Citation Info


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Author Info

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Harry Josephine Giles

Them!

They swallowed a small blue pill and settled to write a poem.

The desk was large; the coffee was strong; the sun had risen an hour earlier, behind clouds.

They reflected on their sex.

You encountered the text.

A sentence is a subject, a verb and their ornaments.

They planned to address the lack of poems in their body of work identifiable as “trans poems”, that is, poems which narrate their sex.

They had identified this lack the previous year when considering whether or not to submit their latest book to the relevant prize under the “transgender” or “bisexual” category.

Their book narrated nothing identifiable of their sex or sexuality, but did narrate a great deal of anal sex, which they now had to assign as either transgender anal sex or bisexual anal sex.

They drank their coffee.

They rubbed at the coffee stains on their desk.

They submitted their book to a category.

It would only take a brief search to find out which one.

You can find out if you like.
You are a public.
You can determine to what category the poet belongs.
They looked at the sun.
The sun was brighter.
A poem is a collection of illegitimate sentences.
When, the next year, they were asked to perform at a poetry event for “women and non-binary people most comfortable in women centred spaces”, they identified the lack once more.
When, the day before, they were assembling a set, they had had to choose between a set which narrated women’s and trans experience and so celebrated their abundance while also acknowledging their struggles, and a set which refused to narrate women’s and trans experience and so acknowledged their struggles while also celebrating their abundance.
They assembled a set.
They weighed their breasts.
You had to be there.
You can find out if you like.
“Women’s experience” is a noun possessed by a noun, and “trans experience” is a noun modified by an adjective.
They swallowed the last gritty sip of the coffee.
They moved objects around the desk to create a sense of space.
They were not sure whether their reluctance to write a “trans poem” was rooted in refusal or in inability, and whether there was a difference between the two.

They moved words around their poem to create a sense of music.

The sun was penetrating the clouds with some force, and so they narrowed their eyes.

A public is a collection of legitimate people.

They have argued on three publicly-traded social media websites that contemporary trans identity emerged through an interaction between medical case study and literary memoir, and so that individual trans people can only emerge through narrating their own literary memoir and medical case study, but that publicly-traded social media websites offer new, plural forms of case study and memoir which exceed their own categories.

To the left of their desk was a mirror, recently polished.

From their position at their desk the mirror reflected a 1.5 inch-wide vertical strip of white sun reflected in turn from the windows across the street.

Poetry is an excess of prose.

You can determine to what category the text belongs.

They can determine when you appear.

You are obscure to them.

They ask you to appear.

You hold the text.
They wait.

You wait.

They chose to obscure the brand name and dosage of the pill mentioned earlier in order to decline to reveal their sex, stacked and split like an infinitive.

At their last blood test, their testosterone level was identified as 17.6 nanomoles per litre, and their estrogen level was identified as 209 picomoles per litre.

They were asked whether they wanted to change their medication, that is, whether they wanted to alter the probabilities of developing certain visually identifiable characteristics and of not developing certain other visually, that is, publicly, identifiable characteristics, except that the research on those probabilities was minimal, and so they could only alter probabilities of probabilities, that is, best guesses, the lines between the medically measurable and the publicly observable stretched thin between data points, like a sentence between commas.

They chose to narrate details of their sex after all in order to incline you to see them as vulnerable, to offer you something so that you might give in return.

A sentence opens with a capital letter and closes with a full stop.

They chose not to change their medication.

They changed their medication.

They wait.

The sun rose past their window.
You wish to know whether their breasts are metaphorical or not, that is, can you look at them.

You can find out if you like.

The sun gave a diffuse and moderate light to their room.

You wish to know whether the anal sex is metaphorical or not, that is, how do they fuck.

You can find out if you like.

The sun’s irradiance was identified as 25 microwatts per metre squared, and the cloud cover was identified as 7 oktas.

The desk measured 115 by 90 centimetres.

There were three tablespoons of grounds in their coffee.

The symbols “sun”, “breasts” and “anal sex” are not metaphors for identity, and the symbols “cloud”, “poem” and “them” are not metaphors for sex.

Poetry is not fucking.

The poem was not finished, but narrated.