

## Becoming Who We Are: Real Stories About Growing Up Trans

**Sammy Lisel, Editor**

**Hazel Newlevant, Editor**

A Wave Blue World (Jun 4, 2024)

Softcover \$16.99 (144pp)

978-1-949518-26-9

With memoir entries for transgender youths by transgender people, *Becoming Who We Are* is a comics anthology about the process of becoming yourself as a transgender person. It includes essential representation along with a life-affirming message: you may feel isolated, but you are not alone.

By a lineup of transgender illustrators and writers, both award-winning and breakout independent talents, the book tells nine transgender people's stories of coming into their identities. While Rebekah Bruesehoff, the youngest contributor, is still in her late teenage years, most others reflect on their childhoods from the vantage of adulthood, with glimpses of what comes next in terms of careers to personal lives when one is living as their authentic self. Some stories touch on difficult childhoods featuring poverty and neglect—circumstances beyond children's control. Each person's trans identity is affected by such problems, as their abilities to focus on self-actualization are delayed amid the pressures of survival.

Unified by soft palettes, hand-drawn styles, and a cozy aesthetic, the anthology moves through contributors' childhoods into their presents. Each entry distills a complex life story and a sense of rich personal identity into a moving yet simplified arc of figuring out what it means to be human. They emphasize the breadth of transgender experiences and the needs of young audiences, focusing not only on people from a variety of identities under the transgender umbrella, but on diversity in people's cultural, economic, and racial backgrounds. There's power in the depiction of transgender people in rich and poor homes, accepting families and rejecting ones, white and BIPOC spaces, and communities both urban and rural.

In the comic anthology *Becoming Who We Are*, transgender origin stories are just as difficult and beautiful as anyone else's.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (May / June 2024)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*