

## School

Axel Patterson

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The teachers aren't here to be your friend  
they're here to teach you  
if you fail you WILL be left behind  
it's your fault if you feel unwell  
you might have almost no sleep or none at all  
that IS your fault  
because you, a young child with problems, (I doubt they're that bad)  
cannot get sleep because you miss your dad that you wish you had  
and it's your fault you're sad  
even if it's out of your control

we want to help you  
but we both know we're not good at that  
you have to be responsible  
even if you are a child  
a child with a single parent, anxiety, a third year of being depressed, and sometimes the only times you feel free,  
is when you are glued to a screen  
it's your fault you stay awake trying to be happy watching other people be who you want and could never be  
and we know that's why you get no sleep  
but that's YOUR fault  
you are the reason you can't be happy  
you are the reason you are anxious and scared and sad and angry  
you're scared you might hurt someone because of it  
And you have signs of OCD and ADHD,  
but to be diagnosed you have to wait for a month or three  
or four or five  
we don't have time  
to care and help for your rotting self  
you have bad self-confidence, and gender dysphoria  
and we know you never felt the joy of euphoria  
but we don't have time  
you don't have time  
you know that you have almost no time  
you are slow and worthless  
and shy and we expect you to feel painless

you have to work non-stop  
because you are slow and stupid and everyone looks perfectly fine  
but at least one is trying not to die  
you remember at least once a day  
all the pain you felt  
you feel  
you don't want to feel  
no one does, and we expect you not to  
you are too scared to talk to anyone  
your mom, siblings, friends, let alone the receptionist!  
But how do you get help?  
You have to be brave and some crap  
You are small and pathetic  
and of course a LIAR!  
You want attention  
you stupid kid  
if you share emotions you won't feel safe  
but if you don't,  
you'll die in this awful place  
all you want is to be seen  
but your voice can't be heard even if you scream  
and every day you feel like it's all a dream  
or a nightmare you will soon wake up from  
But please don't waste our time  
even if you yourself are one  
you don't have time to eat  
your heart will skip a beat again and again  
for someone who isn't real  
because everyone else is scary  
but it is your fault you feel that way  
not your trauma's!  
And compared to other people it's not that bad!  
In fact, they're doing better than you!  
But I must be on my way  
let's hope you last another day  
and if you pass away  
maybe we will change  
but I doubt it

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**Axel Patterson** is an Inuit Cree trans masculine high school student. He was born and raised in Yellowknife. He is a creative writer who also has a passion for singing, drawing, story writing, and animation; his work is often about the struggles of Indigenous and queer youth in the NWT with an emphasis on mental health.