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My Self

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My Self

Logen St. Leger

Sitting here today,
I know my soul better than I used to.
Now knowing the nuances,
I can look back at my life,
Recognize tiny fractures
In the glossy polish of wood.

I. Not a Girl

From the minute I started education,
I wore athletic shirts and boy shorts,
The ones that go down to the knees.
I wore my hair down to my chin,
Keeping it short.
I hung out with the boys, so much so
People thought I had a boyfriend
In first grade.

As my friends began to leave me,
Finding their own flock,
I sought refuge in the bathroom,
The boys' bathroom.
I would duck my head out
See if anyone was looking,
Then swoop in to see.
The only difference be
A urinal.

I went back, again and again,
The tiled floor alluring me.
At some point I stop,
Because it wasn't right;
Or was it?

Oh pink carnation,
How I detested your color,
Representing who people thought I was:
A princess,
My dentist would call me.
I would shake my head no.

II. Not a Boy

By the seventh grade,
Things had changed again.

I was forced into
Wearing more feminine clothes
And hanging out with the girls.
I ended up finding new friends,
But I still felt itchy in casual tees.

Now I had milk jugs on my chest.
And people just expect me
To get used to them?
I wanted to squeeze
Them until they burst.
Instead my brain
Pushed down the pain
Until it was numb
So I didn't succumb
To that black hole,
So I could keep going.

In eighth grade,
I had to dress up for some event.
I was no longer itchy.
The clothes tight to my body
For once I felt in control of myself.
A friend encouraged me
To wear the clothes full time.
So I did.
I wore dresses and skirts
Down to the ankle,
Heels to strut my style.
I still wear formal clothes,
Now patterned bow-ties
Instead of patterned skirts.

III. Coming to Terms

About two years ago,
My sibling came out as gay.
It made me wonder if I fit into

This community.
My conscience spent a long time pondering it,
Was not conclusive.

Often, at the beginning of français class,
We would chat with my teacher
About various topics.
Sometimes news,
Sometimes weather,
All interesting to listen to.
One morning,
They were talking and the
Term agender hit my ears.
It intrigued my brain,
Enough to feel out the word,
Ponder if it fit me.

Three months later,
On a dark night in January,
During a conversation with myself,
I put the word into a search engine,
And admitted to myself that this is me.

IV. Disclosure

After two months in the light,
The itch returned.
A new itch.
The itch of keeping this secret.
Not everyone has to disclose.
It is a choice.

Now I was about to throw
A bomb at those I love.
And I wouldn't know
How anyone would react.
So I started with one person I knew
Would support me, my counselor,
On a Tuesday with everyone
Out of the house.
An unusual day for us to meet.

I worked up the ladder to my relatives,
 And eventually to my parents.
 If you ever do something like this,
 Be careful which relative
 You choose to tell first.

They may end up pushing you into telling
 A parent when you're not ready.
 Somehow my flustered self
 Traversed that conversation.

There are many ways to disclose
 This information.
 I used letter-writing
 The second time round,
 Stuck it in a bag for their
 Drive to Flagstaff.

I had considered using the graduation ceremony
 To express usage
 Of a new name.
 That wasn't the purpose of the occasion.
 Instead, a letter told them
 Two days later.

V. Transition
 A tricky word,
 Often mixed up with transgender.
 Taking steps to remove the itch
 From my body.
 I haven't put quarters in my pockets,
 Haven't changed my soul.
 I still know exactly who I am.

I shaved the sides and back of my head,
 Trimmed the top,
 Colored it
 Red and purple
 Blue and green.
 I went back to pants and button-down shirts,
 Though I still wear a skirt or two.

Then it will truly be my self,
Nobody else's.