



LESBIANS are MIRACLES

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Queer Joy

No. 16



LESBIANS ARE MIRACLES MAGAZINE

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I'M BABY



MAXXX PLEASURE



MATTY LYNN BARNES



QUEER JOY



CARE IS JOY

by Kelsey Rhodes

In this queer ass life, I've been in conversation with queer people and realized that every queer person, no matter who they are, has, at one point, had to redefine something for themselves. Rebirth! Reborn! Renew! Rediscover!

Their life trajectory. Their intimate relationships. The language they use to talk about love and partnership. Pleasure and sex. Friendship and family. And this redefinition is two-fold in its impact on the queers I've had the honor of loving (including myself).

One-fold: redefinition is scary.

When anything is possible, it can be paralyzing, and choice paralysis can be isolating. When we feel scared, we sometimes put up our defense mechanisms and can be led to believe no one else is going through what we're going through. There are a lot of cool queers out there who feel alone.

Growing up and finding ourselves, learning our lights and shadows, and figuring out what we need to unfurl regularly tests what we need to feel safe. And safety is a key to combatting our loneliness. There are so many tools to help us find our way to safety with ourselves—therapy, of course, being one of them—but also examples of secure and healthy relationships, unconditional care from platonic and romantic relationships, repair from past harm, and rewriting our narratives as ones of truth, strength, and love rather than fear, shame, and control.

We can find community in not only queerness, in not only doing cool shit, in not only doing this work of learning ourselves, but also in the shared kaleidoscope of messy living we find ourselves in as we navigate love, sex, relationships, family, grief, trauma, joy, friendship, and community.

Two-fold: redefinition is exciting.

When we realize that we can redefine what we once thought was the “one right way” to do something, a new world of possibilities opens up. We can redefine what it looks like to care for each other in ways that honor our communal needs. We can disrupt oppressive forces. And with these realizations, we often find ourselves doing things in new ways. We reject binaries; we reject boxes. We declare that we are something more, something new, something undefinable.

People in power fear what will happen when it's made public that we can have so much more than what's offered to us in tiny gender binary boxes. The queer community has found freedom in turning these boxes upside-down and inside-out so that we may live as authentically as cosmically possible.

I get it. Those people in power should be afraid. They should be afraid of more people embracing the permission to be everything they are all at once. To assess themselves on a cellular level and to allow themselves to take up space, be loud, have needs, be

loved, and love others with their whole hearts. Being ourselves instead of being trapped in the boxes cis-het-white-Christianity created is in and of itself a liberatory act. We can have something greater.

We can have intimacy *and* connectedness *and* community, accountability *and* silliness *and* hotness *and* delicious creativity.

Our depression, the state of the world, or our challenges with substance use telling us we're small are the lies of the binary, volume way up in our heads. But we can counteract those lies, take hold of the dial, and adjust it to hear the authentic songs of our quirky, weird insides as loudly and as bigly as the bass rumbling our sternums will allow. A sweaty dance party of truth.

When we survive, dance, and live, we become a walking, talking, beaming story to queer littles that they can do the same.

When we speak out against attacks on our queer families, we show queer littles they're not alone and that we can't have a future without them, too. When we hold each other with intentional and consensual care, we show queer littles that there's a whole queer pile of leaves awaiting their leap to catch them with soft, soft grace.

Community in celebration of the queer bending of space and place, honoring the labor and care of queers all the hell over the place. Community rooted in justice. As attacks on queer people continue across the country, it is more important than ever to be loud about the softness we queers are living in. The joy. The intimacy. Support of this softness disrupts queerphobia and transphobia. When we normalize and amplify joy, we make the violence and hate a little quieter.

That's the hope, isn't it? To find connection, community, laughter, and likeness with people who help us remember what it means to survive. What it means to live. That's the point, isn't it? To care for each other in spite of it all. 🌸





MASON ROSE



QUEER JOY



THIS IS ALIVE AND WELL

by Dot Perisca

It is a great gift to name her again –
to let her be born once more –
her little feet taking enormous steps
a five, a six, a seven, and eight
then she crumbles and laughs
and tomorrow: forgets.
Letting her scrape her knees anew
dismissing old bruises, inviting the blues
crying out: more! if she's hungry,
now unafraid to demand
having a new chance to look
over a cliff of some sort,
and to stand
the wind like a thousand kind hands
stroking
soft



GENDERFUCK GUIDO

by Rosie Accola

My gender is the salt on someone's lips after they cram an entire slice of salami into their waiting mouth like it's the flesh of the holy ghost. It's Tony Soprano astride on a horse, or actually a Soprano's summer (khaki board shorts, Prozac, dodging panic attacks, and lead pipes alike).

My gender misses giardiniera. My gender wants to dip a beef sandwich into lake Michigan until it's soggy, salty, and one with the earth.

Queer intimacy is each link on a glimmering dyke chain,
Tanktop, no bra.

Nipples standing at attention like Lassie:

WHAT IS IT, GIRL?

Is it hot in here,
Or is it just me?



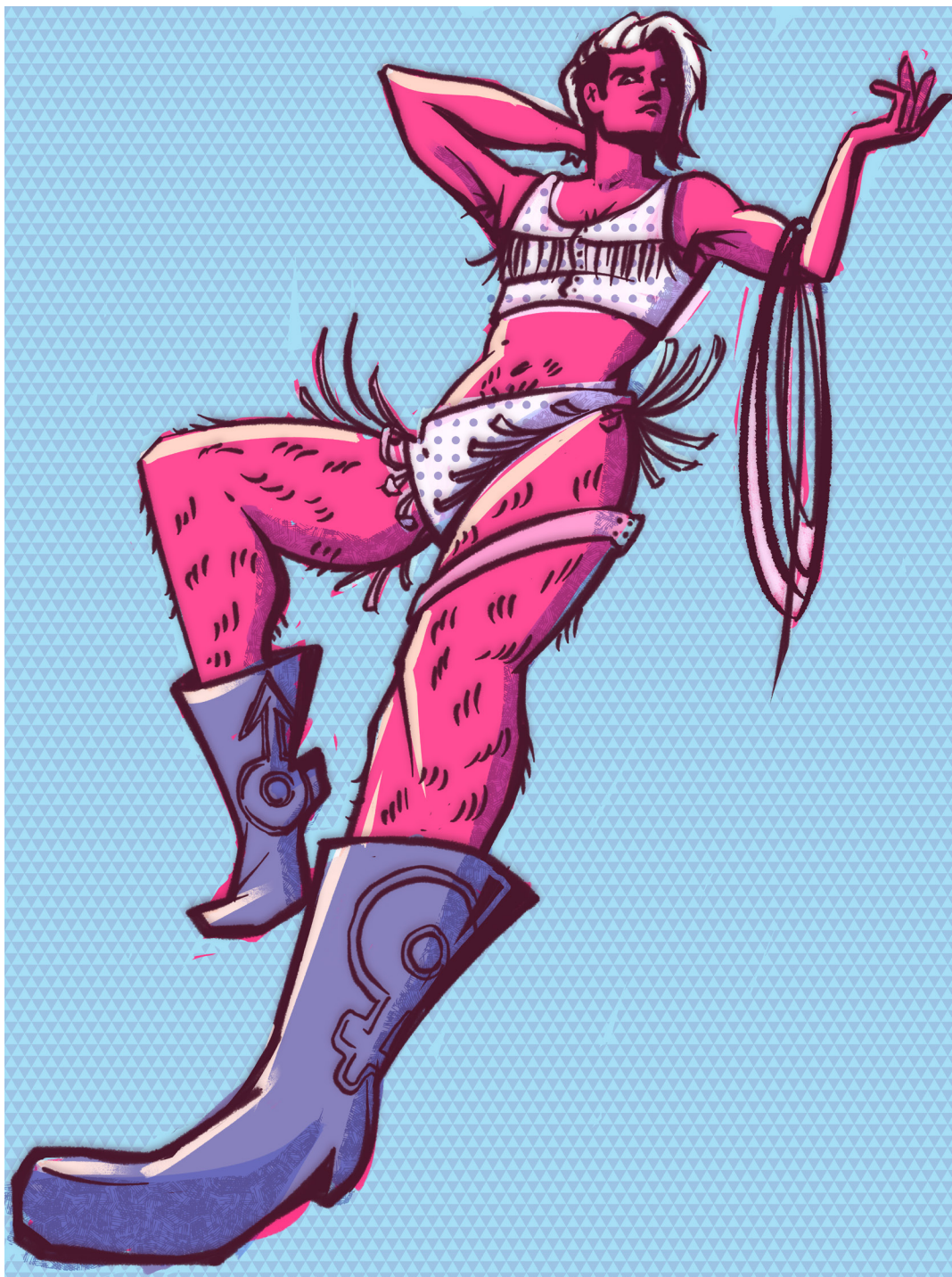


BUTCH

by Angel DaCosta

I am Butch. Etched from the stone of the Dykes who came before me and paved the way.
I am the son of Earth & Fire. From the balance of ease and intensity, I was forged into flesh.
I am a paladin for equality, striving to reconnect humanity with nature.
I am the Divine Feminine. Peaceful and optimistic.
I am a visionary. Original, open and approachable, pure and trustworthy.
I am proud of who I am. Loud, powerful, confident, and sexual in nature.
I am Nature. There is beauty & goodness in me, and it is my duty to see it & trust it.
I am physically perfect just the way that I am. Society's standards are not my standards.
I am the embodiment of harmony, grace, peace and strength.
I am love. I live to love endlessly and serve those I love and the world we've been given.
I am Butch.





NON-BINARY TRANS BUTCH JOY

by Liz Escalle-Dyachenko

Last year, the day I turned 32, I went with my wife to the DIY shop she soon dubbed “my favorite store” to find the hardware and tools we needed to install our furniture. We’d just rented a flat in the French mountain town where I had recently found a job as a librarian. It was a beautiful birthday: even though, through our long-term relationship, we got more than used to moving from place to place between Russia and France, we still shared the pleasure of consolidating and inhabiting a new space together, a nest that would sustain and nurture our different ways of being and rhythms of growth in the months to come.

For the past ten years, I had been living as a trans woman constantly afraid of being clocked. Every part of my body tensed in an effort to pass as cis as possible in all public spaces, forcing me into a performance of conventional femininity. Though this hard work helped me receive some of the gender-affirming care I needed and had a lot of trouble accessing in late 2000s France as a trans lesbian—a status I often didn’t disclose in medical and social institutions—it also induced a negation of a female masculinity I never wished to reject. Indeed, it was precisely that gender expression that propelled me as a teenager to understand myself first as a tomboy, but not a boy; then as a gentle person, but not a gentleman; and years later as a fem-attracted dyke, and not a closeted homosexual or the perfect son-in-law.

In early 2022, as I emerged from a severe depression prompted by an experience of abuse at my previous work, I gradually felt that the barriers, prejudices, and injunctions preventing me from envisioning myself as non-binary were falling apart. As I grew more confident in my body and began to think beyond a dualistic vision of transition, I started to move just the way I wanted, to wear the shirts, jeans, and jackets I liked, and cut my hair shorter than it had ever been. Finally, I understood what gender euphoria meant for me: not a congruence to an inner gendered self, but a freedom to be through which I could face and fight (cis-)sexist violence. To put it more simply, I let myself be butch and walk in the paths trodden by people I then considered to be my role models, such as the butches of all ages and orientations I met in lesbian-run community spaces. They never looked down on me and opened to me a future just by being near.

As we opened the cardboard boxes our friends helped us to carry from our previous home while our cat got acquainted with our new living room, it seemed that I was revisiting multiple trajectories in my life, materialized by the books, scores, notes, and clothes I put on the shelves. These scattered archives were witnesses to my craving to belong, a search for words, sounds, textures, sights, and tastes that would enable me to find relief and comfort beyond what had been defined in my youth as the only acceptable

and expressible sense of self. Romanticized heterosexuality seemed the only horizon both in my family and the world of the Parisian suburb where I went to school. There, queerness was not absent but silenced, and I had to craft myself ways out of this confinement.

Some time in the summer, just before we moved, while we were by the sea in Brittany in one of those places we kept coming back to, I came out as non-binary to my wife and then to my friends. Even though I had known the word for a few years, I had never thought I would one day reclaim it for myself. After all the difficulties and gate-keeping I had been through during my transition, letting go of a firm grasp on the category of “woman” seemed akin to giving others a power over me that could eventually put me in danger. As a survivor of sexual violence and rape by a fellow musician when I still hoped to become a professional in that field, I live with a constant habit of hyper-vigilance that pushes me to want the widest possible understanding of any social configuration or interaction I’m implied in. Being non-binary felt like diving into a lack of coordinates I would have no instructions or ideas about dealing with. But that’s not what happened. The more I expressed myself as butch, the more I gained trust and ease in every sphere of my life, even though people outside of my friend circles started to gender me in absolutely random ways. I got used to being

taken for a “monsieur” or “madame” a few times every day, but strangely, the misgendering didn’t affect me as much as it did before because I no longer feared being clocked.

While my wife and I arranged our photographs and postcards around our new house, I felt joy like a wave rising inside my chest. We smiled at each other and recalled the birthdays we celebrated over the years in our towns or the towns of our close ones. We cuddled all day and reflected on all we had gone through since we started living together on the fifth floor of an apartment block in front of the regional bus station in the north of Moscow. Since the Russian government started its imperialistic war of aggression in Ukraine, we have been volunteering at a refugee center nearby as translators and have encountered many people supporting each other in the way we want to show up in our relationship and society at large. As we accompanied them in their processes of dwelling and living in France under these circumstances, we also learned important things about drawing our own passages into the world under changing conditions—in my case, gender. It is all about care and matter, and how we compose them by moving forward, together. 🌸

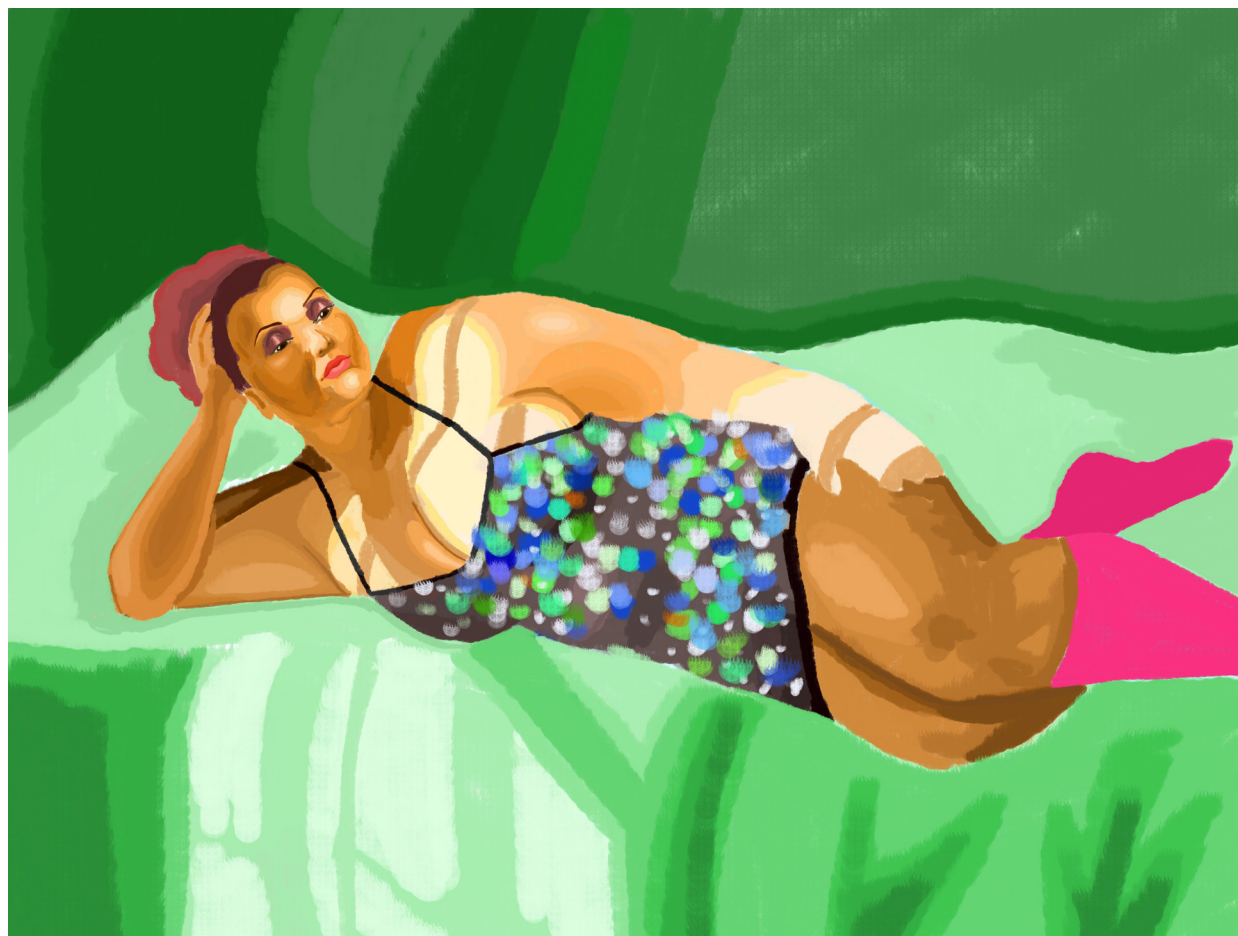
C.S. CORBIN



QUEER JOY



CARRIE CHEN



QUEER JOY

I TOOK A TWO-YEAR HIATUS FROM FRANK OCEAN

by Elle Warren

From most music actually but today I listen to Good Guy & Moon River & walk upstairs to feed my neighbor's cats. She has been gone four weeks & when I open the door they bite me until I kneel & pet their arched backs. I understand, I tell them. Everyone's been desperate for touch before. We've all been more volatile than we needed to be. Downstairs my lover makes french onion soup so our apartment smells like we're inside an onion & I love it because I love onions but also it reminds me I would live anywhere with her, even inside an onion, especially if we could bring Opal & Frank, our own cats who chase each other & eat the blinds but sleep with us through the night. My standard of joy is so high I upped my dosage of Prozac. I took two capsules for the first time & my heart fluttered with how well I've done for myself, how full my bed is, how I own two armchairs. I listen to Moon River & think about the time I was twenty. My memory & what it unearths in me will not scatter us in all directions. We are not a pile of leaves poised to topple & crunch beneath the softest weight. I believe that now. It is a shockwave of blessing to be loved & sad at the same time, to be sad & love life. To listen to music & want to dance or thank its beauty more than you want the music to devastate you.



GIRLGOD

by Melissa Bernal Austin

My favorite iteration of God is 12-year-old GirlGod —

God of watermelon bubblegum and Dr. Pepper LipSmackers. Of hologram stickers and locked diaries. GirlGod of 1994. A God who never says anything mean about your bedroom when She comes over to spend the night. She can keep the secret about your brother's sadness and you can cry and cry and She won't be bored or make you feel like you have to say you're sorry for it. She smiles while running Her chipped, glitter polish fingers over the smooth spines of your books. Stands politely near the bed, uncertain about sitting until you say, *You can sit there if you want*, and 12-year-old GirlGod sits, relieved. She does my eyeliner like Hers, a little too thick, with a black pencil pocketed from the Walgreens on the corner. She leans in so close, I smell Her green apple shampoo, Her Windsong perfume. GirlGod holds my eyelid taut with one small hand, Her charm bracelet tinkling and catching the light. I can hardly breathe. When GirlGod is catcalled for the first time, we whisper about it during band. *He was old enough to be my dad*, She says, making that gross face 12-year-old girls do so well. If we tell Her father, he'll say he wants to *lock Her up 'til She's 30*. She rolls Her dark eyes, eyelashes fluttering like bird wings, descending. *As if he could*. My GirlGod is wise and beautiful. She is loving and kind. She shares Her cokes with me even though the health teacher says She shouldn't. *It'd be better to have mono together anyway*. We blow watermelon bubbles on the back of the bus. We play M.A.S.H. and only write each other's names on the list, four times. We lean close to share headphones. She winds and unwinds the cord around Her finger. I think She's really pretty and I know I love Her. I'm not even scared. GirlGod says She stole a new lip gloss from Walmart this time. She holds my chin steady to apply it. Hidden from everyone else, I am face to face with Her. When I smile without meaning to, She scolds me a little but it doesn't matter. We're best friends and I know it. And I smile again because She's looking right at me. Her lip gloss so shiny I can see myself in it.





BODYWORK

by Rosie Accola

During eclipse szn
I make a destitute resolution
To move through the world as if I am loved,
even if I do not love the body I am tasked to tend.
A bottomless pit of need shaped languid by desire +
the plastic jello mold dream of America,
A billboard for a sex shop neon heaving,
warped and bleached desert bones
picked clean by carrion like a toy or a death.
What does it mean when your body is something that is done to you?
Spending days flat on the couch tears leaking from my eyes,
the only steady thing about me.
Eventually, I get a headache from crying;

I know the palmistry of every ache.
So I think of my body as an experiential vessel,
Squishing blackberries onto the roof of my mouth
+ I conceptualize happiness as an earth tone,
As devotion twining up my ribs like ivy scaling the siding of an old house,
as weeds testing the growth edge of a garden.
I give into nature imagery because I call most animals creatures. A creature provokes a love that
scares you a little, a midnight clang that's just a raccoon thumbing garbage with their immaculate
velvet hands.



JACKIE ABBOTT



QUEER JOY



LOU LAUREN



QUEER JOY



REBIRTHDAY

by Leslie Lopez

I pull out my phone to text my roommate that I'm outside and see the time: 4:44 p.m. It is way too early for this, but that was one of my non-negotiables.

Non-negotiables, I scoff to myself. You would think I was about to accept an awful business deal or meet an estranged parent for the first time in years. That's not what's happening today. It's not a terrible thing, what I'm about to walk into, but I'm afraid of disappointment. I'm afraid to be a disappointment.

I also don't feel like myself at all. Yes, the puffy pink tulle dress reveals too much of my thighs, and the cowboy boots make me feel silly. But I mean more than just the clothes.

The front door is ajar and invites me to slowly push it open. Because of the awkward placement of the hallway, it's an easy escape to the bathroom.

Quietly, I walk in and lock the door before I accidentally catch my reflection staring back in the mirror. I will face her, just not right now. Instead, I slide into the bathtub and pull out my phone, my attempt at buying myself some time.

I immediately click the blue app and see the name of yet another conservative politician trending, sandwiched between a confusing meme and a new celebrity ship. I scroll for so long that my eyes stop registering the words, so I exit the app and open Instagram. The first thing I see is a picture of two people I went to high school with who are apparently getting married. The girl—who I've known since elementary school—has posted various photo dumps of proposal pictures, which feels a bit much. I unfollow her, but not before I comment "Congratulations!" on the post. I check my messages just to make sure I haven't missed anything. Maybe a years-late apology from my mother. There's nothing.

Without a distraction, my mind shifts to the recurring dream I had the night before. It always starts the same way: I'm in an empty movie theater in my favorite spot, the middle of the back row. Just as the lights dim, a person runs up the stairs and takes a seat next to me.

While I contemplate switching seats, the movie starts playing. The setting looks just like one of the apartments we lived in. Actually, it is my old apartment, and there's me and my mother.

My heart begins to beat louder and louder—I know where this is going, but I can do nothing to stop it. Then, as if on cue, the screaming begins. We point fingers at each other, our faces growing redder and splotchier by the second. A faceless man walks in wielding a knife, but we are too busy arguing to notice. Rather than running from the killer, I run from my mother because she feels like the most dangerous person in the room, her words like a razor slicing my skin. My right hand feels numb before I realize someone is holding it tight. Just as I yank my hand away, I see it is a younger me with a sadness in her eyes I deeply remember. I try to ask her what she's doing here, but my mouth feels weird, and I look down as my teeth fall onto the floor. When I look up, I'm staring straight into a mirror. When I try to scream, no noise comes out.

Each time I have this dream, I think about my mother for days. About how things could've been different for both of us if we weren't so hard-headed, so prideful. For some absurd reason, I still expect an "I'm sorry for..." text, but I am my mother's child, and we are more alike than I ever wanted to be. I know the likelihood of receiving that text is non-existent. How can I make peace with the fact that there will be no apology, no contact, no anything?

My phone vibrates, and I read the text from my roommate. I'm late, and I promised I wouldn't be. But I can't go out there yet, because I still haven't looked into her eyes and put an end to her following me.

I gather my strength and force myself to look into the mirror. We touch our hair, and I'm no longer afraid or upset. I recognize this feeling of not looking the way you feel, of people not understanding why you need to look the way you feel. My chest tightens, and the next thing I know, I'm opening the cabinets and drawers in a frantic search for scissors. I find a rusty pair with red handles and grab fistfuls of my hair. Each chunk that hits the floor leaves me feeling infinitely lighter. We can breathe again.

The impulsivity of this decision brings a wave of déjà vu over me. I've been here once. Except back then, I was fourteen, and this proved to be the domino that knocked the other tiles over. Without warning, the overprotectiveness turned to surveillance turned to uncovering the truth turned to begging for forgiveness. In the end, the lesson became that familial love is unconditional unless your life is tainted by disobedience and wrongness.

I pick up the swirls of hair on the floor and stuff them in the trash can before opening the door.

"Oh my God! She's here!" someone screams. Another person in a leather vest runs and grabs me firmly but gently by the arm.

I am pulled into the living room and immediately see two, six, a dozen people—all of whom I recognize. The pit in my stomach that was present only seconds ago disappears when I look at them. In this room, I don't see the faces of people whose love is dependent on a set of conditions. Instead, I see the people who have shown up at my door, ready to feed me the food they've brought in Tupperware containers and make me laugh until our bellies hurt. I see my phone calendar filled with scheduled FaceTime calls a month in advance because they know I need a reason to keep going until next week, the week after, and the week after. I see the stack of love letters awaiting me in my mailbox, the ones I never believe but savor nonetheless. I see the 24-minute voice messages that assure me it is okay if I don't listen all the way through, even though I will because their voices make my heart swell, and I want to hear all they have to say. I see people who have thrown me a party despite my insistence that it wasn't an important occasion, who decided that yes, it was.

"Happy lesbian birthday!" they shout as the party poppers go off. The confetti rains over me, and I am frightened for a second before I feel my body relax. It is not a possibility, but an undeniable fact that these people—my people—know me so deeply and choose to love me every single day, even on the days when I don't feel like I'm worthy of this life.

Immediately, I move in to give tight embraces, grateful hand squeezes, and playful kisses on cheeks. When I finish making my rounds, I turn to see two of my friends carrying the cake and holding it up toward me.

I smile as I blink my eyes to keep them from spilling over. Someone shows me mercy and instructs everyone to sing an out-of-tune rendition of happy birthday while someone else lights the candles. There is confusion about what to say at first, but soon the second "birthday" is replaced with "queerday," and my chuckle gets stuck in my throat. I'm glad someone else remembers to turn out the lights because the tears will begin any minute, and, just like the teeth in my dream, I will not be able to stop them from falling.

It's finally time to blow out the candles, but I have to think of what to wish for. What would fourteen-year-old me have wished for? I would've prayed to God to make me normal. For my mother to get her way. I'd be a long-haired girl with a mouth she keeps closed and off the lips of other girls. I'd be the high school sweetheart of a boy, any boy.

But I'm not fourteen anymore. I'm surrounded by people who don't think I'm a disappointment and don't need me to be different to love me. I've found the tenderness I longed for from my mother in every person in this room. What more is there to wish for? What more is there to want when, just ten years ago, I couldn't possibly bring myself to imagine this very life because it seemed completely out of my reach?

I finally open my eyes and see the entire room of queers illuminated by the orange glow. I want to live in this moment where everyone looks heavenly and holy. When I decide it is finally time to let love in.

As I scan the room, I catch my reflection in another mirror. This time I don't look away or close my eyes. This time I smile right at her and take the deepest breath. When I exhale, the room breaks out into loud clapping and joyful laughter, and I hope she can hear it, too. 🌸

JENNA WILLIAMS



QUEER JOY



DIANA C PATIN

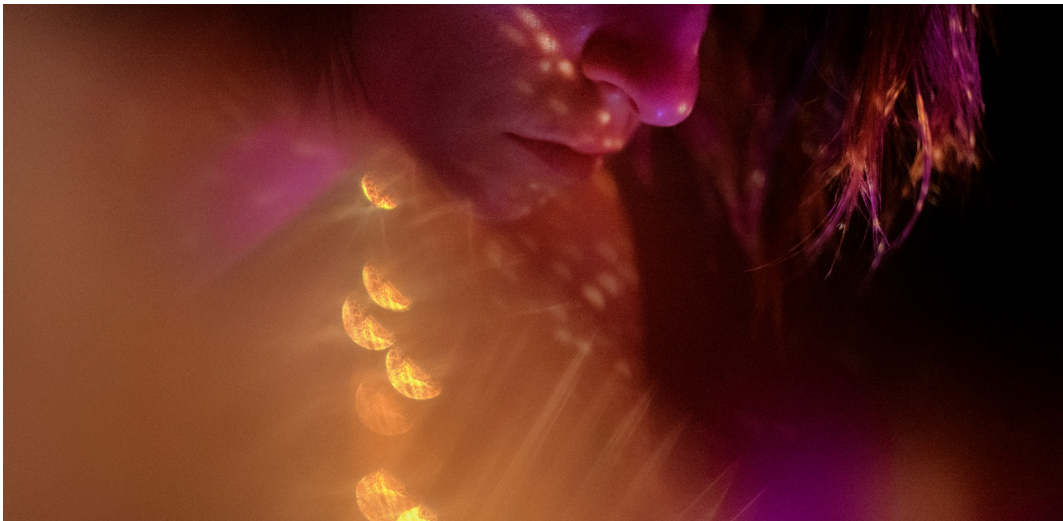
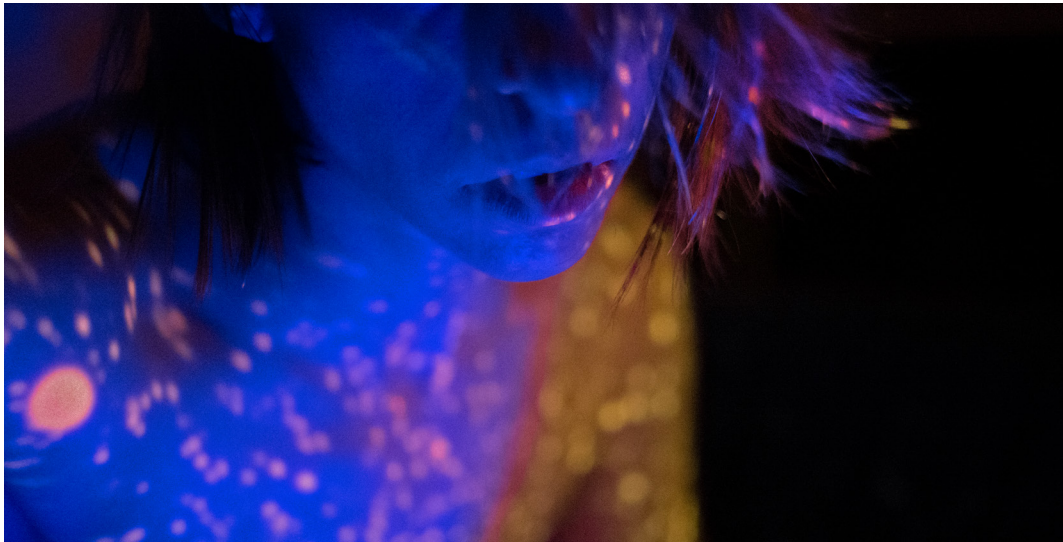








DANS KARAGANNIS





ALL DYKES GO TO HEAVEN

by Taylor Ray

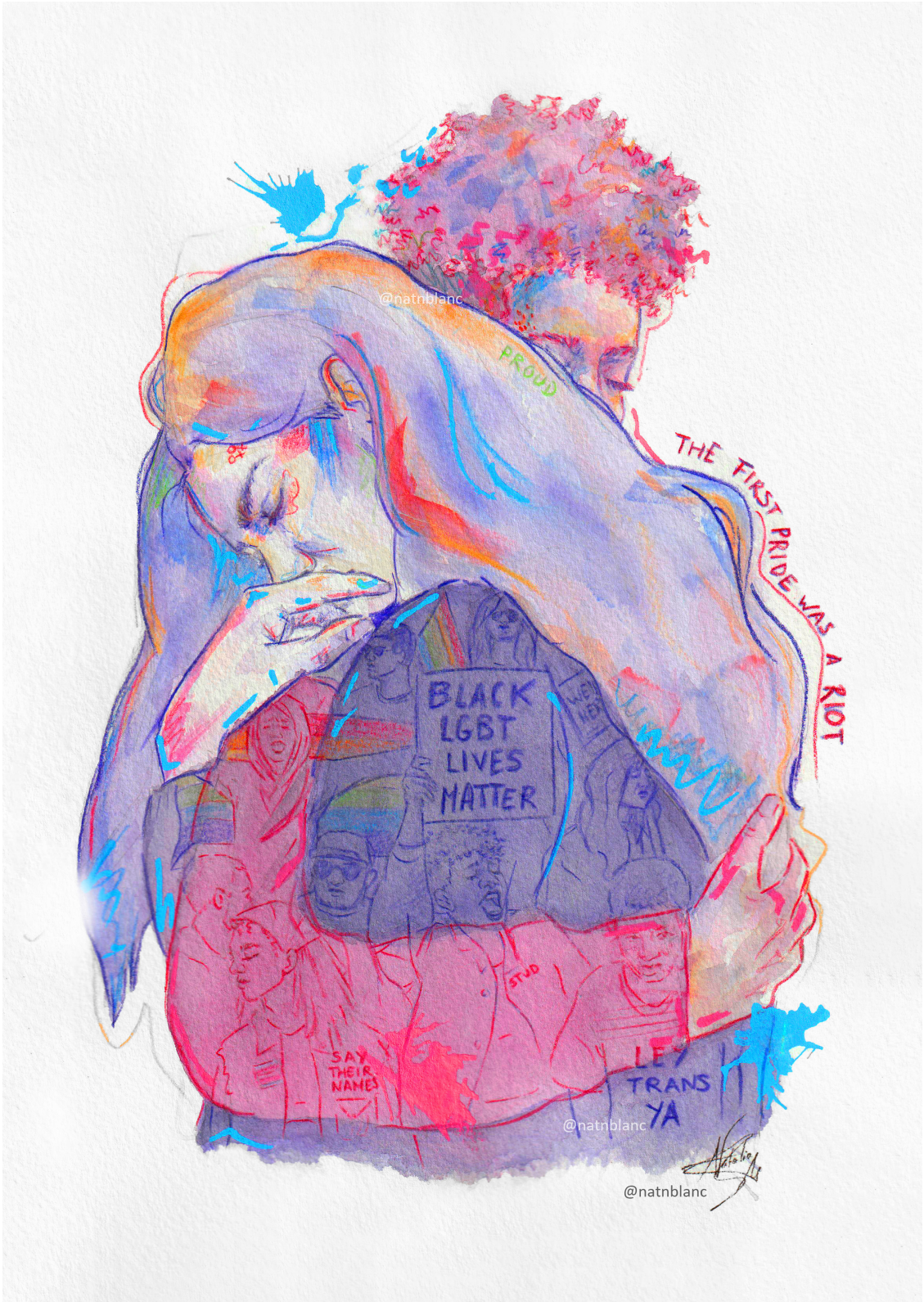
Even me,
Barely out in a nondescript month in 2023.
Feeling fortunate to be a freak, but the
Kind with a community.
Essentialism be damned.
All dykes go to heaven.

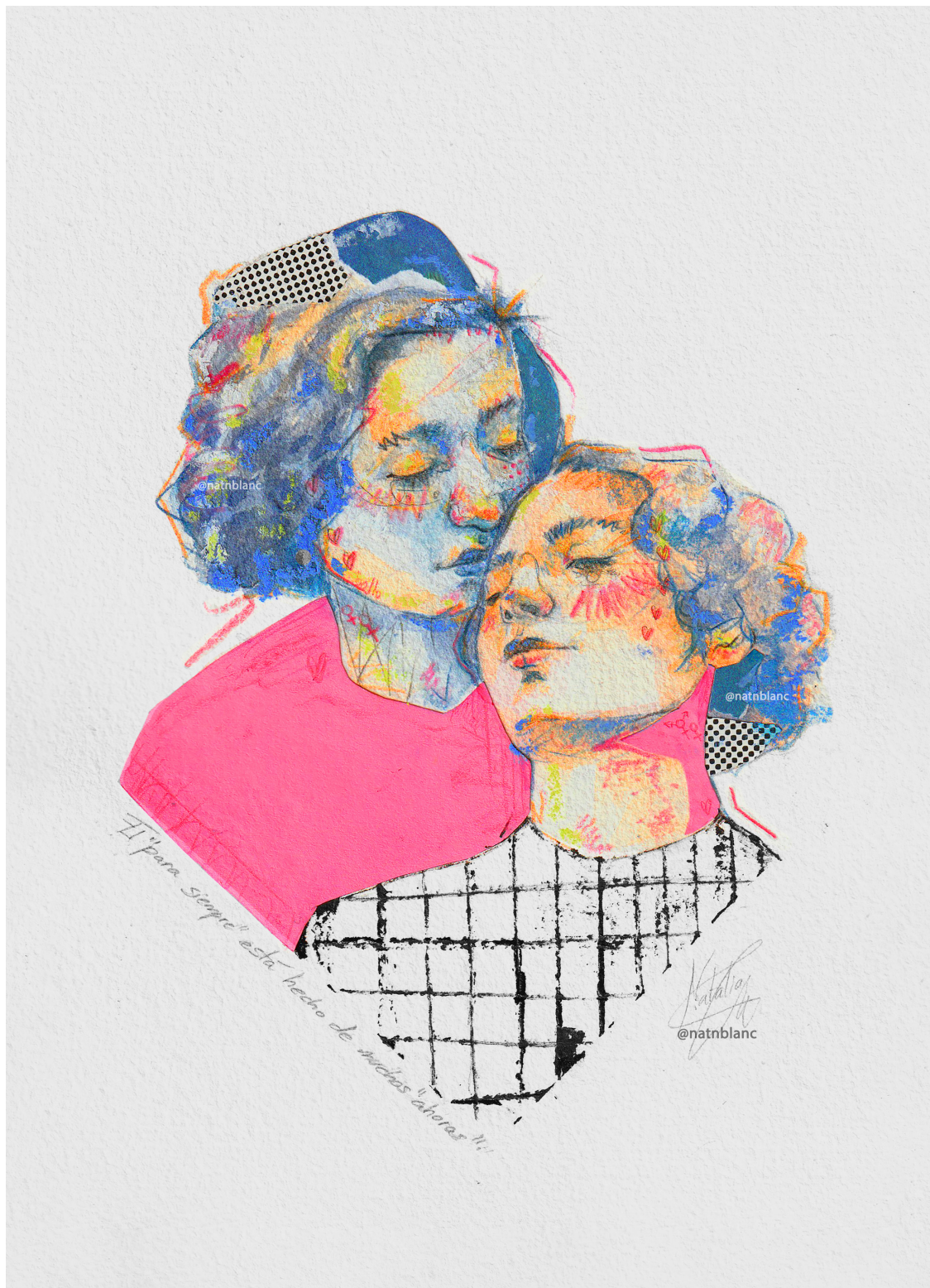
Beauty is in the eye
Of the dyke. She's known beauty since at
Least age six,
Warm-hearted
In bed with a blonde best friend. They share a name, but that was it.
A heart harking for how lovely the blondes were, and
Never for herself. However—
Dykes never say never.

Good things come to dykes who wait,
Even if twenty-eight seems late to see
Your humanity.

The old adage says
Many dykes make light work.
I'm putting on my boots
As we speak.









COSMOPSIS

by Hannah Karpinski

when you are the first sound of morning
your words ocean and I am weightless

when you look at me with your whole face
my shadow falls behind me

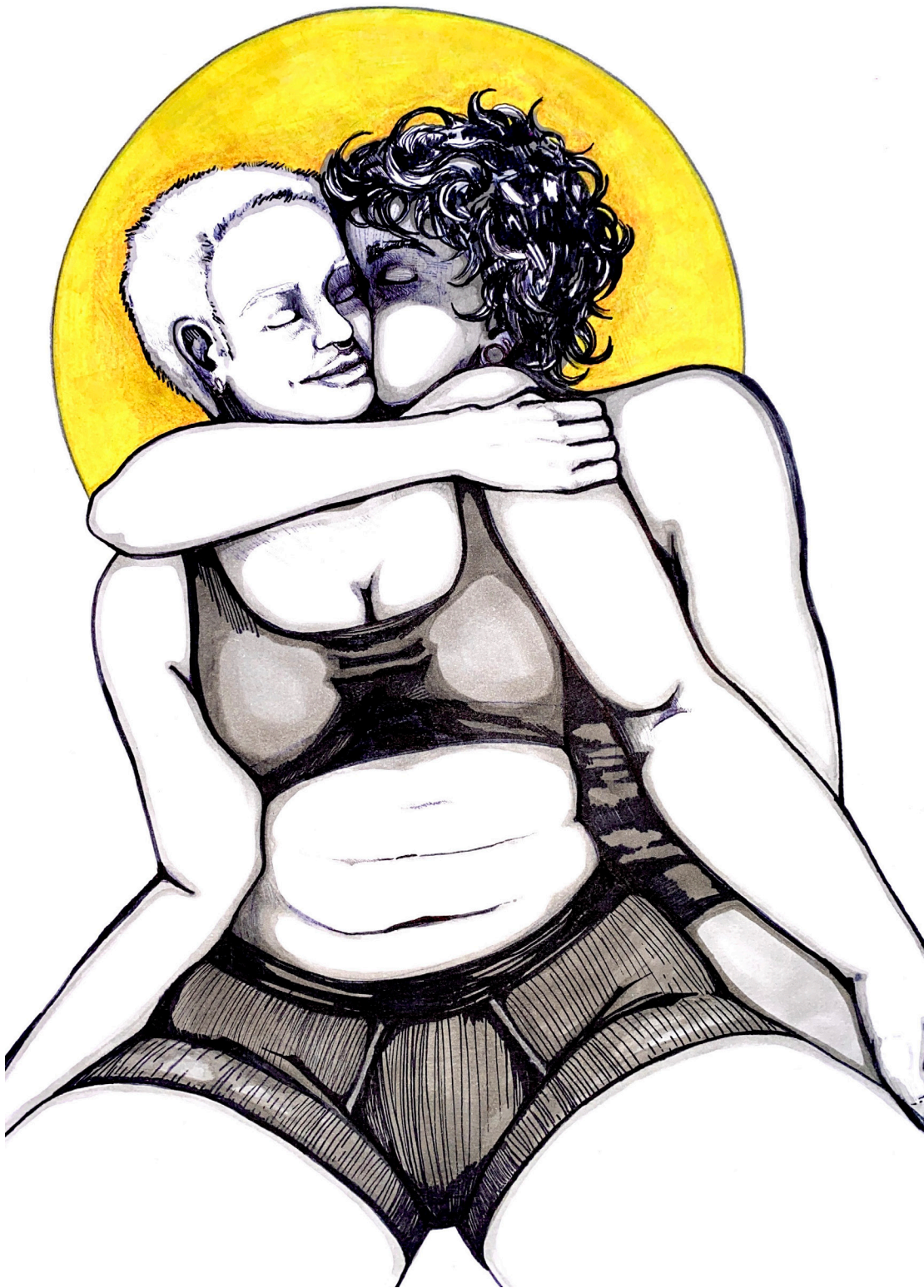
were a word a world I would live
on planet pleasure, olive, us

were a word a world I would universe
your name and orbit earlobe, elbow, belly

on Earth: of all my walks you are the subject
the thought of you balloons, the size
of a language I recognize but do not speak

in my first language
smok means dragon
cmok means kiss
može means maybe
sounds like ocean





SPECTACLE/SPECTACULAR

by Grace Gaynor

Come inside and take off your boots, your thick jacket. Hang the weight of your key ring, heart, and shame on the hook by the front door. What should I call you? Where are you from? (I could say I am from this world, this perfect one I have built on the outskirts of the “real world,” but that wouldn’t be true.) Who has rejected you? What do you reject? Whisper anything into my brain devoid of dutiful womanhood. Where have you found yourself? I’ll admit it, I still search for myself in ill-fitting places. At times, I blink and see myself flickering in the background of a series that will inevitably be canceled next week. I will myself into the lines of everything I read like a careful prayer.

I am seeking you out. I want to hear everything you have to say. I want to know what kind of representation you crave. What are you searching for in the muddle of media haze? Are you hoping to see your reflection staring back at you? Let’s cut the glass for our own mirror; we are certainly capable enough.

Bring me your secrets and I’ll welcome them like friends. Yes, I want the unwieldy story rifling through your precarious gender performance. Yes, I want the rambling prose poem recounting your whirlwind love with her. Yes, I want the uniform sonnet dedicated to the wild euphoria of slinking into the men’s section. Write about that hushed part of you, the part you promised never to reveal. I’ll read with admiration in my eyes. I’ll look up from the page and smile.

How does it feel to write yourself into spaces you shouldn’t exist ? It might feel almost impossible, like jogging up a swelling hill in the swelter of late July, the strain of muscle and stream of sweat. So often, the words we hold are wet sand. Do you also feel like you rush to string sentences together before they collapse into the sea? Abandon your construction and swim out to meet me. Let’s float on our backs until the tide washes us in. We’ll wear shorts and they’ll fit us like a dream. We’ll write poems about it, about fitting.

Walk through the door and greet me like I am someone you know. Shed the weight of a life you do not want, the one that others hope to give you, hope to bestow like a gift for a different person, hope to wrestle over your head like a too-tight dress. Show me the pages of your knowledge, collected during your solitary life on the margins. Settle your unregulated body into the soft chair across from me. Let’s live lavishly. I want to listen to you in a world that talks back. We’ll be spectacles together, you and I, our confusing hair, our comfortable clothes, our practical shoes. 🌸



CATE YOUATT



QUEER JOY

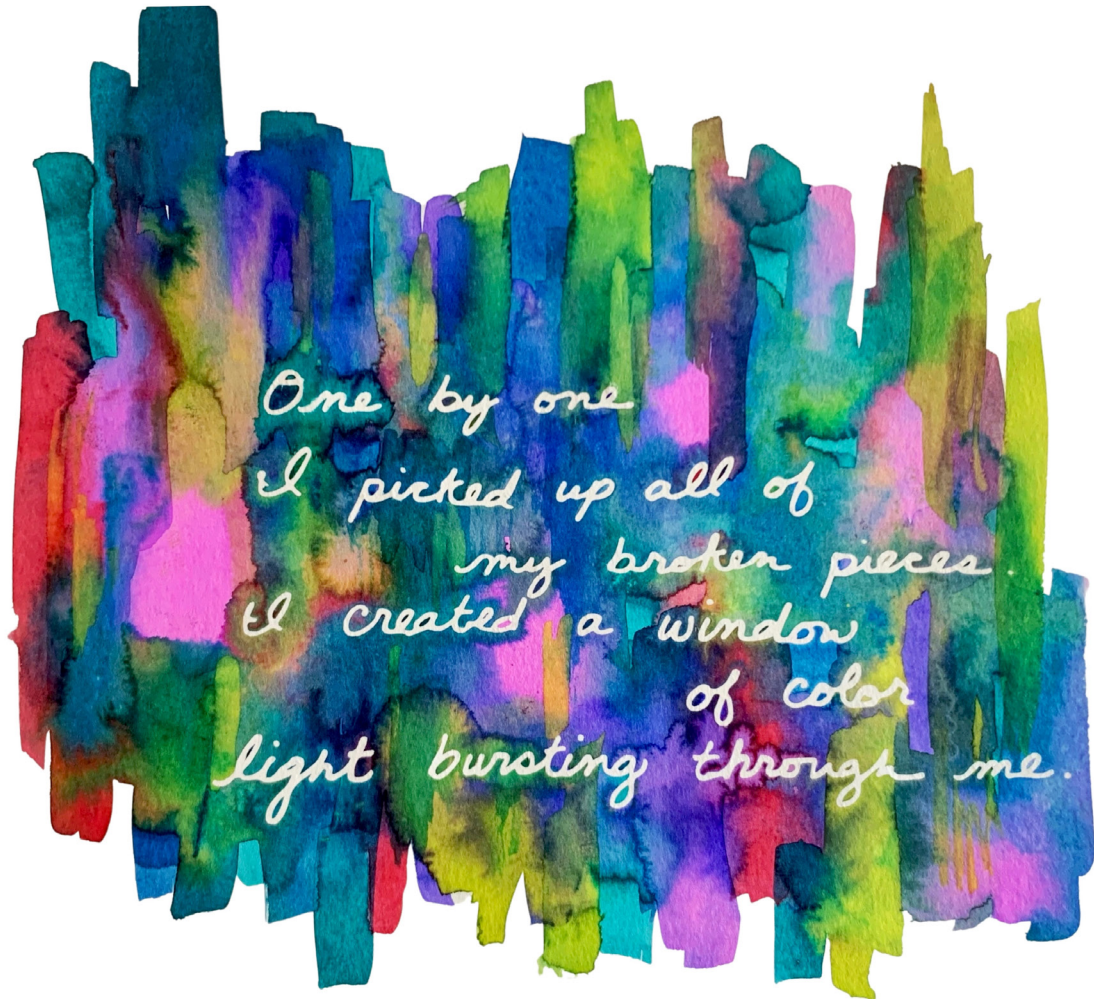














KACIE HENDY













WE LOVE OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JACKIE ABBOTT (she/they) is an oddball, tender-hearted romantic, and aspiring class act living in the city with their tuxedo cat (read: actor, writer, and photographer based in NYC). Her portraiture and 35mm street photography can be seen over on [@jma___photography](#). Visit her at [jma-photography.com](#).

ROSIE ACCOLA (they/she) is a queer guido, editor, and writer based out of Michigan. Their work explores how reality t.v. functions as autofiction and the intersection between pop culture and poetics. They graduated with their MFA in Creative Writing from Naropa University in 2022. In 2019, they published their first poetry collection, "Referential Body" with Ghost City Press. You can find them on Instagram [@rosieaccola](#).

SKYE BAPTISTE (she/her) is a Black lesbian artist from Brooklyn NY. Visit Skye at [skyebaptiste.com](#) and follow her on Instagram at [@skyeebaptiste](#).

MATTY LYNN BARNES (she/her) is a photographer based in Oakland, CA. Working primarily with film, she documents queer intimacy, sexual liberation, fashion, and resistance. She uses color and movement to capture the beauty, talent, and resilience of her community. Follow her on Instagram [@mattylynnbarnes](#).

MELISSA BERNAL AUSTIN is a queer Latine writer, artist, and educator in El Paso, TX. Spotted in the wild, they'll typically be covered in cat hair, paint, and/or dirt. Their work can be found or is forthcoming in Longleaf Review, Pidgeonholes, Best Small Fictions, Dreginald, The Boiler, and more. More of their work and projects can be found online at [@house.gnome](#) and [@mbernalaustin](#).

NAT N BLANC (she/her) is a lesbian artist and illustrator based in Madrid, Spain. Her art centers mainly on activism about the LGBTQ+ community, feminism, racism, and other social issues that affect our society today. It's also a space where she tries to open up a conversation about mental health. Nat has a very distinctive art style, giving a lot of importance to color and movement and using various symbolic elements, many of which are relevant to queer culture and codes used by our community. She wants her art to help normalize our community and make everyone feel represented and art-worthy. You're invited to check out her art through her social media, [@natnblanc](#), and in her digital portfolio profile: Kaleido/natnblanc.

SARA BROWN (she/they) is a garden variety dyke from the Bay Area living in San Francisco. Her photography tries to capture those sweet, sneaky feelings you experience when you're with your favorite people. She hopes that by sharing these moments, people can see not only the joy in themselves but the joy they bring to the people around them! She keeps herself busy and happy by rolling around in the dirt, making snacks, and waiting for rolls of film to be developed. Follow Sara on Instagram [@sara_m_brown](#).

CARRIE CHEN (she/her; they/them) is a queer, Taiwanese-American artist born and raised in Los Angeles, who will be starting their graduate program in Art Therapy this Fall. Carrie is a drawer, painter, writer, poet, zinester, tarot reader, and digital artist. Art has been their way of processing trauma, celebrating milestones and the joys of life, and a way that they continue to connect with others! Follow Carrie on Instagram [@cache_intune](#).

CS CORBIN (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Washington, D.C. They work in acrylic and sculptural mediums as well as digital illustration. When their winemaking career took a sharp turn at the start of the pandemic, Corbin started creating again after a ten year hiatus from earning their Studio Art degree from Florida State University. Corbin's return to sketching, paralleled with their own process of gender transition, has served as both a means of healing and livelihood. Their work is a colorful extension of their journey exploring gender, reframing femininity & masculinity, and expressing the beauty of queer joy. Follow them on Instagram [@cscrbrn](#).

LUCIE CRAY-STANTON (she/her) is a sapphic painter from the UK. Her work varies visually, from extremely saturated pieces to subtler colored works, but it always centers around her sapphic lived experience. Her favorite pieces to paint usually involve hands, because of how intimately she thinks they can capture the sapphic experience. She started creating work to create images she wished she had when she was younger, and she hopes you enjoy them too. Follow them on Instagram [@luciecsart](#).

ANGEL BLAZE DACOSTA (he/they) identifies as a nonbinary, trans masc, butch lesbian. He is a loving husband in a monogamous t4t relationship of eight years and cat dad of four. He works in youth development, with a focus on LGBTQ youth and neurodivergence. They

consider themselves an activist and advocate for racial justice, the LGBTQ community, and disabled people. Follow Angel on Instagram [@gvthfvther](#).

COURTNEY DUDLEY (she/her) is a passionate interdisciplinary artist with a specific interest in craft materials. Her practice includes research in archaic processes, resulting in creation of works that position the artist and viewer in relation to geologic and cosmic time, underscoring the brevity of current power and social structures. Courtney completed a MFA from Pratt Institute in 2018 and most recently attended residencies at Wassaic Project and The Studios at Mass MoCA. She has exhibited throughout Brooklyn and New York. Follow Courtney [@courtneydudleyart](#).

LIZ ESCALLE-DYACHENKO (they/them) is a French and Russian-speaking art school librarian and the co-creator and animator of a trans support group in the French Alps. They love to ride their bicycle along the lakes and mountains, listening and playing the piano and collecting and reading all kinds of books. You can follow them on bookwyrms on the Fediverse: [tendertools@millefeuilles.cloud](#).

GRACE GAYNOR (she/her) is a writer from Louisville, Kentucky. She earned her BA in English from Hollins University. She studies poetry in the MFA program at Virginia Tech. Follow her on Instagram [@graceagaynor](#).

KACIE HENDY (she/they) is a lesbian fine artist working mainly with drawing, collage and printmaking. The collage piece "Paradise" is inspired by a song that Kacie and her partner often listen to together. The collage is a representation of pure joy when you realize that you are living the queer life you dreamed of. You can follow Kacie on Instagram [@kacie_art_](#).

ANDREA SIFUENTES HERNÁNDEZ is a visual artist from Lima, Perú who is interested in exploring their cultural Amazonian heritage, the limits between public and private space, their role as women lesbian artist, and understanding and reconfiguring the construction of discourses that perpetuate and normalize violence against women in consumer devices through the exploration of public (newspapers) and personal archives. (photography) from different techniques such as drawing, painting, engraving, digital media, among others. Follow Andrea [@andreasifuentes.h](#).

SJ (they/her) is a documentary family and wedding photographer serving Orange County, CA. Their vision is to capture meaningful moments for people who value authenticity and the preservation of memories. Curiosity moves them to document the joy and chaos of

everyday life in a beautiful way. Follow them on Instagram [@picturesomethingqueer](#) and visit them at [www.letsomething.com](#).

JEANS (they/she) is a NJ based artist working primarily with traditional printmaking techniques. They have been creating a series of prints inspired by the feeling of being watched when in public spaces as a queer person. Her Instagram is [@jeans_portfolio](#).

DANS KARAGANNIS (they/she) is a Los Angeles based director, photographer, and writer. Their art platforms the nuances of marginalized communities and subcultures that shatter predisposed societal expectations. Most recently, Dans is in financing and packaging for their feature film, INSOMNIA! (Writer, Director) and in post-production for their fifth short film DAMNED IF YOU DO (Director). Dans' photography has been on display at galleries stretching across the globe, such as Los Angeles, New York City, Washington D.C. and Italy. Dans is available for narrative, music, doc., media and beyond. Follow them on Instagram [@dans_karagannis](#).

HANNAH KARPINSKI (she/her) is a lesbian writer and editor living in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. Her work has appeared in Lemon Hound, Bad Nudes, Commo Magazine, and My Loves: Digital Anthology of Queer Love Poems (Ghost City Press), among others. She is currently the Publishing Assistant for Metatron Press. Follow her on Instagram [@raunchy_lez](#) and on Twitter [@yer_dog](#).

LOU LAUREN (they/she) is a self-taught Greek-American queer photographer based in Brooklyn, NY. The medium they mainly work with is analog film photography focused on street photography and self-portraiture. Check out more recent work [@stayweirdfilm](#) on Instagram or their website [www.louisestellalauren.com](#).

BLOEM LOETE (they/them) is a freelance illustrator and graphic designer. Their illustrations focus on representing marginalised bodies of all kinds, mainly queer and body positive. They like to explore intimate and emotional interactions between women in their work without a sexual connotation because they feel that WLW are sexualised and fetishised often enough (usually externally and without wanting to be), and they would prefer to focus on other parts of their relationships and identities. Follow them on Instagram [@bloemloete](#).

LESLIE LOPEZ (she/her/ella) is a Black Mexican-American lesbian writer and artist living in Texas. She is a lover of public libraries, her grandmother's cooking,

and the smell of chlorinated water. If she's not posting photo dumps on her Instagram ([@tejanafeminist](#)), you can find her co-hosting the podcast, Little Gay Library, with her lesbian bestie Glory.

SHELLY MELTON (she/her) is a Japanese American artist who enjoys telling stories through drawings, often inspired by nostalgia, lesbianism, and love (in all its forms). She spends her free time creating things, watching coming-of-age movies, and filling up her photo albums with pictures of her cat Betty. Follow her on Instagram [@jellyjiriart](#).

MIA MONTALVO (they/them) is a queer & Jewish multimedia artist, based in Brooklyn, NY. Their work explores the importance of play, the joy of nature, and finding peace, connection, and community in a capitalistic world. Follow them on Instagram [@playscapeart](#).

LIZ MIGUELES (she/her) and is a lesbian illustrator from Brooklyn, NY. Her work focuses on celebrating the everyday and finding joy in the humdrum of our daily lives. She loves infusing her work with lots of color and texture to make it feel like a hug to the viewer, and often speaks directly to the queer community with her work. Follow her on Instagram [@lizpostsart](#).

DIANA C PATIN is a photographer and educator who currently lives and works in Eugene Oregon. She studied photography at Louisiana State University, where she earned her MFA in 2021. Diana is most interested in making photographs that examine her own life, whether that be in the case of these photographs with her partner in the early days of their relationship, or self-examinatory photographs that explore her identity as a fat, queer, southern woman. These particular photographs come from a larger body of work called "Tender," and are all shot on large format film, which is a labor of love in and of itself. She hopes that with these images she can communicate the softness and joy of new love. Follow Diana on Instagram [@dianacpatin_photo](#).

DOT PERSICA is a performer born in Naples, Italy. They are a co-founder of the queer collective Strasaffica*, with which they published their first short story in 2022. In life they sing, dance, translate, and agitate. You can follow Dot on Instagram [@punktierung](#).

JULIE PHOENIX (she/they) is a lesbian artist and writer living in Huntsville, Alabama with her wife and furbabies. You can follow their watercolor work on Instagram and TikTok [@juliephoenixart](#). Find their prints for sale, extended bio, events, and blog at [juliephoenixart.com](#).

TAYLOR RAY (they/them) is an emerging dyke, writer, and literary theory enthusiast. They recently relocated to Brooklyn from their longtime home state of Vermont. Follow them on Instagram [@trayverified](#).

KELSEY RHODES (she/her) is a queer, chronically ill writer based in Kansas City, Missouri. Kelsey is the Communications Director at Physicians for Reproductive Health where she partners with abortion providers to tell their stories. She's a participant in the upcoming Juniper Summer Writing Institute, hosts a podcast called *Cool Queers Doing Cool Shit*, and has written for publications like *Women's Health*, *Public Notice*, and *ReproJobs*. Kelsey attended the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy with a degree in Domestic Public Health and Wellness Policy. You can follow Kelsey's work at her website, on Twitter, on Instagram, and on Substack.

MASON ROSE (he/they) is a trans photographer based in Los Angeles and Portland. With a passion for photographing queer sex workers, trans people and kink, he works to highlight narratives not typically showcased in mainstream culture. His work has been described as hazy and threatening, ethereal, and foreboding. He also directs and produces erotic videos for himself and other sex workers.

TEADORA RUIZ is a queer, BIPOC artist and poet from Denver, Colorado. Currently, they are based in Greeley, CO, studying K-12 Art Education in the hopes of soon becoming a high school art teacher. Teadora's work aims to navigate topics of queerness, sex, identity, and healing. You can follow their journey [@louisaruiz](#) on Instagram.

SAPPHIC SCENES (she/her) is a 27-year-old lesbian artist originally from the Southern US and now living in China. She is inspired by queer love and liberation, and identifies as a long-time sapphic and late-in-life out lesbian. In addition to the visual arts, she is an avid language learner, reader, and writer, also making poetry and prose centering sapphic experience and identity. Sapphic Scenes is interested and active in kink and BDSM dynamics and practice. She is pro-trans, pro-sex worker, and pro-woman. Follow her on Instagram [@sapphic.scenes](#).

DAKOTA SEBOURN (she/her) is a photographer and writer from Seattle, Washington. Her photography focuses largely on portraiture that emphasizes the subjects' most true and authentic self, and avoids posing her subjects because it takes away from the subjects' own expression of self. The piece featured in this publication is about the purest joy of queer couples,

letting them interact and be themselves—complete with all the tomfoolery, shenanigans, and goofballing they bring. All images submitted are shot on various film mediums. Visit her website www.seawitch.photography or on Instagram [@dakotaseawitch](https://www.instagram.com/dakotaseawitch).

SAM SHEPPARD (she/they) is a genderqueer dyke currently working and residing on occupied Lenape land, also known as Brooklyn, NY. They are an interdisciplinary artist-producer and educator working across printmaking, performance, and social practice to present work dedicated to body-based exploration. Her printmaking practice centers and celebrates the overlaps between queerness, natural materials, environment, chosen kin, and political activation.

TAYLOR (she/he/they) is a dyke residing in Oklahoma City. Taylor is passionate about expressing themselves through film photography and the written word. Their photography influences their poetry and vice versa, and they're most inspired by queerness, the natural world, and how the two meld together. When they're not making art, they work as a photographer's assistant and spend time with other dykes and queers in the city.

JANELL TURLEY (she/her) is an interdisciplinary lesbian artist based in Los Angeles. She lives with her girlfriend and two cats and likes to take photos of them with her Holga and other toy cameras. Her work has recently been seen in Rogue Agent and VLY GRL. Follow her on Instagram [@janellturley.art](https://www.instagram.com/janellturley.art).

SAMANTHA VERME (she/her) is a painter from Long Island NY. She paints mostly women and LGBTQ+ people/couples in acrylic paint at various sizes. She lives with her fiancé Emily and their cat and dog. Samantha works as an artist with a day job as a barber. She's super passionate about LGBTQ+ visibility and joy! Follow her on Instagram [@samanthaverme_art](https://www.instagram.com/samanthaverme_art) and [@sam.with.em](https://www.instagram.com/sam.with.em).

VICTORIA (she/her) is a Venezuelan born architectural, graphic and experiential event designer based in Brooklyn, New York. Victoria's worldview has been shaped by her multi-cultural experience, allowing her to bring a fresh approach to her art and expression. Raised through the oppressive Catholic lens, her art explores the nuance of what it means to be queer, how to break out of constricting cultural narratives, the female form and sensuality. Follow her on Instagram [@_vcuenca](https://www.instagram.com/_vcuenca).

ELLE WARREN (she/her) is a midwestern poet and memoir writer living in the south. Her debut chapbook, *Come Back For a Little Bit*, was released in April with

Game Over Books. She hosts a poetry open mic, occasional online classes, writers' retreats, and works as a Teaching Artist. You can find more of her work and ways to support it at [@ellewarrenwrites](https://www.instagram.com/ellewarrenwrites) on Instagram.

CATE YOUATT (they/them) is an occasional artist, full-time government employee in Utah. They work with pencil, pen, linocut printing, and acrylic. Follow them on Instagram [@catemakesart](https://www.instagram.com/catemakesart). 🌸

