

Under Construction

When I tell you that I'm getting top surgery
you give me a confused, worried look,
ask if I'm mentally well and
lean in towards me, waiting
for me to answer your questions

I'm can't wait for top surgery

I can't wait for see-through tops, for unbuttoned shirts,
for something skin tight, for swimming in just my little
red shorts

I can't wait to donate my old binder, now defunct as my
shape-shifter, and seeing someone else find comfort in it.
This garment has been a 7 year wardrobe staple and my ribs
could use a very long break.

I can't wait to decorate my scars with ink, to reveal this
art piece to the world and hold myself wide.

I can't wait for my body to feel like a home.

When I say I'll be "happier"
you assault me with your doubt
an endless barrage of questions that slide off me
How can you not see that your "concern" is just repackaged
transphobia?

I can't wait to be what I have always wanted, and getting
to show those on the road behind me that waiting isn't all
a trans person is made to do. I don't care if you can't see
my trans joy for what it is, because that doesn't make the
feeling any less true.

I can't wait to hug my friends with all of me - our hearts
closer to each other than ever before.
I can't wait for the joyful relief to come, to be done with
my pain, which is well-documented in a bloated archive.
Now, I will build myself a new wonderful library and share

it with all the stunning acts of self creation I am blessed
enough to witness.

I'm well aware of how difficult this will be, and I'm not
looking forward to the drains, the clinging hospital smell
and not being able to lift my arms higher than *this* for two
whole weeks. But none of these things remove my excitement.
These things are just tiny inconveniences by comparison.

I can't wait for what I will be once the bandages, scabs
and numbness have all fallen away.

I can't wait for being content. For not feeling at odds
with myself all the time. For having room to grow into a
newly freed up space.

Even still, you don't relent.

I can't wait for feeling shower spray on new skin, for
feeling well enough to stand tall, for walking with that
long-lost spring in my step, for being held, for the new
clothes I'll get to wear, for bulking out my shoulders, for
parties and tattoos and the scars and jumping and strength
and lightness and talking and breathing and breathing and
breathing and being able to breathe.

I can't wait for top surgery. I can't believe I made it
this far, that I am living in the *lead up* rather than a
formless *before*. Soon, I will feel more real than ever
before.

Grand Reopening

I saw myself in the mirror for the first time

I saw myself in the mirror
and cried for a decade
after about as long spent sweeping
away my joy to wait
for this perfect, sacred moment.

You were with me in the downpour
because being alone would have
left me soaked and cold.

You ask me how I'm feeling.

Right now, I am magnificent
I am a bus that arrives on time
I am the downpour that breaks the heatwave
I am mycelial, fungal, sprouting
I am trying to come up with allegories
I might just be an allegory? An adjective?
Am I a magnificent downpour of adjectives?

More. So much more. That's what I am.
There's more space for me in here now.

You understand this, you were there with me.
You held me in my overwhelm
and smiled when I had the space
between sobs to feel it.

Neither of us were keeping track of time,
and before we knew it
the tears had all been spent.
Part of me wishes I could well them up again
for the curious,
but another part of me is glad this only
happened once.

There is no going back.
No finding ways to better understand it,

to capture it.
A definition that feels *whole* is unreachable.

With the impossibility of a diagnosis,
I can instead share the co-morbidities.

Quiet breathing filled the moments
between ecstatic sobbing.
Before, I would recoil at the sound.
Now I welcome the reminder of how
undeniably in the world I get to be.
I can feel for my heartbeat without
contorting my hand to lay vertically
down my sternum.
Knowing I'm alive
comes easily.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
I want to reach for my camera to
use up all the film.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
I run my fingers along my scars
and feel rooted in my own soil.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
I see all those behind me who will
one day have their own reflection too.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
the numbness, the drains, the binder
were all worth it.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
I want to treat myself to a good dinner
at a table overflowing with family.

Now, when I look at myself in the mirror
I breath, I smile, I pose
and feel grateful that
I'm here to see it.