immediately decided, ^{in spite of my} ~~over my~~

^{pleas} ~~disagreed~~, that Jimmy should be black balled immediately, before
we even had time to check ^{things out,} ~~that~~. So it happened, and as President,

I had to inform Jimmy that he was black balled, but I was forbidden
by chapter rules, to be able to tell him ^{why} I was so hurt by

^{as I did, the deed} and Jimmy dropped out of school and disappeared.

^{everything that} happened, that I ^{just} resigned from my ^{fraternity} presidency and never

entered the chapter room again. And I became so despondent that I ~~couldn't~~ ^{couldn't} study, I couldn't sleep, ~~I couldn't~~ ^{and I just fell} apart.

Q If there's a God, why don't you come by here?
Is there some reason why you can't appear in all the places where your people are crying, and your people are ~~dying~~ ^{dying} And your people are trying to survive their darkest fears. Like me!
If there's a God, why don't you come by here?

Angel: And then you tried to commit suicide. ^{I missed Jimmy's life and he might have been gay,}
Julian: I just didn't want to live anymore.
Q: Yeah, ~~but~~ I know that Harmon and I could never ^{ever} be together, ~~but~~
if anyone ^{ever} found out I was gay, I wouldn't be accepted at the Seminary, and the Church would turn its back on me ~~as well~~ for sure!

Angel: But ^{you were on your way to} ~~there was~~ another transformation!

Julian: That's true.
Q: Yeah, I was in such a mess, I ~~couldn't~~ ^{couldn't} pass my finals, so I wasn't able to ~~graduate~~ ^{graduate}, but one of the Music Professors talked me

into staying in school for an extra year ~~and~~ with a major
which turned out to be a lifesaver for me, ~~and~~
in music, ~~which I did~~, and graduated ~~and~~ headed
with high marks

for Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, TX.

(D)

^{AA AG F}
Heading down the winding road
Underneath the burning sun
Shuffling my dusty feet along
Carrying a heavy load, (of books)
Lots of studying to be done
My efforts really can't go wrong
Oh, I am headed for ~~the~~ tough ~~life~~ time
~~The~~ tough life, ~~the~~ tough ~~life~~ time
Shuffling my dusty feet along

turned out to be ^{fantastic} ~~great~~
best Seminary ~~experience~~

Angel: And then life became complicated again,

^{BDD DD}
^{ED F & ED}

+ Angel: Julian
Complications! Why does life have to be so
Full of complications. Hmmm? Complications!

Angel: Since he gets so tangled up with words, ~~the~~ ^{I'm going to} ~~alignments~~
explain what ^{happens next} ~~follows~~, Seminary was a great experience, of course,
so Julian, after 3 years, decided to get ~~get~~ another degree.

~~that time~~

81

a Masters degree

in Christianity and the Arts. And during that time, he

met a woman who had gotten a ^{Christian Education} ~~master's~~ degree from Duke

and the two seemed to become a pair.

Do you really love her?

Julian
\$5 We really care about each other.

But that's not really being exclusive, is it?

Angel ~~that's not~~ since you are gay, you can't really love her.

Julian
No, but I really care about her, &

A: ~~don't~~ ~~met~~ gay ~~on my way to becoming a~~ minister, ~~and~~
I've got to shut the door on that.

~~just can't be gay.~~ For the past five years, I haven't been

gay, so I ~~don't have to be gay ever again~~
can just keep on not being gay! And that's that!

Angel But you can't live a lie, Julian, you've got to be as you were created.

C You have to be free to be as God created you, the one
who'll ~~struggle but try~~ struggle but try.

For you can't live a lie without becoming one.

Julian
\$5 No. No. I'm not ~~gay~~ gay anymore, it's done! finished!

Well —

Angel the story moves on. Julian marries and has 2 sons

And during that time, he ~~served as~~ ^{served as} ~~with~~ ^{four} different churches and got another Masters ^{degree}, this time in Theatre. But then

^{came} ~~came~~ ~~complications~~ even more complications
B6 B6 B6
E6 COMPLICATIONS

A: Our marriage just wasn't working. I never ~~was~~ ^{had}, but we stayed

together for the two boys. ~~But~~ Finally things ~~became~~ ^{became} so unhappy that

~~we~~ ~~separated~~ we separated, and the boys stayed with ~~her~~ ^{their mother on}

weekdays and me ~~on~~ ^{on} weekends, ~~and~~ we went to a counselor, ~~who~~ ^{which} had nothing to do with the other - you know.

~~told us very soon that she needed to see us separately,~~
el reach out to you + you reach out to me - Love dies slowly. Love dies hard.

(Angel) Don't go into all that. You decided you needed to divorce, ~~and~~

and only then did you finally face the music & Tell them about

that!

(Julian) DK! OK! The counselor kept nagging me about facing my ~~gayness~~ ^{sexual orientation}

(Angel) I put her up to that.

(Julian) And at one session, I just ~~opened up~~ ^{finally} ~~opened up~~ and said "All right, I'm gay, I'm gay"

C D E G
 C G I have to be free to be as God created me. The one
 who'll ~~struggle~~ struggle but try, for I can't live a lie
 without becoming one!

Angel: Seems to me I heard that song before
 So you told a few friends, but it got back to the head minister

Julian: Who didn't like me anyway! So everything blew up,

Angel: The church argued for several months, and decided you had to
 leave, but the Bishop, who supported you, found you another

place. So you survived another catastrophe! You had another
 transformation!

Julian: ~~Yeah, but~~ someday, like tomorrow, like tomorrow I can see:
 Someday, I'll awaken, I'll awaken and be free!
 The future's ahead, and I'll meet it.

Angel: Remember the words? persevere.

Julian: I'll tell old man trouble to beat it,
 Because the only way is up from here.

Angel: So you moved to Kansas ~~with your second gay love~~ ^{Larry Anderson} almost
 and came ~~back~~ back to Denver to start the Colorado AIDS

Project, a new transformation! Again!

Julian: I wanted a life that's easy. I ~~longed~~ longed for a life that's slow.
 I longed to live in some quiet place ~~where peaceful water flows~~ where peaceful water flows
 where life could be serenity.

But it was anything but peaceful.

The so-called ^{as} transformation ^{the AIDS} that was overwhelming. Dozens of ^{project}
~~very rich young gay men~~ ^{came pouring} ~~walked~~ ^{more doors} ~~came~~ ^{knocking} ~~for help~~ ^{and}
 some of them were already dying! And we were ^{totally} overwhelmed.

- How could it possibly be I was chosen?
- What do I know? What can I do?
- Why should it have to be me who was chosen?
- Why won't some other guy do? a lot better than I can.

Angel: Because the gay people ^{in Denver} ~~here~~ chose you, and the ^{Methodist} Bishop appointed you there, and ~~because~~ ^{maybe} ~~God wanted it too~~.

There's no task that's easy
 No longer a time that's slow.
 There's no land, except in dreams
 Where peaceful waters flow
 Life cannot be serenity.

So we went to work, ^{and we worked hard, very hard,} and our small group grew quickly into a bustling ^{center for helping people with AIDS} ~~place~~, ^{and having moved back to} ~~but~~ ^{Denver} and within ⁴ years, we had

become a 3 million dollar operation, ~~to help people~~
 But we ~~still~~ remained a loving safe place for our clients.
~~and it was Michael Whit, we felt his~~ ~~and us~~ ~~to~~

with ~~him~~

Angel: It was another transformation - a very successful one.

Julian: But during this time, there was ^{a huge} ~~another~~ crisis - the biggest crisis of all.

Angel: Stop, stop, stop. ~~It'll take you forever to tell~~ ^{the rest of that} story.

so ~~I'll tell it~~ ~~in a few minutes.~~ ~~OK.~~

Julian: Oh, you will, huh?

Angel: ~~Yes.~~

Angel: ^{yes} The Methodist Church has a Book of Discipline, and in it is a

phrase that states that homosexuality is incompatible with ^{by some of his fellow ministers} British teachings. So Julian was charged, because he had a gay

partner, and the Bishop was charged for supporting him.

So ^{Julian} ~~he~~ had to face ^{the} Committee on Investigation.

Julian:

But because I had a very clever lawyer and some ^{very} kind and

that didn't ^{really} want to throw me under the bus, 13.

loving people on the Committee, the charges were dismissed!!!
~~for me and the Bishop!~~

Angel's: And ^{that, my friend,} ~~it~~ was the biggest transformation of all! Yes! Yes! Yes!

Julian's: And ~~was~~ ^{cl was} able to continue ^{my} ministry ^{at the AIDS Project} to people with AIDS

Those dejected, living in fear
Those infected, suffering here,
Marginal people who live in the frays,

Angel's: Come ~~to the table~~ ^{this way,}
Come to the table. Even the least are accepted

And cherished as one family-

Come to the table, where we are able to join in the ~~fast~~ feast

And to share in the love

Julian's: I stayed at the AIDS Project for 17 years / ~~but they wanted~~ ^{I felt that}
and ~~last~~ when I decided it was time ~~to leave~~ for me to leave,

at ~~that time~~ I was able to get a position with Compassion + Choice,

a right to die group which ~~had~~ ^{has} national offices in Denver and Portland

Oregon. I had ^{already} created a group in the ~~at the AIDS Project~~ Project, that

helped many of our clients in die peaceful deaths.

A D*

Angel: Another transformation!

Julia: Yes, but an easy one, ~~by this time~~, by this time, I had been with so many dying people that I felt very comfortable and blessed to be present with people in their final moments.

AA: They seek a death ^{that's} easy. ^{They} long for a time that's slow. They'd love to be in some quiet place where peaceful waters flow. ~~There will~~ be tranquility.
 where death can

Angel: And after 6 years, Michael ^{you} moved to Arizona, and you ended up in this ^{new} church ^{where} I found the people to be loving and accepting and ^{always} fun to be with. ^{And} this year, ^{this} church seems

Angel: to be going through ^{its own} a transformation. ^{For} the first time, we won't have a deficit, and there seems to be a new excitement in the air. We are coming alive in a special way, so we're going to sing a song together called Come Alive!

Come Alive

Come Alive! Come Alive!

Open up your eyes and look at your potentiality.

Come Alive! Come Alive!

There are people all around us who are crying to be ^{FREE} free, so

Come Alive! Come Alive!

We've all got a life to celebrate together. Can't you see?

~~at home with names~~ So get set for the duration

if you've got the inclination, to wake up ~~at~~ our generation,

Come Alive! Come Alive!

Come Alive with me!

(Now we'll give the piano back to Maggie & Ruthie)

Angl; Please stand and join us in singing hymn #

Shall we Gather at the River ~~with the Lord's Prayer~~

~~with the Lord's Prayer~~

The people were singing this hymn that night ^{long ago} when I decided to become a minister, and we're still gathering at the river to do our ^{good} works and get people to come alive again. Amen!