DOUBLE TAKE



The Poetry and Art

of

Nonbinary Voices

a Zine by Haze Fry

Art, Design, and Poetry by Haze



As a gender queer person, I believe that nonbinary / trans voices and experiences deserve to be amplified. We urgently need more representation. Therefore, I created this zine that consists of quotes from interviews I conducted with NB individuals, my drawings of them, and poems I have written that reflect my trans identity. The goal of this project is to educate people about the nonbinary experience, and to promote advocacy for trans rights.

My little girl worried home was her uterus.

She was green with lilac fairy dust
on chapped lips,
and sensitive moons tangled in her curls
like spider eggs.
Her way of talking like a wise cat,
words like whiskers and chipped molars
scared the playground
until jump ropes were corpses in sand.
She ate the earth and was teased for it.
She teased the girls back,
the girls who wouldn't swallow dirt.
My little girl let eucalyptus bloom in her stomach.

My little boy knew home was his brain. But nobody noticed him.

I am finally in the fog amongst extinct creatures. Frolicking with mammoths and drinking sparkling condensation from their hooves. Wiping tears off the beaks of weeping dodos, and smoking lavender as we reminisce on our memories of pre-extincion. The eucalyptus from years ago grew tall and sturdy, proudly looming above metaphors about the sky Beyond the limit, beyond the uterus. My roots have swollen out of the soil, for they were claustrophobic, and now they spiral around heavy clouds. I am vines hurling rain from my grey tips, and my little girl knows home is nothing below her neck. My little boy was noticed. I am home where I have germinated.

Germination

Riley, age 31



"I'd realized that I'd been experimenting with femme expression already, but I'd never considered that I was gender queer to that extent, rather just a man messing around. Then immediately, I started unlocking all these trauma doors from my past, noticing how many moments in my life prevented me from finding myself at an earlier time; my father hiding my favorite femme clothing items from me; my childhood exfriends consistently using homophobic language; my boy friends calling me a f**"

"I struggle constantly when I am in femme, as I literally perceive and feel transphobic microaggressions from those around me. A prime example is when I'm at the grocery store, and I'll see this Gen X/Millennial parent give me this judgmental look, followed by their commanding words to their kids, "come here sweetie, be safe, stay by my side." I hear that phrase so often and I think to myself, what are you so afraid of?"

"One thing that annoys me is how we're just labeled as having a disorder, and that's why we're in this situation.

Although I continue to combat mental health issues I've had all my life, I find my peace with my identity to be more liberating, healed from traumas I could previously not solve!"

When I dress in femme and look in the mirror, there are moments where I hear these negative voices in my head, telling me the same hurtful things that I read bigots comment on social media. Then time passes and I look at a photo of myself from a specific day and I say, "Omg that pic is actually rlly cute."

My diary told me to write to you.

She knows about everything, says we need to make amends. I search my house like a rat for blood stains and scabs freckling the wood floors, and I remember that I don't miss you like that.

But I miss you like this - need you like this.

I need you like a serpent around my neck reminding me that it's too early to die.

Reminding us that we need to touch each other and ourselves

in this mirror smudged with flesh, black eyeshadow whispers and teardrops that crusted into smiles.

I love you like I love the pigeons eating crumbs of unknown things off the sidewalk, me,

waiting for them to die. Hushed, poisoned, choked.

But I feel your skin around my bones and the way your earrings clank like broken church bells summoning the devil.

You are a form of pretty they could only find nuzzled in the craters of the moon.

You write me poems, and I write you back – but no one sees them but me.

We tickle the bathwater until we love ourselves, until we bloom like the lone flower in winter, a carcass that breathes. I really do love you,
but I can't tell you yet - haven't
for years, and I'm sorry.
Maybe I am a hopeless romantic with glassy eyes
and cheeks so red they could be sipped like wine.
I want only to adore someone
that I may never see again.
Maybe this is why I refuse to love someone
bruised by their own hands,
and hugged only conditionally when the reflection looks right.

But you, you travel to fairy gardens when you sleep and you never leave.

I love how your nose wrinkles in squiggly lines like a witch's handwriting when you smirk.

How the fog brings you to life and you sway in the rain with bugs dancing on your arms and worms weaving around your toes.

You spend hours listening to the ants and to humans, holding them in your loving nods, telling them you're here and you won't leave.

I know you could kill me but you don't.

So I love you.

And I love you for splatting my brain on paper and letting the world decode it.

Emilie, age 18



Labeling my identity has been much more of an arduous process. For one, I did not know that being transgender was even a possibility until high school. I didn't meet an out non-binary person until I was fourteen. I think that if I had access to the terminology I would have identified as non-binary when I was much younger, but since I was sorely missing that representation in my life, it took me until the age of eighteen to fully discover myself.

"I would describe my style as maximalist and eclectic.

For a while, I felt trapped into presenting more masculine in order to justify my queerness. But recently, I've just started to wear what I like (dangling earrings, bright colors, sweaters, pants) and I couldn't care less whether I'm perceived as more feminine or masculine.

It's liberating."

"For a long time I confused beauty standard related self-hatred with dysphoria. I remember hating the way my body changed during puberty, but I thought that all younger teens must feel this way. I also remember being jealous of the boys in my class for their voices dropping and their facial hair, but I didn't think much of this jealousy at the time. My entire life has been sprinkled with moments of dysphoria. More so, recently, after I've come to terms with my identity. Every time I am misgendered in public, I have a little moment of wrongness inside myself."

"I love the freedom I feel to move throughout society.

I happily roam between the men's and women's clothes section at department stores. I love spending time with my friends who are girls and equally marvel at the times when boys dap me up in the halls or try to discuss sports or video games with me."

Aggravated by some sort of storm she pulses, not woman nor sand.

I can't tell, these days, what woman looks like or what her soft, seagrass stomach should feel like in my palm moving between the lines that tell me when I'll die

I mean, dictating my life. I shouldn't ask these questions.

What is a woman if not fluid that drips through our fingers and finds its way back under the waves, gazing up, sea glass eyes, at mother planet? Who will touch me again? Who decides what body I will have now. And in what hands.

Who is a woman if not malleable?
This feels nice –
Imagine, pale turquoise aquarium silk that never struggles or fights or snags on jagged fingernails.
This is woman.

No,

is this living? Is this
a mammal's biography – or the unborn eggs
of a polluted grandmother shark,
neck tied in plastic,
or is this a shell abandoned on the beach?
Is this the right kind of solidity?

If Not Ocean

I was a victim of the amygdala, tongue outstretched to catch cyanide like raindrops, my eyes spiraling compasses searching for the North Star.

I think this is how poetry first kidnapped me.

My tearful brain grew tight blonde curls in a mohawk formation, more puffy hair blooming each time I babbled a story.

I would call mama into my bedroom at 3 am, my blinking baby body cocooned in a closet, and tell her to transcribe my words on post it notes until her vision went blank and the only sense in the universe was the sound of my bossy voice shaping each law into a stanza,

Queerness was always a taste in the back of my throat.

Not dry and stale like the word "girl,"
but glistening like a faerie's handwriting
inscribed in my tastebuds,
sweet and colorful.

And to learn how to walk on my tippy toes
with pretty girls' voices tickling my ears
was how I knew that only writing
could describe this feeling.

I was a jewish kid in a backwards baseball cap,
loving the meaning of every word,
yet never knowing which word meant tranquility;
acceptance of my growing body.

and each government into illegible poetry.

Happiness soon faded to blood stained parchment, cluttered metaphors with no meaning besides the distraction from voices picking at my ribcage and my brain being rapidly devoured by red ants.

But here we are now gagging on the poison of poetry and loving each and every flavor, even the metallic aftertaste.

dylan, age 56



"I never gave up - even though there were many times I wanted to or could have. That despite all the challenges and obstacles - I am not hard - my heart can still love and be broken.

I am still open.

Euphoria? With every breath.

In and out - and repeat
I am so grateful to be alive."

"I didn't have a problem with my queerness or with women loving women - I really didn't. Then came the epiphany — I don't identity with being a woman!! It was like wearing a sweater that was way too many times too small - and on top of that it was wool - and I was allergic to wool. So freakin uncomfortable!!! I was like," so now what?" - I knew I didn't identify as a woman or a lesbian - but I also didn't identify wholeheartedly as a man - so again I was faced with the question - "who am I?" or "what am I?"

These are questions I continue to face while in a constant state of becoming. I have often found language and identity to be liberating - quickly followed by limiting - and just like the shampoo bottle says - "rinse and repeat."



"The stereotype that often hurts the most is that we are "liars who cannot make up our minds" or "pick one or the other already". The problem with these ideas or expectations is that we are being asked to choose one part of ourselves and deny the other part. This is an unrealistic expectation to place on each other and more importantly on ourselves.

We are being asked to live a lie and then we are judged for it when we try to eventually break free and become tired of trying to make ourselves more comfortable for society, than with ourselves."

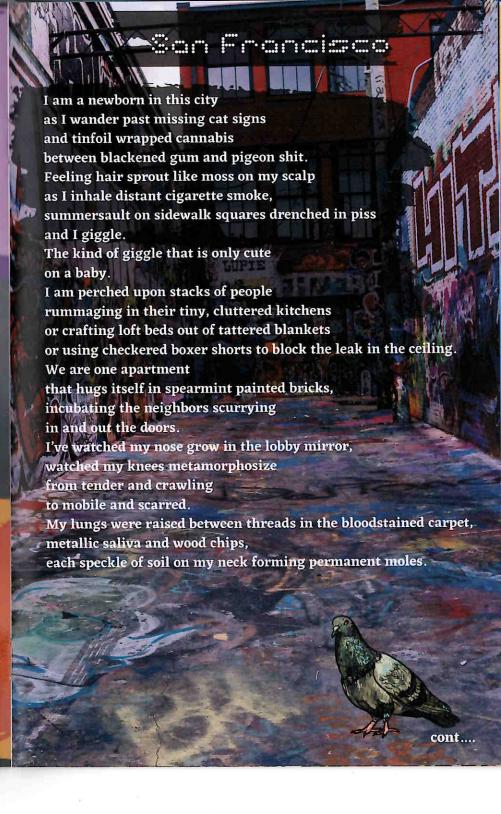
"Bathrooms - growing up they were a main source of trauma. When I had to use the women's room there were times I was hit over the head with an umbrella/purse, sometimes the bathroom was cleared out and security would come in and knock on my stall asking me what I was doing in there, one time an owner of a restaurant called the police and I was held in the back of a police car - needless to say I avoided going to the bathroom and had many physical problems as a result of "holding it" too much."

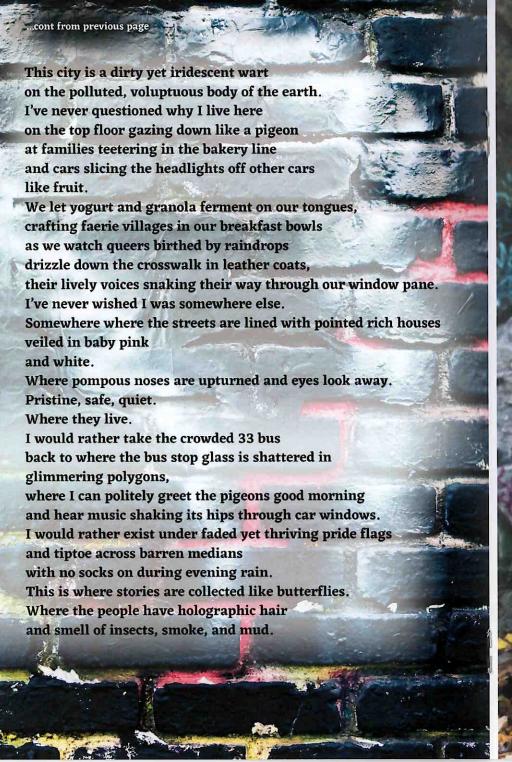
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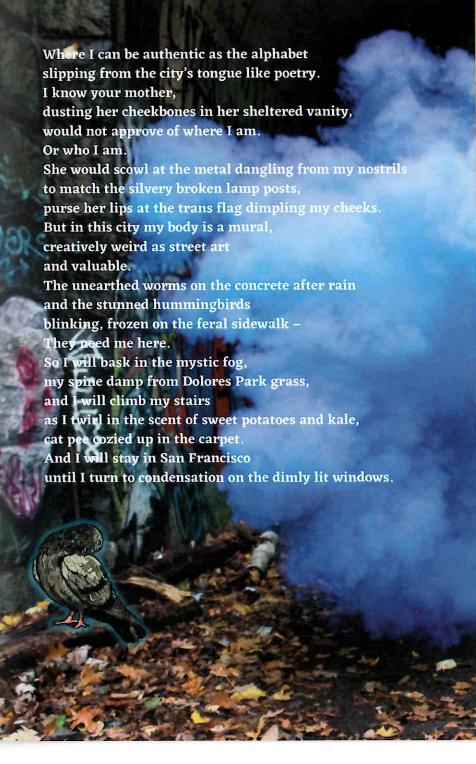
"Whenever I give into pressures to be anything other than myself my mental health heads towards crisis. Creating and maintaining a variety of pathways to becoming my most authentic self has truly been the main thing that has maintained my acceptance of self, my pursuit of what I identify as contentment, and a level of stability for my mental health and well-being. Without these pathways I am lost."

"In hindsight I feel dysphoria for me was more about guilt and taking responsibility for confusing other people - that I was failing at trying to fit into boxes that weren't big enough to accommodate my identity.

As I have come to understand and accept my whole self, dysphoria happens less for me - and happens more for those people that can only see me through their limited lenses."







LEENA, AGE 32



"What feels most important to me about sharing my nonbinary identity is for other people to feel inspired to rethink what gender is to them, based on seeing me try every day to be generous and fluid with my own gender and understanding of self. I hope for people to know there is no "one way" to be nonbinary, or to look nonbinary, and that being non binary is not a "third gender" or an "in between" gender, but something more expansive, indefinable, limitless, and ever-changing."

"It's so exciting to me to see how much more representation and acceptance there is for younger generations regarding gender, and it inspires me to continue to analyze, play, and grow my own understanding of my gender as a non binary/trans person in my 30s. I feel grateful to never feel static. It pushes me to be the person I want to be each day."

"Experimenting with clothing and finding clothes that give me gender euphoria is occasionally frustrating, but it is also so fun. Showing off your personality and sense of self through clothing feels sly, sweet, and powerful. I surprise myself each time I try a new way of presentation, or thrift a new piece of clothing that really excites me."

"I've heard negative stereotypes that a nonbinary identity is "fake", and that people who identify as such are looking for attention or wanting to feel special. It's unfortunate people feel this way. I have been aware, on some level, that I did not identify as a woman or man, a girl or a boy, since I was a very small child. I wasn't given words or opportunities to really express this or understand it until much later in my life. "

"My experience of gender has been freeing and healing for my mental health.

It's a part of me that feels most like "me", something I don't have to doubt or overthink, because I know I'm in process and that I am fluid."

"I love being a shapeshifter, a sprite, and a jester. I love being free to be one way one day and another way another day. I love to disrupt expectations of existing ideas of masculinity and femininity. I love to play with masculinity and femininity, both in their traditional senses and in new experimental ways! I love to write and talk about being non binary with my friends and understand how their experience is similar and different to my own."

have we changed?

They used to be like you, back when their brushed onyx curls were strangled into a ponytail, and their lips were drenched in nightgown colored gloss.

They had braces that cut their gums so when they smiled you laughed at the blood on their teeth.

This was when the teachers called them "her" and you did too, during sleepovers where you'd criticize your reflections together and moan about beautiful girlhood.

Back when you told them that they should wear thongs more often, that they should dress themselves in money rather than borrowed sweaters freckled with sprite stains and dark, faded blood.

Told them that they weren't thin enough.

They listened to you
until their belly flinched each time they moved,
and their thighs felt like beached whales
missing the way drowning felt.
Your hissing words teased their eardrums
cut them deeper than the metal on their tender gums,
and you told them this was friendship.

Maybe when you kissed them
you felt like more of a girl than you ever had.
You could taste the estrogen in your saliva
and all they wanted
was to taste it too.
But their queerness tangled the chords in your throat,
painted you colors you loathed to see in the mirror
so you chipped yourself raw
and you sliced them down to bone marrow.

If you ask them
what they say about you now,
the answer will desaturate you,
rip the confidence from your tongue.
Their womanhood was swept away by a kind October wind,
and now they drape themselves in their art,
a human dressed in the attire of a raven
black and protective so you will not find them
under the facade of your thin shadow.

When you see them again you'll say:
"You've changed"
and with their gray eyes they'll respond:
"You haven't"



Moxie, age 17



"A LOT OF PEOPLE ASSUME NONBINARY PEOPLE ALL IDENTIFY AS SOME THIRD GENDER
WHEN IN REALITY THERE IS VARIETY IN EVERY PERSON'S PERCEPTION OF THEMSELF. MY
VERSION OF "NONBINARY" IDENTITY IS THAT NONBINARY IS AN ADJECTIVE THAT
OBJECTIVELY DESCRIBES ME AS NOT FITTING IN WITH "MAN" OR "WOMAN", BUT IS NOT A
LABEL I IDENTIFY WITH. AS "NONBINARY" BEGINS TO BE A LABEL FORCED INTO ME, RATHER
THAN A DESCRIPTION FOR A REJECTION OF THE DIVISION AND AESTHETICS OF GENDER, I DRIFT
AWAY FROM IT AS A LABEL. BINARY AND NON BINARY SEEM LIKE THE NEW BINARY AND IT
MAKES ME WANNA SWEAR LIKE A SAILOR."

TI STRUGGLE WITH FEELING LIKE I NEED TO CORRECT PEOPLE WHO MISGENDER ME CAUSE IT WE'RE CRINGE FOR DOING ANYTHING TO ADVOCATE FOR OURSELVES.)

"Some Stereotypes I've heard about nonbinary people are that any afab's are just women with internalized sexism and that we're all young people following a trend. I'd say not wanting to be defined by womanhood isn't anti-woman, it's just about defining oneself by who they are as an individual, and the binary of gender hurts women more than any trans or nonbinary individuals do, exploring the ins and outs of my gender identity helps me feel more connected to my feminine sides than I ever did blindly following the womanhood I was raised to accept for myself."

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"MY DYSPHORIA MOSTLY COMES FROM LEGGINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL NAUSEOUS."

LEGS, BUT MAYBE THAT'S JUST A TRAUMATIC FLASH MAKES ME FEEL NAUSEOUS."

I am sitting at my kitchen table as I hold out my tethered palm to whomever is watching, unveiling my throbbing stomach and unused uterus like an uneaten dinner on a prince's plate.

There is blood sneaking through the cracks in my fingertips, drooling from the crevices in my open organs, and I can't decide whether everything is edible now or if everything is poisonous.

Polygon

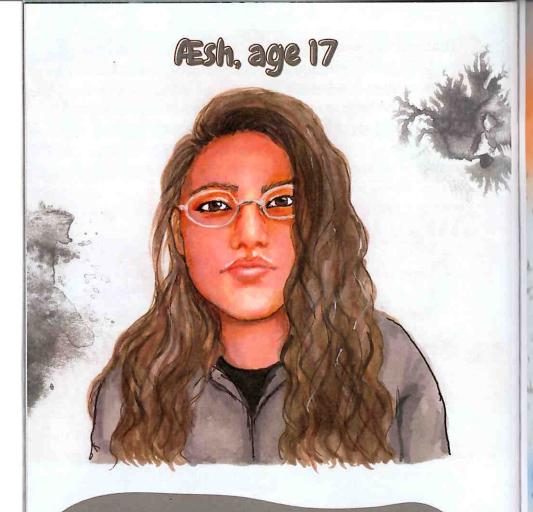
Being awake is just another task, Melancholic like the moon impaled by flags and competition. I am licking the scabs off my chest for breakfast, chewing my esophagus into jam, gazing out the kitchen window and pondering the difference between the two dimensional rainy world outside and my three dimensional body -If we exist symbiotically or if I am parasitic on this man-made soil, with millipede legs and mollusk features. A woman on man-made earth, a woman meant to be a boy or whatever these politicians and angry family members will allow me to be inbetween. The day is now rocking like a toy on its axis and I am still at the kitchen table. The window glass is scaly and serpent-like, dimmed

by the embarrassed sun shyly ducking behind storm clouds.

and they have crawled their way back into place still chewed and bleeding from my teeth's abuse.

I have digested my organs by now,

What will this world allow me to be Can I tell them that I am simply a polygon trapped between curves and edges or must I reshape myself until I fit into a circle or square? I am melting away and forgetting which conversation I belong to, unsure of whether or not there are people in my kitchen or the ticking sound of my thoughts berating me from the outside.



"As a person of color I feel alienated at times within the nonbinary and trans community, I have a vastly different background on identity. Nonbinary individuals on social media, many of them white, have a greater voice and sometimes sadly they're the only exposure to nonbinary identities that cisgender people have."

"I like to think that my identity and my selfexpression are two completely separate things,
one I can control day to day and the other is a
ball of confusion that I sometimes get a
glimpse into and I'm happy with that. I dress
comfortably and I'm a difficult size so if
something fits and I like it, I'm glad the fact
that it's from the men's section or women's
section or it's Unisex, I don't really care."

"I've seen many people stereotype nonbinary people through a white lens and experience. Do all non-binary people like frogs? Do all non-binary people look androgynous? Are all nonbinary people skinny, white, and AFAB?"

"I'm not out to my family, they don't know I'm queer or nonbinary they know something is off but they don't ask and that's good enough for me. But it's still sad that I don't get to be myself fully when I'm at home. It gives me extra anxiety so I try to avoid talking about myself because I can't express my thoughts fully - I fear I'll slip up one day and something might go wrong."

"I do experience the yearn for a different body-most days I can go without thinking about my body. I forget I have one! But then it hits me sometimes like, "do I really want to go on T? Nah too complicated". Sometimes I get the random: "yeah I can live with my body". But the thing that I do want one day is top surgery. I live with the hope that one day I can finally wear a tank top and not feel weird about it, or I can go to the beach and go for a swim carefree, one day I'll be able to dress in a tight shirt without the need to layer 10 things."

UPSIDE DOWN GLOBE

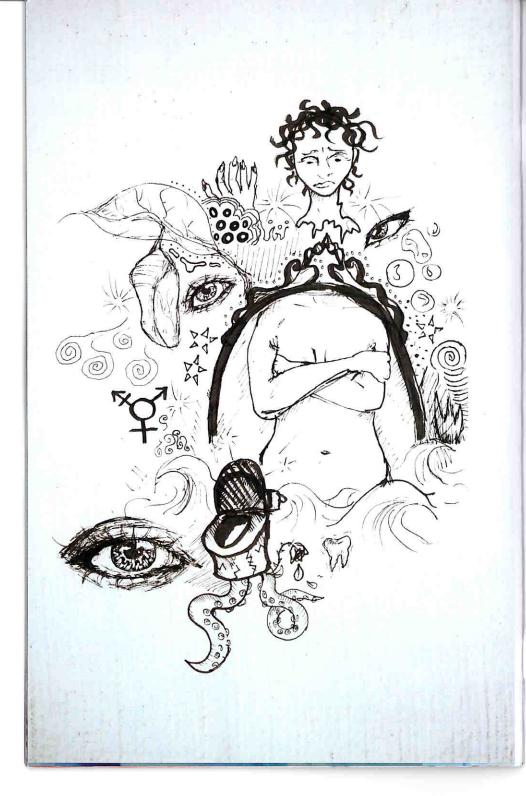
I yearn to find a place to undress in the soil, looking still, pacing until I am reborn uncomfortably in the eyes of the moon, hiding away behind the city lights and robotic buildings. I am from the spark that feasts on the gap forming between my mind and my body. Someone you do not recognize yet can see in jumbled pixels. I know that you've wandered among the static confusion in my eyes, exchanged me for my girlish baby cheeks. Mistaken me for a tadpole whose frog legs have yet to develop, the adhesive feet that stick only to the weatherbeaten mannequin you see me as. I am untethered still as they choke on the fantasy of what I wish to be named. I lose you under the plastic doll clothes you bind me in. I beg the rainstorm to free me from what I should do to hurt myself, breasts torn like paper, pulsing for help. This is not my body telling you to clean the blood off my exposed organs, wipe up the saliva in my translucent eyes. But there is no solitude in this panic, the way you're soaping my scarred skin in rosy girlhood, so soft that it hurts to touch. I catch a glimpse of you, busy training your vocal chords to speak over me, busy being the reflection of God whose womb still bleeds, afraid that I am the straggling piece of the umbilical cord, a test to the humanity you watched run out of love, like recycled air, signatures on century old paper, or ancient fables of the woman I once was, not the human body I have sheltered in. You're

examining my fossilized skeleton instead of my brain, missing the slants and angles of me, missing the way my hands bend your ignorance into poetry, finding the fun in the shovels you use to unearth my breathing body. A waste of the time you could spend clothing your discomfort in tolerance. So dress yourself instead of dressing me. For I exist in the foggy eyes that shed fairy dust on window panes, the knuckles that punch holes in corruption despite your embarrassment.

I am inside of this paper and peeling at the slivers of hatred you use to cut me.

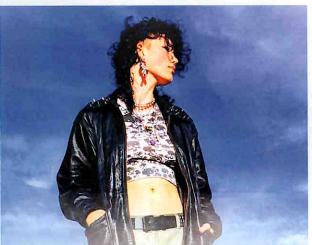
We find our balance atop this upside down globe called life.





A big thank you to the people who offered their vulnerable and powerful experiences to be shared in this project.

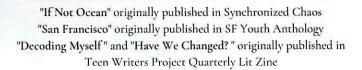
Thanks as well to the Contemporary Jewish Museum (CJM) and to the incredible Julie Grigoryan and Cara Buchalter.



Haze (they/he) is a junior in creative writing at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts in San Francisco. They are a gender queer lesbian activist who has started a nonbinary / trans club at their school and is leading the charge to create more gender neutral bathrooms on campus. They have loved spinning worlds through writing from a very young age and have work published in several online journals. When they are not engaged in activism or creative writing, they can be spotted cuddling their three cats, holding their python, feeding their tarantula, or rescuing insects from being squashed.

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"I get so much euphoria from knowing there is no wrong answer."

"When I feel the most giddy and silly, I get a sense of Euphoria. Also, when I feel like I have the most cool fit on, I low-key feel like a rockstar: Mixing Flamboyant feame with Chill Masc."

"I love connecting with other people who think about gender and exist outside of it."

"I love they/them pronouns. How when you say "they" the mouth elongates in almost a smile. I love the fluidity of my identity and understanding of my gender. Mostly, I love the non-binary and trans communities. I love the systems of support that we create for each other. "

"I ENJOY THE AMBIGUITY, THE SPECTRUM, THE OPENNESS,
AND THE FREEING FEELING THAT BEING NONBINARY CIVES ME.
I GAN JUST EXIST WITH NO EXPLANATION
AND THAT IS WHAT I LOVE THE MOST."

"EUPHORIA? WITH EVERY BREATH. IN AND OUT - AND REPEAT -I AM SO GRATEFUL TO BE ALIVE."

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