

Two things happened:

I heard one gay man say disparagingly of another gay man, “He’s got the inner life of a drag queen,” spoken in a tone implying that all drag queens are vapid.

An editor at a small publishing house told me my work was “too gay” for a general readership.

So then I got angry, and wrote “The Manly Man’s Guide to Virtue.” Since I don’t have the talent necessary to be a drag queen, I started with the initial discomposure the two above events elicited, mixed them together with disparate memories, observations, and inventions that clunk around in my head, and after a long struggle, I shaped them into a story.

—*Joseph O’Malley*

