

Do I Pass?

By **F.I. Goldhaber** - December 27, 2020

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Worried faces peer out from selfies, beautiful people desperately seeking acceptance from netizens.

Reporting on the changes in their appearance and lives brought about by hormone therapy and surgery.

Trying to learn which cosmetics, beard length, haircut, or clothing will win them family's, friends', strangers' approval.

What voice pitch will keep them safe from the trans misogynists who call them names, threaten their lives, beat them in the streets?

Why in the world do we hold trans folk to gender binary standards that most cis women and men never meet?

Why are they forced to risk life and limb just to use the restroom when at a restaurant, school, even in the park?

How do we adjust the narrative implying those who are transgender want only to pass as cis people?

Doesn't dumping strict definitions of how genders should look, sound, and act, grant every one of us more freedom?

Why must we accept the constructs that society assigns our gender or impose them on anyone else?

Instead of classes in gendered voice, appearance, and gestures for trans folk, what if we taught cis groups acceptance;

Helped them learn the difference between gender identity and gender expression; to see beauty within;

Showed them how much damage imposing sexual- or gender-based decrees causes just about everyone?

Acknowledgements

*Included in their forthcoming collection *What Color is Your Privilege?**

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F.I. Goldhaber's words capture people, places, and politics with a photographer's eye and a poet's soul. As a reporter, editor, business writer, and marketing communications consultant, they produced news stories, feature articles, editorial columns, and reviews for newspapers, corporations, governments, and non-profits in five states. Now paper, electronic, and audio magazines, books, newspapers, calendars, broadsides, and street signs display their poetry, fiction, and essays. Almost 170 of their poems appear in more than 70 publications, including five collections.