

My Composite Girlfriend

by Con Chapman

President Obama's autobiography, which is sold as non-fiction, contains several "composite" characters including a girlfriend to whom he replied "Thank you" when she said she loved him.

Vanity Fair



"Really, old sport—did you have to drag me into this?"

As I look back, I kick myself that I didn't marry my composite girlfriend. She was that WASPy type I yearned for, like Jay Gatsby. I moved East for her, a boat against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. She inspired me to write my first serious poem, "To the Next Fellow to Woo a Certain Connecticut Bluestocking":

*She will mourn for each mosquito
Slapped upon a sunburnt arm.
She'd prefer you not eat Fritos
They can do you grievous harm.*

Available online at «<http://fictionaut.com/stories/con-chapman/my-composite-girlfriend>»

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Her family had slid (cf. Dizzy Dean—"slud") into shabby gentility, which was an embarrassment for someone who grew up amidst the sailing crowd of Old Lyme. It was a good thing she had her father's wealth to fall back on! How he used to regale me with the stories of his up-from-the-bootstraps climb out of poverty on the hard-scrabble, rough-and-tumble Lower East Side of New York, where he started the business that is now the leading supplier of hyphens to writers of purple prose the world over.



"You should see the get-ups the girls in Coolidge Corner wear these days!" *tante* Ruth would say as we gathered for Rosh Hashanah. "I know," I'd reply as I looked lovingly into my composite girlfriend's big brown eyes, peeking out from underneath her 80's Jewfro across the table.

She was . . . reserved, so demure—but she had her wild side as well. Like the first time she snatched my virginity away from me in the laundromat of the trailer park in Missouri while her Mormon parents slept just two doors down! Hindsight is 20-20, but I realize

now that she was the girl for me. If I'd stuck with her, I could have literally dozens of wives today! Who knew back in the 60's that polygamy would become so accepted that one day *both* candidates for President of the United States would have it in their background—the incumbent just one generation back!



No, I blew it—I really blew it. I should have listened to those who said Cherokee women were the best in bed, unless you were still living at home and had to make out in the front seat of a 1968 Oldsmobile Rocket '88, in which case they were even better.

When she whispered “I love you” in my ear that night, it was my last, best chance to overcome my narcissistic tendencies. I took a deep breath . . . and hesitated. After thinking for more than just a moment, I decided to take the high road and simply say . . . “Thank you.”

Instead of what I really felt like saying, which was “What's not to love?”

