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Ode to the Gender-Neutral Restroom

POETRY

When I say safety, I mean a door
that locks, tucked behind a corner
where even the light struggles
to define its own anatomy. Inside,
I tug my waistband down to my knees,
watch my flesh re-expand, spill
over the cold white porcelain like a secret
wrenched wet out of a mouth.
A friend once told me *I wish you had never told me*
what you are, and I wonder if it was me
or my body, the way it obfuscates, the way
it invites interrogation. Every day,
I wear my terror like a talisman,
hold my breath for moments
like these: half naked
and hunched over a toilet,
my shirt rucked up against the rolls
of my stomach, my shorts
at my ankles, my rib cage latched so tightly closed
that it hurts to exhale—
This all is to say, my worst fear is not
my own dickless shape
but that the world may see a boy
coming out of the gender-
neutral restroom, his eyes lowered,
his hands lashed
against his flattened chest,
and realize exactly what he is:
unidentifiable transgender object. ■