

CREATIVE PIECES

Homesick

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Imagine the heat of a Toronto summer day, you are young and in love for the very first time. You are aware of your every heartbeat and you are learning what the true meaning of desire is. Every love song and movie tells you that it is beautiful to be young and in love, but this feels anything but beautiful because your family tells you that your feelings are not normal and that you are not normal. They tell you that you can no longer live with them because of who you have “chosen” to love. You feel terrified every time you enter your home because of what awaits you. Imagine what it feels like to discover that there is no such thing as unconditional love, just as you fall in love for the first time. Imagine feeling like a disease that cannot be cured, unless you no longer existed. So, you begin to wish that a car would hit you every time you leave the house.

Imagine the prospect of the streets or an alleyway feeling safer than your own home. But then being met with the same threats outside, because of the way that people stare at you and the homophobic slurs that are sent your way. Imagine discovering that your house is not a home, but just a house. No place feels like home anymore, because you do not have a home. This is when you realize that you are homeless. You begin to feel paranoid in the world. You become homesick and you cry yourself to sleep at night remembering when everything was fine and you were happy.

Imagine being told repeatedly by your parents and the rest of the world that you are not normal, but that if you were normal, you would be loved and you would have a home. Imagine what it feels like to not feel at home in this world. To feel so hopeless because there is no cure for you and you have no place to go. So, you spend every dollar you have just to ride the subway all day because that is where you feel safest and because that is where you can be away from the people who hurt you. Imagine feeling locked up by other people’s words.

This is the kind of hate that starts in the home and ends on the streets. This is the kind of hate that leads young people into institutions that are ruled by homophobic and transphobic policies. This is the kind of hate that turns to suicide. This hatred and the devastation that it results in is an emergency situation.

I Felt Homeless

Spoken by queer and trans youth experiencing homelessness, arranged by Jama Shelton

I feel homeless now
For the past 2, 3 years
So unstable in my environments
Mistake
I believe a lot of transgender women do
No support system
On the street, on the stroll
Can't go back home to my mom
She's not stable
She doesn't have a place
Everybody's homeless in my family
We don't talk anyone
Not an option for me
I feel homeless at my peak now
I don't have support when it comes to my family
They can't do anything for me
I've removed myself from those people
They're very negative
They don't support the fact that I'm transgender
They feel like I'm better off as a boy
They feel that I'm better off being what they want me to be
It just never, never would've worked out anyway

My first phone got cut off
When my phone got cut off
I'm like, I'm homeless
I don't work the stroll nothing like other girls
My phone was my life
I can't call nobody
All my friends that know me know my phone been on forever
That number means a lot to you
That number
I just want the number
My phone got cut off
I got depressed
I was like, oh my god, I'm homeless
My whole world ended
Oh my god I just, I'm homeless
I'm homeless, honey
That's when I realized I was homeless

I was never black enough to be black
And I'm not white
I'm not quite one or the other, to a lot of people
I'm one of your own and you're gonna treat me that way
I straddle the line between boy and girl too
I'm the yin and the yang
I'm everything and nothing
At the same time
Being biracial, and then being trans
It's like you're caught in the middle
Bam! Being religious and queer, that's another
You're either queer or you're religious
Like you can't have that combination
I got every fucking combination on this planet
That's when I feel homeless
When people will try to categorize me
So you're just some thing
Go somewhere

This past weekend
I heard “he’s a big fucking he-she”
Two days I was on the street
I was gonna overdose
I was tired of everything
The people I was hoping to depend on they were like, we can’t let you stay
I was just done with everything

Sleeping on a bench
Spoken to my mother about wanting to make the change and she flipped
Got kicked out of there
You can’t stay here
Didn’t feel like I could go to my father with this
So I was homeless
Didn’t have anyone to turn to

Whenever I felt really, really homeless is whenever I had to sell myself
To buy my hormones or to afford to buy food
And I would still have no place to go and have to go sleep on a park bench

When I was 15
My mother was always out working
It’s that feeling that if I come out to her she might disown me and everything
She doesn’t really want me anymore
I am homeless and my mom doesn’t really want me to just be myself around her
It makes her feel embarrassed
It just dims me down

Sleeping on stoops and benches and trains but I never felt homeless
Until one morning – they each threw a beer can at me
I know how it feels now
It hurt
I wanted to go back to every homeless person I ever hurt and apologize
It’s lonely
People don’t know what you’re going through
I don’t think they realize
