

Flowers that Bloom in the Trash

Prostitution came to me at the intersection of my needs and proclivities.

-----*The Scarlet Harlot*

Now that I was an escort, I always felt well off and free. I felt in control of my life. I began to defend the profession that had brought me to such a good place.

I made endless entries in a journal. I already knew it was a book. I sought lots of books on the subject, all by, or about, other escorts. I needed to learn whatever I could about this secret, unacceptable lifestyle, this forbidden and “shameful” way of living that had lifted my life out of hell.

One glance at the writings of American activist sex workers had me almost falling out of my chair. Late twentieth century heavies---Norma Jean Almodovar, Dolores French, Cosi Fabian and others---expressed my feelings exactly. They all described an elation. A big sense of liberation. They were unified, a voice full of power.

Money had abruptly come into my life, but not with the destructive emotional price I'd been led to believe a prostitute pays. At first, some qualms did affect me; social conditioning bites. But social conditioning is really a spin, and its clatter can be brought to a permanent stop on the ground of concrete truth. For me, that truth was fourfold: the new look of peace on my well-attended sons, the health of my bank account and credit rating, the validating peers on my bookshelf, and last but not least, my clients' gratitude.

I've always been thanked by my clients in one or more of these ways:

Thank you for being so friendly.

Thank you for being all mine, my dream come true for one hour.

Thank you for taking charge of my need. And thank you for the honor of allowing me to try to take charge of yours.

Thank you for letting me have this fun.

Thank you for helping me through this transition.

Thank you for letting me relieve my stress, exactly the way I need to.

Thank you for committing me to only your fee.

Thank you for providing these wonderful “sins” with respect and a sense of humor---with the attitude that what I badly need isn’t wrong.

Most of the escorts whose writings I’ve read describe that appreciation. And most of the conclusions they’ve come to mirror mine perfectly. We all see the blatant stupidity of making our service illegal. We consider all the meanings of “criminal,” and we know that our happy transaction simply doesn’t add up to a crime.

Dolores French founded the Atlanta-based support group called HIRE (Hooking Is Real Employment). To this day, she remains outspoken. In 1988 she published her book, ***Working: My Life as a Prostitute***. Throughout, she reveals her awareness that prostitution is a helping profession. French quotes from her mentor, the woman who got her started, a courtesan who declared that sex work is a benevolent human service.

...even the weird clients are usually nice people. You’re providing a valuable service to these people---all of them. You’re helping someone with a crippled sense of self-esteem...Part of the art of prostitution is using sex to create a feeling of trust and intimacy...Men might not even understand why they keep coming back...They think it’s for the sex. But they’re coming back because we touch them emotionally...

French concludes the passage with her own convictions.

The way [Elaine] described it, prostitution is a noble profession, right up there with nursing and teaching...As I started working, I found out that many of my clients were isolated and lonely...If I could make that client walk out the door feeling happy, feeling good about himself, feeling he might actually be interesting and fun to be with, I had performed a great service. To do that, a person has to love men and enjoy being with them, which I did.¹

In 1993, Norma Jean Almodovar published ***Cop to Call Girl***, her account of how she came to prefer sex work over working in the LAPD. Police work, in the LAPD, was rotted out with corruption. Escorting, on the other hand, felt blessedly honest and right.

It was not degrading to me because I think that sex is a positive, nurturing act...I cannot fathom how making another human being feel good for a fee could be degrading or demeaning unless it is degrading to make other people feel good.²

Almodovar remains the most familiar sex work advocate in America. This friendly, approachable woman (we’ve chatted on the phone) uses the Internet and talk shows to clarify that sex work has value, sex workers contribute as artists, and that most are in it by choice. Anyone weary of the biased insistence that most prostitutes are enslaved should check out the Almodovar website, www.normajeanalmodovar.com. A clip from a cable news channel is showcased on the site, a generous helping of truth. In an interview with an anti-human trafficking attorney, John Stossel positions her arguments against those of an escort in the studio audience. The prosecutor’s stance is so faulty and stale you can almost smell the mold growing: ***all*** sex workers are coerced, ***all*** sex work degrades women, blah-blah-blah, yada-yada; she takes refuge in quotes from the shoddy

research of those who talk *only* to victims. The girl in the audience is an indie with plenty of firsthand experience. She laughs, shakes her head, and makes a fool of the lawyer, while Stossel himself makes no effort to conceal his agreement with her.

Mayflower Madam was published in 1986 by Sydney Biddle Barrows, an "infamous" twentieth-century madam. Though I don't endorse third-party management, in this case I make an exception. Her book is a treasure of avowal for the honor in the profession, and her nurturing respect for her girls.

Barrows states:

Like their counterparts in the other helping professions, our girls brought tenderness and comfort into our clients' lives. We were there for them. We listened to them. We made them feel better. We gave to them emotionally, and we gave to them physically....Our society still needs to learn to tolerate the idea of women making a living by being intimate with men. Some people say that prostitution is degrading. Certainly it can be, but not in the agency I operated....

And her girls state:

Melody: You can have millions of dollars...but if you don't have anyone to share it with, what's the point? Some men try to buy that companionship. I'm not saying it's as good as the real thing, but it beats the hell out of being alone. Besides, sometimes the real thing isn't that good, either.

Sunny: For most of our clients, who were hard-driven, hard-working men, an evening with one of us was an extra-special treat they looked forward to every now and then, just as I sometimes reward myself for....strenuous dieting by going out for a hot-fudge sundae.

Lisa: Although sex was certainly part of the package we were selling, I knew all along that we weren't really in the sex business. We were in the happiness business. The Constitution guarantees the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and all we were doing was helping people pursue a little happiness.³

Since my earliest days as an escort, I've felt certain I'm doing no harm. I know I'm not cheating anyone. I had dealt in the past with bad feelings that arise from employers' pressures to scam; sales managers subtly urged me to, and I despised myself for complying. In sex work, I create something different: a service all cards-on-the-table. My fib about my age doesn't feel wrong, because I state the age people guess. I don't sell drugs or weapons. I don't steal. I don't pollute the environment. I don't create negative ripples in the universe.

I use condoms.

And I'm not a destroyer of families. As I've mentioned before, innumerable married clients have told me they're sure I'm *saving* their families.

I'm not phony. I don't fake orgasms. I've always heard that whores are fakes, and I don't want to be. I admire Dolores French, who writes that she's used her sessions with clients to teach herself to easily orgasm.⁴ I either do or I don't, and I admit to either if asked. Whenever I'm in a relationship, I never come for the clients. That would feel like cheating on my lover. And even when I don't have a lover, I don't come for clients all the time---who could! So whenever I don't, which is often, I tell the clients who need to know that regardless, they've made me feel good, and they like that, especially my truthfulness.

As a newbie who was also an indie, I learned casual sex can bring joy. Absent, in the paid situation, is the pain of getting discarded. The desolate hole left by hit-and-run loving had become a big wallet stuffed with cash; now I understood the one-night stand can also be a lucrative living. Money can annihilate hurt. I never felt "used." No more so than a seller of valuables who receives great money for the sales. I never felt "slutty." Who can feel slutty, or anything ugly, when she's basking in compliments and cash? The word "slut" sounded vastly incorrect. The slovenly image evoked by that syllable is a woman who lacks self-esteem, and is guilty of cheating her worth, and even the slut with respect for herself is construed as unfaithful, untrustworthy.

I felt honest. Trustworthy. I felt like a good woman. The very people I serviced were the reason I felt that way. My clients and I each walked away with equal satisfaction. I gave the men what they needed. They gave me lots of money. All was fair, a balanced equation, with mutual respect in the air. But the gratification of making great money was only one part of the goodness. My debut in professional Eros and my prior commitment to fitness were merging magnificently. Soon I got past my first motive to whore, which was desperation for money. I saw that the work has some value. I saw that the work can be healing, like fitness, and even spiritual. I had always understood that my birthright, in this pluralistic culture, is that "spiritual" is not only Judeo-Christian, it's whatever I want it to be. "Spiritual" is a catch-all expression. It applies to any benevolent act that feels profoundly right.

As a sex worker, I felt sexually spiritual.

Every woman understands that nurturing is manifest spiritual. I had always been very maternal. A helper, comforter, healer. As a sex worker, that's what I did, and my proof was my clients' gratitude. My self as a sex worker was weaving into all that was nurturer---me. Mother, gardener, exercise teacher, whore; I felt seamless. Then I saw something tremendous. With the obvious exceptions of rape and coercion, or the molestation of children, or the spreading of STD's, sex is *always* righteous. When professional sex is completely freed up from a conditioned sense of disgrace, its goodness is as clear as the daylight. As natural as the selling of the fruits from my backyard garden.

Holistic integrity mending conflict.

In the beginning, when being a "pro" was an uneasy, clueless act, and I presented myself to innumerable men who wanted to pay me for *me*, I saw that the key to well-being lay in giving myself *joyfully*. Deliberately taming my fear and reservations, I tended to my clients with the same sense of *right* as when I mentored a child, or when I instructed in exercise, or when I

labored to grow my garden, or when I worded a written story. I began to live by this maxim: *genitals are a gateway to joy*. That is not an opinion. That is an absolute truth. Some ignore, despise, or shrink from that truth. Regardless, that truth stands.

I refused to desecrate quality, as in breaking an advertised promise. Right from the start I devoted myself to a healing-temple-priestess sort of model. I decided to call it the *true whore*. The true whore provides sure relief from bad stress, and we're talking ecstasy. She infuses that with compassion and warmth, and that is what makes her true. To know that a client needs his genitals stimulated, and needs to try to stimulate mine, is no more disgraceful than a caregiver responding to the cries of a child, or a personal trainer pushing his client to feel the surge of his blood, or a gardener breaking up clods so that roots can feed from the soil, or an intellect pursuing more effective expression.

I had to coach myself. I was taking a stand against so many things I'd been taught to enshrine about womanhood. To value prostitution is a huge revolt, an overthrow of huge rules, and I did it. Few women share that with me.

And yet, the number of autonomous escorts is formidable, on the rise. My proof is the presence of websites, like *IndependentEscort.com*.

It's been lovely to find that my truth is reflected in some recognized, celebrated theisms. I thrilled to an article in a holistic-living magazine, written by Philip Toshido Sudo, the late Zen Buddhist master, entitled: "*The Zen of Lovemaking*."

Sex is sacred. All of us began as a combination of sperm and egg, man and woman. At its best, sex takes us back to that beginning, transcending the mere fulfillment of our animal desires to reveal our inherent divinity as creators: it's a spiritual endeavor, as profound as any religious rite or ritual. Like sex, the study of Zen takes us back to our origins as well...Zen is simply an absorption in life---the essence of life. The way of Zen is to allow nature to express itself through all of our actions, whatever they are...

Religious adherents sometimes renounce sex as an earthly desire to be transcended. Zen monks are no different...they take strict vows of asceticism as a means to self-purification. But "pure" Zen decries attachment to religious orthodoxy or any doctrinaire pursuit...Consider the revered 15th century Zen master, Ikkyu Sojun. In poem after poem, he sang the praises of wine, physical love, and even brothels...

To Ikkyu, sex deepened the path toward enlightenment. No one can enter this world without being born of both a man and a woman, he said: we are connected to sex by the "red thread" of blood at birth...We're of sex. That fact should be embraced, not avoided, Ikkyu said. He wore his priest's robes to the pleasure quarters to signify the spiritual nature of his activity:

Me, I am praised as a general of Zen...tasting life and enjoying sex to the fullest!

Zen sex can take place anywhere, anytime, with anyone, because Zen truth is available at all times, for any person willing to practice.⁵

I know.

At first, I was alone in my venture. No one mentored me, and no other escorts worked with me. My aloneness was a pained isolation. The books I read by the activists were an ironclad cornerstone. So were the websites of prostitutes' rights organizations. But most of all, it was appreciative clients----their recession-proof, endless demand---that kept me there as their supply.

They do yet.

I eventually bumped into a formal definition for the liberating process I'd created. In my readings by holistic-health luminaries, I happened upon the insights of the medical intuitive, Carolyn Myss. When I read her book, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, Myss helped me see that my self-made identity frees me from counter-production. She calls such defiance empowered. When a person's "tribe" is prohibiting her from her own kind of spiritual growth, and is virtually destroying her uniqueness, her continued compliance is wrong; rebelling against her tribal restrictions becomes the virtuous thing to do.

Given the power of unified beliefs--right or wrong--it is difficult to be at variance with one's tribe. We are taught to make choices that meet with tribal approval....From an energy perspective, becoming conscious....is extremely challenging, and often very painful....to evaluate our own personal beliefs and separate ourselves from those that no longer support our growth. Change is the nature of life, and external and internal change is constant. When we change inwardly, we outgrow certain belief patterns....Evaluating our beliefs is a spiritual and biological necessity. Our physical bodies, minds, and spirits all require new ideas in order to thrive....Seen symbolically, our life crises tell us that we need to break free of beliefs that no longer serve our personal development...

Myss adds: ***no matter what the situation***, the honor of oneself and others is crucial.

From a spiritual perspective every relationship we develop, from the most casual to the most intimate, serves the purpose of helping us become more conscious.... We can more easily see the symbolic value of our relationships when we release our compulsion to judge what and who has value and instead focus on honoring the person and task with which we are involved.⁶

I gleaned what I needed from thinkers like Sudo and Myss. I crossed a line that women are ordered to never approach, with a moral certitude all my own. At first, I didn't know I was exceptional. I assumed most escorts are. I had immersed myself in the published writings of principled prostitutes, and I thought they were the standard.

I was wrong.

Like anyone, I knew about streetwalkers, the women "on the stroll", and those like them who posted online. A lot of them are drug addicts. I assumed they don't deliver much in terms of

psychological uplifts. Indifference is expected in addicts. They only care about their drug. But I wasn't aware that indifference is a typical trait of my peers, referred to as call girls or escorts.

My clients made me aware.

Clients repeatedly told me there was something different about me, that I was better than most. They didn't mean my looks or expertise. Most had spent time with escorts who may have been better-looking than I, or more erotically skilled. But my clients had learned to dislike them. Those women would promise the clients an hour, and take off in twenty minutes. Some used bait-and-switch tactics, quoting a flat rate beforehand, and telling the client when they actually met that that rate was just the beginning, just the fee to walk through the door.

Their hurry-up ways were most offensive. A form of dehumanization, making the clients feel deeply ripped off. Men told me they felt I was much more sincere, I took more time with them. Over and over again, I heard: "I feel comfortable with you." I came to see that was my brand. Inadvertent, but regardless, my brand.

Occasionally, I would be asked:

"What's a nice girl like you doing in a business like this?"

"Making it nice."

Their endless grumbles about other escorts made me see that my *true whore* intentions were the exception to a rather dismal rule. I eventually concluded that usually, customer satisfaction happened in about one out of three or four trysts. Clients had their own #MeToo grievance. Their bitter complaints regarding my peers became a troubling but powerful cornerstone of my own growth in the work.

I realized many sex workers are con artists. I thought of a book I'd skimmed through, *Ladies of the Night*. In it, some of the interviewed call girls report that the work self-empowers, and express their compassion for clients. But others sound memorably harsh. One of them actually brags about "conning."⁷ I was coming to see that those who con are more typical than those who care. Like carnival cheats whose loftiest goal is *hit 'em up for all you can, then take down the tents and run*.

I needed to understand why.

I knew that ambivalence must play a part. How can a woman feel respect for her work when the world always tells her it's wrong? I also sensed a hostile malevolence, something even proudly malevolent, which forced me to incredulously ask: *What are man-haters doing here?* People uncomfortable with animals don't work in veterinary clinics. Democrats don't campaign for Republicans. People allergic to poison ivy don't romp, bare skinned, through the woods. But some people will do anything for money. That was it. That was where the path forked. Financial desperation was our common denominator, the point where most of us started, and we all

remained in the business because of the formidable money. Personal growth was the difference. Through sex work, I was evolving. Many escorts were not.

I knew early on that I wanted to change that. I wanted to help other escorts understand that sex work can be transcendent. And to those who couldn't care less about that and wanted it all to be cold, I wanted to holler: *Get out*. I homed in on the causes of their negligence. I realized the cause could be simple: a girl simply being too young. To her I wanted to say, *Go, and come back when you're older. At this early point in your life, the work is harming you. And you are harming the work. This is an extremely responsible job, really demanding psychologically. It's meant for mature and compassionate people, not kids who feel like they're victims. And sometimes are.*

In 1986, hundreds of prostitutes from all over the world met in Belgium for a big conference. They called it the Second World Whores' Congress. (The First Congress was somewhat smaller, held in 1985.) Critical issues were discussed. Among them was the subject of age. At what age should a woman start sex working? Many agreed that before age twenty-five, psychologically most women aren't ready.

I recently read a novel that appears to support that point. The title of the book is *Whore*. It's about a young girl in a brothel. The narrative is so detailed and caustic that I assume the author has been there. The sex worker in her story is twenty years old. She complains about the likeness of clients to her father. That seems to deeply disturb her. She feels as though she's having sex, every working day, with her father.⁸ Her book made me see how paternally molested a very young prostitute might feel. That feeling could make the work hell.

I also understood that if a woman of *any* age sees herself as men's victim, her erotic service to men will be poisoned. She'll infuse it with the rot of her wounds. She might use the work as a vengeance, cheating every client every which-way. Such women are unfit for sex work, yet the business seems full of them. *Get out*, I wanted to tell them. *Get help. Don't come back till you're well.*

Another cause of negligence can be the escort agencies. Agencies are basically pimps on the phone. Consider the "friend" who got me started.

They control a perfunctory work force of "bodies."

I know what it's like to feel worthless, like nothing more than a "body." I learned about that as a waitress. Once I worked for a restaurant chain with "stores" located everywhere. Managers-in-training were assigned to different "stores." These guys weren't local, they came from all over, and they didn't give a damn about their staffs, because soon, they'd be moving on.

My "store" was just another rung in their ladder to the top.

On one night, a lot of the wait staff had quit, and not enough people had replaced them. This was a very busy "high-volume store," and we knew we would have a tough time. I remember the inhuman comment from one of the temporary managers.

“I need bodies,” he said. “I need more *bodies*.” The corporate mentality. We servers were almost as important as the food and alcohol. We catered to and pampered the patrons...but management saw us as robots.

On another night, a server kept running to the restroom. She couldn't stop throwing up. She was stricken by a terrible flu. A manager told her to leave. Gruffly. He made her feel almost fired. And once, I fell down with a big tray of food. The bastard just stood there, assessing. He never offered a hand. He never asked if I was okay. I was one of the best of his staff, experienced and fast. That was the only time I caused him a loss, and all he did was scowl.

Motherfucker.

A lot of the escort agencies view their sex workers that way. They compel their “bodies” to be cold and businesslike, and most of all, to rush. They teach them to grab the money, hurry up, and dash off to the next guy. To such “bodies” I wanted to say: *Why are you working for them? Why are you giving huge portions of your fees to pushers determined to make you machines, getting from you and your clients as much buck for the bang as they can?*

Get free. Get out there on your own.

Toward the addicts, I was nullifying.

You are not really sex workers. You are addicts; addiction defines you; you usurp and steal our profession just to get the fast money for your fixes.

And because you've traditionally walked the streets, you're the most visible among us. You vastly diminish the public awareness of what a true whore truly is. And when you post online, you damage the perceptions even more.

Please get clean, or get out.

These days, “harm reduction” programs reach out to sex working drug addicts. The focus seems more on clean needles than on getting the sex workers clean. Okay, we all need that precaution; clean needles mean less spread of AIDS. But I can't accept the addiction. No one does in any other business.

The *true whore* is never an addict.

Among clergy, psychotherapists, social workers and the like, the exploitation of those they "help" is unforgivable. When their wrong deeds are publicized, they're defrocked or shorn of credentials. In prostitution, however, the cruel exploitation of clients is often the horrible norm.

I considered the sweetness of most of my clients, and I came to suspect that the meanness some escorts report about clients may be the clients' response to *their* meanness. How else can I explain the fact that no client has ever misbehaved on my watch? It can't just be good luck. I've been at this work for far too long for luck to last that long.

Clients dole out hundreds of dollars...for what? To be treated like nothing but a “blow job?” To be told, after paying a lot just to *view* her, “That will cost you a hundred more?” To be deserted the second an orgasm happens---which could be in the first five minutes?

I’d be resentful and pissed off as hell.

My feelings about this helped me think up the descriptive for how I think escorts should be. Carol Leigh, a well-known sex work activist, coined the familiar term, *sex work*.⁹ I would follow up with *true whore*. The term is designation of standards. Actually, a *redesignation*. According to my readings in feminism, I had a *herstorical* precedent, an ancient grand template for my mission: the Goddess idea, and her loved temple prostitutes.

The *true whore* understands her service is sacred. She’s known it for thousands of years.

The true whore performs a sort of magic: an immediate intimacy. So when something meant to be stress relieving gets somehow tainted with hate, I call that professional failure. That isn’t the work of the true whore. She renders a tiger enchanted. A lion all purring and nice. How? She’s aware of his wounds. His fear. She makes fear and rage disappear, for an hour. Disappears them with smiles and caresses, and an attitude that broadcasts: *you matter*.

But if she gets with a Trump type who thinks he can just grab her pussy, he’ll find himself abruptly abandoned, and perhaps even nursing crushed balls.

Alienation has never chilled the exchange between clients and me. Maybe it’s because I’m a mother, and my nurturing ways runneth over. Maybe it’s because I’m a “Daddy’s Girl,” expressing my affection for maleness. Maybe it’s because in a previous life, I was a sacred temple prostitute. Or maybe it’s because I respect what I’m doing, respect myself doing it, and respect who I’m doing it with. Whatever the reasons, I disarm men’s defenses. They always respond very nicely.

I realize a serial killer would be undeterred by my charm. He’d accomplish what he came for: rape and murder. But how many psychopaths are there? Not nearly as many as people seem to think, and most of them prey on other women. Streetwalkers and isolated housewives. Joggers, coeds, and bar flies. The predators rarely hunt escorts. They fear we’re surrounded by protectors, and if we’re smart, we are. I’ll go into that, later on.

My clients are glad they spent the money. I want every sex worker in America to be able to make that claim. No escort on the face of this world should be disliked or bitterly remembered.

Yet many are.

One day while channel-surfing, I stopped to check out a madam on the *Jerry Springer Show*. Before millions of viewers, she was boasting: “Men are stupid. I take their money.”¹⁰ Imagine a mental health therapist proclaiming on TV: “I don’t care about my patients. They’re stupid. I’m just out there taking their money.”

She'd lose her clientele and her license.

Prostitutes and their managers get away with that, every day. Legitimacy would get them all ousted. Just as it goes in any licensed profession, an enforced code of ethics would remove the jerks who mistreat their own clientele. Thanks to the advent of the Internet, the clients are fighting back. Just as it goes for a zillion types of issues, interests, and dilemmas, cyberspace comes to their aid. Google the term "escort reviews" and several sites will pop up.

Escorts are finding they'd better be able to show prospects some good reviews. If they don't, they may get passed over.

Way to go, guys. A solution for *your* #MeToo problem.

Soon after I got into sex work, once in a while I discovered that *only the money made it bearable*. Like when I prewashed the crotch of a man so obese that he couldn't clean himself. Or when a guy kept a hyper-territorial pooch, barking its head off in the next room, jangling my nerves the whole hour. Or those moments when I'd finished with a prostate massage, and I pulled out the plug, and it was dirty. Or when a pubic hair got stuck in my throat. Those situations are not inspirations. No way do they empower. Times like those, I knew I wouldn't be long for this work if I weren't getting so well paid.

But for me, the money is never enough. Right from the start I understood that without a high standard of caring, I would lose respect for myself. I would erode the deep goals of nurture that anchored my self-esteem.

I knew it could be easy to stop caring. To cease being human about sex work. To grab the money, behave like a robot, and run. Easy to do on the surface, but also a way to self-harm. To cease being caring in sex work would be a path to internal decay---the loss of my compassionate essence. So while earning that thrilling and head-swelling money, I saw the importance of sustaining compassion for even the clients who were gross. As with any other work that reaps profit from human need, caring would make my occupation more than exploitation of that need, and would prevent a hollowed-out version of me.

I saw how badly some escorts need a model. In its absence, many muddle through bleakly. All of us are wounded by the stigma. Criminalized and forced underground, we're left all alone to keep up our strength, and are at risk for failure to do so. Clients are given the dubious honor of paying for that never-ending struggle.

On her website and in her appearances, Norma Jean Almodovar laments the lack of unity, particularly between generations. She speaks of her thesis on the history of American prostitutes' rights, hoping it will reach and encourage young peers, and help them to learn all they can, and feel strengthened.

Roger that.

I came to understand that the model I envision reflects my ideal for *myself*. The true whore *markets* her selfness, straight from within, to the world. The true whore knows she inspires. She understands that she's vital. She thoughtfully shapes each encounter with customized soul fused with sex. She sets a high feminine standard. She responds, at least subconsciously, to an inkling of feminine deity.

A true whore is lit. Magnetic. Freer, than most females, from female paranoia; she's learned to fear men a lot less. Her smile is less guarded, more instant. When she's out, and she meets strangers' eyes, her own eyes remember to twinkle. She's the one who stands out in the crowd.

If she's short, she seems tall. People pass by, and feel something. It's not her clothes that affect them; she could be turned out in drab sweats. It's not her body; her curves could be average. It's not her parts; it's the confident sum.

The true whore understands her uniqueness. She recognizes her worth. She knows it's not shameful to be fondled by the world. There's a proper way to do it--yes, *proper*. To alleviate and rejuvenate in an atmosphere of beauty and warmth. To provide a beneficial process. To know paid sex can be righteous.

Americans choose from cornucopias of therapies to lighten their burdens of stress. Almost every common pastime, and sometimes even some chores, are informally dubbed "therapeutic." The therapy of the true whore should not be confused with informal. It's kindred to licensed, legitimate helps, but enjoys a certain distinction, which is: self-enlightenment during naked abandon.

The true whore enshrines her self-discipline. To succeed with other people is to first succeed with herself. To help other people relieve their stress is to deal with her own stress, beforehand. She attempts to prevail with joyful rebellion against her depressive surroundings. The true whore knows to resist an obsession with self-indulgent excess. Like anyone in our country who tries, in this stuffed-face culture of glut, to "stay straight," "dry out" or "eat right," she knows that the toughest of battles lie within. She grapples with the threat of unhealthy addictions brought about by consumer temptations. She always attempts to remain well-toned, in both her body and her mind.

In our high-fat, sugared and drugged, lethally sedentary culture, such physical and spiritual feats are supreme. As a victor over this toxic way of life that fattens, pharmaceutically imprisons, causes barroom, street drug and nicotine fixations, the true whore knows that the point of her work is to reunite people with their natural joy.

She also understands that her affection for men is refreshing, and even unusual.

Those are the ways that "*This pussy grabs back.*"

She might brood over words like "blowjob." That's shoptalk straight from the street. The term should be replaced by an expression more apt, a word for what actually happens. What happens is a natural ecstasy, immediately followed by peace. How about "mouthpeace"? Or "joyjob"?

I've thought of those terms as replacements for "blow," which is a comically insulting descriptive. Yet "mouthpeace" and "joyjob" sound silly, as well. They sound stupid because we've been taught to believe that fellatio is unworthy.

Most men, however, will insist it's sublime, and even sullen prostitutes get it. They've witnessed a lot of joy. One of my favorite examples is from a memoir by a former Boston callgirl.

When I heard about her book, I rushed out to buy it, because she lives in my area. I was also compelled by her doctoral degree, because I'd found that a lot of well-educated escorts embody the true whore paradigm.

I was bitterly disappointed. Her book smacks of cynicism. In her account entitled *Callgirl*, Jeannette Angell hurls resentment. Her tone regarding men is kindly at times, but is far more often scornful. Her memories stink with downheartedness toward herself and the profession; she clearly relates as a victim, and shows how she let herself be one. But here I want to make the point that during her trials in escorting, even this pimped, coke-addled escort could sometimes acknowledge the joy.

I have to say that some people are so delighted with you and what you do for them, it's hard not to get caught up in their happiness. This guy was like a kid at Christmas, exclaiming happily over my breasts, transported by joy when I touched him...His orgasms were the closest thing to complete delight that I think I've ever observed. Does it matter that it was a callgirl who got him there? Hell, no; joy is rare enough in our world, you've got to grab it and feel it and love it whenever you can. A woman had done that for him. It didn't matter who she was, only that he felt it.¹¹

The service of Eros is therapy that attracts the true whore like blossoms to sun. The pull she feels is strengthened by impressive financial rewards, and by the persistent intuition that what she does isn't wrong.

I hear this praise so often that it starts to sound like a mantra:

"Thank you so much, ****. I feel so much better now. I'm going to sleep like a baby tonight."

