**Tuck:** Urbody is a gender-affirming underwear and activewear brand that designs gender-inclusive collections by and for the community that address the fit, functionality, and style needs of those across the gender spectrum. Urbody created its own sizing and grading system that’s built to fit trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming folks. Use the iconic trans underwear promo code TUCK15 for 15% off your first Urbody purchase. Shop based on fit and style, and remember that you deserve to get dressed for the day with confidence, and that starts with what’s underneath.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Tuck Woodstock.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey, everyone. Hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, I am delighted to share my chat with Avery Tucker, who you may know as half of the band Girlpool. Avery founded that band nearly a decade ago with his friend Harmony, and I remember watching Avery’s transition so closely when he and I were both baby transes. I’m so happy that I finally got to speak with him, after thinking about inviting him on the show for many years and just not doing it. And you’ll hear a lot of my special interest topics in this episode, like transitioning in public, losing control of your singing voice on T...

**Avery:** At moments I was like, “Oh my God. I’m like, way in over my head. Like, this is my job. What am I going to do?”

**Tuck:** And learning to accept that people are just going to keep streaming your old work. But first, we just put out the first full episode of our new bonus podcast, which is available exclusively via our Patreon. The episode is actually a recording of the virtual launch event for the book Side Affects: On Being Trans and Feeling Bad, which was written by Gender Reveal alum Hil Malatino. That event was hosted by Bluestockings, which was such an honor, and it was open to everyone. But if you missed it live, don’t even worry. You can still listen to it at our Patreon; that is patreon.com/gender. And now it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes]

**Tuck:** Okay. Here’s the thing about the news right now. It’s not just that it’s bad. It’s that there’s so much of it, like pages and pages of different news items about trans people and they’re like 98% bad. But Ozzy and I weeded through to find a few things that seemed good or good-adjacent, and we present them to you now.

[Chimes]

**Tuck:** Weeks after the British government announced that it would be banning gay and bisexual conversion therapy, but not trans conversion therapy, the government of Wales is taking matters into its own hands, and has outlined the steps that it will take to ban conversion therapy for the entire LGBTQ acronym. This is part of Wales’s commitment to becoming the friendliest LGBTQ+ nation in Europe, which is a competition that I really wish more countries would try to get in on.

[Chimes]

**Tuck:** Last year the Montana state legislature was like, “Look, it’s simply too easy for people in Montana to change the sex marker on their birth certificates,” and passed a law to make it harder by requiring that trans people undergo a surgical procedure before they would be able to do so. So last week, a district judge blocked that law, saying that it’s unconstitutionally vague because it doesn’t specify what surgical procedure must be performed before trans people can get their gender marker changed. I’m so glad that this law was blocked, but I also do kind of want to see someone exploit the vagueness of it and be like, “Yeah, I just got my tonsils out, so I’m pretty sure I can get an F gender marker now.” I just want to see how that would play out.

[Chimes]

**Tuck:** And speaking of laws, there’s movement in several states to try to counteract various trans bans that have recently been passed in some way or another. So, for example, parents in Alabama and Texas are suing their states on behalf of their transgender children to try to get those laws reversed. And a doctor who led the University of Texas Southwestern’s program for trans youth is suing her employer because they won’t let her provide gender affirming care to new patients. Plus, state legislatures in New York, Minnesota, and California are in the very, very early stages of proposing bills that could essentially provide sanctuary state protections for trans kids and families, which is good, but like, so fucking bleak, dude. Like, we have to protect trans families from getting extradited?

[Chimes]

**Tuck:** I tried so hard to find something else good to tell y’all and like leave this all on a light note, but I just scrolled through, like, ten pages of Google News results at midnight, and it was a very bad time. So instead, I’m just going to back up and be like, “Hey! Did you hear that story from last month about how My Chemical Romance is thinking about selling binders as merch?” That’s fun. We like that. This has been This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes.]

**Tuck:** We’ve got a Theymail message for you today. Theymails are tiny, sliding-scale ads from listeners, and this one is from Lavender Menace Press. It says: “Boo! Lavender Menace is seeking submissions for their first gay ghost stories zine. Anything queer, spooky, and printable is welcome. Think campfire tales of trans witches and haunted gay bars. Submit by June 1st. Check out gayghoststories.net for more info.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

**Tuck:** Avery Tucker is a singer-songwriter in the band Girlpool, from Los Angeles, California.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades out]

**Tuck:** The way we always start is by asking: in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Avery:** A guy. You know?

**Tuck:** Perfect.

**Avery:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I love to do a long gender transition to end up being just some guy. Honestly, it’s incredible.

**Avery:** I know. I mean, I was just talking about this with a friend where, like, I took, like, baby steps into, like, figuring out that I wanted to be, like, just super all the way, kind of, and still feel, like, weird with the word “man.” It’s hard for me to say that I am a man because it’s so, like, loaded. When I first started transitioning, there was like, I’m a boy. But then there’s a transition between, like, being a boy and then being a man, and that’s like a whole other thing in and of itself. I feel like there’s like, so many transitions in transitioning.

**Tuck:** Yeah. What do you think it is—because I do think you’re right that transmascs find it a lot easier to be like a boy or some guy, but not like a *man*—like, what do you think it is about “man” that we’re like, “Well, not that one, though. That one’s to too challenging.”

**Avery:** I think it’s like a lot of stuff. I think it’s like internalized transphobia. But then I also think that it’s like, man is scary. [laughs] Man is scary. Like, men are. Like, I feel like, I don’t know, I’ve felt like, “me against the man,” in my life. So I think in my body, re-learning what that means or like, can be, and like, I think like identifying with something that felt at one point in my life like the furthest thing from who I am.... I think that’s what’s hard about identifying with being a man because, while I feel like that’s who I am, I also feel like it’s who I can’t be. Something that I am locked out of attaining, but also am. There’s like a really intense tension with that word and just, like, identity within me that I forget about when I don’t have to, like, break it down and talk about it and just pass outside my house and I don’t have to unpack my identity, but that, like, definitely lives within me.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well, I was thinking about that because you have had to do this entire transition and all these different steps of, you know, changing your pronouns, going on T, changing your name, changing your pronouns again. Those things did happen as you were being publicly perceived about it, and also interviewed about it. And the majority of trans people don’t have to do national interviews about their transition. And so I’m wondering if the fact that you were doing this somewhat publicly affected the way you approach transition or the way you thought about the steps you wanted to take?

**Avery:** Yeah**,** I mean, like I don’t read a lot of the articles and stuff because, I’ll be like, “Oh, cool.” I’ll see it. Maybe I’ll read the first few lines, but then it starts feeling too meta. I’m just like, this is weird. But the other day I was on the computer and I was feeling like, sneaky. Like, I just wanted to read, like, the nastiest shit that I could find. It’s funny because I’ll look through our comments and stuff, and sometimes I’ll see some, like, gnarly anti-trans vibe or something, or like painful thing that’s, like, “I miss his old voice,” whatever, I don’t know, something like that. And yeah, I was just reading some stuff and it’s definitely weird. I think if anything, it’s an insecurity of mine, because I feel like people have seen me in such a radically different gender expression. And starting Girlpool was like, not only was it called *girl*-pool, but I was like, giving high femme. Also, a lot of the songs, like the early stuff, Harmony wrote the lyrics for a lot of the sexual stuff, kind of. Like “American Beauty,” which is like, “Eat me out to American Beauty”—that like, makes me shiver. I can’t play that song because saying “eat me out” just totally freaks me out. And like, Harmony’s been obviously aware of that and stuff, but like, it’s hard because this is also Harmony’s creative outlet, and she didn’t transition to a man, so, holding space for that.

We just are communicating all the time, obviously, but just like about what we need in the project. And so I think like transitioning was really intense on the project, on me and Harmony’s relationship and our band. I mean, I couldn’t sing for basically two years. We would tour, but... that’s what I was actually trying to get to at the beginning of this answer, which has gone in different directions. But yeah, when I was, you know, going online and like looking at articles and stuff, I saw this article that was in the prime of me losing my voice basically. I mean, it just didn’t work and like, I felt really defeated when I first started transitioning in Girlpool because I didn’t know if I could do it, because it was so triggering. Everything about the project kind of triggered me and I couldn’t actually do the thing that made me love the project, which is like express and sing and write and like, I felt I couldn’t, like, say what I needed to say, you know?

**Tuck:** So was there like a moment where you were like, “Maybe I can’t do Girlpool anymore?” Or was it like, “Maybe I can’t transition because it’s going to ruin Girlpool?” Or like, what was, what was the feeling there?

**Avery:** I definitely experienced both feelings of those, but when I first started thinking about going on hormones and stuff, because I was nonbinary and not on hormones for like a second, but only literally like 15 minutes. Then when I was making that choice, me and Harmony talked about it a lot and she was just like, “We’ll make it work,” you know? And we had no idea what to expect. And I had a couple trans friends, but, and this sound silly because it wasn’t that long ago, but I started transitioning, I guess six years ago or something, which wasn’t that long ago, but it literally was different. It just like, I didn’t know, I didn’t know any musicians that were trans. I mean, I knew one, but they weren’t on T. So, yeah. At moments I was like, “Oh my God. I’m like, way in over my head. Like, this is my job. What am I going to do?” You know? And I was like, young. Me and Harmony talked a lot about changing the band name because it bothered me, and she was open to it. But we just kind of were like, it just felt like we were going to have to start over on a lot of stuff. We’ve kind of built a world.

And my friend, he’s trans and like, he was older than me and we talked about it. And he wrote me one day because I had been talking about the name and he was like, “I know that right now it feels like that name is ruining everything, or something. But I feel like, within my experience, you will get to a place where like you will be able, I feel like you could coexist with that and know that it’s just a name. And I feel like once you feel a bit more like grounded within yourself, that could feel less threatening.” Basically offering me the perspective that like my relationship to this could change as I grow into myself, because it was very early into my transition. And you know, it has changed for sure. And I think it’s cool. And I also have moments where I’m annoyed sometimes telling people the name of my band, especially random older adults that I meet somewhere, and they think I’m like a bro and then they’re, like, make a misogynistic joke about like how I probably like, get girls. It’s weird. They think I’m a bro, like, literally a toxic cis dude that’s in a band called Girlpool, and then they look it up and they’re like, “Oh, God, I shouldn’t have said that.” You know what I mean?

**Tuck:** Totally. Yeah, god, I remember when you were using they/them pronouns. I think you started that roughly when I started using they/them pronouns. So I was also in that “everything is new and feels sensitive” phase. I remember my friends and I would just call y’all Theypool for a while, because I could feel that it was bad.

**Avery:** I love that.

**Tuck:** But when I was getting ready for this, my producer was like, “Oh, well, Avery’s not a girl anymore, so he is the pool.” And I had never thought about that, and that was so funny to me. Like, oh, there’s one girl and one pool, and they’re the Girlpool!

**Avery:** Wow, I love that.

**Tuck:** This is the rebrand.

**Avery:** I’ve never thought of that.

**Tuck:** I mean, I can understand it being super challenging. We’re actually talking to River Butcher tomorrow. I don’t know if you know who he is, but he came out when he was doing a show called Take My Wife. Somehow a common experience that you’re in projects that are very gendered and then you come out and you’re like, “Fuck, what do I do now?”

**Avery:** Totally.

**Tuck:** Like, like this was my whole brand, was this thing.

**Avery:** Honestly, I was watching the Oscars and when Elliot Page came out and it was, like, “the ode to Juno,” or something, I was crying because I was just like, damn, that fucking movie was like, girlhood, impregnation. I was just like, damn, I feel so much for him right now. It was so beautiful. And that’s what’s so cool about trans is that like, it stretches people’s brains to imagine different energy and expression within one being that is multifaceted and it is symbolic of actually allowing life, literally allowing Mother Earth to be Earth. It’s just so trippy and, I don’t know, it’s just the coolest. Trans is god, honestly.

**Tuck:** I, on a much less galaxy brain level, loved hearing Elliot speak for the first time because he has the same trans voice that we all have now. And that just made me laugh. Like it was just like, “Aah, one of us.”

**Avery:** I know, I’m like, so confused what my voice sounds like because I was mortified of getting trans voice because, I think I just feel like it’s an immediate out. It’s an immediate, “Oh, you’re trans,” you know what I mean? And I feel like I’ve had to do work to move closer to loving my voice, because I get scared that it is the most feminine feature or something about me, or a giveaway or something. I don’t know. Did you have that experience with your voice?

**Tuck:** I mean, I was laughing yesterday because my speaking voice is still very clocky, could go either way, but my singing voice, I’m on the baritone/bass line and I’m like, “How is it possible that these are both true?” And my friend who’s been on the show a lot, Kirby Conrod, is a linguist, and they were like, “It’s because gender in voice isn’t just pitch. It’s also like the way you pronounce vowels and consonants,” and a bunch of other linguist words that I didn’t understand. And so they were like, “You just talk gay, that’s the thing.” So it’s like, trans voice pitch-wise, I think is mostly noticeable to us, to other trans people, which is not necessarily bad. Like, it’s kind of fun to nod at each other and be like, “Yes, you’re one, I’m one. I see you, I hear you. Our vocal chords are resonating.” But I think the rest of it is just sort of like speech patterns of having grown up talking a certain way. And it’s hard to get rid of that. And like, maybe I don’t want to! Because I realized that I can pass as a guy more if I don’t show any human emotion. And I’m like, “Sometimes I want to have an emotion!”

**Avery:** Oh yeah, fully. It’s so weird. I don’t really have gay vibes. I feel like I don’t, I’m kind of like, I mean sometimes I have—this combo is funny, “I don’t really have gay vibes” is a funny thing.

**Tuck:** I mean, you’re like a bro dating a famous model. That’s like the straightest thing you can do.

**Avery:** That’s what I’m trying to say, is bro-wise, just the bro part, that I feel like, I am bro vibes. But I talk, like sometimes I’ll be like, [slowly, with vocal fry] “That was like, the best bread.” Like, I talk gay as fuck. And me and Harmony will laugh so hard because it’s like, that’s when I’m like, “Oh, yeah, I fully was like a woman for a long time,” like that’s where I’m like, “Oh, I was like, conditioned as like a girl in L.A. with, like, vocal fry.” And then I’m like, “Oh, that’s why I sound gay.” And it’s like, really funny. And I think it’s cool to be, like, a bro that kind of talks like he’s gay sometimes.

**Tuck:** I love it. It’s a great combination.

**Avery:** And we all have our little, our little mixtures within us.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Yeah. You were talking earlier about early lyrics that Harmony wrote, but my favorite early Girlpool song is “Slutmouth,” because it famously starts with “Sometimes I want to be a boy,” which I assume you wrote, but I guess I shouldn’t assume. Was that Harmony?

**Avery:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** That’s fucking incredible.

**Avery:** Isn’t that crazy?

**Tuck:** That’s amazing.

**Avery:** I know. Like, it’s so funny because me and Harmony were very different at that age, and Harmony was writing a lot about sex. It’s funny, we were talking about how “Nothing Gives Me Pleasure,” the newest song that we put out, sort of feels like a more evolved version of “Slutmouth.” Like when Harmony and I were writing “Slutmouth,” she basically wrote the lyrics for that song, and we were just kind of playing music and I was doing melody stuff and we were bouncing words back and forth. But she was sort of, she had something to say, and that was her space. That was when we really wrote *together* together. And some of the lines she said made me cringe because I was like, “Whoa, that’s, like, intense.” You know? She made me uncomfortable often, which was like part of the fun. And I also had a lot of blocks in my voice. I was learning how to write because we were young, you know? And so I liked how risky she made me feel. I liked going there with her. It just didn’t feel like it was me. It felt like it was us, kind of. I don’t know if that makes sense.

**Tuck** No, it does. It’s so interesting. Well, I’m thinking about now, like you’ve gone away from, you know, early Girlpool where you were literally singing the same note at the same time. And now there’s sort of like Harmony songs, and there are Avery songs, and obviously you’re both on both songs, but it’s really clear who’s leading which one. And I was looking at like some of the new photos and videos, and I feel like Harmony has a whole gender thing going on too, where she’s doing this really heightened femininity now. And you’re writing these songs that have, I would say, the most explicitly transsexual lyrics that you have done. So I’m interested in what you said earlier, where you were talking about how you both get what you need out of the project, like, how you two have talked about working on these songs together, where you’re sort of going in different directions, at least just genderwise. As you continue to branch off in different directions, does it continue to feel challenging and uncomfortable, or...?

**Avery:** It’s funny because it actually feels way less uncomfortable in that way, because there were specific things that I think were uncomfortable for me at that time. I was just like, new to writing and saying something—like having something to say. So I was experiencing discomfort and just pushing myself to the edge. And I still need to find the edge; that’s what it’s all about with writing. And so I think I’ve gotten more comfortable with getting uncomfortable in that space. When I was younger, it was like, “Whoa, this is gnarly,” you know? But I liked that I had a partner that was supporting me through it and vice versa with Harmony, I know. And I think that as we’ve gotten older, it’s more intentional to get uncomfortable in a way that feels less like, “Ooh, I’m going to try this thing,” and more like, “Oh, I have to try this thing.” You know? And it’s like, we’re eager about it and stuff.

I think that feeling uncomfortable in relation to something she’s saying or whatever, that maybe I don’t relate to or something.... I think that what’s cool about Girlpool now is Harmony and I were able to develop our own identities in it, so it feels way more comfortable. There was a vulnerability to that when that kind of started happening, when my voice started changing, we both were like, “Whoa, this is different,” because now everyone knows who’s saying what. And before it was cool, there was like this film over us where we just kind of intertwined and swam together and no one really knew. And it was just *us. S*o there being a more distinct identity, two identities in Girlpool has been…. It’s opened up a lot of room for us to actually just own who we are as individual people. And it’s pushed us to be… we have a challenge within Girlpool now to like… there has to be a through line between her and me. So there has to be chemistry, there has to be love. We have to pour ourselves into each other in some way or another on the record, because if not, it is disjointed. It is binary, honestly, it’s too much like *this* and we can feel it when it’s not enough together. So that’s been a cool way to explore how to go like this without actually just sounding exactly the same, you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah, I love that. And it makes so much sense to me. So I know that people who like Girlpool are still streaming your old stuff because it’s familiar to them; they like it. And something I end up asking a lot of guests is: how do you deal with the fact that your old songs are out there? Photos and videos of you are out there. Your like, old Tiny Desk is out there, and people can find that. And I know, you know, you alluded to that in one of the songs off the new record that’s coming out, you have some line about worrying about people looking up old pictures of your band. So, that obviously is on your mind. But then also, you know, you still have that old music out there and like you released the “Chaos Is Imaginary” demos where your voice hadn’t changed yet. And so you have had this vulnerability, and I know you’ve talked about it in the past, that decision, but I would love to hear more about, I guess, how comfortable you’ve actually become with it. And if you are fully comfortable with it, how you got there; and if you aren’t fully comfortable with it, how you’re getting through anyway.

**Avery:** Totally. It’s… I’m working on it. Harmony and I just started playing “Before the World Was Big” live again for the first time in years because that.... “Wearing matching dresses,” or whatever, that line was just… it also… I’m just like, I listen back to the Girlpool stuff and I’m like, “Wow.” Like, I just like, I’ve gone through periods where I just totally can’t listen to it and it freaks me out and I feel shame and I feel overwhelmed. And I get feelings like, I should let this be what it was, and maybe we should just move on. I’ve had feelings like that for sure, because I’m stressed out that what I pour myself into now, music-wise, is going to eventually lead somebody to discover that old music, which is daunting to me. And then I start feeling like, “Wait, that’s really interesting. That’s kind of cool.” And I’m like, I write from a super intimate—well, my intention always is to write from the most intimate space, you know, to move myself with my writing. And if that’s how I feel about this project and how I’ve approached it with Harmony, always, it’s like, that’s my whole self.

It’s about, well, also the album, it’s like the album is called Forgiveness. I’ve been thinking about this the last couple of years so much. A lot of these songs on the on the record are about this feeling actually, where there’s that feeling in the songs. And I think that that’s part of this record for me is letting it all be, and actually playing with that, using that as a tool for myself to actually like embrace my past, my story, the fact that I don’t have a cisgendered male body. That’s something that I, every day, kind of have contractions about and it comes up in different ways. And it’s something that I feel like, the truest way I can lean into it is by just breathing into the truth, like letting the truth be what it is, versus resisting the truth. And so all of my impulses to push it away, start something new, which wouldn’t be a bad thing to do or the wrong thing to do. It just wouldn’t be the thing that I am most interested to do, which is like, allowing.... I feel like in this life, what I’m learning here the most that keeps coming up for me is how to flow and how to like, let it all be what it is and not resist it. I’m a double Virgo; I have an Aries moon; I get these ideas and visions for something and it’s very like, you know, I’m kind of a perfectionist and I kind of can be controlling. And then I have this Aries moon kind of wild side or whatever. Harmony is like, super, she’s a Libra. And she’s a Gemini rising, Sag moon.

**Tuck:** Oh, wow.

**Avery:** Yeah, she’s like, flow, everything’s beautiful, like, candid, nothing’s bad. You know, we’re super different in this way. And so I really do feel like, in this life, I’m learning to flow and not control or, or when I do contract, to slow that down and let it be, breathe through it, let it be. I think my kneejerk reaction in life, historically and like default kind of in my body, when I get that the contracting feeling, I shut down. I get kind of hard, and I want to erase and start over or something like that. It’s like a grip. It’s like a grip on life. And I had that feeling before I even started transitioning. I had this anxiety about being perceived and understood exactly the way I felt like I needed to be. And I felt really misunderstood. And even the thought I think of transitioning was like, “I’m not going to fully be a guy. So like, I can’t fully be a man.” It’s just not like, I think that that’s. Sorry. I’m kind of like ranting a little bit.

**Tuck:** No, you’re good.

**Avery:** There’s just a lot. There’s just a lot. So, like, these questions could go on forever. Want to give me some direction?

**Tuck** Yeah, I’m happy to.

**Avery:** Okay, cool.

**Tuck:** Well, I think you’re talking about, you know, worrying about being perceived. And there is a line after the new record about feeling too visible. And I was thinking about that in the context of Trans Day of Visibility, which just happened, and about how your whole transition was so public. And I was curious if in some hypothetical, and I hate hypotheticals, I was like, do I even want to ask this? But in some hypothetical, like, do you feel at peace with the way that things played out? Or if you could go back and like transition and then just be some guy in some band and not have everyone have this like whole geography behind you. Like, would you do that instead?

**Avery:** Hell, no. No. This is so much more fun, isn’t it?

**Tuck:** Yeah. Oh, yeah.

**Avery:** Yeah, it’s fun. It’s like…. It’s real. It’s like looking at a plant getting hit and changing and like losing leaves and like, it’s just like, there’s this heartbeat in this process that I think I do have a lot of gratitude for, because I think it’s taught me a lot and I love it.

**Tuck:** Mmm. Yeah. I mean, also, there’s just so many guys and so many bands, and there’s only one Girlpool. Like, there aren’t bands where this is happening, so it’s just so cool that y’all exist. And with that, let us talk about voice things, because I also had the thing where my voice just stopped working for at least a year and a half, and I went off T twice in the first year and then went back on because I was so freaked out. And when I would go off, my voice would come back a little bit, like I could sing more than three notes again. And then I would go on again and it would go away again. And then eventually I just pushed through it. But it was so hard and scary to commit to pushing through it. And it, my voice is my job in that I do a podcast, but singing is not my job. And so I could kind of croak through a podcast, but the singing was so, it’s just something I do for fun. And it was so sad and scary to have it be shut down like that. And then I would talk to other transmascs on T and a lot of them were like, “Oh, that didn’t happen to me.” And I was like, “What!?”

**Avery:** Whoa, really?

**Tuck** Yeah. I mean, like, I was talking to Mal Blum and he was like, “Yeah, it was fine. I didn’t have a problem.” And I’m like, “What do you mean you didn’t have a problem?”

**Avery:** Woah. That’s so cool.

**Tuck** Yeah. So, you know, it hits differently. But yeah, I would love to hear more—and I know that you’ve talked about this a lot with like random interviewers who want to ask you about this. But, I’m special.

**Avery:** No, I’m down. You are totally so special. Yeah, I mean, it was really hard. We were touring, and me and Harmony had been a band, I guess for maybe five years or something already. And so all of the harmonies that I was used to singing, you know, we’d have to, sometimes we’d switch or I’d just stop and not sing a harmony on that, on that one part, or just back off the mic. I’d get really frustrated at shows, sometimes I would just like not sing on a song. It changed the energy in the project. Like, that one article that I was talking about earlier that I had read, it was like basically saying that I, it was like right in the middle of my like, in the pit of kind of like when my voice was dropping out. And we kind of lost this charisma on stage because I was distraught and frustrated, and frustrated, too, that I was abandoning Harmony and I just kind of felt like I was becoming a bit invisible. And I felt silenced in this way that was like, “Gosh, not only am I feeling super confusing to people, like, I kind of look like a guy, I kind of look like a girl. No one knows what to say when I walk into Wal-Mart in Arkansas on this tour and is freaked out. But also, when I go to play the show, I can’t sing.” Like it was really difficult.

And yeah, I mean, we just worked through it. I just kept going out and I saw a vocal coach like twice and it didn’t really help me. And I was actually just being taught how to sing, right, because I never have sung... the correct way to sing is insane. You have to, like, it’s just so complicated. And I was like, “Oh, this has nothing to do with transitioning. This is like, this is just learning how to sing, which is a whole other thing.” So that ended up just being more daunting for me. So I just like pushed through it. And yeah, now I feel like I’ve landed in this new space. I feel like kind of where I’m at with my voice, right before I started transitioning, the comfort level that I was at with my voice. I felt like I’d been singing for five years and I was like getting used to my, my singing. Then I kind of fucked it all up and like, took T and now I feel like, “Okay, I’m here again and now I can grow from here.” There’s a lot more I want to experiment with.

**Tuck:** Did you ever have the thing where you felt like you, like, couldn’t get enough air?

**Avery:** Like, while singing?

**Tuck:** Yeah, like when I...because, you know, when you are on T, like, your vocal cords get thicker. And for some reason, I just had this thing where I just would run out of air constantly and it made me feel like, “Oh, maybe this is just how I always was, and I’m an idiot.” And then one day it just went away and I was like, “Oh, no, that’s, that’s not how it was.” There was just this weird period where I just couldn’t get through a whole line and then it went away. But that was like a year.

**Avery:** I totally feel that. I mean, it could be anxiety for me, but I totally feel that. I notice, too, when I’m singing a specific way, that’s calm, I can hold it way longer. But I think that the breath is so, it totally could be what you’re saying, like from T and also, it’s so connected emotionally, I think.

**Tuck** I’m sure that, I’m sure you’re right that it’s also just the anxiety of being like, “Will this work? What will happen?”

**Avery:** Yeah, totally. Yeah, yeah.

**Tuck:** But I also, a thing happened, I want to say like a year in where I couldn’t match pitch for a while because my voice had changed so much. And that was such a wild time, too. Like, still, there’s still times where I’m like, I don’t know what note’s going to come out. It’s scary to sing in front of people, like along to a song on the radio. Because I’m like, “Wait, what octave do I sing it in? Like, where should I be starting?” And it’s just so destabilizing. So, yeah, I’m just imagining you having this be your entire job, and trying to do this.

**Avery:** Yeah, it’s so, so hard. Like, I resonate with all of that. It was, like, totally a nightmare.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Wow. Yeah. But now you’re here and you’re doing it.

**Avery:** I’m here, yeah.

**Tuck:** The way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Avery:** It’s such an interesting question, because it feels like we kind of keep building on top of this strange animal time period, like where it all began. Where it’s like reproduction, and then it’s like, we’re building off of these power dynamics that were kind of strange. So it feels like we are trying to do the best we can to reduce toxicity, and I just feel like the variables that we’re working with, that we play with, for gender, inherently are loaded and toxic. So our ingredients are just sort of like, they have some GMOs on them, do you know what I mean? So it’s tricky, because I find it really fun to play with this shit. And no matter what I’m embodying or something, knowing that I am infusing my performance of self or whatever, just with my heart and my intuition of just being a loving force. So I think that no matter what gender performance you’re embodying or giving or whatever, it is just, it’s more just about being a person that is loving and kind. And you can play and be whoever you want to be. But what it comes down to is like, you know, your action on this earth and like, giving love, you know? Yeah, I guess, if that that makes sense.

**Tuck:** It makes a lot of sense, it was a very good answer. And also I was like, this is the most L.A. answer we’ve ever gotten. So you really like, nailed your brand.

**Avery:** Totally. You got to. You got to. Yeah. It kind of had, like, Red Hot Chili Peppers vibes.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s going to do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time or learned something, please share this episode with someone else who might like it. Girlpool’s new record is called Forgiveness, and it was released last Friday, so you can find it now in all of the music places. They’ve got great merch at girlpoolmusic.com, including Forgiveness LP’s on purple vinyl, and shirts that say “Gaslight Gatekeep Girlpool.” And they didn’t ask me to plug that, I just thought you should know. Avery is on Instagram @girlpoool with three O’s, @girlpoool, and also @av33333ry with five threes, that is @av33333ry, an incredible choice. We are on Instagram, and also Twitter still, @genderreveal, and at genderpodcast.com, where you can find transcripts of every episode and all sorts of other resources. If you like what we do here at Gender Reveal, please consider supporting the show at patreon.com/gender. By signing up, you’ll automatically get access to our weekly newsletter, our bonus podcast feed, and other fun perks. This episode was produced and edited by Ozzy Llinas Goodman and by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh; our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal Theme music ends]

**Avery:** So you’re Tuck.

**Tuck:** I’m Tuck. Nice to meet you.

**Avery:** I’m Avery. My last name is Tucker. So we have a similarity there.

**Tuck:** Yeah, that’s true. I didn’t, you know, I never once noticed that somehow. Today I was getting a bagel from this place that’s like, everyone who works there is trans. And every time I go, they write down my name as Tack, like with an A, and I’m like, I don’t know what it is about trans people that you think it’s more likely that my name is Tack. Like, this is offensive.

**Avery:** Right, right. Totally. No that’s really funny. That would like, never happen at the Coffee Bean.

**Tuck:** Exactly.

[Chimes]

**Tuck:** This is part of Wales’s commitment to becoming the friendliest LGBTQ+ nation in Europe, which is a competition that I [incredibly loud commotion, microphone falls] Jesus Christ! Oh my god, I cannot believe I am still recording. Ruby just pulled down my computer and my mic and a blanket that I don’t even know where she found it. I’m so sorry. Oh, Ruby, get out of here. Get outta here!