

## 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 skiddoo photo

But that is 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 duel 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 orchid 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

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

Alana Storm lives, works, and cries in Portland, OR. Winter 2023

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