



“I Hate Birthdays” by Al Wong  
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## I Hate Birthdays

Birthdays: the day to celebrate that one time we all decide to "bless" the whole world by painfully pushing our 34 cm head through our poor mother's 10 cm vagina. I hate mine-- from the unnecessary attention of strangers to the cult-like ritual of gathering around a flaming stick of wax, clapping and chanting horribly off-key-- all to celebrate the fact that we were forcefully dragged into the light, bloody and naked. Then there are the excessive amounts of money spent on a party, of which the whole point seems to be just to flaunt status to the other parents. Everyone is shamelessly trying to outdo each other with each celebration until we just get to that age when they stop shoving gifts that they probably found in the back of their closet into our grubby little hands and start haphazardly handing us 20 dollars cash, 50 if we're lucky. I don't know which has been worse, getting toys I've hated because they are too "girly" and "cutesy" or the sad realization that these people know nothing about me. And for some reason, even though my younger brother always gets less extravagant jamborees than I did at my age, I find myself jealous-- jealous of the kinds of presents that he gets, from the Legos, to the Nerf guns, to even something as simple as a baseball glove. Why does he get all the cool "boy" toys when I get stuck with an immense amount of Hannah Montana merchandise because I decided to mention once that I liked that wrecking ball of a Disney star despite never seeing a single episode...?

It hurt seeing him get all the gifts I ever wanted, but it hurt just as bad to be born again: "I don't know what that means" are the first words that finally escaped my parents' mouths after I had come out to them as transgender in 8th grade because of an FFA jacket. My mother looked at me with the same pained expression as the first time I came out (of her). I thought that by telling them, I would be able to magically change my name in a month so that "Allison" wasn't plastered all over my FFA coat. (I eventually got the troublesome blazer with my deadname embroidered on it and quit the club a few years later.) Now that I had evacuated the official, unofficial Trump fan club, I had time to focus on the big questions in life that I'm sure everyone

wonders. "Would I choose to be born biologically male?" Although it would be nice not to go through the struggles that come with having a queer identity, these trials have wrestled me into the person I am today: a 17-year-old high school student that is still afraid of my own reflection in the mirror. In all seriousness, I am grateful that I started out as female; it has allowed me to understand the struggles that women face every day, and, while allies are appreciated, there is still a degree of detachment in our levels of empathy-- unless you have personally gone through these forms of oppression. My unique dual perception will manifest the best boyfriend, boss, doctor, human ever by understanding the intensity of being alone in a room full of predatorial cishet men (or walking out into a dark parking lot with just one of them), being overlooked for a promotion but continuing to work for less pay, being swindled by auto mechanics who only do fair deals with nuclear husbands, and above all, birthing pains.