

Trans Upperclassmen in the Cast Changing Room Will Support Your Kid's Transition Even if You Won't

call it excessive

the way we use freshmen's fresh-picked names

all broken records playing the best part of the song

over and

over and

over and

over and

over and

over again

call it stereotypical

the pronouns they try on like bracelets

and how they change them

over and

over and

over and

over and

over and

over again

call it ridiculous

the protectiveness we feel towards them

we will feel it anew

over and

over and

over and

over and

over and

over again

call it anything you like

we will care for your trans kids if you do not care for them

and we will adopt them

over and

over and

over and

over and

over and

over again.

Iced Tea Lake

Since you asked me to lead, then I will take you there,
With holes in my shoes and my jacket threadbare
Though our path is not beaten, we make no mistake,
'Cause we're making the journey to Iced Tea Lake.

Leap over and crawl under hot metal fences,
Secretly enter through secret entrances
Lime-colored brush that we stomp through and break,
'Cause it's all in our path down to Iced Tea Lake.

Putrid old Bradford pears haunting our noses,
Summer intensifies that and the roses
But the sun beating down will not cause us to quake,
'Cause the canopy shields it from Iced Tea Lake.

Seagulls screech down in pure blue above land,
Our shrill backing track trekking through forest sand
Lighters and shot bottles litter paths we take
'Cause they were left by the last group at Iced Tea Lake.

If we walked through the forest and reached a great sand pit,
Then hopped a small fence (well, I crawled, since I knew I'd fit)
Walked 'til we saw the dirt path that we needed
Walked THAT 'til our journey was halfway completed
We'd hop a guardrail and hold it as we slither

Down untrodden paths, to not fall in the river
Then climb that guardrail we held onto so dearly
Returned to the other side, then, you'd see clearly
If we've made it to here without scratch, bruise, or break
Then you and I have arrived at Iced Tea Lake.

Ten Minutes From Where My Great Grandmother Was Born, I'm...

just

wishing

I felt close

to Sayreville.

The trees have no leaves,

and they haven't for months,

and the sight's so depressing

as we drive by that I look down

as my mom points out family homes.

Everybody else cares about this place.

My head is too heavy to feel it.

I reminisce on memories

from some months before, of an

acquaintance holding me

around the waist as

an audience,

electric,

sang and

shoved.

It was

his first pit

with just a friend.

It was my first time

for more than a minute.

I only knew his face, but

he had an extra ticket, and
there wasn't another soul here that
he could take to Philly to see a band.
My soul begged me to go to that show.
There would be a moshpit. I craved
energetic violence. He
only planned to be in
the pit for one song:
wanted to hear
Little League,
then we'd
leave.
When the
intro came,
guitar fading,
rising, he grabbed me.
Everything blurred, blue-green.
I held onto him for life.
Didn't want to lose my stranger
in the city stranger than we were.
But with the vocalist screaming, the crowd
bouncing off each other, this stranger
became less strange to me, and it
was four minutes later that
we emerged, not strangers,
but newfound brothers.
We sipped water.

We breathed in,
breathed out,
laughed,
sat down.

Took a few,
but needed more.

Right back in the pit.

As I reminisce on
our first show together, and
how we've intertwined like family,
his home so close to my ancestors',
I find real connection to Sayreville.
More than stories of decades now past.

The blood pooling under our skin
from the bruises of the pit
makes my "moshpit buddy"
my chosen brother

'cause genetics

can't bond us

like this

blood.

Addressing the Elephant

The name used in this poem is fake and not representative of any real person known to the author.

Ben
is loved
by his friends,
by his sweet cat,
by his coworkers,
by his acquaintances,
by his tabletop buddies,
by his family, I assume,
by his neighbors, though he just moved in,
by his students.

I
think of
how they say
his last name, it's
Mattis, but I say
Ben, I call him Ben, I
call him a lot of things and
they can't, and the difference between
me and them is thirty minutes and
luck.

We

meet at

the station.

I'm in his car,

then his apartment.

I tell him about my

classwork, my homework, my staff -

he knows all of this already -

Mr. Mattis shuts the blinds and says

he would never do this with a student.

Marsh Words

tell me about your writing
the rambling-on that muddles your poetry,
verbosity the audience won't understand,
words so thick i chew for hours to swallow the meaning
and i will savor every fatty second
entirely careless as to how "dreadful" you think you are
i am deathly aware of what it is
to create and to hate your creations
and if i need to wade through the muck of your self-hatred
to see your art, your writing, the window to your soul,
i will