

TRANS

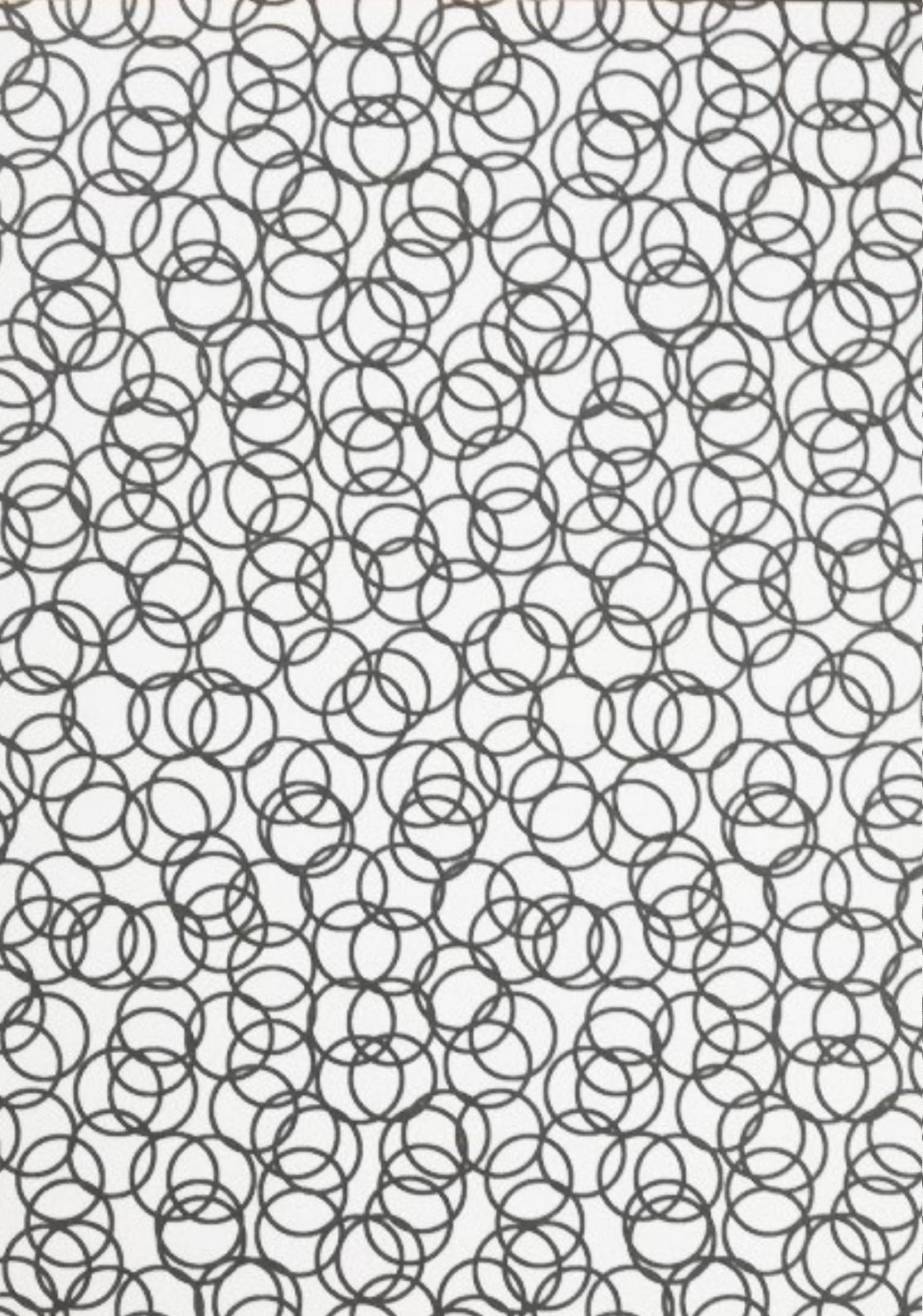
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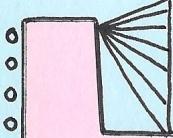
DISABLED

A ZINE ABOUT BEING TRANS/NONBINARY

& DISABLED/CHRONICALLY ILL

EDITED BY RAZ





Hi there!

Thanks for picking up this zine.



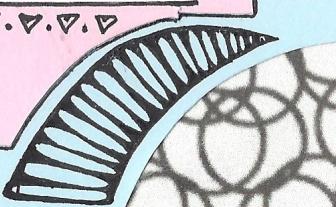
This zine is by us, for us, and about us. The intersections and the additive effects of trans/nonbinary and disabled/chronically ill identity are many and varied, and this zine seeks to be a space for us to explore that. Distinctions are not made between the mental and the physical, or between gender and disability.

I started working on this zine because in my own life, I felt a lack of community around disabled trans identity and wanted to put together a resource for other people who felt the same way. We are not alone and we never have been. Building links between marginalised people is awesome and allows for empowerment and solidarity, so you'll see throughout this zine that every contributor who wished to has included social media details.

I've identified with and been moved by the submissions to this zine, and found in them a greater sense of community, support and pride—I hope you do too.



- Raz, September 2017





The Norm by Sam James McCracken

Instagram: @darklink1991

Facebook: Samuel James McCracken Artist

[Image description: a person wearing a blue shirt and white shorts standing up, holding up a frame over their abdomen through which their heart, spine and pelvic bone can be seen. Their heart has a sad cartoon face. Their other arm is dissolving, a bottle of acid inside of it sprays upwards. Their knees are being attacked by small figures and there are sharp spikes coming through their feet from wooden boards. There are darts stuck into the side of their neck and a photo of a smile pasted over their mouth. They are crying and have bags under their eyes, and their pink hair/brain has a cartoon screaming face as water is poured onto it from a jug with wings. Behind the person is a sign saying "Days Without Sleep: 187"]

untitled #6

cw: assault, medical abuse, seizures, death,
dissociation

grasping, clawing, fighting
i dont want to be touched
but that would never stop them
when my vision surrenders
my body becomes dead weight
trembling, shaking, convulsing
possessed by a fear i cant exorcise
its borrowed too deep
in my flesh, or veins
(soul or brain)
all i can do is lie back and feel
for all the times i am
dead,
but can never seem to decompose
its more like stone,
(i am)
uncaring, unmoving,
simply existing

until a voice, a shout,
a noise too loud and there it goes
an avalanche of everything i can never feel
never experience, never express
but this is still not the 'i' we search for
this is not the Self, myself
this is just movement
muscles pulling, flesh pounding
and then its
choking,
unable to save myself
too dependent even to breathe on my own
my body merely convulsing
until i am still
too still
but never too dead
never not waiting to decompose

untitled #8

cw: ableism

im tired of
fighting to stay alive
in a system created
to wipe away our growth

i dont want inclusivity
i dont want to be known
i want a day not questioning
what i'll have to live through

dont tell me you support us
when you jump to defend
every voter who allowed this
every action to desecrate us

we are sacred
we arent saved



By Natasha Basarab
Twitter: @shitheadhotel
Facebook: DIY Publishers

Embody

I was destined to hate my body.
This queer, disabled body.
It holds altogether too many curves,
Treasures too many angles,
These popping bones cradled beneath rolling hips.
A chest too malleable, thighs too thick to cut the feminine from,
Fingers too nimble,
Ankles too loose to walk on,
By all accounts I should detest it.

But it has worked too hard to keep me afloat.
Treading water for hours, even as I tied stones to my feet,
My head was always kept above the waves.
I will always have scars
From when I thought glass could glitter so nicely in my skin.
I didn't always treat this figure with fairness,
Tried to steal it's shape,
Denied that it exist.
But a denial can only ever obfuscate the truth.



My body has wildness in its joints;
Knees arched backwards like crescent moons,
The bows of Artemis strung too loose to hunt.
It clings to elbows sharp enough to take an eye out,
Shoulders consumed by wanderlust, never able to find their way home,
My body tucks their pain close to my heart like a child it could never
bear to see grow up.
I know one day it will be adult though
And in the darkness, pain will wear my body like comfort,
A blanket cape it hasn't the courage to let go of.

This body,
So easily beautified,
Eyelashes thick enough for mascara, voice high enough for cat calls,
Hips loud enough to swing.
This body, so easily read as female
And yet
Still I cannot bring myself to hate it.

My body has been so strong for so long,
Been heckled and hacked at from all sides,
But it was never wrong;
Never bad, never broken,
Never worthy of this disrespect.
My body is exactly as it should be.
I may have had the odds stacked against me,
But my body,
My queer, disabled body,
Has never been so loved.

The Toilet and I

I've always had an intimate connection with the toilet bowl. Ever since I was a 10 year old with period pains so bad I spent a couple days each month with my cheek pressed to it, it's had a significant place in my life. When I got older and inevitably developed inflammatory bowel disease, it became something of a campsite. I found out that I got into my top choice university whilst sitting on the same toilet I'd been vomiting into for years, wracked with anxiety diarrhoea, and I cried that I'd achieved this arbitrary goal.



The toilet became a place of refuge when, as a young trans person at start-of-year social events at that university I knew no one and couldn't for the life of me start a decent conversation. At one of those events (which I attended in a binder and a suit cobbled together from jeans and a blazer), I tried to go into the disabled toilet for a bit of a break from the unforgiving crowd. A bouncer told me I couldn't go into that toilet – it was for disabled people! I replied to say that it was the only gender neutral toilet in the venue, and he did a complete 180 and held the door of that disabled toilet open for me.



The disabled toilet has become an important space for me. As a nonbinary kid, I go there to avoid misgendering myself by going into the female toilet (the only one my chest, short stature and baby face gives me a free pass into), the place where I chant over and over in my head as I walk in under that woman in a cape sign, *I don't want to be here*. As a disabled person, I go there because I take a shit roughly three times a day and I don't want anyone nearby to hear it.



I have claimed the disabled toilet as a liminal space within public space where I can be my trans disabled self with no misgendering, no barriers, no cis abled people to keep a brave closeted face to. I'm sick of being asked "is it contagious?" as the first question after I disclose ulcerative colitis. I'm sick of people deciding both that they can prescribe me a course of treatment for a disease they know nothing about, and that they can prescribe me a binary gender.



Colitis is a gross disease. Nobody wants to know that you shit blood sometimes, that it hurts too much to walk far some days, that you cry on the toilet bowl when you're on your (trans) period and it triggers a poopy flare up. Talking about nonbinary identity often feels like marking myself out as a special snowflake, as a person who can be ignored and harassed because they're different. There are people who would rather kill themselves by age 40 than live with a disability like mine. There are people who would rather I killed myself for being trans.

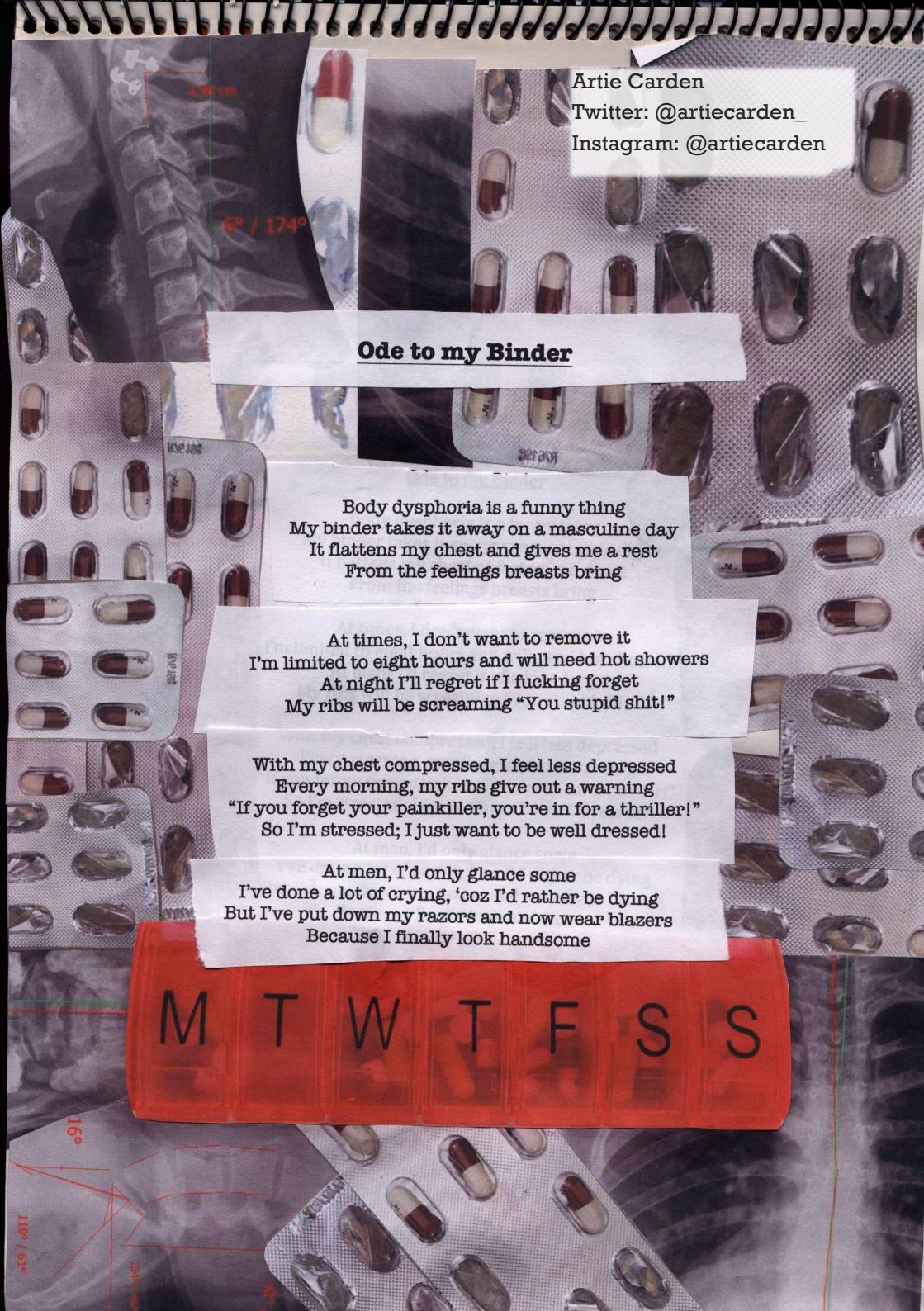
But at the same time, I'm proud. I've never been as capable of loving myself as much as I am now, regardless of whether I always manage it. Colitis came at a time when I was dysphoric about everything in my life; I looked in the mirror and saw a stressed out future girl-doctor who could never do enough for the med school CV. I got sick because I pushed myself too hard and now colitis serves as an instant reminder of when I am overworking myself, when I am stressed, when I need to slow down and take a break.

When I came out to myself as nonbinary, overnight things which I had hated about my body whilst desperately trying to become a woman ceased to be things I hated. My body hair, my fat tummy, my facial hair, my absolute hatred of the sensation of makeup – none of these things make me a broken, aberrant woman anymore. My body is a tool for experiencing the world, by definition blurry and in motion, not a porcelain doll for the judging. I can finally begin to accept my body in all its disgusting glory: it shits, it's hairy, it bleeds, it's pudgy, it's genderless and it's mine.



Together, these two revelations about my illness and my gender brought me to a place where I can be an ally to my own body. It wasn't easy: at first I was bitterly angry at my body for getting sick right when I needed to rely on it to help me with my goals, and I saw it as a traitor both for that and for the crippling dysphoria which would occasionally catch me off guard and shut me down until it passed. Even now, a surprise health problem has the power to throw me back into a state of powerlessness and fear around my body, but I have developed a toolkit to (at least) survive my own anger. Sometimes this looks like spending three days watching Netflix until I feel vaguely ok, and that's ok.

I know now that I'll never get anywhere without love and care for my body, without accepting it unconditionally in its entirety. I am dysphoric, I am sick forever. I can either hate it for those things which will never change, or I can accept it as it is. I am inflamed. I am delicate. I can be both strong and delicate. I am my own biggest ally and my body is the only one I will ever be able to depend on. The illness is a tool; a self defence mechanism; an honest friend; a carer; a disability.



Artie Carden
Twitter: @artiecarden_
Instagram: @artiecarden

Ode to my Binder

Body dysphoria is a funny thing
My binder takes it away on a masculine day
It flattens my chest and gives me a rest
From the feelings breasts bring

At times, I don't want to remove it
I'm limited to eight hours and will need hot showers
At night I'll regret if I fucking forget
My ribs will be screaming "You stupid shit!"

With my chest compressed, I feel less depressed
Every morning, my ribs give out a warning
"If you forget your painkiller, you're in for a thriller!"
So I'm stressed; I just want to be well dressed!

At men, I'd only glance some
I've done a lot of crying, 'coz I'd rather be dying
But I've put down my razors and now wear blazers
Because I finally look handsome

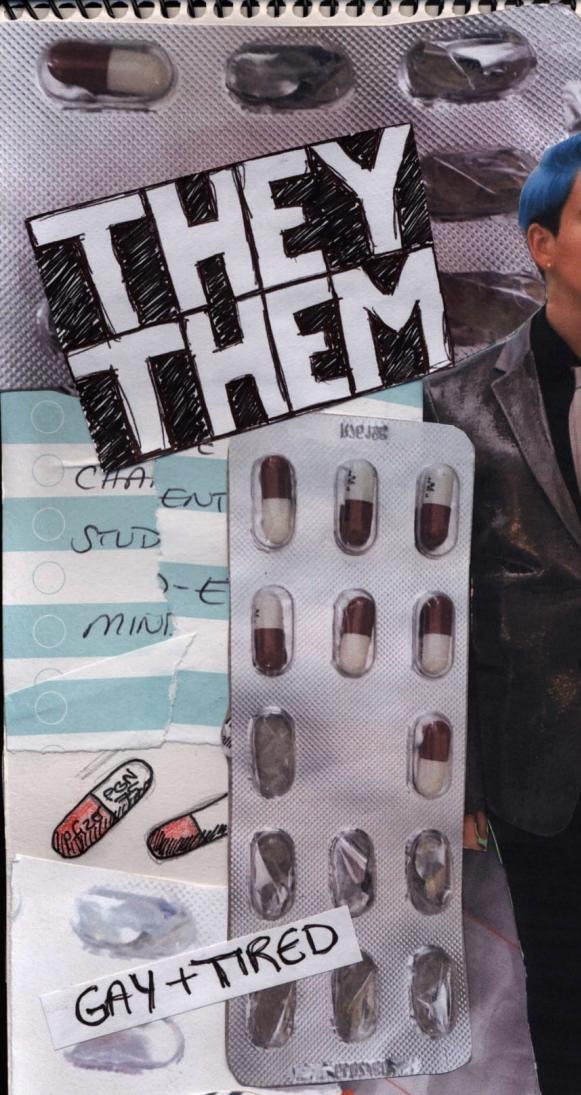
M T W T F S S

THEY THEM

CHA.
ENT
STUD
D-E
MINI.

GAY + TIRED

WAITING
FOR MY MEDS
TO KICK IN
...



Isn't it bizarre

When a thing like disability is the turning point in life?

Isn't it just tragic

When that's what it takes.

Isn't it just fucking *tragic*?

I couldn't love my body until a disease mangled it.

My self-confidence teetering on a precarious ledge

I couldn't love my soul until I hated my body.

Crohn's took my freedom, it took my sexuality, it took my *femininity*

A scar raked down my abdomen

A canyon of white tissue

Go on prednisone, turn into a balloon-faced hunchback

Go off prednisone, turn into a sickly-pale skeleton

When surgery after surgery does no good, I futilely rage against the inevitable

When a midnight infection creeps up and nearly extinguishes me

Early morning, alone, the doctor says "this is your only chance"

Mom weeping on the telephone

Wake up with brand new dysphoria

The dreaded ostomy bag

The death of beauty, youth, self-confidence, humanity

The alarm that shouts "WARNING: Disabled"

God, it took years.
To learn how to cope.
To map this new, foreign thing to my body.
To realize that I have value beyond what my body can offer.
To then realize that my body DOES have value, regardless of what it looks like.

10 years post diagnosis

"I'm losing my queerness" I tearfully admit to my husband
The confused man silent but supportive
"I'm feeling weird about gender"
Isn't it just fucking tragic
Isn't it just fucking *beautiful?*

By Kelly Bracken

Instagram: @critterbiscuit

I used to draw my hair as made up of

words

& squiggles

said its size

accounted for my

extra tears

Thought of it cheerfully,
as scribbles

Consciousness my bright-kid strangeness made
legible - illegible
twisting my head

Even when I cut it off, my

thoughts
will
not
grow
straight

Any more than I am
Any more than my feet can

Crossing lines, the arms
of hands with letters

learning how to look after my hair: it twists
without tangling into knots

Hair reads:

[Cosy— the universe's fluff
overflowing
big brain beneath bigger
hair]



I used to draw my hair as made up of
Words and squiggles,
Said its size
accounted for my
'Extra brains'
Thought of it, cheerfully, as scribbles
Consciousness, my bright-kid strangeness made
Legible-illegible
Haloing my head

Even when I cut it off, my
Thoughts will not grow straight
Any more than I am
Any more than my feet can
Crossing lines, the curls of handwritten letters

Learning how to look after my hair: it can twist
Without tangling into knots
~2017

By Mi

Twitter: @strigidnarrator

5 week post-op update: Poem: "I Did Nothing All Summer!" - E.L.M.

"I Did Nothing All Summer!" I say,
As I look through your photos:
- Of holidays,
- Of work parties,
- Of payday shopping sprees,
- Of Smartphone snaps from Pokemon Go!
I didn't have such adventures.

I didn't always sleep in my own bed.
But not in festival tents,
Not in my 5 star hotel room,
Not spooned up with a holiday romance.
But on hospital wards,
Where everyone else sleeps off their pain,
Drugged up to the eyeballs.
Everyone who isn't you.

Back then, I couldn't even handle a blood test.
An everlong needle phobia stood in the way,
Of all I ever wanted.

I'm still fearful:

- Of needles,
- Of cannulas,
- Of IV drips
- Of infection
- And unexpected stitches spiking out of places you don't expect.

But I did it!

Some Summer stories are illustrated by photos,
Mine may be illustrated by scars.
They aren't exactly pretty,
But beautiful, they are.

I'm soon to graduate,
Face yet another big day in my life.

Be faced with questions,
About what I'm doing with my life now.

- Why I'm not working (yet)
- Why I'm not studying (yet)
- Why I'm not travelling (yet)
- Why I haven't moved out (YET)

My CV hasn't updated itself,
But my body has.

- From recovery to setback;
- Setback to recovery.

Time and time again, I faced my biggest fears,
Developed new ones in the process,
Heard stories from inspiring people,
Watched people change lives,
Had my own life changed,
For the better.

So you may appear successful,
And proud,
And rightfully so!
But no better or worse,
Than Myself,
And Others,
Who Did "Nothing" All Summer.

Don't you want
shot pre

comes here please come

Please
she please
to do
off don't

you call me
in case I
please

You know you will. I know you will
know with. I know you will

Asthma and chronic pain flare up whenever I wear a binder.

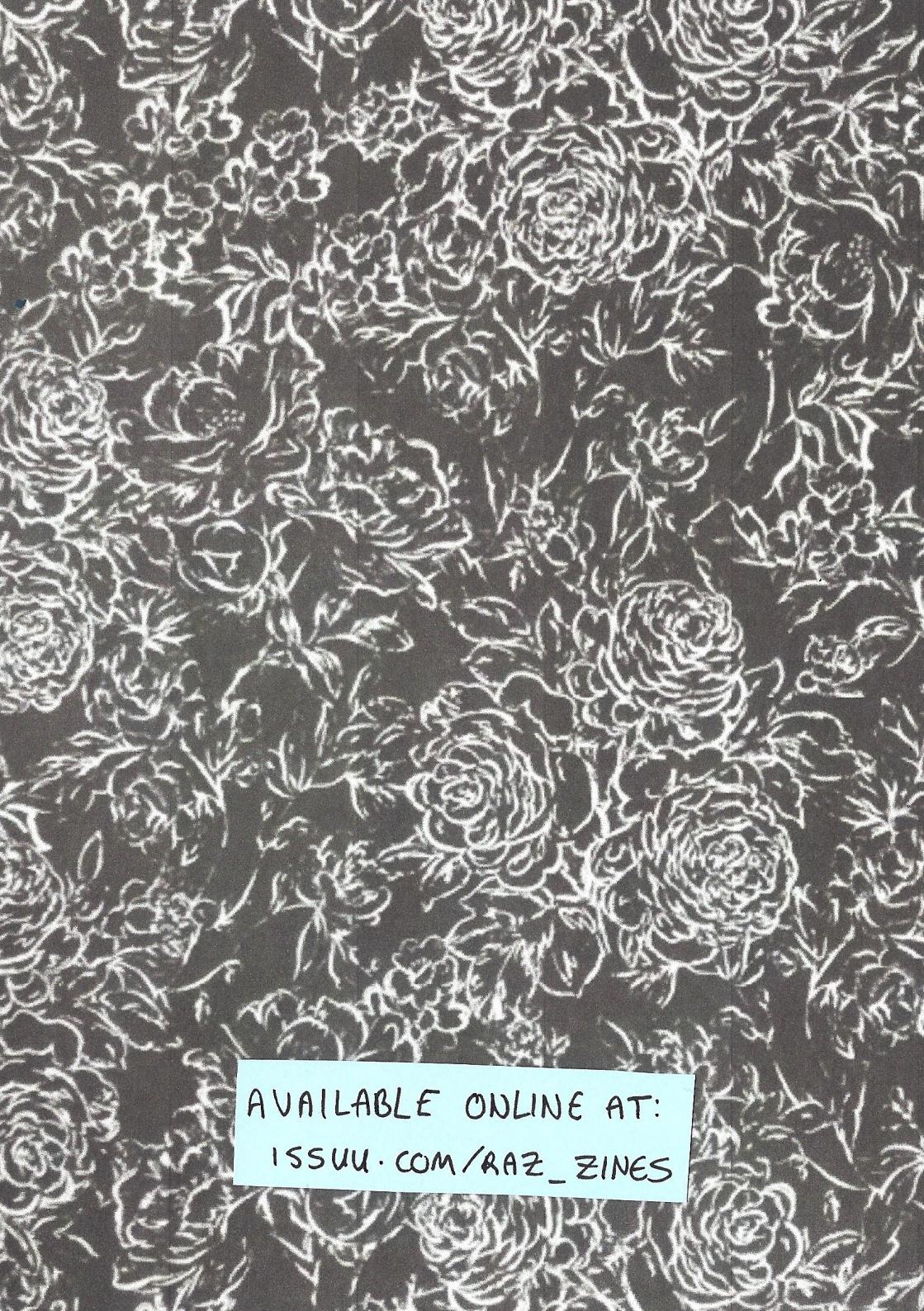
And because of my illnesses, I'm too exhausted from the constant fatigue and low spoons to keep up an "androgynous" look -- with or without a binder, my hair is too long, my face is too round, my hips too wide. People look at the shape of my body and all they see is female, whether I am constricting my chest or not.

But still, if I don't bind -- people ask me, am I even trying?
How can I call myself nonbinary when I look just like a tired
cis woman?

By KM

Instagram: [@aliceinsketchland](https://www.instagram.com/aliceinsketchland)

[Image description: a pair of red lungs connected by a blue windpipe and bronchi are inside a black cage with narrow bars. The top and bottom of the cage resemble the edges of a vest, with the blue windpipe poking up through the neck hole. Between the lungs is densely packed small writing.]



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[ISSUU.COM/RAZ_ZINES](https://issuu.com/raz_zines)