

# MY SHIRT

Toby

When I was 5,  
I owned a shirt that I did not like  
It was a lot of things, it was:  
Too small,  
Too itchy,  
Like it was not my shirt.  
I didn't know I could have another shirt and  
assumed the shirt would start to fit me or  
that I would start to like the shirt.

I still owned the shirt when I was 7  
And much to my annoyance,  
Nothing changed.  
In fact, it got worse,  
The shirt got tighter and itchier  
and I did not learn to like it.  
I watched others who had different shirts with envy,  
I wanted their shirt but I thought I could not have it  
The shirt I was given was the shirt I was  
To stick with, no exceptions.  
Or so I was told...

Things started to change when I turned 10  
and no, the shirt did not start to fit me.  
I finally accepted that the shirt  
would never fit but  
I did learn that what I was told  
was wrong and I could wear a different  
shirt, I did not have to feel the fibres  
of the labels prodding and poking  
at my skin anymore.



I had finally found a shirt  
It had fit me just right,  
The fabric was as soft as wool,  
It felt right,  
It felt like my shirt.  
However, I still had to wear my  
old shirt because nothing  
Stung my skin and soul more  
Than the eyes of people  
pulling my skin and flesh apart  
until I was nothing but a skeleton.

I still wore my shirt in private though  
I basked in the feeling  
Of wearing a shirt that  
stuck to my mind  
rather than the curves  
Of my body.  
It reminded me that I could  
Still clothe myself in beauty untold  
and that maybe,  
Just maybe,  
I could show that beauty to  
The people in my life,  
rather than the walls of my room.



I am now 13, almost 14  
I wear my shirt with pride  
And the knowledge that  
Whatever eyes try to  
Tear the seams  
I know that they will hold.  
For this shirt is mine  
And every stitch,  
Every pattern,  
Every thread  
Is a testament to my journey,  
A symbol of my resilience,  
A banner of my pride.

