

Normal Conversation

By

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The World Can Know (2023-04-23: #1000)

Commissioned jewelry pieces in copper
Led to a momentary show-stopper;
An artist who has learned to read me well
(Who has been part of the story I tell
As I've experimented more and more
With identities never shown before)
Used both he and they in a post online.
I paused with a thought in the brain called mine
And realized both the pronouns he and they
Left *my* heart, mind, and soul feeling okay.
My possessive term remains singular
Despite having been called both him and her
Over the course of the year just gone by
Based on signs I'm not a typical guy.
In fact, with this first purposeful pairing,
That I have to admit left me staring
And asking about the artist's intent,
To the moon and back was where my soul went.
Embracing bits of feminine each day
I find myself lifted by "he and they."
The words capture what I have been and see
On the life path that spreads ahead of me.
Attire, leadership, friends, and emotions
Each reflects my very strong devotion
To being my whole and very true self,
Not just a guy like a *Ken* off the shelf,
But the multiple facets of the "me's"
Reflecting both gender identities
People often label as "expected",
Even though nature never directed
There should only be two from which to choose
Rather than a spectrum of many hues
Going beyond binary blue and pink
Allowing for what each chooses to think.
I think, no I know, I want to push on
Assessing what I feel each day at dawn
About whether that particular day
I feel more like a "he" or like a "they".
I choose joy by being the truthful me
Showing my personal reality
In all its wonderful complexity
Presenting myself for all to see.
With all the choices about what I show
"He" or "they," both okay, the world can know.

I am in the process of becoming (2023-04-30: #1002)

I am in the process of becoming
A person who believes in who they are,
A person I can understand better,
A person who's more multifaceted,
A person with both breadth and depth in life,
A person with recognizable style,
A person of both empathy and joy,
A person I would like to hang out with.
And it would be more than just hanging out...
Investing companionship time to run
With someone who shows permanent stories
With them at all times in colorful ink
Or dark black lines and sometime shades of gray;
With someone who mindfully makes a choice
To wear an anklet that expresses joy
Through its design and being worn daily—
At least when the weather facilitates
Baring ankles to the surrounding world;
With someone who wears very bright colors
In which to run around tracks and on roads,
Each set of leggings represents something,
Almost ev'ry shirt tells a race story,
And each head covering has a meaning.
Investing coffee and shared story time,
Speaking at length of the times of our lives
Of classes to be very creative,
Of accessories being collected,
Of accessories worn throughout the day.
Investing time to be with my likeness
To share moments of closeness over time
As I dress and act and feel like someone
With whom I would want to be very close.
In the process of becoming someone
I would like to invest time to be with,
It turns out others around me do, too.
Building myself; building community.

Fitting and Belonging (2023-07-25: #1029)

Fitting into a new situation,
Or a new environment or workplace,
Classroom or circle of acquaintances,
Is much like being a contortionist—
As one twists and bends themselves into space
That is not where one is supposed to be.
Some may cheer for such an accomplishment,
While others wonder, “Why make the effort?”
A contrast with a place of belonging
Where one is welcomed with wide-open arms
And invited to join the gathering
Just as they are, however they may be.
Expecting encouraging belonging,
While finding that one must try to fit it
Can be both painful and discouraging.
The opposite is a pleasant surprise.
Growth can occur after a person fits,
And after a while finds a way to grow
And to break out of the space they fit in,
And welcome others to the gathering
With their own wide-open arms, so others
May belong from the start in the future.

Their Secure Place (2023-10-21: #1063)

They are standing in the kitchen
Near dusk on a summer evening.
The setting sun makes the sky orange.
That is visible
Through the open window,
And a soft breeze surrounds them.
Their partner has already turned in.
They are still in work clothes,
Having hurried home
After a long day at the office,
Picking up dinner on the drive home.
Italian hoagies aren't too messy;
They did not feel compelled to change to eat.
Neither did they feel compelled
To change to make banana pudding
To share with running partners
Just after sunrise in the morrow's morn.
So, there they stand at ease,
With light green skinny capri-length pants
Showing their hairless legs from mid-calf down,
Pointed flats on their feet
That enjoy contact with hardwood floor.
The shoes are a sour apple green
That precisely matches the pants.
For a moment, they push a shoe off
Preparing to wiggle and crack their toes,
The sleepy cat looks over
And sees the yellow-painted toenails.
The cat goes back to sleep,
The shoe is slipped back on,
The sole of the flat taps on the floor and
A random barred owl
Asking, "Who cooks for you?"
Is audible at the unexpected hour
And catches their attention.
Their shirt is a solid black halter tank
They sometimes wear without a blazer
When teaching showing shaved underarms.
The light blue blazer they wore to work
Is draped over the back of the kitchen chair.
The lapel pin, shaped like a light green hand,
With the word grown spelled out on the fingers
Remains on the blazer.
They have three piercings in each ear lobe
And a hoop in the left helix.
The lobe piercings are decorated
With a series of three silver earrings:

A mixed of hollow and filled circles—
Six in front, four in the middle,
And a tiny two in the back.
Their necklace is a silver chain
With a similar pattern of eight circles.
They also have a copper anklet
With small stones
That are the non-binary flag's colors,
Along with a silver anklet
With beads in Morse code for “choose joy”.
They wear several bracelets
With bright colors and hammered silver,
Some in the form of cuffs,
Others quietly showing non-binary colors.
They breathe deeply as they stir pudding
Over and over, meditatively,
The smell of gently warming cow milk
With sugar also in the pot
Mixing with the body scent
Of sandalwood, pear, and gardenia.
They chose to reapply the scent
Just before coming home for dinner.
The calm dog on the room's other side
Knows the owner by the body scent
And remains asleep
As the pudding is being made.
They look forward to the group run
On the next weekend day
With friends whose presence
Invariably brings joy.
The pudding is beginning
To appear and feel thicker.
They continue to stir.

Headshot Smile (2023-10-28: #1069)

Leggings that are not boring solids.
One piercing—then two— then four—
Then seven—including a helix.
Not just studs and little hoops
And gems in dark colors,
But dangling and bright and big hoops.
Hair on the head growing ever longer.
Hair removed from other body parts.
Colorful and floral and butterfly shirts.
Not just legging capris but dress capris.
Reading stories with women characters
To whom I relate to and feel empathy.
Looking somewhat feminine.
Feeling somewhat feminine.
Having only female friends.
Wondering where wandering ends.
I am a bit stalled,
But it is a comfortable stall.
Not trying to make an engine restart.
But taking in the scenery,
Taking a deep breath,
And pondering what will grow
My headshot smile that is driven by joy.

Only Sounds (2023-II-II: #1076)

They slept in nothing but anklets
And took time to put on dangling
Earrings before they took their dog
Out for his 5K morning walk.
Along with a splash of scent
For no particular reason
On their walk before 5 AM,
Other than for how they felt
They wanted to feel for themselves.
Sorting the mix of who they are
On a walk through the silent night.
Ironic that on the TV
That morning they'd heard the old song,
Simon and Garfunkel singing
Of darkness and sounds of silence.
Silence without other people
And, also, without other dogs
With fitness centers not open
But people in their cars outside.
Only sounds were rare passing cars,
And earrings brushing rough facial hair.
They could just enjoy the moment—
Freedom to be all that they are.

Dream Meaning (2023-11-16: #1077)

They dreamed their leg hair had grown long again.

Not long as the character Chewbacca,
But longer than before they'd started to shave.

Leg shaving was a journey, from keeping
One calf tattoo clear, to two, to whole legs.

That journey was part of something larger.

A transformation in presentation
A transformation in their sense of self.
Not discarding self, but evolving self.

Being the type of person believing
That everything in life means something,
They tried to interpret their sleeping dream.
Particularly as the hair stood on end,
Like they'd passed static electricity—
Each leg hair sticking out with emphasis.

Could it be regretting transformation?
That did not seem to be very likely
As both the dream and wake-up included
A very strong sense of consternation.

Could it be that some of their feminist
Female friends were choosing to focus less
On controlling leg hair as suggested
By some parts of modern society,
And they were trying to be like those friends?
Perhaps, but the dream did not otherwise
Include any sense of activism.

Could it be that somehow they had ignored
Leg shaving for a length of time because
Higher identity priorities
Had to be given precedence a while?
Perhaps, but that would be a very long
Period of neglecting one part of
Their evolving identity process.

Could it be just a reminder to them
Of the need to continue evolving,
Of recognition of complexity
Of personal life long evolution,
Of the fact that evolving can be hard,
Or that evolution involves hard work

And that that work continues a lifetime,
And the fact that while the journey so far
 Had not been incredibly difficult
 There is no guarantee that as the work
 Continues it will not become harder.
With that, the brain was testing willingness
That they had to continue on their path.
 That meaning appeared satisfactory.

They rolled over ready to continue.

Sufficiently Feminine Kinship (2023-11-17: #1078)

How am I presenting as feminine?
How am I presenting as masculine?
I am aware I am presenting as both
And am building up my understanding
Of my non-birth presentation impact.
I would never dream of my hand touching
The earrings of an acquaintance except
For the earrings of my very close friends.
A female colleague recently reached out
To touch one of the three pairs of earrings
I was wearing one coffee-sharing day.
She commented on how well I had matched
The earrings' roses from broken china
With the color of the blazer I wore
Noting my creative life tendencies.
I wondered about the earring touching
But did not find it inappropriate.
Weeks later, in a lunchtime discussion,
I asked a friend who listened and answered,
"Welcome to a part of a woman's world."
She commented on the degree to which
She feels my feminine presentation
From the times we have crossed paths over time.
She noted discussions about earrings
Or other accessories are common
In some circles with accompaniment
Of a willingness to touch and be touched.
Perhaps those around me feel that I have
A sufficiently feminine kinship
To be welcomed into this expression.

Standards (2023-II-18: #1079)

More than a half century of living
With familiarity of language
And standard social conventions saying
This is the thing to do or what to say.
Just because I am now interested
In exploring new boundaries in life
Does not mean that standards and conventions
Instantly disappear and go away.
So, what are words those around me should use
To describe how I am seen and perceived
In my clothes and shoes and accessories?
Should there really be anything to say?
What if the situation were reversed
When my identification was clearer,
What would have been appropriate for me
To say to a colleague on any day?
Is it so different now that it's me
With the complementary bright colors
And earrings that are coordinated
And I'm told bring out color in my eyes.
Handsome and cute were rarely used for me
Before the word elegant guided me
But now that the word is central to me
Perhaps there should not be any surprise
When those around me choose to make comments
About appearance using words such as
Beautiful or pretty and the offer
That I proceed before them through a door.
Perhaps if comments were not positive
And social situations were not nice
I would be aware in different ways
And not wish for those standards any more.
So, for me, and those with me on each day,
Whether old standards stay or go away
I hope each feels free to politely say
Please go first, you look marvelous today.

Setting Free (2023-II-18: #1080)

I had rarely been called handsome or cute
But as I've changed daily presentation
I've been called pretty, beautiful, and told
My style's fabulous, no hesitation.
Sometimes those around me choose to comment
On attire not considered "guy-routine,"
Recently, I was told that my green earrings
Bring out color that is seen in my eyes.
The person who'd been complimentary
Thought about appropriateness out loud.
I found the comment not problematic
And did not think it should be disallowed.
My image of myself is elegant,
And I am glad others view that in me,
But I would not want to be judged all the time
Always worrying what others will see.
Surprise of being told someone saw green
In eyes that I always describe as blue
Made me ponder, "What are my true colors,
In my eyes and all that is on view?"
True colors require me to look with depth
Seeing more than is seen with a quick glance
Taking time to examine and ponder
To understand with care, not only chance.
To understand parts of me beyond style
And aspects of gender presentation.
I think some "meta" about how I think
About gender identification,
Not just attire and with whom I spend time
But how I process the world in my mind.
What are comments I should expect to hear,
And things like walking in front or behind.
I try to be ever more observant
Of all underlying motivation
To understand all that there is in me
Celebrating expansive creation.
Seeing all I am and what others see,
Being all I am and all I can be,
Releasing constraints and setting me free
Of bound'ries imposed by society.

Normal Conversation (2023-12-27: #1100)

She and they had a long conversation.
To the two of them the conversation
Between them that afternoon was normal.
They spoke of clothes that made them feel their best,
A completely normal thing to discuss.
They spoke of how those clothes made them appear
To themselves and to all society,
A completely normal thing to discuss.
They spoke of finding shoes that fit their feet,
A completely normal thing to discuss.
They spoke of finding shoes that made them feel
The way they were most truly meant to be,
A completely normal thing to discuss.
They spoke of their dreams and goals and missions,
A completely normal thing to discuss.
They spoke of their highest motivations—
Finding them and living them fully out—
A completely normal thing to discuss.
To the two of them the conversation
Between them that afternoon was normal.
They wished the rest of the world would agree.

A Vision (2023-12-27: #1101)

I have had a vision of a woman,
A vision that I believed I wanted
In a partner with whom I would spend time.
For much of life, that was all I believed
I could do with my feminine visions.
That was in what feels like the distant past.
In the time I have moved from "he" to "they,"
I have come to understand the purpose
Of the vision I have held for so long.
It was not a vision for a partner,
But instead a clear vision for myself,
For my own ongoing evolution,
For whom I was living life to become.
The placement or lack of bodily hair,
Some places, now, long and decorative
Other places to be shaven daily.
The style, colors, sparkles, and heels of the shoes.
The movement from ties to scarves for formal.
The bright pastel colors of pants and shirts
And the cuts and combinations of both.
Perhaps there will not be dresses and skirts
Or hormones or procedures in my life.
Perhaps there will be therapists for me
To have deep conversations on morphing.
The vision is being manifested,
The vision is coming to life each day
As I morph a little more completely
Into the person I see in myself,
Into the person I know in myself,
Into the person I am meant to be.