AFTER TOP SURGERY

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MAY 19, 2026

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After Top Surgery

**Published by Arc and LCP*

Did you know
my chest is a whole
universe

even though the
planets have left
my stratosphere

I am still
a perfect
set of spheres

that you can dip a
chip on me and
it's always delicious

that I imagined myself
and then created the
tools to carve it

that I am now
the lunar landing
of choice

that my name is
a whale song
from Jupiter waves

that perfection
isn't close to glee
it's a roadblock

touch my scar
to hear my thoughts
bubble

kiss it to see
what it's like
to float in space

Post Surgery Wake Up

I wake to a crush of chest
look down to see bandages
and the surgical binder strapped
the final binder on the quest
to feeling like a normal person

hospitals are always in a rush to get
you out of the bed
I ask for Gravol as the heaves
start to climb inside of me and the
nurse claims I need the doctor to
prescribe this and I used to work here
and know this is a lie

she says she'll get it for me once we're done
and I shallow breathe as she tells me
about the drains the maintenance
the possibility of hematoma if I take the binder off

I swallow bile and try to listen
she clearly doesn't want to do this part either
I tell myself it's COVID burnout not intolerance
I grasp for my mask but my chest screams

my hands are twice their size
and another nurse says I
probably am having an allergic reaction
I ask for benedryl and again I'm told
my doctor needs to prescribe it
and do nothing though he's still on site

each of these nurses is doing the work of so many
I try to be patient but my hands hurt and
it will be horrible to throw up when I can't
barely move my upper body and I ask again
and this time my mom who's arrived hears it
and tries to advocate but my nurse just keeps
telling me monotone instructions while I swallow vomit

we stop on the way home
I vomit standing up straight to avoid bursting seams
I stay in a state of nausea for days
forcing water and broth and meds to stay inside

days later I see myself awake
this being in the mirror

a flower blooming
a deep exhale
the undoing of it all
a cacophony of relief
something I can still
only barely touch
all I carved into me
so that I could cope

“There you are” I said
and I am

Dear Boobies

Sorry for the long break up
how I pushed you down
all those years how I repaid
your beauty with a binder
how you had to suffer

you did your very best
showed up for parties
bounced on dance floors
swelled beneath the hands
of lovers of randoms

it was never your fault, boobies
like how landing on electric fence
isn't the fault of the bird
who could never read the sign

the last time a man spoke to boobies
not to me was 24 hours before surgery
I considered keeping you for him
dropping them off with a note saying
"I noticed you liked them, please enjoy"

and dear boobies if there is an afterlife
may you have found a nest on the
chest of a trans girl who takes you to
all the parties to bounce

may she give you the life I never could
may she have the life I never wanted
and may you finally
feel wanted by your host.

Stitches get Roses

A bouquet of roses welcomes me home
red soft petals like new skin
My roommate has gotten these
and for once I know they’re for me

when men would buy me roses
I knew they were getting them for a woman
But she’d never show up this woman they expected
And I’d hardly breathe until I could throw them out

Roses arrived like the breasts did
me thinking they were beautiful but surely
they weren’t meant for me someone so
clearly masculine they would wilt in my presence

but the breasts stayed and the flowers
got sent no matter what I said they were
both meant for me why did I make everything
nice into some sort of affront what is wrong with me

now I receive the flowers like a man might
amused at my roommate’s affection
and I realize I love roses
now that they're meant for a man

and isn't it nice for a man
when sometimes
he gets something
delicate and pretty

Post op Surgical Binder aka “The Final Boss”

Instructions : Wear for 4-6 weeks without removal, dream of hematomas

I would shove my
thumb under the
iron bar feeling
into the nook between
foot long scars
to relieve the binder
tension

sometimes it would be
so much I would think
a hematoma was bubbling
beneath the
binder I was becoming
an incredible hulk of
collected blood

I look to the larvae
bound by cocoon
see how they are a
perfect muscle
a not yet thing
how being something
always becoming is
beautiful

some days I would have
eaten so many edibles
I would think “holy fuck, I think
I’ve had this binder on a long
time” and try to take it off
and remember I might just
break in half when I do

look to the larvae
they are the driven
the dedicated
the blind faith
the most willing
to sacrifice for
flight

Do you remember

I remember
getting soft purple shoes that seemed
so girly I had to run down to the water to
make them into boy feet I stomped in
the mud and the muck and got in trouble
if I'd only had the words to explain why

I remember
putting a facecloth over my chest in the
tub water so I couldn't see the things
they called breasts growing on me how we
now had to shop for girl's clothes that one
time my brother called me pretty
why did that make me so sad?

I remember
my first communion
dressed to be the child bride of Christ
the pious photos and bow in hair
instead of jumping in leaves
with my Nana and Brother

first communion my nose bled all over my
weird wedding gown and I had to run downstairs
and I thought god hated
me because I wasn't like any other girls and
the teachers were already looking at me like
I was the problem

I remember
being transmasculine without the words
how my life was an endless question mark
why was I so upset why couldn't I say why

do you remember when
none of us had words for
who we were but we found
each other anyways and sure
maybe it's taken us 30 years
to say the truth of it all
but it's the truth

I remember so much
ever since my life has

gone backwards in time
because that’s what finding
your true self is
a way to answer all those
questions that pulled you
into holes under covers
and under people

thank you for everyone who
shouted loud enough
so that we could have
answers

My Ghost Breasts

My ghost breasts travel back in time
to remove themselves from me before puberty

they take me shopping to
marks works warehouse like I wanted

they throw Barbies out the windows
before they even get there

they turn my dollhouse into a series
of caves for mice

they tell every server that I ordered the coffee
and that my dad ordered the tea

my breasts go back in time to tell the teachers
why I was always hanging out with the boys

my breasts open up a queer club in my school
and this time we don't call it drama or av club
and no one has to learn the musical

my breasts fly into
the mouths of my bullies
to soothe and choke them

my breasts tore up your baby shower invite
where I am forced to tell the room
I don't want children
and that man I married is dead

my breasts turned back time and I became
a cinematographer instead of an electric
called "mountain dew" by my own crew

my breasts leave so that I can avoid
having to smile for others in public

Suddenly people know how to make eye contact
Listen to what I say

my breasts get the medication they need so they can stay
chest and I'll never have to get 6 hour surgery

my breasts write themselves out of this poem
because they were never forced to exist

Itsy Bitsy

I walk my fingers up the wall
itsy bitsy spider
my childhood sisyphus
each day I get further up the hill
my arm almost able to move
past elbow height

uphill battle was my path
each day a pushing a rock
that would always roll back down
the rain that would wash me off
falling and spelunking into some sort
of bottomless way of being

now I am all steady climb
I take a tea towel and hold it
across my back my hands
bound by grip and force
the physio exercises came
from a guy like me
I tell my surgeon to buy it
for all his guys getting cut

food comes and goes
friends buy my dinner in lieu of being here
and every bite feels like a little cheer
I cannot stop looking down
the binder holds me less tightly
the swelling finally calming
soon I can just be

it took us 35 years to say the truth
I did my best didn't I do my best?
I look at my past like who was that
walk up the wall's waterspout
every day getting dressed
as another rock rolling up a hill

the myth of sisyphus was that
the rock was never his to roll
the itsy bitsy spider is rebirthed by rain
we glide past rock past web
my spider hand now higher than
where my nipples once were

each day is rebirth
rocks have rolled away
my chest a smooth plain
up comes to the sun
to dry up all the rain
I am no longer a myth
I am created again

My surgeon

We used to haggle rooms and patients
when I was in charge of hospital beds
and he needed spots for his surgeries
our conversations shoving matches
my emergencies vs his electives

he greets so first-consult-warmly
I know he doesn't recognize me
I remind him who I am
greet him back like an old coworker
we catch up and relax our roles
the lockdowns so lonely for healthcare workers

he tells me how doing trans surgeries
has changed how he feels in his practices
our joy and relief a balm an endless win
we both get overcome at this
so happy for each other

this is not the man I met
I was never the woman he met
we share such a profound joy
though we are whispering
because it still feels so much
like a secret

II

my bandmate comes with me to the next visit
we traded pronouns a while ago
and maybe we can share my surgeon

it feels so special to be indoors
for this consult 4 years in the making
because a pandemic cut in front of me
or 30 years in the making
had I known

I make jokes like
I can't see my dad gut
can we get rid of these?
and we cackle

III

before the gift of anaesthesia
my surgeon asks me what we are doing today
I say we are removing my breasts
so we can make them into one big breast
a cyclops breast and he agrees laughing
the mask comes on and I count down

Ten nine eight
seydum sixsh
fi…

furr…

IV

when I see him next
it's back in his office
we are both so giddy
we did it we did it
on company time even

we look at his work
remove drains bandages
a foot and a half of stitches
he tells shows me how
much skin there was to work with
gosh they were so big we marvel

when I first start scar care
I feel each entry and exist of his needle
each are so filled with such character
wonder at the thoughts behind each angle
I swear I feel them like hazy conversation
or a deep collaboration needle pointed

it's an intimacy
this changed man operating
on me a finally arrived man
bound by the joy
of not having to stay the same
when it's killing you

Neural pathways

When they set my breasts free
there was all this negative space
all these neural pathways severed
and it felt like where my nipples were
had become a sunken kind of grid

I traced my pain along it
sometimes the grid was itch
sometimes a dull thud of pain
sometimes it was an echo
of all I had lost asking
where is it now

I saw it like a neon grid
black background and then
lit lines of green traversing
as if someone laser cut it
and it was left inverse
an outline of doldrums
a mathematical equation

whenever I closed my eyes
it was a bright map lit
on the backs
of my eyelids

perhaps it was my brain
mapping a path back to feeling
I am numb in so much of my chest
my brain still catching up
to the amputations

the breasts were inevitable
my generation had little option
so my brain had to accept them
though I never expected them
to happen on this boy's body

what a relief for me and my brain
each day we celebrate what's gone
each day we don't have to create
a whole system of coping
just to look down

Recovery wave

I walk my fingers up a wall
a little more each day
my arms are almost able
to raise past my shoulders now
and I am full of the best syrup

I'm no good for capitalism
so I amuse myself in this haze
I am so full of relief I buzz
the anaesthetic is still here
or maybe it's the edibles
or maybe it's becoming myself

the binder holds me vicelike
I sleep through nights without it
carefully taking it off
still worried my chest will pull apart
that a hematoma will have me
back horrified at my chest's growth

but it's quiet like hesitation
omicron crumples the city and lockdowns
interrupt the 6 week recovery plan
my roommate is my only caregiver now
she and her big beautiful husky Tempo
who is locked out of my room at nights
my chest a recently stitched smile
I suspect I am made of light

I march the spider up the wall
my hand is higher than my shoulder now
I call my roommate in to see this
they drop a bowl of porridge near me
their dog waves a tail at my trick
life can still bring you miracles
when you let every idea sit on your chest
before it flies away

Phantom Chest

**published in Arc*

when I rub the scars at first
I can feel the angle of the needle
as it threaded me back together
I wonder at each thought the
surgeon had as he did it

I am so ready for these scars
I have artwork dedicated to them
think of them as smiles where
mistakes used to be
I fall in love with every inch

when I think about my breasts now
they are some strange deformity
that everyone but me loved
they are a costume piece I never could
take off until now

others want them to live on
to be repurposed onto their chests
to be flung into the air burned in a
fire it's not their fault they ended up
with me so I love them for trying

I wonder if there's a term for
what's opposite of phantom pain
because after all I put my breasts through
they are probably happy to have me
never think of them again.

Life in Reverse

My breasts exist in convertibles
under show lights engulfed in hands
they are pushed together like
an ass on my chest

I see them being fucked
this hard cock pulse until
the cum shot squirt
me licking the tip as it showed
itself eager to explode

I see them sitting on me
as I pass by eyes claiming ownership
I always had to make decisions about cleavage
what sort of day I was willing to have
how much street harassment
could I put up with

these images exist past my hands
past my old body
now it's someone else's
isn't that a kindness to
keep dissociating long after they
are sacrificed to medical waste

how big were they
a new lover asks
they were the size of a meteor
they were a house on top of me
the size of a bursting porn theatre
they were boulders big enough
so they'd never find the drowned
body

wow
they say when I show an old photo
I stare at the girl in it
still not ready to grieve

Scar Care 1

Two months after 3.5 pounds are removed from my chest

I am a bliss
think about
myself with breasts
like *who was that?*
I speak about that person
like a fever dream

I was so done with them
I let the nipples
be really free
didn't get them re-attached
so now my chest
is looks as alien as I used to feel

I had been waiting for
the spaceship to take me back
only now I am so real
I claw into the earth
to stay

Turns out I'm all human
I will tell them sheepishly
I just felt that way because
my gender wasn't words

my scar is becoming a smooth thing
I will miss the bleating red smiles
the violence of it all
I want my chest as trans as I am

the scar feels glossy like
my inner cheek like
a lapus lazuli under
constant thumb rubs
like something so
brand new it is almost
fetal

no medical person tells me
such a big scar and operation
needs physio for recovery
I am so lucky some trans guy

made a zine about before
and aftercare and I'm blessed
to have been handed this

I let you kiss the scar
trace it with your fingers
it is full of hot blood and
tissue still waiting to
be assimilated into the
rest of me

each kiss brings me
back to life again the life
I thought I was living
erases as I massage
the scar down as I
see myself nipple-less

hide the evidence
put the body parts
in the incinerator
let nothing back into
the grave of your chest

unless it is lips
is kisses
is the kind of
meditation called
scar care

Boobqueathed

A man dies and leaves behind
a note for my breasts
who never could read

The man wrote how he misses them
he's held them so long
bouyant in his brain
no matter the scalpel he
will imagine them back
bigger and more available

another man who loved
my breasts watches me
eat grapefruit slices in the
backyard and I know he's
spank banking the moment
even in absence
he places them into the moment

somewhere my breasts
are a fucked bath pillow
somewhere they are spoken of
by neighbours who will never
understand why I would remove
something men wanted

I can't control who holds
the breasts in memory
they preceded me into every room
these life of a party
balloon arches of happiness

nor do I know what to do
with other's feelings about them
I had little ownership over these mounds
clearly meant for someone
else's pleasure

so when this man dies
and bequeaths me back the
memory of when he found me hotter
I let them slip to
the ground for autumn

here the earth
will know what to
do with them
sort which tree root
system they belong to

I used to water them
and clean them now I
watch them become nutrition
always there for consumption
my breasts how nice they were

Fetish shhh

I ask you to kiss my scar
and a little bit of me
worries I am a fetish
when you agree
with such gusto

I remember when
I was my own desire
a woman’s body with
curves with humour with
fearlessness

each time I looked down
I liked what I saw
except that it was
also my body
now am I dating that body?

these little poison thoughts
and all my ghosts
follow me into bedrooms
trickle down my hand
as you hold it

maybe we are
accidental fetishes
maybe being someone’s
favourite everything is
called loving when
you’re born into
the right body

I remember never
having to wonder
am I a fetish to my partner
am I dating my past body
I remember being a young boy
and thinking someday
I will be a man

Bodycount

My girlfriend mentions “bodycount”
and it becomes a land eel
slithers around my mouth
and reminds me that I don’t know

if top surgery has taught me one thing
it’s that my body never felt like my own
and de-escalation can look like consent
that there is a difference between desire
and having my own male body

it’s decades of *I don’t knows*
how did you lose your
I don’t know
the names of lovers or assaulters
of *did we* or *didn’t we*’s?
I don’t know

I see myself as an old movie
sped up reels of someone reckless
someone trying to survive their death wish
escape attempts with moonshine paths

when they sliced my chest open
maybe they took that me that acute me
maybe it all went to another dimension
where everything bounces more

I keep driving despite the eel in my mouth
hope she doesn’t want to hear the answer
like a warning like a promise I’ll cheat
that one body will never be enough

we stop at the lake
I let the eel slick away to water
it buries the answer so deeply
that sometimes I feel as if I’m drowned

Sex Therapist

I came here to write
about our last night
our first try at
achieving such heights

to sort out what it is
to be penetrated after
so long to even capture
how your fingers
felt over my scar

but instead I am
google searching
Sex Therapist so
that you don't have
to be

to handle what I was
meant disassociating for so long
imagining myself on porn sets
trying to levitate
just to be present for sex

I want last night to
have felt uncomplicated
but nothing is after such
harms and heals after
so many liquor sweated
sheets

so I figure the best way
to say thank you for last
night is to google
sex therapist so it's always
just you and me
and we are on earth
and it's beautiful here
with you

In sickness and in death

Published in Prism international

She tells me of the ghost
at the foot of my bed staring
and I show her a picture
of my late husband

says he grabbed her one
night and I think well that
makes sense we always
had similar crushes

I do my best again to
get rid of him but he
still runs his fingers
through my hair

I am so used to my ghosts
to the peacefulness my husband
never had in life and his anger
still keeps the basement cold

the transmasc break up involves
the returning of the bag of dicks
and I'm not surprised
when she turns up with it

she says I still speak like we're married
I don't tell her that sometimes
he grips my head so hard
I think I might join him

once again I am alone with ghosts
with dicks I had to purchase
and phantoms where my
breasts used to be

I am the sum of my parts
I am a body of work
I tell the room most see empty
I guess you got what you wished for

It’s not a period if it never ends

I understand
how trans men just
ignore the need for medicine
how we’ve learned
sick is weak

how that speculum
must be for someone else
they keep calling that name
you used to respond to
a dog’s reflex

I have been bleeding
for 6 months of my top
surgery year I was supposed
to have felt the most myself
but instead I go to blood labs
weary walk to the feminine
hygiene aisle

I have lost bodies of blood
been infused with buckets
I am but a vessel but a
giant blood vessel staining
everything around me

I am bleeding when I’m dumped
I am bleeding when I try at love again
and this time I have to end it
to remain surgery ready

I can see why trans men avoid medicine
aimed at women
I don’t even want to say the name of the
organ they will remove
as they penetrate me repeatedly to find it
too big too thick too bloody
too full of planets

I don’t tell people and we are all in
our own pandemic hells so it seems fine to
keep to myself
I keep weakness to myself
and I’m told this is toxic

masculinity and they’re right
but it’s the only masculinity
I’ve been accused of since
the bleeding began

it’s not a period if it never stops

Scar Care 2

my scar is an earthworm now
just the crest as if it's embedded
it turns white as I rub it as the blood
pushes away from healing
I ask it to settle into me

My ex left before giving me the racquetball
that would help with scar care
so I go with another trans guy to
Canadian Tire to get one
and isn't the hardware store
a balm for broken up men

we are alone
my scar and me
when the balls
come out

I roll it over the puckered scar
watch as it turns from white to
pink in the wake of me
I don't mind being alone
with my scar and my blood

I am in perimenopause
so much I might die
so much I triage myself
look at my hemoglobin levels
my platelet levels dip my iron
goes from pill to infusion and
back to pill again I hold the
lips of my eyes open to see
if I need a transfusion yet
when will I have to finally
go into the hellscape that is
my old ER during a pandemic

and maybe I should have gone
a few times how but it's a lot
to be bleeding from your uterus
after being freed by top surgery
I remember doing this as a
woman and even then
they sent me home instead

of the transfusion I needed

so I stay at home
triage so close to emergency
I'm happy I'm alone no one
else needs to witness
all this blood and it doesn't
help these scars that need platelets

the scar is the scar ever going to heal
when my body fights
to hold onto the platelets it has
I roll the ball over it so hard
I feel where my areola is in my scar
a cluster of memories and

It's just a little earthworm
resting on the happiest part
of my body asking to fit in
somehow and I do my best
to help it feel welcome
on the body still fighting
still becoming
still bleeding

Endless Recovery

This body
needs me to trust it
asks for morsels
requires constant
maintenance
but oh
what it gives back

this year it's had so much anesthesia
I think maybe I haven't woken up
as the pounds fell to surgery floor
tissue cut out then cut out more then
cut out more until I don't know
which scar is elective anymore

when surgery is political
the recovery period never ends
I see bills get passed and care get
criminalized until we are the
crimes and I think about what it would
be to detransition due to care being criminal
but they can't sew my chest back on
ok they just can't yet

every day the internet tells me I'm sick
and I try not to listen too hard
because I'm not what's ill
it's anyone thinking
surgery is for the weak
that a body is political
instead of someone's

so I rub more oil into raised scars
from my chest to abdomen and
I am a mythical beast
I am the dream of trans ancestors
I am once again
recovering

My breasts turn 1 year old in the medical waste facility

I hope they made friends
it always seemed like they
were trying to

gosh you should have seen them
at a party
squished together maybe a trail
of sweat

Please get rid of these
I told my surgeon
they're getting in my way
of seeing my dad gut

maybe the sun is setting on them
right now somewhere salient
everything is nicer in the magic hour

I wonder if some random guy
will still show up to call them a slut
when I'm no longer attached

What happens is I…

get dumped before my scars heal
start bleeding and never stop
go indoors and triage perimenopause
wish my uterus away

8 months later they take it
hold aloft the size it was
I had become 4 months pregnant
with fibroids and polyps and walls
I have a new 5 inch scar
to worry at

after this my body punishes me
for how I laid down and bled
grants me a cyst an open wound
and I wash it four times a day
leave places when the pain starts
only can do one thing a day

I spectre my own life
faking wellness to avoid conversation
all these womanly things happening
have me hibernating anemia
iron infusions and sitz baths
I try to date but can't stop bleeding

can't be awake like I want
I work on my back find jobs I don't
have to sit up for
some surgeries stop the bleed
and I make it to a festival in another province

where I end up running an emergency during the show
A woman passes out and my 911 training takes over
Triaging running algorithms
getting a defibrillator close as the ambulance
took an hour because pandemic
handing off paramedic instructions
before running onstage to finish the show

I pray the bleeding holds off
it does until the plane ride home
the cabin pressure easing
half my body's blood out of me

gushes into my pants

I should be out in public
showing off this new chest
and it seems like I am
but it takes so much to get there
and even more to replace that energy
I never really had

online me is doing things
celebrating this surgery
not discussing why I have
no pigment left under the filters
I celebrate my book

offline me cannot stop crying
when I shelve a new show
when I cancel a workshop again
when all these things could pay
and I was living dreams

5 surgeries in 18 months
three enormous scars to tend to
I become this carved up thing
but fuck do I ever emerge
and the joy of my first surgery
gives me all the energy I need
to survive losing life blood weekly

whittled by scalpels
and fear of bursting
abdominal scars
turns me into
a middle aged twink
and fuck
do I ever feel whole

There’s no divorce in the afterlife

The pandemic lockdowns bring me closer
to the ghost of my husband
no longer is he an anxiety
a reason not to breathe too loud
or regulate how I walked

his ghost is not as angry as he was
though sometimes the basement
forces me to escape to the upstairs
as I become more myself each day
I wonder what he thinks of Charlie

sometimes I joke with his nephew
“turns out your uncle was gay” I say
though I was still a closeted trans
when I shook my husband’s ashes
onto the land that apparently healed him

I’m sent to my girlfriend’s medium
to break up my ex-husband’s ghost
but all I want to know is what
he thinks of Charlie would he have
loved him laughed with him as we did

nothing has been weird for me for a long time
my ceiling cracked in half when my husband left
I feel him glowing whenever I visit his family
I avoid reflective surfaces
ease into his hand in my hair

the medium instructs me in getting rid of him
this is what my girlfriend wants
but every time I try I miss some element
I try again and again and then give up
not every divorce is final

at least I know
there was someone excited
for my breasts to arrive
in the afterlife
to have and to hold
from this day forward

Coming out late

As I get bolder online
messages fill from people
who feel it's disgusting to
come out so late
guys like me
deciding to cope instead

I too bullied myself
like *is this my middle age red corvette?*
no one wants to think
about your crotch you
are no twink
you've managed this far
why put your family through this

I come out transmasculine at 42
I get three weeks of being new
before I start being called elder
but I just got here and my elders
often didn't survive enough to arrive

I am of the generation
where we made our own spaces
fought without the words we needed
didn't know there were others like us
cosplaying as tomboys or
I'm not like the other guys

I shed a tear for each message
these theys and men who cannot come out
these women who remain father
these fears of disruption after coping so long
I celebrate them being so bold to tell me
let them know they are part of something
so huge and beautiful it is called a threat

you are you no matter what you're called
I tell them
It's ok not to come out
to stay safe to remain a mother a wife a husband
you are trans and that is so beautiful
find your spaces to be you
even if it's just in this message box
you are so brave

and this is a reason to celebrate

older trans have the tiniest coming out parties
before we have to get back to work
before our others come home asking for dinner
we cut into our gender reveal cakes once again
and the piece we carve is made of light
so bright we forget our bodies
our circumstances
and finally see our selves

Panic at the picnic

My breasts came to the company picnic
and sat down next to me
true they were on someone
else's chest but I had the same
oddly coloured tank top and cup size

I don't think I said a word for
20 mins I just tried to pretend
there wasn't a ghost in the park
tried to tell myself
they're not yours they're hers
and she seems happy with them

sometimes with enough smoke in me
I start to panic like
holy shit I had
someone saw my boobs off
I must be totally insane

sometimes they appear onscreen
pushed together and powdered
let loose and bouncing
how the hell did they get there

I didn't know dysmorphia
could also be expelled body parts
coming back to remind you
they know what you did last winter

this is the slope they want us on
to be questioning our sanity
while cis people easily book plastic surgery
access HRT without aggression

I don't tell anyone that my breasts
are here on someone else's chest
that I am cold sweat panicking because
when you kill something it can
sometimes come back for revenge

Pulling Monsters from Closets

Somewhere far away from my body
my amputated nipples sit by a stream
they've had a wonderful day today
they dip a nip in the cold water
and once again miss being sucked

yours have been sewn on
each a rallying cry of survival
changed now having known a small
amount of detachment during top surgery
now framed in a halo of scar

I know another trans man
who said after many years
his reattached nipple's feeling came back
woke up with new nerve endings
newfound normality

somewhere else my nipples
are nibbled by a creek fish
who saw them floating bait
swallowed them whole
Free the Nipple they said
and I freed both of mine

I wonder at all the body parts
that were sluiced from me in the
past year did they miss me
are they somewhere shining
dancing with other amputations?

I have always felt love for monsters
given them a glowing soul only the
best kids can access
some think trans monstrous
turn us into ghouls and freaks

your replanted nipples feel like
the best kind of candy in my mouth
our chests Frankensteining together
scars like streams sliding over
body corrections

I grow up to monster myself in the eyes of many

now I understand better that sometimes
freedom can look like exile
and that I too can be made into something
children can be convinced to fear

Winning at Swimming

I move here with only my bathing suit bottoms
I want no excuse not to boldly be me
this me that hasn't yet happened
the guy who shows up in a public space
and takes his shirt off

I tell the other trans guy in town
I'm gonna do it go topless and they say
they're not ready yet and I get that
I couldn't do it before today

not being able to take your top off
is something so sewn into us who
were raised to be female like *if you do that*
you'll deserve whatever happens

like if you do that then your boobs
will definitely touch your chest wall
like children will be harmed but in a
straight way like *you slut*

it takes forever to get past that part
and then onto this part where you
are screaming TRANS into a public space
but I don't live here so I act big city

Big City Trans expects no reaction
he asks where the non-binary shower is
he casually talks to a lifeguard about
journalism he says he's the Writer in Residence

there's only 6 people there when I arrive
only adults learning how to swim
I change in the laundry room and shower there
for a second I forget as I walk in topless

I dive into the water and it holds me
my chest so streamlines I feel even more
at home in water like a fish returned
like amphibian folklore

life could be like this
I think
because it is

right now

Pierre’s Breasts

Written while in the Berton House Residency

I stick my pathology report
to Pierre Burton’s fridge
I wonder what he would
have done had he woken
up with breasts on his chest one day
like what happened to me

would he perhaps embrace them
feel he finally didn’t have to
measure up to his leather couch
would his wife had left him
what was this town for
trans people in Pierre’s era

currently the trans people are
casually walking around
bolder even than the
city trans and non-binaries
I never feel less threat
but here and maybe I
will swim shirtless and I do

Pierre would your breasts
have been able to write even
better books with more compassion
would we have heard of the
adventures of girls more
having known the strength
of dealing with everyday breasts?

It’s getting colder here
the mornings are layers and
stretches and seeds and
ravens bellowing good morning

GOOD MORNING PIERRE’S BREASTS

> *how was your sleep*
> *do you put a bra on immediately*
> *so the mounds don’t touch your*
> *chest Pierre? Do you flinch*
> *each time someone favours them*

over your eyes?

I know I know Pierre
they’re a lot to get used to
I was a young man once too
until they showed up and suddenly
there were less adventures
roughhousing and frog catching
I missed how easy it was
just to be boy before they came

All I can say is
dear dear imagined Pierre
if you love your breasts
I hope they make you
feel as natural as I feel
without them.

Transmasc makeout

We know how to
make each other's scars
feel good
kiss and suck and lick
mine - a year older
theirs - a few months old
still with the bruised smiles
a shadow bruise behind stitches

they kept their nipples
so perfect in my mouth
I wonder what it feels like
this space that used to
be just skin now
nipple kiss expectant

masc 4 masc - T 4 T
so many things that
creep into our thoughts
with others are unnecessary
we are seen by each other
easy pronouns and truly
our selves are a normalcy
no threat of our being fetish
we relax into homosexuality

still the cis boys creep in
when my lover asks me a question
my whole body answers in panic
I try to push through but I don't
have to with them
so I stop

we are laughing again easily
still encircled still their belly
is the best escape and the sun
streams over our skin that holds
shadows scars and memories
I tell them a better way to ask me
next time and they thank me

the cis boys
their legacy
still present

in how we have
to stop when one
of us sounds
too much like
the shadows
they left

If a trans man falls in the forest does anyone…

Sorry to be laying here
you probably wanted the
forest to yourself today
now here I am supinated
causing you to question
your understanding of gender

take the choking vines down and
lattice yourself
let your manhood
dig a moat around me
watch out you might get some
trans on you and then what
will the other guys say

give me a reason to get up
ask me how I wandered so far
from a home that would have me
feed me water from a canteen as if
I were anyone you'd find fallen
let everything seem normal because
it might be

my old gender fell in front of me
I never pushed her
I just said my name
and a tree burst through her chest
I hear others call her name
as I write her eulogies
and realize
she was never here

if a trans man falls in a forest
does anyone get his pronouns right

if a transman falls in the forest
will it ever make up for what
men have done to you

if a trans man falls in a forest
will he sprout a whole new way
of thinking

if a trans man falls in the forest

will anyone care

if a trans man falls in the forest
was it because
he was trying so hard
to get out of your way
to be small to be soft to be
supportive in silence and listening
that you forgot
he was there

Funeral for my tits

Another film boss dies of ALS
I think about the ballasts
the heavy magnets we sat next to
and how transformers have warnings
but we would hang round them on sets
in lift buckets for hours and years
and decades

the fluorescent lights are flickering in the
legion hall I ask my gaffer friend
when he can get that fixed for the shoot
we laugh but he becomes a repeated
figure my lighting disability imprints
each flicker until it's just body parts
and acid flashbacks

I go outside to avoid seizure
and descend into a gaggle of old buddies
I reintroduce myself tell them my new name
as they look for the tits instinctively
their faces sadden at the new view

"it's Cathy she cut her tits off they were big, remember?"
(crew name) says and they do they do they do remember
suddenly nothing is about Mike who died
I keep trying to hear more stories he always had
the best ones and for a while we laugh and forget
about my tits but then another grip or electric arrives
and I am introduced as Cathy who had Big Tits again

I wasn't expecting anything different
film is a circus and insular marked only by
a few workshops the guys laugh off
these are the people who stay who break their backs
for the shows you watch
who have heart attacks and run back to work
no one pays us to be ill and the show will go on
and the next body will fill your space to be broken

I don't flinch or correct or say my pronouns
I only want to be around these men
at ease on lifts and trucks and legions
who shower edibles out back of the funeral
and I tell the story of how a branch went up

Mike’s nose and I gave him a tampon to stop
the blood and he came to lunch that way
and Steve fills in the part that they hung the
branch in the office which also means truck

they are ruddier more bow legged and grey
I hear stories I have heard before and laugh
just as much and they each look at me worried
or disgusted or who knows what but they look
we’ve lost our friend our funniest story
but the stories will live on and the next electric
will climb into the next cherry picker with the next
Ballast that will give them ALS

the show must go on
my tits will live on
and a Mikey story will live on
so long as there are legions and trucks and
film crews who never sleep or get that thing
looked at or complain when the pain starts
and never ends or that first moment when
they notice they can feel their muscles
start to twitch in a new and different way

My surgeon

I

We used to haggle rooms and patients
when I was in charge of hospital beds
and he needed spots for his surgeries
our conversations shoving matches
my emergencies vs his electives

he greets so first-consult-warmly
I know he doesn't recognize me
I remind him who I am
greet him back like an old coworker
we catch up and relax our roles
the lockdowns so lonely for healthcare workers

he tells me how doing trans surgeries
has changed how he feels in his practices
our joy and relief a balm an endless win
we both get overcome at this
so happy for each other

this is not the man I met
I'm was never the woman he met
sharing such a profound joy
though we are whispering
because it still feels so much
like a secret

II

my bandmate comes with me to the next visit
we traded pronouns a while ago
and maybe we can share my surgeon

it feels so special to be indoors
for this consult 4 years in the making
because a pandemic cut in front of me
or 30 years in the making
had I known

III

before the gift of anaesthesia

my surgeon asks me what we are doing today
I say we are removing my breasts
so we can make them into one big breast
a cyclops breast and he agrees laughing
the mask comes on and I count down

Ten nine eight seydum sixsh fi… furr…

IV

when I see him next
it's back in his office
we are both so giddy
we did it we did it
on company time even

we look at his work
remove drains bandages
two feet of stitches
he tells shows me how
much skin there was to work with
gosh they were so big we marvel

when I first start scar care
I feel each entry and exist of his needle
each are so filled with such character
wonder at the thoughts behind each angle
I swear I feel them like hazy conversation
or deep collaboration

it's an intimacy
this changed man operating
on me an finally arrived man
bound by the joy
of not having to stay the same
when it's killing you

Harness life

There’s something about a leather strap
wrapped around my now smooth top
something about O rings in everything
about leather bars and upstairs rooms

leather leaks everywhere
coils around me whispering
I wear the skin of another animal
it’s been cured pounded stained

I put it on when no one is around
strut around the house
I think of horses and halters
and how they calmed when strapped up

when I have it on the noise of my brain
becomes stifled and I think this is how
they break horses how they stop instinct
how a tightened strap can be a hushed mouth

I start wearing it out of the house under shirts
going to leather bars with open mics
and the gay man who shunned me for
cutting off my breasts make a passes at me

I wear it to pride and get called faggot
before I’m even downtown three men
say they will cut my head off and I do up
another button on my shirt without breaking stride

every cell of my body feels finally at home
this flat chest these scars this leather smell
my porn searches change into leather boy dreams
how was I anything else how was I her for so long

I strap in
I strap on
I become a strapping
middle aged transmasc

I get called fag

The men who call me fag look lonely
sometimes I know they mean me
other times I think I just gave myself
too much credit in crossfire

I wonder
Is this “fucking faggot” for me
or is faggot just thrown around
like a forgotten bundle of twigs
from a once tall maple tree

faggot makes me think that I look right
it makes me think the top surgery
was so effective I’m now gay bashed
I thank them for getting my gender correct

the first time I’m called faggot I have
a new short haircut finally feeling me
now with new pronouns which I realize
have always been my pronouns

“Faggot” is flung from the window of
some divorced dad’s Hyundai and I smile
finally they have gotten my pronoun right
because I am this I am I am

after top surgery “Fag” feels different
I’m called this in summer months by
ropey white men in camouflage trucker hats
they loudly describe how they will kill me

after top surgery I dare to wear feminine accents
I want to look more gay because gay men are glorious
because women’s clothes make me look like a man now
the kind of man who gets harassed by alt-right fucks

I find it’s the full sweatpant and sweatshirt combo
that has me called “Homo” so I wear it more proudly
Homos are almost as gorgeous as Fags are in
this world of trolls behind wheels on subway platforms

men who try to forget how their best friend tasted
closeted sirens slapping out words
rolling down their windows to make sure we

know we are gorgeous fucking Fags

they want to fuck Trudeau but they don’t know how
they cum too quick in leather boy porn hub searches
to really see how to properly fuck a man like me
so they just try to ruin our days

Faggot is still a novelty for me but I feel how soon
I might receive it like a gay cis man
the beginning of an attack the reminder of how we
will never be accepted the echo of panic past and future

but for now it is gender euphoria
I grew up in the 80’s AIDS era so I know
Faggots are the strongest humans on earth
and you shouldn’t fucking mess with us

so call me Faggot you puny fuck you sad sack
of shitballs you scared little man
it’s easier to keep track of you babies
when you are crying out my name in public

What the river says

My crush sends me a video of the Klondike river
and I weep at the sound
the kind of tears that hurt when they come
a sudden rush to my face so engorged
they break blood vessels on the way

when I am next to the Klondike
I am so full of peace I worry I'll fall
that this riverbed will hold me in all
it's half buried rocks and charms
cradle me like a bottle with a message

here in my bungalow back home
with only the Don River cleaved into concrete
I ache for this wild friend too far away
Toronto has this energy that rarely leaves me
and there in that Yukon town I finally
learned I could relax without preparation

back home I live next door to someone
who was raided by the special forces only a month
before this Klondike residency started
this blonde and blue eyed family who votes
for the one with the most conspiracy theories
people who know I have transitioned
I closeted from them until the top surgery
you never know who lives next door

in Dawson City the Yukon meets the Klondike river
and they look like neapolitan ice cream for a while
one clear and young the other brown with silt
for a while they run parallel and at different speeds
their sound is a harmony of rushing of tandem
until they become one by the end of town

my street still remembers the raid
says they probably got the wrong person
they just want it to be over because they have
such a nice garden in front such a nice young man
and his mother so sweet she always says hello
I don't know which of us is the clear river

I didn't want to leave the Klondike or this town
where trans people flock to for the health care

and the many queer bosses with job offers
I reveal my terror to my crush tell them of flashbangs
and me thinking the war had begun or my house
was on fire and someone was shot in the living room
and 40 pairs of combat boots guns cocked screaming
and questions and never answers

but I return home regardless at some point my
crush rivers to my home and we become a weeping
and I'm too scared to have them here so close to next door
and I can't tell you any more about my neighbour
because I am trying so hard not to know
I have even forgotten his last name

but I can tell you this
when I hear the Klondike I fly away from here
rest in riverbed and sleep next to neighbours
who I have yet to fear

Scar Care 3

Can I tell about you shame
I feel for how raised my
top surgery scars still are?
how I look at them like
some sort of failure

they are still earthworms
disappearing into flat plains
as if my chest skin was
a clay to be absorbed into

I tell this to the gay masseuse
in the Gold Rush hotel room
he's heard it before
gay masseuses have heard
most things before

you'll never feel like
you're doing enough so
stop that he says and
pushes his fingers over them
not around and around like I
was told

There's still time he says
up to 2 years it will be movable
you're doing a good job

my transmasc lover
echos this shame we
aren't doing enough we
will never be enough
we are doing it wrong

we hand each other scar shame
to see it being held by someone
who knows how to make it
into a bouquet of
you made it to here
you're doing the best job you can

there is no failure when they hold mine
there is only celebration and how good
it feels in their mouth and how delicious

is it to be present in our bodies

the massage guy tells me this town
is the ideal he's always hoped
existed and I wonder why I'm
going back to a town that calls me
Faggot that has me woken up by
flash bangs next door
this story I have no ending for

Just be present I tell myself
giving spruce salve to my chest
your scars are so beautiful I say
to my lover's chest and somehow
this makes me feel better too

there is gold in this town
I have found it
and like a fool
I book a flight home

Pomegranate Basketball

I remember playing
pomegranate basketball
I would stand with my guy friends
and we'd spit them into toilets
at the catholic school

we didn't know which washroom
to do this in so I just made sure
the women's was empty
that I was fearless each time
someone walked in

which is to say I was likely feared
the teachers called me devil but
I was just a twelve year old kid
not even out it was the 80's and gay
meant AIDS meant dead

but they always see us first
how we cannot fit in how obvious
we all are in our non-understanding
of gender order of fashion
of removing ourselves to be left alone

but those gorgeous moments
spitting seeds into toilet bowls
with my best guy friends
who were also shunned to the point
of being unafraid

they were my escape
these flashes of maleness
spitting seeds into toilet bowls
worried the girls would kick us out
of their washroom

But how much testosterone

I'm starting testosterone
I say it's all about HRT menopause
but I couldn't wait for this
as an excuse to finally T

my nurse practitioner asks me
do I want to start low dose and I do
at some point we double it
she tells me T is a helluva drug

so I'm wondering dear reader
how much can I take before
I stop listening to women's opinions

how much until I refer to my femme partner
as my secretary

until I'm convinced
having emotions in public is gay

how much until I deny my own
homosexuality by bashing others

until I start saying
boys will be boys
until people say that
in reference to my
poor behaviour

until I deny my body pain
as something that holds me back

until I tie the value of my job
over the reality of my capacity

until I think America can be great again
and that Canada should be nicer

how long until I get a
Fuck Carny flag until I
still wanna Fuck Trudeau
but make it not gay

until i intrinsically believe everyone

will listen to me

until I think her body my choice

until I say swol about myself

until I think he had a promising future

until fart jokes are funny again - ok they always were

until I feel the weighted disappointments of my father
for a life I can never achieve in this economy

how long until I take that strain out on others

until I feel the queer community leave
because I’m just some old white guy now

how long until that loneliness forces me
to out myself just to stay in community

how long until I think I don’t need community

can I have the dose before that?

All the ways I am green

Green is a wallow
a something to slip into
it is bog life and new sprout
it is camouflage and stealth

I have wrapped myself in army gear
throughout my life as if war was coming
a way to hide curves to hide the
womanness of my body and
to make my eyes stand out more
than my gender ever could

now as my body becomes more male presenting
and get rugged for the years
I am as much “sir” as I am ‘Ma’am” d
in public

transitioning on social media
I realize my old jokes are coming
from the mouth of a white man now
so what I used to say in satire
becomes just some dude being a dick
I think about my audience in a new way
about how I cloaked myself in misogyny
to be one of the guys

I am finally perceived as a man in public
a short lived thrill
we are in such times
where me a white man in army gear
becomes “Fuck Trudeau” becomes
“chem-trails” and “convoy” and alt right
marching becomes the new KKK

I like aviator shades
they go with jackets
the masculine army brat vibe
I stop needing to flex so hard
because top surgery freed me
And sometime during
Last year’s endless sick
my face became chiseled

I wander into a Jamaican store downtown

in army green parka
In aviator shades in
all my whiteness chiseled and set jaw
I walk in quietly aware a woman hasn't seen
me yet

it's that awful moment when you know
you could surprise them
she screams when she sees me
it's not been so long since the last mass shooting
a white man opening fire on Black spaces

I stop loving army green in this moment where
I am this man now don't be this man now
I take the mirrors off my shades
wrap my military garb in effeminate
shiny scarf shawls get called
faggot as I multi-gender my exoskeleton

I aim for faggot over "fuck Trudeau"
over convoy flags over tiki torch alignment
over scaring a Black woman in her store
over being mistaken on social media for
the man I never wanted to meet in person

transition isn't just about me
it's about being the man who walks in compassion
whose message must be clarified
for the fear his body can bring

my favourite green becomes lime
becomes pastel teal or honeydew
green is new life green is growth
I grow beyond who I thought I was
each new leaf turned lets an old one go
it drifts to the ground eager to become
food for more growth

Didn’t we have a moment

Where it felt like revolution
Laverne Cox on the cover of Time
a symbol of more than just trans
femme strength but Black Trans Power

and in white rebuttal
Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of Vogue
her republican ignorance strong
proof trans isn’t a leftist thing

we spoke about intersectional feminism
expected others to grow with us
reminded everyone whose land this was
then we all moved inside for lockdowns

indoors is a fester
it’s a fast growing mold
random encounters dried up
nuance and grey areas gone
we moved from land to screen
watched bodies pile into meat trucks
and racism and blame grew
faster than any outbreak

eased restrictions
abandoned disabled people
and the rest were sprung loose
more zoo than recess
ever year hundreds of new laws
try to keep trans people indoors
out of view away from medical care
even online we are shadow-banned
our information only available
for those wishing to round us up

my life becomes more focused
writing words to seep through walls
find those kids behind steel doors
watching their doctors leave town
their pronouns becoming closed fists

if this poem has found you
may it be a light
find your moments to be free

know that you are normal
that leagues of us have always
lived like this closeted even to ourselves
but you have a key few of us did
use it for your freedom
as your escape drug of choice
you’re going to need it

we are meant to be leaders
meant to be free
you are a part of a history
so revolutionary
that they burn down our hospitals
our research and our history

survive this all
be a light in someone’s bunker
who else but trans people
can see from every side
how we got here
and what can become
if we just
lead with love

A short and cutting history of top surgery

a virus takes over my screen
when I look up the history of top surgery
it glows red and windows pop up
tell me I'm now infected
guess I'm safe from gender ideology?

the internet sells me a story it can live with
a famed white British doctor in the 1940's
performed it on another white British Doctor
but then I remember that German hospital
burned down by Hitler's regime that had
hundreds of years of history of trans treatments

every part of me feels this British story
is just a placeholder for all we've lost
a way to keep us from looking for more
to placate us with scraps
so that we stop excavating

we carry history in our bones
in scraps of knowledge in elder's shoulders
we are adrift to our own origins
this is why oral histories are necessary
you cannot burn a story

elder trans dudes are concealed
sometimes slipping away into passing
joining a history one can point to
so many of them lost to the AIDS crisis
to violence and illness and disinformation

so when I find that one older dude in my hometown
I send him a little message
who knows what stories he holds
his own is always enough

friends
he is so sweet and creative
perhaps he knows
when the first top surgery was

2.5 Years Post Op Top

Have you ever tried to move out
of a place you've lived in for
the past almost 40 years?
was it your body?

I still look down a thousand times
a day to much relief
it is still the pure joy of the first week
it is still joy

there's some part of me that cannot
accept the notion that anyone would
detransition

when a friend does this I find myself
removing them from my life
like a whisper of it might be catching
like this could all go away because
there are people I love deeply who
prefer who I tried to be

later my friend re-transitions
I feel such immense relief
it's too much to feel the propaganda
has elements of truth
only 1% of us return to our old genders
and this is generally for safety

propaganda can be a real silencer
but my joy is so loud
each time I look down and see the man
I always expected to see
feed him t-shirts and
non bursting button downs

I am out to bring light into closets
embrace my scars that aren't going away
I start wearing femme tops
because I look like a man in them
I get called faggot and it makes me happy
I know this is a trans guy thing
and I'm not helping gay men feeling this way
but I lean into the term
as it becomes my experience of life

we have all been in this closet together
ever since colonization ever since
the land was stolen and rebranded
ever since we were scurried away from sight
and Nazis blew up our research hospital
and our data is trashed after the 2025 US election

in two days there will be a trans march
I remember it when it was just a few hundred
now we march in thousands
it's still a quiet event as there are no crowds cheering
just stragglers on Yonge street wondering
what the fuck is going on and a few people cheering

I never know what to do when they cheer
I try to steer the crowd into the chick 'o fil instead
"c'mon" I yell at our march "we can take it over"
but we all just want to be home safe later
so no one answers my rallying cry
besides I don't want anyone harmed or to
lose their fast food jobs

I don't plan my outfit
but I plan how to cover it up
we may be in the thousands
but I am almost always alone
joyfully looking down at a body
I finally recognize
as my own

I see you missing them

a telling dip to your head
a thick nostalgic smile
your eyes full of eulogies
for my breasts
that once were

I know I know I know
even I used to thirst over them
and think them perfect
until I'd realize
they were mine

somewhere my tits
are a fucked bath pillow
somewhere they are recalled
boisterous and light or heavy
and bouncing

I cannot control who holds
my big party breasts in mind
what happens to our connection
when there's only my eyes to look at

sometimes surgeries
remove whole people from your life
and others surprise you
by saying they finally
see you

Yesterday I didn’t start Testosterone

My outfit was perfect
black skinny jeans
black tanktop and belt
an 18 wheeler belt buckle
and a self done haircut

I was plotting my celebration
a joint to make the world more handsome
a plan to hit the queer bookstore for a drink
or maybe stop in to see my coworkers
when we get our healthcare
it is proof of hope

but my bloodwork reminded us
of my autoimmune condition
I will get a bag of iron infused instead
a specialist appointment and more tests
I am thankful enough trans health care
has happened that they would catch
the danger to my blood disorder

I smoke the joint to assuage my sadness
wander to the bookstore which is closed
and for lease
settle for a little patio but I don’t
want anyone to see me but I also
want someone to find me

someone who knows
what it’s like to wait
a lifetime to become themselves
forever getting early interventions late
no mentors who aren’t in the same boat
we are such lonely dudes

quelling our anger
because we know
the fear unhinged men bring
I have learned to cry on the subway
behind anti-seizure glasses
it makes me feel more manly
than testosterone ever could

TransSex in the City

Six months into testosterone
has me living puberty at fifty
finally the gay bi pan guy I've always
been conditioned to suppress

seems he's too old to the party though
too behind in hormones for acceptance
there's a designated area around me
called trans bi guy in hard fought spaces

no one approaches at the leather bar
the steam rooms tell me my night is only
every third Wednesday of the month
and the sex club I end up at is sapphic or straight

I am moving into my unfuckable years
my special-night only-once-a-month gender
my feelings are not so attached to any of this
because my mind is dick dick dick dick dick dick dick

the sex club brings another's smile to my side
a seemingly straight dude who asks my pronouns
we watch a Dom situation together and I let him know
I can do something for him if he wants

we drift away and meet again later and later into the night
dick dick dick dick dick has become my pulse
finally I let him know I have a vagina and we go upstairs
I might have reattached my breasts for dick at this point

he says "so you were born a woman"
and I just say "yes" and hope the ancestors don't hear
"so you're a lady" he says and I agree because
dick dick dick dick dick

we dick dick dick dick dick dick dick
his hands wrap around my neck squeezing as he cums
he asks if I'm ok and I hold a thumbs up sign
gives me the ravest of reviews though he doesn't touch me after

it is the cost of dick dick dick dick dick
this isn't a gender convention it's pure testosterone hunger
he tells me his athletic profession so quietly
I stop myself from singing the Heated Rivalry soundtrack

a trans girl once told me
don’t let your genetilia get in the way of fucking
while this is a closetry I know my way out
I have been doing this most of my life

and I remember that trans guy
who only dates men
and how his face looked
when he spoke of betraying transness for sex

there was no sadness in his expression
just that futile and amused look of loving men
who may briefly think of killing you
for the secrets you eagerly swallow

My Chest

My chest likes hugs
likes to feel the flatness now
mounds no longer a difficult conversation
or something collectively ignored
and bound down

every day is great shirt day
buttons that no longer need
safety pins to keep them together
I mourn T shirts past
for they were wasted on my
former chest

my chest can open up that jar
it can fix the door handle
use the right glue for the right medium
and be considered
to have the answers
on any given topic

my chest becomes a billboard
asks that we protect non-binary
trans and 2 spirit youth
people ask why the youth
and it’s because they expect more
than my chest ever could

my chest wanted puberty blockers
but didn’t know the words to ask
it also didn’t know
it’s normal for trans guys
to feel this way

my chest is waiting for more sun
for more eyes to see it
it doesn’t miss its nipples
or want to appear normal
my chest is perfect in it’s transness

I am forever a body of work

Steamtrans

It’s tranny night at the steam works
I know because one is loudly
listing their diagnoses in front of my locker
I am decidedly alone to miss
these types of conversations

I get nodded away from most gay men
I offer what I can and am up front with
my transness and the men are grateful
this is their hard fought space
they deserve such an etiquette

a little engineering cutie cruises me
we find a dark corner and go down
on each other while a crowd forms
another man joins and I am
spit-roasted like dreams come true

I shower and think about leaving
but after a joint with the engineer
I am renewed and wander back in
a man waits while I change and grabs me
I’m distracted and he hesitates out the door

later I’m in the hot tub and I spot him
pull him with my eyes and he wades over
his erection throbs in my mouth and he’s
wanting a slow worshipful suck
we go into the sauna and give a show

when he cums he literally runs out
I find it amusing but also recognize
I may have been his first trans dude
I breathe victoriously satiated
as men side-eye my cum splattered chest

after a shower I find another man
he has a room and we go inside
our sex feels so straight and he keeps
telling me he’s only been with one other
trans guy and asks if I’m liking it

I think if I knew him a bit better
I would say it feels like a peanut butter sandwich

without any peanuts or butter
we stop and thank each other nicely

this was my first real feed
I’ve been starving for this
most of my life
an array of dicks
a loss of words
to be desirous
without charm
without my old body
without gender

Do I pass?

after all has fallen out
been given discharge
excavated cuttaged and sluiced
I'm left with some bones
a few yards of skin
some muscles
and fat everywhere
but the upper part
of my chest

I'm as surprised by menopause
as I was to have a monthly period
which oddly is to say a lot
like whose is this hot flash
like of course I'm not bleeding
why would I ever have menstruated
my body erasing memories of
female framed things even before
finding my gender

now I get to notice little bits
like how my chest is 5 degrees cooler
than any other part of me
you can lay your hands over
and under the scar
and feel the temperature drop

like the little hairs on my belly
show which side I prefer injecting
like maybe there's bottom growth
thank goodness for online groups
now sold off by meta of course

but for a second trans men are all here
loving each other up
talking scar care
and how we lose community
the more we pass

when we convene we don't talk about our haters
we brag about what's good in our lives
how we've learned to adapt and care for ourselves
how some of knit and have babies and hope
we show each other beard growth and talk about

how to care for our testosterone oily skin
or not disappear when healthcare becomes criminal

do I pass they ask
I get called a girl what more can I do
do I look like a dude enough
how can I do more
do I pass
any guys out here in Big Tuna
in Bristol in Red Deer in…
be nice to hang with y'all

I've heard us described as
small men with kind eyes
and I hope that's always
the way I look

do I pass as a trans man
do I pass as a bi man
as a non binary best friend
as someone a woman would
feel comfortable around
do I pass as being a part
of a queer community
how many more piercings
until no one
thinks I'm straight

Bath House Hot Tub Talk

I get into the hot tub all wrong
I am scattered
looking for another hot tub
one where I'd look
more like a man in maybe

I get in quick and scoot to the side
(do men even scoot?)
talk to two guys who smile at me
tell them i'm trans
they start to bark this out
saying my movement
made me look like a woman

perhaps they feel gender compelled
to tell me about their relationships
with mommy
asks me if I was
I was an innocent child before
I became this thing

I say oh cool I was hoping
to talk about my childhood
at the bathhouse today
and the man next to me smiles
and winks

this wink follows me from room to room
finds me in the dungeon
I kiss him tongue first
soon we are sucking and fingering
and rubbing and licking
and men move around us
pulling and fucking around
the various apparati

it is so animalistic in here
I finally feel normal again
he winks as I gag
as I try to fuck his huge cock
as I climb into the sex swing
winks as I pull another man in
winks and winks and precums
onto my belly

when I fuck I become a thing
a series of sense and smells
my mind open in a way
it feels inhabited by
some ancient fucking being
some kind of fuck grub

sometimes I think I should
maybe go back to therapy
but then a dick comes into view
and the ache is filled

“Bananananananana nanananananana Batman”

at 14 there was nothing cooler
than going to the headshops downtown
and getting a t shirt
and yes I get how that’s not cool anymore

I got the batman one and though what a funny
thing it would be to rip open my pearl button
plaid shirt to reveal it after building up the lead
music “dananananan da nanananan… BATMAN”

I ran up to my best friend since grade 1
this boy who ran other boys who
already had turned some friends into a gang
but we were always still kids together

so I go up to him do the theme song tear
open my flannel shirt and shout “Batman”
but all anyone looks at are my breasts

there they were already needing more bra probably
full under the batman logo and my friend
his eyes went so wide and he looked at me
like I was a girl for the first time since grade 1

this was the end for me
the end of my boys who were friends being my friends
as most of them asked me out and I said no
as I didn’t understand why anything had to change

I said goodbye to the boy I was
these breasts ruined everything
I told the boy in me to stop growing up
I needed to leave him behind

like how my parents started to hide
my grandfather’s tools I would take out to name
carry around C-clamps to the playground
we all just didn’t know who I was I don’t blame
anyone for trying to make sure I wasn’t beat up
for something tangible even to them

when I came out as trans
I called back to the little boy I was
I was so worried he was mad

I left him decades ago though I missed him
like a limb
but when I told my family then social media who I was
he was right there
he's always been right there
he never left me no matter what I did to
try to be a girl a woman a balm

I am the bat man
I am the man
I am a trans man

I gave my disguises to my trans girlfriends
closed my bat cave of solitude
my tragic back story had new answers
there are so many answers when one comes out

and maybe I have to avoid this friend now
because the gang went so deep
and I see him on 4chan still looking for family
like so many lost boys do

what I don't have to avoid now
is my chest
is the boy inside of me
is my mind having to cope
is these thoughts that I was a little boy once
who had little boy friends until we all grew up
and had to act some other way
because one day I opened my shirt
and my breasts go in the way
for the next 30 years

I swallow I swallow

He namelessly cracks open my hips
I pull another into my mouth
I have too many limbs
for all this larvae urgency

all I need are joints now
no bones all socket
no break all green stick
and yes the ones that I light

breathe in the clouds
to lessen this pile of bodies
this clamour of genitilia
this steamed heat roils down walls

it is a lot to disappear
to become smaller even at home
to squirrel the flags away
stuff protest pins in my mouth

even at the bathhouse I keep quiet
it is a part of house rules
we whisper our moans
clap hands over spilling lips

what if I ingested this rag
I've put in my own mouth
let it scream through my insides
swallowed words patterning cloth

this world seems a muffling
a regulation of rallying cries
a school bully's playground
an occasion to swallow endlessly

My voice cracks the world open

My voice cracks
at my local convenience store
and the world becomes
more dangerous

it was so low
unmistakeable trans man low
that rasp we have
a low I could not crack back from
a no-going-back-now low

can I say I felt cornered
like I had to get out of that store
like what was I thinking
to be further out
in a Clavicular world

it is what I want
the T voice to me is
a top down convertible
a swooning short hair flip
an axe splitting wood
in a single swing

but this world can be louder
than the music in my body
fears for my safety drown out
the joy I thought I'd feel
becomes a deep vertigo
a thrill spinning inside a falling plane

I leave with my purchases swiftly
try my voice again and it's normal
and sure it scares me
but I cannot wait for it to crack again
because we all should get a chance
to live before we die

a tiny poem for wispy hair

I inject testosterone into my belly
so this is where the wisps show first
a treasure trail of soft black grasses
descending under belly button

there's a shadow over my lips
the next patch of early puberty
there's a 12 year old somewhere
with a better beard but this one's mine

the hair is there if you hover and skim your finger
if you look really hard if you believe
there's more to shave each month
at jawline at neck and next to lips

it's not embarrassing to have pimples
or go through the correct puberty at 50
it's preventable
just listen to our doctors

it should not take a lifetime to become
take going through the wrong puberty
and a six hour surgery to correct what
we already have medication to prevent

media publishes false surveys to keep us evil
a country's president claims we can
have corrective surgeries at school
and the FBI puts us on lists

it's too late to push us back into closets
or for youth to forget how normal it is to be trans
dragged into the sunlight we see it all so clearly
how puberty blockers can prevent death

prevent surgery
depression
anxiety
and self harm

I never want another trans kid to grow up like me
a legacy of burned hospitals and research
meant to keep us some embarrassing secret
because of how deeply we could lead

they use this fear to take away body autonomy
and ours is so freely offered up
that people don’t notice
they gave away their rights too

and yes maybe you can’t see my moustache yet
but these wispy little hairs
are rooted in the hopes of all my ancestors
those who hid away and in clear sight

and we are all watching you
trying to steal the dreams of our youth
what a joy it is for all of us
to watch a child grow up with all they need

so they don’t have to have surgery at 50
so they can have puberty at puberty
so they can be who they are first
before life tells them who they should b