



tummy

by Myf



a zine by Shapeless Press



in loving memory of
Cora Cassandra Kenfield
and Mira Bellwether

tummy

by myf

content warning for fatphobia, transphobia, and mental health/body image discussion

As long as I can remember, I've ~~loved~~ ~~loved~~ ~~loved~~ my tummy. ~~felt indifferent about~~

Existing in this world as a **FAT TRANS** woman is a kind of hell. Let me explain.

When I was a kid, I had a tummy. A little thing, between my chest and my legs. A thing to be tickled, a thing to beat like a drum when I felt silly. But at some point, I don't remember when, I had a stomach. I had a **FAT** belly.

I had a **GUT.**

A **SPARE TIRE.**

I saw people with a GUT. I saw people laugh at them. Eventually, people laughed at my GUT, too. In middle school, I had a group of friends, and we were all just one type of person, or so it seemed.

Christian was the tall kid.

Marcus was the Black kid.

Nick was the nerdy kid.

Josh was the crazy kid.

I was the FATKID.

In high school, I felt bad about my weight. I had parents who thought I needed to exercise MORE, to do MORE with this body to rid it of that GUT. In college, I finally had the chance to live on my own, to make my own choices. I had a mental breakdown my sophomore year. I saw a nutritionist once. I tried my best to control my GUT, because I thought it was a thing in need of controlling.

Because I was afraid of it. Because people told me that I wasn't **HEALTHY**. I felt fine, honestly. But I was **UNHEALTHY**, so they say.

And then, at 24, in the middle of a pandemic, I transitioned. ← surprise! 😊

I had been working on my body image up to that point. I had learned to accept shopping in the so-called **PLUS SIZE** section. But if living as a "man" with a **GUT** is bad, living as a trans woman with a **GUT** is an absolute nightmare.

Earlier this year, my grandmother invited me on a trip to New York City. She's been one of the most supportive people throughout my transition, especially considering that I was living in her spare bedroom while looking for a job last year and also coming out to the extended family. She wanted to buy me an outfit, so we went to

*Saks
Fifth
Avenue*

I was on the fifth floor of Saks. I saw a lot of beautiful clothes, many of which I would love to see myself in. My grandmother asked if I'd be embarrassed to shop from the *PLUS SIZE* section, as though it was some underground speakeasy and not, you know, the only section of any store where the clothes will actually fit my body.

She asked a store employee, who told us in the most positive-sounding way that there was no *PLUS SIZE* section, and that having plus size options was entirely up to the whims of individual designers and fashion lines.

Great. Wonderful.

My grandmother took this as

"we'll just have to look for your size."

I knew in an instant that they meant
WE DID NOT CONSIDER YOU.

I knew this because I've been there before. I knew this because I've been in thrift shops and department stores and boutiques and Anthropologie and websites and Depop and every place you could find clothing, and found nothing that fits me. I knew this because websites have told me my bra size doesn't exist.

Underbust

52

in

**Please enter a number
between 25 and 50.99**

I know this because I've had to prepare myself for failure. I know this because I am now crying on the fourth floor of



*Saks
Fifth
Avenue*

There's a special kind of hurt that comes from trying on clothes that are too small, for years. You hurt because you're being squeezed. You hurt because you fear there's a point where "NORMAL STORES" won't have your size anymore. You hurt because the message has been effectively conveyed.

**YOU ARE NOT
WELCOME HERE.**

I've gained 25 pounds since starting hormone therapy in April of 2021; I went from about 270 to about 295. And there's an abstract fear, a silent terror, of crossing that boundary. Hitting 300, It's a meaningless line, honestly. Is there a difference between 135.624 kg and 136.078 kg? Is there an inherent judgment to the Earth's gravitational pull?

Last month, I started seriously looking into bottom surgery* for the first time. It's been a tough process, especially since one of my main sources of trustworthy information was my friend Cora, who passed away in October. My HRT provider reached out to the trans surgery center at a local university, who then reached out to me. I was given a consult appointment TEN MONTHS FROM NOW?!?!? and the person on the phone also asked for my height and weight.

I had anticipated this moment, feared this moment. I had already begun to cry by the time they told me my BMI** was outside of their "acceptable" range for treatment.

*gender-affirming surgery, specifically involving the genitals

**horseshit fucking pseudoscience bullshit

BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LOSE

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

3 I do worry about my health. Not because I'm a large 3E

3 person, but because I haven't seen a regular doctor 3L

3 since... high school, perhaps? 3E

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LOSE

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

I've lived for 26 years in this body. It's done me pretty well, all things considered. I went through hell and back again to realize I wasn't a failure or a fuckup simply because of my pants size. I had to purposefully, intentionally build my confidence.

BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LOSE

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LOSE

My partner tells me I'm beautiful, and I try to believe them.

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

BETTER YOU SHOULD JUST LOSE

SOME WEIGHT, YOU'LL FEEL

**Do you know
what it's like to
be told you're too
fat to have joy in
your body?**

**Can you grasp
what it's like to
be told you're the
wrong size for
happiness?**

Being a fat trans woman is hell because the world will not provide you a single inch of self-love. You will have to build that tower, brick by brick, with your own hands, and guard it against the constant waves. You have to save yourself from drowning, because people think you're already lost.

I'm an adult woman, and I have a tummy. A thing to be tickled, a thing to beat like a drum when I feel silly. I am trying to recapture the simple relationship I had with my body before people put hate between us. My tummy is a part of me. And I try to love it as much as I can. ■

**myf norris
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**dedicated to the loving memory
of cora cassandra kenfield and mira bellwether**



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Writer.....Myf
Editor.....Glen K. Rodman
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