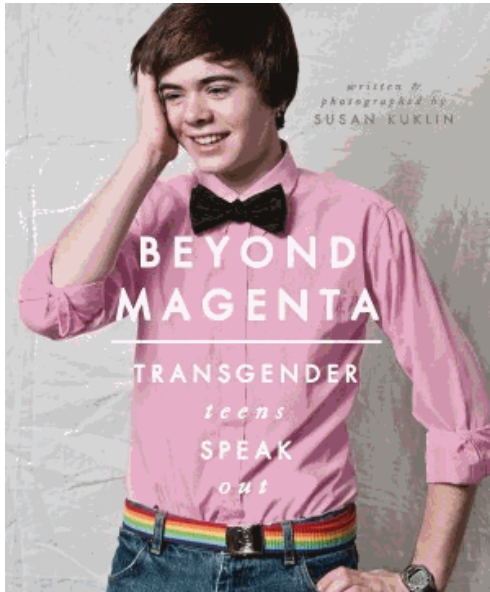


# BEYOND MAGENTA



*Young Adult*

**By Susan Kuklin**

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## **Book Summary:**

Transgender teenagers discuss their transitioning process.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains inexplicit sexual activities including pedophilia; alternate sexualities; explicit alternate gender ideologies; profanity and derogatory terms; suicide commentary; hate; and alcohol use by minors.

**2**/5

**Teen Guidance**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
8	My Facebook page says “male—so happy I’m taking T,” so I’m out there. (“T” stands for testosterone, a male hormone.)
9	I’m an only child, an only daughter. My parents call me their son now. ...One day I went into the boys’ bathroom with them, and my mom pulled me out. “You can’t go into that bathroom.” I was heartbroken. “Why can’t I go into that bathroom?” “You’re a girl—you have to act like one. You can’t always be with the boys.” From that early age, I knew that being a girl is not me—that is not how I feel.
13	During Jessy’s early high-school years, he didn’t know what the word transgender meant. He was only questioning his sexual orientation. He thought, Hey, if you like women and you’re a woman, then you’re a lesbian. He didn’t know about gender diversity because he was young. On the one hand, he wanted to please his family and be accepted by society. On the other hand, he knew something was not right.
16	When I was sixteen, I saw a TV episode about the transgender community, and the first thing that came into my head was “Oh, my god! That could definitely be me!” I was starting to come to terms with my sexual orientation. I wanted to be the masculine figure in a relationship with a woman, to be seen as a straight man attracted to women. I wanted to transition, but before I did, my mother had to be the first to know because we have always been so close. I knew that I could not go into transition without her knowing about it.
19	I said, “Mom, I’ve been reading a lot about the transgender community. I’ve been reading a lot about taking testosterone. I think that’s what I will be doing once I start my sophomore year in college. At the end of summer, I’m going to find a place where I can begin transitioning.” I said it to her just that way. ...I told my mom that I wanted people to see me as a man in a heterosexual relationship. I wanted to be referred to as he. I wanted to live my life as the man of the house, masculine. I know there are butch lesbians, and all that stuff, but I didn’t want to be that. I just wanted to be a normal man.
20	Two or three weeks later, I talked to my mom again. I told her, “I want to transition. I’m at a point where I’m responsible enough to carry on my transition.” ...My mom said, “I want you to blow the world away with your transition as a man. Start working out. Go to the gym. Look good. And you can’t be a fat man. No girl likes that.”
21	I don’t think my mother told my dad about me wanting to transition. He knew I was butch lesbian and that I was dating girls because I was bringing girls to the house back in Thailand. But he didn’t know about me wanting to transition.
22	Jessy went online to research transgender forums. The Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, in Manhattan, has a program called HOTT, Health Outreach to Teens, which helps transgender teenagers transition. Jessy went to the clinic, ready to take the necessary steps to transition to male. Not so fast. Before Jessy could begin the physical process of transitioning, he had to go through sixteen sessions of therapy. Sixteen? That would mean waiting four months. He wanted

Page	Content
	<p>the hormone shots now. Not now, yesterday!</p> <p>The therapist, Nicole Davis, explained that before he transitioned, he had to be sure that this was what he wanted to do. It's a matter of discovery, of self-exploration. As a trans male, Jessy will need hormone shots, testosterone, for the rest of his life. That's a big step.</p> <p>Nicole was amazing! I love her! I was very comfortable with her from the start. I'm so glad I had those sixteen sessions with her. It gave me the time to make sure transition was what I wanted, and to make sure I was ready to deal with certain obstacles that come with transition. Like, when to start using the men's bathroom, how to switch pronouns, and how to interact with my family and friends as a different sex.</p>
24	<p>Nicole told him that taking hormones was his choice, and his choice alone, but that he would be able to change his passport picture, and the clinic could write a letter explaining that he's transitioning, so he wouldn't have a hard time passing through customs. Finally, after thinking and talking and weighing his options, Jessy said to Nicole, "You know what? I'm ready! I want to transition. This is me! The world will have to just deal with it."</p> <p>In March 2011, I started taking testosterone injections. After being on them one month, my metabolism was crazy. I started noticing more underarm hair, and my muscle mass was increasing a little. People noticed the changes. Even Nicole said I looked a little bit different.</p>
25	<p>Maybe because I'm young, my body took in the hormones very fast. I got the shots every two weeks. For the first two shots, I had a half dose. That's the protocol. After the first two shots, you can decide if you want to keep to that amount or increase it to a full dose. How fast you want to transition is your personal choice. At first I thought I would not rush it. I would just do low doses of T and change slowly. But then, once I started to feel the changes and I started to see myself looking how I really, truly wanted to look, I got so excited. I wanted the full dose.</p> <p>...In the beginning, I told my friends that I was transitioning and they were, like, "Okay, what does that mean?"</p> <p>"It doesn't mean anything," I said, "but it would be more appropriate to call me he, instead of she, because it would match what I identify myself as and what I look like from the outside."</p>
26	<p>She prances around the train, singing: "I fucked a man up. Go get your pussy the fuck off the train."</p> <p>up. Go get your pussy the fuck off the train."</p>
27	<p>I was still going to the women's lockers. Then I thought, Wait! I'm getting further and further into my therapy, and sooner or later, I'm going to sound like, and completely look like, a man. So how do I handle the gym? I was close with the gym owner, so I planned to tell him, "If you start seeing me going to the men's locker room, it's because I've transitioned to male."</p> <p>I won't use the shower, though, since the bottom part of me hasn't changed.</p>
28	<p>Three months later . . .</p> <p>I pass one hundred percent as male now. Everything about me is very masculine: my voice, my facial hair; even my skin texture is thicker, rougher. I'm a lot more</p>

Page	Content
	<p>muscular. I was never able to do pull-ups; I had poor upper body strength. Now pull-ups are so easy. I have a lot more stamina, endurance. I lift things now and don't get tired.</p>
29	<p>Usually, though, I bind. A binder is a double layer of spandex that looks like a tank top. It's very tight so when you pull it over you it compresses your chest. Binding, honestly, is very uncomfortable. Binding makes it hard to breathe.</p>
36	<p>But yet I can't get rid of the fact that I was born a biological female. I've had the privilege of being born into a female body and living in a masculine body. I like the fact that I've changed my sex.</p> <p>God made me transgender for a reason. Maybe not God, but whoever created me. Whoever created me made me this way for a reason. I enjoy life from a different perspective. I can see the world simultaneously from a male and a female perspective.</p>
40	<p>I stick up for my friends, especially if they can't stick up for themselves. He was, like, taking it. I tapped Andrew's shoulder and said, "Why don't you just leave him the fuck alone?"</p> <p>And he said, "Shut the fuck up! You're a faggot too."</p> <p>"What did you say?"</p> <p>"You're a faggot! You're a faggot! You're fucking gay."</p> <p>"The reason you have a problem with this," I explained slowly, "is that you're gay and you're insecure about your own sexuality."</p> <p>We started arguing back and forth while the teacher was trying to teach class. The teacher looked over and asked, "Hey, what's going on over there?"</p> <p>And Andrew said, "Get this faggot away from me!"</p> <p>for themselves. He was, like, taking it. I tapped Andrew's shoulder and said, "Why don't you just leave him the fuck alone?"</p> <p>And he said, "Shut the fuck up! You're a faggot too."</p> <p>"What did you say?"</p> <p>"You're a faggot! You're a faggot! You're fucking gay."</p> <p>"The reason you have a problem with this," I explained slowly, "is that you're gay and you're insecure about your own sexuality."</p> <p>NSC</p> <p>We started arguing back and forth while the teacher was trying to teach class. The teacher looked over and asked, "Hey, what's going on over there?"</p> <p>And Andrew said, "Get this faggot away from me!"</p>
47	<p>While everyone else my age is saving up for a car or a house, I'm saving up to look possible. I'm saving up for a vagina.</p>
51	<p>By the time Jonathan was eleven years old, he told me he was gay. When he turned twelve or thirteen, he told my mother and she completely flipped out. "That's disgusting!" she said, and started crying. Then she said to me, "I hope you're not gay too."</p>

Page	Content
53	<p>Around the time I turned five, some guy on the street said, "YO! You're not supposed to be wearing those</p> <p>"Why not?" I always got defensive about this 'cause everyone was always telling me this.</p> <p>"Because you have a dick."</p> <p>"What's a dick?" I didn't know what that was.</p> <p>"Boys have dicks and girls have pussies."</p> <p>"Well, what's a pussy?"</p> <p>"A vagina."</p> <p>"Bagina?" I didn't even know how to say the word.</p> <p>"No. Vagina."</p> <p>"Oh, okay."</p> <p>Then he said, "So you're not a girl. You have dick."</p> <p>"Well, what is a dick?"</p> <p>"That thing that you have between your legs."</p> <p>And I'm, like, "I thought everybody has that."</p> <p>"No, not everybody has that."</p> <p>I thought, This man is crazy.</p> <p>said, "YO! You're not supposed to be wearing those</p> <p>"Why not?" I always got defensive about this 'cause everyone was always telling me this.</p> <p>"Because you have a dick."</p> <p>"What's a dick?" I didn't know what that was.</p> <p>"Boys have dicks and girls have pussies."</p> <p>"Well, what's a pussy?"</p> <p>"A vagina."</p> <p>"Bagina?" I didn't even know how to say the word.</p> <p>"No. Vagina."</p> <p>"Oh, okay."</p> <p>Then he said, "So you're not a girl. You have dick."</p> <p>"Well, what is a dick?"</p> <p>"That thing that you have between your legs."</p> <p>And I'm, like, "I thought everybody has that."</p> <p>"No, not everybody has that."</p> <p>I thought, This man is crazy.</p>
54	<p>A lot of people didn't approve of me. My neighbors cursed out my family. "You're raising a fucking boy! He's supposed to be wearing fucking boy clothes, not fucking girl clothes. You should go to jail for this shit." That's what they were saying.</p> <p>cursed out my family. "You're raising a fucking boy!</p> <p>He's supposed to be wearing fucking boy clothes, not fucking girl clothes. You should go to jail for this shit."</p> <p>That's what they were saying.</p>
54	<p>Eventually he came out to me and he became my best gay friend. He wasn't transgender. He was just gay.</p>

Page	Content
57	<p>I think that's why some of the boys later had trouble understanding my transition. In my eleventh-grade year, I said I was gay, and in my senior year, I said that I was a girl.</p> <p>I learned about transgender people when my brother Jonathan was dating a boy named Renee. No, I take that back. I learned about it when my brother started cross-dressing. He would dress up in women's clothes. He put on a wig and filled up bags with rice and put them in a bra. He went out in seven-inch stilettos and really short shorts.</p>
58	<p>My brother was dating a boy whose mother was transgender. He said, "My boyfriend's mom is transgender. She dresses like a girl and everything. She has the boobs and the hair and the body." When he showed me a picture of her, I was like, Wow, it is actually possible to change into a woman. I can't remember exactly when I did it, but one day I typed transsexual into Google. Transsexual is another way of saying transgender. The site said, "When a man or a woman, or vice versa, feels that they were born in the wrong body, and they want to be the opposite sex." And there were a whole list of things, like, if you want to wear women's clothes, if you wish you were born a woman—I can't really remember everything exactly—but if you are these things, then you're transgender.</p>
58	<p>When I was about eight, I was put in placement.</p> <p>...Two staff members always went with us. One was Kathy, the recreation person, and the other was Franklin. He was Puerto Rican, and a lot of people told us we looked like each other "cause I looked Spanish when I was a kid. And our names were almost the same, Frank and Franklin. Because we all liked Kathy, anyone who Kathy liked, we liked. They were really good to us. No abuse. No abuse at all. There was sex — what I would call curiosity sex. We were experimenting. Isn't that what a kid does at that age?</p> <p>...Two staff members always went with us. One was Kathy, the recreation person, and the other was Franklin. He was Puerto Rican, and a lot of people told us we looked like each other "cause I looked Spanish when I was a kid. And our names were almost the same, Frank and Franklin. Because we all liked Kathy, anyone who Kathy liked, we liked. They were really good to us. No abuse. No abuse at all. There was sex — what I would call curiosity sex. We were experimenting. Isn't that what a kid does at that age?</p>
59	<p>At that point, I had done my research. I told him, "I want to be a woman, but I'm very scared to do it. I'm afraid I'd be rejected by society, and that would make my life worse."</p> <p>"Well, whatever you do, you should do it after high school."</p> <p>"Okay."</p> <p>Then I read that if you wait too long, the hormones are not going to be as effective. If you take hormones at sixteen, you're basically going through another puberty stage. When you take hormones at forty, it kind of doesn't have the same effect. When you're sixteen, you're still growing. If you replace our hormones, you won't grow as tall or your bones won't be as big. That's why I wish I had started at sixteen. I wouldn't be so tall. I didn't get hormones until I was eighteen, which is when Callen-Lorde allows you to do it.</p> <p>At this point, only my school counselor and my brother knew that I was planning</p>

Page	Content
	to transition. My brother knew a lot of transgender girls. He took me around to the Village (Greenwich Village), the Village Pier on Christopher Street, where there are lots transgender girls. They fascinated me. They looked so real.
60	<p>Before I educated myself about what being transgender really is, I thought that I must be a gay person.</p> <p>The Google site said, “Sexual orientation has nothing to do with gender identity. There are gay transgenders and there are straight transgenders.”</p>
61	<p>Transitioning is a very long process. We go through stages. First we look like a man. Then we go through gender bending. And eventually we look like a woman. Gender bending is when you don’t look like a male and you don’t look like a female. You’re changing from one gender to another.</p> <p>My hair was short. With short hair, I looked like a boy. I had to grow it out. Because I was gender bending, I started to dress feminine. But I still looked like a boy.</p>
62	<p>When Mariah turned twelve, she was placed in a state hospital called Sagamore. She started gaining weight, lots and lots of weight.</p> <p>...This guy got me to perform oral sex on him. I thought I was doing the right thing by performing on him. But I wasn't. He was just abusing me. He had total mind control over me. He didn't have to get physical with me; he just knew where to hit me where it hurts emotionally.</p> <p>We finally got caught in the act, and I was very happy because I wanted it to stop. I think the directors were worried that they could get sued because they kept telling me it was consensual. It wasn't consensual at all. But I just wanted it to end. I wanted them to stop talking about it, so I agreed.</p> <p>Afterward, that guy told everybody on campus about us, and they all thought I was this big old homo. Other kids tried to have sex with me. Other kids wanted to abuse me. I was so confused. I was mad at myself, slow because of the medication, and I didn't know what to do. hospital called Sagamore. She started gaining weight, lots and lots of weight.</p> <p>...This guy got me to perform oral sex on him. I thought I was doing the right thing by performing on him. But I wasn't. He was just abusing me. He had total mind control over me. He didn't have to get physical with me; he just knew where to hit me where it hurts emotionally. We finally got caught in the act, and I was very happy because I wanted it to stop. I think the directors were worried that they could get sued because they kept telling me it was consensual. It wasn't consensual at all. But I just wanted it to end. I wanted them to stop talking about it, so I agreed. Afterward, that guy told everybody on campus about us, and they all thought I was this big old homo. Other kids tried to have sex with me. Other kids wanted to abuse me. I was so confused. I was mad at myself, slow because of the medication, and I didn't know what to do.</p>
62	<p>“I have a gender identity disorder, and I want to become a girl.” (I had diagnosed myself.)</p>
63	<p>I just sat there, so happy, with my purse—my big, black purse. I walked to class swinging it, and my friend was going, “What the fuck are you doing?”</p> <p>“I’m a girl.”</p> <p>“Okay, you’re crazy.”</p>

Page	Content
	<p>“Well, I just want to be a girl.”            And he was, like, “But aren’t you gay?” “No, actually, I’m not gay. I’m transgender.”            He couldn’t grasp the fact. He thought a boy dressing in girls’ clothes is gay.</p>
65	<p>I wasn’t taking hormones yet. I was waiting. I had gone to Callen-Lorde and started counseling. Their rule is that you have to be eighteen and take counseling for four months before you get hormones.</p>
66	<p>“I don’t care what people think. I’m going to do what I want.” And on the loudspeaker comes, “Please send Matthew V. to the principal’s office. NOW!”            And everybody was going, “Ooooooh, you’re going to get in trouble.”            I thought, Whatever.            I walked into the office and said, “Hi, did you need me for something?” Again, the dean was there; the principal was there. The principal said, “Yeah, why are you dressed like this?”            “Because I want to dress like this. It’s Dress Down Day. I can wear whatever I want.”            “Well, you can’t come to school dressed like a woman.”            “Well, I am a woman.” He got really angry. He slammed his hand on the table, “YOU’RE A BOY! YOU’RE NOT A WOMAN! YOU’RE A BOY!”            I started crying at that point. I said, “Actually, I am a girl. You just need to educate yourself. Get on Google and Google transsexual, ’cause I’m a girl.”</p>
67	<p>I told him, “You know what? You guys, you need to understand: I’m transgender. I feel like a woman. I don’t feel like a boy. This is what I want to do. There are other transgender people in this school who are afraid to come out.”            ...I think the other students were freaked out because I looked like a girl and I was pressing against gender boundaries.</p>
73	<p>It wasn’t until I was done with the four-month therapy program that I could take hormones. In March, my senior year, I started taking hormones. They started changing me fast.</p>
74	<p>When I had testosterone in my body, I was a very horny boy. Before I went on hormones, I was able to get an erection and maintain one. Whenever I saw a boy I liked in the hallway or in gym class—the locker room is the best place to get my eyes on flesh—I’d get it. I think that’s why a lot of gay people like to have sex. They’re both men, they both have a lot of testosterone.            ...The estrogen slowed down my sex drive. It’s not that I had no sex drive; I have it once in a blue moon. My boyfriend feels like I’m not attracted to him. Of course I’m attracted to him. I just don’t have the want or the need or the urge for sex all the time.            There are certain things that turn me on, but most of the time I don’t want to have sex. I always wanted foreplay and romantic attention. My boyfriend was never the foreplay, romantic type. He just wanted to get right to it. What are you gonna do?            I’m glad I no longer have all that testosterone that fueled me to want sex. Normally guys can get it up with a cold wind. That doesn’t happen to me anymore. I don’t have the morning wood. I only have it when I’m aroused.            It’s kind of weird: I know what it’s like to be a man, and I know what it’s like to be</p>



Page	Content
	<p>a woman. That whole testosterone-driven thing is something they can't really help. I'm happier without having that sex drive. The constant need for sex is annoying—it really is.</p>
75	<p>April, my breasts started growing. I was surprised and excited. I was the only boy in class with tight shirts and budding breasts. Everyone wanted to touch them. Of course I let them. It just feels like flesh; it feels like nothing.</p> <p>Then the time came when I first put on a bra. Now, that scared me! It was so uncomfortable. I had been going the whole year flat-chested. I was comfortable being a gender bender, not yet comfortable being a girl. Once I put on a bra, I knew this was it. That was when people needed to see me as a girl.</p>
76	<p>In spite of her feelings and reservations, Christina's mother pulled out her credit card and bought her daughter breast implants.</p>
81	<p>He's going to want to have sex with a trans girl, to see what it's like, but at the end of the day, he's going to put the ring on the genetic female.</p> <p>Whenever my transgender friends get a boyfriend, I say, "I give it one month, or two." When a man finds out you're trans, his respect for you goes down. If a man meets me as a woman, he's very nice, gentle, opens the door for me, and doesn't talk about sex. As soon as he finds out I'm trans, he starts talking about sex. It's frustrating because he's not treating me like a woman anymore.</p> <p>...Talking to guys, telling them that I'm trans, gets old so fast. They ask stupid questions, like, "How do we have sex?"</p>
82	<p>I learned from my own experiences that I was getting nowhere having sex with different guys. When I did, no one took me seriously. I learned that in order for a man to take you serious, and love you for you, you can't have sex with him right away. When I met Gabriel, he didn't believe me when I told him I was trans.</p> <p>...He tried to have sex with me right away, but I didn't let him, not until he said, "I want you to be my girlfriend." I wanted to be sure he was really serious. We didn't have sex for two months.</p> <p>...I can't truly let myself go with him. I've been in bed with my boyfriend, but I never let him see it. Ever. I wear my panties the whole time when we're intimate. And that really sucks because I can't be fully intimate with him. I'm always worried he's going to see it; he's going to feel it.</p>
83	<p>All my trans friends with vaginas look beautiful. They got everything they wanted. It would be so great if I could get an operation, if I could get my vagina.</p> <p>...If I had my surgery, I would live it to the fullest.</p>
84	<p>With me you have to walk on eggshells with that word. I take it very defensively—especially when there's alcohol involved at the party.</p> <p>When I was drinking he called me dude and I took it the wrong way.</p> <p>...I was really drunk.</p>
87	<p>"No, Mom, I'm not gay. I'm transsexual. I feel like a woman inside."</p>
96	<p>What's the point of having a vagina when I can't have those things? I wanted to experience what real women like you experience. Inserting a tampon. Of course, I can insert a tampon when I get a vagina, but what's the use of it?"</p>
97	<p>Around the time I turned five, some guy on the street said, "Yo! You're not supposed to be wearing those clothes."</p>

Page	Content
	<p>“Why not?” I always got defensive about this ‘cause everyone was always telling me this.</p> <p>“Because you have a dick.”</p> <p>“What’s a dick?” I didn’t know what that was.</p> <p>“Boys have dicks and girls have pussies.”</p> <p>“Well, what’s a pussy?”</p> <p>“A vagina.”</p> <p>“Bagina?” I didn’t even know how to say the word.</p> <p>“No. Vuhgina.”</p> <p>“Oh, okay.”</p> <p>Then he said, “So you’re not a girl. You have dick.”</p> <p>“Well, what is a dick?”</p> <p>“That thing that you have between your legs.”</p> <p>And I’m, like, “I thought everybody has that.”</p> <p>“No, not everybody has that.”</p>
101	<p>My mother was an alcoholic, she was on drugs, she was a prostitute, and she also had lupus.</p> <p>...There was this girl there. I thought about that guy in my neighborhood telling me that girls have vaginas. I looked at her and thought, This must be a girl. So I went up to her and told her I liked her and she said she liked me. We started kissing. I picked up her skirt and looked in her underwear. “Where’s your dick?”</p> <p>“What’s a dick?”</p> <p>“You don’t have what I have.”</p> <p>“Well, what do I have?”</p> <p>And I put my hand down there and felt this little hole-kind-of-thing. I got really scared and ran away. At the time, I thought girls must have had their dicks cut off. That’s what makes them a girl.</p> <p>I was so scared, I didn’t know what to do. I sure didn’t hang around her no more. Then one day, when I was with my mother or my grandmother or maybe it was the social worker—I don’t remember—I said, “I want to have my dick cut off, because I want to be a girl.”</p>
102	<p>Or when they’d see me, they were, like, “Come here, girl. See this!” and they’d start laughing.</p>
103	<p>I was sexually mature. What I mean by sexually mature is that I knew about sex. From six up, I used to kiss other guys in my neighborhood, make out with them, and perform oral sex on them. I liked it. I used to love oral. And I touched their you-know-whats. We were really young, but that’s what we did.</p> <p>I was making out with girls too. I used to love making out with girls ‘cause everybody thought I was cool. Everybody was encouraging me. “Look, Frank’s not gay—he’s making out with a girl!” They wanted to know how the hell I learned to kiss like that. I didn’t know how I learned.</p> <p>...Guys used to hit on me—perverts—pedophiles. I’d see guys giving me a look, and it kinda creeped me out. They would touch themselves, saying, “Come here, sweetie.” Something told me not to go. I ran away.</p>

Page	Content
105	<p>There was sex—what I would call curiosity sex. We were experimenting. Isn't that what a kid does at that age?</p> <p>...At night, he used to get in bed with me and we'd kiss or hug each other.</p>
109	<p>Everybody else was getting facial hair. Everybody else was getting bigger penises. Now I'm glad my penis is small. I've never even used it. But at the time, I wanted it to be big because I wanted to be with a girl. I told myself, if I had a big dick, I'd be with a girl.</p> <p>...Somebody said that if you drink liquor, you get a lower voice. I was drinking. It's hard to drink liquor when you're thirteen.</p> <p>"Smoke cigarettes. It will make you have a deep voice," a friend told me. I was smoking cigarettes back to back to back to back. It didn't even work. It kinda lowered my voice a little.</p> <p>...This guy got me to perform oral sex on him. I thought I was doing the right thing by performing on him. But I wasn't. He was just abusing me. He had total mind control over me. He didn't have to get physical with me; he just knew where to hit me where it hurts emotionally.</p> <p>We finally got caught in the act, and I was very happy because I wanted it to stop. I think the directors were worried that they could get sued because they kept telling me it was consensual.</p> <p>...Other kids tried to have sex with me.</p>
112	<p>I went into my room and it suddenly clicked to me, Frank, you're bisexual. I'm bisexual? It was like the wind blew in and hit me that I'm bisexual.</p>
113	<p>As I learned more, it made me feel sad, like I had a disorder. Transsexual. Even the name sounded weird to me. It was like I'm not born who I am; I have to transition to be who I am.</p>
114	<p>Down-lows are basically gay guys still in the closet.</p>
115	<p>Transition starts when you feel that you're a woman physically, mentally, and emotionally. You fantasize about it. You research it. You start wearing women's clothes. Then you start looking into hormones. That's really transitioning.</p> <p>I'm taking transition step by step.</p> <p>...I don't get erections as much as I used to. I never did much, anyway, because I never really liked my penis.</p> <p>...With hormones, my facial hair doesn't grow back as fast as it used to. I had laser on my face—only four sessions and it worked pretty good.</p> <p>Ever since I transitioned and accepted that I'm a girl, I've been attracted to girls. But they say that's not weird 'cause gender has nothing to do with sexuality.</p>
119	<p>"Gender fuck is blending stuff, having something girl and something boy and something neither. The cords are pretty gender-neutral 'cause they are skinny and gray. The shoes are sexy. They're about four or five inches high and have a little platform, not a huge platform."</p>
120	<p>"You can be gay, bi, pan, homo flexible (mostly gay), hetero flexible (mostly straight), or just queer. If you are a homo flexible woman, you mostly like women with the occasional guy, the occasional gender-bender queer person. It's like, gay with exceptions."</p> <p>..."Mine is not the typical trans narrative that you see on TV. One of my best</p>

Page	Content
	<p>friends is trans and gay. I'm trans and pan. Pansexual. Basically I like people regardless of gender. I mean, of the people I'm attracted to, some of them are girls, some of them are boys, and some of them are not boys or girls. Actually, a lot of them are not boys or girls."</p> <p>...I started questioning my gender around my fourteenth birthday. And I probably started questioning the gender system around that time too. My first thought was that I was gender queer. Gender queer is not part of the gender binary, meaning somebody that's strictly a boy or strictly a girl.</p> <p>Recently I began to feel comfortable saying that the gender system does not work because it really does not work for me. That's when I started defining myself as outside a gender system that society dictates.</p> <p>Some people don't understand this. To them I just say, "I'm a boy; call me he." But I like to be recognized as not a boy and not a girl. I'm gender queer, gender fluid, and gender other.</p>
135	<p>When I was thirteen, I told my parents I was a lesbian.</p>
138	<p>My dad picked me up August 3, 2009, just before I started high school. Everything was fine as we drove home together. Then, out of the blue, he said, "Do you want an operation to change your sex?"</p> <p>...I don't remember even thinking about an operation back then. At that point, I thought that I'd come out, then get new clothes, and then start high school as Cameron—a boy.</p> <p>After that, I wanted hormones and top surgery. I didn't want bottom surgery because the options aren't that great and it's really not something I need.</p>
139	<p>Cameron's parents went with them to consultations and talked with the doctor. They wanted assurances that hormone therapy would be safe.</p> <p>...When the hormone therapy was set up and ready to go, Cameron's mother went with them for their first hormone shot.</p>
141	<p>There is a course offered called "Gender Ideology." It is half women's studies and half queer theory. I'm taking it, of course, and it's going to be awesome. We do have other controversial classes. There's a class called "Racism, Classism, and Sexism." It was given at the high school, but it's a university class from SUNY, Albany.</p> <p>...Testosterone is definitely a sexy hormone. My sex drive went way up once I started taking it. Testosterone makes me go Kajooo! Kajooo! Kajooo! What's really weird and kind of bizarre is that my testosterone level fluctuates. A couple of days after the shot, the level is at the highest, and a couple of days before the shot it is at the lowest. My sex drive fluctuates too. Right after the shot I'm really horny, and before the shot I'm not good for anything. I've been thinking about switching to a half a dose every week rather than a full dose every other week. It would be the same dose but less fluctuation. That would be good 'cause hormone fluctuations are not fun. It's not just sex. It's the mood swings and the energy swings.</p>
142	<p>There's a lot of information on side effects of testosterone. There's tons of legitimate information online.</p> <p>...Because I'm perceived as male, I get male privileges. It weirds me out a little bit. Male privilege means I don't have to prove myself for my opinion to have weight.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>People assume that I'm intelligent. People assume that I have something to say. I get a fair amount of respect. By being male, I'm automatically given some kind of validity that is weird. "Wait, guys, I haven't said anything yet. And besides, you shouldn't be giving me male privilege because I'm not really a guy—at least not by your standards. By your standards, I'm definitely not." People don't see me as a person they can talk down to. A stranger won't call me "sweetheart." The only person who can call me "sweetheart" is my grandma. I like to think that I can fend off society's male expectations pretty well. Society wants all kinds of things from the boys. They want us to be masculine and to wrestle, to swear, and to be aggressive and assertive. To some degree, society wants us to be misogynistic.</p>
144	<p>What's interesting is that the straight, non-trans population seems to think that trans people automatically have allies in gay people. And that gay people automatically have allies in the trans community. And they do Not, capital N. We need to stand together to fight the system. If trans people stand alone, we have no chance. No chance at all! I think all people who are oppressed in one way or another should stand together- women, queer people, people of color, disabled people, whatever. All the special-interest groups, minority groups, have a much better chance of effecting change if we stick together.</p> <p>...Life goal: be part of the revolution! It's on my bucket list- I don't have a bucket list, but if I did, revolution would be on it.</p> <p>...I want to be a doctor, I will find a queer organization and work with queer kids and prescribe hormones to trans kids. It's going to be so cool</p> <p>We have so much potential. Together we have the potential for dynamic change. A revolution. I hope a revolution happens. And I want to be in it.</p>
147	<p>How can I explain myself to someone normal? I'm hard to explain. Usually I don't like to use labels, but if I did, I would say I was gender queer, gender neutral, or simply queer. Intersex is another way I can identify myself. Intersex means that I'm both male and female. It means that I'm neither male nor female; I'm a whole different gender, a third gender, so to speak, part of the transgender umbrella. Intersex people can be identified a number of ways: by their genitalia, by secondary sex characteristics, or by chromosomes. They can be physically both male and female. Or they can externally look like one sex but internally be another sex.</p> <p>My birth certificate says I'm female. I guess I looked female when I was born. I thought you follow whatever's on your birth certificate. But maybe that isn't always true.</p>
148	<p>This chapter refers to Nat as them or they.</p> <p>...I had an image in my head about how my body's supposed to look. I wanted to look androgynous, in between, as if you can't tell that I have male or female genitalia. It's a nice image. When people say I look male or female, it messes up my head.</p>
152	<p>In my head, I didn't feel like a girl; I felt more like a boy. But I didn't identify myself as a boy, either. I started reading lots of books about stuff considered androgynous or hermaphroditic, and I looked at a lot of pictures. I learned that there are people who look like both sexes but are not both sexes. They're another</p>

Page	Content
	gender- a third gender. You know how during the Renaissance the portraits seem androgynous? I was attracted to that.
160	<p>Everything was getting really sexual in high school. Kids were saying, "Oh, having sex is great. I feel like having sex."</p> <p>...I said to myself, I think of myself as a guy. But I don't identify as a boy completely. So how in the world can I explain this? It was confusing. It was confusing to say I'm neither gender.</p>
165	<p>I was not only emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually both sexes; I was physically both sexes too.</p> <p>...In my sophomore year, I tried going to a GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) meeting. It turned out to be mostly a hook-up scene. I thought the Gay-Straight Alliance would be gay people and straight people trying to understand each other. No. It was mostly gay people and people who say they're bisexual talking about sex.</p>
166	<p>According to her, she was bisexual. One time she decided to kiss me.</p> <p>...That kiss didn't mean anything to me. I never saw it as a big deal. It was just kissing. I didn't want sex- that was the last thing I wanted.</p>
169	<p>I attempted suicide twice. The first time, I had a knife but I couldn't use it. I was really close to doing it, and I would have done it, but then something in my head said, I would spill a lot of blood in the bathroom. And then my parents are going to yap at me even after I'm dead. That's another problem I don't need. So I got myself out of it.</p> <p>...The second time, I gave hints to my social worker that I wanted to do something.</p> <p>...The second time, when Nat was ready to attempt suicide, a phone call from the cousin of the "kiss girl" stopped them.</p>
170	<p>"I cannot tell what you are," she said.</p> <p>"I guess you can say that I'm queer."</p> <p>"Oh, that's cool, because I'm a dyke."</p> <p>That made me laugh.</p>
172	<p>This time I was diagnosed gender dysphoria. I think that's how they diagnose transgender people. Transsexuals. It's like, if you're physically one hundred percent one sex but you think you're the other sex, then you have this.</p> <p>I continued to research "intersex" in the limited access I had to the hospital library. That's when I learned about hormone therapy. I considered myself gender queer intersex, but I thought hormones would get me closer to my ideal self. It's very difficult to explain. I mean, although I was both male and female, people still saw me as female. Maybe it was because I had breasts or my voice wasn't masculine enough. I just wanted people to accept me as me. I thought that hormone therapy would help me become my ideal self.</p> <p>Nat's ideal self is hard to explain without invading their privacy. Suffice it to say, the hormones are working and Nat is coming closer to finding happiness.</p> <p>Before I get male hormones, I had to go to therapy sessions. I had to explain everything about myself.</p>
181	<p>Last year, when I started writing the poem, I knew I was trans but I didn't know if I was gender neutral or FTM (female-to-male).</p>

Page	Content
187	<p>At the time, I still identified as gay. I never liked using the word lesbian because it implies female. If anyone ever asked me, I'd say I was gay, not lesbian. I was on the verge of questioning my gender when I was cast in the part.</p>
200	<p>In its mission statement, the clinic states that the "Callen-Lorde Community Health Center provides sensitive, quality health care and related services primarily to New York's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities- in all their diversity- regardless of ability to pay."            ...Amelie Davidson, one of the two social worker-therapists at HOTT, deals with the mental health part of the clinic, where people are seen for a variety of concerns, including depression, anxiety, relationship issues, social isolation, coping with a new diagnosis, and gender-related issues. Amelie say, "In terms of transgender care, our intention is to create a space where young people can come at any stage of their transition process, get correct information, and be cared for and feel safe."            A person must be eighteen or older to be given hormone shots at Callen-Lorde. Although younger teen clients are able to work with HOTT therapists, they are referred to various hospitals for their hormone shots.</p>
202	<p>Q&amp;A with Dr. Manel Silva, Clinical Director of the HOTT program            Susan Kuklin: When is a person considered transgender?            Manel Silva: That depends on the person. Actually, it's one of the debates in the medical and political field: What does it mean to transition? For some people, it can be as simple as having other people acknowledge their gender identity and potentially their name change. For other people, it can be the full nine yards- hormone therapy, sexual reassignment, and other types of surgery.</p> <p>SK: What causes a person to be transgender?            MS: I think the question should be flipped around: What's the cause for assuming that one's gender identity has to be the one that you are born with? When I first came into this job, I was much more comfortable about people's sexuality than I was with people's gender identity.            ...SK: A person arrives at the clinic and says, "I know I want to transition, but I'm not sure how far want to go." What's the process?            MS: At this clinic the first session is dedicated to figuring out what transitioning means to them. Often questioning gender identity begins way before they start to think about transitioning. They may not know that transition is an option. We ask how they learned about transitioning. What have they already done? What are they interested in doing?            By the time they've come here, though, most of the kids have already done a lot of research. They don't show up at a doctor's office on a whim, especially an eighteen-year-old, especially here. Many have been dressing as their preferred gender for several years. They've figured out what their support system is. They've generated the courage to out themselves just by coming here.            SK: The what do you talk about?            MS:...How are other people going to deal with your transition? Will your family accept you? Will they let you stay in the house? If they kick you out, where are you going to go? Do you feel comfortable transitioning in your job? Or do you feel</p>

Page	Content
	<p>you have to take time off?            ...SK: What are the social risks?            MS: A lot of the risks of transitioning have less to do with hormones or surgeries than with how society deals with folks who are transgender. It's about how you out yourself. It's really about how society deals with people who are transgender, and the very real experience of transphobia.            ...Being transgender and wanting to transition is often a very marginalizing experience because of the lack of acceptance in society.            This is also the reason why, as a clinic, we've decided to provide hormones and medical care for free to all our teen patients. We feel that removing as many barriers as possible allows these young people to engage with us on a regular basis.</p>
204	<p>SK: What about the medical risks of hormones?            MS: Let me start by saying that cancer is not one of the known main risks. Everybody thinks it is, but it's not. There are risks like blood clots, especially if you smoke. High blood pressure can be a risk. It can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke over the long run. These are not minor things. But they can be monitored clinically. We measure cholesterol levels. We do liver-function tests. These risks are the reason we encourage people to go through their transition in a monitored environment. We're not going to just give people hormones and never see them again. I tell folks, "You can always get hormones off the street. You know that because that's what some of your friends do. But the reason it's important to get hormones here is we can monitor you."</p>
205	<p>For the vast majority of gender nonconforming people, their intrinsic identity is not determined by genetics. At HOTT, we place heavy value on the patient's self-identity.            ...MS: During the first two visits, we do the lab work, such as blood and urine analysis, to get a baseline and to make sure nothing drastic is going on. We do a physical exam, but if someone declines a physical exam, that's not a reason to refuse them hormones.            SK: What else does the clinic provide?            MS: Transitioning is not just about hormones. For example, we talk about the medical effects of binding, making sure they are tucking properly.            ...We also provide legal referrals to help with name and identity changes.</p>
206	<p>MS: There are rare contraindications. There's no medical interaction between most common drugs and hormones.            ...If a person's suicidal, we worry that hormones could increase that. But half the time, the reason trans folks are suicidal is because they can't access hormone therapy.            ...To learn more about the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, visit their website at <a href="http://callen-lorde.org">http://callen-lorde.org</a>.</p>



<b>Profanity/Derogatory Term</b>	<b>Count</b>
Ass	2
Dick	10
Dyke	2
Faggot/Fag	10
Fuck	15
Piss	8
Pussy	3
Shit	9