Four Years Old

I am four years old today.  
Legal papers will say: You are nineteen as of two days from now. 
But that would be a lie. 
Whoever it is in those papers, it’s not me.  
I’m turning four. 
See, four years ago  
I climbed into a cocoon –  
wrapped myself up in lists of genders  
and support blog posts  
and loose sheaf journal pages. 
When I went in, I was someone 
and when I came out, I was me. 

I am four years old today. 
My family still displays my pictures 
at age negative nine –  
a testament to a previous vessel –  
but each of those cells  
is replaced now. 
I live the paradox  
of the Ship of Theseus  
and say I am the same  
but not the same, 
because what ties me to those pictures  
but memories? and mine  
are faded,  
dissipating into time  
faster than they ever should,  
I am four years old. 

I am four years old and forgetting,  
because I don’t want to remember  
what I did at age zero. 
Don’t want to remember  
how you saw me at negative four,  
want to believe  
that my life began  
in tenth grade  
with the question, What If? 

I am four years old today. 
Four years old and counting,  
every day is another step forward  
into who I am  
as me,  
I am four years old and learning  
that I may choose how  
to grow older,  
that there are certain things
I owe nobody but myself; 
four years ago I 
finally 
woke up 
and have been aware 
ever since 
and will be, for years on forward, 
and isn't that its own kind of beautiful?

C.A.B. - 06/10/2020