

Spring 2021

Issue 1

Transcend

The Launch



A collaboration with Saints LGBT+

Contents

i-ii	Contents	
iii	Acknowledgments	
iv	Editorial Notes	
2	irregular ode to winter love	_____ Bryony Hockin
3-4	Entanglement	_____ Aarushi Malhotra
5-9	'A Man of Understanding'	_____ Marius Murdoch
11	Jacq o' Random	_____ Paula
12-6	Leslie Feinberg (1949-2014)	_____ Paula
17	The leaves that wish to be the wind	_____ Paula
18	Body	_____ Anonymous
19-22	Claude and Claudette	_____ Paula
23	Confrontation	_____ Greysen Braley
24	Untitled I	_____ Aria Kaul
25-6	Academic Spotlight	_____ Jessica Secmezsoy-Urquhart

27-9	Better Late than Never	_____ Ada Simão
31-2	Nonbinary	_____ Blue Smiley
33-9	Nonbinary Disclosures	_____ Katerina García-Walsh
42-3	a poem in which i have sex and cry	_____ Plum Selfridge
44	Untitled	_____ Anonymous
45-7	Dying	_____ Adrienne Aboyou
49	Carcinization	_____ Gee
50	I know	_____ KP
51-3	Academic Spotlight	_____ Elliot Smith
54-5	smoke in my eyes	_____ Wilde Smith
56	Trans Reflections	_____ Paula
57-9	A Strange Case in Moscow	_____ Ciel E. Burges
61	The Violence	_____ Katerina García-Walsh
62	Untitled II	_____ Aria Kaul
63-4	Soup	_____ Maeve Slack-Watkins
65-6	Content Warnings	

Acknowledgments

Editorial Notes

Chief Editor,

Sebastian Taylor

Editor & Coordinator,

Katerina García-Walsh

Design Manager &

Publicity,

Maeve Slack-Watkins

Accessibility Coordinator,

Kristoffer Naas

Graphic Designer,

Katharine Kibort

Designer,

Moshe Dixon

Editor,

Aarushi Malhotra

Editor,

Ciel E. Burges

Cover art by Corin Wong

Digital art by Moshe Dixon

This publication contains imagery and language that may be triggering. For specific contents warnings, please see Appendix on page 65-66.

The idea for Transcend originated in September at the first Transfest Subcommittee meeting of 2020-2021, although the name was not coined until much later by the editorial board. With the ongoing pandemic, we knew we needed to approach this year's events and the presence of our St Andrews gender diverse community with fresh eyes and inspiration. The zine developed as a wonderful way to build our community through creative expression. So often the representation of gender diverse people's lives and bodies in media and daily life is filtered through a cis gaze in order to make our existence palatable to a cis audience. As a by-trans-for-trans publication, Transcend intends to capture living gender diverse joy unfettered by the limitations of cisnormativity. Our hope in launching Transcend is to provide gender diverse people a

place to shine and express themselves fully within St Andrews.

I want to extend my fullest gratitude to the wonderful members of the editorial board and design team—without your creative genius, passion for the project, and hours of tireless labour we could never have hoped to accomplish what we have.

Greysen Braley

Trans/NonBinary Officer

This zine is an important space for trans creativity, and we would like to thank all of the contributors for their amazing work. We are, of course, incredibly grateful to the Transfest Subcommittee and Saints LGBT+ for supporting our work.

Transcend Zine Editors

irregular ode to winter love

by Bryony Hockin

my love

she brings me

mangos in winter

just to see me smile

my love

she drinks her

coffee three sugars sweet

like her smile

my love

she sings soft joy

even when it is early

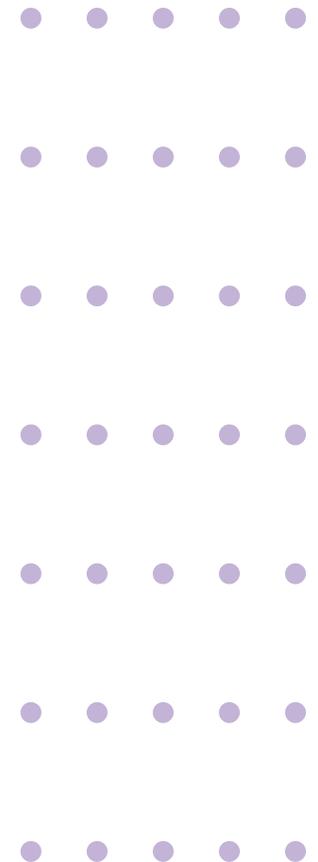
and the sun peeks up

my love

she smiles at

the snow and stomps

her boots in drifts of it



entanglement

by Aarushi Malhotra

do you remember when we went to that McDonald's and sat on the hood of your car with its neon sign burning like both of our hearts laid out in the desert,

like firelight,

in the arse end of nowhere at midnight.

do you remember that I told you I loved you, then, with sweaty palms as the sky raged above us, hopeless, forceful.

do you remember that you leaned in, softly, like you did most things, and said that love wasn't something people like us could afford to have.

you were lying, I knew it then and I know it now, because love is the only thing people like us can afford to have, to give.

you knew this too, because you leaned in and let your forehead touch mine, let me feel your laughter rip through my chest like something unafraid as we almost fell apart in front of McDonald's in the arse end of nowhere with its neon lights burning like both of our hearts laid out in the desert.

you always knew how to lie with your mouth, sweetly, like you did most things but your hands were a different story.

do you remember how you clung to the hem of my skirt as you said that love wasn't for us?

how could anyone believe you, then? when your hands wrote another story onto my cheek, gentle as the winds before a storm.

how could i believe you then, when you gave me your jacket, smelling like cedar and lilies

and the men leaving the McDonald's made to shout at us, their stances forceful, their eyes hopeless.

they didn't quite know what to call us, stumbling between faggots and dykes and other words we never mentioned again,

you kissed me, then, with your hand on my waist, your jacket on my shoulders and my world collapsed into itself and began anew around you

and we never talked about those men, or others like them but you always kissed me with the urgency you did that night

and your mouth was the only god I'd ever pray to, your hands the only religion i'd follow.

it meant something, my crescent moon, every scar on my skin matching the bruises on yours, it means something, my shattered sun, every stone thrown at us, your hand in mine throughout it all, it means something.

do you remember when you told me you loved me?

in our bed with city lit like a thousand fireflies outside our window,

I believed you, then, with your lips in my hair and your hand on my breast, gentle, like you did most things.

‘A Man of Understanding’: The Life and Work of Dr. James Miranda Barry

by Marius Murdoch

On a stormy night in Cape Town, South Africa, Wilhelmina Johanna Munnik stood at the crossroads between life and death.

Wilhelmina was expecting her first child and, on the 25th of July, 1826, she went into labour. The delivery took a catastrophic turn, and Wilhelmina’s husband, Thomas, soon realised that his wife likely wouldn’t survive until morning. Desperate, he sent for a young doctor by the name of James Miranda Barry.

In Barry’s day, the Caesarean section was far rarer and more dangerous than it is today.

Very few successful Caesarean sections had been carried out in Europe, and in Barry’s native British Isles, just seven children

had been saved via the procedure, along with only two mothers.¹

According to John F. O’Sullivan, the Caesarean section served to “deliver live babies from dead mothers” or, even more tragically, “more often to deliver dead babies from dead mothers”.² As Barry prepared to operate, Wilhelmina’s family could not have dared to hope for her survival.

However, both Wilhelmina and her newborn son lived to see the sun rise on the 26th of July.

Against all odds, Dr. Barry saved both mother and child in one of the earliest successful Caesarean sections ever

recorded, making medical history. A grateful Wilhelmina went on to name her son James Barry Munnik in his honour.

James Barry Munnik’s delivery was an extraordinary achievement at the time, but then again, very little about Dr. James Miranda Barry’s life was mundane or boring.

Even Barry’s death was followed by an explosive scandal. On the 25th of July, 1865, Barry died of dysentery, aged approximately 75. Although Barry had left instructions that his body not be examined and that he be buried as quickly as possible, a charwoman by the name of Sophia Bishop laid the body out and discovered that Barry had been assigned female at birth.

The details of his early life, on the other hand, are murky, but general consensus is that Barry was born in County Cork, Ireland, to Jeremiah and Mary Ann Bulkley. Jeremiah and his

son proved unable to support Barry and Mary Ann. The two were left to fend for themselves. At first, Barry was educated in the hope that he might find work as a governess or a tutor.

However, Barry’s uncle, also named James Barry, was a successful artist and a professor at the Royal Academy in London. After the older James Barry passed away in 1806, a handful of his friends banded together to support Mary Ann and Barry.

Among them was a General Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan revolutionary who championed the fight for independence in the Spanish American colonies.

H.M. Preez speculates that General Miranda may have first suggested that Barry attend medical school. His revolution, after all, would need qualified doctors and surgeons, and medical schools in Britain did not accept female students. A plan emerged: Barry would assume a male identity and

attend the University of Edinburgh, with the support of Miranda and the late James Barry's other friends. Then, Barry would travel to South America to join Miranda's cause, and live as a woman again.³

The first part of this plan went off without a hitch. Barry assumed his new identity as a man and boarded a boat at Wapping in September 1809, bound for Edinburgh. His mother accompanied him, although Mary Ann Bulkeley would from then on refer to herself as Barry's aunt.⁴

Barry excelled in his studies at the University of Edinburgh, although he kept mainly to himself in his spare time. His thesis, *De Merocoele vel Hernia Cruralis*, discussed femoral hernia, and he received his degree in June 1812.⁵

However, General Miranda's plan never panned out. Just before Barry finished his education, Miranda was captured. He died in prison in

1816, blowing a hole in Barry's plans for his future.

Barry chose to continue living as a man, and joined the army in 1813 as a Hospital Assistant. He rose swiftly through the ranks.

In 1816, Barry was posted to Cape Town, South Africa, where he struck up a close friendship—or perhaps more—with the governor, Lord Charles Somerset. Barry's proximity to Somerset was the subject of a brief scandal, as the two were accused of having a less than platonic relationship.

In 1822, Barry became Colonial Medical Inspector, and in 1826 carried out the Caesarean section that saved Wilhelmina Munnik and her son. Eventually, he was promoted to Army Medical Inspector, and was posted in colonies around the world, among them Trinidad, Jamaica, Corfu, and Malta. Barry also worked alongside Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War, and the two apparently clashed.⁶

Throughout his career as a military surgeon, Barry championed a number of reforms, often coming into conflict with his superiors. According to A.K. Kubba, Barry fought relentlessly for "prisoners' and soldiers' welfare, sanitation and mental health reforms" and was once placed under house arrest by General Middlemore, governor of St. Helena, for his "recurrent conflicts with the authorities".⁷

While he accomplished great things and worked tirelessly to protect the people he was charged to care for, Barry could also be short-tempered and belligerent. He won a pistol duel against Captain Josias Cloete of the 21st Light Dragoons by shooting off the peak of Cloete's shako.⁸ In general, his peers considered him a talented swordsman and an excellent shot.

Barry may not have had the same language and opportunity to define his identity as we do today, but his desire to be buried without

examination even when he had no surviving family to be affected by a posthumous scandal indicates that he wanted to be remembered as a man.

His contributions as a surgeon and a doctor saved countless lives, and had a lasting impact in his field. Dr. James Miranda Barry does not only deserve to go down in history as a man, but as a truly great one.

End Notes:

¹ Holmes, Rachel. *The Secret Life Of Dr James Barry* . Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020:. 209.

² O'Sullivan, J F. "Caesarean birth." *The Ulster medical journal* vol. 59,1 (1990): 1.

³ du Preez, HM. "Dr James Barry (1789–1865): the Edinburgh years." *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* vol. 42, no. 3 (2012): 259

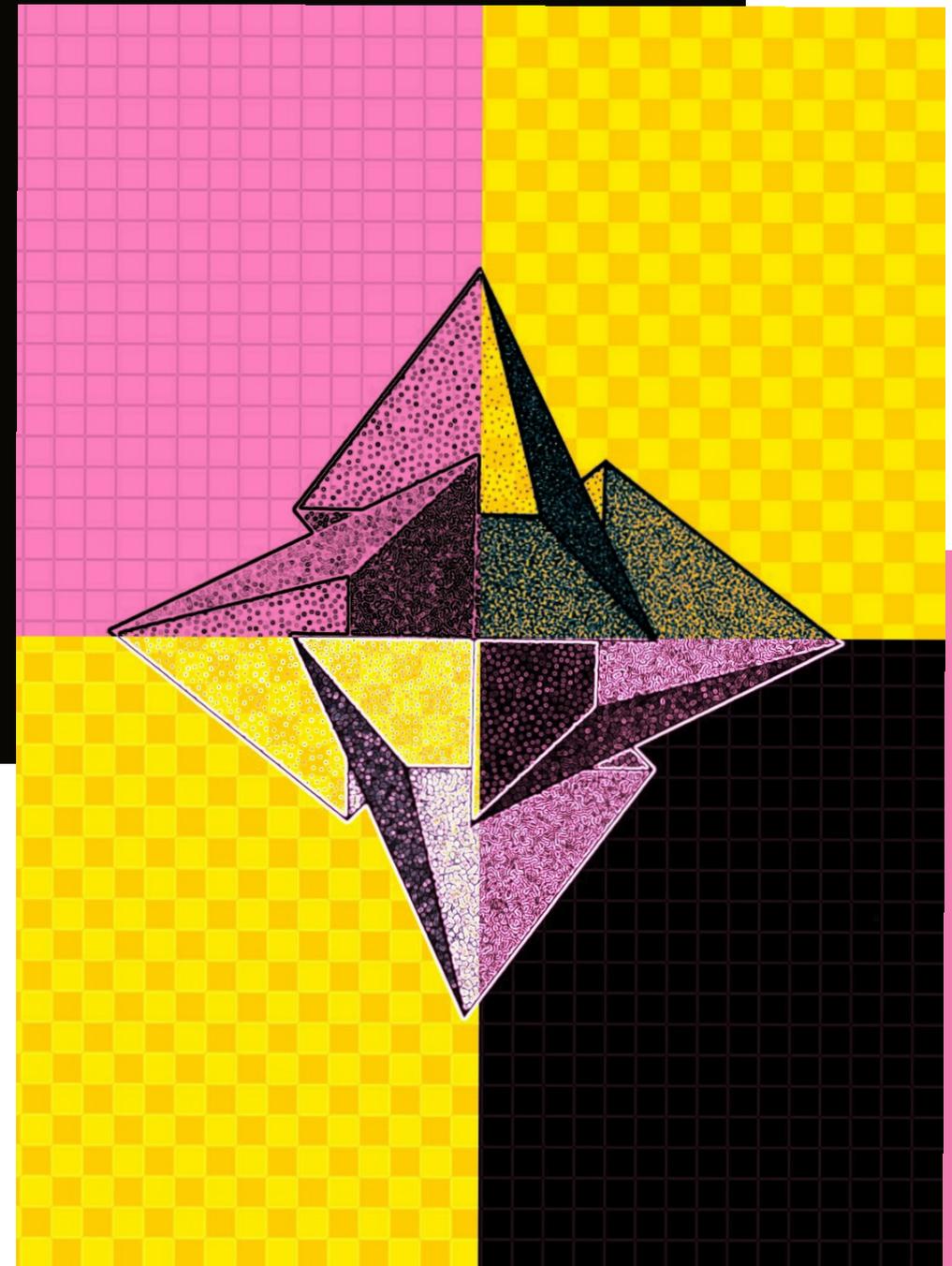
⁴ du Preez, HM. "Dr James Barry (1789–1865): the Edinburgh years." *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* vol. 42, no. 3 (2012): 258

⁵ du Preez, HM. "Dr James Barry (1789–1865): the Edinburgh years." *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* vol. 42, no. 3 (2012): 263-264

⁶ Tishma, Mariel. "A Surgeon And A Gentleman: The Life Of James Barry". *Hekint.Org*, 2020, <https://hekint.org/2020/04/03/a-surgeon-and-a-gentleman-the-life-of-james-barry/>.

⁷ AK Kubba, M Young, "The Life, Work and Gender of Dr James Barry Md (1795-1865)," *The Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* vol. 31, no. 4 (2001): 353

⁸ du Preez, Michael; Dronfield, Jeremy, *Dr James Barry: A Woman Ahead of Her Time*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2016: 155-159



Jacq o' Random

by Paula

Jacq o' Random they cry me here in Sint Aindra's,
Jacq the tricqster though I'm out to fool nobody.
Some folks bring misery but I'm for joie, me being
no gal, no boie, no rabbit, no red herring, but all.

See my two hats, see my skirt and DM boots,
see the fur, the feathers, the colours, the red, the purple,
the blacq, the blu, all to make you laugh lowd and hard.
"Jacq o' Random's coming!" they cry out as one,

"Jacq in a suit sky-blu-pink-with-a-fenny-haddy-border!"
and they join my mad dance, and them as will become
tricqsters so become, and them as won't so don't.
Some days I waggle a tamboreen, some days a rattle,

and some to surprise I stay silent as a qat, standing
bacq-to-bacq with my bestie, who's Jil o' Turbulens,
no gal, no boie, no birdie. And together – oh my! –
are we a song to sing! Jacq o' Random's song,

an old, sly, rambling thing of gay green leaves and
shifting, rippling sunshine. Oh happiness! The top tricq
is letting people find for themselves, and by dancing,
by singing, they do. So who's away with me?

Who's mad for a dance? Who'll take the tricqster's hand
and wake the dayling? The sun in its pod wants shelled!

Leslie Feinberg (1949-2014): a revolutionary life lived

by Paula

It is important to know our trans elders, their stories, their struggles, the times they had to live in and through, and it is my privilege to introduce Leslie Feinberg to you.

I was attending a conference on "Gender and Activism" about a year ago, and the discussion turned to Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues*, about which I had just delivered a paper. I was approached by a young lesbian couple who wanted to know what I thought was the most marked change in gay and lesbian politics over the past fifty years – yes, they could see how old I was! I said that back then, one could rely on the gay community to support any radical agenda, but that

nowadays, following the change in marriage laws, there was a strong trend to settle for bourgeois respectability. Radicalism had given way to "respectability politics." One person who never wavered from radicalism over that time, however, was Leslie Feinberg (1949-2014) – hir reported dying words were "Hasten the revolution! Remember me as a revolutionary communist."¹

Leslie Feinberg was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and brought up in a working-class Jewish neighbourhood in Buffalo, New York. Zie dropped out of high school and had a series of badly paid, temporary jobs, before becoming an activist with the Workers World Party, a Marxist-Leninist organisation in the USA. Writing was an essential part of hir activism, along with editorial work on the party's newspaper. In 1993 zie wrote hir first novel, *Stone Butch Blues*. Although it is not an autobiography, Feinberg drew heavily on hir own young experiences for the novel. Zie said of it, "I couldn't have

written a fictional work without having lived the non-fictional realities.”² If you haven’t read it, do. It will make you cry. I rank it alongside Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* as one of the outstanding novels of gender non-conformity of the twentieth century. It is not easy to read, not because of its narrative style which is straightforward, but because it is an account of almost unrelenting hardship, of tough manual labour, of rape, of beatings. Unlike *The Well*, which is in many ways a tale of someone who could indulge in non-conformity because of class privilege, *Stone Butch Blues* is plainly, four-square working-class. There is no privilege beyond that of the cis-males, and even they are under the heel of the boss and the foreman. The protagonist, Jess, lives hand to mouth, journeys though several expressions of transmasculinity and suffers for that at the hands of others, retains sanity because of wonderful friends, and eventually emerges into the nascent world of intersectional

radicalism in which the author himself was active.

Feinberg wrote a second novel, *Drag King Dreams*. It is not as well-known as *Stone Butch Blues* and it divides the opinion of readers. It is set in post-9/11 America – a country of newly-revived paranoia and intolerance – and its plot hinges on reactions amongst a community of gender non-conformists, of all types, to the murder of a transfeminine friend. Its central theme is the reawakening of radicalism in their community. Perhaps it does not have the impact of *Stone Butch Blues* – second novels often don’t compare to first – but its coda is a moving one, (SPOILER ALERT) as the various community members are called out of their jail cell by their birth names, their deadnames.³



In 2011, Feinberg married Minnie Bruce Pratt, a professor at Syracuse University, NY. The couple were regulars at “Camp Trans,” the annual demonstration outside the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival, which had a policy of excluding trans women. Using a very broad definition of “trans,” to include all “people who cross the cultural boundaries of gender,”⁴ Leslie Feinberg was, during hir life, at the cutting edge of intersectional leftist activism. Almost paradoxically, zie had a very liberal and gentle attitude to pronoun use. Zie used both zie/hir and she/her, but didn’t bother to correct anyone who used “he,” saying, “I care which pronoun is used, but people have been respectful to me with the wrong pronoun and disrespectful with the right one. It matters whether someone is using the pronoun as a bigot, or if they are trying to demonstrate respect.”⁵

Feinberg was never less than outspoken, and never afraid to occupy a public platform or

grab hold of a megaphone. Many of hir speeches were collected together in *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*.⁶ In 1992 zie published the pamphlet *Trans Gender Liberation*, which begins, “This pamphlet is an attempt to trace the historic rise of an oppression that, as yet, has no commonly agreed name. we are talking here about people who defy the “man”-made boundaries of gender. Gender: self-expression, not anatomy.”⁷

Today we may have agreed a name for that oppression, but Feinberg shows us that it has been recognised and fought before our time. Hir book *Transgender Warriors* documents a struggle against oppression which starts with the burning of a medieval warrior, and runs through to a twentieth-century African-American basketball player who turned up to a book-signing in a wedding dress.

When someone dies, it is as though the steps we take without them, from then on, put

a distance between them and us that ought not to be. Feinberg was – I am going to say *is* – an almost exact contemporary of mine. Zie was born in 1949, and I was born in 1950. Maybe that is one reason I am determined not to let that distance between us develop. There is already too much of a distance between hir and me – an ocean, a national culture, an ethnicity, a class, a *clear* gender non-conformity – and what I want to do more than anything is draw closer to hir. I wish the same for you. Hasten the revolution!

End Notes:

¹ Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Transgender Pioneer and Stone Butch Blues Author Leslie Feinberg Has Died," *Advocate online* (2014), tinyurl.com/FeinbergAdvocate.

² Gretchen Lee, "Pink and Blue: Interview with Leslie Feinberg," *Curve: The Lesbian Magazine* 8, no. 5 (1998): 31.

³ There is an excellent review of the novel at "Drag King Dreams," *The Feminist Spectator: Ruminations on how culture shapes our lives*, 2006, tinyurl.com/DragKingDreams.

⁴ Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender warriors: making history from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman* (Beacon P, 1996).

⁵ Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Leslie Feinberg – A communist who revolutionized transgender rights" *Mundo Obrero / Worker's World online* (2014), www.workers.org/2014/11/16937/.

⁶ Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* (Beacon P, 1999).

⁷ Leslie Feinberg, *Trans Gender Liberation: A movement whose time is come* (World View Forum, 1992). 5. Available as a free download from www.workers.org.

References:

"Drag King Dreams," *The Feminist Spectator: Ruminations on how culture shapes our lives*, 2006, tinyurl.com/DragKingDreams.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Trans Gender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Is Come*. World View Forum, 1992.

Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue. Beacon P, 1999.

Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman. Beacon P, 1996.

Lee, Gretchen. "Pink and Blue: Interview with Leslie Feinberg." *Curve: The Lesbian Magazine* 8, no. 5 (1998): 39-31.

Pratt, Minnie Bruce. "Leslie Feinberg – a Communist Who Revolutionized Transgender Rights". *Mundo Obrero / Worker's World online* (2014). www.workers.org/2014/11/16937/.

"Transgender Pioneer and Stone Butch Blues Author Leslie Feinberg Has Died." *Advocate online* (2014). tinyurl.com/FeinbergAdvocate.

Note that there is also an interview with Feinberg and Kate Bornstein at www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_Aqmaq_a2U

The leaves that wish to be the wind

by Paula

It's autumn, but while still green
a leaf that wished
to rise with the wind
and be the wind
was ripped from the tree
and trampled under a heel;

the leaf that is torn from the tree
has no tree-memory,
but lies on the wooded rise
in a fall Calvary of leaves,
forgiven thieves, bronze to brown
to the blackened earth of murder.

We leaves who still wish,
who believe to rise,
who feel the wind,
leaf hearts, leaf eyes,
leaf hands together, we
the little leaves,
the old, broad leaves,
pine needle, trembling aspen,
we grieve, we dew tears,
we mourn but still live as leaves
who wish the wind.

Body

by Anonymous

Tired of this Body



Fall apart without me

Claude and Claudette

by Paula

A friend said to me “Oh, everyone tries on their mother’s clothes,” and instantly led the conversation somewhere else, so I didn’t have time to reply. I’m slow like that, otherwise I would have said something to the effect that it wasn’t about trying on Maman’s clothes, I wasn’t interested in Maman’s clothes, it was just that there was something there that...

Let me start somewhere else.

We were on holiday in the Midi – Papa, Maman, and I – motoring from Mediterranean town to Mediterranean town, stopping for a couple of days wherever they spotted a likely hotel, a comfortable one, somewhere off the main streets but close to them, not too

expensive, respectable enough, perhaps with a restaurant and a pavement café. At each town, Papa would head his mid-range Citroën towards the sign that read “*Centre Ville*” and then maybe towards “*Port*” or “*Marina*.” Sometimes he would get frustrated at the one-way streets, or a double-parked delivery truck, or a sudden twist of the street that headed us the wrong way, dumping us in a housing estate or an industrial area. It was during one such delay, as we crawled past a dock of idle fishing boats, that I saw you. You caught my eye.

I was too young for lust, and anyway you weren’t pretty. You were perched on something – a crate maybe, a tumble of lobster-pots – one leg drawn up and the same foot extended, bare. You managed somehow to look both relaxed and alert, bored and animated, aware and insouciant. I couldn’t hear what you were saying, but you were engaged in give-and-take with some lads. They weren’t suitors, they were *confrères*, *copains*. I picked you as the central point

of my vision and, as we moved by, watched the rest of the harbour scene revolve around you. I craned my neck, watched until you were out of sight.

A week later, back home in Clermont, you were still on my mind. I didn’t know what I felt, I had no vocabulary for it, I think “recognition” is the closest I can get even now. That Sunday morning when I was up early, when my parents would be asleep for at least another two hours, when I had time to myself, I decided to act on that feeling. On the landing of our house, between my bedroom and my parents’, there was built-in storage space with a sliding door. Our holiday things were kept in there, and amongst them a bikini that Maman no longer wore. It had a top with foam lining under the bust, so it held its shape. I knew exactly where it was kept, and I slid the doors open sufficiently to reach in, locate the bikini top, and take it out. Back in my room, I shucked off the t-shirt I slept in and put on the bikini top. It was a

comfortable fit. I got my old, checked, cotton shirt and knotted it above my waist. I pulled on my *bluejean* and turned the bottoms up so that my bare feet, my ankles, and much of my calves showed. Then I turned to the mirror on the back of the bedroom door, and there you were. I recognised you at once. I tossed my head and let my half-long hair fall across my face. In the mirror you tossed your head and let your half-long hair fall across your face. We struck an attitude, grinned at each other. “Hey, girlfriend!” we said.

I was at that age when childhood was about to be lost, when the confusion between *gamin* and *gamine* soon became irrelevant. There was one last Sunday when I was there in front of the mirror, but you weren’t there to greet me. That was that. In any case we had a clear-out of the storage space, and God knows where that bikini went.

That was so long ago. Last summer, several years into my retirement, I drove myself down

to the Midi to see if I could find that town, that harbour. It was harder than I thought – we hadn't stopped there when I was a kid, we hadn't picked a hotel, we hadn't strolled round the town – but there was something familiar about the third harbour I came across, although the town was bigger, busier, more touristified, more modern than it had been. I found a hotel with parking round the side and took a room there.

My room was on the third floor at the front. It overlooked the street. It wasn't quite possible to see the harbour, but there was a corner in view and the adjoining street led down there. I set a chair near the window and sat looking out. I don't know whether what happened next was a waking reverie that played in my imagination like a movie or a computer game, or whether I dozed and dreamt it. It was real enough at the time, and has a hardness and solidity in my memory. I found myself walking into a bar. You were there, a

woman *d'un certain age*, dressed in Birkenstocks, scruffy chinos, a dark blue, unfastened Lacoste tennis shirt, and a windcheater like the ones Mediterranean trawlermen no longer wear. You had a cup of coffee on the table and had just poured a Calvados into it. As I came in, you were folding up today's newspaper. You grinned.

"Hey, Claude! How's it going."

"Well enough. But it's Claudette now."

"So I see. Join me." You pushed one of the chairs at your table with your foot and nodded towards it. I sat down and smoothed out my skirt.

"You know," you said, "you could have called yourself Claudette back then, and to hell with it."

"I know," I said. "I did anyway. Sort of."

She looked me up and down and smiled. There was a mocking hint to that smile, but no unkindness. It was a matter of

badinage, of friendly teasing. "I'm surprised to see you in a skirt. You and I were always such tomboys."

"Oh, I don't see the point in being butch or femme, like picking a football team to support or a party to vote for and sticking to it. I wear what I'm comfortable in."

"Well, you're looking good."

"Thank you. So are you."

"Go on, say it – for someone of our age!"

"Ah, get lost you! It's a number."

"When did you eventually make the trip?"

"The trip? Oh, I get you. I guess I was about forty when I started taking hormones. It wasn't too easy getting a doctor in France. I had to go abroad. One of the problems was I didn't tick all the stereotypically feminine boxes, and I didn't see why I should. Back then it was classed as a long-term condition. Now

it's like legislation has caught up with where I was when it was all such a struggle. I'm a woman, but I'm damned if I was ever going to be a conventional one!"

"Good for you!"

It seems like we talked for hours like old friends, compared our lives, argued about politics, even flirted a little, there was the old give-and-take. And suddenly I was in my chair in the hotel room, and outside the streets were blue with evening, yellow with electric light, and starting to bustle. I had only ever really met you in my mirror. I knew that. I could walk into every bar in town and fail to find you.

Next morning I packed and paid my bill. I had done what I came to do, found what I'd come to find – even a negative result is a result, and you had only ever been in my mind. The clerk at reception smiled and addressed me as "*Madame*." It's more and more a matter of fact these days. It's a bit formal for my taste, but I don't really mind

Confrontation

by Greysen Braley

A trick mirror:

Shoulders and stomach hair and heat—
a vision of Orlando, Arianesque seascapes.
Legs splayed, shirt open, tie loose:

brave and brave and brave and brave.

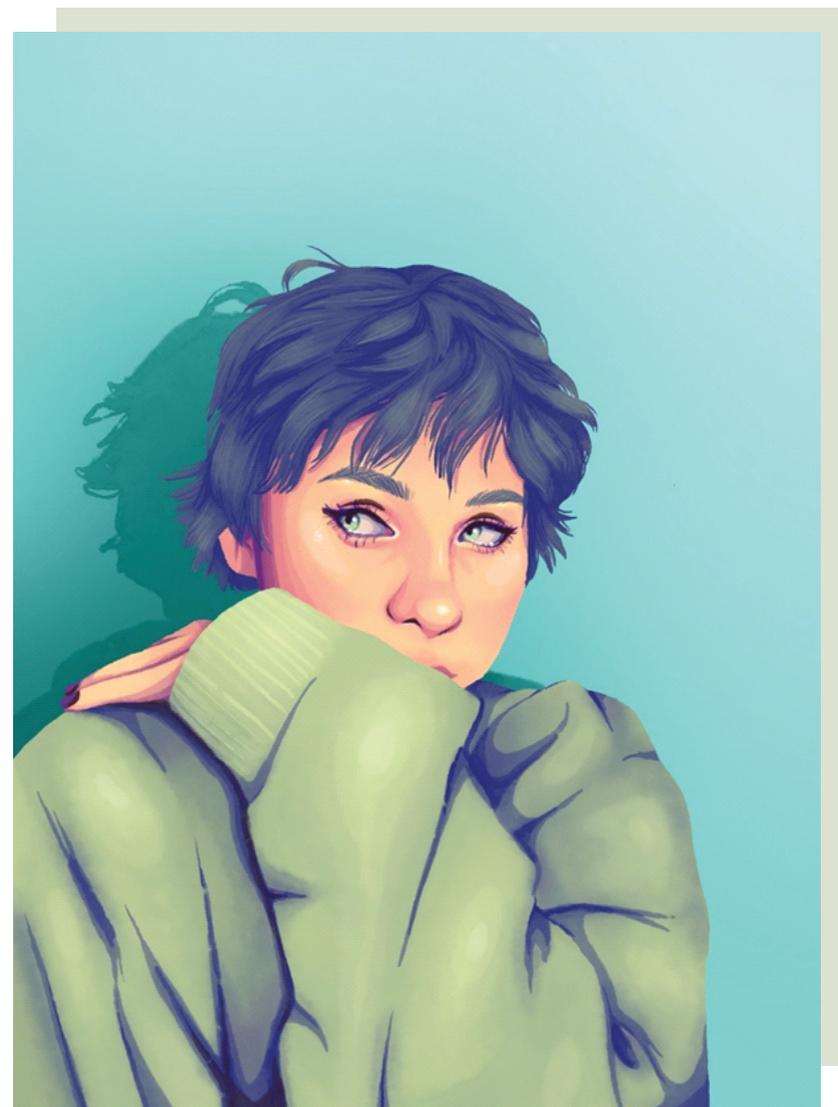
Hidden
skeletal frame
carrying wall, roof, window—
peek over sills.

Reflect:

Legs and smooth skin and petite—
Kafkaesque, vision of the wretch.
Eyeliner smeared, heels off, bra slips:

fearful and fearful and fearful and fearful.

Do you see?



Untitled

by Aria Kaul

Academic Spotlight: Jessica Secmezsoy- Urquhart

“There is no disability, no disabled, outside precise social and cultural constructions; there is no attitude toward disability outside a series of societal references and constructs. Disability has not always been SEEN in the same way. [...] A society reveals itself by the way in which it treats certain phenomena[...] Disability is one such phenomena.”

These words by historian of disability Henri-Jacques Stiker influence all the work I do for my PhD. I’m Jessica Secmezsoy-Urquhart, a disabled, non-binary, queer sapphic Scottish and Turkish PhD researcher whose area is the history of

disability. As Stiker notes, disability is not an a-historical, unchanging and static thing. All British disabled people today are impacted by the views on disability and mental illness that developed in our society from the 1600s onward. We are all influenced by the fact we live in a capitalist nation where worth is based on productivity and inability to produce leads to assumptions one is a scrounger and fraud, where supposedly innate conditions are to be diagnosed, treated or stamped out, and where statistics and psychiatric care developed the binary of normal/abnormal just in the Victorian period but completely inform how we view ourselves. Our views and assumptions regarding disability, whether we are disabled ourselves or not, have been shaped by two centuries of medical discourse and abuse, economic and political discrimination. Societies, however, change and so do their views on everything including disability. My work attempts to show that before the early modern period, English and

Scottish neurodiverse and bodily diverse people were seen, in a spin on Erving Goffman’s words, as having a form of ‘desired differentness’ that made them assets to powerful people and celebrated figures in Renaissance society and culture. At honours I was first interested in studying jesters and other court entertainers but surprised to discover so much of that history was disabled history. Court fools/jesters were mostly neurodiverse, and those called wonders were people with gigantism to dwarfism etc. I found these groups had important roles at medieval and renaissance courts not just across Europe but the world. Studying the stories of those like Will Sommers and Jane the Fool, both neurodiverse, to Jeffrey Hudson, a court dwarf and general *bamf*, is humbling and incredible as I can see people like myself have always existed. Foucault talks of the renaissance as being a golden age for disabled and mentally ill people which the early

modern people ended by silencing these voices. While I disagree with him on some arguments, I do agree disabled voices of pre-modern history have been silenced. I love that through my research I can contribute to bringing their voices back to life and letting them be heard. Disabled History was once a hidden history. It is not anymore. To quote Alan Bennett’s History Boys, I want everyone to know these disabled historical figures as, like me, you might feel finally “as if a hand has come out and taken yours”.

Better Late Than Never

by Ada Simão

“Are you goin’ to sulk pensively all day,” the old man behind the counter said, “or are you goin’ to order? If you ain’t buyin’, you ain’t stayin’.”

“That’s how you treat a loyal customer, Fred?” the man on the stool said.

“Good grief, I got a sequence-breaker today.”

The man on the stool took a tablet from his pouch, a logo of an open eye on the back. He wore a leather glove on his left hand only, the scars of amateurish tinkering with time-skipping tech. Swiping with his gloved thumb, the tablet shone green with validation as his balance drained. “The name is

Alex. Don’t forget it, or I won’t be coming here today after tomorrow.”

“Right, gotcha. Alex. Alex.” Fred massaged his temples, “Alex, people like you are why I’m going bald! Havin’ to remember who’s who, what you know, or don’t know, or will know-,” Fred shook himself. “Bah!” he blurted, leaving Alex chuckling. Fred prepared Alex’s order.

The rising tone of his gradually filling glass helped him focus his thoughts better. Sequence-breaking was likely the brand of trouble he was dealing with. The Federation of Temporal Investigators noticed a missing time-skipper and an investigator who wasn’t returning their calls. The investigator was assigned a difficult case, erased all information associated with it, and then escaped. No one knew them, as none of them knew each other. It prevents sequence-breaking paradoxes, apparently. No one knew the case either, for the same reason. It was Alex’s job to find them.

After a round, and some chips, Alex got up.

“An investigator like yourself leaving so soon?” asked Fred. “I saw the logo on your tablet, I know your type.”

“I’ve made sure the sequence of events remains unchanged, that’s all I needed to do, Fred. I have business back home anyway.”

A woman sat on a stool close by, hands inside her hoodie pocket. Her fashion was contemporary to his time period. *How curious*, he thought. *And unlikely*.

“Hey, lady!” he called.

The woman turned, “Yeah?”

“What year are you from?”

“Somewhen.”

“Do you not remember?”

“Of course I do, but I rarely stick in one place. What’s with the interrogation?” she asked with a half-serious rising tone.

“I’m fairly certain not all hoodies have moving lava-lamp patterns, you know. Saw them in my youth.”

“Awfully garish if you ask me.” came Fred.

“Fair.” she replied, shrugging. *It’s not so bad*, thought Alex.

“Though, you ought to know better than to ask people where they’re from. Sometimes they’ve good reason to not say.”

“What could you be running away from?” Alex asked.

“First off, not being recognised by anyone wherever I go is a plus.” Alex moved his hand into his coat pocket, figuring out the shape of his taser. “Secondly, you are bad at listening. I have my reasons for not saying more, maybe you’ll understand what I mean later.” She got off the stool and began to leave.

“Not so fast, lady.” Alex jumped onto his feet, pulling out the taser and his tablet, its logo facing her. “On the authority invested in me by the Federation of- “

“God, really?” the lady laughed. Alex tilted his head.

“That reaction is a first.”

“Do you think I would have made it obvious who I was if I had any chance of been taken, investigator?”, she said pulling her right hand from her hoodie pouch, revealing an intricate small explosive. “Dead man’s switch. Any shock goes through me, the tavern blows up, causing an untold amount of sequence-breaking.” Gasps came from the patrons.

Alex’s stomach sank. He didn’t want to harm the patrons, but he wasn’t going to come home empty handed. As she pulled out a blue cube with her left hand, a time-skipper, he took a picture of her from his tablet. The time-skipper shone brighter

and brighter, as she made her escape.

“You think me a sequence-breaker, don’t you? Have you considered that I left the FTI to make the sequence of events consistent?” The blue glow enveloped her completely now. “Oh, on that note. There’s a name you can call me! This will be useful, so pay attention!” she shouted over the time-skipper. “It’s Cassandra, nice to meet you!” Her last words echoed as her blue outline phased away.

One day, hands covering her smiling face, an investigator will sob hard as images of her life flash before her eyes. She will hold her suspect’s photo for the thousandth time: her right hand, below the explosive, being empty; the one on the left, though covered by the blue glow of the time-skipper, bearing a leather glove. She will stop crying. Cassandra will take all the case documents under her arm, her blue cube in the other, and time-skip somewhen else.



Nonbinary

Limen, -inis (Latin)

Neuter noun

- I. a threshold, the head/foot-piece of a doorway
 - a) a door, entrance
 - b) a house, dwelling, abode
- II. both entrance and exit
 - a) a beginning, commencement
 - b) an end, termination.

I live in limine.

Most people never even see the door.

Some pass through and feel the splintery frame with fingers and toes,
but having passed through, settle down,
and come to rest with fellow travellers and
locals alike.

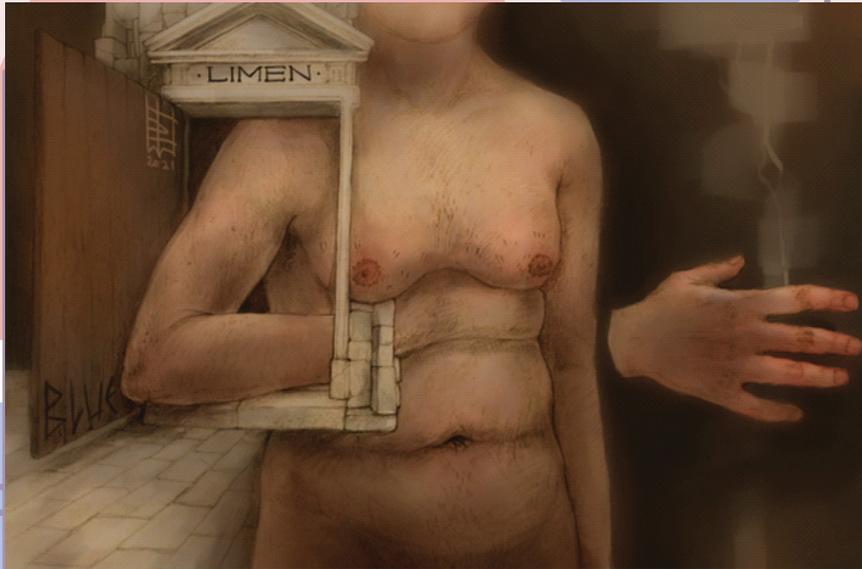
There is no hearth in limine
to warm hands pink with cold.

I can't build one all on my own
[the bricks are heavy
and I'm not sure where to lay them]

So I look for other faces
languishing in doorways,
carving new names in the splintery wood,

until

Transcend



Nonbinary

by Blue Smiley

Transcend

Nonbinary Disclosures

by Katerina García-Walsh

The documentary *Disclosure* was released in January 2020, gaining four award nominations alongside critical accolades. It traces the history of trans and gender diverse representation from silent film to twenty-first century cinema, interviewing thirty prominent trans individuals associated with media. The documentary samples numerous film clips to illustrate how trans men and women have been portrayed in film and television as either sex workers and victims or as dangerous, psychologically unstable degenerates. Since the majority of cis people have never knowingly met someone transgender, media models the appropriate reactions in the face of gender nonconforming people: laughter, fear, disgust or anger. *Disclosure* also features numerous talk show

interviews, highlighting a cultural fixation on trans people's anatomy and medical transitions. Among its central arguments, it considers how films that cast cis actors in trans roles encourage violence, particularly against trans women, all while rewarding the cis actors in subsequent awards shows. In the midst of these criticisms of cinematic history, *Disclosure* shows the way trans people in the film industry have begun to reshape the conversation and more sympathetically portray trans experience. The documentary touches on such intersectional topics as the portrayal of black trans people, activism and community-building, always from the humanising perspective of trans people as both creators and viewers, whose experience of being trans has also been shaped by the images they've encountered on the screen.

Especially to cis people, I would recommend watching it. However, *Disclosure* seems to avoid discussing the portrayal of

nonbinary people. While historian Dr Susan Stryker respectfully refers to the eunuch character in the 1914 film *Judith of Bethulia* as “nonbinary” and “gender-nonconforming”¹ and the word “gender variance” inevitably crops up further on,² the rest of the documentary focuses on trans men and women. Two nonbinary individuals are interviewed, but never identified as nonbinary. The first, actor Ser Anzoategui, speaks for only seventeen seconds, addressing the iniquity of trans people being interviewed about their genitals.³ The second, journalist Tre'vell Anderson, speaks on Laverne Cox's appearance on *Orange is the New Black* and on the importance of allies “recognising privilege”.⁴ Both interviews offer sound and significant insight but avoid addressing the interviewee's experience as a nonbinary trans person. Nick Adams, the GLAAD Director of Transgender Representation, uses the word “transmasculine”, but the

surrounding clips show the character Max Sweeney, a trans man from *The L Word*.⁵ When Adams says “nonbinary”, a clip of Taylor Mason as portrayed by nonbinary actor Asia Kate Dillon in the show *Billions* appears on-screen, quickly introducing their pronouns before the discussion shifts back to the invisibility of trans men vis-à-vis trans women.⁶ If nonbinary identity lies beyond the scope of *Disclosure*, potentially complicating its message to a cis audience, its depiction of contemporary nonbinary identity as transmasculine echoes similar images in recent mainstream film and television. Other trans/nonbinary actors playing nonbinary-coded roles include Bex Taylor-Klaus in *Deputy*, Lachlan Watson in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*,⁷ Blu del Barrio in *Star Trek Discovery*, Asia Kate Dillon (again) in *John Wick: Chapter 3* or even Miley Cyrus in *Black Mirror*. While these actors have made tremendous headway, they all happen to have been assigned female at birth (afab).

What, then, of nonbinary transfeminine representation?

The closest Eddie Izzard has got to playing a nonbinary character onscreen in her nearly twenty-five years of film acting was as a British transvestite during World War II in *All the Queen's Men*. The very name of the film is suggestive. Indya Moore, who is nonbinary, plays a binary trans woman on *Pose*. Meanwhile, other nonbinary actors are repeatedly cast as cis men in their respective roles: Ezra Miller in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* or as Flash in *Justice League*; Nico Tortorella in *Scream 4*; Tommy Dorfman in *13 Reasons Why*. While there are certainly afab nonbinary actors who have not been afforded the opportunity to play nonbinary roles, the representation of nonbinary bodies by transfeminine nonbinary actors in mainstream media is virtually nonexistent. In my research, I could find only one exception to this rule: JayR Tinaco in *Another Life*. The world of

animation offers more leeway: Indya Moore plays nonbinary Shep in an episode of *Steven Universe* and Jacob Tobia voices the shapeshifting entity Double Trouble in *She-Ra and The Princesses of Power*. Cartoons seem to obscure the real transfeminine body, thereby permitting certain freedoms not afforded in live action cinema. Indeed, the only mention of transfemininity in *Disclosure* occurs when Susan Stryker discusses Bugs Bunny's "transfeminine" appearance in the 1957 animation *What's Opera, Doc?*⁸

Disclosure highlights how transmisogyny portrays trans female bodies as threatening, duplicitous and either deserving of violence or else destined to victimhood. Nonbinary identity, largely outside the scope of the documentary, remains a term only vaguely sketched out, associated primarily if not exclusively with afab transmasculine bodies. One of the talk show interviews featured is from an episode of *The Joan Rivers Show*. *Disclosure* includes first a clip of author,

playwright and actor Kate Bornstein describing the difference between gender and sexuality. A few seconds further, another clip from the same Joan Rivers episode shows Bornstein, beside her partner, and Leslie Feinberg, a transmasculine trans activist and author, defending their right to describe their own experiences.⁹ While she does not discuss her nonbinary identity in the interview, Kate Bornstein would go on to write *Gender Outlaw* about her experience as a nonbinary trans lesbian. In the documentary, Leslie Feinberg's name flashes across the bottom of the screen while Kate Bornstein's name, which *does* appear in other parts of Joan Rivers' interview, is not included. As a result, *Disclosure's* IMDB page lists Feinberg among its sampled interviewees, but not Bornstein.¹⁰ While Feinberg passed away in 2014, Bornstein is alive and well and living in New York. She even promoted the documentary on 19 June 2020 from her twitter account.

Disclosure is not responsible for the discrimination that transfeminine people experience; to the contrary, it does significant work in outlining the cultural discourses that underpin transmisogyny. Yet the prevalence of transmasculinity in our depictions of nonbinary identity is the direct result of transmisogyny, precisely because afab nonbinary bodies are not burdened with the same cultural negativity. In *Disclosure*, filmmaker Yance Ford says that "trans people make it really difficult for some people in the queer community to assimilate", explaining that respectability politics, the desire to assimilate and be seen as acceptable, leads directly to trans erasure.¹¹ I wonder if nonbinary transfeminine people have been excluded from our media because they make it difficult for binary trans women to assimilate and be viewed as legitimate in their womanhood. In 2021, it seems we still have *gender outlaws*. As actor Sandra Caldwell states at the end of *Disclosure*, "Work still has to be done."¹²

End Notes:

¹ Susan Striker interviewed in *Disclosure*. Directed by Sam Feder (Disclosure, Bow and Arrow, Field of Vision, Netflix, 2020), 8:30 to 10:00. <https://www.netflix.com/title/81284247>.

² Jen Richards interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 1:08:24 to 1:08:32.

³ Ser Anzoategui interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 53:11 to 53:17, 53:33 to 53:38, 55:18 to 55:24.

⁴ Tre'vell Anderson interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 1:28:55 to 1:29:14.

⁵ Nick Adams interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 21:37 to 21:50.

⁶ Nick Adams interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 28:21 to 28:36.

⁷ Watson's character is arguably trans male rather than nonbinary, but this pays homage to Watson's identifying as a trans man before coming out as nonbinary later on.

⁸ Susan Stryker interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 1:09:40 to 1:10:00.

⁹ *The Joan Rivers Show* sampled in *Disclosure*, 2020, 56:30-57:35.

¹⁰ For further information, see: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8637504/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast.

¹¹ Yance Ford interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 50:15 to 50:27.

¹² Sandra Caldwell interviewed in *Disclosure*, 2020, 1:40:40 to 1:40:45.

References:

Abbott, Michele, Ilene Chaiken and Kathy Greenberg, creators. *The L Word*. Seasons 3-6, featuring Daniela Sea. Showtime, 2006-2009.

Aguirre-Sacasa, Roberto, creator. *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. Seasons 1-4, featuring Lachlan Watson. Archie, Warner Bros, Netflix, 2018-2020. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80223989>.

Beall, Will, creator. *Deputy*. Season 1, featuring Bex Taylor-Klaus. Cedar Park, Fox, eOne, 2020.

Bornstein, Kate (@katebornstein). "#DisclosureNetflix premieres today @netflix [...]". *Twitter*, 19 June 2020, 6:28 p.m. <https://twitter.com/katebornstein/status/1274016228743548929?s=20>.

Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Canals, Steven, Brad Falchuk and Ryan Murphy, creators. *Pose*. Seasons 1-3, featuring Indya Moore. Color Force, Brad Falchuk, Ryan Murphy, Fox 21, FX, Netflix, 2018-2021. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80241986>.

Craven, Wes, director. *Scream 4*. Dimension, Corvus Corax, Outerbanks, Weinstein Co., 2011.

Feder, Sam, director. *Disclosure*. Disclosure, Bow and Arrow, Field of Vision, Netflix, 2020. <https://www.netflix.com/title/81284247>.

Fuller, Bryan, Alex Kurtzman, creators. *Star Trek Discovery*. Season 3, featuring Blu del Barrio. CBS, Living Dead Guy, Master Key, Roddenberry, Secret Hideout, CBS, Netflix, 2020-2021. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80126024>.

Rivers, Joan. Interview with David Harrison, Kate Bornstein and Leslie Feinberg. *The Joan Rivers Show*. PGHM, Tribune, 1993.

Koppelman, Brian, David Levien and Andrew Ross Sorkin, creators. *Billions*. Seasons 2-6, featuring Asia Kate Dillon. Showtime, 2017-2021.

Martin, Aaron, creator. *Another Life*. Season 1, JayR Tinaco. Halfire, Netflix, 2019. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80236236>.

Morris, Kat, Alonso Ramirez Ramos, writers. *Steven Universe*. Season 6, episode 9, “Little Graduation”. Created by Rebecca Sugar, featuring Indya Moore. Morena Films, Cartoon Network, 2019.

Ruzowitzky, Stefan, director. *All the Queen’s Men*. Atlantic Streamline, B.A., Dor Film, Phoenix, 2001.

Snyder, Zack, director. *Justice League*. Warner Bros., RatPac-Dune, DC, Atlas, Cruel & Unusual, 2017.

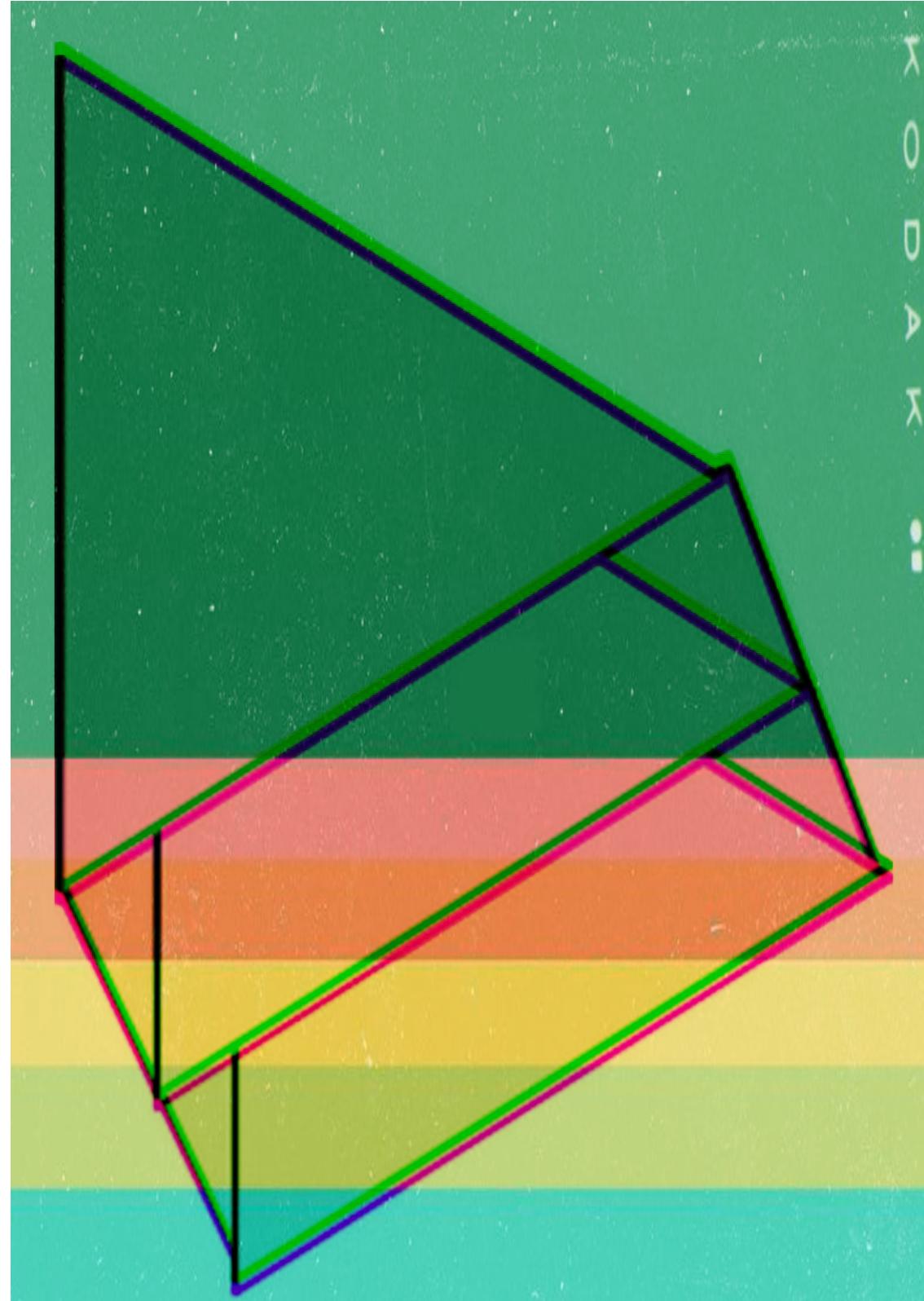
Stahelski, Chad, director. *John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum*. Lionsgate, Summit, 2019.

Stevenson, Noelle, creator. *She-Ra and The Princesses of Power*. Seasons 4-5, featuring Jacob Tobia. Dreamworks Animation, Netflix, 2019-2020. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80179762>.

Sweitsky, Anne, director. *Black Mirror*. Season 5, episode 3, “Rachel, Jack and Ashley Too”. Created by Charlie Brooker, featuring Miley Cyrus. Zeppotron, Channel 4, Babieka, Netflix, 2019. <https://www.netflix.com/title/70264888>.

Yates, David, director. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Heyday, Warner Bros., 2016.

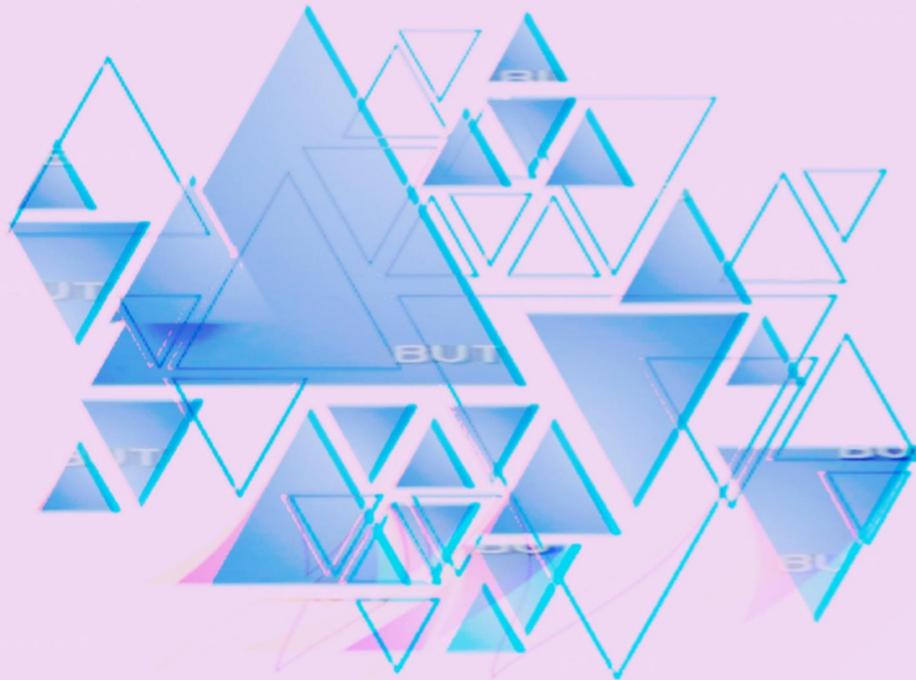
Yorkey, Brian, creator. *13 Reasons Why*. Seasons 1-4, featuring Tommy Dorfman. July Moon, Kicked to the Curb, Anonymous Content, Paramount, Netflix, 2017-2020. <https://www.netflix.com/title/80117470>.

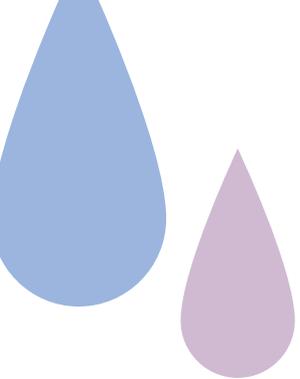


a poem in which i have sex and cry

by Plum Selfridge

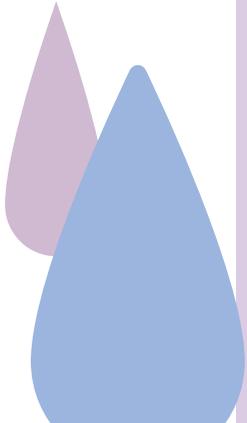
red satin bed sheets
ice cubes
fluffy handcuffs
brushes my arm
breathes on my neck
breathes down my throat
i think he ate pizza
HOT COLD HOT COLD HOT COLD HOT COLD
herpes outbreak
genital warts
can i get a glass of
water?
good girl
strawberry lube
just say it for fuck's sake
say it
just call me a girl
black rope
leather belt
my lips are dry





Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

ice melts
i'm cold
hug me?
ball gag
do you love me?
am i daddy's little girl?
COLD COLD COLD COLD COLD COLD COLD
sweat
raindrops
mountain dew
nail polish
parma violets
will i ever be a girl?



Untitled

by Anonymous

Dying

by Adrienne Aboyoun

You think you are ready, because you are a cynic who doesn't believe in the afterlife, because your favorite TV show is *Six Feet Under*, because you know what she looks like. You think you are ready because you dwell on the morbid and spend hours filled with dread, sometimes contemplating your own death. You think you know what a dying person looks like; and you think you know how a dying person moves, you think you know how a dying person speaks and how they smell. You assume you know all these things because you are a smart person who knows things, a person who knows that they know things.

As soon as you enter the room it becomes obvious how wrong

you are, so much so that you are worried she can tell that you are shaken by how much she has shrunk, how slowly she moves, how painfully she speaks and how she no longer smells like a person. She asks you a few questions about your new job, teaching at a summer camp, as if it matters, and you answer. You don't have much to say, and let her daughters do most of the talking. They brought her new mumus, ask about the food and the hospice staff. They smile, but you can tell their positivity is fake, barely concealing the agony of spending years watching her wither away, the tension of wanting the morphine drip to end everyone's misery and not actually wanting her gone. Her hospital bed looks like it will consume her.

As soon as you enter the room you regret choosing to come here. You felt like you had to, that you should, as this was the only opportunity you had to do so, and you were probably right, you should be here, should experience this even though it

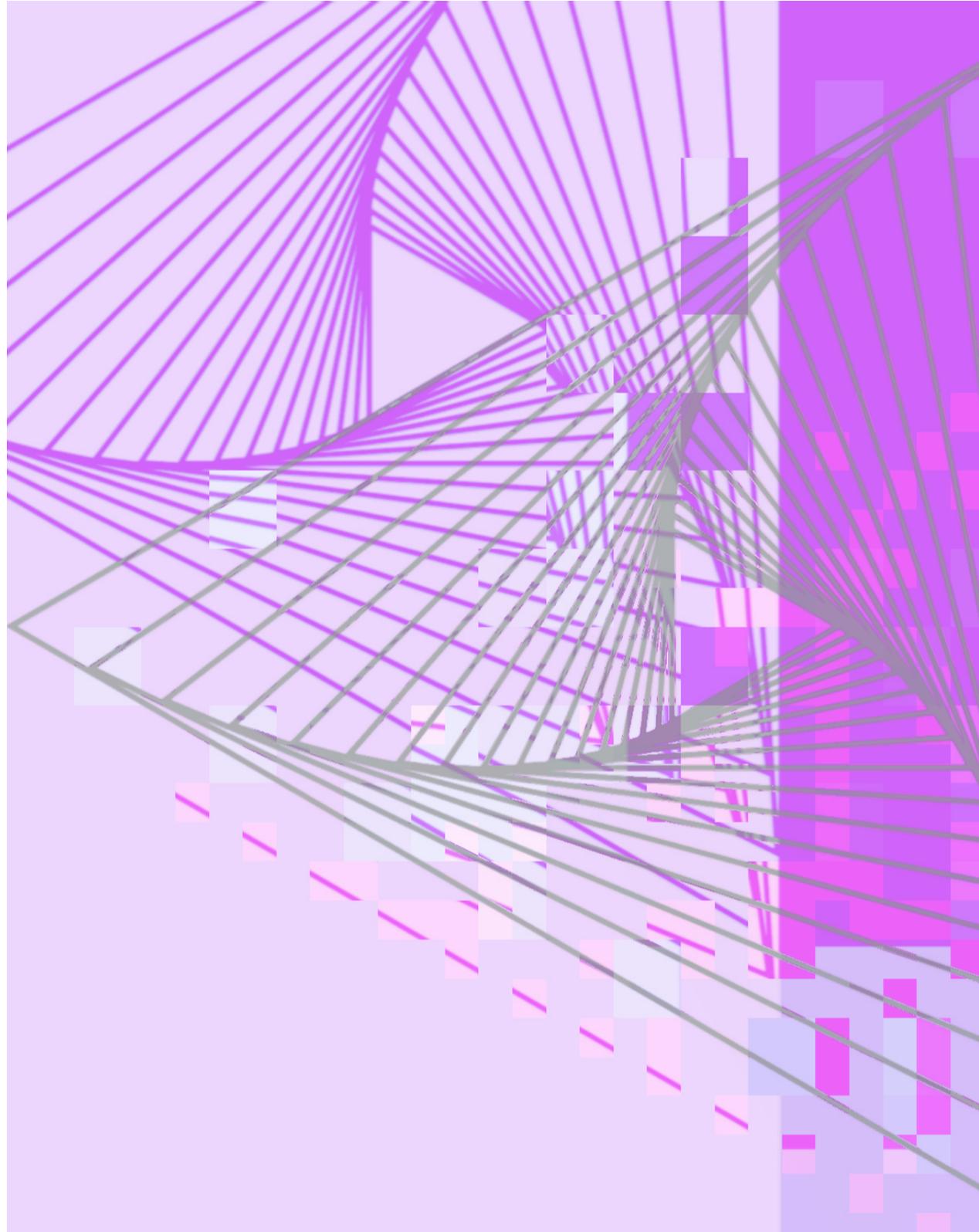
hurts, because something like this will take everyone you love and then take you, but that does not make it any easier to maintain eye contact or stop your leg from shaking. Your eyes dart around the room, reading whatever text they can find in between looking at whoever is speaking. You wonder how long everyone will stay, think of ways to get away even though there's only one car. You have to pee but don't go to the bathroom.

It seems your stepmother has read your mind, because she suggests, right after the half hour mark when you truly cannot stand it any longer, that the two of you leave so you can get ready for your first day tomorrow. She wants to buy you a railcard. She gets up first, gives her mother a hug and kiss goodbye, and you do the same. It's painful, and you are sure by now that your discomfort is obvious to everyone, but no one says anything and you wait for the Uber outside. Your stepmother talks to the driver on the way back while you stare

out the window. She dies exactly one week later.

A few months later, after the ceremonial dinner that was definitely not a wake, after you watched your stepmother drink too much champagne and embarrass herself, after you've taken the train back up north to wait out the summer, you are cleaning your room and really begin to feel the loss. You kept the program from the not-wake and are not sure where to put it: it feels wrong to pin it up but just as wrong to bin it, so you tuck it under the collection of short stories she gave you that you've started three times but never finish. You wonder if it's no longer worth it to give the book another go, because if you ever do finish it you won't be able to tell her what you thought about it. You think of the scene in *Breaking Bad* where Jesse dials Jane's phone over and over just to hear her voicemail greeting one last time, until finally the line is

disconnected, and you get a little sad. The two of you kept in touch via email, and you have saved these emails, even though you like to delete as many emails as you can, and you realise that you can read these emails as many times as you like but she will never write you another one. Years ago, when your first stepmother's mother died, she told you how hard it was to reconcile the loss, wondering why her mother wouldn't pick up the phone if she dialled the number. You thought she was an idiot, because dead people can't answer the telephone, because they're dead, obviously, and you were certain that when you lost someone you wouldn't be that stupid. Well, now you have, and here you are, dumb as a fucking rock.



Carcinization:

convergent evolution in which a crustacean evolves into a crab-like form from a non-crab-like form.

by Gee

They do not hide in the shells of others.
There are not soft and moldable.
They age larger and stronger.
They are perfect.
Symmetrical.
So I change.
I strike out on my own.
I harden.
I grow.
I begin to blend in.
Inside, I am still just a little crooked.

I am named by strangers.
But only "like".
But only "close".
But only "near".
And for what?

The skin I have is not mine.
Do I still exist inside this shell?

I Know

by KP



Academic Spotlight: Elliot Smith

There are many lenses through which we can assess the problematic nature of current medical and legal institutions that serve transgender people in the U.K. In my dissertation, I focused on how these institutions undermine transgender people epistemically.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge: how do we know things, who do we trust as sources of knowledge, who has access to knowledge etc. We assume that by denying somebody opportunities to generate and access knowledge, they suffer an injustice. I argue that the current set up of medical and legal institutions creates such a denial, thus leading to epistemic injustice.

One example of this is credibility deficit; this occurs

when somebody is treated as less credible based on stereotypes that apply to that individual. For example, one might assume someone with an Essex or Valley Girl accent is less intelligent, and therefore a less credible source. For trans people, pathologisation of trans identity has acted to give trans people a credibility deficit. A comparison will help bring this to light. In the U.K. a cis woman can decide she wants a breast reduction; she can find a private surgeon and undergo the procedure. In contrast, whilst there are also private surgeons in the U.K. offering top surgery, a trans person wanting to undergo this procedure must provide two official psychiatry reports, usually a year apart with an assessment of whether the surgery is appropriate. When the trans individual walks into the room it is the psychiatrist's words that grant them access to the surgery, not their own. The trans individuals' statements concerning their need for surgery are not credible enough to grant them access to the treatment. Meanwhile, for the

breast reduction the cis woman's words are sufficient.

One might argue here that the trans person's testimony about their need for surgery is taken into consideration by the psychiatrists. However, I contend that in this circumstance the trans person is being treated as an object of knowledge rather than a subject of knowledge. This means that the trans individual is deemed as material for the psychiatrist to draw information from and then interpret and evaluate this, to generate an outcome, rather than the trans person having the agency to draw their own conclusions in relation to their identities and the medical interventions that would benefit them.

This has further epistemic effects for trans people. Knowing that you are being treated as an object of knowledge, rather than having your words be credible in and of themselves, creates a pressure amongst trans people

in clinical settings to say the right things in order to ensure the psychiatrist interprets them in the way they need. A 2015 report by the Scottish Trans Alliance, which surveyed non-binary people about their experiences with NHS gender clinics, found that 56% of respondents only 'sometimes' or 'never' felt comfortable sharing their non-binary identities with service providers - only 25% responded that they 'always' felt comfortable sharing such information. The report cites the main reason for this as a worry that, as non-binary people, they would not be seen as 'trans enough' and would 'subsequently be denied access to services', especially to hormones and surgery (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2015). Here we have non-binary people feeling that it would be detrimental to be completely honest with clinicians about their identity; instead, they adapt their testimonies in order to ensure they are interpreted in such a way that will garner the outcomes they want. An environment in which it is

deemed unsafe for a marginalised group to convey knowledge of themselves is one of epistemic injustice.

One last epistemic consequence of this is that the trans individual is undergoing more epistemic work. They often need to have a 'double consciousness' (Du Bois, 1903). An example of this would be black people often needing to not only be conscious of themselves, but of how white people, particularly police, perceive them. Needing to be aware not only of yourself but how others are perceiving you, and might treat you, is a burden and stress on the individual. The current set up of the medical clinics has this effect. Trans people must be conscious of the psychiatrist, what they are thinking and whether what they say next could lead to the denial of medical intervention. This creates an unnecessary stress and burden on the trans individual, once again problematising their attempts to convey knowledge.

Trans people suffer in this system from a lack of credibility given to their voices and from the stress of being aware of this and needing to adapt their testimonies in order to get the medical interventions they need.

This is one example. If you would like to read more, including analysis pertaining to the legal institutions, I am happy to send a full copy of my dissertation to anyone. Please email thegaysaint@st-andrews.ac.uk for further information.

References:

- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903) *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago.
- Fricker, M. (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford University Press.
- Scottish Trans Alliance (2015) *Non-Binary people's experiences of using UK gender Identity Clinics*, published on STA Website.

smoke in my eyes

by Wilde Smith

my shoes are broken
and my palms are freckled with gravel,
but that's not why i'm crying.

i read today, that Death is patient.
(why bother to hasten the inevitable?)

it made me think of you—
i don't know if i think you're impatient or rushed, quiet or loud,
strong or weak, here or
gone.

maybe i think you're dead.

(maybe i wished i was.)

did you know
when i came back
filled with hope and excitement and sweat palms and butterflies in my
stomach and a heart that just wanted to escape my too plump chest
only one person asked me how i felt
the one person that i expected nothing from
and she was kinder than you.

(i know i'm crying too much.)

i sat at my favourite table
in my favourite café
with my favourite drink—
but all i wanted was to be somewhere else.

(i know i haven't stopped yet.)

they looked at me
as if they thought they should say

but they couldn't
wouldn't
didn't.

(neither did you.)

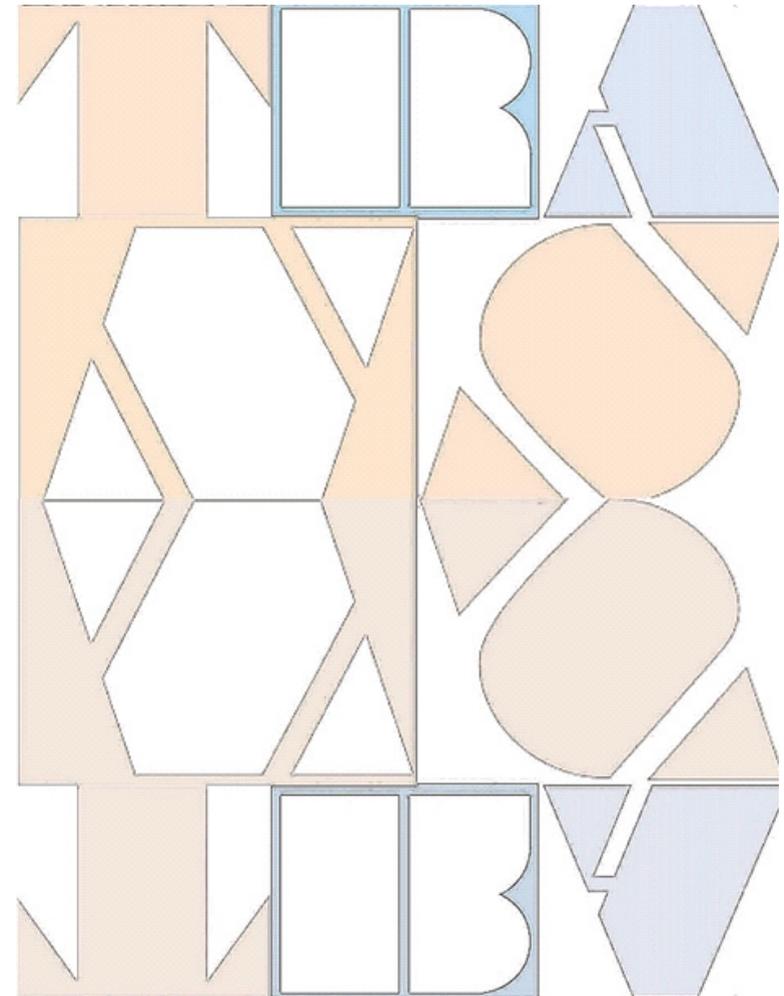
i walked home in the rain last night.
there was smoke in my lungs and in the air and caught up in my
clothes

i know the smell by heart now

(is this self destruction?)

my shoes are broken
and my palms are freckled with gravel,
but that's not why i'm crying.

something



Trans Reflections

By Paula

Regarding the artwork: It's a piece of what a friend of mine calls "impact art," based initially on the same concept as Robert Indiana's "Love" (1966) and General Idea's "Imagevirus" (1987), but with extra sharpening/colour effects—using pink, white, and blue—and a deliberate mirroring effect. "Impact art" is designed to be published in virtual form only, and deleted by the artist.

A Strange Case in Moscow

by Ciel E. Burges

It was a bitterly cold December when I first came to Moscow, buried under several feet of snow and incrustated with frost flowers. My editor had sent me there for an assignment on some prominent politician of that time for a portrait before the elections. Hasting through the noise of taxis and fumes of fur-coated strangers, I was chasing some culture before starting my work. Later the same afternoon, I entered an old-fashioned restaurant, curvy letters spelling out *La Fleur* on the marquee. This was where my politician was supposed to be every day, dining under heavy chandeliers and between white orchid bouquets in the thick odour of steak and cigarettes.

I was watching him from my table, vigorously shaking hands, about to leave, when a large group of revellers poured in. Bring more chairs!, Huzzah, it was someone's birthday, and buckets of champagne were ordered. You seem lonely. I looked up, one of the newly arrived had sat down opposite my single plate. His head was moving, his face the one clear object in the golden blur, passing too fast. May I join you? I must have nodded, overcome by a flood of surrealism, the room spiralling around him. The stranger and I conversed for hours fleeting like minutes as time had faded into a sludge of Russian birthday songs. Goosebumps crawled over my back all night, I remember how I thought his appearance otherworldly beautiful when he helped me into my coat. I've always had the tendency to fall for beauty rather than for success and walking alongside him entrapped me in a wildly romantic fairy tale. Strolling

through the streetlights and heaps of snow, it felt like a dream. When we reached the Red Square, I believed I could hear the military parades, the student demonstrations, the crackling of the burning puppet of the Tsar... And the bells of the cathedral tolled, their blaring overlapping with rejection slamming the door to not quite my heart but something close to it, when he left me standing in the cold.

Three months later, I was back to cover the elections. For your research. he said, smiling, when he took me to a ball the politician would attend as well. There we were, twirling between fantastic ball robes in candlelight.

Steaming cappuccinos between us in a coffeeshop the next morning. I'm married, he said all of a sudden. I have to take

off, my wife is meeting me in town.

The sun had been long gone, but I was still sitting there, writing up notes, spidery handwriting sprawling on my retinas. She walked into my words, her long blond hair flying over her shoulders. She was Botticelli's Madonna herself, veiled by expensive perfume and eyes burning their way into my soul. What are you working on? I told her about my piece. Later, I realised that the café had been closed up around us. I was caught completely off-guard but caught like a fly under a water glass. Women, then? I thought, when her hair tingled my collarbone, as she was leaning over to whisper something into my ear. She took off the heart-shaped amulet that revealed one portrait in each shell. One showed her in faded grace, but seeing the other side made my heart skip a beat: it was no other than him who had left me here

few hours before to meet – his wife. Enclosed in gold, together even more ravishing, me greyer than ever beside them... In confusion and surprise, I didn't know what to reply. She said she had wanted to meet me because her other half had told her she'd find herself obsessed with me. I blushed, she invited me over for dinner, the owner asked us to leave.

The next day, I climbed the staircase to their apartment, I had bought flowers, white orchids. When I knocked, nobody opened. I waited nervously, the suddenly, I heard the infernal screams. The door was unlocked, and I fell into the apartment that could have been on the front page of an interior design magazine. Was one of them torturing the other? I hurried towards the despairing howls and landed in a room with a triptych of mirrors, three times me staring back, and three creatures on the floor twisting in

crimson gowns – three for one – who was it? Finally, I looked down upon the ever-distorting bubble bath of cells, beyond recognition, then there was he, then there was she, transforming back and forth. For a second, it looked up, one side of the face his, the other hers: I tried to be both at once ... so you could fully see me... With a last cry, it splattered into jelly pieces wriggling on the marble floor.

I've kept this story all this time.



The Violence

by Katerina García-Walsh

Morning light lies muted behind cloudcover, grey-dappled;
The brightest drops of light burst from wildflowers,
Sprouting firefly yellow blooms in the corner of a neighbour's
Windowsill against withered brick wall and oxidized pane,
Despite the darkened, absent light.

“We are healing”

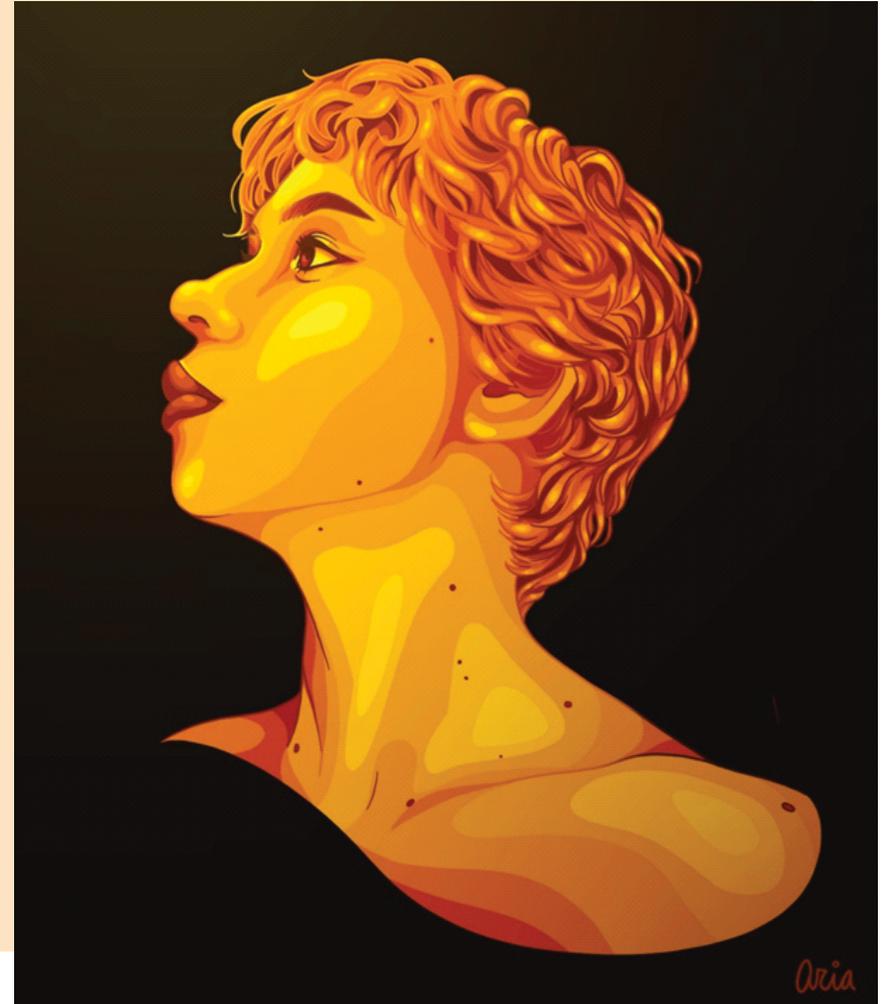
Music in my ears all hours of the day to dissipate the silence,
A crack of keystrokes or creaking floorboard,
Reading poems I scratched out years ago:
They overflowed with heartache.

“When this is over, we'll...”

But I used to love, bleed, break, scream, gnaw, hate, cry—
I've marched with my sisters till my throat was raw,
Blotted their tears in my armoured embrace,
Fought off men in alleycellars of 4am clubs, kicked out and
kicked in,
Been battered and triumphant, worshipped like an epicene
Venus,
Heartfull each day to now—
Stare across the patio at Macarena's flowerpots
Empty and dead
And wonder,

“Will I live again?”

Blanketed in isolation's anhedonic weight,
I miss the violence of a warmbodied sun
Burning my skin with its kiss.



Untitled

by Aria Kaul

Soup

by Maeve Slack-Watkins

I know you're wondering
Why I'm on your porch
Cause it's 4 am and
Both of us should be asleep but
I needed to get something
Off my chest and
It's better to say it to your face.
I made you soup.
Do you get it now?
You said you were sick
So I've been up all night
Wondering if someone's keeping you
Warm
So I tossed this together
(Though the stock's from scratch)
Because I need you
To be well.

Because of course I remember
You told me
Four years ago, half awake
Underneath fluorescent lights that
Sharpened your jaw
To a fine point
Burning your visage into my retinas.
So of course,
I remember.
Anyways.
I just came to say I made you this
It's cold, but delicious.
I made you soup,
Do you get it now?

ing
War
arni

Entanglement _____ 3-4
CW: Homophobia (Slurs)

'A Man of Understanding' _____ 5-9
CW: Death, Pregnancy/
Childbirth (Cesarean)

Leslie Feinberg (1949-2014) _____ 12-16
CW: Discussion of Transphobia

Body _____ 18
CW: Mild Body Horror

Confrontation _____ 23
CW: Disordered Eating

Academic Spotlight:
Jessica Secmezsoy Urquhart _____ 25-26
CW: Discussion of Ableism

Nonbinary _____ 31-32
Art CW: Mild Body Horror

Nonbinary Disclosures _____ 33-39
CW: Discussion of Transphobia

a poem in which i have
sex and cry _____ 42-43
CW: Sexual Content, BDSM

Dying _____ 45-47
CW: Discussion of Death

I know _____ 50
CW: Transphobia (Deadnaming),
Mild Body Horror

Academic Spotlight:
Elliot Smith _____ 51-53
CW: Discussion of Transphobia,
Discussion of Racism

smoke in my eyes _____ 54-55
CW: Suicidal Ideation

A Strange Case in Moscow _____ 57-59
CW: Death, Mild Body Horror

