


Her Closet

Luisa Grams



Writing Matters



Gil was standing in front of her closet not knowing what to do. She had always liked her closet; it brought her comfort. It was made from dark brown wood, and she had put colourful hardware on it. Inside the closet she had put up posters and stickers from people she admired. Gil didn't like it when her mother opened it and looked inside. It was Gil's closet. Not her mother's

Gil still debated over her choice of clothes. She could put on the white sundress her mother bought her last summer. They were going out on a shopping spree and Gil felt uncomfortable the whole time. Her mother had this effect on her.

Or she could put on the shirt with the colourful print Sam had gifted her last June. Gil loved it more than anything else in her closet, but she never dared to wear it out before. Sam didn't understand.

It was getting late, and she might not make it in time for her math class, but she didn't care enough to hurry. Gil stayed exactly where she had been for the last three hours. In front of her closet, looking at her clothes.

She thought about what Sam had said to her last week; she thought about how weird Sam acted towards her. Sam had always been nice to her. Sam was gentle, and Sam kissed in a way she never experienced before.

Gil didn't understand why Sam had broken up with her the week prior. She thought that they were meant to be together, she was so happy and comfortable whenever Sam was around. Gil liked that

for Sam everything was so easy. Sam was liked by people. Sam had a good relationship with their parents. Sam wasn't all over the place. These were things Gil did not have. Maybe that's why she liked being around Sam. But Sam seemed to have moved on from her.

"You aren't serious about us". "Why do you care about what other people think?" Sam had said a lot of things Gil did not want to hear. Gil also didn't know why she cared about other people's thoughts and feelings. It wasn't like they cared about hers. No one beside Sam had bothered to ask her about how she felt before. She and her mother didn't have the best relationship, and there were things Gil did not dare to mention in front of her mother.

One of these things was the fact that Sam was admitted to the hospital yesterday. Gil knew she needed to visit Sam, but at the same time she knew she couldn't. Not when it was partly her fault Sam had gotten beat up so badly that a pedestrian had to call the ambulance. The group of boys had fled the scene before the police arrived. The bystander couldn't help to identify them. But Gil knew who was responsible for this.

Everything was Gil's fault. After Sam had broken up with her, she wasn't herself anymore. All she felt was this insane loss, and how she thought that she would never recover from this. Sam had broken her heart, and Gil wanted to hurt her too. Hurt her even more. Gil knew how hurtful her community was, and she still wrote "Sam is a lesbian" inside multiple bathroom stalls across the school. Someone must have seen Gil writing these disgusting things about



Sam because on Friday a boy from her physics class had cornered her after school and told her how disgusting she was. How could Gil know that Sam liked girls if she wasn't involved with her? Gil had never been more ashamed of herself than in this moment. Why couldn't she be normal like everyone else? She didn't even know this boy's name, and yet he had threatened her – she was abnormal, and her kind had to be erased. And he would start with “Gil's little girlfriend”. She didn't know that he would follow through with his threat.

The next thing she knew Sam's mom called her to let her know that Sam was admitted to the hospital after a group of boys had beaten her up, shouting homophobic slurs. Gil knew this was her doing.

Gil knew it was her fault that the boy and his friends had beaten Sam. Gil had a choice to make. Everyone would know what had happened by now, everyone would look at her and see her in a different light. But she could try to deny it. She closed her eyes and took out the white sundress she detested. She didn't dare to take another look at the colourful PRIDE shirt Sam had gifted her. She wasn't ready yet.



WRITING MATTERS

Workshop Led by Jan Carson
Coordinated by Dr. Petra Zaus & Antonios Smyrnaio

The mission of the Writing Matters initiative is twofold: exploring “matters” pertaining to writing practices and underscoring that writing “matters” as a powerful means of engaging with the world.

During the 2021 summer semester, the award-winning author Jan Carson convened a Writing Matters workshop for students at the JMU Würzburg. Carson emphasized developing structure, characterization, and narratology, but also community. When writing together, Carson observed, you find “a whole community of other people who see the world a little bit the same as you and suddenly it doesn’t feel as lonely anymore.” The short stories that emerged in this workshop are published here as chapbooks in the first of an ongoing series of publications that feature student work from the Writing Matters workshop series.

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