

i don't want to be afraid.

i don't want to be afraid

of the men on the street

staring at me

or the women in the restroom

throwing me dirty looks and sidelong glances.

i don't want strangers i talk to

to stare at my chest trying to decide

how to categorize me.

i want not to have to put people at ease

by telling them immediately

what my pronouns are.

i want not to have to worry about

taking off my rainbow lanyard

every time i use a truck stop restroom.

i want not to be afraid of the men's room.

i want not to worry about whether people think of me

as a man or a woman.

i want not to worry wherever i go

what people will say to me.

i want to be free, and queer, and fabulous, and exist without apology.

i want not to be afraid.