

Trans Rural Narratives

The Poetry

Words by: The Rural Trans Community of South Africa
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A Gender Dynamix Book Project



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Trans Rural Narratives: Perspectives on the experiences of rural-based trans and gender diverse persons in South Africa – Addressing issues of recognition, belonging and access

Mia Strand & Estian Smit

Trans Rural Narratives: The Poetry

The Trans Rural people of South Africa. Without you these books would not have come into being. Without your voices there would be no story. You have our eternal gratitude.

Our Implementation & Funding Partners

Gender Dynamix would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to all the co-authors, implementation partners (S.H.E. and Gay Umbrella) and funding partners (Astraea and SAIH) for making this book a reality. We look forward to forging greater solidarity and many more collaborative projects as we seek to advance human rights realisations for ALL trans and gender diverse persons not only in South Africa but across Southern Africa.



SAIH

THE POEMS

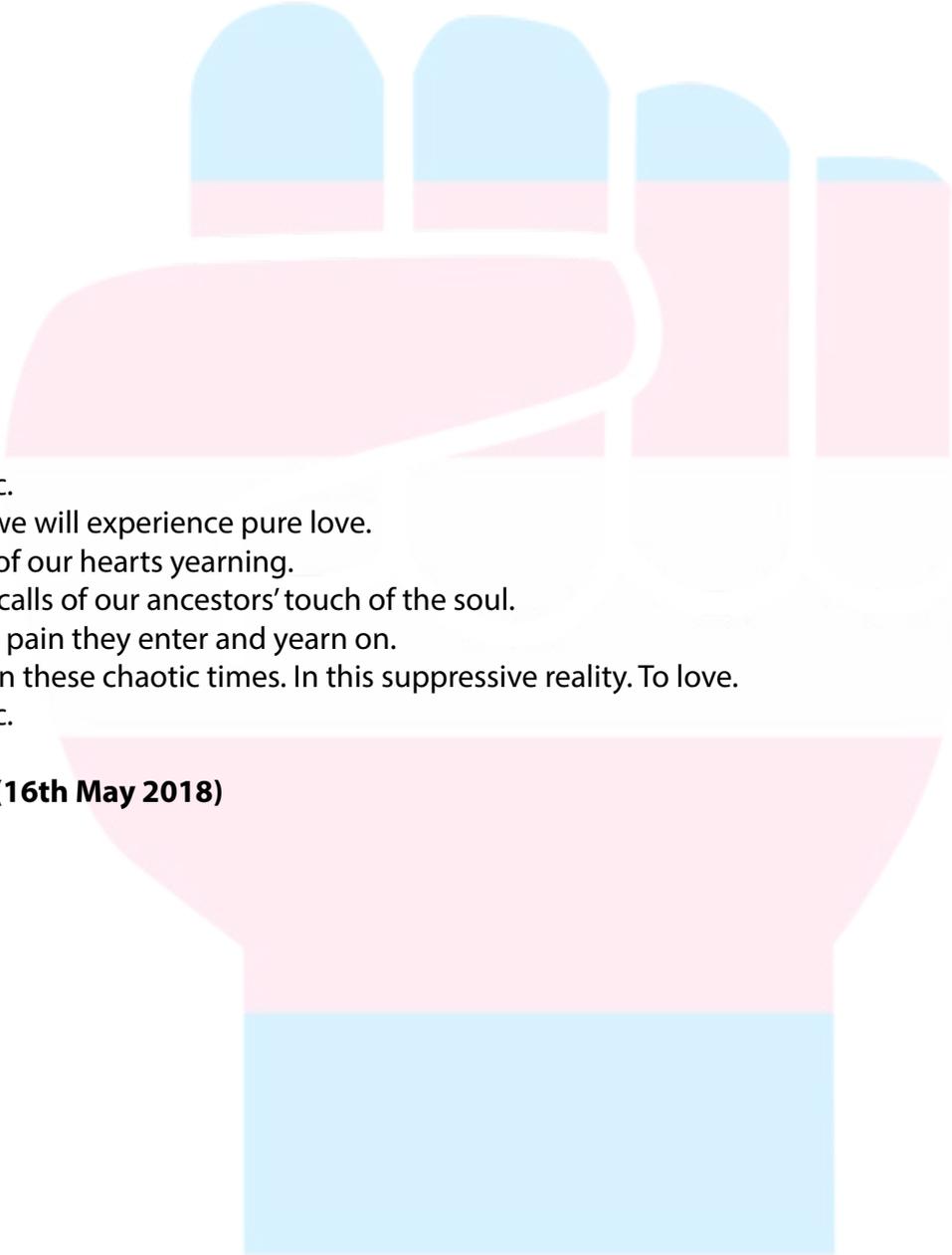
During the workshops in the different rural areas, we constantly encouraged the constituents to share in whatever way they wanted. One of the ways in which we outlined a set way of writing was an ice-breaker involving filling out a poem template. The poems became very popular, and almost everyone wanted to share their contribution to the book. The next few pages are the poems as shared in the respective workshops.





I am a woman and an activist.
I wonder how this world would look like without any form of phobia.
I hear cries of the fallen heroes and heroines of our LGBTI+ community.
I see a tremendous division within the Obo(...).
I feel the anger of the fallen and their spirits are raging.
I want the fallen to be acknowledged, and the living to be at peace.
I am a woman and an activist.

- **Mother Rooi (16th May 2018)**



I am love, cosmic.
I wonder when we will experience pure love.
I hear the beats of our hearts yearning.
I see the angels' calls of our ancestors' touch of the soul.
I feel the joy, the pain they enter and yearn on.
I want freedom in these chaotic times. In this suppressive reality. To love.
I am love, cosmic.

- **Bandile (16th May 2018)**



I am unique and special in my own way. There is no one like me.
Even identical twins don't have the same fingerprint.
I am more than what I think and capable of.
I wonder if god was one of us. Just a stranger, like one of us.
I hear movements, feet, noise of confusion, of confused people in the conversations.
I see young South Africans who are able to work together. If we have ubuntu.
I feel so sad when one soul is lost in my present.
I want to stand in the gate to save someone's soul.

- **Mathews Maja (16th May 2018)**



I am Seoketsi and I am revolutionary.
I wonder if ever the world will heal from the pain we have experienced.
I hear the sound of the ocean calling my name and
I see my people hurting and yearning to survive and heal.
I feel highly favored and highly empowered. To be young, black, trans and gifted.
I want to feel safe and loved. I want to learn and learn and relearn. New ways of survival and living.
I am Seoketsi and I am revolutionary.

- **Seoketsi (16th May 2018)**



I am bold and optimistic.
I wonder what it is like living without gender binaries, partition, pain and hate.
I hear the sound of a wave of change hitting our shores.
I see the soldiers armed with narratives, lived experiences and a well of knowledge.
I feel the winds of change blowing in our direction.
I want equity and an ending to pain, exclusion, antagonization, victimisation and I want it now.
I am bold and optimistic.

- **Vuyo (16th May 2018)**



I am a humble person and honest
I wonder what people will think when I get married to my partner
I hear that we should have our own church for LGBTI
I see discrimination against each other
I feel secure about myself
I want my family to respect my decisions
I am a humble person and honest.

- **Mtombizodwa Mdluli (25th October 2018)**



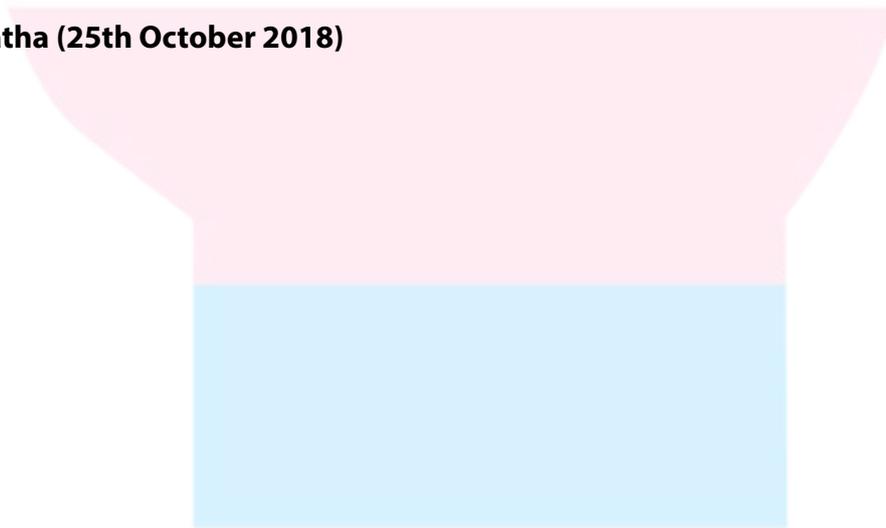
I am an honest and an open person
I wonder when people will understand the person I am and accept me as I am
I hear voices in my head that tells me every time that whatever I face whatever circumstances I face I will
conquer and I will make it
I see the beauty in every human being in this world and that we are all the same in Gods eyes
I feel the hate from people that do not want to understand me and tend to call me names. I feel love, I
feel love from my family more than the outsiders, and I am blessed by that.
I want to be a successful person, care for my own family and drive my dream car
I am an honest person and an open person.

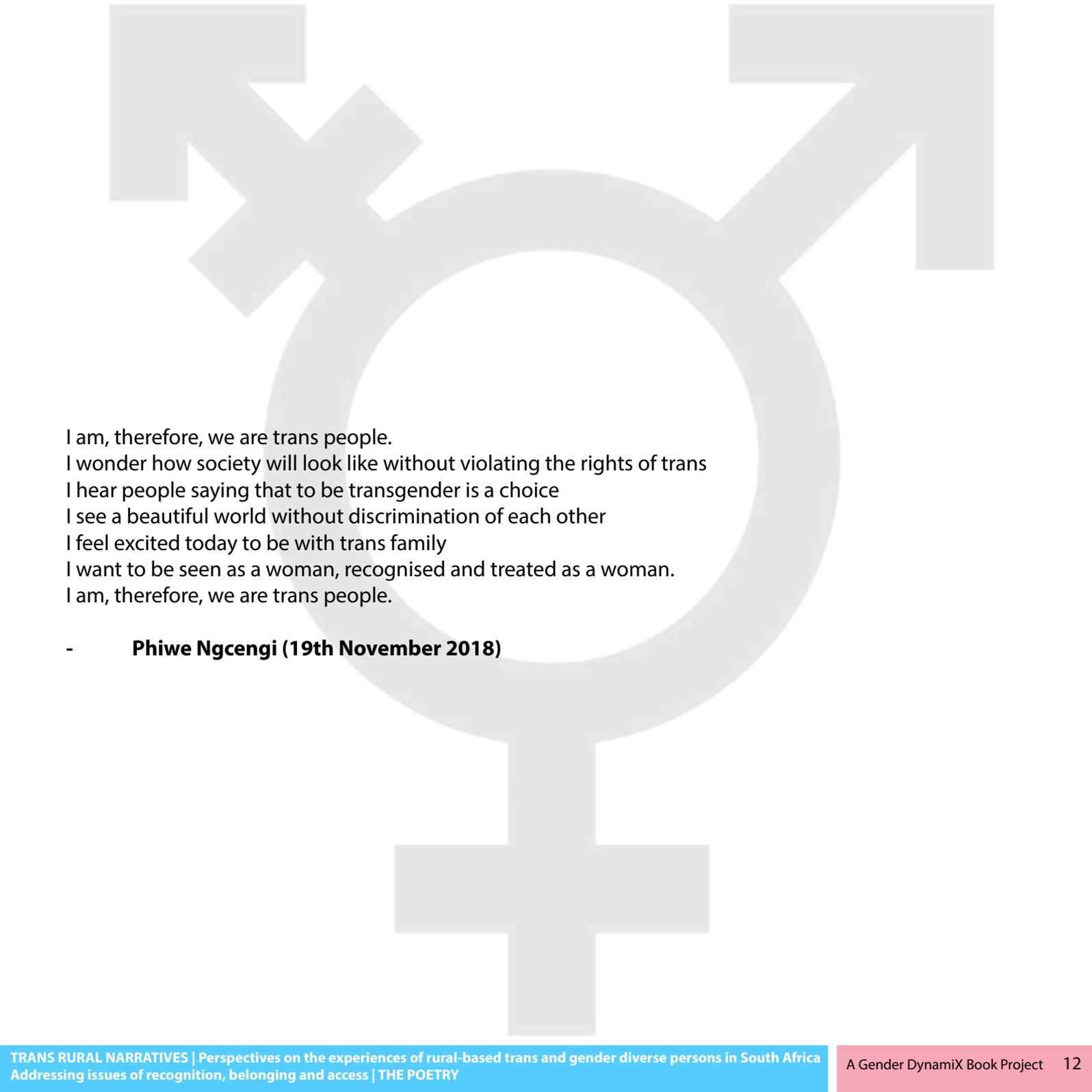
- **Thoskho (25th October 2018)**



I am the gay guy with a good sense of humour. I am a person full of respect
I wonder why my community is making it so hard to accept me of who I am
I hear nasty comments about me everywhere I go
I see hatred and homophobic people around me
I want to live in a free and understanding community
I am Eugene the beautiful gay guy.

- **Eugene Mbatha (25th October 2018)**





I am, therefore, we are trans people.
I wonder how society will look like without violating the rights of trans
I hear people saying that to be transgender is a choice
I see a beautiful world without discrimination of each other
I feel excited today to be with trans family
I want to be seen as a woman, recognised and treated as a woman.
I am, therefore, we are trans people.

- **Phiwe Ngcengi (19th November 2018)**



I am a strong, wise character
I wonder how life would be without transgender discrimination
I hear the sound of my voice crying for help inside
I see no change...
I feel stranded in a better planet
I want self-seeking
I am strong, wise. I am.

- **Siyamthanda Kolisa (19th November 2018)**



I am a human being that loves to be loved
I wonder if I would have the same courage I have now if I was not the person I am now.
I see the world changing for the better every day.
I hear the sound of my people calling for freedom
I feel a sense of hope when I am with transgender people
I want to be safe, loved, cared for.
I am a human being that loves to be loved.

- **Mthandeni Deki (19th November 2019)**



I am the queen of my own skin and uniqueness. But, my heart ruptures immediately I get rejected. Suicidal thoughts knock me down when haters are all over the place, surrounding me.
I wonder if they extinct me, how would my uniqueness be embraced
Didn't they know that this is God's plan?
None of them knew that I inherited the 'homo' from the 'homo sapiens sapiens' species
I embodied masculinity and femininity from my common ancestors Mother Eve and Adam.
Yes I am gay and I am unique in my own way.
They despise me because of my uniqueness.
My DNA is rare and they want it to themselves
That is why they hate me so much.

- **Honey Mbi (19th November 2018)**



I am a strong woman with black scars
I wonder how many fingers are pointing
I hear you but I am not going to answer you
I see you planning something but you won't win
I feel much better than yesterday
I want to live a better life like anybody in the world
I am a strong woman with black scars.

- **Wanidwe Chacavunga (20th November 2018)**



I am transgender and am proud to be queer
I wonder after taking hormones who look like but I am not ready until I know I will look like women
I hear some people that will call you with many names that they will change your situation to what you prefer
I see many different people around me sometime I see trans, gays, lesbians, straight persons and they will talk bad things not in front of me, they will talk behind my back
I feel soon positive about me because is what I prefer to be
I am transgender and am proud to be queer.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



I am flabbergasted, excruciating and very furious
I wonder when will the communities, societies, family or our surroundings ever accepting us the way we are without discrimination and pressuring. And when will they stop prejudicing our sexualities using verses from the bible, knowing exactly we're all sinners and we are all born the way we are
I hear the call for change in our societies by stop judging and accepting us the way we are, and by adoring us the way we are
I see the changes in our societies being accepted the way we are, living an extrovagasy and life we want to live in our future without any fear and dislikes of homophobic people
I feel loved and welcome because with self-love, self-esteem nothing will put me down or having a low self-esteem and awareness
I want all homophobic to stop insulting, discriminating us
I am flabbergasted, excruciating and very furious.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



I am unique and human
I wonder what it would have been like if I was 'straight'
I hear the call to change people's perception about sexuality
I see the beauty in unity
I feel ambitious about giving back the information
I want the world to accept and be a better place
I am unique and human.

- **Jackson Letanta (20th December 2018)**



I am unique
I wonder what a world would be without me
I hear the call and
I see the beauty and nice created world
I feel well about the future
I want to be respected
I am loving and caring.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



I am loving and caring
I wonder why some community members discriminate and stigmatise
I hear positive words from others
I see the love and respect
I feel curious to others life
I want positive life to everyone
I am loving and caring.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



I am caring
I wonder what the future will be like without trans people
I hear a sound of change
I see a beautiful world
I feel possible life styles
I want equity and equality, and to go back to school
I am caring.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



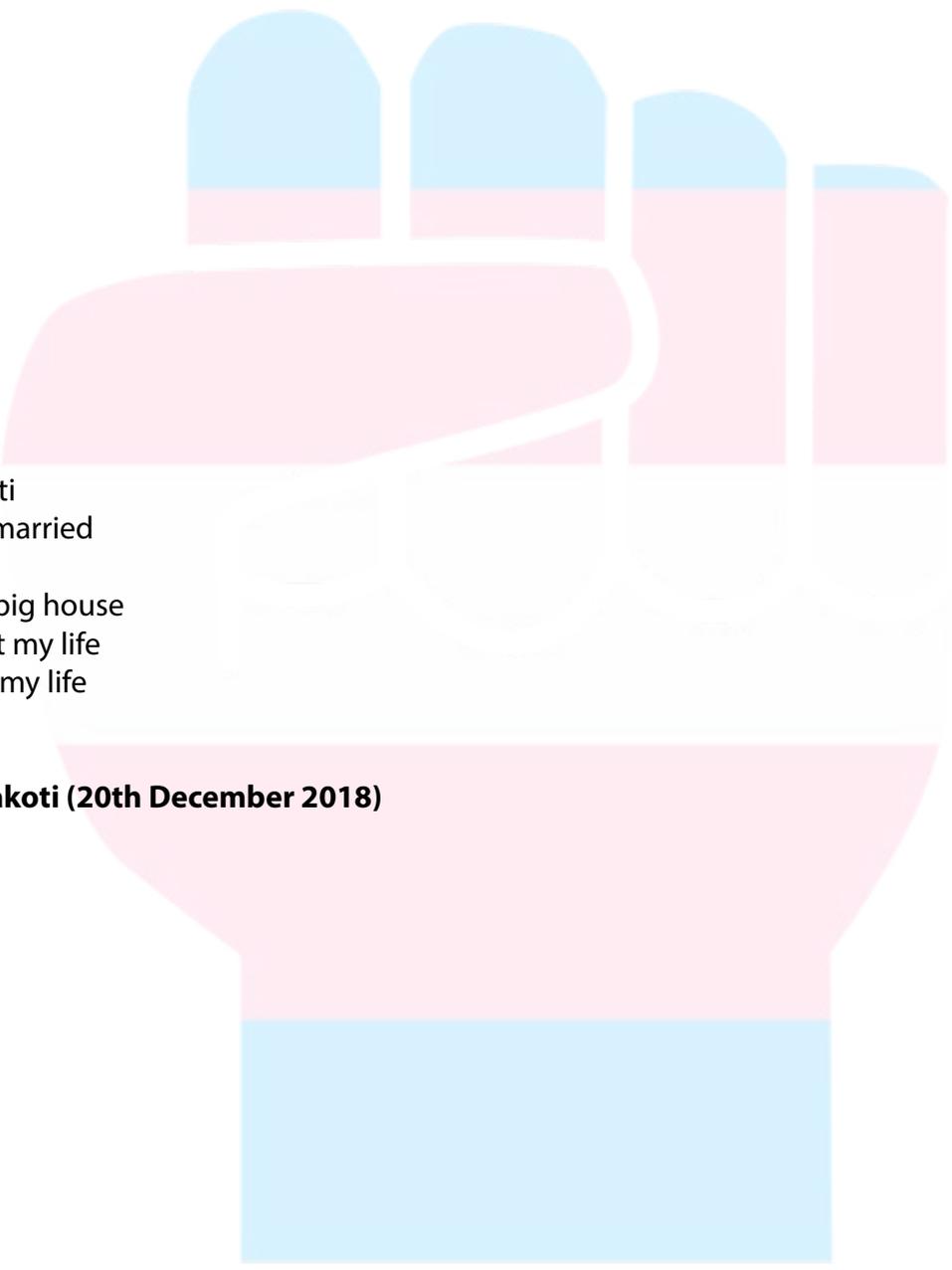
I am a survivor and a conqueror
I wonder the unseen
I hear the voiceless
I feel the unreal
I want the impossible
I am what I am, a survivor and a conqueror.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



I am sophisticated and normal
I am thoughtful but sad
I wonder if I'll ever be happy
I wonder if my future will turn out the way I am expecting it to be
I hear too many screaming due to how I was abused
I hear different names regarding my gender identity
I see beautiful creation always when I look at my fellow trans women
I see shadows in my sleep
I feel depressed most of the time
I feel sad when I look at someone who are struggling to find their feet
I want to be acknowledged
I want to be taken into consideration
I am sophisticated and normal
I am thoughtful and sad.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



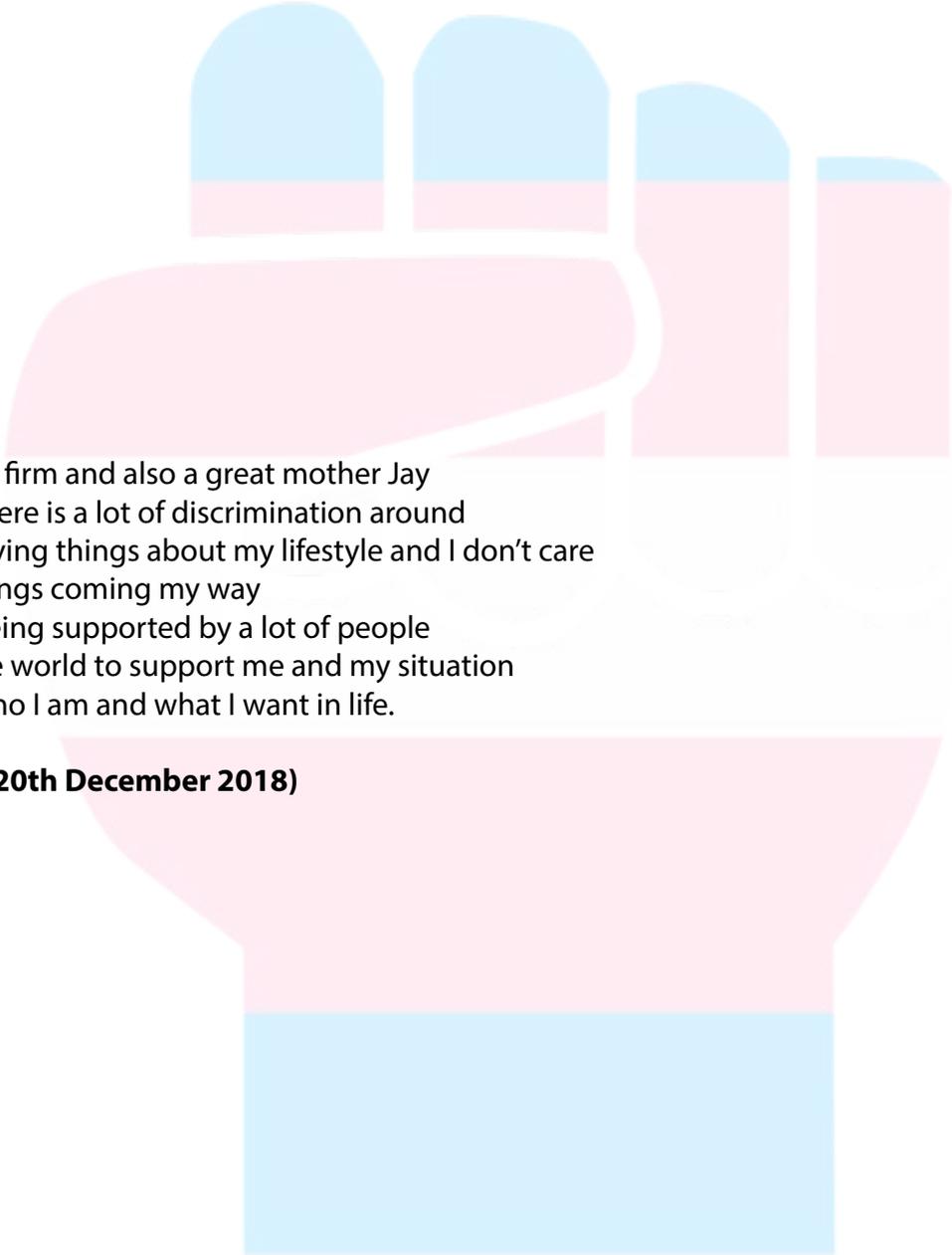
I am Thabo Rakoti
I wonder to get married
I hear voices
I see myself in a big house
I feel good about my life
I want money in my life
I am queer.

- **Portia Rakoti (20th December 2018)**



I am funny, dancer and normal
I wonder why my father doesn't want to accept me the way I am
I hear the future calling
I see the beauty in nature and having loving people around me
I feel positive about myself and my future as well
I want to have a bright future and equality at home, having an acceptance at home
I am funny, dancer and normal.

- **Boitumelo Sehalk (20th December 2018)**



I am unique and firm and also a great mother Jay
I wonder why there is a lot of discrimination around
I hear people saying things about my lifestyle and I don't care
I see positive things coming my way
I feel like I am being supported by a lot of people
I want the whole world to support me and my situation
I am proud of who I am and what I want in life.

- **Jessica (20th December 2018)**



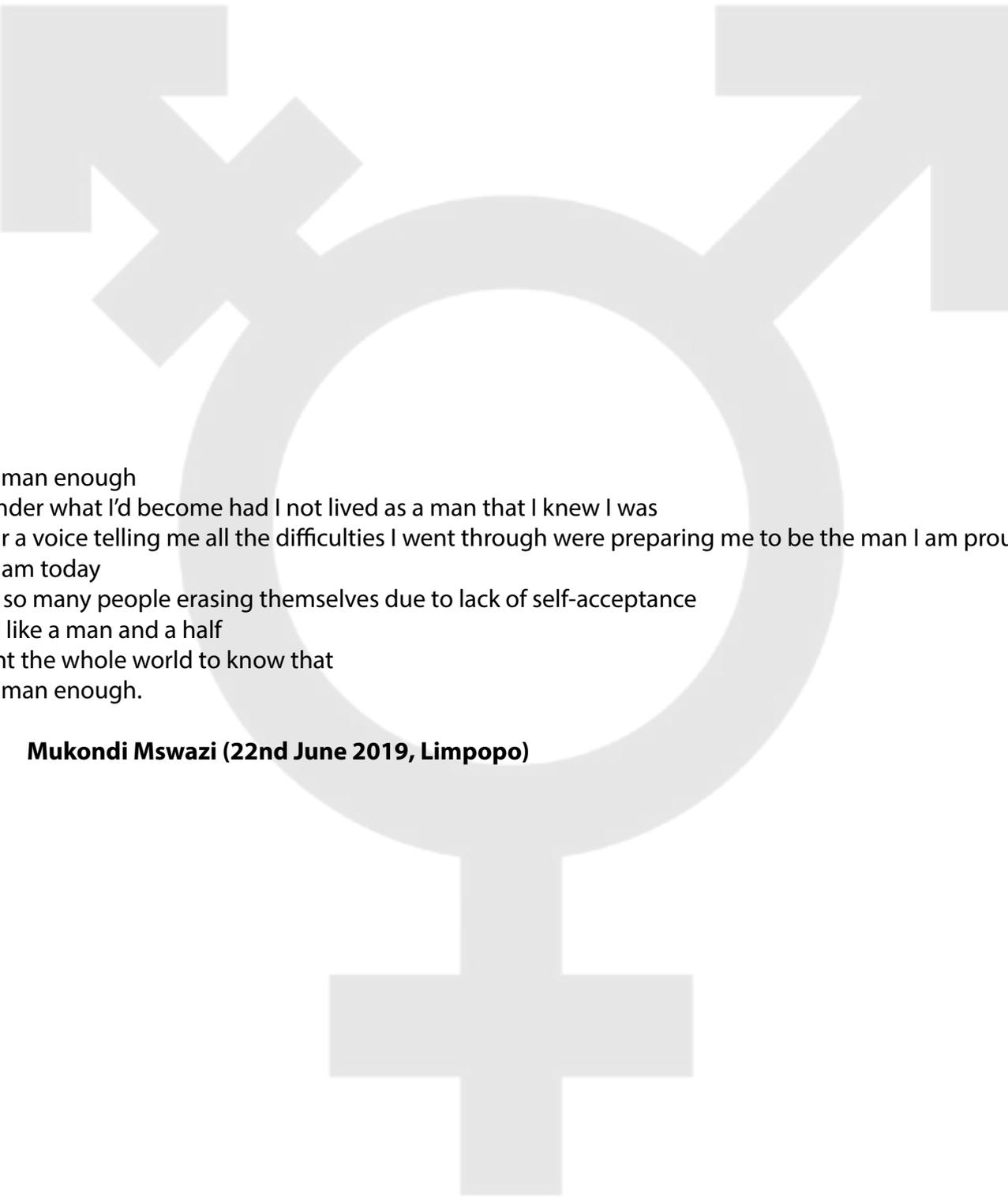
I am quite unique and beautiful
I wonder without our transgender projects where will I be
I hear something calling me to change the world
I see my family support me
I feel good things coming for me
I want a change for people like us
I am unique and beautiful.

- **Anonymous (20th December 2018)**



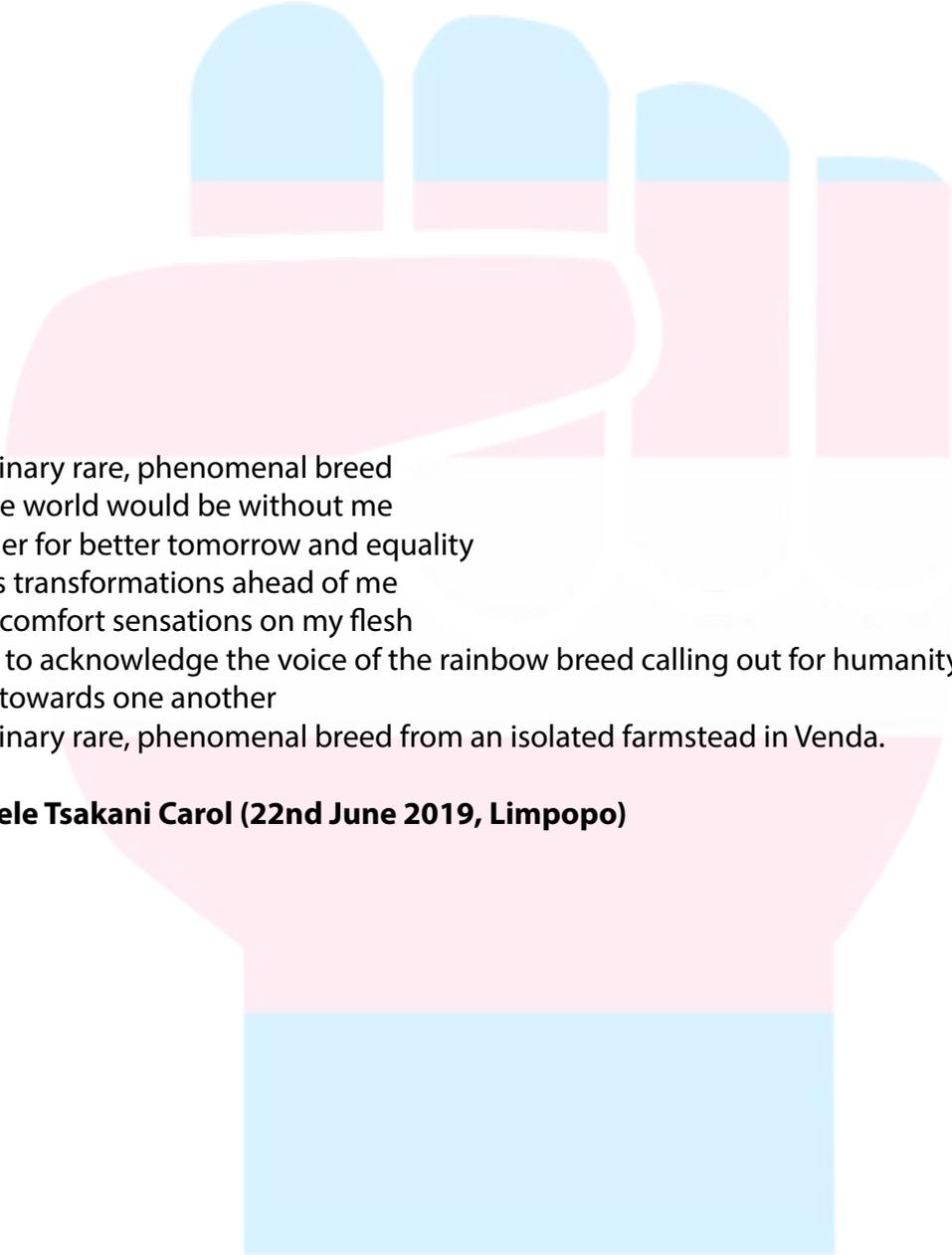
I am beautiful and unique
I wonder how I would see the world if I was not a transgender woman
I hear the future generation claiming to become who they are
I see the world becoming a better place since everyone is being allowed to express themselves the way they are
I feel proud about myself
I want to make my mark in this world
I am beautiful and unique.

- **Kananelo Kobile (20th December 2018)**



I am man enough
I wonder what I'd become had I not lived as a man that I knew I was
I hear a voice telling me all the difficulties I went through were preparing me to be the man I am proud to
say I am today
I see so many people erasing themselves due to lack of self-acceptance
I feel like a man and a half
I want the whole world to know that
I am man enough.

- **Mukondi Mswazi (22nd June 2019, Limpopo)**



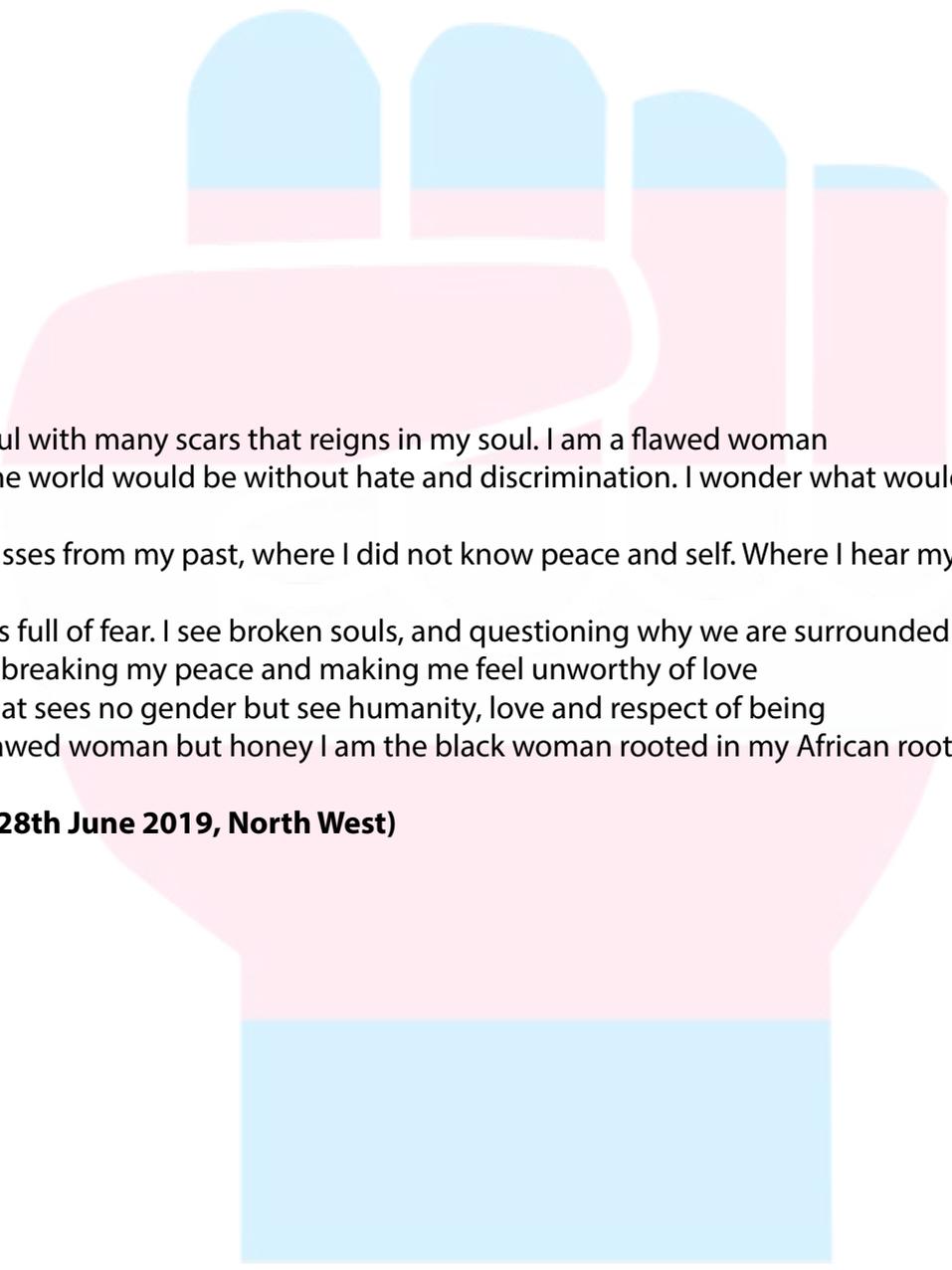
I am an extraordinary rare, phenomenal breed
I wonder how the world would be without me
I hear voices eager for better tomorrow and equality
I see stupendous transformations ahead of me
I feel the loving, comfort sensations on my flesh
I want the world to acknowledge the voice of the rainbow breed calling out for humanity, love, respect,
and acceptance towards one another
I am an extraordinary rare, phenomenal breed from an isolated farmstead in Venda.

- **Makhubele Tsakani Carol (22nd June 2019, Limpopo)**



I am a child of God
I wonder what the world would like if there will be no heterosexuals
I hear a bird singing
I see myself getting married
I feel good when I am around my girlfriend
I want to teach the world about LGBTIQ+ people
I am a child of God.

- **Mangi Matamela (22nd June 2019, Limpopo)**



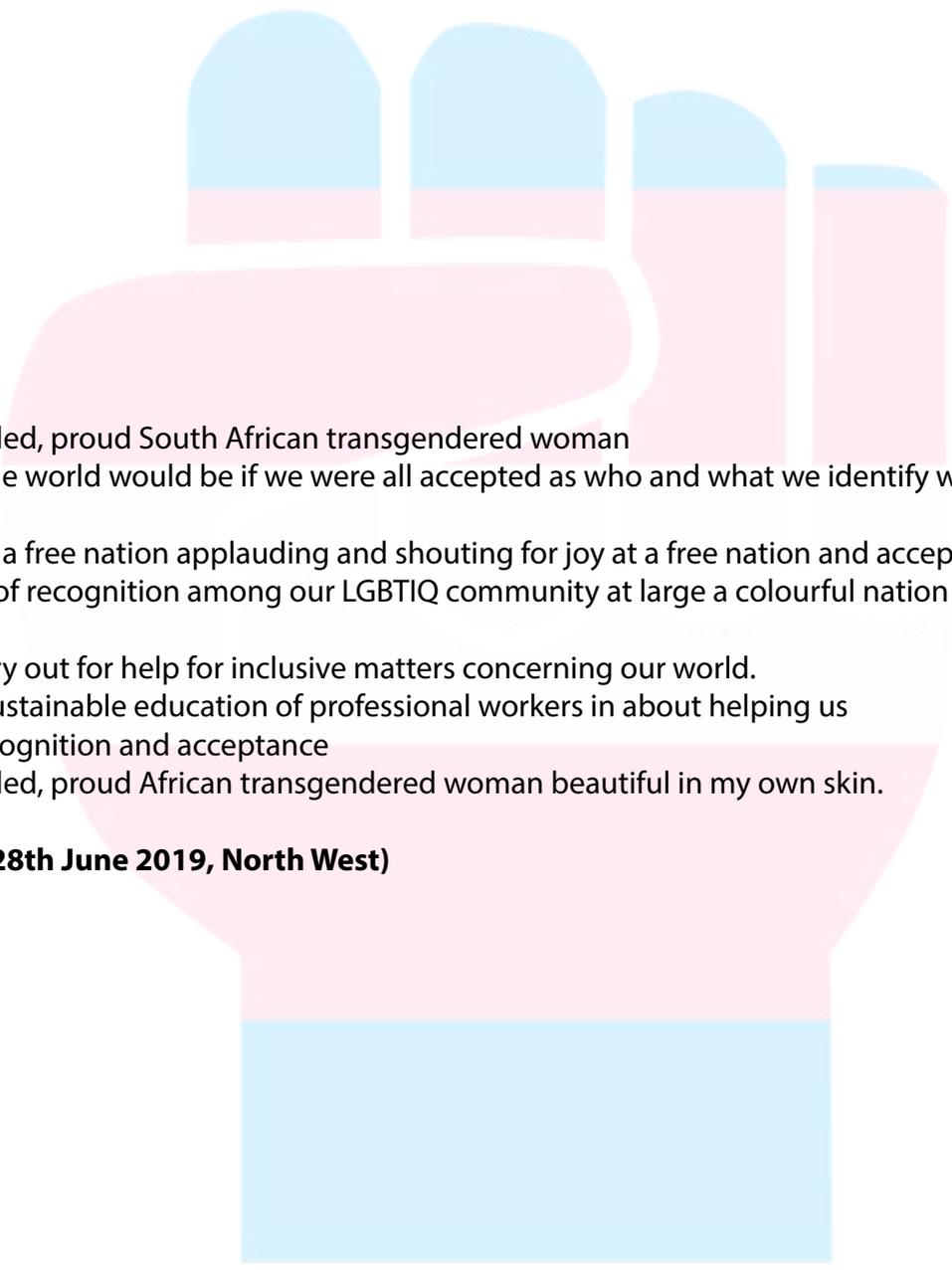
I am a broken soul with many scars that reigns in my soul. I am a flawed woman
I wonder what the world would be without hate and discrimination. I wonder what would living in peace
be like
I hear broken glasses from my past, where I did not know peace and self. Where I hear my pain outside of
my body
I see blood, roads full of fear. I see broken souls, and questioning why we are surrounded by pain
I feel my anxiety breaking my peace and making me feel unworthy of love
I want a world that sees no gender but see humanity, love and respect of being
I am a broken, flawed woman but honey I am the black woman rooted in my African roots.

- **Thanya (28th June 2019, North West)**



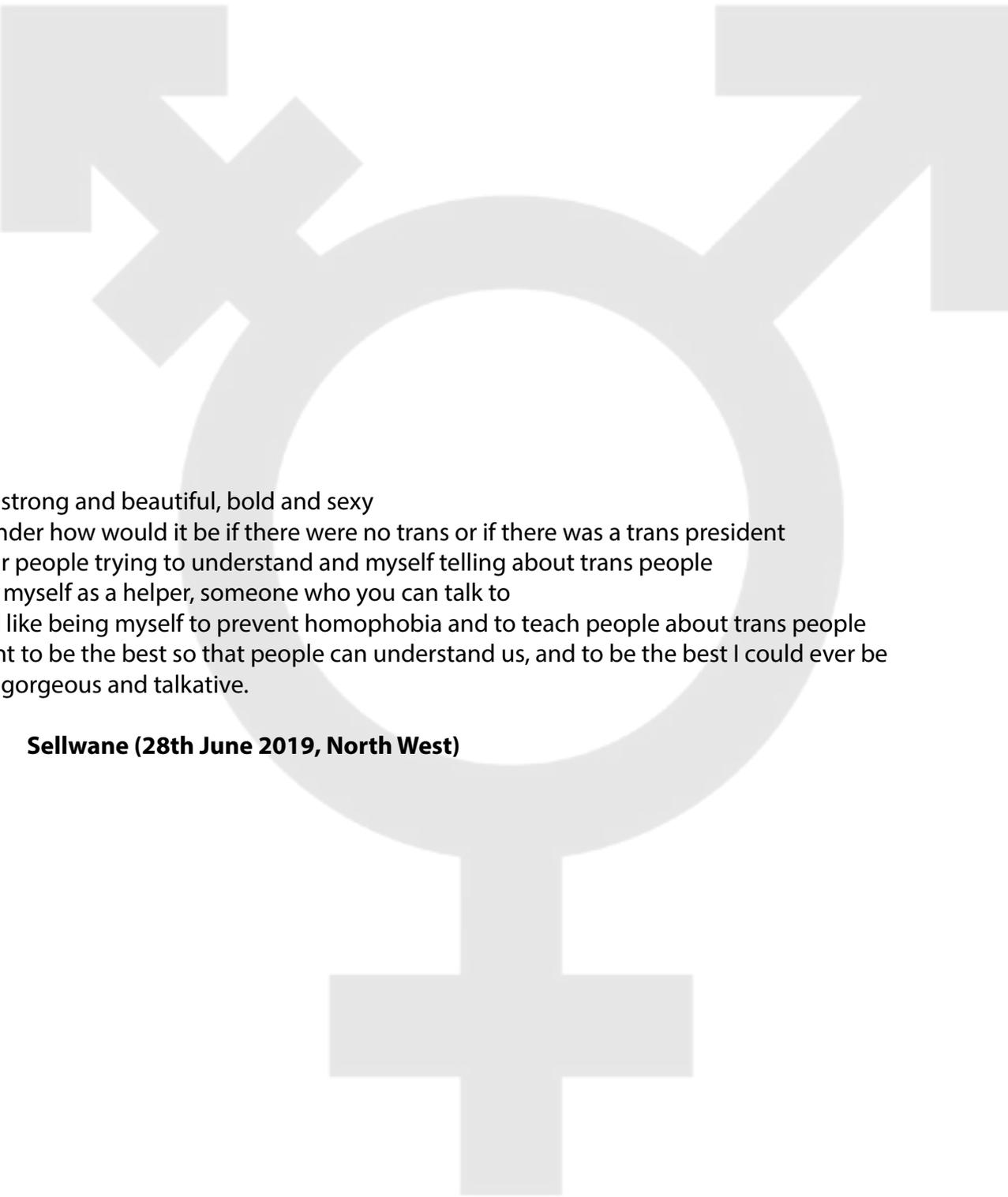
I am Gose von Stefan and I am strong and unique
I wonder what life would be like without all this hatred and transphobia
I hear the constant cry from my fellow brothers and sisters for the need of change to a better tomorrow
I see change taking its precious time
I feel we are one step closer to positive change day by day
I want and imagine life without struggle, discrimination, hatred, fear, transphobia and I want world peace
I am Gose von Stefan and I am strong and unique.

- **Gose von Stefan (28th June 2019, North West)**



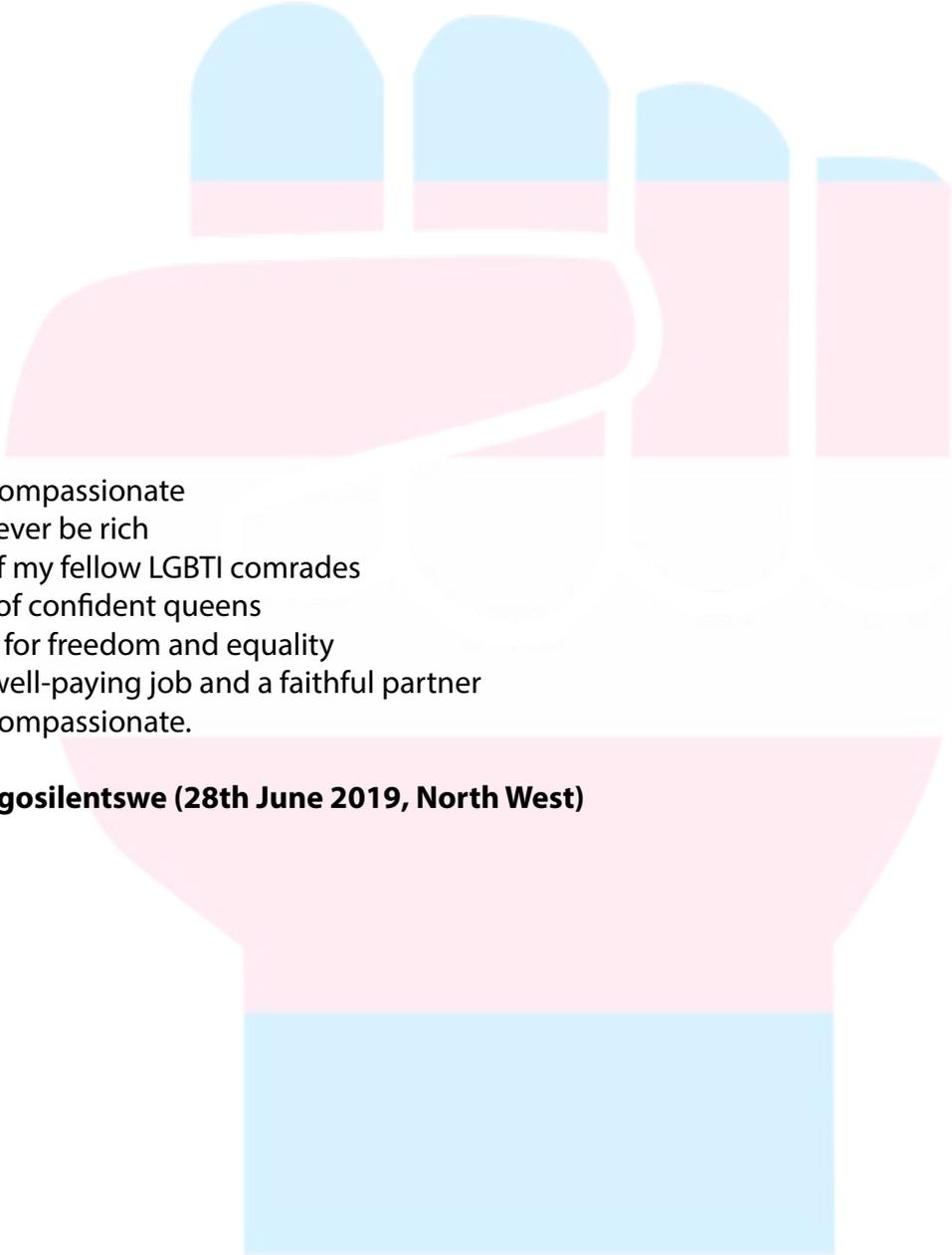
I am a strong-willed, proud South African transgendered woman
I wonder what the world would be if we were all accepted as who and what we identify with as individuals
I hear a sound of a free nation applauding and shouting for joy at a free nation and acceptance for all
I see the beauty of recognition among our LGBTIQ community at large a colourful nation with our bright identities
I feel a need to cry out for help for inclusive matters concerning our world.
I feel a need of sustainable education of professional workers in about helping us
I want simply recognition and acceptance
I am a strong-willed, proud African transgendered woman beautiful in my own skin.

- **Christy (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am strong and beautiful, bold and sexy
I wonder how would it be if there were no trans or if there was a trans president
I hear people trying to understand and myself telling about trans people
I see myself as a helper, someone who you can talk to
I feel like being myself to prevent homophobia and to teach people about trans people
I want to be the best so that people can understand us, and to be the best I could ever be
I am gorgeous and talkative.

- **Sellwane (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am smart and compassionate
I wonder if I will ever be rich
I hear the cries of my fellow LGBTI comrades
I see a room full of confident queens
I feel the hunger for freedom and equality
I want a proper well-paying job and a faithful partner
I am smart and compassionate.

- **Kagiso Kgosilentswe (28th June 2019, North West)**



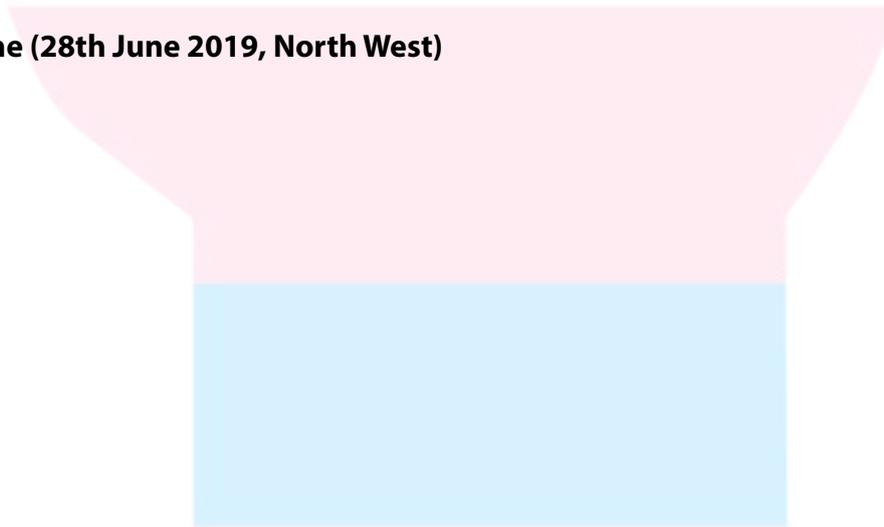
I am beautiful, special
I wonder how life would be without me because I am a drama queen
I hear a noise from outside
I see myself as a rich lady
I feel down when people discriminate me
I want a good, loving man
I am special, beautiful.

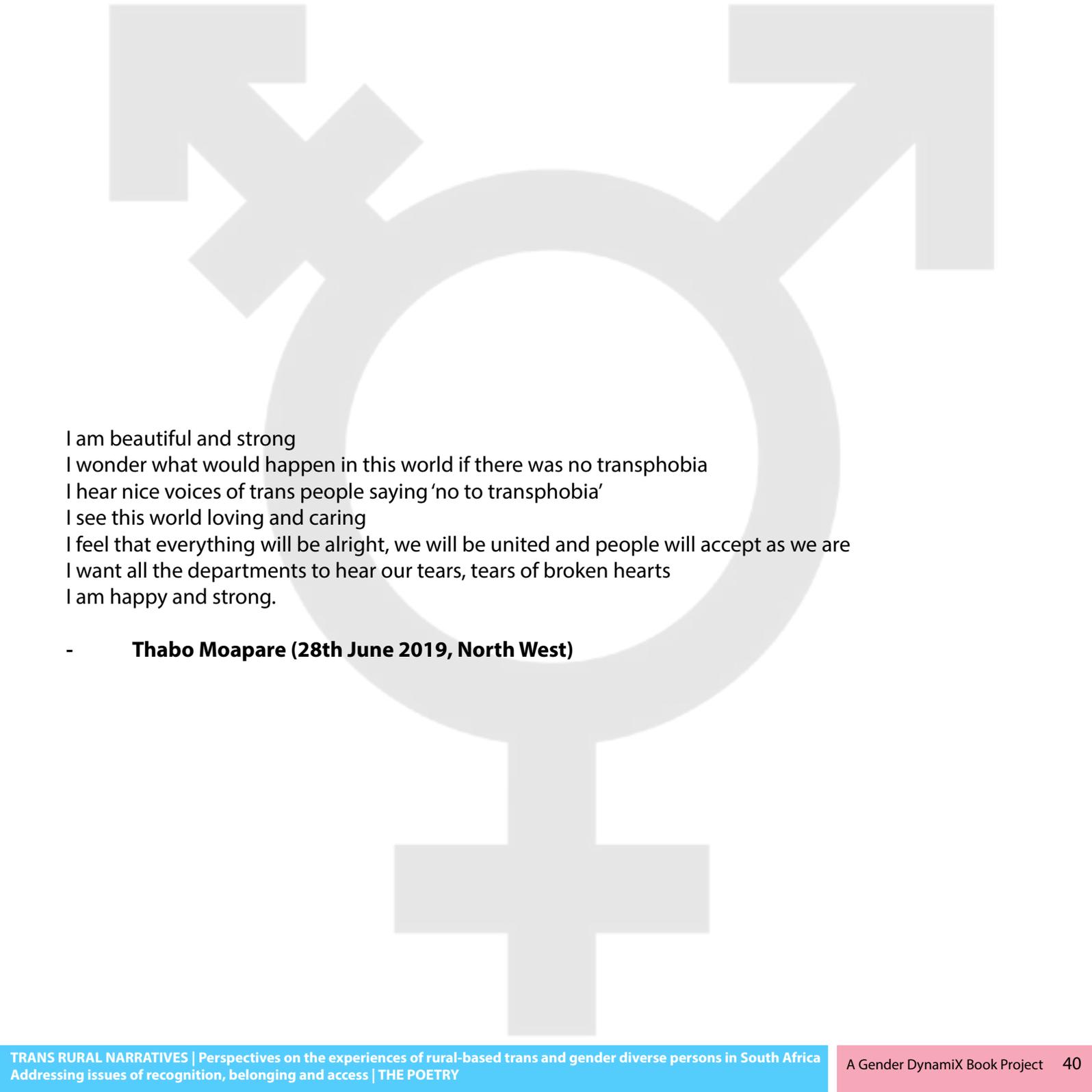
- **Kagiso Pelele (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am beautiful and special
I wonder why people of this world get us wrong for being who we are
I hear the people of this world discriminating us, calling us by names also wanting to kill us
I feel we as trans people are not protected enough in this world
I see us trans people are intelligent and also talented
I am proudly a trans woman.

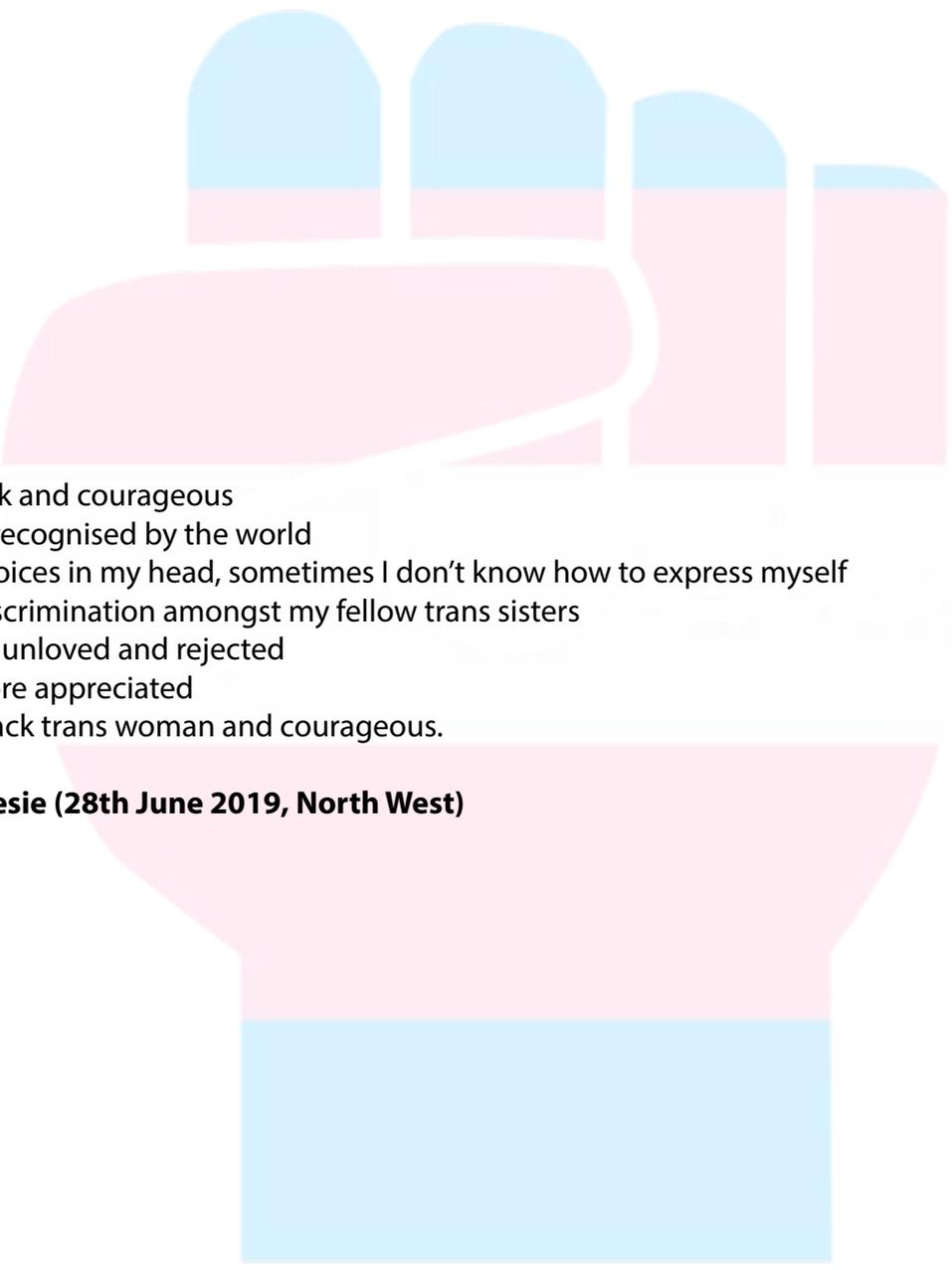
- **Latoya Tikane (28th June 2019, North West)**





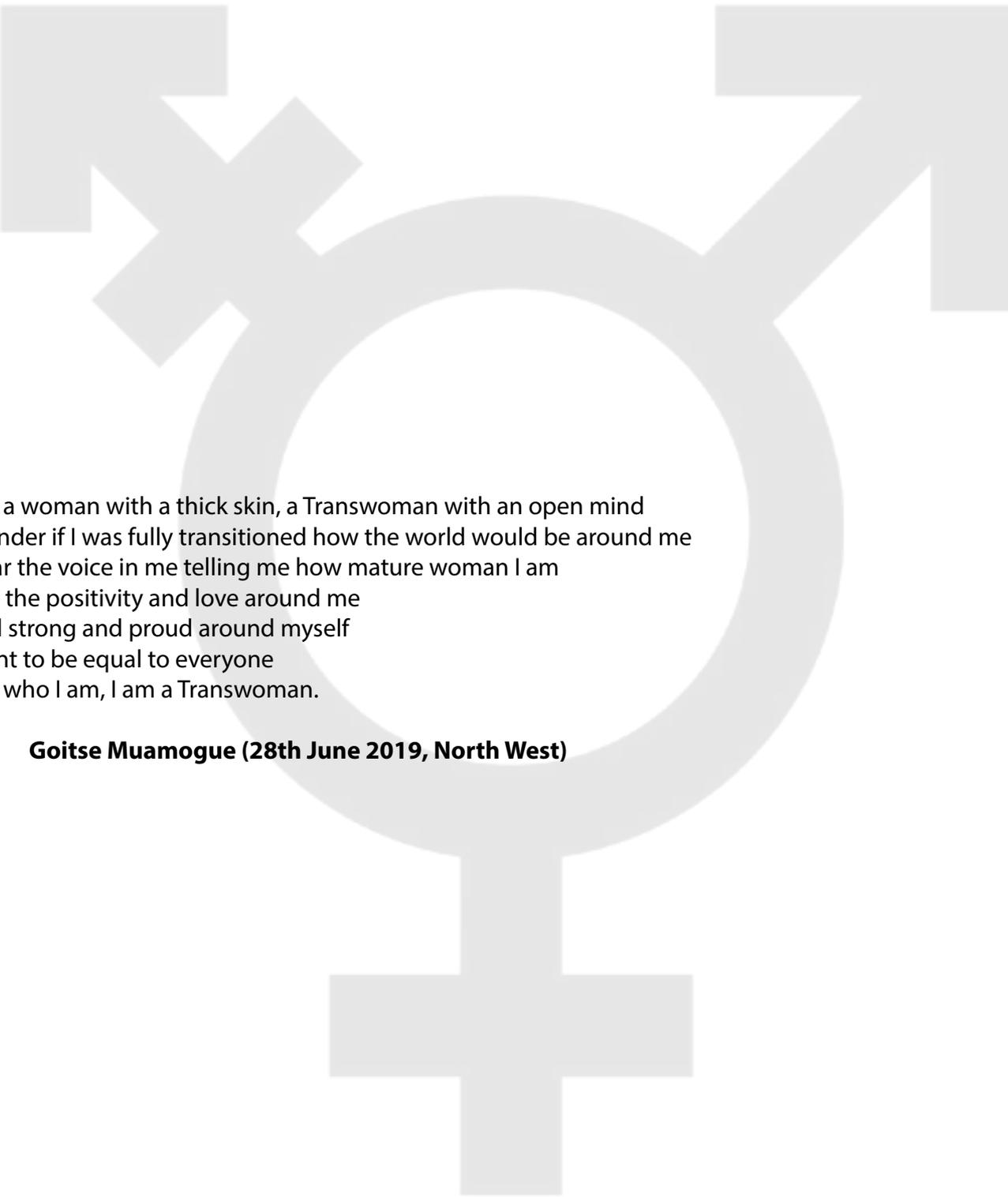
I am beautiful and strong
I wonder what would happen in this world if there was no transphobia
I hear nice voices of trans people saying 'no to transphobia'
I see this world loving and caring
I feel that everything will be alright, we will be united and people will accept as we are
I want all the departments to hear our tears, tears of broken hearts
I am happy and strong.

- **Thabo Moapare (28th June 2019, North West)**



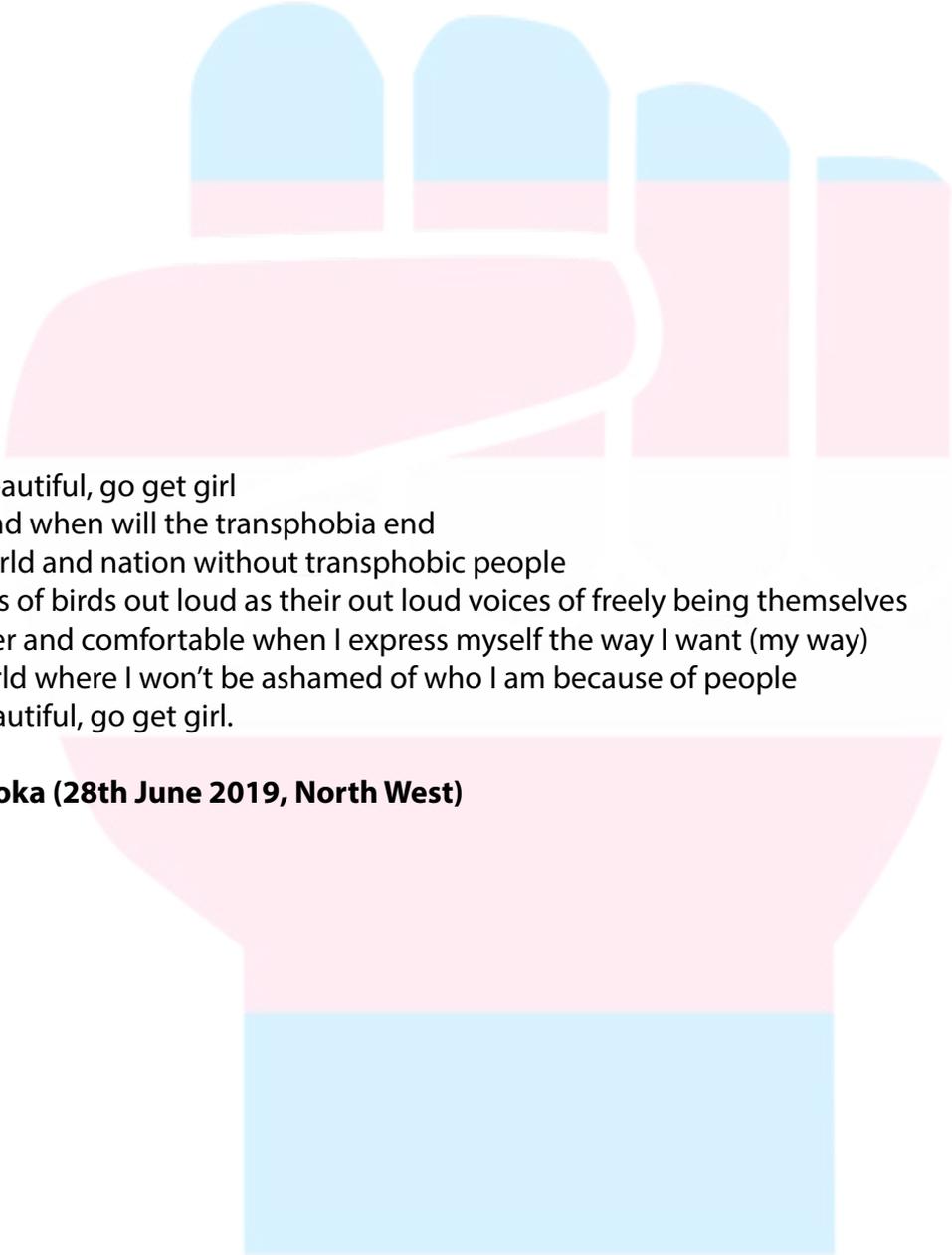
I am strong, black and courageous
I wonder if I am recognised by the world
I hear so many voices in my head, sometimes I don't know how to express myself
I see so much discrimination amongst my fellow trans sisters
I feel sometimes unloved and rejected
I want to feel more appreciated
I am a strong, black trans woman and courageous.

- **Mpho Wesie (28th June 2019, North West)**



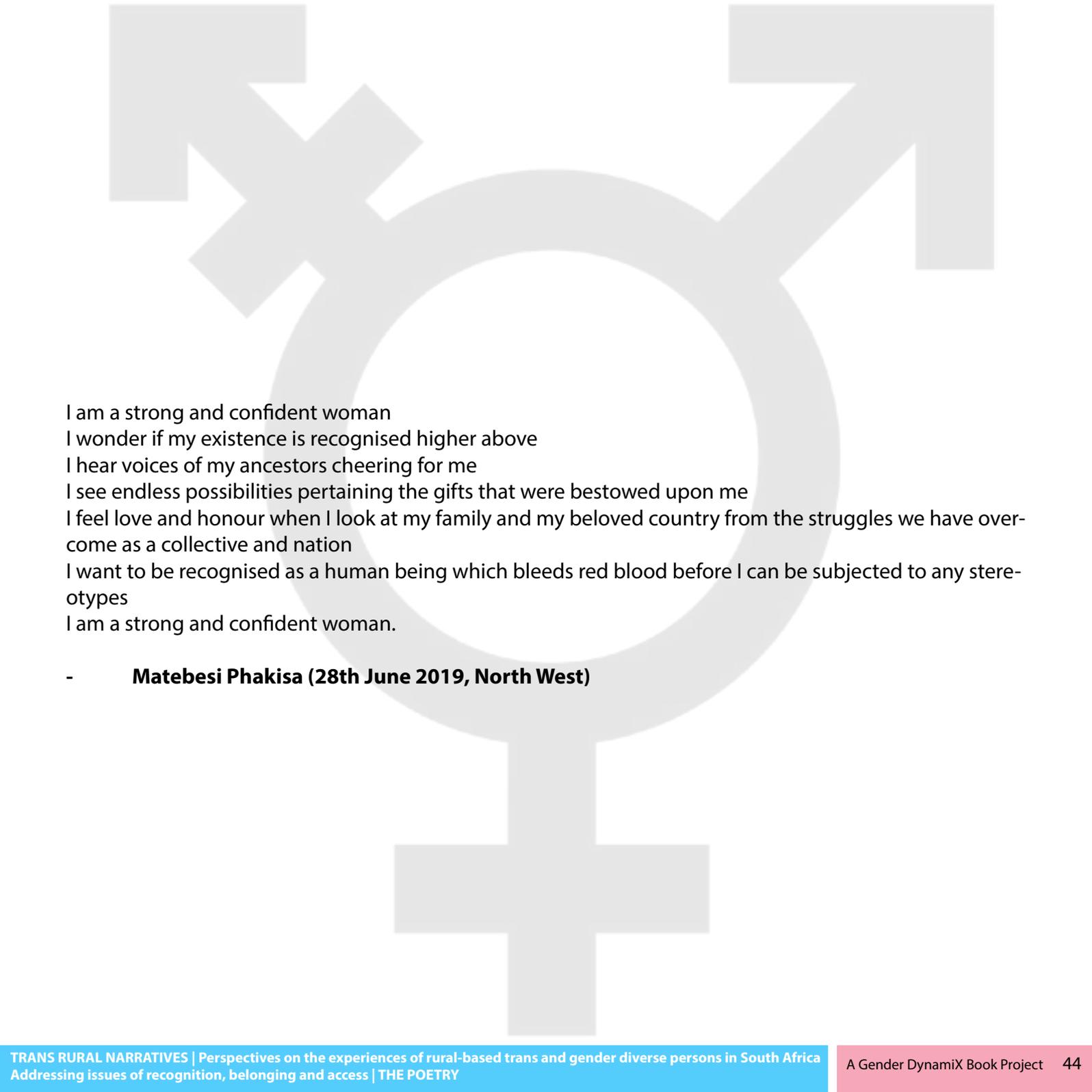
I am a woman with a thick skin, a Transwoman with an open mind
I wonder if I was fully transitioned how the world would be around me
I hear the voice in me telling me how mature woman I am
I see the positivity and love around me
I feel strong and proud around myself
I want to be equal to everyone
I am who I am, I am a Transwoman.

- **Goitse Muamogoe (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am a strong, beautiful, go get girl
I wonder how and when will the transphobia end
I see a better world and nation without transphobic people
I hear the sounds of birds out loud as their out loud voices of freely being themselves
I feel much better and comfortable when I express myself the way I want (my way)
I want a free world where I won't be ashamed of who I am because of people
I am a string, beautiful, go get girl.

- **Cutie Seoka (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am a strong and confident woman
I wonder if my existence is recognised higher above
I hear voices of my ancestors cheering for me
I see endless possibilities pertaining the gifts that were bestowed upon me
I feel love and honour when I look at my family and my beloved country from the struggles we have overcome as a collective and nation
I want to be recognised as a human being which bleeds red blood before I can be subjected to any stereotypes
I am a strong and confident woman.

- **Matebesi Phakisa (28th June 2019, North West)**



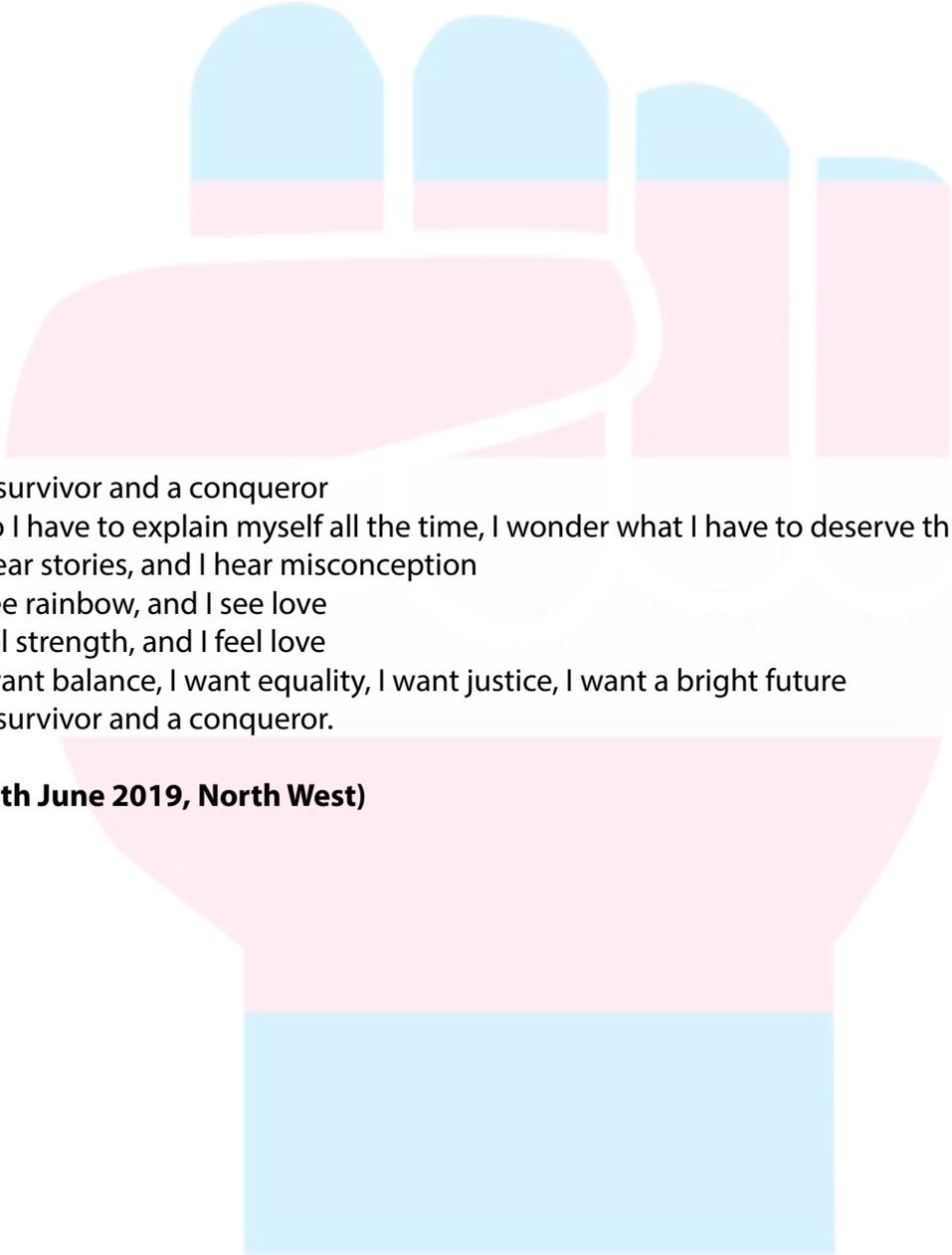
I am a Transgender Woman
I wonder why it is so much homophobic violence
I hear rural trans cry
I see transphobia and hate crimes
I feel fear
I want equality and access to primary health care
I am an unapologetic strong trans woman.

- **Millicent (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am a strong black man in my own right
I wonder if the world would see me as such
I hear the voice in my head telling me that all is going to be ok and to take a deep breath
I see a beautiful journey of my life: in a broken world in constant need of change
I feel a positive outcome towards the man I am becoming
I want to make a positive change in someone's life
I am a strong black man in my own right.

- **Lesego Hlabana (28th June 2019, North West)**



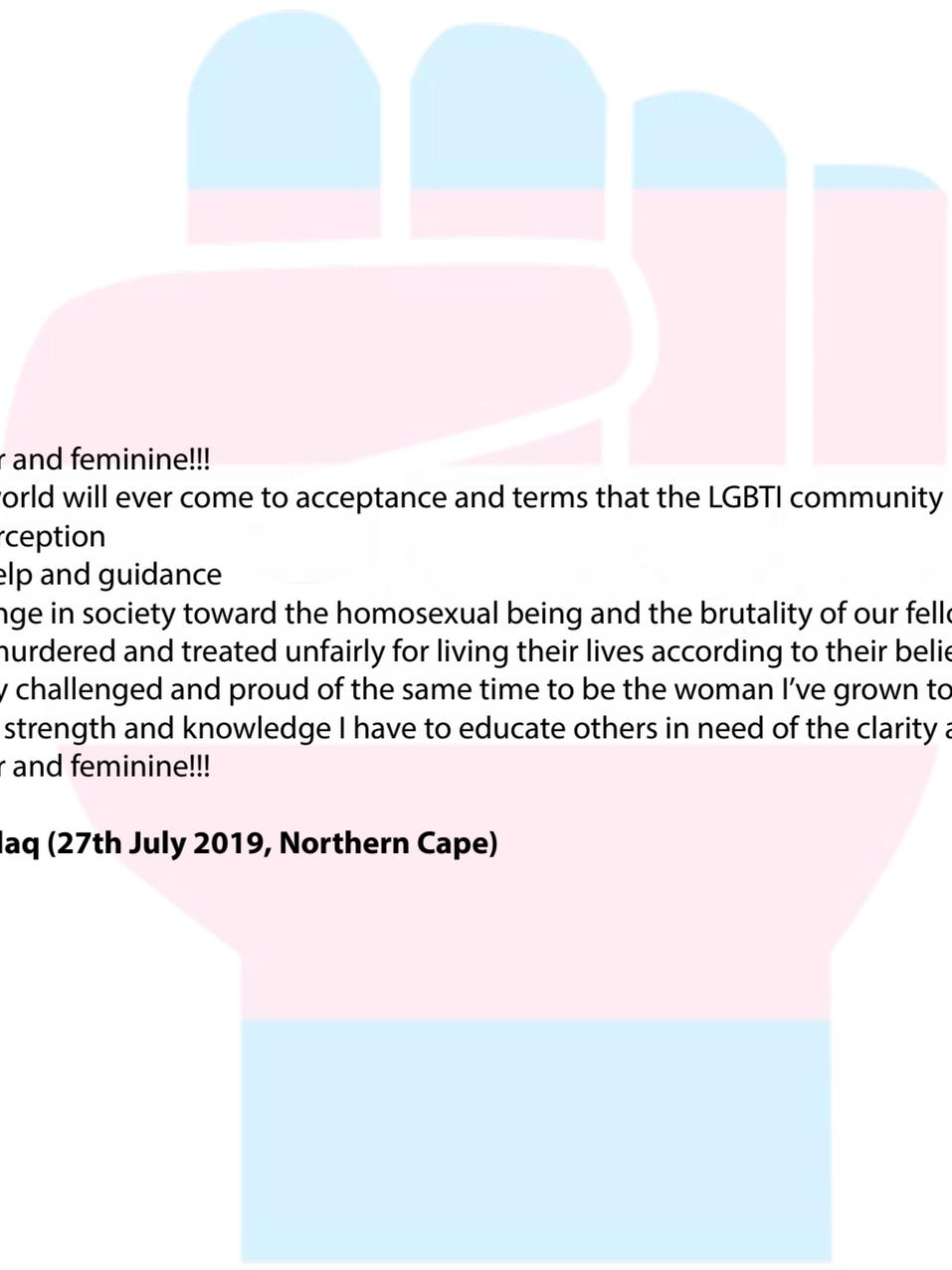
I am a hustler, a survivor and a conqueror
I wonder why do I have to explain myself all the time, I wonder what I have to deserve this
I hear voices, I hear stories, and I hear misconception
I see colours, I see rainbow, and I see love
I feel better, I feel strength, and I feel love
I want peace, I want balance, I want equality, I want justice, I want a bright future
I am a hustler, a survivor and a conqueror.

- **Milly (28th June 2019, North West)**



I am a Transgendered woman, rich in texture and content,
full of potential for a better tomorrow
My voice speaks for the Transgendered women robbed of their beauty
with no voice of their own
I wonder what life would be like without discrimination
and if every individual were left to define themselves.
I hear my voice strikes, rain is coming to wash our sorrows away
I see a future where the LGBTIQA have the freedom to be themselves, without the need to explain yourself to anybody.
I feel the love, righteous love shared amongst all humanity
I want equality for all, and for no human being to feel not normal or disabled
I am a proud black African Transgendered woman.

- **Anonymous (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



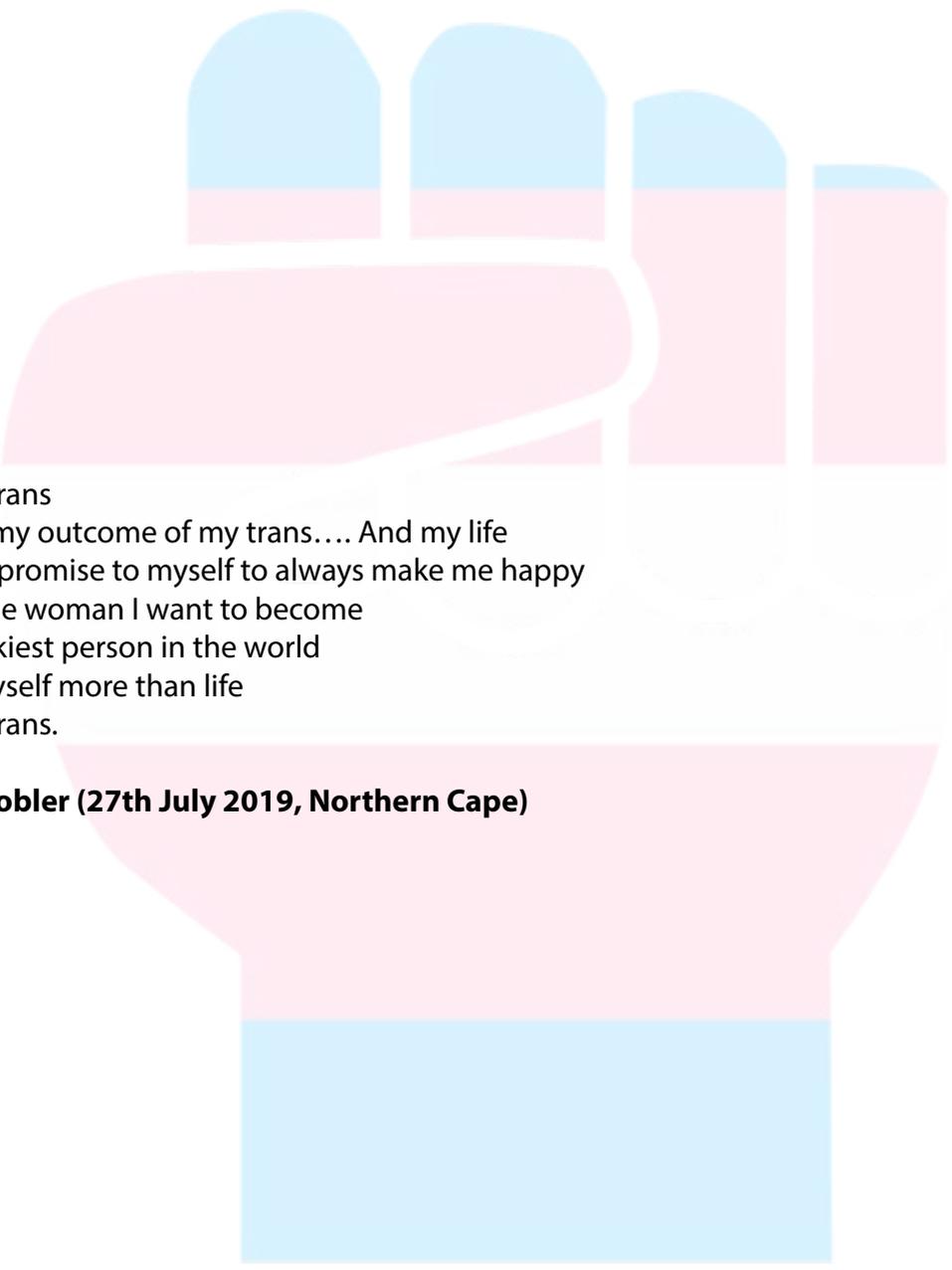
I am transgender and feminine!!!
I wonder if the world will ever come to acceptance and terms that the LGBTI community is here to stay
and strive for perception
I hear a cry for help and guidance
I see a great change in society toward the homosexual being and the brutality of our fellow sisters and
brothers being murdered and treated unfairly for living their lives according to their belief
I feel emotionally challenged and proud of the same time to be the woman I've grown to be
I want to use my strength and knowledge I have to educate others in need of the clarity and education
I am transgender and feminine!!!

- **Keisha Blaq (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



I am intersex and proud
I wonder what a world without being imposed to genital surgery as well as ignorance and intolerance
would look like
I hear the advocate inside me fight for human rights for our intersexuality
I see the beauty of our bodily anatomy being displaced
I feel overwhelmed and intrigued about what awaits me
I want a safe and acceptable society
I am intersex and proud.

- **Keilunetse Skonta (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



I am queer and trans
I wonder about my outcome of my trans.... And my life
I hear to make a promise to myself to always make me happy
I see myself as the woman I want to become
I feel like the luckiest person in the world
I want to love myself more than life
I am queer and trans.

- **Nicky Grobler (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



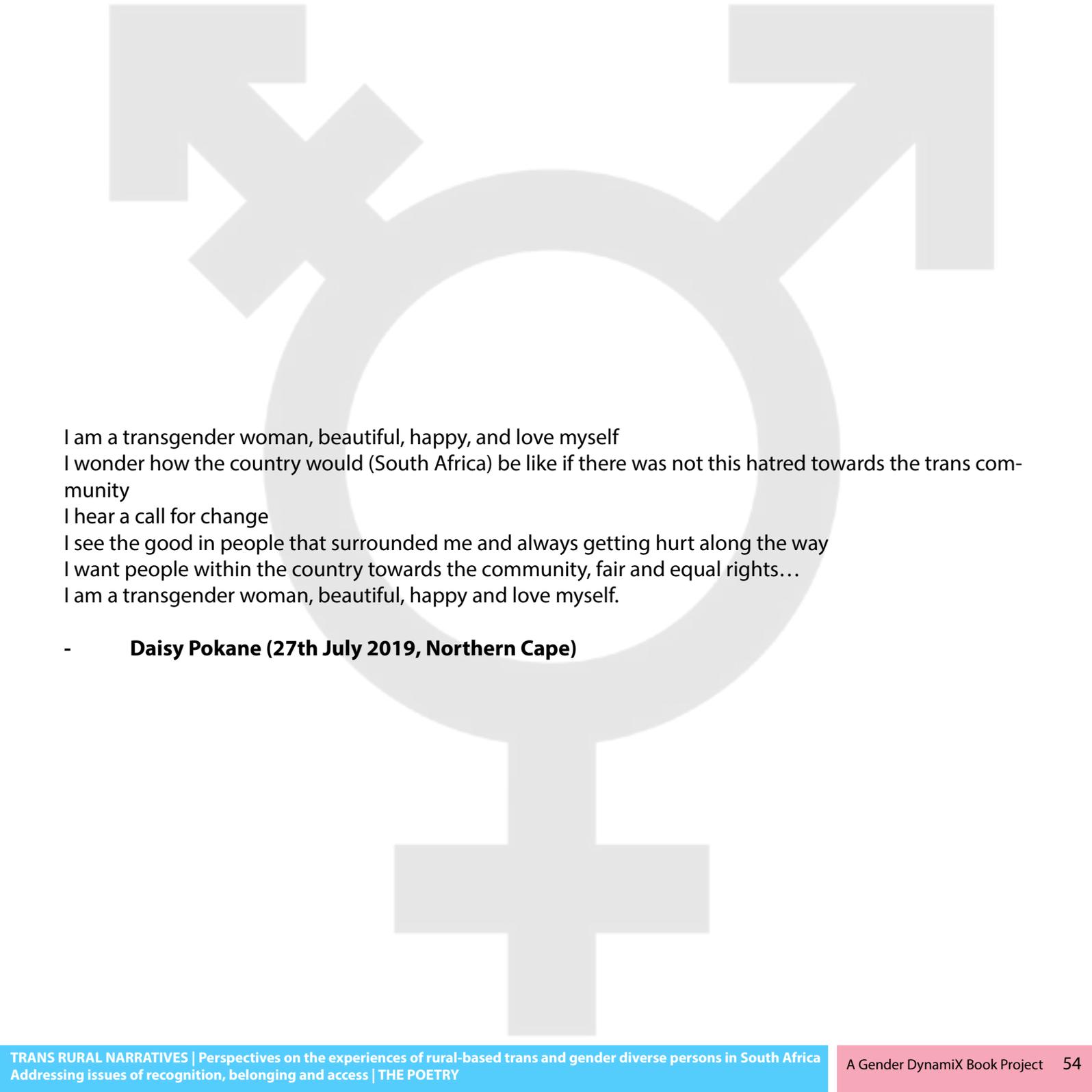
I am gay and feminine happy
I wonder what the world would look like where we all understand one another and accept each other as we are
I hear the future calling for better things, for our umbrella
I see where I am going
I feel positive about my purpose in life
I want what is great not good
I am gay and feminine happy.

- **Itumeleng Pitse (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



I am hot chocolate and vanilla ice cream
I wonder what people will say about me when they hear that I'm gay
I hear if I could have done that before we leave???
I see everyone there are some good as me/ be in the mood I like me
I feel happy when I am with new people, and when I'm with my people of LGBTI
I want to be who I am
I am hot chocolate and vanilla.

- **Tshiamo Diamond (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



I am a transgender woman, beautiful, happy, and love myself
I wonder how the country would (South Africa) be like if there was not this hatred towards the trans community
I hear a call for change
I see the good in people that surrounded me and always getting hurt along the way
I want people within the country towards the community, fair and equal rights...
I am a transgender woman, beautiful, happy and love myself.

- **Daisy Pokane (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



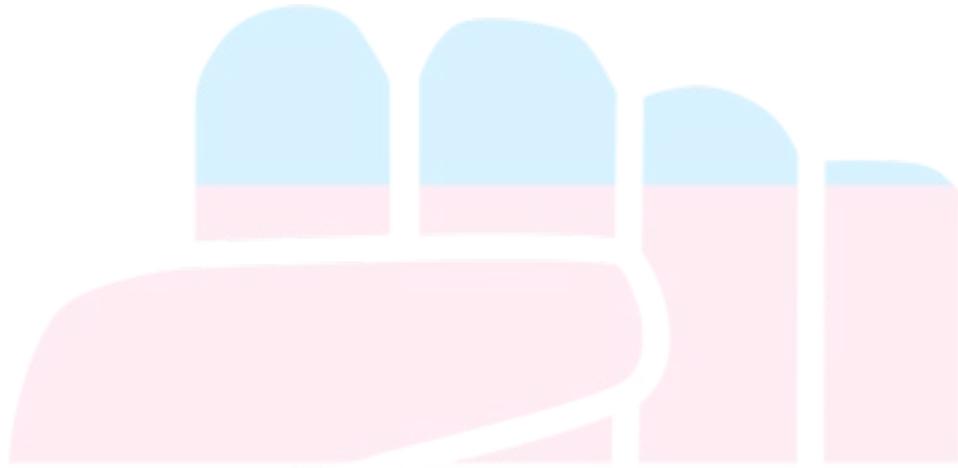
I am a member of the LGBTQI + community. An exotic, controversial, eloquent bubbly gay guy
I wonder if a world without intersex, trans, and gays, what world would we live in?
I hear the world being overpowered and ran by the LGBTQI+ community
I see growth, greatness, determination, and potential in people
I feel overwhelmed and ecstatic about being who I am
I want to leave a legacy, a challenge being implemented in our society
I am a member of the LGBTQI+ community, an exotic, controversial, eloquent, bubbly gay guy.

- **Ashley Selaledi (27th July 2019, Northern Cape)**



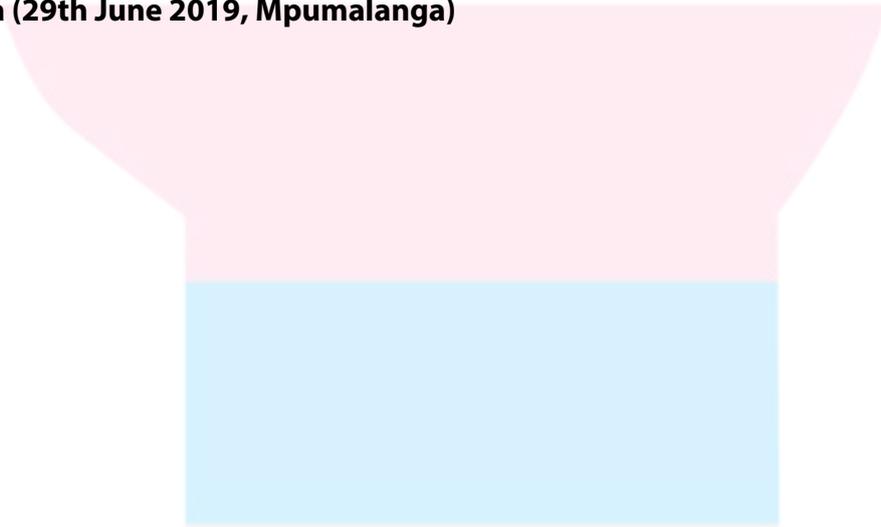
I am gay, bubbling, and also destined for greatness in all expects
I wonder if I'm going to be noticed that I am also a human being like them
I hear a triumph blown into the ears of the judgers telling them that god is the only judger of man
I see a better tomorrow for every person leaving in the new democratic southern African where-by equity
reigns over equality
I want to experience a better tomorrow for my brothers and sisters of the rainbow
I am gay, bubbling, and also destined for greatness in all expects.

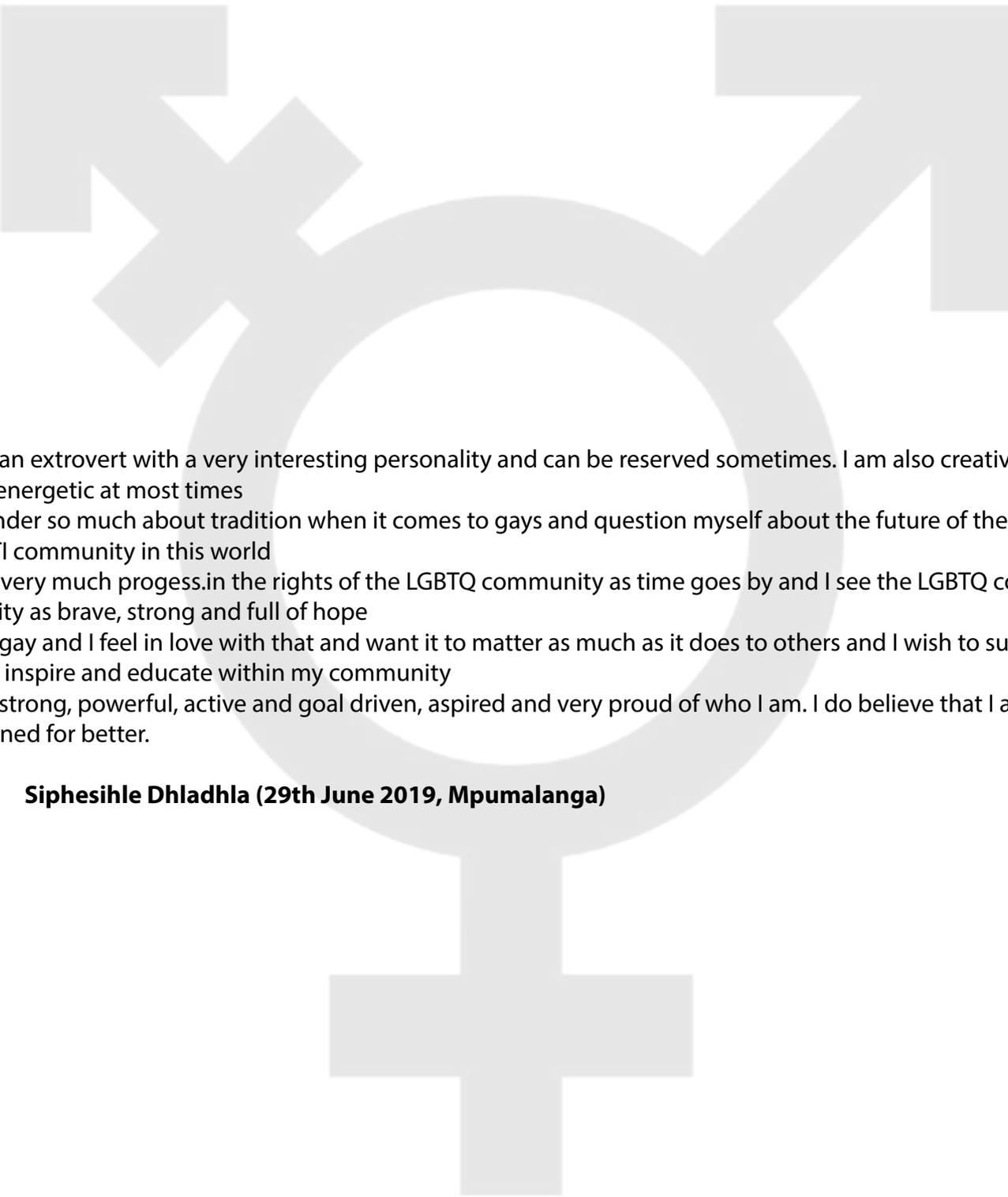
- **Gift Mkhonza (29th June 2019, Mpumalanga)**



I am good at netball and also dancing... I need a good boyfriend and I am probably gay bottom
I hear to improve my gender so that many people understand me
I see my gender as good
I feel boys not girls
I want a good relationship.

- **Lucas Thwala (29th June 2019, Mpumalanga)**





I am an extrovert with a very interesting personality and can be reserved sometimes. I am also creative and energetic at most times
I wonder so much about tradition when it comes to gays and question myself about the future of the LGBTI community in this world
I see very much progress in the rights of the LGBTQ community as time goes by and I see the LGBTQ community as brave, strong and full of hope
I am gay and I feel in love with that and want it to matter as much as it does to others and I wish to support, inspire and educate within my community
I am strong, powerful, active and goal driven, aspired and very proud of who I am. I do believe that I am destined for better.

- **Siphehile Dhladhla (29th June 2019, Mpumalanga)**

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Gender Dynamix



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