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## LGBTQIA

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# What The Fuck Is Cheese?

Heather Wolf

I texted her at 3 AM.

I was already up,

reaching for the phone to tell her

the way she made me feel was like

cement drying in my stomach,

late night kisses drawn on the pavement

in my shaky child's scrawl.

“What the fuck is cheese?”

I texted her, even though I already knew the answer—

it's something good left alone for long enough,

growing mold until it makes something else,

something that tangs on your tongue like the words “I love you”,

which is what I was trying to text her.

But instead I say things like milk

in the hope it will make her laugh

so hard she will forget to clean me up,

and instead leave me out overnight

to grow mold.

## LGBTQIA

I sit down before you on the couch;

you're worried that your daughter's growing up too fast.

I find myself in a pew, you at the pulpit,

a straight woman preaching about the destructive nature

You tell me not to create boxes.

You don't remember the time before we were carpenters—  
when only they were allowed building permits—  
but now we have hammers and nails and wood that smells like home,  
and all we long for is a place to sleep  
where we're surrounded by familiar breathing.

Your room is a place of safety, but I tell you to knock it down.  
“There is no rain in this world,” says the woman with the umbrella,  
and you tell me I do not need labels because the world is ready,  
while you kiss your husband in public and do not feel dread.

In this world, a name is everything,  
and so when the young girl, huddled over her computer screen,  
finds a name for the things she is feeling,  
she finds a power you've known since birth  
and holds that name close like a blanket  
or a shiny penny—  
a promise to push through the cogs and wheels of her body  
to prove the machinery is not broken.

You say these labels divide us,  
but your last name is different from my last name  
and here we are sitting in the same room.  
You are not upset about the new identities,  
but because your daughter has been expanding her vocabulary.

Your daughter hears  
'faggot' and 'cunt' on the bus—  
words like prison bars—  
but I give her 'gay' and 'transgender'.  
You hand me your scrub-brush speech,  
asking me to erase progress like bloodstains outside of Stonewall.

When your God created this world,  
he gave Man the power to name.  
Shapes in the shadows became less scary  
because we knew them to be Monkey and Horse and Frog;  
the feelings inside us became less scary  
because we knew them to be Lesbian or Asexual or Queer.

We found our place in such a tribe,  
and you found your place in a God who gave us the power  
to build ourselves up from the ribs of  
Sakia Gunn and Matthew Shepard and Harvey Milk  
and call ourselves LGBTQIA.

} Heather Wolf