

Notes on The Kind of Man I Am at the DMV by Stacey Waite:

At first, The poem caught my attention because I couldn't figure out the speaker's gender. Is s/he a man or a girl? I did some research, but I couldn't find any information regarding Waite's young life before s/he became an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I did learn that s/he has published four award-winning collections of poetry, and s/he is a biological female, but s/he does look like a man, and she prefers to be called a queer who rejects traditional gender identities and seeks a broader possibility in life. In an interview with Stacey Waite by Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum, Waite says, "I think of all of my poems not really as having meaning or conveying a particular ideas, but more as asking questions." What kind of question does Waite ask in the poem, "The Kind of Man I Am at the DMV" ? The little boy at the DMV pointed to Waite and said to his mother, "Mommy, that man is a girl." His mother answered, "Of course he's not." Who is the one misreading Waite's gender identity? The little boy or his mother? Waite says in an interview by Jennifer Perrine, the little boy "is more right about gender than his mother is" because the mother's response "means both that I was not a girl (which I, a little bit, am) and that men cannot be girls (which, of course, they can)." If it is easy for us to misread someone's body, we are tended to misread the text. Waite encourages the readers to read queerly as s/he wants to be called queer. There are five prominent gender identities other than female and male. They are LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer). Are we a nation where all humankind are created equal? I don't think so because all genders are not treated with dignity and respect. Hopefully, in the near future, all genders can reach real equality without threat of biases, resistances, prejudices, and stereotypes. Until then, we should be proud to say we are a nation where all humankind are created equal. I applaud Waite for s/he works so hard to change society.

This is the link about the two interviews with Stacey Waite.