

**Sumin Park**

Age: 15, Grade: 10

School Name: Loveless Academic Magnet Program (LAMP) High School, Montgomery, AL

Educator: Helen Lee

Category: Poetry

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**she, not him**

he were him  
he was she  
she was a writer, an author of magic, a wonder  
she daydreamt of poems—  
about her,  
a love

laughter lies upon her lips,  
warmth and joy trail behind her words  
beguiling lips of true love  
all so true and delicate  
yet, judgment drowned her and wrapped her in cold

to them she was a homo,  
a queer,  
a freak.

her parents cared more about the Bible  
than loving the tender being she was  
her cuts,  
her wounds,  
her cries of mercy  
unheard and met with silence

two years later, she still went to church  
praying to God to have her sins absolved  
she masqueraded herself behind her pleas  
her amens, her verses, her prayers— *a fraud, a pity*

she prayed to father,  
what has our love done wrong?  
she prayed to mother,  
what has birthed this hideous monster?  
she prayed to brothers,  
what have crippled  
our shattered hearts?  
she prayed to sisters,  
what has the world done wrong?  
what have *we* done wrong?

but as time passed by she knew—  
her cries were not a sign of weakness  
they were pure and authentic,

not frail and spurious

he were him  
he was she  
an author who dreamt  
of her own true ending

let her love who she truly loves  
her love and sex is not a sin  
for she is not a sinner

thank God  
thank God  
thank God,

Amen.