

**Lynn's Zen**  
**By C. Lynn Perry**

**Victoria Doesn't Make Secrets in My Size**

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I recently received an e-mail from Cousin Ann that said if Barbie were a real woman, due to her proportions, she'd have to walk on all fours. This comforts me because now I know who most of the Neanderthal men I know should date. They can go out and get road rash together by dragging their knuckles on the pavement when they walk. You also have to admit, that Barbie thing explains some of those poses in the Victoria's Secret catalogues.

Since my Gypsy Tendencies are taking over again, and this Saturday I am headed to Trinidad and Tobago for the next week or so, I found myself in dire need of a new bathing suit. So, I ordered a couple of new swim suits from the Victoria Secret's catalogue hoping at least one of them would be a go (after all, they had been sending them to me for years, and I was starting to feel obligated).

Frankly, you'd think that a woman my age would know better!

Upon coming home after a hard day at work, there was a package at the door for me... from Victoria's Secrets. It was just my dumb luck that it didn't come in the plain brown wrapper as I had hoped. I ran up and got the package before the dog could get hold of it, sprinted into my room, locked the door, and ripped it open. I excitedly tried on the first bathing suit, which was a two piece made out of material that showcased a map of the world.

"Hannah!" I screamed to my daughter excitedly. "What do you think of this one?"

"Geesh, Mom!" she replied, after looking me over. "There's like, only seven continents! You've got to have more coverage!"

And then she sat me down at the kitchen table to have our first Daughter-Mother talk. "Mom, it's like this," she started out patiently, "you're just too old for a two piece bathing suit anymore. It's embarrassing."

"What?"

"Mom," she said sagely, "there comes a time in every woman's life when she must migrate to the one piece bathing suit with the little ballerina skirt around the thighs, like Grandma's. It's a natural process! You really shouldn't fight it."

"Excuse me?" I shrieked! "I'm not quite ready for Grandma's bathing suit yet! I'm only thirty-five! Wearing Grandma's bathing suit does not compute in my universe!"

"Mom, you know darn well you're almost forty-five, not thirty-five! And whatever universe you're living in, perhaps it would be best to find a world to land on, with... I don't know... maybe ten or twelve continents!"

"What do you know about voicing my real age?" I yelled. "You're grounded for life!"

"Come with me," Hannah said tolerantly, as she lead me by the hand like the village idiot to stand in front of the full length mirror in my bedroom.

I gaped at my mirror, trying desperately to suck my navel into my lower spine. I certainly didn't remember the travesty reflecting back at me. Imagine, if you will (or not), an overweight weenie dog in a Victoria's Secret's map-of-the-world bathing suit. Somewhere along the line, I had become a little sway-backed, a

little (OK, a lot) pot-bellied, and OhMyGosh.... I don't even want to think about my thighs. One thing is for certain; for all you nice folks at the neighborhood pool... let me apologize, because I just really didn't know. I really didn't!

And to think I make fun of the guy with the toupee!

You know, things are supposed to come with warnings. When you buy a toaster, the warning label says not to use it in the bathtub because of potential electric shock (because, I guess some really efficient people have tried to make breakfast and shower at the same time). When you buy an iron, you are warned of the potential for burns (because, I guess some people don't know irons get hot and stuff). So where, I ask you, is the Victoria's Secret's written warning?

At this point, I was contemplating a class action law suit! Suppose one of Hannah's friends had seen me in that bathing suit? Wouldn't it have immediately been child endangerment? I expected DFACS to knock on the door at any moment! I almost had to put my own eyes out for goodness's sakes.

"What are you thinking?" Hannah asked me.

"The Bloated Britney Spears MTV Music Awards Appearance," I said miserably.

"Exactly," she said smugly. "But, Mom, what is that?" she asked me, pointing to my belly.

"It's my pot belly," I simpered. "Somewhere along the line I got fat!"

"No, *that!*" she whispered in awe, pointing and flailing her arms like a rabid air traffic controller around the red and brown marks that begin somewhere around my belly button and wrapped down around my hips.

"They're stretch marks."

"I did that to you?" she asked.

"That was only the beginning," I said. "And you weren't even *born* yet!"

As for me, I'm returning the map-of-the-world bathing suit, but I stashed the other two-piece I ordered (which I never showed to Hannah) in my suitcase. Let's face it, I'm going for the sun, and I'll never see those people I'll run into on the beach again! And, after all, no matter how old we are, a woman still has to have her secrets! And, really, it's not my fault that ...

...Victoria doesn't make secrets in my size.