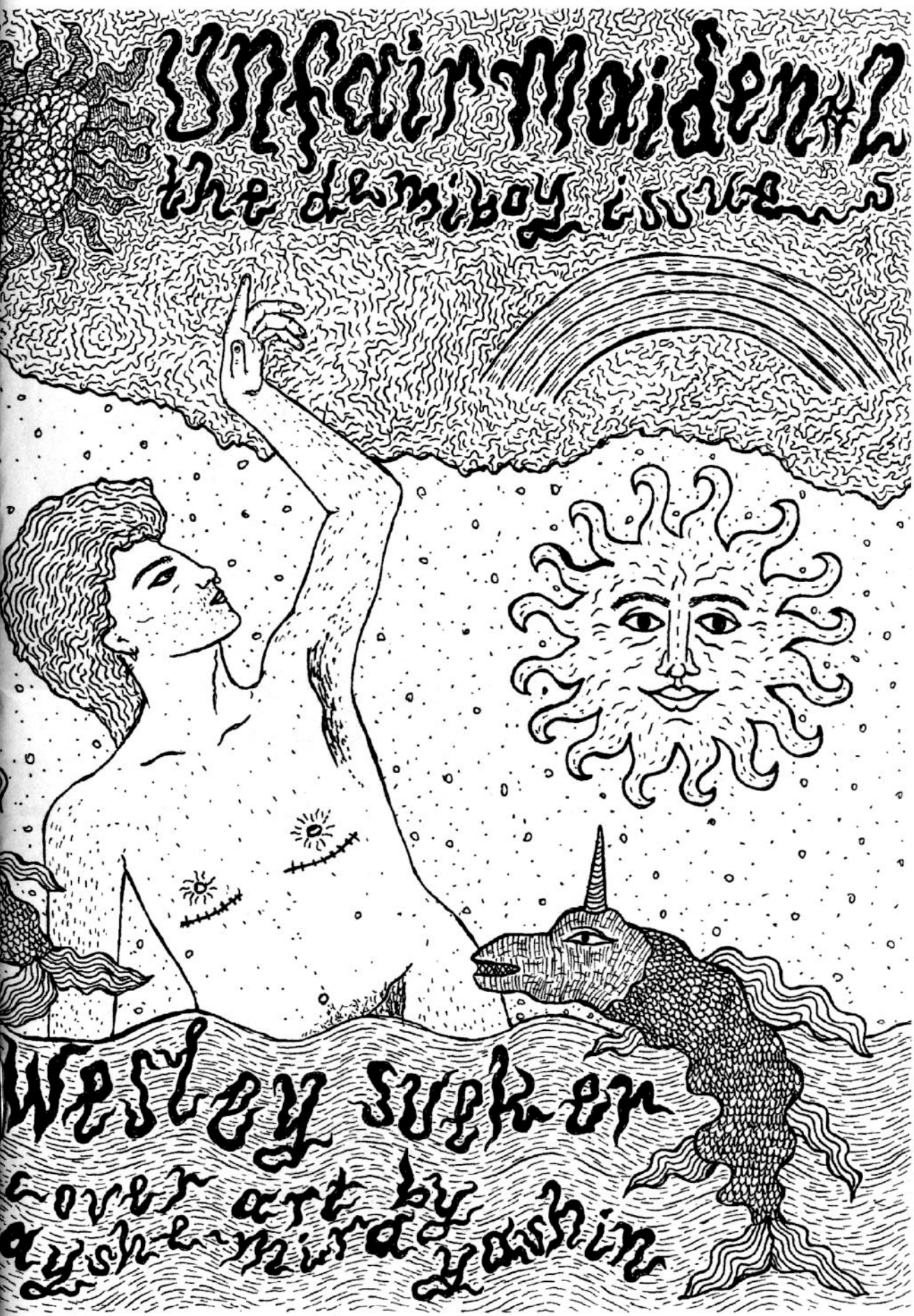
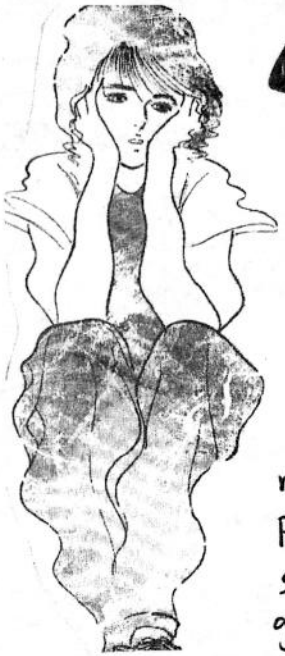

Unfair Maiden #2
the dumbboy issues
Wesley Supkis
cover art by
Aysha Nirdyashin



WESLEY SUEKER SUMMER 2021

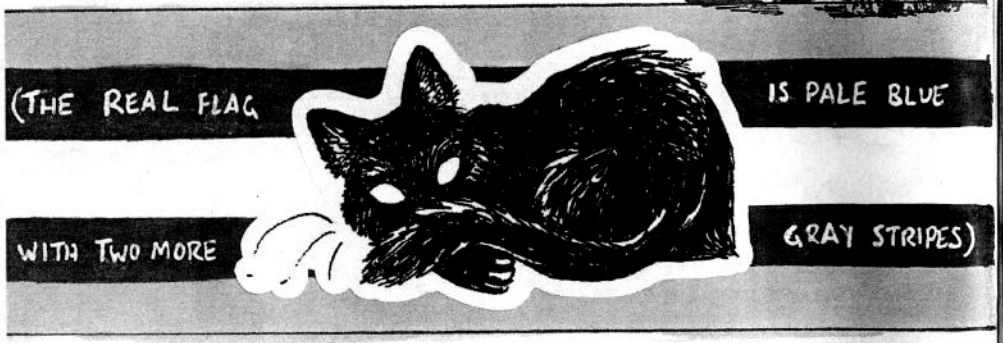
UNFAIR MAIDEN

#2: The Demiboy Issue ♂

COVER BY AYSHE-MIRA YASHIN (bio inside!)

Gender, transition, microaggressions, cis people, tough chix, soft bois, and more gender bullshit inside!





I am absolutely terrified that you are reading this right now.

It is scary writing this zine because for a long time, my gender has been an aspect of myself that has been purely mine. I'm not closeted or stealth; it's not a secret that I'm trans. I have the trans flag on my Twitter page and the trans symbol next to my name.

(I want people to know that I'm trans because I don't want them to think I'm a cis guy because that'd be worse than them thinking I'm a cis girl. At least if they thought I was a cis girl they'd probably assume I was a lesbian.)

The ability to say anything beyond the words "I'm trans" has eluded me. I don't correct people on my pronouns, even though I want to and I should. I don't say anything when someone hears my name as Leslie unless it would be even more awkward to correct them later. I don't mention that I see myself as a demiboy, even though I think it's perfect for me and I think being open about it will help bring about more acceptance of the variety of gender. I skirt the questions about gender my therapist and my doctor ask, or I give them answers I think they want to hear.

The exploration of what gender means to me, what my gender actually is and how I relate to it is something kinda new for me. I thought about it a lot for years when I was a baby trans, but I know I've changed since then. Gender is not something I like to think about, because thinking about it means recognizing all the ways that I'm not living up to how I feel. All the ways I feel I've failed by being a coward about my gender, all the ways I'm not presenting in Just the Right Way, all the ways my transition is or isn't or should or shouldn't or want or don't.

I don't know what my goal is with transitioning. But I do know what my goal is with this zine. I want to come to terms with my experience of gender, become more comfortable with calling myself a demiboy without shame, and try to get to a point that I'm self-assured enough that thinking about gender isn't frightening anymore. And I do this as a zine because that's where I'm most comfortable expressing myself. (Something about zines are a license for me to be open and honest, with others and with myself.)

If this is relatable, I'm sorry, because it's kind of hell sometimes. But if it is, I want you to know that there is nothing more powerful than taking control of your own gender, your own body and your own self in a world that wants you to be cis.

TRANS PRIDE Well. Let's get this thing going then! 4 EVER

My he/him/history

The beginning of my story isn't all that unique. I was 17 when I started *really* thinking about my gender. That summer I'd gone to my first pride fest with my trans friend, and he ended up ditching me there (it's a long story, he had some relationship stuff to deal with so I don't blame him). Lost and confused, I ended up chatting with someone who looked just as lost and confused as I did. Turns out she was a baby trans girl* who ended up moving in with me literally later that afternoon. It was talking with her that started me thinking "hey, I've had gender feelings like she has, what's that about? Probably nothing." I saved an old journal entry from around then. It's almost embarrassing that it took me another seven months *after* this to realize I was trans:

"JUNE 20, 2014

Might try playing with gender appearance. I don't think I'll do it in front of the gang though; I don't want it to seem like I'm copying [trans friend] or stealing his thunder or anything. Besides, it's just for fun, so it's not like they need to be involved.

I might try chest binding.

Perhaps I'll develop a male personality. None of my friends of family members will have to know about him. Some days, I can just walk out of the house as Sam. (I'll probably pick a purely masculine name). He can have a different backstory, but I'll do my best to keep him as "me" as possible (unlike, say, Wesley). Just see what it's like to be a guy for a while.

(For context: Wesley was a character I had made up in middle school as part of a "draw yourself genderswapped" challenge on deviantArt. Oh, the foreshadowing!)



*I use "baby trans" as an affectionate nickname in the way a goth might say "baby bat" to describe someone who newly identifies as goth. I like this better than something like "newly trans" because often the experience of transness isn't new, just the words to describe it are.

OCTOBER, 10th Month.

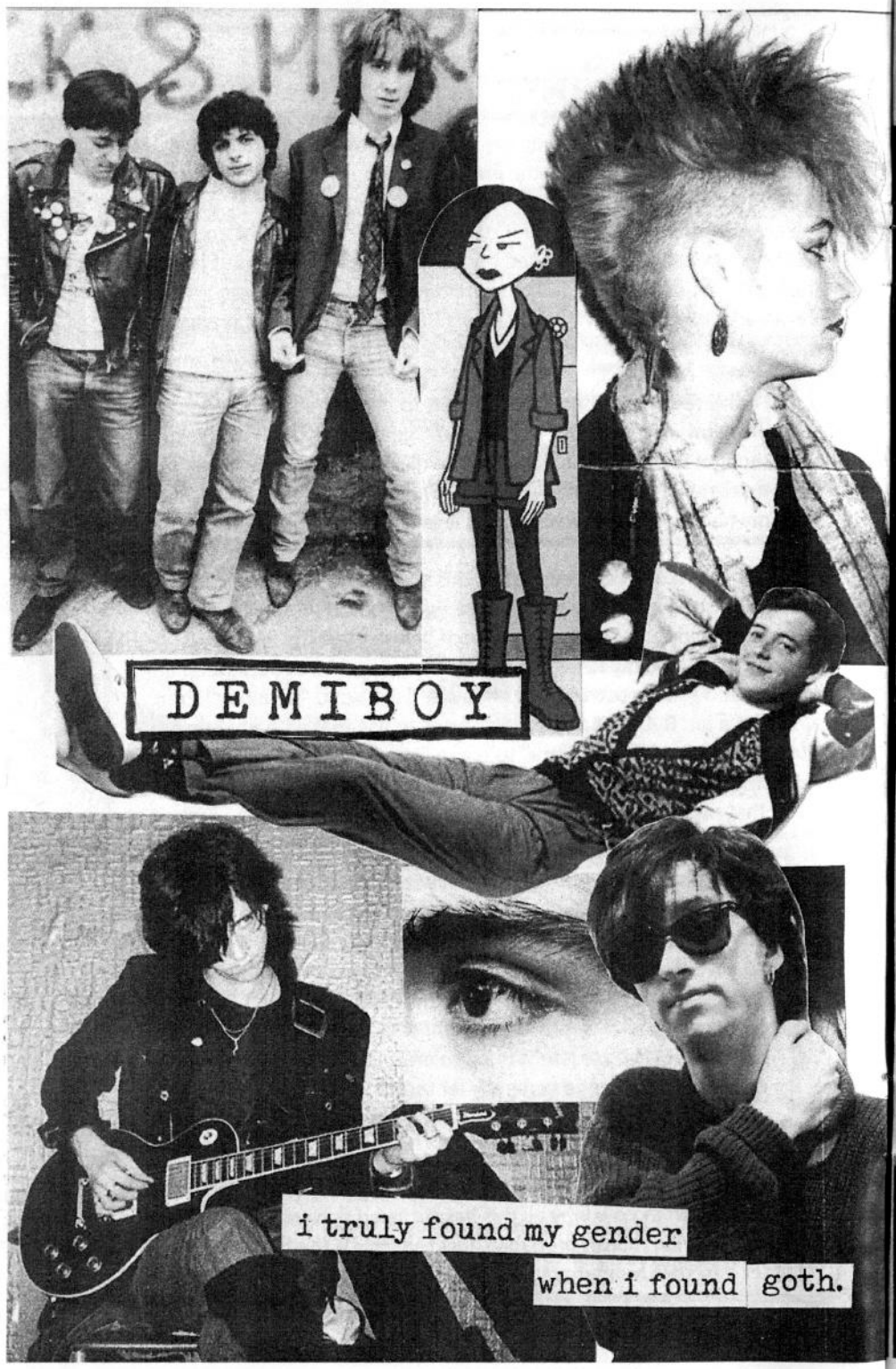
When I turned 18 that October, my grandma sent me her traditional 18th birthday gift that she sent all the grandkids: $18 and a list of all the new things you could legally do once you turned 18. The thing that stood out to me on that list was "Change your name". I had never thought about changing my name before. I liked my name, and I still like it. But just the thought of changing it tugged at something. I ended up picking Wesley because of the character I'd made, and I justified it by saying it wasn't so masc that I couldn't pass for a cute "girl with a boy's name".

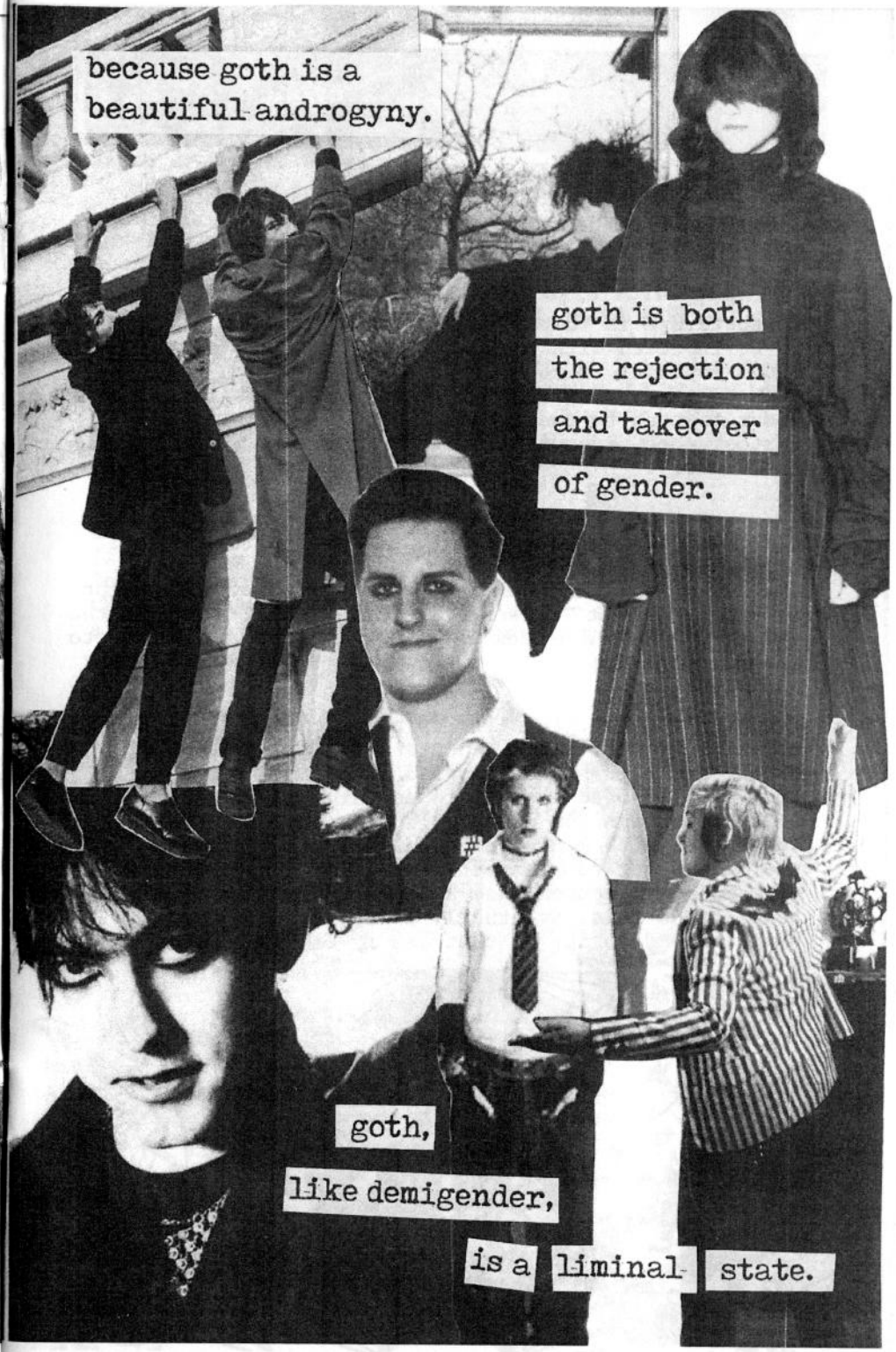
I don't remember how I explained it to my parents, but whatever I said they probably didn't believe me anyway. I get the sense my dad might have thought it was a trans thing, but he died before we could talk about it (five weeks after my birthday). He did say he'd support me if I decided to change my name. (When I did change it legally, I took his name as my middle name.

A couple months later I realized that all this stuff about changing names and presenting masc was actually be being trans, so I asked people to use he/him pronouns and that was that. (My mom hated it but she hated me anyway). That's when my Research Mode started and I was neck deep in trans blogs and gender textbooks. I discovered the word "demiboy" then and I liked it a lot. But I definitely didn't want to use that with my family because I knew they'd take "demi" to mean "not really" and try to convince me I'd ruin my body and my life by transitioning. I was probably a little afraid of that myself.

I tried testosterone but went off it when I accidentally missed an appointment for a shot and was too embarrassed to go back. I tried top surgery but gave up when the surgeon never contacted my insurance and I'd have to start the whole application process over again. I tried binding for a long time but gave up because it hurts my back too much. And I've been preoccupied with depression and haven't had the bandwidth to think much more about gender lately. I just go around in my afab body and introduce myself as Wesley and generally let the cards fall where they may.

It's only recently, as in the last couple months, that I've revisited the word demiboy. I don't know why all this has surfaced right now (something something pride month probably), just that this is the time to think about gender and start to figure out this word.


DEMIBOY
i truly found my gender
when i found goth.


because goth is a
beautiful androgyny.
goth is both
the rejection
and takeover
of gender.
goth,
like demigender,
is a liminal state.

Why did I stop testosterone?

It's a good question. It's a question that's easy to explain away by describing what a pain in the ass (or thigh) it is.

Testosterone is thick, thicker than molasses. It needs to be injected with a huge needle (22-gauge if that means anything to you). It needs to go through all the skin and fat and pierce the actual muscle. And it takes about fifteen to twenty seconds to inject all the testosterone without causing air bubbles (which fucking hurt later).

I don't have a needle phobia. But I still couldn't manage to stick myself with it. I went to Planned Parenthood and they gave me my prescription and taught me how to inject T myself at home. I did it fine in the doctor's office. A week later I'm at home and I have to do it on my own.

I couldn't do it. I really tried, but I couldn't manage to stick myself. I had a panic attack. I cried and cried. Trans guys are supposed to be able to do this. They are supposed to want to do this and be so overjoyed with the thought of going on T that they could stick themselves with a hundred needles if they had to. I took the subway out to Planned Parenthood to have a nurse give me an injection once a week. It took at least two hours to do this. Eventually I found a clinic by my house that'd do it, so that was my routine for a while.



But one week I forgot it was Friday and while I was supposed to be getting a shot and making small talk about the nurse's daughters, I was out in the garden pulling weeds, wondering if I should just skip class and watch crappy tv shows in bed.

And for some reason that mistake was enough to make me stop going altogether. It would be too embarrassing, I'd have to admit I forgot and then they'd start questioning whether I'm really trans and how I could forget something so important and they'd be really upset at how big an inconvenience it is for them to inject me every week when trans guys are supposed to do it themselves and why the fuck am I even here if I'm not going to take it seriously and treat their time with respect?
(I did have a lot more anxiety issues back then.)

But at the same time, I think if it was important to me, if getting my shots was something affirming that I could look forward to, I could've overcome that anxiety. I think the anxiety just compounded the problem I was already having with testosterone: it wasn't working.

I had gone up and up and up in dosage and I was on the highest possible dosage without getting some sort of special permission. And after two years it still wasn't doing what I wanted it to. The first few months had some small but immediate changes: my voice dropped about a third an octave, my periods stopped, I grew a few chin hairs, and I was fucking starving all the time (which my grandma hassled me about). And then... nothing.



All the videos I'd seen of FTM transitions seemed to work so well. They all looked so handsome and masculine and the differences from day 1 and day 730 were so dramatic and why wasn't it working for me? I hadn't had any visible changes in a year and a half. (I could never tell this to anyone because they'd just chastise me for being impatient and puberty takes years and you're acting like a teenager you dumb cunt).

But while I was rewatching some of the videos of trans guys I admired, the ones where I saw them and thought 'I want to look like them', I realized something. Testosterone couldn't make me look like them. It would never make me look how I wanted. It would make me look like myself, but as a boy. I wanted to be taller with a more defined face and a slimmer pelvis. I wanted to be naturally skinny. And it would be impossible to achieve that with this body, no matter how many injections I had, because this body just wasn't built for the Look.

Anyone else would probably have noticed 'hm, you have some body image issues, maybe it's time to work on those.' Or at least brought it up with their therapist. I just ignored everything and lied and said testosterone was fine and went back into my fucking depressive spiral and eating disorders and only now three years later am I looking at myself in the mirror and saying 'yeah that was fucked up, time to work on some body image issues'.

I'm trying to be nicer to myself... but damn, that was fucking stupid.

Early on when I was exploring gender I went to a gender support center and talked with a therapist there who told me about different kinds of dysphoria. She broke it down into body dysphoria, social dysphoria, and mental dysphoria. This was a revelation for me because I thought being trans meant being 'born in the wrong body'. I experienced social dysphoria. I was in a perfectly fine (though mediocre) body, but everyone else thought it was a girl's body and saw me as a girl. That's the part I didn't like.

And in the fight for medical transition, in the fight to be taken seriously as a trans person (especially among my family), the social dysphoria got all mangled up with the body dysphoria.

So now come the big questions.

What if I don't want T?

What if I don't want top surgery?

If I don't get top surgery and testosterone, I'll have to be okay with people misgendering me my entire life. I'll have to be okay with the fact that nobody, not ever, will see me and assume I'm a guy. That at the very best I'll get someone who defaults to they/them pronouns on days I look queer enough and if they're progressive enough.

It kind of raises a weird question. I know who my body is for. It's for me, and I've always known that. But WHAT is my body for? What is the purpose of this mound of flesh? Is it just to help me get along with others? Or is it something else? My body is as much a part of me as my mind (and I've never believed in the Cartesian mind/body separation anyway). But what is its purpose?

If I can answer that, maybe I'll finally be able to answer the question of what I want to do with it.



long tall neighbor



My name is Wesley. I say half-joking that I picked it myself, but in some ways it grew up with me.



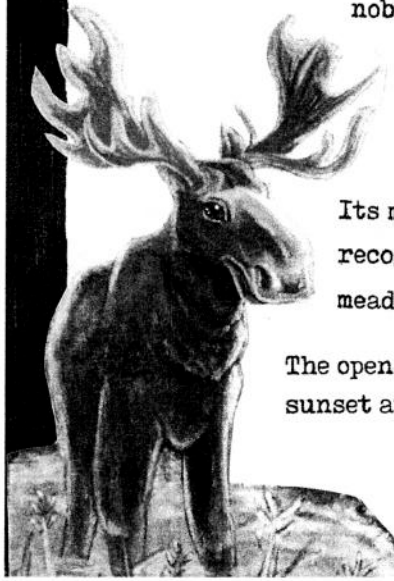
It was my babysitter's name, the person I thought I had a crush on but really had a crush on being.

It followed me through high school and when I tried to pick another name imbued with special meaning, I found there was no other name that carried any.



I have thought at times I should have a Magical Name, something strong and natural and beautiful.

Wesley is simple, it is humble, it is quiet. It has a 74% approval rating on Behind the Name. It is nobody's favorite but mine.





Its meaning is not immediately recognizable. Wesley means "west meadow".

The open green in the far-off sunset at the equinox.

Balanced, open, gentle.





174 JOAN OF ARC

JOAN: As for women's clothing, I shall not put it on until it please God;

JOAN: If permission were given me to withdraw in woman's clothes, immediately (thereafter) I should dress myself in man's clothes and do what is commanded me by God;

TRANSLATED BY W. P. BARNARD

surpasses all the stars. And her light
stretches over salt sea
equally and flowerdeep fields.

And the beautiful dew is poured out
and roses bloom and frail
chervil and flowering sweetclover.

But she goes back and forth remembering
gentle Atthis and in longing
she bites her tender mind

Jean d'Arc, "Joan of Arc, By Herself and Her Witness"

Sappho, "If Not, Winter"

It is tragic to think of how much transness has been lost through history. How many trans stories are missing or have been ignored.

I was reading an anthology on Greek women writers of antiquity. It suggests Sappho may not have been a lesbian because the biographical tradition states that she married and had a daughter, which "complicates the picture". It warns of "the difficulty of trying to create the poet from her poetry".

It never occurred to the writers that Sappho's wife or Sappho herself might be trans. It never occurred to them that the statements "Sappho married and had a daughter" and "Sappho was a lesbian" could coexist.



So WHAT'S A DEMIBOY ANYWAY?

The GENDER WIKI says:

"A demiboy is a gender identity describing someone who partially identifies as a man or boy, regardless of their assigned gender at birth. They may or may not identify as another gender in addition to feeling partially a boy or man."

So... YOU'RE A BOY?

FUCK YEAH I'm a boy! But that's just the half of it. I'm better than "just" a boy. I'm a boy and then some.

I take femininity and corrupt it by being a boy.
I take macho man bullshit and throw it in the trash.
I am NOT a binary trans guy who hasn't "committed."

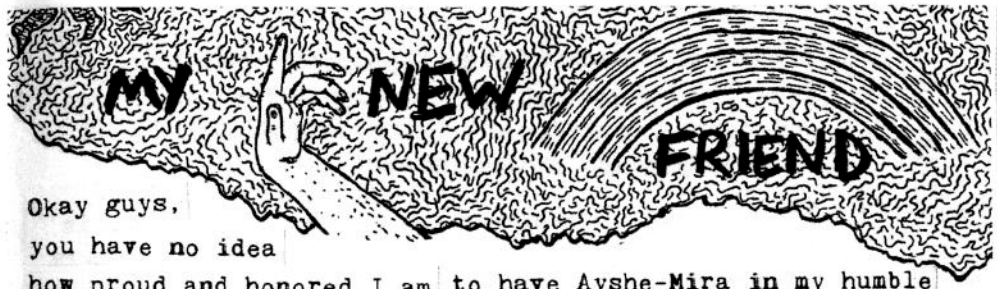
How can I describe it... you know how a demigod is like half human, half god? It's like that. I'm half boy and half god.

SEE ALSO...

- *Tomboy
- *Hard Femme
- *Riot Grrrl
- *GNC
- *Androgynous
- *Enby

} Similar vibes





Okay guys,
you have no idea
how proud and honored I am to have Ayshe-Mira in my humble zine. Her art gave me something I didn't even know I needed. I love a piece of art when it's honest; it's Something Else when it encourages me to be honest. Her "official" bio is below, but first, an "unofficial" one:



Ayshe-Mira is a badass sapphic artist using her art to fight cis/heteronormativity, white/abled/skinny-centric beauty standards, and any structure that declares our bodies and ourselves to be not good enough. Her work is beautiful without bowing to what society has deemed beautiful–it is beautiful in its very soul. And her artworks do indeed have souls. Seriously, this artist is fucking going places and (un)paving the earth beneath her as she does it.

SUPPORT HER at https://www.ayshemira.com/

Ayshe-Mira Yashin is an 18-year-old artist from Istanbul, Turkey, and Nicosia, Cyprus. She is based in London, England, and is an art foundation student at UAL (Camberwell). Being a Middle-Eastern lesbian, her art explores queer and intersectional identities, and frequently displays themes of sapphic love and intimacy. She is of Jewish and Muslim heritage, and is a practicing eclectic pagan green witch. Themes of the occult and spirituality are often incorporated into her art, one of her most recent projects being the Sapphic Enchantress Tarot Deck, a tarot deck representing queer and femme bodies, exploring divine femininity. You can find the tarot deck either on Haus Nostromo (pagan art emporium), or on her independently managed art shop, the Illustration Witch Shop, where she also creates and sells handmade necklaces and notebooks, stickers, art prints, a ouija board, and zines.



Zines are a large component of her creative practice, and she is currently working on an illustrated poetry zine, on a partnership publication with Zines and Things (Portland, OR) titled "Jasmines which Spill Into the Sky from Nicosia Balconies". Her art has been exhibited at The Holy Art Gallery (Hackney, London), at M. A. D. S. (Milan, Italy), and at the Queer Art Collective (Rhode Island, New York). Her art has also been featured in Witchology, Lesbians are Miracles, Riot and Roux, The Witch Zine, The Survivors Zine, The A. R. T. Zine, The Unfair Maiden Zine, The Field Project Zine, Astraea Zine and The Zindabad Zine. She was awarded the Power of Creativity award (by Contemporary Art Creator Magazine) in 2021.

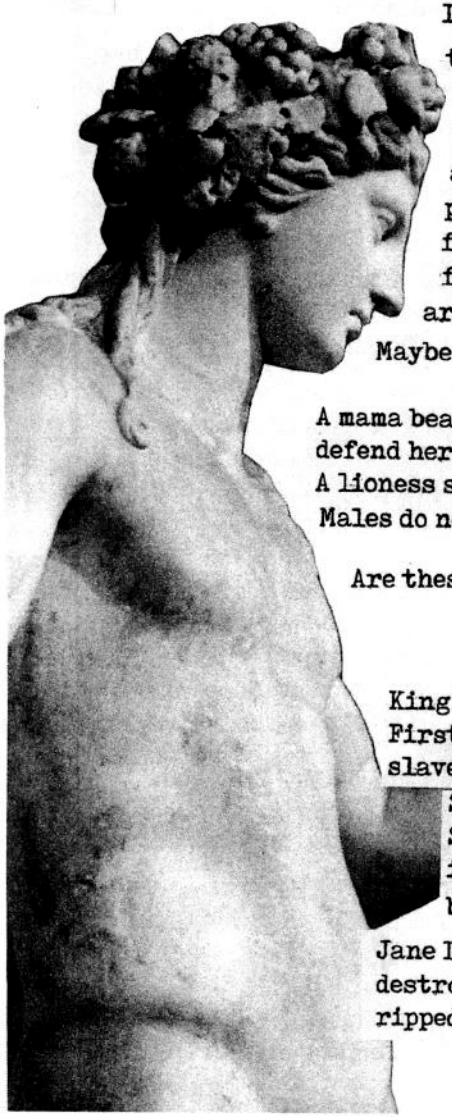


tough femme

We think of femininity as gentleness and passivity.
We say it's not a sexist thing because they're archetypes, and everyone had both feminine and masculine qualities in them regardless of their gender.

Living in this framework means a strong, fierce woman is a masculine one. And it means a gentle, kindhearted man is a feminine one.

This is not how I feel. It doesn't make sense to me.



It's not just the "girls can play football too" thing, nor about deriving strength from traditionally "feminine" things, nor about redefining "real" strength as gentleness. Nor is it about taking pieces from both categories— toughness from masculinity and gentleness from femininity. The problem is the pieces are in the wrong categories to begin with. Maybe we shouldn't have categories at all?

A mama bear viciously attacks an intruder to defend her cubs.
A lioness severs the throat of a wildebeest.
Males do neither.

Are these expressions feminine or masculine?

Tough Femmes:

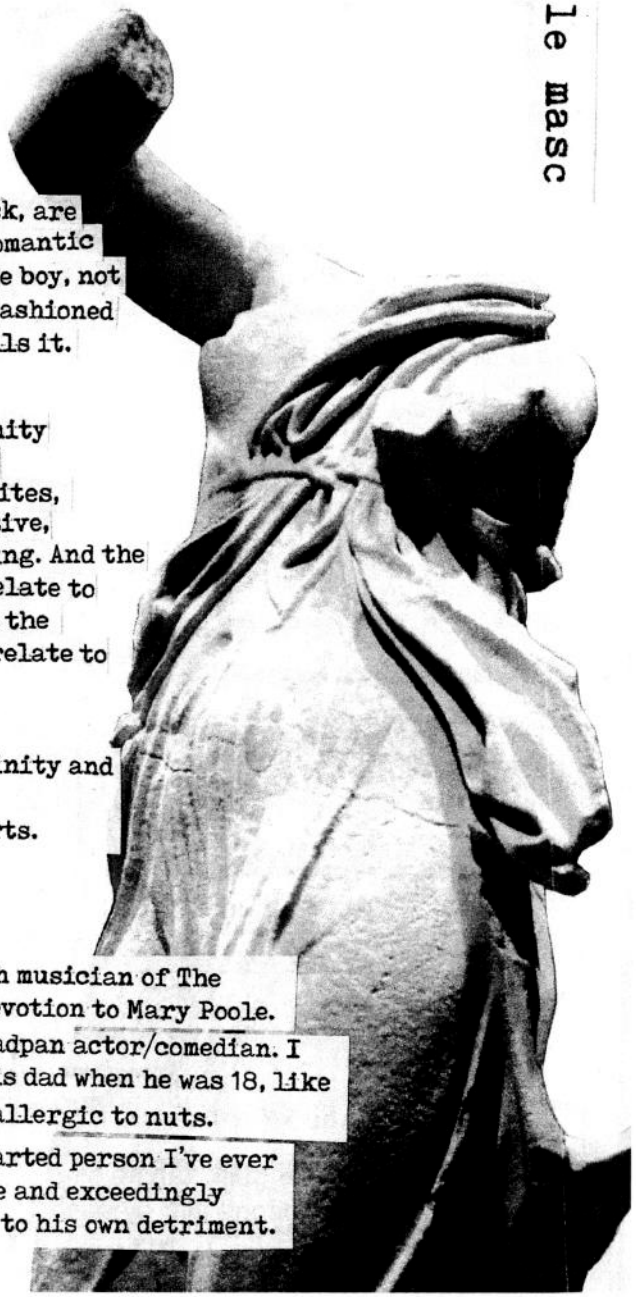
King Nzinga, Ngola (monarch) of now-Angola. First female Ngola and fought Portuguese slave traders with cunning and ferocity.

Siouxsie Sioux: Punk/goth musician of Siouxsie and the Banshees. Refused to be idolized for her womanhood and not her band's music.

Jane Lane: Daria's best friend. Willing to destroy her own art when its meaning is ripped from her by school administration.

& gentle masc

I seem to live in reverse.
I relate to a femininity that is naturally ferocious. Femininity is where I derive my strength and confidence and power and tenacity and blood and sweat and tears.



And the masculinity
I relate to, the parts
that make me a demiboy
and not just a punk chick, are
the gentle and soft and romantic
loverboy parts. I'm a cute boy, not
a cute girl. A Good Old-Fashioned
Lover Boy as Freddie calls it.

Femininity and masculinity
are both intrinsically
whole. They are not opposites,
one is not passive or active,
they both have everything. And the
parts of femininity I relate to
are the tough parts, and the
parts of masculinity I relate to
are the gentle parts.

I guess I do have femininity and
masculinity in me.
Just not the normal parts.

Gentle Mascs:

Robert Smith: Punk/goth musician of The Cure. Eternal loving devotion to Mary Poole.

Demetri Martin: Deadpan actor/comedian. I found out he lost his dad when he was 18, like me. We're also both allergic to nuts.

My dad: The most softhearted person I've ever known, dedicated to love and exceedingly kind and generous even to his own detriment.

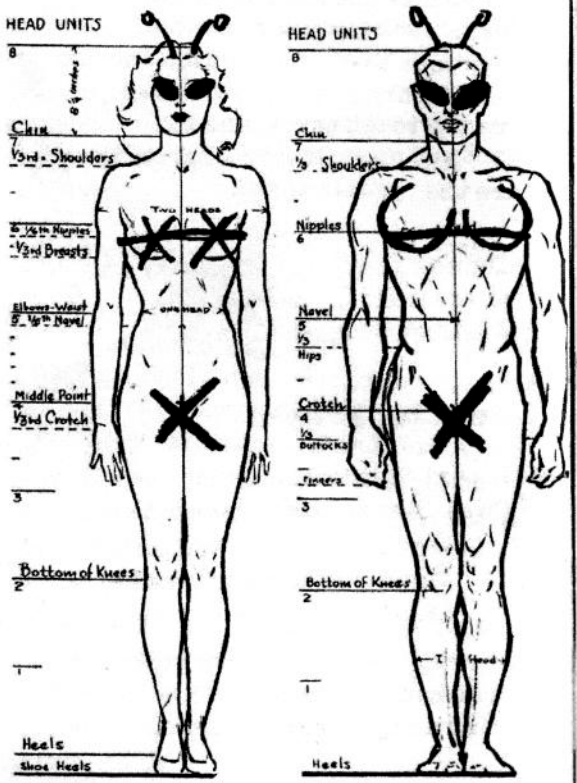
GENDER STORIES

Has this ever happened to you? (I hope not!)

ART CLASS

I took a drawing class in community college with a professor who was outwardly transphobic. She refused to call me "he" or call my NB friend by her real name Scott instead of the one on the roster. The worst thing was when she drew male and female figures for an anatomy lesson, and then started distorting the figures with alien eyes and antennae saying "or some weird in-between."

She literally drew this. →



Scott and I talked about lodging a formal complaint, but we knew even if we did so anonymously she'd definitely know it was us. So we waited until we got our grades to report her. I have no idea if anything came of it.

HAIR

For some reason, my mom took me to a beauty salon to get ready for prom. The stylist noticed a hair on my chin and went to get some tweezers. While she was gone I realized I didn't want it gone! She came back, plucked it, and said "Don't worry, now you're perfect." Yeah. Perfect.

NAME CHANGE

When I was announcing my plans to change my name legally, my best friend's mom advised me to "wait until I knew what I was doing" because it's difficult to change your name back and forth.

This was coming from someone who was divorced and went through a lot of hell going back to her original name and now had kids bearing her ex's name, so I get where her comment was coming from. But I swear I wanted to punch her!

Names and words are the most important things to me, way more than body. So for me that was basically tantamount to saying I shouldn't transition at all. And from someone who was "supportive"...

MARY KAY

My mom made me try makeup once. when I was 15. Her friend sold Mary Kay and while my sister was in theatre rehersal, mom dragged me to her friend's house and had her put ten pounds of shit on my face. She also made me buy something so I "wouldn't make her look bad". I got out with just some acne cream — out of my own pocket of course.

We picked up my sister and went out for pizza, but I was so uncomfortable and embarrassed with all that makeup on. Mom made me get out of the car. But after we ordered I said I had to use the bathroom, went in and scrubbed it all off! I came out and mom was pissed. She screamed at me for hours.

A Post from when I was 18 ☺

Post

Trans problem
Mom: I'm so supportive, you should be happy you are born into this family!!
Mom: *uses the wrong pronoun*
Mom: *uses the wrong name*
Mom: *introduces me to people as her daughter*
Mom: What have I done to deserve this anger? I'm always on your side

CAN I SAY SOMETHING?

Even within the LGBT community, there is often a stigma against certain labels people use to describe themselves. Terms like demiboy, genderqueer, bigender, aromantic, pansexual, etc. are often written off as being "too specific" or "too complicated" or "a fashion statement" or any manner of things. Basically, calling yourself anything beyond L, G, B, T, Q, or *sometimes* NB is somehow a less acceptable expression of queerness. Some queer people aggressively reject those who use specific labels (calling them "transtrenders" or "special snowflakes"; ironic how some queer people see no problem using the same words that cishets use to demonize all of us). Others will just ignore specific labels entirely or write them off as "those dumb kids".

I regret that I was one of those people for a while, despite the fact that one of these "too specific" words (demiboy, obviously) really resonated with me and accurately captured my experience of gender. Early on in my gender studies, I fell into that trap of thinking that people just "wanted attention" and that's why they made up different words and flags. Instead of the words and flags being created for the same reason any other word or flag comes into existence—to fill a descriptive void and serve as a uniting and validating representation of a certain lived experience.

I bring this up because it is still one of the main reasons I feel shame around using the word demiboy to describe myself. Calling myself "trans" already carries the risk of rejection from cishets; calling myself "demiboy" carries risk of rejection from the LGBT community, my own family.

The problem with specific labels can't be purely about their specificity (nobody has a problem with family crests, and what is that but a pride flag for a tiny group?). I think the resistance ultimately comes from two main places:

1 There's a concept in queer theory called the Charmed Circle. I'm by no means an expert, but the basic idea is that there is a circle in which certain expressions are acceptable based on a variety of factors—monogamy is acceptable, polygamy isn't; binary gender is acceptable, nonbinary isn't, etc. A lot of LGBT people, whether they know it or not, are approaching the struggle for acceptance as a struggle to have their group be allowed into the charmed circle.

Certain expressions of gayness (and to a lesser extent transness) in America have now attained, through many years of struggle, a certain level of acceptance from mainstream society. I think there is an underlying fear that if the LGBT community gets "too weird", like by incorporating "too specific" labels and flags, the queer expressions currently within the Charmed Circle will be pushed out of it.

2 They are deeply afraid that specificity will lead to divisions and infighting, which would be detrimental to the continued political organization and activism of the LGBT community. Ironically, they are perpetuating infighting themselves through their rejection of specificity.

I understand the fear, and I know how important it is for the LGBT community to stand together. The thing is that specificity does not mean division, it means diversity. The presence of a demiboy flag does not invalidate the trans flag. Someone preferring to use the term pansexual does not invalidate those using the term bisexual. More flags and more terms just means more ways for LGBT people to unite and more ways for baby queers to find themselves.

If you are someone who rejects or does not understand more specific LGBT words and flags, I think you should ask yourself these questions as a way of re-framing your thoughts: Do you value diversity? Are you not proud to see more self-expression in your own community? Are you not proud that the community is large and outspoken enough to encourage and accommodate more sub-groups? Are you not proud to see young people discovering themselves?

Words are important to find yourself and others like you. They are helpful to realize that you are not alone in your feelings and you may actually be part of a community you never knew. And even for those who don't personally identify with a certain term, it is always important to see more expressions of gender and sexuality to learn about those unlike you. Break binary thinking. Celebrate diversity of gender and sexuality. Be in awe of the beautiful spectrum of the queer experience.

More terms. More flags. I want more gender zines. I want to learn new words. I want to hear about your gender experience in the words that make you feel most like yourself.

For me, that's Demiboy. What is it for you?

DEAR CIS PEOPLE

THESE ARE THINGS I HATE TO HEAR

"Correct me if I mess up."

Maybe some trans people like this. I don't. Personally, I feel like this says two things: 1) You anticipate messing up without correcting yourself, which means you aren't planning on trying very hard to remember my pronouns.
2) The burden is now on me (and therefore off of you) to correct you every time you mess up instead of you fucking remembering in the first place. It's basically like expecting me to come out to you multiple times.

That's fucking stressful.

Seriously, though, I don't like correcting people on my pronouns because being trans around cis people is scary. Even if you say "correct me", I don't know how you'll react to actually being corrected, especially if it needs to happen multiple times. I probably don't know you or trust you enough to feel comfortable interrupting a conversation—especially around a third person, which is probably when you'd be using my pronouns anyway—to correct you on *anything,* not to mention something personal. I've been through a lot of trauma with my family, as many trans people have, in which I was abused just for being myself, forget asserting myself. I don't want to have to relive that shit just so you won't misgender me.

Try Instead: "Sorry I messed up your pronouns back there." This shows you're taking responsibility and you're recognizing your own mistakes. Ideally, you'd correct yourself in the moment (well, *ideally* you wouldn't mess up in the first place), but on the off-chance you forget, a straight-up apology with no excuses is great.

"I'm still getting used to all this."

Used to what? Trans people existing? It's 2021, get the fuck over it. Trans people have always existed, and trans rights has been a widely known and widely discussed topic for *at least* the last 20 years. What you're really saying is that you're still getting used to being forced to respect trans people after comfortably being able to ignore or make fun of us.

Try Instead: "Do you know of any cool queer zines I could buy?" Get "used" to trans people by educating yourself.

"I know [this person] who's trans too."

Great, I can complain with them about how you randomly out people. You're basically saying that meeting a trans person is a novelty that gives you some sort of street cred. I don't want to meet this person through you, and I don't consider their (supposed) acceptance of you as proof that you're a good person.

Try Instead: Just don't say anything.

"She—er, he. It. Whatever."

This almost sounds like a joke from someone being knowingly transphobic. But I've literally heard this from "well-meaning" cis people who are "doing their best". Because apparently being intentionally dismissive is you being "well-meaning". Apparently treating a trans person like you would an object is you "doing your best".

Try Instead: Falling in a ditch. Or just like, correct yourself without making fun of trans people.

"Is [your cis partner] like... *okay* with you?"

He's more than "okay". I'm the love of his goddamn life. He loved me before I transitioned and he loves me even more now because I'm more myself. You're basically saying you're disgusted by the idea of dating a trans person and you can't believe that other cis people aren't as transphobic as you are. You're saying that I am somehow *worse* for Sean by being significantly happier and healthier as a demiboy than I was as a miserable, abused girl. You're saying that he should be angry with being seen/considered "gay" now. And you're saying there's no way he could love me without contempt when he could have had a Normal Girlfriend. You're insulting me, Sean, trans people, and gay people in one fell swoop, but you still hide behind the guise of "concern".

Try Instead: Go fuck yourself.

things i'm reading

Alien In Disguise by Z

"I am only in middle school and my life is hell."

Hard Femme by Kirsty Fife

"My body is full of contradictions that are beyond gendered and other divides. Femininity is embodied, and I use it with my body's history in mind."

UNFAIR MAIDEN (ME)

I had the name Unfair Maiden in my notes for a while, unsure what I wanted to do with it. It's one of those things I would name my band if I had a band or cared enough to start one. And then when I decided to start the perzine, it just seemed to be right for it.

At first I had some idea that people would either read it as 'it's unfair that I was born a maiden', or they'd just think I was a cool punk chik, the undoing of the fairy-tale Princess. And I kind of wrote it off as just like 'eh whatever it's just a cool name', but in thinking about it I think my gender could just as easily be described with the phrase Unfair Maiden as it could with Demiboy.

It's the 'un' part that I really like. It feels subversive, specifically anti-something. I meant what I said back on page 5 - that I truly found my gender when I found goth. I was so concerned with being perfect growing up, with staying out of trouble so I could fly under everyone's radar and just get out and grow up already.

Hard Femme Bike Tour by Elokin and Pamela

"We eyed them right away, doing a laydar conversation full of gendered assumptions, the sort that only seem okay at all when made by queers just trying to find some other queers."

The Vinyl Princess by Yvonne Prinz

"About a year ago, at yet another cocktail party featuring academic blowhards spouting off about something they read in a book or wrote in a book (and likely stole from another book), my mom was discussing her dissertation topic, Pushkin's poetry, with a colleague from her PhD program when my dad turned to her and told her that he didn't want to be married to her anymore. My mom reached for a cheese puff and asked him why not."



I could have kept on being that person, the pretty little girl who could easily have become a 1940s Disney Princess just waiting as things happened around her and hoping someone would come rescue me. It was only when I was out of that house that I was able to grow out of that life into someone more independent. And yeah, my gender is wrapped up in all that too.

Being un-Fair isn't just about being 'not like other girls' or whatever. It's like a philosophy, one that is sometimes hard for me to live up to but is really empowering when I do. Something that sees Fairness and doesn't just 'not fit', but intentionally destroys it. The world isn't fair and neither is my gender.

If I'm honest. . . I think I don't want to pass. I want people to know I'm trans. I want people to know I was the perfect daughter and it still wasn't good enough. So fuck it. I'm going to be the worst daughter that ever lived and I'm going to wear it on my sleeve. I will not forgive my mother for anything. I won't let her be proud of me for anything. I won't shut up and I will stand up for myself. I'm such a bad daughter that I'm not a daughter at all, I'm a son.

A TRUE STORY!!

Meet The Lioness That Roared—And Grew A Mane

by Dan Avery

Lionesses in Botswana are evolving by altering their gender presentation.

