

## H U M O R

by Lynn Mabel-Lois

There is nothing funny about being fat in America. Every fat child learns this early in life. We are jeered, reviled, spat upon, physically and mentally pushed around, and joked about to our faces almost incessantly. Where is the humor in a life like that?

No, there's nothing funny about fat. Fat people learn that they must laugh first, and they think that people will then be laughing with them, not at them. Unfortunately that's only partly true. When fat people assume their traditional clown role, people are laughing with them and at them. Being fat and funny does give you a modicum of control over a situation - you make the jokes so you decide when people laugh. But the point is that people will tolerate fat people only when they are clowns. Fat people quickly find that that is the only route to even the outskirts of slim society, and we grow used to having our few minutes as the life of the party via our masochistic humor, and then fading away when the dancing starts.



The Fat Underground has stopped laughing. When we were fat little children we got into fights with the neighborhood kids who pushed us around and called us whales. We got knocked around a lot, and ran home crying and hurt mentally and physically. Eventually we learned that in order to survive we had to swallow our pride, because fat people weren't supposed to fight for their right to human dignity. So we learned how to be funny so we could "fit in." We learned The Lie and we crash-dieted our way up and down the scales, laughing all the way and praying that some day we would be treated as people and not as self-described "beached whales" (Yok, yok).

We do not consider our bodies funny. We do not walk any funnier than most people, and it is not amusing to be caught in a turnstile. Job discrimination is not funny, nor do we consider it amusing in the slightest that we can not walk down a street or through a store without being jeered at openly.

Don't bother to tell us the latest joke about the fat lady-- not only will we not laugh, we will be offended, and by God we might just start fighting back again.

THE FAT UNDERGROUND



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