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## T4T

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# T4T

## Newton Sweeney

*After Jenny Johnson*

I remember: standing shoulder-deep in salt water,  
Grateful to the brackish obstruction of my nakedness;

My cousin Safi diving through waves, water clinging  
To her perfectly curled lashes, seeping into her braids.

*My sister wants to be a boy.* I didn't know she had a sister. Minnows flit between my  
legs. I didn't know you could want

To be a boy. Years later, I meet him at Safi's graduation. He's in his forties. He has a  
beard. Safi still calls him her sister.

My grandparents agree to call me by my name,  
I start crying in this hotel lobby. *Thank you,*

I manage. My grandfather hands me a book: *The Case for Christ*. I understand their  
concession as the bribe it is. It sits in plain sight

Next to the bong on our dinner table, covered in ash. I won't hide it, But I won't read it. I  
don't know how to explain that I don't care

If there is a God. I retreat into myself at family events. At church, I used to dress like a boy  
and think about gay sex during the sermon.

Just the concept. Some vindictive need to express control. The way my cat swats  
at my legs, claws out, in revenge

For being swept up and into my arms. A small creature, Resentful of her own  
powerlessness. I hold her anyway.

I'm trying to find a way to say this:

I may not believe in God but I believe that what I am is Holy. I worship at the altar of HRT. I  
recognize the divinity in creating oneself.

The Divine Transsexual lays her hands and her blessing unto me. She scrapes nails along my

scalp, knows exactly which keys to press.

She croons – *Look, baby, I'm not hellfire and shame, I'm not moral righteousness, I am the gift of bodies and sweat.*

She climbs into my lap, holding me down, holding me. You know why we call it making love? We create

Something new, a oneness where we were two.

God's lips are at my neck, and she whispers –

*I know how to show a boy like you a good time.*