



THE
POETRY
INTERVIEW

Poetry Editor Hezekiah Scrotch with Jacklyn Henry

Jacklyn Henry (she/they) is a loud crowd (her/him/chicken bones/matches and debris, LA, anyone?) that strikes a perfect balance between subtlety, eroticism and everyday life—three things the anteaters around us don't get. And I'll be frank. She's not just Henry, she's frank:

HS: Jaqueline, my dearest, I have chosen SHE/THEY for the Poetry Interview...

JH: Oh honey that would be divine. I did get excited and now that I have fresh panties on I am open to whatever...you have in... Mind...

HS: If I only knew what I was thinking...

Er...ahem. Moving right along, we will do things contrary to universal logic and start with the last question first which I will call number one.

Reader discretion: My questions are tirelessly inappropriate and I think strongest when I veer off topic. You have been warned!

HS: *Jacklyn, what provokes you to be so evocative in your writing? I find 'simplicity' and 'small talk,' as examples, empowering and delightfully emasculating?*

JH: if by evocative you mean honest, then that's all there is to it. life is too short to be shy or not just *let it all rip*. i had a professor at university that pushed us to just bleed from the pen, and that's what i do.

HS: *On the other hand, 'sinister,' 'old' and 'shopping' are introspective, even self-effacing. You give equal time to others' follies as well as your own foibles. I'm engaged. And although this is not a question, I'm afraid I'm going to have to insist on an answer.*

JH: i'm not sure i see a question but i will try. all of life of explicit and implicit, and introspective.

those three poems are all about longing and a desire to be something you really cannot become, not wholly or 100%. based on the selection i provided one would get that sense that i am spending equal time between my inner- and outer-self. i don't think i do, really.

shopping is a true story.

old is based on being torn between desire and realization.

and sinister is obviously about jerking off but also about the shame you can feel after you cum, especially utilizing porn as a tool of gratification.

HS: *You must tell us who has influenced your writing--living or dead--in the interest of making them better aware, so that they may be rightly influenced by you?*

JH: i get asked this a lot. and i still don't know how to answer. everyday is my primary influence. just regular people trying to survive. LGBTQIA folkx trying to live. it's those lives i write about.

HS: *Please, just between you and I, what brings you joy?*

JH: lately it's about getting new work accepted, especially the overtly queer and transcentric work. and the short stories. i've never really tried to publish those, lately, and i've had some

success. watching my kid become a fully functional adult has been a joy. and being with a good loving person that accepts your gender identity and sexuality without question is amazing.

HS: *And in the interest of avoiding any unnecessary awkwardness, what makes you sad?*

JH: transphobia, not being able to live 100% authentic, being too tall, not coming out younger and to everyone (i am still very much closeted), not having breasts or a cute butt, the political culture in this country, so much more.

HS: *Do you write every day? Do you have a schedule? Any plans for the future?*

JH: i do write every day or, at least, edit every day, but not on a schedule. not sure what you mean by plans but i am hoping to get a chapbook under as Jacklyn but my work is so explicit i am not sure many presses would have the balls, so to speak, to publish me.

HS: *I love the way your poetic plots string along, tighten up, draw us in and neatly untie themselves at the conclusion. Are unravelling, twisting, tangled denouements a part of your structured/structural strategy? And how is this related to tinned spaghetti and belated periods?*

JH: teachers have taught me the masters, how to construct a poem or story, how to embrace my own style or voice, and forget everything i've learned; and that if i stop evolving then i will no longer be of any worth. i believe all of that, deeply. so i appreciate that you see this in my work as it took a long time to develop.

in some work i will tighten up an ending to a point of actual conclusion, but most times i do not. this is due to the fact that i write snapshots of life, generally, and not large world view epics. i admire work that i can place myself within, or something i can honestly relate to. anything else, for me is a waste of time.

but, of course, slopping endings happen. sometimes for the better.

HS: *I feel that prose poetry must also flow. Arbitrary line breaks are no substitute for tempo. Your style has a soothing rhythm that is distinctly pleasing. Do you have to work at this, or does it naturally stream from your consciousness?*

JH: it's natural now, but it takes practice. like anything. finding rhythm that isn't rhythmic (ie rhyming words) is a challenge. i thinking i figured it out. it's like fucking. it's not bam-bam-bam the whole time. it ebbs and flows, fast and slow, bump and grind. i've always thought my writing to have that kind of rhythm.

HS: *Just to add to any controversy, what aren't you wearing and what notable author(s) are not to your taste, orally or otherwise? [Omit or alter at Senior Editors' discretion.]*

JH: i'm not wearing men's clothes at the moment, but ultimately i am not wearing my masculine exterior, my male lie. and i'm not wearing a bra. if that's your curiosity. they are uncomfortable to be sure.

well, what are you trying to say? writers are delicious, in every way. in college we read all the classics, near classics and weird shit professors' thought were hip. i didn't like a lot of it, but nothing i can pinpoint.

HS: *Signature question: What didn't I ask? And what are you longing not to tell us?*

JH: i have found greater success as a transfeminine genderqueer writer as the work is more honest. more than ever i do not know what the fuck i am doing and i write about that experience. and the fear of what people think about me no longer echoes. i don't care. i don't care if what anyone thinks about me in my actions, my sexuality, or my writing. i fuck who i fuck and write what i write.

that's about it. i just want people to accept trans folkx and hoping my work helps with that.

HS: *Thanks so much, Jacklyn, or, as our dear (?) Charles, who insists on pestering us with Italian none of us understand, would say: muchos gracias! (That's spagnolo, you moron!! Molto grazie! Molto grazie! CP interjection). And let me say, while I'm putting my dress back on, no matter what else you do, keep writing! After all, our biggest readership is the dead...HS*