

Androgynous Chestoidal Appendages

Androgynous:

Uniting both sexes in one, or having the characteristics of both; being in nature both male and female;

“The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous.”

--Coleridge.

I am not one to argue with Samuel Taylor Coleridge about anything. He was a genius. I do not have a great mind. I have an ok mind, but nevertheless I am, simply said and in a very small way, androgynous.

I discovered, to my amazement, that I have breasts

I don't think that I was born with them. I never wanted them. I am certain I didn't used to have them. But I have them now and I have come to accept them as important additions to my body.

By “breasts” I don't mean something like men describe female mammary accoutrements that drives them wild, even if covered with flimsy material on beaches. No, mine are not noteworthy by any definition. I do not exactly have what is often referred to in romance novels as a “bosom.” At least I didn't use to.

Here's how I came to have breasts. One cold night my wife rolled over in search of spooning and warmth. She braced herself against my back, wrapped her lovely arm around my front and jabbed me in the general area of my upper left torso. She did this accidentally, and I sleep very soundly. I let out a noise that left me awake. What she did, hurt. I rolled over, spooned her back and went to sleep

The next morning as I watched the Today Show while reading the paper, I half paid attention to the doctor discussing things like mastectomies, breast cancer and hormone therapy. I felt my left breast.

Well, I have to be honest here. Most men don't really have “breasts.” They have nipples. They have chests. They have pectorals. Who knows why we

have any of that stuff in the Darwinian scheme of things anyway....so to be exact, I poked my left nipple.

There was something in there the size of a penny and it hurt. I am an engineer by trade. I got on the internet. I researched my left nipple to a fare-thee-well and found to my amazement that there was virtually nothing about male breast cancer except that it can happen.

So I called the Johns Hopkins Hospital immediately and made an appointment to have it checked out. I am against death, basically, so this seemed a good thing to do under the circumstances. The next day I showed up in the emergency room as instructed, my nipple perfectly available to whatever the hospital felt it had in store for it.

I am not what you might call “abundant” to begin with. My body fat is around 2% and that has nothing whatsoever to do with workouts. I’m just a little skinny guy.

The small woman technician that ushered me into the medieval mastectomy mammogram room (the “MMM” as she called it) was not impressed either.

To be fair, I was shaking my head negatively and emphatically because I saw what she wanted to do to my left nipple. This woman, this entirely unsympathetic woman, this probably amused young woman looked right into my eyes and suggested that I stick the entire left part of my chest skin into this device.

The machine, she explained, was going to take a picture of something that needed taking in a place that God did not intend men to have any business being involved. I am quite sure that He has a good sense of humor, and I don’t want to alarm anyone to think that I feel that I am one of the chosen few, but He must have been figuratively rolling in the aisle when this particular event took place.

So without all the sexual ramifications involved with nicely shaped pieces of fatty tissue that helps preserve the species, I asked this lady what she was going to do to me.

I think that she started to be nice because she could sense that I was really frightened and not being a typical male jerk. Well, perhaps I was the typical male jerk, but she, for whatever reason, tried to make me feel better. She

described what women go through when they go for the normal mammogram. She said that they have to stand sideways for an x-ray, then have their soft tissue crushed by this machine that will tell them whether or not they need to have most of their natural loveliness above the belt removed. I was humbled.

So I got a mammogram. It was not pleasant. It hurt. I will not defend my sniveling and whining. I can, however, testify to a new appreciation of what women go through on a regular basis. I can't lactate. I can't get a "c" cup bra...well, I could, but that really would be laughable. Unless it was maybe black and lacy? Probably too late for that. But it was at the end of this procedure, at that precise moment, I decided I had a real breast. Maybe two of them since they normally come in pairs.

A week later I had a benign tumor surgically removed from my left breast. It was just after this operation I decided I had not only breasts, but a bosom too. After all, I went through something that women go through on a regular basis and had surgery for a tumor to boot. For some time I think I actually expected women to say something nice about my newly identified bosom, but I finally gave it up. Even when I told my sad tale to women, replete with all the gory details, they would look at me with thinly disguised boredom and would say something like, "So?" They wouldn't let me into their club. So I finally got over thinking I was a quasi-woman.

However, I still claim androgyny and I defy any gender to dispute this assertion.