**The Many Shades of ‘Out’, by Lynn Conway:**

It was a sultry June afternoon in 2013. As my husband Charlie and I were walking towards the White House, I reflected back on my gender transition decades before, in 1968.

Shamed as a social outcast, I'd lost family, friends and all social support. Fired on the orders of the CEO of IBM, I’d lost a promising research career. In many cities I could be arrested, or worse yet, institutionalized.

Evading those fates, I completed my transition, took on a secret new identity, and started all over as a contract programmer. Any 'outing' and I'd have become unemployable . . . and on the streets.

Fear channeled me into ‘stealth-mode’. For over 30 years I covered my past, living as if I were a spy in my own country.

So while hidden in the backrooms of Xerox PARC . . . launching innovations as the hidden-hand behind the VLSI microelectronics revolution . . . I didn't mind being invisible in my field, or that no one had a clue what I was really doing . . . I was thrilled to even have a job.

But it was now 2013 . . . My husband and I were joining many other advocates at the President's White House Reception for LGBT Pride Month. The air was full of joy, and as we awaited the President I reflected further.

I’d now been 'out' for 15 years . . . or so I'd thought . . . out on the Internet as a trans-advocate and an activist against psychiatry’s pathologization of gender variance.

But 'out' has many shades of grey -- and even in recent years I kept on shyly holding back, covering in the darker shadows. Although times had changed, I'd clung to old habits.

Down through the decades no one could explain how the VLSI revolution actually happened. The results were simply taken for granted. Although I'd gained vital knowledge about creating such paradigm shifts . . . I feared my personal story would loom large in folk's minds and obscure any attempt at explanation . . .

As the President entered the room, I glanced around and took in the joyful vibes. As he began to speak, I grasped how far we'd come. Times had more than changed: a fresh wind was sweeping through our society, especially amongst younger generations.

Swept up by those social-winds, I’d finally got the nerve in 2012 to publish a memoir . . . and began revealing how the VLSI revolution had come about.