

“It is an absolute human certainty that no one can know his own beauty or perceive a sense of his own worth until it has been reflected back to him in the mirror of another loving, caring human being.” - John Joseph Powell

It was a choice.

Was it?

I never asked to be born this way- with

This skin

This skill

This sexuality.

I didn't ask to have this **gender**

Or this confusion.

It was a gift.

Was it?

Was it a gift?

To day by day, destroy my life

A little bit at a time.

Is a gift something

About you that others hate?

Is a gift something

That other people make you hate?

It is a beautiful look on you.

Colors are beautiful.

Words are not.

I am not a **pervert** because I am **gay**.

(No, I just wanted to love who I wanted to love.)

I am not a *criminal* because I am *colored*.

(I am a successful lawyer living in the Upper West Side.)

I am not a failure because I am poor.

(I scored 1550 on the SATs.)

I am all of these things

Because that is what you say I am.

It was meant to be.

Then why do you tell me to change myself?

Why do you tell me that I will go to hell for who I am?

God will not condemn me.

You condemn me.

It is what makes you special.

I don't want to be unique

Anymore

(Only the truly normal,

The average,

Wish for that.)

Because there's a price to everything
And I can't afford to pay.

It is what sets you apart.

A-P-A-R-T

Five letters that set me miles
Away from the rest of the world.

So what if I **used to be a male?**

don't believe in God?

didn't get the same chances in life that you did?

So what?

It's not my fault

It's just who I am.

I'm not telling you who you should be

So why are you telling me?

It's not like I went to bed one night

And went, "Oh, let's shake things up,

"Why don't I be gay tomorrow,

"And maybe, I don't know, a kid from the hood the next?"

I don't want to be different.

Isolated.

Alone.

I want to be like everyone else

But I want to be myself

At the same time.

Is that really too much to ask?

To just be accepted?

It is the best thing about you.

I don't want to have people think

That the fact that I can love those of the **same gender**

Or That I am a *different ethnicity*

Or That I don't believe in the same religion as them

Makes me great.

I want to be great

With things like

Art

Science

Math

Writing

And

Music.

I want to great

At the things I am good at-

The things I *worked* at-

Not from the way I was born.

It is nothing to be ashamed of.

Then why do you make me feel ashamed?
Why do you tell me there is something
Wrong with me?
I do not judge you based on how
You judge me because
I know.
I know the feeling
the hurt
the anger
the sadness.

But I judge you based on why
You judge me because
You don't know.
You don't know the feeling.
the hurt
the anger
the sadness.

You don't know what it's like to feel ashamed
And you don't know what it's like
To be made to feel ashamed
In the way that you do to me.

It is something no one can take from you.

But it is.
They can take away who I am
In **conversion camps**
In *hate crimes*
In the words and stares they give me every day.
They can take away who I am
In one second
Because the moment I begin
To doubt and hate myself
Is the moment I am no longer
My own person.

I believe that I should be
Protected
Sheltered
Unharmmed
Because I have done nothing wrong.
I am sorry if I offend you
But I did not choose this.
I am sorry if I offend you
But this is my life, not yours.

I am sorry if I offend you
But I will not apologize for who I am.

Do I not have rights

To be my own person?

To have my own qualities?

To love and be loved?

Do I not have rights

To be accepted for who I am?

To be given a chance without judging me first?

To not conform to the straitjacket of society?

Do I not have rights?

“Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe.” - Elie Wiesel