Damned but Beautiful

This boy’s not giving up the butt without a fight

May 1, 1997 By Spencer Cox

My ass is stunningly beautiful. I say that not to be conceited but merely as a statement of fact. Even my straight gastroenterologist gets a woodie looking at my derriere. Just the other day, a group of friends made me turn around and show them my denim-encased buttocks. “Why,” one of them gasped, “you have a bubble butt!” I smile demurely.

I can only take a little bit of credit for it--oh, like any gay boy in Manhattan, I do lunges and the Stairmaster thing and even an obnoxious machine called “The Buttblaster”--but most of the credit goes to two anabolic steroids prescribed for occult reasons having to do with advanced HIV infection. I’m just making the best of a bad situation. My butt’s not even fully functional. Due to a drug toxicity last year, I required surgery which has caused sporadic pain during important uses. Don’t worry--I’m not going to go into details of either the surgery or the uses.

But according to my blood work, I should’ve been dead about 10 minutes ago, so having a decorative bottom is, well, an unexpected but pleasant joy. Never let it be said I’m not the cockeyed optimist, always looking for the silver living in every cloud.

I’m told some people view AIDS as a welcome relief from the body culture that has overwhelmed gay men in the past decade: An excuse to let it all go to hell, as it were. Not me. I don’t intend to look sick gracefully--I intend to fight it every step of the way. With God as my witness, I’ll be the last queen in Manhattan slathering two inches of Max Factor Egyptian No. 2 pancake base over every single KS lesion rather than give up one moment of whatever attractiveness may have accrued.

Let’s face it--most people don’t find visible signs of disease very sexy, and those who do scare the hell out of me. I remember a magazine article from several years ago in which some boy glowed with warm fuzzies because a trick had licked his Hickman catheter. I remember thinking that if someone licked my Hickman catheter, I wouldn’t be able to run far enough or fast enough from them.

Like many gay men, I was one of the kids who got picked last. You know the ones--we threw like girls, tripped over third base and always missed the pop fly (whatever that might be). Now, thanks to the steroids, I am no longer one of those kids. I’m like Elizabeth Taylor in *Ash Wednesday,* after

she gets her face and boobs lifted and learns to wear sable hats (hint: my birthday is coming, and I'd love a sable hat).

Now, I'm well aware of the group of prudes who like to complain about something they poetically call *body fascism.* "It's so shallow," they sniff self-righteously. Apparently they have something against boob jobs and sable hats, pecs and biceps. In order to be truly profound, you have to be homely.

Well, I've looked into the abyss. I didn't like it. I long for a shallow life where I never have to worry about dying before I'm 30. I would kill for a life in which having 16-inch biceps was the biggest challenge in my day. Does having a pretty bottom make me a better person? Absolutely not. But my comely *tuchus* does add substantially to my quality of life. It adds a little bit of shallowness--I may not be assembling a 401(k) retirement plan, but every now and again, I can still pull a wolf whistle. And when every day may be one's last, that ain't chopped liver.

Sooner or later, it will probably all go away. I'll get gnarly and sick-looking, and my butt will acquire that flat, saggy, late-stage look. Boys will stop turning around to watch me walk away. I'll have to find other reasons to get up in the morning. No big deal. Maybe it'll be that opportunity I've always wanted to move to Fire Island, wear a rainbow-flag caftan and flip-flops, smoke Virginia Slims and play Edith Pilaf CDs all day, singing along. *Non, je ne regrette rien.* But until then, why shouldn't I work my firm, melon-like posterior for all it's worth? I'm entitled. Let the prudes look into the abyss for a little while. Have a field day, guys.

So don't hate me because my butt is beautiful.

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