

# A Letter to My Younger Self

*Marcus Mackenzie*

Hey, kid.

You are the most handsome boy at that all-girls school thirteen years young  
pimples to the gods  
lion heart

    baby face

        so deep in the closet it looks more  
        like a home now

breathe

let them believe you are a lesbian  
for as long as you need  
it is okay to allow yourself time

you are not wasting your life by waiting  
to arrive at your future  
sometimes all you can do is hold on  
  that's okay

your life did not start the day you  
    found your name  
        got your first shot  
            first called yourself boy

your life started when your parents dreamed you in an  
ocean and it might not have been perfect  
but those early storms are what made you so strong

your life is more than the destination  
this journey is what made you / us /

I know you don't love yourself yet

dream of a world with you in it  
call it nightmare

darling boy,

one day you're gonna get here  
this dream  
this never ending possibility of a life  
this future where the world makes space for  
you and all you will want is  
more

you haven't skinned enough knees yet  
grown into your bones  
had your heart reach out of your chest  
or have someone else reach in  
you don't even know what's coming  
wait till the wave hits you  
a freight train ready to take you to new worlds

you're gonna find the flagpole on the moon and pluck it  
down slip it into your spine  
so you stand a little straighter

swim through a wave  
swallow a conch shell  
so you speak a little louder

this life will never be perfect  
will never not hurt some of the time  
you will almost always have to fight to be  
understood this life will be hard

but it will be yours  
and it will be beautiful

you have always been beautiful

always been Boy  
don't let anyone convince you otherwise

tell your demons  
one day we will love them away

Boy  
you are not a discarded box of our history  
burned though I grew  
I did not grow out of you  
only realised how much I love you  
how thankful I am for all you endured

so grateful I never left you behind like you wanted

you,  
buck tooth wild eyed Ocean  
Boy  
chasing your tail to catch a glimpse of the man you want to

be Boy

keep running  
keep living

Boy,  
you are  
always kind  
    always angry

Boy  
you will grow out of that

Boy  
you are the seed planted in a plains  
    you're gonna grow

Boy  
one day  
a question you have been waiting for all your life

they will call out your name  
    and you will answer

    a man