

A LETTER TO CISTERS

by Stephanie Jewel, 2018

I am **not** a stepping stone

To explore how well others accept me
Even if I am part of your inner circle

I am **not** your main attraction

I am **not** a show

As if in a circus

A freak for others to see

To nod, to judge, to tell me

How well I am being me

I am **not** a choice

Stop fucking saying it

Because if that was true

We all chose to be a woman

Thus, we all made a choice

Not just me

I **don't** present myself as a gender

Exhibit: *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*

Location/Phase: Part 3: Toronto

Witness: Fallon Andy

Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe

Add'l info: P03 P07 K0101

Date: JUN 11 2018

Initials

63

I/D

Entered

13

So stop fucking asking me about it

I express who I am

My clothes

My accessories

My hair

Remove them all

And still, it is just me

A woman

I am **not** beautiful

For a transgender

Oh! I didn't think you'd kiss

Like a woman

Duh!

Oh, you know more about makeup than I do and I was born a
girl

Fuck

You

I learned

I took time to try it and adapt to it

I allowed myself to fail

Who dresses you and does your makeup?

Fuck

Off

I am neither successful

Because you see me as a woman

As if these are my only qualities
My only gifts
I have a past
A present
And a future

I am **not** your entertainment
I **don't** do shows
I am **not**
A fucking
Drag
Queen

I **can't** teach you a thing or two
Being feminine
What the fuck does that mean?
As if I needed to compensate
As if you
Needed to tell me
How much more of a woman I am than you

Don't joke about being surprised I am trans
When so many
Struggle to be accepted and affirmed
And we all come up with terms like
"Visibly trans" or

You "pass" very well

I **shouldn't** have to look like a woman

To join a group for women

And yet, no questions arise

When a butch cisgender woman arrives

And fuck you

I am **not** being brave

Courageous for being me

Isn't that all what we are looking for?

To be ourselves

Authentically

Truthfully

In every

Moment

Of

Our

Life

Don't assume

What I am comfortable doing while having sex

What do you care if I have a penis or a vagina?

Why do you assume I want to use one or even the other?

If you ask me that question

Because of morbid curiosity

Fuck
Off

I am **not** disgusting
Because I express physical interest in another human
It **isn't** gross
If you express to others you have a physical interest in me
I am **not** a secret
For you to carry
Ashamed
Of others
And what they will say
Fuck
You
Be strong
For yourself
And for me

In the end,
You should know
I **haven't** changed
I have grown

Don't just tolerate my presence
In your space
Tolerating that I am

A transgender woman

Not just a woman

A transgender woman

As long as I am happy

Right?

Oh, is it that simple?

Or are you avoiding the work you need to do

Internally

Shifting your own perceptions

Fighting your conditioned behaviours on gender and
sexuality

Don't just accept my presence

In your space

Accept

I am

A

Woman

Like

All

Other

Women

Do affirm my presence

In your space

Affirm I am
A woman
Protect me
Give me
The same thing you would give to any other woman
Because
You know
I am

At the core
We are the same
But labels
Differ us
And you propel these labels
To keep me separated
As if to keep an asterisks beside the noun woman
Fuck
That
Star

Remind yourself this
I was born a girl
But you raised me as a boy
You damaged me
From the start
And still

Continue to
Prevent me
From being
Fully
Me