

SEX WERK
18+ sensitive content inside



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QT7



WELCOME

February 14th, 2022

Sex workers have always been at the forefront of the 2SLGBTQI+ rights movement.

For this issue, we sought the perspectives of queer and trans individuals with current or past sex work experience. 'Sex work' or 'sex trade' being broadly defined and open to interpretation.

Queer and trans people with lived experiences also drove the creation of this issue—from crafting the initial call for submissions, to designing the final issue.

The following questions were provided to prompt, but we welcomed any submissions related to an individual's experience as a queer person in the sex industry.

What's mundane about sex work? What's extraordinary? How has your view of sex work changed? How has your experience shaped how you view the world? How does sex work compare to other work? How does sex work relate to other forms of feminized labour? How has sex work been an act of resistance for you? What does justice for sex workers look like? How has the pandemic impacted your work? How do you imagine the industry 50 years from now? How has sex work affected your sex? How has sex work affected your understanding of consent?

When have you chosen to disclose your queer identity at work? Has sex work enabled you to explore different aspects of your queerness? Your gender? How do your intersecting identities -

class, race, migrant status, etc - interact with your work experience? When have you chosen to 'come out' as a sex worker? How would your experiences be different if it weren't for stigma and whorephobia? What's something you wish people without sex industry experience knew? What would you change about the way sex work is portrayed in the media? What's the best representation you've come across?

...

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 nonprofit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

Thank you to all the writers, poets, artists and makers for allowing QT to share your work with the world. Thank you to all the volunteers at QT without whom we would not have a magazine.

—Pax Santos, Founding Editor

*What a wonderful day it is that you're getting
a chance to live again, to share and be a
part of someone else's life
-and to carry that on*

MissMajor

This issue features adult content. It is written for adults by adults.

Content Warning: sexism, assault, violence, whorephobia, and nudity.

This issue was designed by Adèle Nichols + Kris Kim

Adèle Nichols is an interdisciplinary artist. They currently live in an RV and draw inspiration from the world just outside their door.

Ig: @adelefrancisnichols

Kris Kim is a multidisciplinary graphic designer and bunny steward. He is dedicated to creating empathetic and accessible designs and has made a career out of building fun and engaging brand identities.

Ig: @kriskimdesign

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Bella Quinn is a full-service sex worker, writer and artist. She is co-founder of the Queer Whore Art Collective. She compiled 'Whore Stories' zine and 'How to Talk to Sex Workers' zine, and is currently working on a slasher movie featuring a vigilante group of sex worker assassins. \\ Ig: @whores_handbags



VIGNETTES OF NOVEMBER

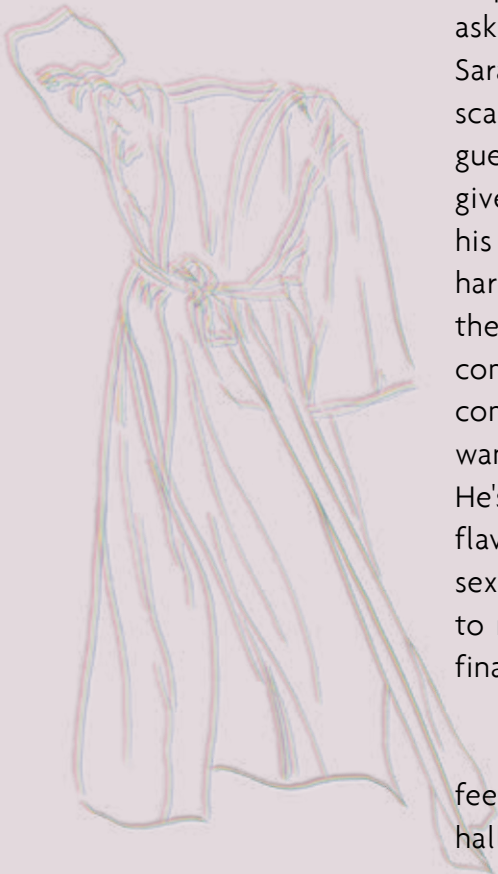
In the back of an Uber. Wondering what the driver thinks of his three passengers - a man in his 70s in the middle with two younger women tucked under his armpits. He's taking it in turns to kiss each of our hands. Sara does the talking while I stare out of the window. The city is a blurry sparkle, as if we're in a fish tank.

The hotel restaurant. He orders for us - fish - then picks a conversation topic like it's a record, *My Ex-Wife*, played from the album of his unchanging life narratives. It doesn't matter who is listening. If you've got a pair of tits, then this is what it sounds like, a rehearsed stream of consciousness broken only by those little murmurs hookers make while in listening mode, "Ooh,"

“Uh-huh...,” “Of course,” “Yep.” Whole octaves of paid-for agreement.

A house. It's always dark here, no matter the time of day. His curtains are closed and his light bulbs are red. He sits on the floor watching YouTube and eating chocolate while we touch him, stationed silently on either side. The carpets are like canopies concealing years of spills and pre-come. I am mashing his floppy dick to a Grimes video. He asks to "feel my mouth around him". Sara hands me a baby wipe like it's a scalpel. I slather him in coconut oil, I guess because it's antibacterial and gives me something to taste that isn't his skin. We watch porn from his hard-drive and play with toys. I think the pornstar is hot so I actually come, while tuning out his commentary, "Ha ha, I wonder if she wanted to be a real actress once." He's saying it with that special flavour of derision reserved only for sex workers. It makes him feel good to mock her, I can tell, because he's finally getting hard.

A bigger, much grander house. I feel like a ghost as I float along its hallways. A spectre in a silk robe.



Someone who has to be invited in, here to haunt his most private moments. I know and understand that I am an echo. The reverb of his reveries. I am a merchant of make-believe, trading in dreams.

...

My ex-girlfriend showed me how to be a hooker. It made our break-up

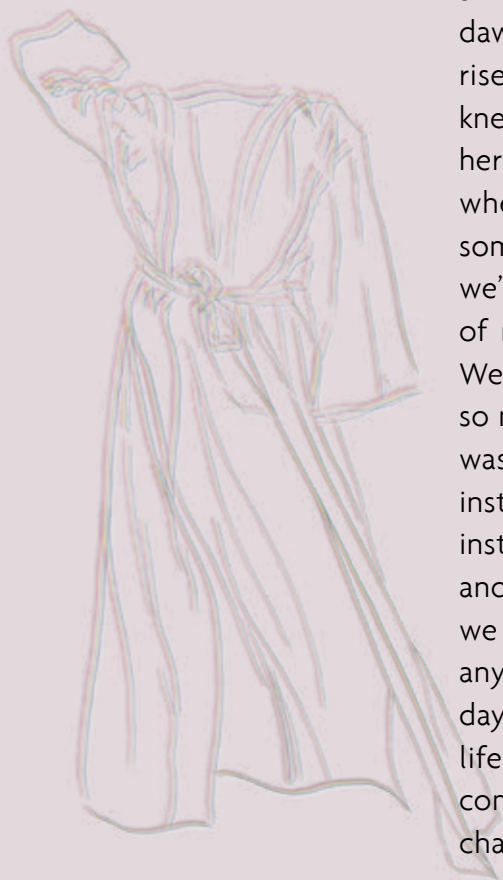
*I am a merchant of make-believe,
trading in dreams*

terrifying because she was the only person I knew at the time who 'got it'. We worked separately but together on some weekends - clipping on each other's stockings and suspenders, having men over to pay us for sex, then eating burgers in bed with a horror film. Always burgers in bed with a horror film. I can remember the pleasure in tipping the delivery driver with a sheet of smooth cash from our hard-won envelope. That was the first ritual that made me believe in the potency, and beauty, of traditions. They bind you to one another. The perennial pursuit of survival becomes instead a sacred song, and I guess falling in



love is writing the religion to go with it. We'd fight so viciously with each other, so hungrily and brutally, that our personal philosophies, our morals and boundaries, were revealed to us through the conflict, carving themselves on our nerve-endings like covenants.

We had churches littered about London on steps and side-streets – my favourite you could find only by sitting on either arm of the lock at dawn, shrouded in the vapour that rises like spirits from the canal. I knew if the world was ending, I'd find her there. I still believe I can guess where she is in the universe. Like some act of quantum mechanics, we're entangled. And I bear the scars of religious sacrifice, letting her go. We hurt and suffered for each other so much to prove we had a love that wasn't simply biochemistry, that instead 'transcended our mortal instincts.' It went too far, obviously, and we trauma bonded so violently we can't be around each other anymore. But in those early hooker days, burgers and horror films in bed, life was beauty itself - a wholesome combination of savagely rough sex, chain-smoking out the window and

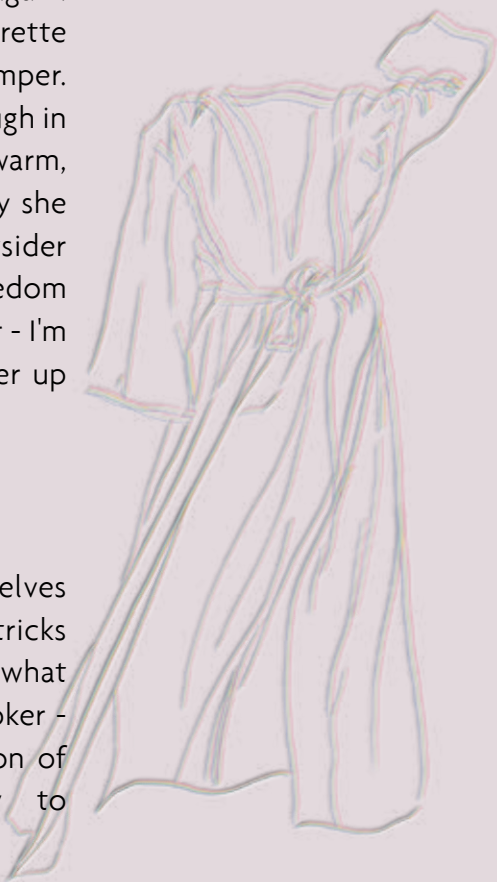


telling each other our grossest secrets. Shame or judgement didn't exist between us, and that's the main requirement in your relationships when you're a sex worker.

We were already on the rocks when she got sectioned under the mental health act and eventually put in prison. I bumped into her on New Year's Day, 2020, in the very same moment as wondering if I would see her at all this decade, or ever again. She was smoking a heroin cigarette outside a pub, still in her jail jumper. I hated that she was sleeping rough in January using smack to keep warm, but she said it was the only way she could stand to be, "an outsider through and through," and freedom has always come naturally to her - I'm glad they've stopped locking her up for it.

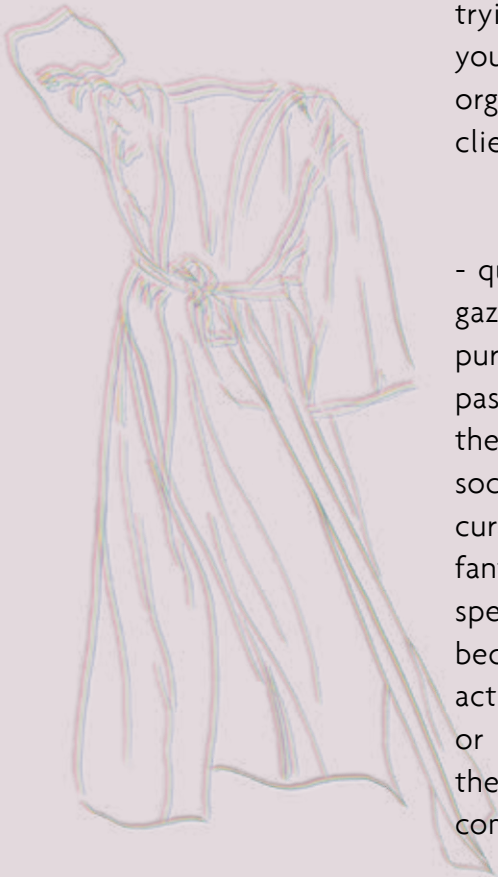
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Whores reconfigure themselves in countless ways after their tricks leave satisfied. That's really what clients see when they see a hooker - a custom made, bespoke version of herself designed specifically to



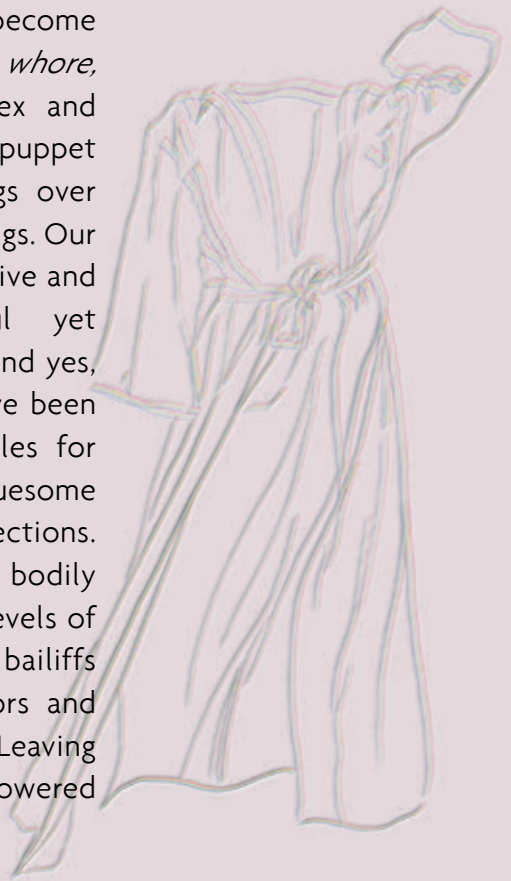
accommodate them, emotionally and physically. And then when they leave we unzip, exhale, remove, unwind, shape-shift back into ourselves. My current girlfriend and I witness both these modes in each other first-hand. We have sold sex together and shared sex together; the difference mainly being that in one scenario you're half-dressed in woolly jumpers with no lingerie in sight and the other you've been trying not to laugh for three hours as you watch each other fake a zillion orgasms while bouncing on a lazy client's cock.

Those little moments between us - queer love when there is no male gaze watching expectantly, having purchased their exclusive access pass to 'the lesbian experience' - these things we don't curate. But society itself is a constructed, curated thing, and our job, selling fantasies, demands that we both speak its language and subvert it. We become the secretaries you can actually spank, the nympho nurses or the kinky teachers, the lady-in-the-streets / freak-in-the-sheets combo, we become whatever our



clients are dreaming of, allowing them to escape their civic duties and fall down magical cracks in the pavement.

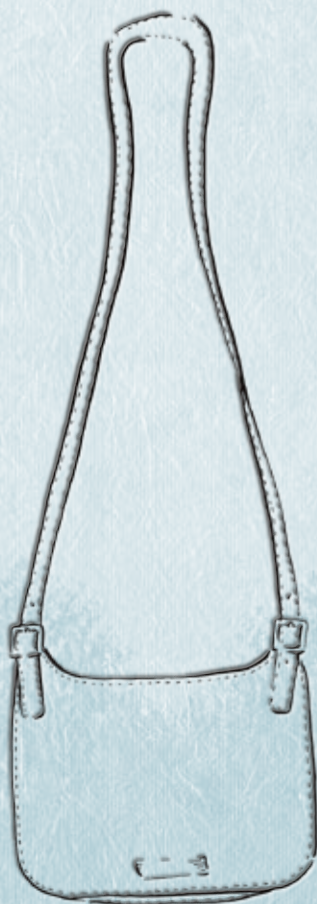
It's important for our voices to be heard outside of the fantasies we embody. Otherwise we live down those cracks in the pavements forever. And what happens when we're left to exist in the shadows? We are only seen and known by our outermost edges. We become semantic silhouettes ... *whore, hooker, prostitute* ... complex and layered words that parade a puppet show of superficial meanings over which we rarely hold the strings. Our artistic legacy sees us as elusive and tragic creatures, beautiful yet doomed, diseased or dying, and yes, it is true that our bodies have been the recipients and receptacles for some of man's most gruesome fantasies, impulses and infections. But we are much more than bodily barometers for the toxicity levels of the patriarchy. We can be its bailiffs too, knocking down its doors and seizing the cash up front. Leaving furnished with its fruits, empowered and enriched.



When I bend or move my body for a client, when I pose, preen or perform, that portrayal is mine. Nobody but me is pulling those puppet strings and nobody but me profits from doing so. My touch is my trade, tenderly tendered; deliberate and not de-liberated. Our experiences belong to us, are felt and known intimately only by us, and our identities grow intricately under that peculiar, coded glow of red lights, assumptions and obscurity.



Shannon Ariel is a queer, polyamorous, sex working single parent artist who is trying to bring more colour and whimsy into the world, one art piece at a time. She enjoys using her positive history in the sex industry as a huge motivation for her art work to help bring some understanding and acceptance into the world. \\ Ig: @pinkbananasparkles



I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH..

I fixed my hair
And straightened my shirt.
I checked my phone for what felt like
The 100th time

To confirm
Again

The door was right.

I don't remember
Who opened the door?
I'm sure I said hello as I smiled.

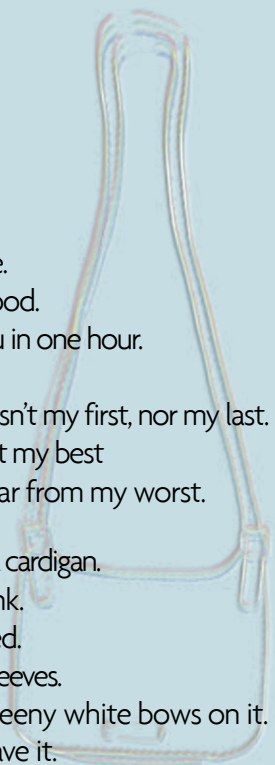
I don't remember much.

I do remember
Discreetly putting the money in my purse,
and sending one text:

I'm here.
All is good.
See you in one hour.

This wasn't my first, nor my last.
It wasn't my best
It was far from my worst.

I wore a cardigan.
Hot pink.
Cropped.
Short sleeves.
It had teeny white bows on it.
I still have it.



My simple black ballet flats were sitting by the door.

I don't remember
Where I placed my purse.
It was a specific purse I used
for these days.
It was white,
Wildly impractical.

And
Way
Too
Small.

I loved it.
I don't remember why.



But I remember how happy I was to be wearing those

size 3

Distressed skinny jeans.

I don't have them anymore.

I don't remember
Much of that day.
It was Easter weekend.
I don't remember
Why I hadn't gone home.

But I do remember

That day, I felt
A new feeling.
A surge.

Not of passion.
Not of lust.
Or of anger.
Or sadness.

Not of happiness.

I don't remember
The exact moment I felt it.
But I do remember
It was a surge
That has stayed with me
For 10 years

A surge
Of

Pure

Self Esteem.

I remember,
That money in my purse.
It was tangible.
It felt indisputable.

This man handed me...
ME?!!
his hard-earned money.
For only one hour of my time.

And was happy about it.
I remember.

I don't remember.
What my percentage was.
I remember it didn't matter.

He didn't know me.
My photo was faceless.
I don't remember him.
He may have forgotten me.

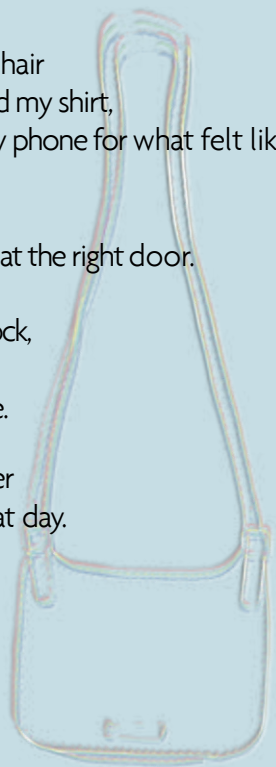
But

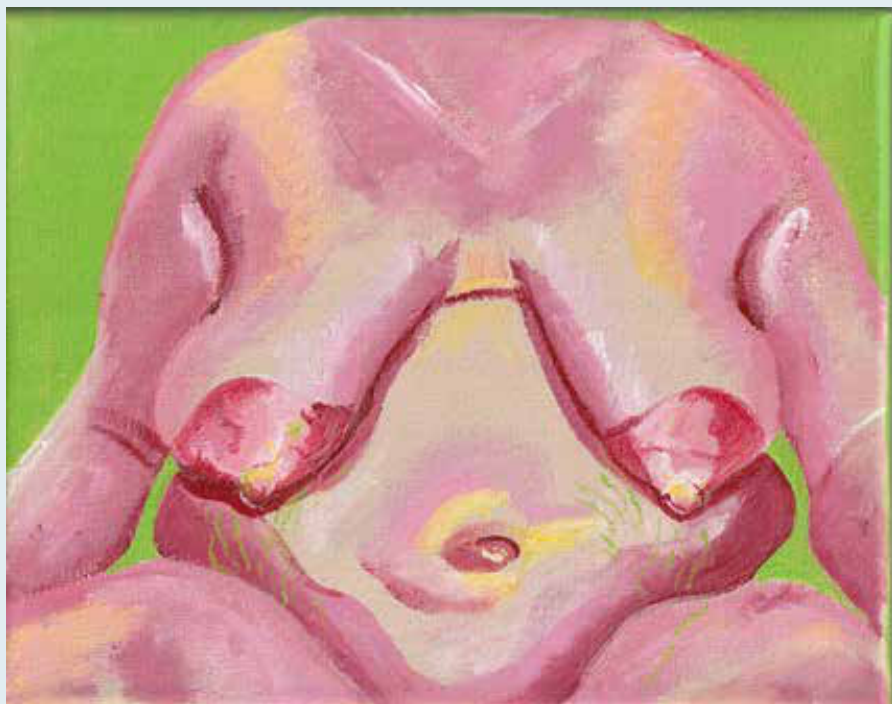
After I fixed my hair
And straightened my shirt,
And checked my phone for what felt like
The 100th time
To confirm
Again, that I was at the right door.

He heard my knock,
And opened,
Happy to see me.

I don't remember
Much about that day.
But I remember.

That feeling.





8' x 10'

Sitting Pretty

Acrylic on Canvas



8' x 10'

Self Portrait

Paint Pens on Paper

Jasper is a queer & trans unicorn who uses his imagination to stir up creative things. He makes children's books and is an expressive arts therapist. Jasper believes that art, social justice, and healing are connected, which he cultivates in his art workshops and community support work. \\ Web: jaybryan.art \\ Ig: @jaybryanart



ODE TO THE GOOD ONES

To the curly-haired giant with big belly charm,
the Comic-Con traveller with circumspect arms
To the rich man in jeans,
and the poor man in love
costume jewelry gifts,
paper rain from above.

Orchids and perfumes without expectation,
Cheek kisses, timid anticipation.

To guys who tip big
Atop ATM fees
—In American dollars—
God damn, I praise thee!

The lost lamb who found
Sodom's glowing nude gates;
afraid of talking to girls
but brings roses on dates
(pleasanter than slick men by the oily stage,
Investment bros, Armani suits,
acutely middle aged).

Praise the man
with the small cock:
You are beautiful.

Boy with breakup eyes
puffy, ready to be lost
kindred thread
Buried, luscious wet hedonism
Wishing to be dead,
Seeking to be found.

Here's to the son: dad's gonna make you a man.
Unsatisfied marriage, finding power where he can
"that dress makes you look fat" dad chortles,
You look away---
Mortified, vowing to
never be him someday.

Pink-cheeked hockey boys,
This shaking kid talks big game
two songs/forty dollars,
fumbled secrets, whispered shame:
fantasies of bro's dick,
"Please don't tell."

Blushing hard-on
awkward sweatpants
Maple jersey and
the game goes on.

To the gay men with wives
and the world on their shoulders,
Who fear dying alone
and their kids getting older.

Salty violet carpets
Decades of broken hearts,
illicit orgasms in
peeled-paint booths,
ripped vinyl
used condoms;
Faceless men bow to the clamshell goddess.



The ones who break shackles forged of masculinity,
The ones flogged and whipped into infinity,
The ones who are freed
by ropes and a ballgag—
Even if just for an hour.

The ones who cum loud, the ones who cum quiet,
the ones who don't cum at all—
so I can break for a snack
(instead of cleaning the wall).

Blessed are the men who shower.
The diabetic bearing cupcakes;
The one with styrofoam boxes
Shrimp fried rice offerings,
Soothing tired, eight-hour-platformed-toes, baby
powder to soak up the sweat:
A welcome break.
Praise the foot fetishists.

To the bi girls and the straight girls
Who tip shyly onstage.

To the coroner who cried,
balls cupped in my palm,
thanking me for being alive.

Those who choose humanity above
misogynist slurs, condescending church groups—
We don't want your pamphlets, we want respect.
Bitch, we are Mary *fucking* Magdalene
Take your shame
elsewhere.
Save yourself.

We are the holy whores
Who pull g-strings,
Wars fought and treaties written
on our behalf,

nuclear families blown up and new worlds from the ash,
We make the world possible.
We make the world verdant.
Ode to the good ones who remember our lineage.

The good ones
who see us.
Who don't want to be thanked.

The good ones who
don't listen to their fathers,
drop of sweet medicine in
toxic sludge.

The soft ones,
paperthin flowers,
diamonds in the bullshit.

Those with hearts on their sleeves
and a pocketful of silver.

This is an ode to the good ones,
Carrying our prayers
For a kinder future.





My Pleasers

Digital Illustration



Fuck You Whore

Digital Drawing



Trans Vibrations

Mixed Media



Cockslut

Acrylic

Model: I am a Spanish mature transsexual model and lesbian woman. I am a sex worker and escort. I love modeling, especially in naked, feet, and plus-sized sessions. I am known as Sapphire (mostly in Spain) or Zoraida García (worldwide). \\ Ig: @spanish_milf_trans

Photographer: Bea Wherever is a photographer from Galicia, Spain, and she likes to take pictures from the essence of the objects photographed. Her work focuses mainly on portraiture. \\ Ig: @beawhereverphotography

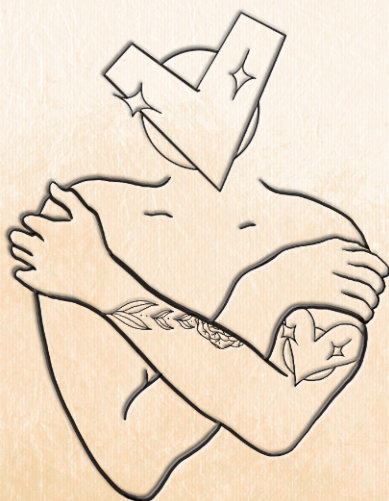


MODELING IN THE WOODS





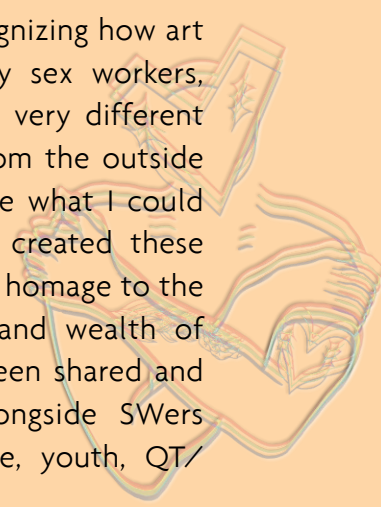
@jasminedrawing is a digital media artist interested in drawing connections between micro and macro levels of intimacy, interdependence, and care. Through illustration, they are dedicated to the explicit representation of diverse bodies - especially those that are 2SQTBIPOC, visibly disabled, adorned with cultural and religious garments, and of all sizes. \\ Ig: @jasminedrawing



SMILE + SELFIE + BITE

Artist Statement

Mainstream society does not fully and respectfully honour the contributions of sex workers to the health of our communities. In considering this, a lot of my thinking revolves around how to disrupt that through my own systems of relation. Oftentimes in my everyday life, this is through exploring care, conversation, and connection with others. Other times, it's through simply being. Through art, this can manifest as offering something that looks and feels different. In recognizing how art about sex workers, by sex workers, can aesthetically look very different than art that looks from the outside in, I wanted to explore what I could offer here. And so, I created these three “SW icons” as an homage to the energy, love, labour, and wealth of knowledge that has been shared and co-built with me alongside SWers who often are femme, youth, QT/ BIPoC.





Smile + Selfie + Bite
Digital Illustrations

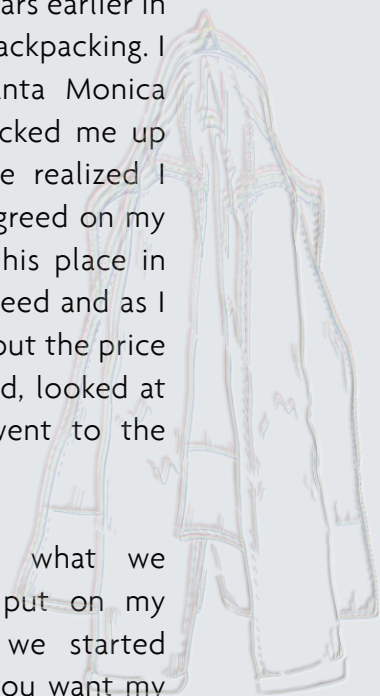
This piece is an excerpt from Marcus Proctor's new book, *Happy Traveller*, which comes out later this year. Marcus is an actor/writer whose upcoming projects include the TV drama, *Elliot's Creek*, in Australia, and comedies, *Mikey* (Canada) and *Heaven Can Wait* (the UK). He plays the lead in all three. \\ IMDB & LinkedIn: Marcus Proctor \\ Ig:@therealmarcusproctor



RED RIDING IN THE HOOD

It's 2005 and a rather cold winter's night has decided to make my chosen job a wee unpleasant (though given what happened, I'd choose the cold). I threw on my trusty red coat I got 6 years earlier in Cannes when I started backpacking. I was a rent boy on Santa Monica Boulevard and a guy picked me up and tried to haggle. He realized I wouldn't budge so he agreed on my price and we drove to his place in South L.A. We did the deed and as I was getting dressed, he put the price he argued for on the bed, looked at me 'menacingly' and went to the kitchen.

I said "Remember, what we agreed on mate" and put on my shoes. He came out, we started arguing and I said "Do you want my



man to come around and get the money?? I know where you live". I didn't have one, it just made sense at the time. He opened a drawer, pulled out a gun and stuck it point blank in my face and said "Do you really think I give a *fuck* about your man??" Calmly I said "Mate, I don't think you're a pussy but this is a business transaction and I want my money."

I got the money. He drove me back to my spot and on the way went Downtown (not as cheery as the song), pulled up behind a closed shop and got a brown paper bag from this guy. They kept looking over so I undid my belt and had my finger on the door handle as the guy got back in and drove off. It ended up being a bottle of whiskey and he offered me some which I gladly took. After an emotional farewell I thought I would hang around for a little more money since I was leaving for London the next day.

A fellow rent boy walked up and we started talking. He offered to share a joint and since I was feeling a little frazzled I said 'Sure!' We walked down a street and turned into a



darker one in which I turned around. He stopped and told me to give him my money ... doh!! He said he had a gun in his pocket to which I replied “No, you don’t. It’s obviously your finger, you idiot’. That didn’t go down well and he ran for me. I ran down the dark street, changed my mind, turned around and pushed him out of the way.

The irony that I had decided to leave my mace behind for the first (and last) time hadn’t escaped me as I ran down the street and screamed at a car to stop. I slammed my hands on the bonnet and the guy came from the side and tackled me to the ground. The car kept driving and the guy tried to take my coat off me so I started punching him in the face. It went beyond just protecting my property. The feeling inside was so strong. I really loved this coat. I actually fought someone off me to make sure she stayed in my life ... well, kind of off me. He ended up getting me into a choke hold and I started to pass out so I threw my money on the road and he let go.

There happened to be a few road workers who were watching the



whole thing so the mugger put on a scene that I was the one mugging him and he stormed off. The workers went back to their jobs and I walked away feeling happy I had my coat and a little down that I now had to make that money back. Five minutes later I'm blowing someone for \$50 - thinking how resilient I am - when I started to quietly dry retch from shock. I pushed it back down and kept going.

*she's the longest relationship
I've ever had...*



I made the money back so jumped on my bike and rode home. Living that life, you build a lot of barriers around you so nothing unnerves you but I lay on the bed and it hit me. I literally could have died, my body dumped and no-one would've had a clue what had happened. Shit got real that day, lol.

...

I'm now writing this in 2021 with my coat gently nestled beside me for inspiration and am amazed at how untouched she looks considering everything we've experienced

together and just realized she's the longest relationship I've ever had ... considering how much I've put her through, I'm not really surprised my human relationships don't last 7 weeks.

Thanks for reading me.



Shoshana is a femme lesbian who blushingly shares her musings on passion, connection, and the heart. She writes to escape the ordinary. Shoshana loves across the gender spectrum, and is dedicated to contributing to the community with her words. She can often be found typing with a cat in her lap and dangly earrings in her ears.



I DIDN'T NEED THE MONEY

Aren't we only supposed to whore when we need the money
When our lives are in the deepest darkest desperation
To sell our pussies and our tits when it is the absolute last resort

But I didn't need the money

I was lost

Sad

Alone

Depressed

Withdrawn

Empty

Broken

Destroyed

I whored to stay on the planet

Desperately gave my life juice to keep myself alive

Used my tits and pussy and ass like they meant nothing

To find the only thing that meant something

As a last resort

The cash hidden away in a glorious box

Better than the man who paid could own

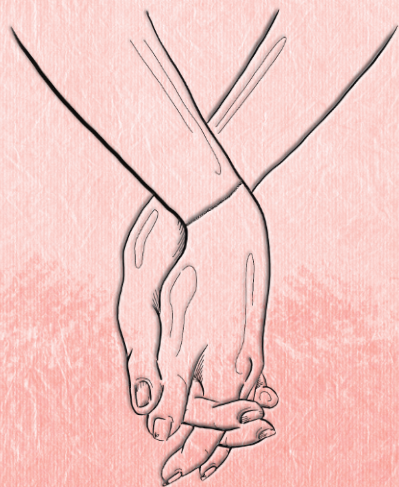
Never spent

Never needed

A souvenir

Of seeing death

I am a queer, nonbinary sex worker with disabilities whose poetry, fiction and journalism has appeared before in places like NOW Magazine, This Magazine, and many others.

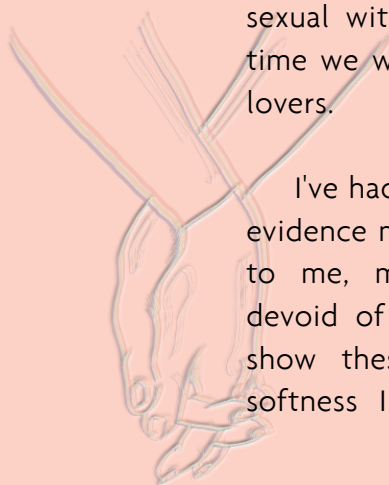


NEW WORLDS OF POSSIBILITY

Navigating Dating & Desire as a Queer, Nonbinary Sex Worker

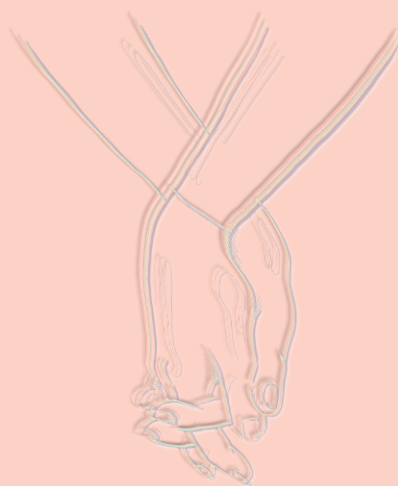
Sometimes I wonder how I got to a point in life where it's normal for me to have sex with a person I'm crushing on before I can work up the guts to ask them out for a coffee. The last time I had a romantic partner who wasn't also a sex worker, I struggled to find the words to explain how exactly this fit into our polyamorous dynamic: that there's people who I like, who I've been sexual with before, who I might be sexual with again, but at the same time we wouldn't exactly qualify as lovers.

I've had some assume that this is evidence my job has cheapened sex to me, made it impersonal and devoid of intimacy. I wish I could show these people the joy and softness I am sometimes able to

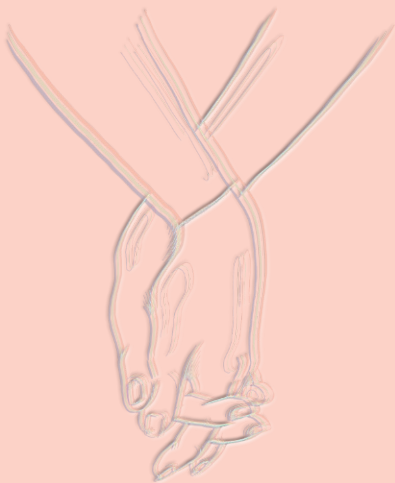


touch, through my work: the time I dissolved into laughter with my elderly client, who had previously thought he was not able to orgasm anymore; the look on the face of another client, a closeted trans woman, as I turned her to face a full length mirror in the resplendent lace dress I'd picked for her. It was like ten tonnes of weight had been lifted off her shoulders. How could anything so beautiful be profaned by the fact that money was exchanged?

My job is simultaneously something I feel confined to, unable to access many “regular” channels of work because of multiple disabilities, and a place where my spirit sometimes feels ecstatic, free to explore erotic being in ways many only dream of. When I take off my sky-high heels and slip back into my baggy hoodie and men's work boots, I feel at peace with the multiple genders I embody in a way I haven't had access to outside of sex work. The high-femme attire I wear for work can be something playful, a costume I cast off at the end of the day rather than one I don because of social expectations.



None of this negates the economic uncertainty, the well-founded fear of violence, the stigma that forces me into living a double life. Our desires do not exist in a vacuum, and the precarious and liminal space I occupy in society is part of what determines who, and how, I love. I tend to shy away from potential partners who are not also sex workers, afraid of what stereotypes might sleep, deeply nested somewhere in their subconscious, waiting to come to the surface during an argument. Or worse, during an intimate exchange, when it becomes apparent that they do not believe I deserve consent.



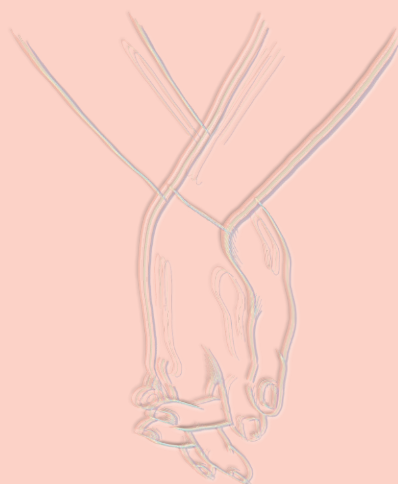
The safest I have felt, with my clothes off and my guard down, is with other sex workers. When the camera has stopped rolling, and we melt into each other, her hand brushing the hair off my forehead, the two of us laughing with all the deeply human awkwardness we are normally so skilled at hiding beneath the polish of performance. When lovers show me my own value, that becomes assimilated into my inner strength, my sense of self. I let it push out all the negative things I've

internalized. Queer sex is how I unmake and re-make myself. Queer sex is part of how I build new worlds of possibility.

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It might sound simpler than it is, to one not privy to the often exasperating confusion of signaling and blurred boundaries between queer sex workers. I make my living off the fact that people desire me, but part of me still cannot be convinced that I am desirable. No matter how overt the flirtations I receive, I am still held back by the internalized queerphobia that makes me feel like I am a predator if I make the first move with another woman or trans person. The fact that we both sell sexual services adds another layer of confusion. After all, what if her affection, her comments under my pictures, are all just marketing?

I'm looking at her Twitter the next day, my heart melancholy as I scroll past her candid selfies in the mirror of the incall. I start typing the



message to her, the one we all know so well, and hating myself for it as I do. Instead of being honest about my feelings, I ask if maybe she'd want to film again some time. You know, for business.

My work, in so many ways, is about helping people break down the internal barriers that keep them from pleasure, from exploration, from self-actualization. Maybe some day soon I'll be capable of believing that I, too, deserve those things.

Maybe some day soon I'll have the guts to ask if she'd want to hang out some time, with our clothes on.



ABOUT QT

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.



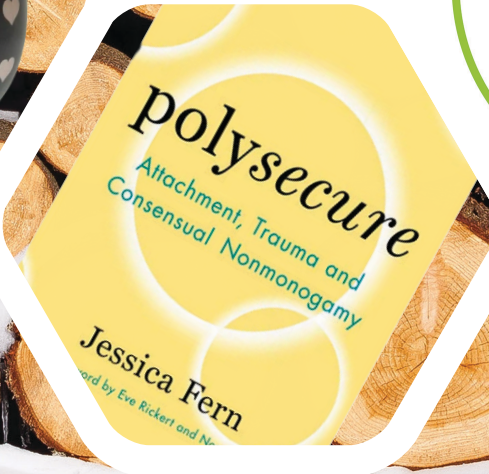
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