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mk zariel

ambassador of homosexuality

Summer 2024

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queers like us ache to carve ourselves starring roles in the
pageant

called gay rights. become picture-perfect

assimilated gays who've never once had an emotional break-
down

queers like us can't have problems can we? if we do, you will
realize

your hierarchies spell death for our chosen family

so queers like us create the illusion of the normal

erase the the way a slur not yet reclaimed

burns holes in luminous queer skin, our relatives claiming they
don't think of us as gay

and worst of all, we're free: to be complicit in murder, to marry
our oppressors

but in three fifths of the country, not all that free from conver-
sion therapy.

appeasement is our world—

you might even feel—heaven forbid—embarrassed by your gay
jokes in the chat

if you realized your trolling was more earth-shattering than annoying

we are the palatable queers in stock photos and wholesome tv shows

a legion of gay best friends, anti-heroes, ghosts
drawn in eternal smiles, then struggle that paints our existence
as a tragedy. we don't talk about activist burnout

the perpetually stressed lesbians who cry all night to kimya dawson

wondering if the day after the revolution
they'll finally get to take a deep breath.

in your so-called representation, we're too stressed
to recall the days when we were preschoolers
who stared at the other girls, feeling like an alien being for aching

to sit next to her at circle time and be her world
sometimes we still feel like sad gay preschoolers—

but we shape ourselves on the daily to win begrudging smiles
of acceptance

sometimes softly pitying stares, never the bring-down-heteronormativity-with-me-baby

kind of love that only queers can have for one another

maybe we can become the queers who declare to straight society

we are done being perfect humans.

i am not your ambassador of homosexuality
doomed to keep smiling for your straight opinions
never discover the liberation i can embrace

not your sob story, not the teenage statistic

you trot out at fundraisers in your cheesy suit and tie
to make donors to your "nonprofit"
feel straight and self-important.

and by the way, i might have even volunteered with you
if only you had started an affinity group.

but you didn't, and the last time you checked your privilege was never. so today

our queerness is everything your heteronormativity stands against—

both a revolutionary force and the way my heart

bursts into queer love and mild panic when i see any other woman

maybe tonight we can do our preschool selves proud:

our queer struggle is not yours to claim