

They Say
by Dallas Denny

They say
"You should be happy with what nature gave you"
They say
"You should be happy with the body you have"
They say this
Through capped teeth
Looking at me through eyeglasses
Breathing through noses resculpted
Their faces lifted by plastic surgeons
Their breasts shaped by bags full of silicone
Their hairlines restored by punch grafts
Their bikini lines shaped by electrolysis
Their appendixes long removed
Their youth preserved post-menopausally by estrogens
Pins in their legs from broken bones
Coronary arteries bypassed
Hearts regulated by Pacemakers
Erections preserved by penile implants
They say
"You should be happy with what nature gave you"
"You should be happy with the body you have"

They say
"It is a sin to wear the clothing of the other sex"
They say
"It says so in the Bible"
They say this
While wearing clothing of mixed fabrics
While risking God's wrath by not having a parapet
on their roof
After eating pork
While eating shellfish
After working through the Sabbath
And even though they didn't stone their spouses
for infidelity

They say
"The rest of Deuteronomy we can conveniently ignore
But not the part about crossdressing"
"It is a sin to wear the clothing of the other sex"
"It says so in the Bible"

They say
"By changing your body you are perpetuating binary
gender norms"
"By dressing as the other sex you are empowering the
patriarchy"
They say this
While carefully perpetuating binary gender norms
themselves
After painstakingly studying their appearance in the mirror
To make sure they're not too butch
To make sure they're not too feminine
After making sure they transgress gender norms
just enough
So everyone will know they're "really" a man
So everyone will know they're "really" a woman
They say

"By changing your body you are perpetuating binary
gender norms"
"By dressing as the other sex you are empowering the
patriarchy"

They say
"You should conform to our expectations"
They say
"You should be what we want/need you to be"
While they, on the other hand,
Feel free to be whatever they want to be
Their parade rained on only, of course
By genderqueers like me