

What Took You So Long?

Jacqui Beck - for Judy, 2014

What took you so long
to come out of the Closet,
the one you made
for yourself
out of the pages of
magazines with smiling women's
faces and bodies you coveted?

What took you so long
to declare who you are?

If you knew you were a girl at 4,
why didn't you say so?

I did

We didn't agree. You weren't a girl.
You didn't look like a girl. Not to us.

I felt like a girl.

Not good enough.

What took you so long?

I cried. I cried so many tears every time I put on those man-shoes,
every time I shaved the stubble off my face, a face that should be smooth.

The tears collected inside.

Why didn't you tell us? What took you so long?

Tell you what? That I felt I was a girl? What would you have done?

Rejected me? Laughed? Taken me to a mental hospital? Told me to shut up
and never say it again?

For you there are no welcoming arms.

You are terrified that this person you thought was a man is a woman.

Terrified.

Why?

Because it rips at the cloth of your own masculinity.

It threatens your patriarchal superiority.

Shake it up.

What if you're not a man, either?

What if there is no such thing?

What took you so long?

Shake it up!