



Home Read About Masthead Submit
Support

Kafka's *The Gender-Affirming Surgery*

by Pascale Potvin

CW: body horror, gender dysphoria

I didn't know I was pregnant—didn't think beyond the fact that I was just femme, and kind of sharp-boned, anyway, for any reason behind my chosen name.

Yet every morning, I was waking up sore and my skin tingly, as if things were shifting. It got so bad I was nauseated—and you know how they say cravings can be a sort-of-hint about your baby's gender? I should have known, based on the volumes of ice cream I consumed in those months, that I'd soon be birthing a full-grown woman.

I regret that it happened at my sister's wedding—but, you know, stress can induce childbirth, and I had just been standing there reaching for a cocktail when my mother 'accidentally' called me Henry another time. I guess I couldn't take it. My skin flipped inside out, then and there—and, all the way pre-grown on the other side, a new face and chest and legs and all I hadn't realized I'd had in me took the foreground.

Everybody was screaming, and I was disowned quickly, but I've started to think that all our heads are maybe organs in someone else's body, too. Maybe, collectively, we'll soon flip into one, become one person with seven billion of them—and, even then, I don't think they'd have as many faces as my fake-woke mother, so everything should be okay.

Pascale is Editor-in-Chief of *Wrongdoing Magazine*. She is the author of *EROTECAY* (LUPERCALIA Press, 2021) and *Folktales for the Diseased Individual* (2021) and has placed work in *Juked Magazine*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *Gingerbread House Magazine*, and many others. She has a BAH from Queen's University. Find her at pascalapotvin.com or [@pascalepalaces](https://twitter.com/pascalepalaces) (Twitter).