

EXTREMIST TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY

By Sharifa Yazmeen

Must be performed by a trans woman.

I once believed I could be anything. Become anything. I wore dresses and colors and perfumes and jewels. I was pretty... I thought I was pretty.

The first hit taught me what was wrong. The second made sure I learned it. All the hits that followed were training. Training me to who I should be. Back straighter. Legs out wider. Head bigger. Heart smaller. So small I didn't know where it went. So small there was nothing that could protect it. God wouldn't protect it...

I would cry to him. I would beg to him. Beg to be made in his image. So I could be worthy. So I could be loved— So I could be loved... I prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed, and still he couldn't love me.

But the devil did... The devil loved me so much he lived inside me, forming a home with nothing but acceptance and belonging. The devil didn't tell me what to do. How to be. How to act. What to want. What to need. Just told me that it was okay. That who I was... was okay. That I was still deserving. Deserving of love. Even if I never got it. Even if I roamed eternity without it. Even if his was the only love I would ever know.

The devil loved me so much it almost filled me. So much that I left God's prayers to whisper at the wind as I held myself. Formed another's touch with my own arms. Bringing my knees so far into my torso they merged together to form one skin laced ball made of organ and bone. Heaving at itself. Birthing the liquid that leaked from my core. A shattered glass cannot hold water, let alone blood.

What makes a God besides word? Besides belief? If I say I'm a God, does that not make me one? If I believe I am— If I believe I am— If I believe I am. Then I am, right? If I say it to you, will you believe it too? Will you say it? What if I need you to... Someone. Anyone. To believe in me, too? Does that mean you hold more power than I do? Does that make you a God, then? Does that make you *him*, then...

Make me a God. Make me a God... So I can be as loved as you... So I can be loved at all...

Please.

Please...