

## I ache for a skirt

Jacqui Beck - for Zoë, 2014

I am not a boy. I hunger for a dress.  
I ache for a skirt,  
thirst for soft flowing fabric in flowercolors.

Without it, life is parched,  
Yet Mom gave me the skirt and then didn't want me to wear it.

Do I dare to gather my skirt to me, to carry myself over the threshold,  
the closed gate that guards the fortress of my home?

Zoë, you are oblivious to the risk of crossing the shark-infested waters  
of the neighborhood park.

Zoë, you are safe in your ignorance of the terror  
that rises in the guts of 6 o'clock-news-watching neighborhood residents  
when they can't tell if you are a boy or a girl

or godforbid, a boybody wearing a dress.

What is more threatening than a twelve year old transgender girl?

The tissue-paper wrapping over our sureness of what is man or woman, boy or girl is tearing,  
and we feel our insides slipping out.

We are so afraid.

We are  
so

afraid.

We beg you not to make us look  
at the inadequacy of our gender-catechism.

We demand you justify  
yourself, but don't turn  
the question back to ourselves.