

Ask Me

I didn't know you, at least not well

I remember your face from group  
and a shape your threw online

So I type 'f r o m : j e'

And the rest autocompletes.

I see a life in five pages of results

I see you started group a month after me

I see your divorce and how you still miss her –  
when I'm four months out from my own  
and those feelings are only now starting to dull

I see you in neurodiversity  
mentioning "your behaviors"

I see you love men but not their profile pictures  
And sharing that ludicrous skidoo photo  
But that its ok because he's talking good so far

I see your doctors shrugging at your mental health

I see your divorce was unwanted, and  
complicated, and driven by your transition, and  
I see you giving love and support to someone  
going through the same

I see OHP denying your dual patch approach  
and \$130/month being too much to justify for  
yourself and how patches would give you more  
stable blood levels which was important because  
of your history with bipolar. and I see you say  
you'll make do

I see you mention your kid  
and for a moment I forget, and smile  
because trans moms are the best moms

I see you dodge the penis detection machine

I see you over the moon  
because you got birthday kisses from a boy

I see an awkward mechanics of butt sex question  
and the girls  
including one of my now friends  
getting you sorted out

I see you post a Mooney Suzuki video

I see you, again, comforting a young woman  
about her marriage  
and this time  
it's a young woman who's now my friend,  
and a partner of one of my best friends

I see you congratulate a girl on her anniversary

I see you add a soft alpaca  
to your meditation corner

I see you fretting that a brief T rebound  
from insurance bureaucracy  
has doomed your breast growth

I see some dollar store innuendo  
about cheap sausages

I see you preparing for bottom surgeries,  
and your top surgery consult. and that  
you can't believe stuff is starting to happen  
you've been on those lists for a year and a half

I see you recovering from your orchi in March  
and the ghosts of your unwanted balls  
haunting you with phantom pain  
and you laugh at it

I see you say  
your breast augmentation is in two weeks

I see you're on the Dr Powers hair formula

I see – any and every one of us.

And then – four months of silence.  
the summer, the fall

And then your friend, telling us you passed away.

And then your friend, answering a question  
saying it was likely by your own hand.

I remember, nearly thirty years ago now, those  
long nights I would spend  
on the icy balconies at the dorms.  
waiting for the smokers to finish.  
daring myself.

And how so many of us have the same  
hard long dark nights.

And how thin the line between life and death is  
and I wonder if it's only luck that saves us

And if we are  
just the lone consciousness of creation,  
split into uncountable shards  
so we feel less alone  
then why have we given ourselves these roles  
this time around

She's the first girl I almost knew  
who didn't make it

And I know, from stories my new friends tell,  
that there will be more

And the only thing I know to do

Is to hold any of you,  
as tightly and as long as you need  
when you ask

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in Portland, OR.  
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