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Nameless

Emjay Díaz
Humboldt State University

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Nameless

Emjay Díaz

Everything changed the day I decided to cut my hair short. Transitioning from middle school to high school was difficult. I got the stares from head to toe. Some students looked confused, others just went their separate ways. Students had no choice but to deal with me because we went to the same school. The routine of freshman year was: go to school and survive. The first couple of days of school were all about being alert, scared, and anxious in silent panics. I thought choosing which restroom to use would be my biggest concern, but the struggle involved all sports, the locker rooms, classmates, teachers, and unfortunately, family and friends as well. Ignorance frustrates me, but I also sympathize to a certain point. Many people who live in marginalized communities may not have the education and knowledge on certain topics. Not being open-minded, being exposed to only one point of view, may cause harm to people, to some intentionally and others unintentionally.

This is what happened. My biology teacher did not show up one day, so we had a substitute teacher. I disliked when we had subs in high school, especially during my freshman year. After my freshman year I got used to it. The sub was a lovely woman of color whose name I forgot, the experience though has stayed with me. I hated roll call. I didn't dislike my name but my appearance, my gender performance, made roll call an event. I did not hate my appearance. "Oh, damn! I do look very handsome when I get my fresh cuts!" HAHA. :) I hated roll call because I feared teachers would question my appearance because my gender performance did not match my name.

So we had this sub and she was calling roll and then got to my name: "María Diaz?" That day I did not see it coming, honestly. I raised my hand; she looked at me and looked at the roll call. I was chilling, trying to be cool, fuck man my blood was boiling slowly.

She said, "You are joking right? Guys, I have no time to be playing around." I showed her my notebook, somehow I thought it will validate who I was, but not even my classmates were able to convince her I was the person named María Diaz indeed. That exchange was only a sixty second conversation, after which I stormed out of class. My mood changed in a flash. It sucked having to deal with a daily exclusion from my life, at school and at home.

I walked and took deep breaths, drank some water and went back to class. Where else was I going to go? I had no one and nowhere to run to. That single event changed me, scarred me, yet also strengthened me. I know now, in college, that I may be singled-out and targeted because of my complex identities, but now that will not stop me. I will not be stopped by one name.

I am...

A Person of Color Lower Class Working Class
Non-Binary Transgender Queer Gay Both Woman Man
Marginalized Oppressed Discriminated Strong
Determined Powerful Disgraced Excluded Included
Strong Educated Destructible Unstoppable Unbreakable

Lovable

I am me,

And no one can to tell me who I am and who I am not,
who I should be or should not be,
what to do or not do.

I do not have to validate myself to anyone,
not even you...

You be you and do you.