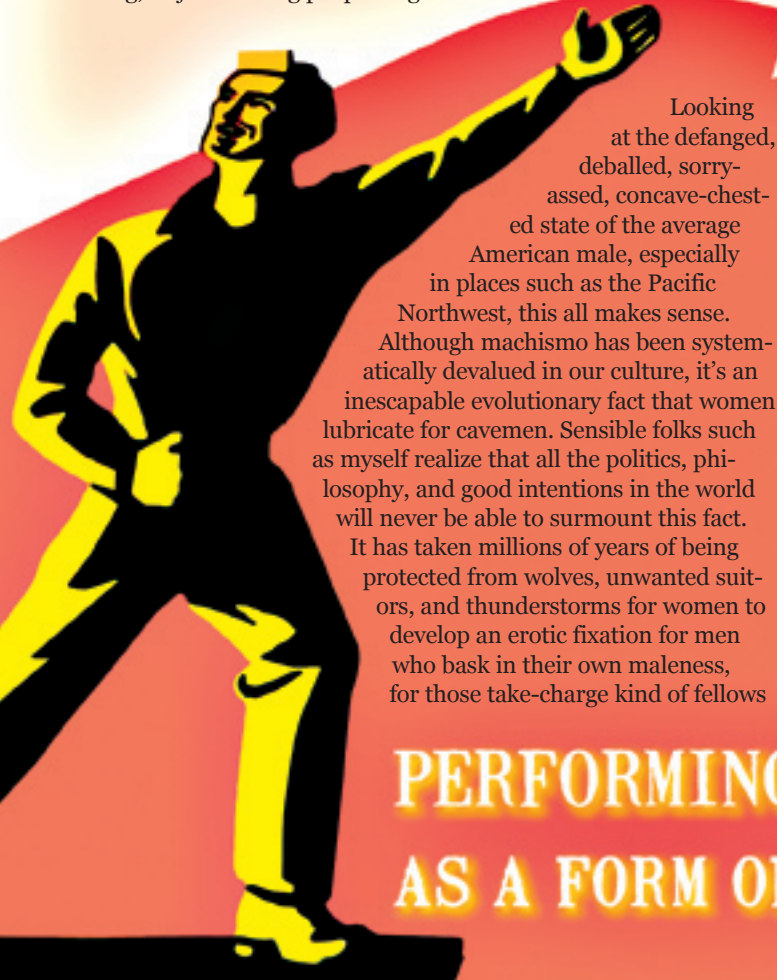


I don't care to know a single demoralizing detail about what sort of sick, nauseating acts you commit in the name of sexual foreplay, but unless you turn the page—which I guess is always an option—you're going to learn about mine.

Foreplay is a simple and effortless process for me, although it's unique in the sense that I manage to sidestep most of the familiar clichés that afflict the less imaginative. When my wife and I start dancing the eternal animal jitterbug that inevitably leads to penetration and full-bore orgasm, we don't rely on standard acts of kinkiness. There are no diapers, vacuum cleaners, or chili-pepper-flavored lollipops involved in our lovemaking. We don't wear rabbit masks or dress up as *Star Wars* characters or don cute S&M costumes fashioned of patent leather and chains. We don't tease each other about how bad and naughty we are. We don't reenact scenes from our childhoods. I don't wear fake mustaches or let her paint my fingernails. Bells are not involved, nor are any egg-shaped devices. We don't place insects on one another's bodies or recite prayers in Aramaic. We don't watch Tim Burton movies while sipping absinthe.

No, we get our kicks in ways far more mundane and pedestrian, and all the weirder because of it. Instead of cocaine-laced enemas or Tantric ear-candling exercises, our foreplay involves me performing ordinary household tasks such as heavy yard work or basic auto repair. If I'm out back swinging a rusty scythe through pesky weeds and bramble, or if I'm in out front getting smeared with oil underneath our car, she wants to be peering through the curtains, fingering herself. It's not technically "role-playing," because I'm not wearing wacky costumes or fronting as some stupid character; it's the eroticizing of ordinary dumb-male chores I'd have to do anyway. Sure, I tap into mythical male archetypes such as Paul Bunyan and Mr. Goodwrench, but in the process I don't have to pretend I'm anything I'm not. And for her, the cumulative effect is as arousing as when I talk about hurting people who've done her wrong, or just hurting people in general.



Looking at the defanged, deballed, sorry-assed, concave-chested state of the average American male, especially in places such as the Pacific Northwest, this all makes sense.

Although machismo has been systematically devalued in our culture, it's an inescapable evolutionary fact that women lubricate for cavemen. Sensible folks such as myself realize that all the politics, philosophy, and good intentions in the world will never be able to surmount this fact.

It has taken millions of years of being protected from wolves, unwanted suitors, and thunderstorms for women to develop an erotic fixation for men who bask in their own maleness, for those take-charge kind of fellows

who appear able to grab nature forcefully in both hands and split it in two. The most important thing about being a man, especially these days, is that you have to be a *man* about it.

I didn't always used to be macho. As a kid I was known as a bookworm, but in later years I've cultivated a reputation as a loud-mouthed asshole douchebag. Despite everything the PC pundits would have you believe about women and sensitive men, the fact is that being perceived as an unfeeling ogre has worked like a charm for me. So long as you don't hurt their feelings in the process, women *prefer* for you to be a brute.

My trusty female companion and I enjoy incarnating the polar-opposite gender roles which nature has, in its unflinching wisdom, assigned us. She is a soft lotus flower and I'm a randy bumblebee with well-toned forearms and a large stinger. She doesn't like emo boys and I don't like girls who know how to fix cars. She likes when I kill bugs for her, and I suppose I enjoy when she makes me wait for her to finish her eyebrows before we go out. On more than one occasion her vagina has moistened merely by watching me curl a barbell while grunting like an angry pig. Last summer she snapped pictures of me swinging a long axe at a thick tree stump in some woods north of Flagstaff. She found the photographic results to be so innately arousing, she absolutely forbade me from posting the pictures online lest the entire world erupt in a dangerous stampede desperate to have sex with me.

I recently made her endure a vigorous verbal grilling about exactly what she finds so goddamned sexy about me performing menial labor while she watches. We both agreed that part of the appeal is that I'm far more intelligent than the type of dumb hogs who have to change oil or mow lawns for a living. But we also agreed that it's best to forget I'm actually a writer, because that doesn't turn me on, either. We also acknowledged the innate theatrical element—when I call her attention to the fact that I'm changing the oil or chopping wood while knowing this will all eventually lead to full-blown penile insertion, there's an element of *deliberateness* to it. I'm putting on a show for her almost as if I were a stripper. Still, we both agreed that for the performance to be effective, it also had to be *genuine*—I had to actually *need* to change oil or chop wood as part of my routine manly duties. So although in a sense I'm acting, I'm really not, because I'm actually changing the goddamned oil and chopping the motherfucking wood. I'm a self-consciously dimwitted working-class male model performing the sort of acts such people need to perform merely by dint of being stupid and plebeian. But while doing these things for her enjoyment (and knowing it will lead to a round of vicious rutting), I feel as invincible as I imagine a male rhino feels.

Interestingly, not all types of peasant labor are appealing to her. She found absolutely no erotic elements in the idea of me laboring as a dishwasher or an exterminator. She insists she wouldn't get turned on if I earned my wages as a bellhop, a janitor, a sound technician, or a clerk at an auto-parts store. She found the idea of me toiling as a waiter to be absolutely "disgusting—it's someone who gets pushed around and yelled at."

What surprised me the most, though, was my beloved's fixation on dirt and odor. Words such as "sweaty" and "stinky" repeatedly emerged in the fantasies she conveyed. "I want you getting really greasy, dirty, and smelly," she told me. "It's 'cause you *worked* for it, not just 'cause you're smelly. But with your greasy hands...*take* me...and put grease all over me. I think it's because I'm clean and girly, and it's the opposite of what I am."

## PERFORMING MENIAL LABOR AS A FORM OF SEXUAL FOREPLAY