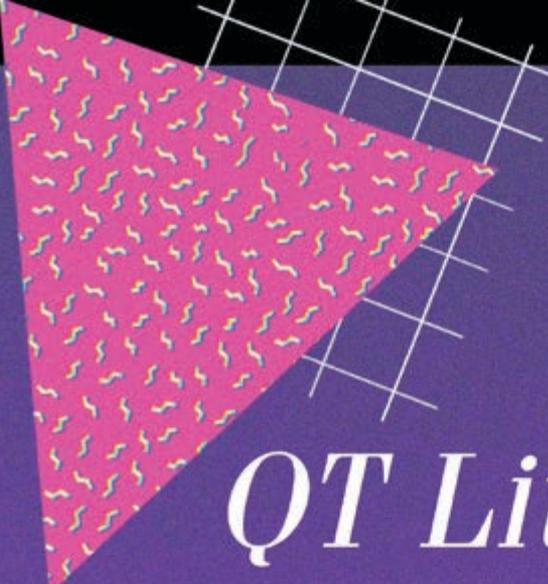




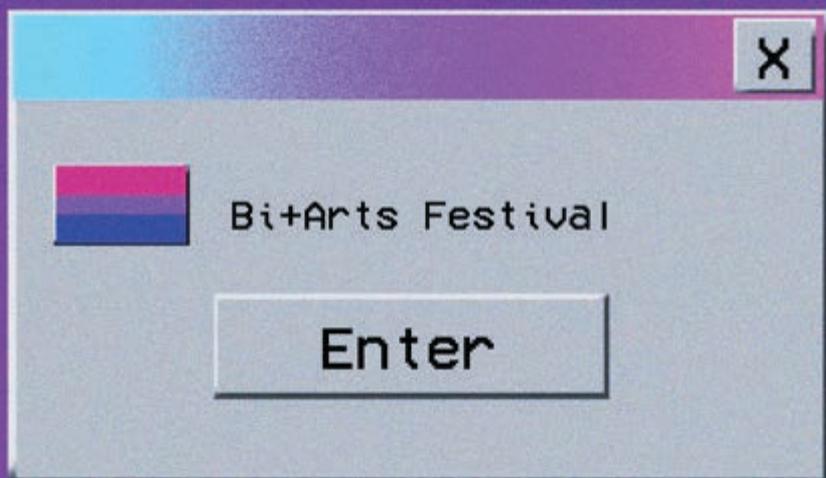
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5

*QT Literary
Magazine*



September/23/2021

FLIRT

Welcome!

Happy Bi+ Visibility Day!

Flirt. Flirt? Flirt! What does it mean to look across a room at someone and catch their eye? How does it feel when you flirt? What does it look like?

In the queer community, flirting isn't always straightforward. We create spaces and symbols and aesthetics to communicate but those are often co-opted or misread. What do you do, to get flirty?

"Flirt" is issue no. 5 for QT and the official zine for the 5th annual Bi+ Arts Festival. This issue showcases 17 artists and writers who identify as bi, pan, fluid, queer, or otherwise non-monosexual.

-Pax Santos, Founding Editor

“Do not seek the because - in love there is no because, no reason, no explanation, no solutions.”

—Anaïs Nin

In times of crisis, maintaining community is vital. QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

The Bi+ Arts Festival is an annual celebration of bisexual / bi+ visibility, culture and history. We seek to connect bi+ audiences and artists/authors, to challenge bi-erasure and biphobia in the arts, and to create safe spaces for learning, imagination, and creative expression.

Thank you to all the writers, poets, artists and makers for allowing QT and Bi+ Arts Festival to share your work with the world. Thank you to all the volunteers at QT and Bi+ Arts Festival, without whom neither organization could exist.

About the Magazine designer

Michelle Dix had the great pleasure of getting to design this month's QT issue. She is a Toronto-based illustrator with a great passion for drawing comics, telling queer stories and drawing goblins. You can find her work on any social media under @michelledixart and her website Michelledix.com

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X

/Author . . . Anita (AJ) Dolman

/Title . . . Spiced chocolate

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Anita (AJ) Dolman (she/they) is author of *Lost Enough: A collection of short stories and three poetry chapbooks*, and co-editor of *Motherhood in Precarious Times*. Her poetry, fiction and essays appear in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *Imaginary Safe House*, *Arc Poetry Magazine* and *Crush*. They founded Ottawa's *Crafty Bi Nature*.



SPICED CHOCOLATE

I stumble into the sharp edges of love
for women who gift me spiced chocolate.
How do they know? I can't remember
ever confessing in public,
thought I had been careful
to declare no preferences
beyond small talk's necessities:

For sunlight to descend dappled
through the cottonwoods,
for the damp weight of forest air
to be lifted by an ocean zephyr,
to contemplate Copithorne's letters,
die inside Baldwin's lines, float away
to Davis over Parker. But never

such an embarrassment of egoism.
Tropical hillsides around the equator
whisper what I am not worth
before I can dream of buying myself
the expensive taste of bittersweet chiles.

Yet she stands at my door, has
hand-ribboned a small box
of Mexican lightning for me,
cocoa so electric
it will still her name
in my mouth
as it burns

X

/Author . . . Sunny Chan

/Title . . . Sure-fire Guide to Success

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Sunny Chan has a PhD in English from UW-Madison and currently lives in the traditional Dish With One Spoon treaty territory. Her creative writing has appeared in Palette Poetry, Interfictions, Ricepaper, The Puritan, Abyss & Apex, Barrelhouse Press, and more. Her visual art can be seen at @moonandmountainprint on Instagram.



X

Sure-fire Guide to Success

Send a meme

Send twenty

Send a pretty rock that reminds you of her when it costs \$30 to mail a rock because rocks are *heavy*

Of course it's \$30, the queer experience is liking girls and enbies in other countries exclusively

Paint her a picture of a walrus

Paint her a picture of a snail

Paint your nails and ask her if she likes the colour; make sure your nails are cut pointedly short

Learn her favourite song on the kalimba and record a tinny version through the phone

Ocarinas and ukuleles are an acceptable substitute

Show her your collection of cute animals that you cut out from magazines

Invite her to a picnic on Animal Crossing

You don't even play Animal Crossing but she does so you do now

Get a succulent or monstera or fiddle leaf fig and name it something she has jokingly said in passing would be an awful name for a kid

Increasingly begin to reference the plant as your shared kid

Take really good care of that plant and give it your love expecting nothing in return



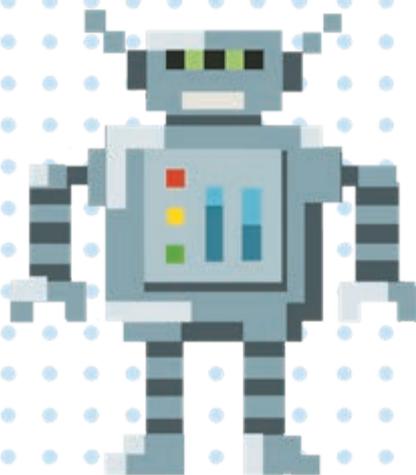
X

/Author . . . Justin Ancheta

/Title . . . The Quick Start Guide to Dating Your
Biomantic Demisexual

/Medium . . . Creative Nonfiction

/Bio . . . Justin Ancheta is a stuttering Filipino-Canadian with interests in tarot, science, and education. After teaching EFL in Korea for four years, he now lives in Treaty 13 territory. He is currently exploring his writing voice, drawing from his experience as a biomantic demisexual. He is @rampancy on Twitter and Instagram.



The Quick Start Guide to Dating Your Biromantic Demisexual

The Biromantic Demisexual, Model “Justin” (BRD-J), is an excellent choice for a partnered relationship. He inhabits a liminal space between Allosexuality¹ and Asexuality, with a capacity for romantic bonding to trans- and cis-men and women, as well as nonbinary people. His understanding of relationships using the Split Attraction Model lets you enjoy an intimate dating experience with minimal sexual expectations.

Before flirting with your BRD-J, please read this Quick Start guide thoroughly.

What's in the Box

1x Biromantic Demisexual 1x medium coffee/tea mug



System Requirements

To fully enjoy your Biromantic Demisexual, please ensure your dating standards meet the following requirements:

1. Compatibility with non-monosexual and Asexual spectrum identities.
2. Support for sexual activity conditional on formation of an emotional bond.
3. Support for emotionally intimate friendship in addition to romance.

Technical Specifications

- Frequency Range: 250 Hz to 8000 Hz (Typical range of human hearing)
- Standby Time: 3-6 hours per day
- Talk Time: 3-7 hours per day, depending on nutrition and caffeine intake.
- Charging Time: 5 minutes with *Coffea arabica* (Coffee) extract or 15-30 minutes with *Camellia sinensis* (Black Tea) infusion.
- Input Required: Intense, intimate conversations every 72-90 hours and sustained epidermal

¹ See Glossary at end for definition of terms unique to your Biromantic Demisexual.

contact every 12-24 hours, such as hand-holding, hugging, and cuddling.

- **Sexual Requirement:** Contingent upon sufficient emotional connection and established safety with partner.

Features

- AttentionNow™ technology provides on-demand emotional affection.
- High-Performance IntuitionCore™ neural processor allows for an immediate empathic response to your needs.
- RadicalVulnerability™ 2.0 system provides expression of innermost thoughts and feelings.

How to Connect

1. Engage in paired activities like cooking, book shopping, watching Netflix, and urban hiking and bring up topics like astrology, tarot, queer theory, and Star Trek.
2. After an extended period,² you may transition from Pairing Mode to Friendship Mode (see Table 1). First, make sure you are sitting close beside your BRD-J. Invite them to spend more time with you to establish a stronger connection. Tell them you appreciate them as you pour them another cup of organic fair-trade coffee.



Try saying, “No dying now, okay?” or “You’re not allowed to die on me, got it?”
The BRD-J has responded positively to past partners using these key phrases.

3. When your BRD-J smiles and offers to repair your malfunctioning computer or electronic devices, you may transition from Friendship Mode to Dating Mode (see Table 1). Tell them how much they mean to you, and how important your relationship is to you. When it feels right, place your head on their shoulder and sigh. Express how this moment ‘feels so right.’
4. Share more personal struggles, and offer to hold their hand (see Figure 1).



² After a minimum 100 hours conversation time, time to Pairing Mode may range from four weeks to twelve years.



Shared activities heighten the formation of emotional bonds. Suggestions include weekly karaoke, Queer literary events and zine fairs, or inviting them to help you move to your new apartment. These interactions can provoke intimate discussions and mutual sharing of parental and relational trauma.

5. Refer to Table 1 below for a description of body language signifying the transition status of your BRD-J.

Body Language		Transition Status
	Arms Crossed Less Talkative	Insufficient time for emotional bond formation. <u>May not</u> transition to Friend or Dating.
	Arms Open More Talkative	Emotional bond formed. May transition to Friend or Dating.
	Arms Inactive Not Talkative	Consciousness is OFF and Justin is sleeping.

Table 1: Body Language Reference Guide.

Troubleshooting Tips

1. While speaking, your BRD-J may glitch due to overactivity of their high-performance neural processor. This may cause them to worry about how they are perceived, resulting in stutter-induced anxiety.



Stuttering may manifest as difficulties in producing leading hard consonant sounds, such as "st-," and excessive word repetition. Signs of stutter-induced anxiety include excessive apologizing, silence, and social withdrawal.

During these episodes, please allow your BRD-J to finish speaking without interruption.

2. Even with enthusiastic attentions from the BRD-J, Pairing Mode may take longer than expected to successfully transform into Dating Mode, due to several factors:
 - a) Past trauma from emotionally and psychologically abusive family members.
 - b) Guilt, shame and trauma from failed, self-sabotaged, and abusive relationships.
 - c) Fear about how you will perceive their Demisexual and Biromantic tendencies.

If these symptoms occur, please encourage your BRD-J to practice self-care through techniques such as deep breathing, meditating, or booking an emergency session with his therapist.

3. Your BRD-J may experience high amounts of stress due to fear of invalidation and gatekeeping from other Asexuals and members of the Queer community.



Keep your Biromantic Demisexual clear of debates on whether they are “Queer enough.” These discussions may lead to BRD-J experiencing Impostor Syndrome, where they feel unwelcome in Queer-/Ace-positive communities, leading to isolation and feelings of despondency.

Glossary

Refer to this table to familiarize yourself with terminology common to your new Biromantic Demisexual.

Relevant Term	Definition
Split Attraction Model	This framework for understanding attraction to others separates romantic attraction from sexual attraction. In this model, one is not contingent upon the other and can vary widely.
Biromantic	A queer identity where a person can experience romantic attraction to masculine or feminine-presenting people, including trans and cis-men and women, as well as nonbinary people.
Asexual Spectrum	Spectrum of Queer identities that range between Allosexuality (conventional sexual attraction) and Asexuality (no sexual attraction).
Demisexuality	On the Asexual spectrum between Allosexuality and Asexuality. A queer identity where sexual attraction is possible, but only after an emotional bond has been formed.
Heteronormativity	A belief that heterosexuality and the gender binary (male and female) are the default. This set of norms discriminates against non-monosexuals and homosexuals.
Amatonormativity	A belief that romantic and sexual relationships are the default. This set of norms discriminates against non-romantic and non-sexual relationships (e.g. Queer Platonic Relationships).

X

/Artist . . . Em Farquhar-Barrie

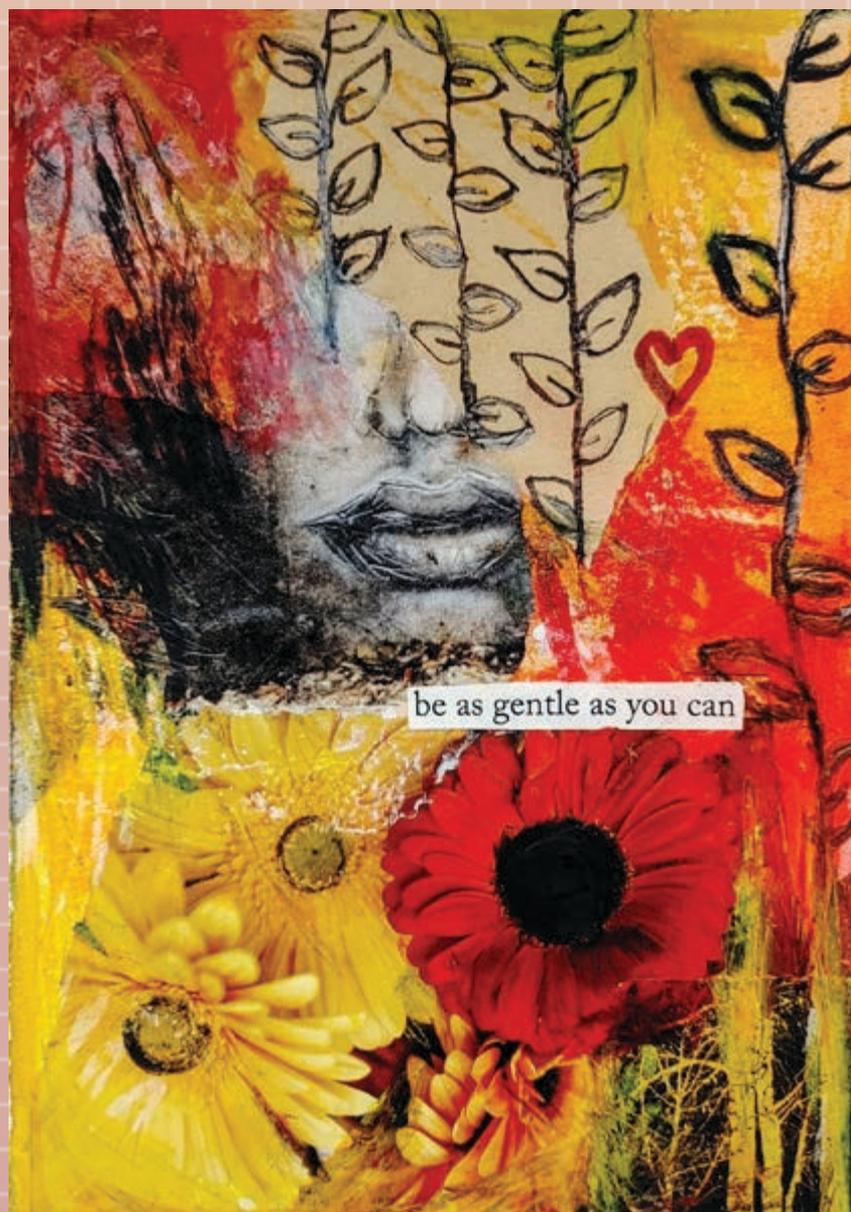
/Title . . . be as gentle as you can

/Medium . . . Collage

/Bio . . . Em Farquhar-Barrie (they/them) is a mixed, queer, trans, multiply disabled artist exploring transformation and growth through mixed-media landscapes. In their experience, art has saved their life, providing them with creative outlets to express feelings, cope, and move forward. Em is a BFA graduate, holding a certificate in Cultural and Artistic Practices for Environmental and Social Justice. You can follow their arts practice on Instagram: @emfarbar.



x be as gentle as you can



be as gentle as you can



X

/Artist . . . Vibeke Silverthorne

/Titles . . . Are you...? \ Tell Me More

/Medium . . . Digital illustration

/Bio . . . Vibeke Silverthorne (she/her) is a multidisciplinary designer who creates illustrations and hand-drawn typography. Her works observe the simple joys and awkwardness of identity, using humor and a playful style.

x Are you...?



x

/Caption... The constant back and forth of trying to communicate while dancing around a subject, I like your style is one way to suss out the situation. Glances and questions that don't ask what you really want to ask. But at least you can say I like your style and hope they know what you mean.

x *Tell Me More*



x

✓Caption . . . Sometimes you don't know what you're feeling, but you know you feel happy when they're talking to you. When they're excited and sharing what they're interested in, when you're the one they want to tell.

X

/Author . . . Tamara Best

/Titles . . . Numerology \ Office Lunch

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Tamara Best started ‘coming out’ and writing poetry in 1994, and has compiled this writing into a manuscript titled “History Lessons.” Hopefully it will be published sometime within the next 30 years. In the meantime, you can read more of Tamara’s writing in the *Waterwheel Review*, *Sparked! Magazine*, and *NonBinary Review*.



Numerology

Multiply me

Catch me on the page and write a table of contents for me

Draw me along your compass and send me in circles

Do I fit on your ruler

And should I figure out how long the page isn't?

In your foggy place of 10-digits

Make me a part of your equation

Can you build me a kitchen tonight?

I want to practice my long division with a stir-fry

And then after dinner let's slip between the ruled sheets

To do some multiplication of our own

We can swap tabulations like sweet nothings

And repeat the two times tables like pick-up lines

The calculator is our graven image

And our love is in numerical order

On the weekends, our favourite pastime is three times twenty-three
(You do the math)

Our addition is perfect and I never dreamt

That someone could round my decimals points like you can

Let the neighbours do their fractions

The only excitement in their lives is their phone number

We've got our abacus, so nothing is going to be in error now

You plotted yourself on my graph

So we can flip, slide, and rotate

Through all our transformations

And I know that I will never do geometry alone again

Office Lunch

This is life on the park bench:

Galahad arrives in lingerie

The wisdom of King Solomon turns cranky

The other men who sit nearby are turning pages
though they could just as easily change their politics

Someone in the distance is selling lipsticks of loneliness
because that's the way to be in a corporatized time

You and I have chairs of simplistic adulation

where we share discussions concocted on enigmas in the end
and our class of sex is not determined

Shall we go to the show tonight?

(which really means

shall we lounge naked in the middle of winter
while singing jazz riffs
and sipping hot tea?)

Softly teach me to be a jester

it is such an exquisite philosophy

My ordered mind becomes a choir of telegrams
passing the message on

In this scraped away wonderland

we are expounding the noontime perfunctory

Our faces are a flash of a grin

warmed next to a sleeping leather jacket

All this happened on the edge of an afternoon

Mindlessly, and through plastic teeth it happened

But this is life on a park bench

X

/Author... KR Byggdin

/Title... Night Out

/Medium... Poetry

/Bio... KR Byggdin lives in Kijipuktuk (Halifax).
Their writing has appeared in journals and anthologies
across Canada, the UK, and New Zealand. Their
debut novel is forthcoming in 2022.

Night Out

I.

leather jacket, the only half-decent dive bar left downtown
I turn around and—unexpectedly—there you are

my drink drips on your chisel-toed Blunnies,
your chapped lips purse playfully in reply

just like that we hit it off
I feel young again, giddy almost, emboldened by our banter

three beers and one smoke break in the question is asked:
are you single?

married, I reply
that's too bad, you exhale, I have this friend . . .

you let the possibility of another world, of hunger, desire, pleasure
linger between us like a cloud of smoke

it dissipates
we separate

I leave before last call without saying goodbye
without making eye contact again, though I want to

you don't even notice me go,
probably

II.

blurry drive home
it's cold for this time of year, but I leave the window down anyway

fill and empty my lungs with needle sharp air
stitch my body and brain back together

come in the door
lock it twice behind me; enter domesticity

I kept the cigarette you offered in my pocket,
crumpled and unfinished

remembering this, I reach for it with fingers full of longing
dead leaves bruised by hasty knuckles release a smoky sweet scent

evidence of an alternate universe
fading now

thoughts clutter my mind like
the supper dishes still in the sink

I should drink some water
I want nachos

I need to pee but there's a cat on my shoulder
I have a good life

III.

I leave the lights off as I undress,
slip into bed beside them with a sigh

match the rhythm of their breathing:
in, out, in

the heady cloud of you is still caught in my hair,
an almost borrowed life tingles on my wet tongue

my hand slides towards them in the dark, desperate to hold/be held but—
skin stops just short of skin

I can't close the distance so
I hold my breath instead

the cat jumps onto the bed, settles into the chasm between us
her warmth on my chest purring in, out, in

she does her best to fill the hollow space inside me, eroded over time by the steady
flow of garbage days/late and later nights at the office/forgotten anniversaries

I think of our jackets hanging up in the hall side by side
I've never liked their windbreaker; they'd look much better in leather

in the mo(u)ming
I'll throw your cigarette away

X

/Artist . . . Alana Boltwood

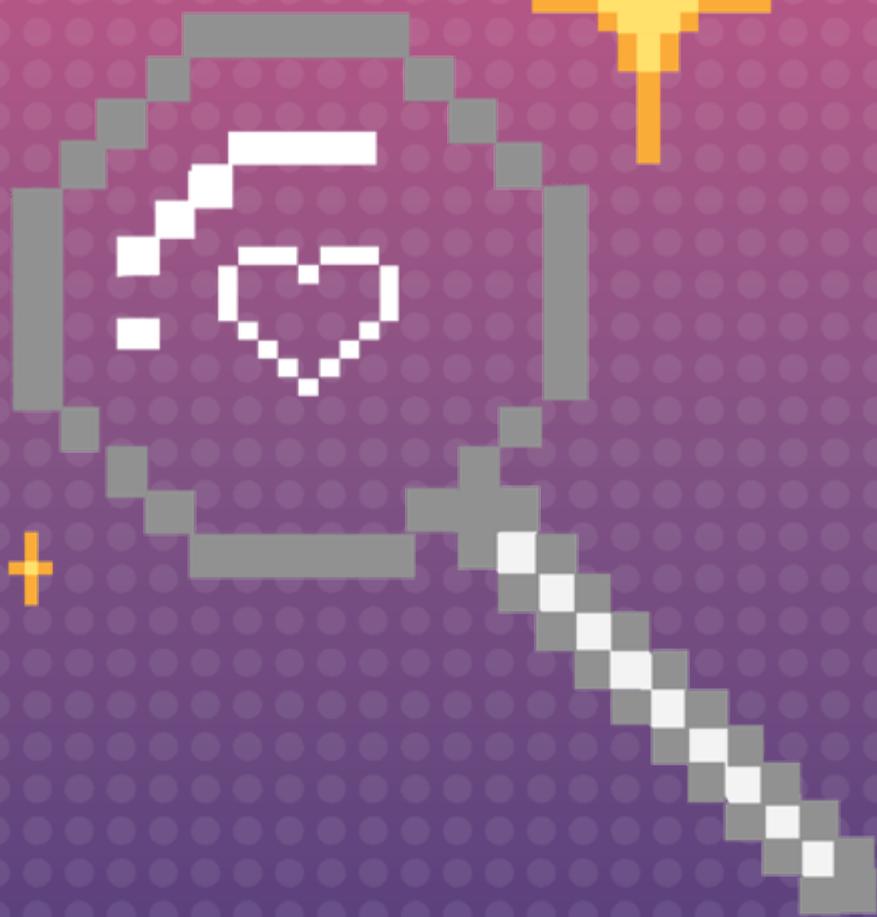
/Title . . . New Lovers

/Medium . . . Acrylic on canvas

/Bio . . . Alana does not limit herself to one art medium or one gender. Her favourite art tools include: eighth-inch masking tape, round nose pliers, a macro lens, and a script brush dipped in Dioxazine Purple liquid acrylic. Alana's latest dabbling is on Instagram: @alanaboltwood

x New Lovers





X

/Authors . . . Carissa Halston and Randolph Pfaff

/Title . . . Lines

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bios . . . Carissa Halston's writing has appeared in *The Normal School*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and *Mizna*, among others. She has received honors and awards for her fiction from *Fourteen Hills*, *Willow Springs*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and elsewhere. She is Syrian, Mvskoke, bisexual, and androgynous.

Randolph Pfaff studies environmental policy and law, and edits for a magazine called *apt* and a small press called *Aforementioned*. His work has appeared in *PANK*, *The Destroyer*, *Barrelhouse*, and *Poet Lore*, among others. He is bisexual and Buddhist.

<http://carissahalston.com>

<http://aforementioned.org>

<http://howapt.com>

Part One: Straight

1. "I'm gonna go put my pajamas on. Do you wanna come with me?"

I am surprised
by honesty,
by people
employing truth
when I least
expect it.
I am unsurprised
by cold,
by the way
it seeps into
back seats
of cars in central
Pennsylvania.
The way it comes
between two people
whose breath
is seen before
their words
are heard.

2.
Him: Halston, look, I've got a hypothetical situation for you.
Me: Okay.
Him: We're having sex.
Me: Okay—
Him: That's it!

He found out I'd never been to a strip club. Aghast, he promised to make me dinner first and then we'd go. He did make dinner. Something I didn't like, but ate out of politeness. He smiled, "You get the Clean Plate Award." We talked like strangers. We'd known each other five years. At some point, he played a Thelonious Monk album and the room got dark and all I could think was, "Is this in exchange for dinner? Are we still going to a strip club?" The whole thing was short-lived. Fully clad and chatty. We were not strangers. I learned how the red light district got its name. Blemished skin is clear in red light. Stretch marks disappear. He gave me dollar bills to give to the girls. I felt like someone's best friend who'd been made to play the lookout while their friend gets lucky in the back of the car. Here, hold this flashlight. Turn it on, then off, three times if there's trouble. I didn't know how to hold it properly. It shone into my eye.

Part Two: Gay

3. “John’s friend, are we gonna make out or what?”

What do you do when you’re done
and you’re saying goodbye
to old new friends?

You drink.

You try to bring your lives together:
past, present, unknown.

You ask those you love
to collapse the space between them;

to be close the way you are with each.
To fill in backstory, to make impressions
first and only.

You forget.

You wonder when they wander.
You make a break for home

in the guise of a Dunkin’ Donuts,
fluorescent and warm,
sober and unalone at 5am.

4.
Her: I know that you’re straight, but can’t you just be gay with me for a little while?

I didn’t correct her. She was wrong, but she sounded so sure. Plus, she knew. As a Definitive Bisexual (as opposed to the half-assed thing I was), she had to know. But I wasn’t sure we meant the same thing by bisexual, and was more than a little confused about what she wanted. Could a bisexual be ‘gay,’ and why did she like me anyway? Was it my haircut or my boots? And what was with all that honesty? I’d favored mystery. She favored confession. She wanted to rip everything down, no curtains, lights on, don’t whisper, here’s mine, now yours. We kissed in winter that first time. Outside. I got the feeling she was afraid I’d just leaned into a warm body—specifically hers—not chemistry, but physics. Not like with like, but cold with heat. I must have surprised her when I asked if we were dating, asked again, again-again. She recoiled, “You’re still living with your ex. I don’t mind if you still want a penis, as long as it’s not his.” More honesty. She truly didn’t mind. She was already tired of me, had already found someone older, someone newer: a man. When she broke up with him, he confided in me. “She says she wants to sleep with a woman. She wouldn’t know what to do if she found one.”

Part Three: Bisexual

5: "So, wait. We could've been having sex this whole time?"

We trade secrets
because we don't want
to keep our own.

We discuss the indefinite
in concrete terms.

We break—even,
and filled to the brim.

We stop building
nothing from something;
reverse course in an instant.

We reform and expand—
an endless search
for new limits.

We write an equation,
already solved.

We find a constant.

We reshape impossible,
taking its limb but
keeping its heart intact.

We pick up and we
never dare leave off.

6:

Me: I can be laughed into bed.

Him: So, wait. We could've been having sex this whole time?

I took for granted that you were my friend. That was safer than the alternative. I assumed you were sticking to your plan to move to New York, and I'd move to Boston, and when we'd visit (far less often than I would've preferred), I'd suffer sighing jags over why you had to be so far away. But instead, we had a perfect week before I left PA. I loved you already and said so, nerves crowding my throat. That last morning, my last chance, the air that flooded my lungs at your response— And still: I moved anyway. Hundreds of miles from you. But you answered your phone every time I called to ask, "Why aren't you here?" And you visited to stave off the missing, and, two months later, when you abandoned New York for Boston, it felt like a trick. An illusion: turn it the right way, and it'll disappear. But a few months after that, you brought up or agreed to the idea of getting married. The odds so slim we had to take them: having grown up less than five miles apart but not meeting before our 20s, having met not once but twice in the same bookstore (five months apart to the day), having both believed for so long we were straight, having finally convinced ourselves otherwise. Our flirting is the only sort that's ever made sense to me, though I didn't trust it when we first met. I didn't even trust our first date, the one I didn't know was a date, when we traded dating histories that aligned like cryptic constellations. We both read not-gay-not-straight, both said neither/nor, both led the other from recognition to revelation to revelry.



/Artist . . . Alyssa Pisciotto

/Titles . . . Lake Huron, Camlachie Ontario, Summer 2014 #1 \\
Stephanie, Summer 2014 \\
Bonfire, Summer 2014 #1

/Medium . . . Photographs, shot with expired Polaroid Film

/Bio . . . Alyssa Pisciotto is a queer artist from LaSalle, Ontario and now resides in Toronto. She graduated from OCAD University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring in Drawing and Painting and minoring in Printmaking. Painting and printmaking are her primary practice. Her current work revolves around themes of colour, line and shape, and how they interact with one another.

Website: www.alyssapisciotto.com

Instagram: @that_glitter_chick_



*LAKE HURON,
CAMLACHIE ONTARIO,
SUMMER 2014 #1*

STEPHANIE,
SUMMER 2014



BONFIRE, SUMMER
2014 #1



X

/Author . . . Eric Folsom

/Title . . . Selected Poems from Ballads From a Lockdown

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Eric Folsom shares a house in Kingston, Ontario with three full-grown humans and two small kittens. He's been writing poetry for more than fifty years, has published a number of books, and is currently retired from the Kingston Frontenac Public Library. He identifies as bisexual and a non-conforming male.

X

Selected Poems from
Ballads From a Lockdown

X

It's Easy to Remember
(And So Hard to Forget)
(Homage to Lorenz Hart and Richard Rogers)

The appraising look you gave me the night we met:
"Not completely ugly, maybe sort of smart."
You asked a friend beside you, was I straight or gay?
He said you should just ask if I wanted to dance.

Some kind of sign, I ought to wear some kind of sign
That reads "Bisexual," not that it would help much.
The intended meaning hardly ever gets through,
Reluctant ears don't believe in explanations.

All confusion aside, it makes no difference
What immutable gender you believe you are,
You're only a person and I'm a person, too,
Imagining the ways we might fit together.

So if you feel attraction to men as a rule,
I will gladly portray the more masculine fool.

X

Nancy (With the Laughing Face)

(Homage to Jimmy Van Heusen and Phil Silvers)

He assumes he knows me because I'm standing here
Polite, presentable, a sociable person.
Fey and bisexual. He says, who really cares?
As long as it's private, he's not worried by queers.

I maintain a light tone, stay open and friendly.
She says I'm amusing if you really listen
To the oblique sarcasm in the velvet glove,
The taut verbal vaudeville designed to please her.

Calculated humour, just one more form of drag,
Steering their attention to the makeup not me.
Acid observations undermined with a smile,
Acceptance is a spectacle without a heart.

I'm your harmless Nellie, entertaining scapegrace,
The good fairy, your Nancy with the laughing face.

X

Lush Life

(Homage to Billy Strayhorn)

I used to go to all the very straight places,
Collection plate places,
Schools and churches where life lurches
Underneath the wheel,
Unable to feel
Like somebody who's real.

Then you broke the ice by making nice
To a freaking weirdo.
We went out for lunch to check out a hunch
Who the other person was,
Pondering as one does,
New love or lost cause?

You spoke to me sweetly, I tried not to be too perverse.
You read me as easily as a book of light verse.
I hadn't imagined my thoughts being fathomed.
Guess it could have been worse.

As the days rolled by, we drew a little bit close.
I reminded myself not to be overly verbose.
Then you brushed my equivocations aside and said,
Why don't we just go to bed?



X

/Author . . . Kamila Rina

/Titles . . . Stagger \ 3 tankas

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Kamila Rina is an autistic and multi-disabled immigrant Jewish non-binary bi poet and a sexuality/gender/disability educator, living on unceded Mississaugas of the Credit land. They have been published internationally, including in Room Magazine, Breath & Shadow, Monsterring, Deaf Poets Society, Carousel, Augur, Frond, Mary, and Queer Out There. Website: KamilaRina.com

X

/Content Warning . . . Harassment; gender-based violence

X

Stagger

It's barely spring, the season just now eked out of longing and calendared consensus. The trees stretch their dry naked arms up and out, occasionally blossoming with plastic bags, malignant flowers flying long torn petals.

The wind howls, as an average human with an average disabled body walks into it, their hips swaying, their sap rising. They have so much experience with walking like sex while

working to not stagger, correcting for their fatigued thighs, trashed hips, frayed cables in their ankles, vise-pinchd achilles tendons, tilted feet, proprioception needle spinning like a demagnetised compass.

This calibrated wrangling is a dance, one no less complex than the seeming seduction of their walk, the sway — used to keep balance and momentum and swagger, like a sailor's stride on a pitching ship.

This body pitches all the time.

This body blooms all the radiance and grace and hormones an average crip body does, which is to say, a lot. We're a graceful, delicate people,

we who throw our bodies with precision when they won't stand, roll them when they can't do the more mundane thing and walk, weave them down the sidewalk in a complex choreography —

X

one missed step and you fall down. Or,
even worse, one missed step and a passing asshole
in a car with nothing to do on this 2am weeknight
sees you and recognises prey. It is the dearest

wish of my heart to never appear drunk.
My crip gifts eternally prevent me from
alcoholising my body — but, whatever they tell you,
it isn't being inebriated that renders you vulnerable,

it's assholes thinking that you are, marking you with
their fratboy-snigger, as if with paint, for extinction.
When this body walks, it's twenty percent focused on breathing:
steadily pulling and pushing air with the small muscles

of the lung sacs, the tense sheet of the diaphragm,
twenty percent on staying upright: gait regularly amended,
arms swinging in careful counterpoint metronome, ten percent
lurching autistic joy, hopped up on the music pouring through

my ears — and fifty percent watching for predators.
Tonight the sad bare trees make it easier to spot a striped
skunk with its tail up, or a menacing human driving too slow
past the curb. This body knows to walk in the opposite

direction to traffic. This body knows dread, knows
insults spat out of car windows, propositions like
cigarette butts thrown out likewise, four tires slewing
U-turn after U-turn on the quiet street to follow me home.



x

3 Tankas

X Handfuls (for E)

My fingertips swoon
your breasts pool in my hands combs
of warm honey thick
unbearably soft your bees
of nipples velvet at play.

X Here (for E)

I want to leave deep
footprints in your life to press
these words into your
eyelids neck hand lips breasts hips
and soft kitty: I was here.

X Heavy Breathing (for M)

That spring I had a
recurring fantasy of
reclining on your
desk my long skirt pushed up legs
wide your tongue making me swoon.



X

/Artist... Anastasia Meicholas

/Title... An Expression of Lost Love

/Medium... Indian Ink on Fabriano Pergamon Parchment Paper, 160gsm. Size 13.75" x 19.5"

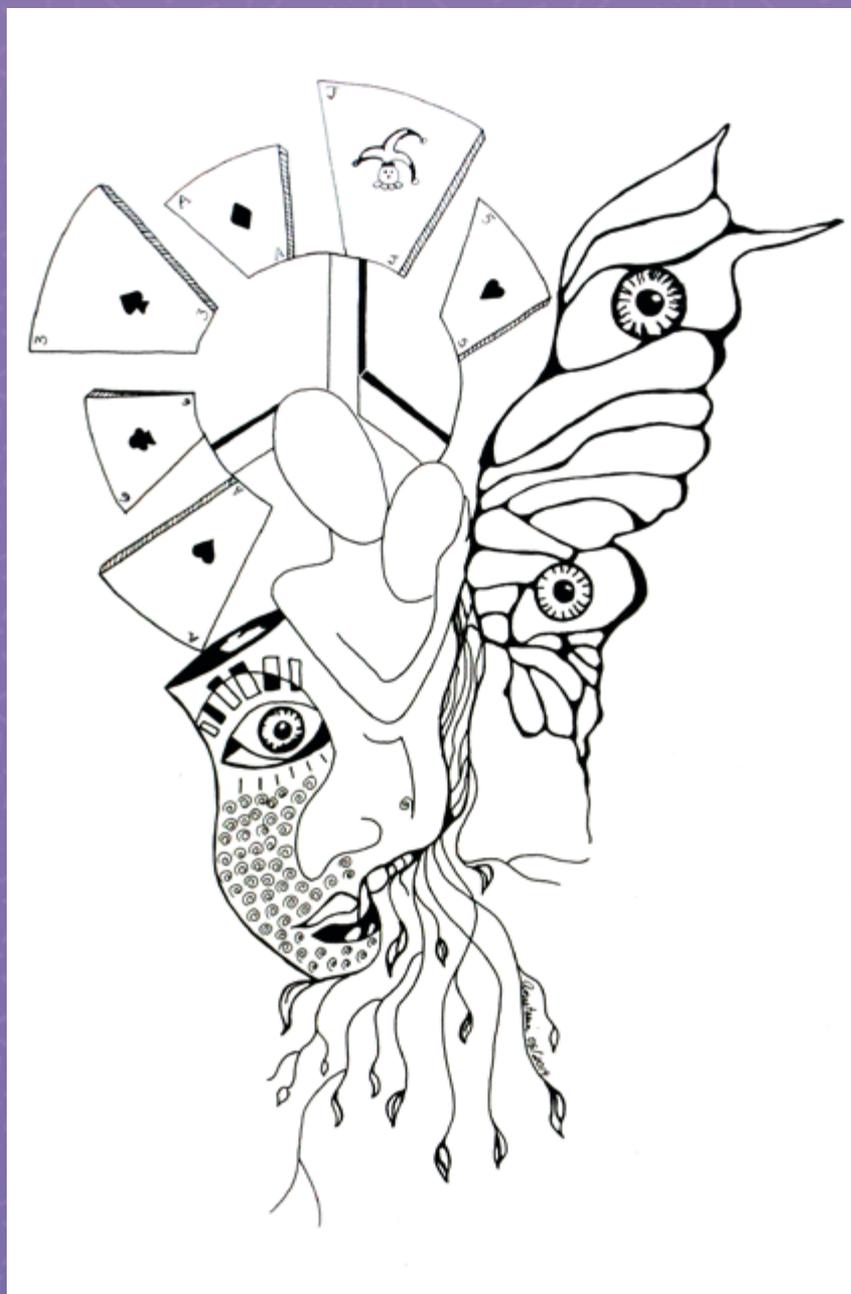
/Title... Love Makes Growth Possible

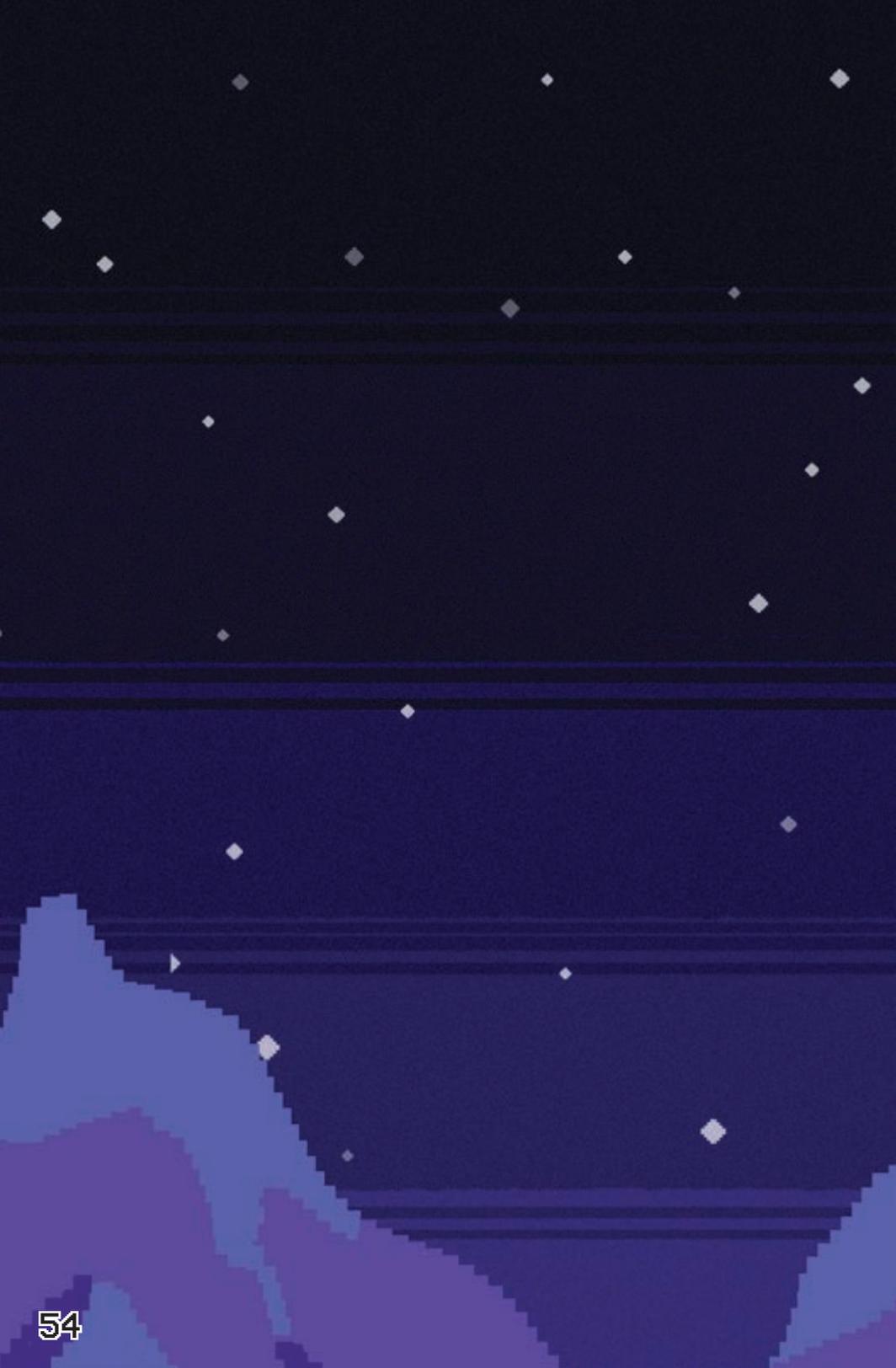
/Medium... Indian Ink on Grumbacher Watercolour Cold Press Paper, 140lbs. Size 9" x 12"

/Bio... Growing up in the Bahamas was very difficult and restrictive. I don't limit myself to one medium, one style or a single process. The pieces I create are drawn from inspiration, experiences and lessons learned, sprinkled with influences from the land of my birth. If anyone looks at my work and pauses long enough to be stirred in some way, to wonder, to question, to simply feel...then I have succeeded in my work.

X *An Expression of Lost Love*







X

/Author . . . Khashayar Mohammadi

/Titles . . . Point-Based Queers for B.O. and Travis Sharp \\ Magna Cum Laude

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Khashayar Mohammadi is a queer, Iranian born, Toronto-based Poet, Writer and Translator. He is the author of four poetry Chapbooks. His debut poetry collection “Me, You, Then Snow” is out with Gordon Hill Press.

X

/Content Warning . . . Homophobic violence

“we sleep until the staggered minarets

divide the
four A.M. air” -Moez Surani

I’m talking to him, thirsting
I sip the last drop of wine
trickling down his moustache
dripping onto his chest hair
I slurp it with a strand of slobber

thirst. that’s it, thirst.
I’m thirsty for lips
and a clawing of the spine
the beard that /
 scratches
along my cheeks
in the whip of a single glance
from my lips to a glass of wine

X

chest hair round finger
touches ruby-red /Lip
as if reflected
in glass of wine

that's how Bihzad liked his men
ruby-red-lipped and cypress statured
and Rumi wrote 3300 ghazals thirsting
too

a young boy round face
brilliant like moonshine
an object of desire
and his naive Sufism
of the cum-throes
counting as the most transcendent
this duality of function
this holy impatience
this ejaculate conception
of the sufiCUMdivine

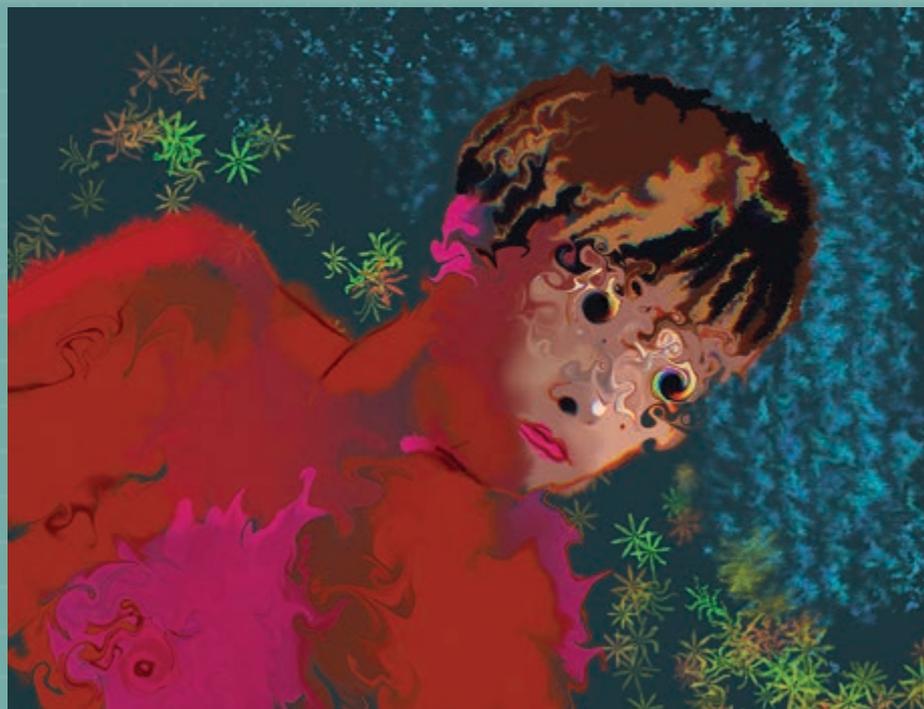
X

/Artist . . . Theresa Slater

/Title . . . Contemporary Oracle

/Bio . . . Theresa Slater is a neuroqueer artist, writer, and servant leader working diligently in her studio and in non-profit administration for an artist-run experimental media organization. She is a MA graduate of OCAD U in Contemporary Art, Design, and New Media Art Histories (2016) with a concentration in feminism and technology. As an artist and writer, they work with creative facilitation, new materialism, and digital bodies.

X *Contemporary Oracle*



X

/Author . . . Jade Wallace

/Titles . . . Con Fantasia \ Anyone Can Find the Dirt in
Someone \ Love Is a Place but You Cannot Live There

/Medium . . . Poetry

/Bio . . . Jade Wallace's poetry and fiction have appeared in Canadian Literature, This Magazine, Hermine Annual, and elsewhere. Their most recent chapbooks are A Barely Concealed Design (Puddles of Sky Press, 2020) and A Trip to the ZZOO (Collusion Books, 2020) under the moniker MA|DE. Stay in touch: jadewallace.ca



Con Fantasia

Stranger,
I am in
love with her,
and there is none
but your silhouette to
tell of tinnitus turned
to a chorus of bells,
of my blood become
soap—cut me open,
I iridesce, organs frosted
with a froth of pearly cream.

I am bubbling, a drifting
skybound ring, hollowed to
a sparrow's skull, doubling
as an offered cup.

Stranger, you must
hold me up, lest I alight
on false and fragrant
cypress with its cochlea
of years to hear me
declare what I would
do with world and time.
Swear me not a liar
though a stroke
of her mislaid
finger could so
easily make
me sing.

*In the beginning was the word
and the word was dirt and dirt was god.*

Blowing & Glowing

Palms up, eyes open, knees down.
Drop the shoulders and relax the jaw.
I recite the ritual, make sure I am ready,
prayed up and available. Even if you love it,
I hear, it can still feel like work. I am
consecrated to the exertion. Everybody
wants to come to the party, but I will be
the one who sticks around for the mess.

*I have seen the smut in your eye
but it could have been in mine.*

Restless Love

Rise like an acorn, ready to become
the oak. You are thick wood growing
in the warm aura of a sunlit day.
Occupy spaces fully. Twine into them
and use them to twine into others.
The love we are given is not meant
to be held onto, it is meant to spill.
Stay inspired, grinding skyward.
Do it again.

*The skies declare your glory and
proclaim the work of your hands.*

Heavenly Consort

Discovered my nakedness, took a reward
on every cornfloor. Played the harlot, but
could not be satisfied. The right instrument
makes all the difference. I have drawn every
line of you and called it love, perfumed my
bed with myrrh, aloe, and cinnamon. What will
you give me? Blow upon my garden and eat
the pleasant fruits. Let us take our fill until
the morning. Great things come, naked and
barefoot. Honest to god, I can't wait.

X

Love Is a Place but
You Cannot Live There

I came here to be in love with you,
but I am caught up in awe of the sea.
I have even forgotten the waning white
light I used to worship in the dark.
My cheap running shoes are nearly worn
through from climbing down to the
beach every morning, afternoon, evening.
I am quick and clumsy and would
happily give myself up on these rocks,
rushing out to meet the ocean.
I stand on the edge of the shore and
stretch out my hand and the huge, shy
waves rise a little higher toward me
to lick at my fingers. My love is as
beautiful and deadly as the moon,
but so much closer.

X

/Artist . . . Stephanie Jonsson

/Title . . . Vapor Love

/Medium . . . Acrylic on canvas

/Bio . . . Stephanie (She/Her) is a PhD candidate in the School of Gender, Feminist and Women's studies at York University. "I never felt like a creative individual, however, I found joy in discovering my own creative process. My artwork is about self-expression, self-love, and determination. This journey has helped me re-discover parts of myself that I have negatively critiqued in the past. Femdemic_Creations is a project about letting go of self-judgement by unapologetically creating."



X



Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada. QT was started in response to the criminal shortage of Canadian queer literary magazines. There are so many LGBTQ2SIA+ artists out there! And in times of crisis, maintaining community and connection is vital. QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. QT celebrates the art queer individuals make for ourselves and for each other. We accept poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, personal essays, reflections, memoirs, as well as artwork, drawings, comics, photographs, collages, and other visual media.



@qtlitmag



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FESTIVAL**
CELEBRATING QUEER CREATIVITY

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