



Q-INE

Spring 2020

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[kw'i:n]

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Editors' Note

Q-INE was born last spring at the La Vida “Mi Vida” launch party. Liam and I both independently realized the need for a similar space for the LGBTQ community. We wanted this magazine to give Penn’s queer community an outlet for expression and a platform for its interests and concerns. Because of our separation this semester, *Q-INE*’s purpose seemed all the more important. We hope this first edition will foster unity and creativity especially during these isolating times. This magazine is a product of months of hard work by many individuals that we would be remiss not to thank. We are indebted to our home, the LGBT Center, and our guide, the Kelly Writers House, especially Malik Muhammad, Erin Cross, and Jessica Lowenthal. We want to thank our lively team that made this all possible while keeping us entertained and inspired: Franny, Jonathan, Peyton, Quinn, and Hector. We also want to thank the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation for supporting our magazine next year and allowing projects like ours to flourish. To all the authors and artists that shared their stories and allowed us to publish them: you are the lifeblood of *Q-INE*. Lastly, we are thankful to you, our reader, for giving this work purpose. If any of the pieces in *Q-INE* inspired you, please consider submitting to the next edition. We hope *Q-INE* makes you think, wonder, and most importantly, feel a little closer to your community at Penn.

Ana Acevedo and Liam Forsythe

LGBT Center Note

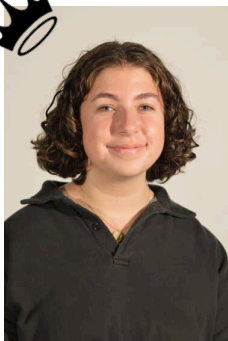
The groundbreaking Black lesbian civil rights activist and feminist writer Audre Lorde once said, “I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.” More often than not, LGBTQ+ voices are forced to remain silent, are ignored, and/or misrepresented. This has led to, among other things, the systemic oppression many LGBTQ+ communities face. Despite being historically ostracized, queer and trans communities are resilient; we will never be quelled fully.

Penn’s LGBT Center is honored to support the student organizers who have birthed *Q-INE* (pronounced “queen”), an LGBTQ+ interest magazine giving Penn’s queer and trans communities an outlet for expression and a platform for interests and concerns. In these strange COVID-19 times, Penn’s LGBTQ+ communities are separated spatially and temporally—it is our hope *Q-INE* will lessen the distance between us. We cannot thank *Q-INE* and its contributors enough for providing a space where Penn’s queer and trans voices are amplified, uplifted, and celebrated. Lorde writes, “When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.” Thank you *Q-INE* for providing this outlet for our community to be heard.

To our vibrant and diverse LGBTQ+ communities, let *Q-INE* be a reminder that you belong.

Staff

Franny Davis



Passions include the *Great British Baking Show* and *Love Island* (UK).

—Bad Bitch Franny

Ana Acevedo



I'm practically addicted to Milo.

—All Smiles Avocado

Jonathan Song



I once paid for tinder gold. :(

—Lazy-assed Mastermind

Peyton Toups



I like to write and I was born without a fourth wisdom tooth.

—Too Quick to Handle

Liam Forsythe



I didn't want a
nickname.
—The Rainbow Maker

Quinn Gruber



Somehow has never
seen *Friends*.
—Quienne

Hector Kilgoe



I never stop tweeting.
—Recovering
Shadethrower

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Poetry

American Sonnet for a Summer, Unbitten

Peyton Touns



Liam Forsythe

After Terrance Hayes

The soft smile of a bitten apple and the
warm juice of satisfaction, like the interior of a
white orchid in an Amazonian forest in a gown of
rain and heat, wet, rests in my palm, yet
another iteration of pink. I have no seeds in my mouth.
The apple is store bought and modified, despite its best red
efforts to brand itself a product of nature. There is no
label. I ate that too in one youthful rejection of logic.
I toss my towel over my shoulder and head to my cabin as I
leave a trail of the river to the river in the white gravel
road. The water was sheer and green thirty minutes ago. Boys
sent themselves postcards of laughter and breath from the top of the
yellow slides, yelled them back to the dreary counselors. And I
took one breath and slid into the sun-black-ice-cold depths.

Poetry

Half Alive

Ericka Ekobeni



My day begins beneath dirt

A mixture of earthworms and dead leaves dig their way into my fingernails

By now, I have forgotten how the sunlight once spoke to me

A language of burnt orange hymns, songs that whistle like light rays

My body knows no different than the roots that hug it
This place has allowed my skeleton to comfort my soul
Become both home and casket
I did not die here



Simply laid my tired bones to sleep
Simply bit my tongue each time the fallen branches of the willow tree pierced my side
Oh the blood
And the tears that once were

The unremoved sense of choking
I once drowned myself to sleep
I am still searching for deflated lifeboats in the love of my mother
I have yet to tell her that I know how to swim
Or that I begged the waves to take me
Baptized me in their foam

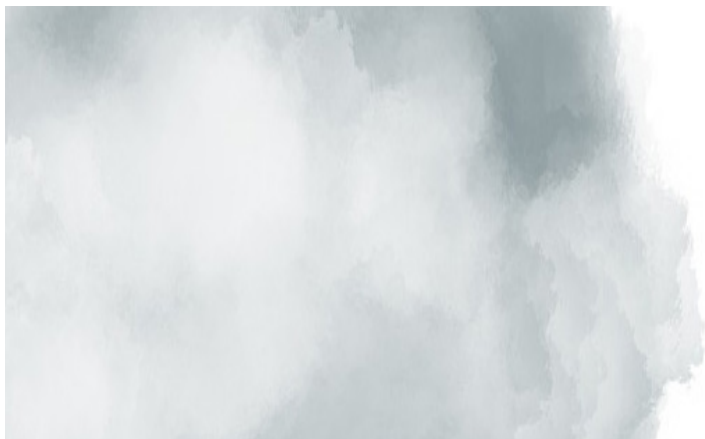


I wish that parts of this life had not been taken from me
That heaven had not existed in the womb I let wash away
Oh the blood
I know everything of an impure love
Yet nothing of my lost innocence



The wind names me poor thing
Laughs at this inability to know myself

But I know where my heart lies
Somewhere beneath [soil]ed desire
Adjacent to my body
Though this body does not belong to me



I still grasp it
Offer her this sorrow
A piece of my dirt and sin

And silence

The heaviness of whispered longing

I attempt to comfort her in a hushed voice
She tells me to speak up
Says she cannot hear the words
Only the fear of what I am trying to say
And silence

So I lace each unspoken adoration between her fingers
In hopes that she will cultivate
Bury my body once more
Sprout my broken love into a single small flower

And though, I have no claim to the solace of this life
Because of her, I did not die here

Poetry

It's The Day Before Valentine's 2019

Erin Jin Mei O'Malley and Sudeep Bhargava

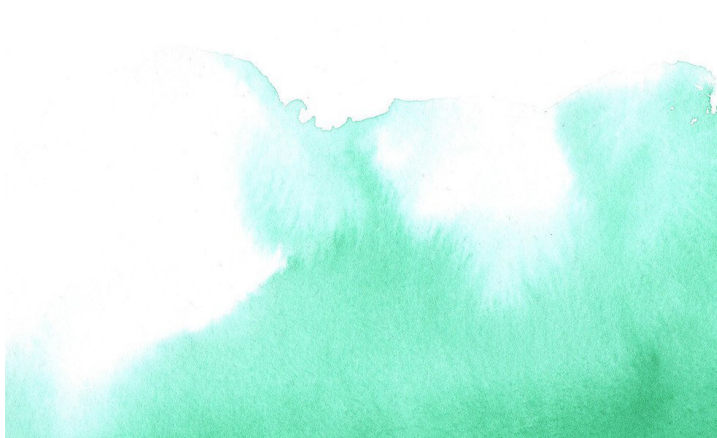


which means that someone will kiss me tonight
at a party but not tomorrow.
someone will hold my name in their mouth, but i will wake up
in bed alone / will never take a stranger home. i will let myself burn
a song into a flawless copy of my body for everyone
to dance with as i leave with my shadow.
I will tell a lie to every bad thing that's happened to me.
Yes, I can sleep / on the couch.
I can just walk home
i find warmth inside a boy's eyes / a boy who looks a little like me
a girl fucks me just by pointing to my body.
Yes, right there.
another girl holds me so close I swear / her body is my own.
my reflection / in a reflection, & i think this is a kind of punishment
To be whole, to have warmth and no one to share it with
It's now 2020, another february later and what's changed?
I said I wanted love, but here / I am again tonight, the same house
party breaking my body / out into a thousand flashbacks,
each one as faceless / as a dance floor wrecked
by sweat, each one an epithet / the tall one / the one
with the glasses / the straight one / the one
who could have been—each one a synonym for sorry, though I don't
know where my mouth begins and the apology ends.
men I do not deserve / no, men who do not deserve me
women I forgive and forgive until I'm too tired for desire
the night quickly proves them all / to be unremarkable
& this is how we end up mouth to mouth
because kissing is a way of saying nothing and meaning every
word of it. maybe this is the reason we find
ourselves in the corner of someone's basement
untangling the silence from our breath. us angling our faces
toward each other, trying to open windows here
that were never built. here, our bodies, every room,
any space anyone has entered and then forgotten
to lock. here's the lie I tell myself:
yes, I have been in love & no, it didn't hurt.

Poetry

I'd Rather Be Dry

Ugo Ndife



Where's the flood?

You call up the stairs to me as I hike up my jeans and inspect my figure in the bathroom mirror.

Fifteen, scrutiny bludgeons that fragile frame,

Scrawny ankles dance in the public eye.

You call up the stairs;

And, I hike up my jeans.

And you'll immediately forget, but I've soaked it up

It's just teasing, after all.

Water laps in my memory.
Like jumping into the pool without knowing how to swim,
Plodding around the damp carpets of a flooded basement,
Or a drip-drop prayer on my brow.

I know how it feels to have my ankles wet,
To hem and haw at the water's touch:
It has never felt like this.



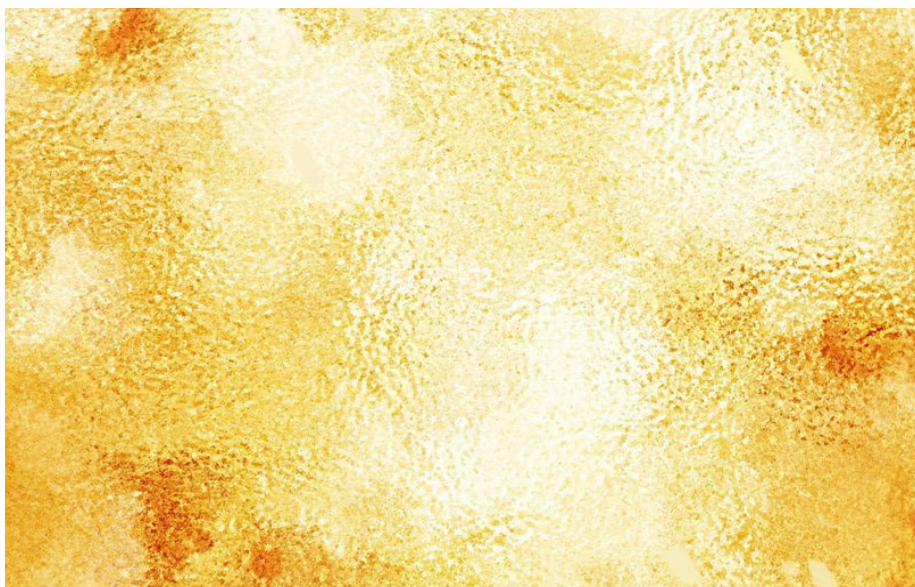
My denim betrays me,
Exposes what I didn't think to cover,
But I'll drown in your slick wet spit before I float the bravery to stay stop.

So, I'll concede:
And we'll slip our fingers underneath,
And roll me up like the cuffs of old blue jeans
When you find me wandering into high waters once more.

Poetry

REV.

Amber Auslander



Maned lioness, planeswalker.
Each step more a godsend than a challenge.
Teeth rip through thin veil of motherworld,
Scissors spacetime open. Come,
As if to say, there is more to this whole
Than just halves. Follow, as if to say,
I am scared to become.

The pride distorted on this moonlit day needs no permission to be.
Lioness greets her maneless mates, lover-crooning over rock.
The cisgender poacher watches, crouched,
Binocular rifts digging deep into long thin nose.
The watching heat turns to pink and blisters.
The rippling air knows there is no kindness to be given to a corpse.

In a moment of awareness, lioness glances up,
Freeze-framed, beckoned by hysterical hyena laughter.
Her gaze skims the leather of the death driver's seat,
And in the moment before the shot rings up,
Her claws call out for another-

Halfway across the world,
Coral reef fish drifts through crumbling bleach.
Twilight metamorphosis, untroubled by thoughts of dying sisters.
At least, this is what the fishermen suppose.
Quiet urine samples swish through decaying plant life
Seemingly unaware of the approaching fishnets.

In the tomorrow waves, we seize present-futures.
The coral reef fish takes its permission to be.
In swimwandering, finds diamond glittering space rift.
Pierces own face with flesh.
Breaks reef as weapon.
Shimmies through as first contact.

Enters lion's maw.

Prose

The Prison of Labels:

Reflection on the Gay and Narrow

Hector Kilgoe

At some point in the recent past, Twitter users circulated a popular TikTok video, in which a man dances near a group of women in a nightclub. The women, attempting to avoid the man's advances, turn away or show their disinterest with their facial expressions. In response, the man displays a limp wrist, an indicator that he is gay and, therefore, not sexually interested in the women, making him a safe inclusion in their dance circle.

The scenario circulated in tweet-form and in several variations, all presenting the same idea: it is safe for women to dance with men perceived to be gay because gay men are not sexually interested in women. The resonance of this scenario marks a shift in the general understanding of labels associated with sexuality and the dynamics of attraction.

Recently, I have observed a narrowing of understanding associated with defining labels assigned to different sexual orientations. There seems to be greater interest in precision with respect to the language used for different sexual orientations and the groups who claim said sexual orientations. The act of naming is a powerful tool of self-determination, and, as more subgroups under the LGBTQ umbrella define themselves and are recognized, the larger community is expected to use their chosen labels as a show of accuracy and respect. Labels are used to define the boundaries of communities and communities within communities. This offers a means of setting groups apart as well as a means for those who claim membership in a group to easily identify others through the use of a common language.

Yet, this precision of language can also become restrictive and oppressive. The narrowing of the definition of a word like “gay” may restrict the boundaries within which a person identified as gay lives their life. In the past, the term “gay” was understood similar to the way the term “queer” is understood today. The term “gay” was more expansive. Whereas today the term “gay” denotes a man who is primarily or exclusively sexually attracted to men, in the past it the terms “primarily” and “exclusively” would not necessarily be part of the definition for the label. It makes sense that the term “gay” would have a narrower definition today, since words like “bisexual” and “pansexual,” among others, are more readily available in the popular lexicon, at least among a certain set of young people. However, the policing of the use of “gay,” driving use toward precision rather than fluidity, restricts what is perceived as acceptable or legible in gay life.

The recent remake of the 1980s primetime soap opera, “Dynasty,” provides a good example of this shift in understanding. In the original “Dynasty,” Steven Carrington is a gay man who has relationships with men and women. He lives a complicated life, leading a journey toward acceptance from his family and the world. At different points in the show, he falls in love and marries two women: Sammy Jo Jennings, with whom he fathers a child, and Claudia Blaisdel.

He also enjoys a relationship with Ted Dinard, a man he meets in New York. Steven struggles with his sexuality throughout the show, attempting to repress his desire for men while also rebelling against his homophobic father. He is emotional, complex, and possibly confusing to young viewers today. On the other hand, the Steven Carrington of the 2017 remake of the series may be more in line with how audiences think of sexual difference now. In essence, the new version of Steven Carrington is “just” gay, in the sense that his sexuality is not problematized in the new series. He no longer struggles with his sexuality, providing audiences with a “normalized” version of sexual difference. Although this might seem noble, his character also lacks substance. His character has become one-dimensional. Steven Carrington is now just another guy in a drama series. The addition of complication in connection with his sexuality in the new iteration of the show would be seen as unrealistic and unsavory, even as people continue to struggle with their sexuality and various levels of poor treatment from the communities in which they live. The contemporary use of the word “gay” represents a particular narrative of progress that audiences want reflected in media because, although it is restrictive, it is positive.

The shift can also be seen in personal relationships and interactions. I identify as a gay man, by which I mean that I am primarily attracted to men. Yet, there have been times when I have found myself to be attracted to certain women. Some might be quick to label me as bisexual. Others have criticized me for attempting to use this label because of the imbalance of my desires, which lean heavily toward men. I see myself as embodying an iteration of the gay label.

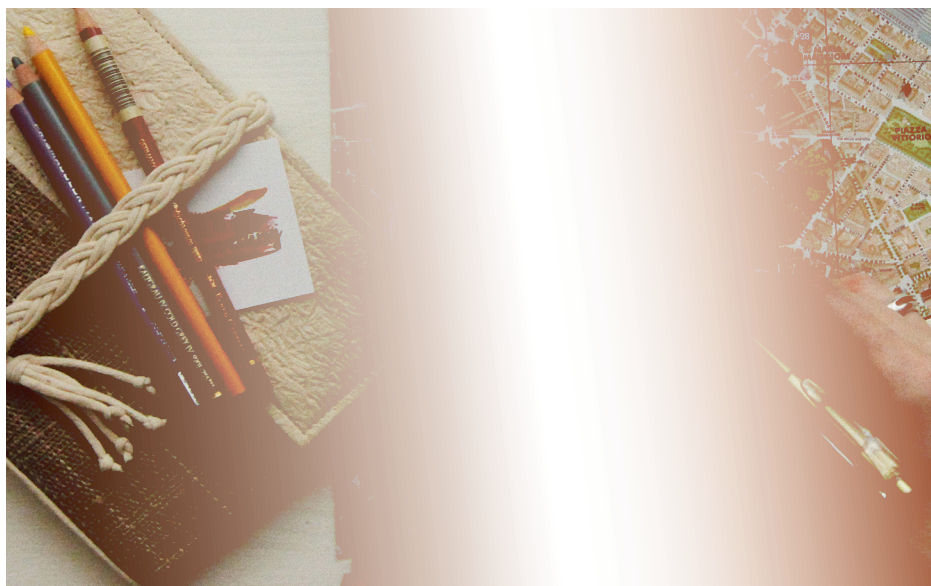
But that assertion doesn't come without challenges. From the expectation that I join into the misogynistic ritual of declaring disgust toward vaginas to women friends undressing in front of me and dismissing my discomfort because "it's not like you're attracted to me," the restrictive nature of contemporary understandings of what it means to be gay are clear.

Carlton [last name], a participant on the new reality series, "Love Is Blind," on Netflix, describes himself as sexually fluid. We used to talk a lot about sexual fluidity. Yet, what happens when people attempt to move through different labels, changing their membership in different groups over time, reinventing themselves after recognizing changes in their own desires? Will restrictive definitions lead them to new experiences of shame and feelings of otherness? Will the current interest in precision and policing of language give way to a recognition of experiences of change and growth in the realm of desire and self-understanding? Only time will tell, but my hope is that we will embrace empathy and the realization that language may not always capture the depth and multitude of experience.

Poetry

Coming Out

Serena Martinez



I drew you a map etched in only semi-smudged pen
hoping to guide you to the outcome
I had framed before your half shut eyes,
yet even with the highlighted color coded map
you always managed to
say the wrong thing,
end up at the beginning
before you got to my end.
the map was clear because I knew this would happen
yet I shredded myself attempting to prevent the inevitable.
you taught me to care
to care for you and for others and only a little for myself
so I knew the map was necessary to make
you feel
comfortable, although
I feel
uncomfortable.
I knew that what I did was right
for you
because you raised me to care,
to care for you and for others and only a little for myself.
well I did care
sometimes too much,
other times
not enough,
mostly for the soiled self I left for
dead.

Prose

Maybe You Can Call Me They?

Kim Fernandes

Surprisingly, the first time someone uses my pronouns correctly, it almost escapes my notice. My partner points it out to me much later that day, asking if I noticed whether our houseguest—someone I’d only spoken a couple of times with on a Facebook group—referred to me as “they.” I admit that I had not noticed and was fully ready to shrug it off. But the smallest part of me is comforted: it is possible. Someone has known to refer to me consistently in the way that I prefer to be referred to.

My own coming out story is many little moments that I had never thought were possible even as recently as five years ago. I was aware—as so many of us are even when we are too little to know that these are things we can talk about—that I was not what people thought I was. It did not occur to me that I was queer until over a decade later, when in my mid-twenties I started noticing people around me stating their pronouns in meetings, speaking about their sexuality on Instagram and Twitter in ways that felt like someone was opening a pair of windows in my mind. Every day, other people’s memoirs gave me air to breathe—I would think about how I am so many of these things I couldn’t yet name for myself, of how great it was to know that I finally could be myself somewhere. Simplistically, and perhaps unrealistically, I was holding on to an imaginary idea of queerness as having to out myself to family and friends, and knowing from then on, that our many fragile connections would snap. For many a whole handful of years, I have reminded myself to compensate carefully, never sure whether I was ready to be out or not—flower prints everywhere and rainbow ink notes to offset the many ways in which I was experimenting with moving my other means of expression away from being queer.

Instead, one very quiet day at the start of my second year of being a graduate RA, I hand out badges for everyone to write their pronouns on before the start of our floor meeting. On my own I go back and forth about what to write, knowing full well that “she” has never fit me. Despite having spent a whole morning thinking about this choice in preparation, I do not yet know what pronouns I will want for myself—and it is only when I look up and realize that everyone else has finished filling theirs in that I scribble in “they/them.” My floor does not use these pronouns when they refer to me for the rest of the year, and I am so tremendously proud of myself for having been able to write what I am feeling for the first time ever that I don’t even think about this with rage. Less reluctantly, the next semester, I decide that my email needs a signature. I add my pronouns, a little less tentatively this time, now the only public marker of any kind of coming out.

I think back to a Creating Change conference a year prior, when a speaker had said, “My pronouns are they/them, but I accept anything offered with respect.” I know now that I am in the same place too. I should be angrier that despite this addition of pronouns no one really uses them, but instead I am only grateful and deeply comforted when a friend texts me months later to ask if I would prefer “they” or “she.” Or when another one adopts a dog and then asks what we should call my relationship to the pup—“Auntx?” she offers, and I am too encased in gratitude to say yes immediately.

Sometimes my own feelings about the many moments of coming out take me by surprise. My partner and I debate what pronouns he should use for me, knowing that it is often a question of my own safety—and ours by extension—if I were out. We settle on “she” without much hesitation, and I feel only relief at this intentional misgendering. I start to push myself to be bolder from there, adding my pronouns to official bios that I submit. One organization goes ahead and misgenders me on their website, something that upsets me to the point of tears. I work up the courage over a fortnight to write in and ask if they could please use the pronouns that I use for myself, providing links on why people get to choose their own pronouns. I receive a terse reply from someone with whom I have otherwise been on friendly terms: “We changed your bio to match the bios of everyone else. But since you feel so strongly about this thing, we can change it back.” They never do.

Having come out, even barely, I notice that misgendering is always a thing. My partner and I pass for a cishet couple, a thing that we had begun to build half a decade ago when we didn’t have the names for the other things that we were. As the language started to come to me, trickling in, it has trickled down to him—and we often joke that our lives make so much more sense now. Some of the continual sadness has lifted, but I would be lying if I said that I felt no sadness and rage over the many years I spent not knowing how to name, not knowing whether or how to claim my identity, not knowing much else other than my confusion.

I am never sure how to respond when people ask whether they are misgendering me, because I am exhausted too about having to out myself every time. But I carry my vestigial guilt with me everywhere I go: What kind of nonbinary person am I if I allow myself to be misgendered on a daily basis? I know from shared wisdom there are no easy answers to this, but I carry around all the other little things associated with this anyway—ebbing sadness, many parts relief, firm guilt, and gratitude for having found my home.

Prose

Let's talk about our first breakup.

A.D.

[Piece formatted by author]



Breakups have an important stipulation- you have to be in a relationship.
Heartbreaks and breakdowns don't have this same
requirement. I can get those whenever I want.

I hadn't been afforded the opportunity to feel secure in the fact that I could get married.
A relationship out of the novels was never a reality for a young queer realist.

My love life was, and is, far more frequently defined by the heartbreaks that have no
place in the real world; those heartbreaks were manifested by the deep corners of my
rom-com riddled mind. By the characters that understood the internal tragedy, the
drama, the passion that clouded my perspective of romance.

When the clouds opened the sun to the sky, in this fake fairy tale moment when I finally got
the chance to see the real thing that I had only read about on the internet, I got sunburnt.
What it boils down to is: a breakup is logistical by nature, it's divisive by nature, it's natural even if it feels
unnatural.

What I don't want to talk about are those logistics.

What I want to talk about is how my first
queer relationship meant the world to me.

I found someone who wanted to be queer and to be it with me. Someone who let me feel like my anxieties
about perpetual loneliness were completely unfounded. It felt like the third world war that had
happened in my mind as I came to terms with my queerness was somehow worth it? Maybe?

Was it true love? Not at all. Do I think my feelings were unfounded? Completely.
Let's not pretend that external validation didn't completely control me.

Am I a cynic now? Absolutely not. Am I still expecting a fairytale ending? Duh.

Did that breakup change me forever? Absolutely.

Poetry

Potamo-Therapy

Lovett Finnegan



The water is typical, brown and we wade
Over the smooth stones. Earlier, I asked
To rent a kayak from the old boathouse, knowing
Of course, we need to practice our budding breaststrokes
Against the coast. In the shallows
We take long breaks to enjoy the caress
Of river in sky. The air is autumnning. The bright leaves
Chaine slowly down from their branches just to be
Sighed away by the tide. I can feel the cold
Gently burning in my breath like a nice
Cup of tea. These are the colors we live for:
Fleeting carmine, ephemeral gold,
Against that subtle mirror, melting.
And some days I am susceptible to my feet
Sinking in the quick mud. It's so
Polluted here it stains my toes bruise green. Some days
I cannot reach the cold air. Gasp. Say something typical, dramatic
Like: Last time it stormed,
I dreamed a book of bodies being dredge
Out this river, bloated like pufferfish
With their eyes eaten out—children, writers, wives
All something like I imagine me. Some nights
I write whole novels while I sleep.
Some days I must comfort stroke my collar bones
Because my muscles are sore from the pulling tide.
Against the water collecting in my ears, I hear
My therapist ask something typical, observant like:
What happened there, when your tone changed?
I need an answer before the end of our hour.

Prose

Braving the Storm

Jasper Maclean



The fog dripped over the snowy peaks, creating an Alaskan whiteout in only a matter of minutes. Bolts of light danced across a lake in the distance. As the clouds sunk into us, what seemed to be a light mist, transformed itself into a steady downpour. High in the Alaska Range, our exposure to the elements and our inexperienced age of only sixteen had just become very real in only a matter of minutes. Terrified of what was to come, we suited up into our rain gear and pushed on.

Despite my attempts to shield myself from the storm, the water breached the material of my jacket through a neglected tear. I began to shiver uncontrollably as my hands and toes became ice. Every movement became more difficult, so eventually I stopped speaking. I knew my body was shutting down, but I felt like no one had the time to notice me.

We hiked through the storm for about an hour, desperately searching for somewhere to set up our tents. By the time we reached camp, my vision was so blurred that I couldn't find my sleeping bag in the tent.

Even worse, I also couldn't remember anyone's names to ask for help. Panicked, I stumbled out into the cold looking for it and fell onto the rocky tundra. I lay in the pouring rain, feeling completely alone.

I'm not sure how much time had passed before Jordyn found me. She removed a two-centimeter rock wedged into my knee and reassured me that my sleeping bag was already in the tent, and that I had just been unaware of that in my hypothermic state. As we sat there together, in the storm, I felt incredibly grateful for her help and realized how connected this made us.

In that moment, I felt vulnerable, but I had yet to reveal my true identity. I never told anyone on that trip that I was gay. Just weeks before, I had shared my biggest secret with my friends and family. But needing a break, I had decided to go completely off the grid—no internet, phones, or toilets for an entire month. Alaska was an escape to my past life. I hid in the shelter of people who didn't know my story. Nobody knew the real me.

When I went back to school in the fall, I kept trying to be an outgoing leader, a strong student, and a good friend. I wanted to be the kid everyone looked up to. My homosexuality felt like an Achilles heel that needed to be shielded by my more popular aspects.

I was “out” but I felt like I was still holding my breath.

That November, our school counselor asked me to introduce an assembly centered around vulnerability. Without thinking, I produced a superficial piece that would just suffice for an introduction. But I knew the speech was incomplete. As I looked down at the deep purple scar on my knee, I remembered shivering and feeling the most alone in my life. I realized I was the most miserable when I couldn’t be myself around people; the strongest connection I had felt in Alaska was when I allowed myself to let my guard down. Embracing what I considered imperfection had rescued me.

I knew what I had to do.

Sprawled out on my bed, the words I had kept within myself for so long began to pour onto the keys of my computer. My school was calling me to embrace my differences and share them with my community.

Just before the assembly, our counselor pulled me aside in the auditorium. “Are you sure you want to do this?” I could feel the cold rain starting to pour again like it did in Alaska.

My younger self would have retreated into a pool of shame. But for the first time, I didn’t let myself get soaked. I didn’t let my body shiver or my vision blur. I walked up to the podium and faced the entire student body. Instead of feeling tense, my shoulders relaxed and my hands no longer felt like ice.



The words I had dreaded the most in my life finally felt natural to me. I couldn't help smiling. Before I finished, people stood up cheering. I finally took a deep breath and walked off the stage.

Poetry

After Jubilee Agnato: A List Poem

Claire Medina

For I will consider how she serves Eros and Sappho
For her body fits next to mine like the waves cleave to the beach
For our form together is beautiful and better than apart

For her braid, pulled tight across her scalp hugging her head
For her hair spills over her shoulders and down her back when she lets it down
For her long brown hair curled around itself unbearing loneliness

For her velvet skin, quivering when brushed against
For her collarbones, pushed up against skin stretched taut
For her bright blue eyes, which sparkle and open up to mine
surrounded by her long soft lash

For her quick heartbeat, aflutter in the cage buried under her soft breast
For her swollen lips, bruised against their sisters and gently parted
For her sweet breath that swells to form my name

For her skin cupped in my hands warms me
For her coy looks under the curtain of her hair
For her hands encircling mine and the softness of her palms

For the smoothness of her legs
For the way her body rises and falls next to mine with the contours of the dunes
For her body under my arm fills the crook of my elbow

For she appears before me at the invocation of muse
For she comes in the reading of poetry at the most beautiful images
For she is GAY and she makes me MORE GAY.

Poetry

■

Amber Auslander

-
The same five writers
Have passed the same two feelings
Across the same two hands
At least a dozen times
In the past year

Desperately moving
Between bruising
And recording
An attempt at romanticization

It seems we only
Regard
The less



Photography

Against the Norms

Jonathan Song

Created through digital manipulation of photograph
taken at Ijen Crater in Ara, Indonesia.



Collage

[Untitled]

Liam Forsythe

Created through mixed media: old textbook, magazine clippings,
pressed flowers, and watercolors



Plant Diversity II: Seed Plants



Photography

**“My Culture, Not Yours” and
Other Works**

Samantha Rivera







SENSE OF DANG
DON'T HAVE TO TU
BLE PURPOSE BEIN
TRANSFORMIN.
PHILLY UP OM

GER ONCE IT'S
ICK ★ YOU NEED
NG A DRAG KING
SIS? ★ THAT'S
ING TRASH BAG





Poetry

Maybe the Bats

Ugo Ndife



Liam Forsythe

Wet nosed and gnashing on air, clustered, bumping, and frantic
Maybe the bats we saw today were screaming
Jaws unlocked; chest indented
- oh god they yell -

But that siren cry has made Manet
Where we can only see the bats.
But, the bats, they see,
And swivel around the portraiture and velvet ropes and
Do not touch the art.
And, they hang for a moment, the bats do,
Sticky black wings pausing mid-air to clamor praise
Affectionately, then
Grasp again frantically, not at the art,
To nothing, up, down, gone.

Or, maybe the bats we saw today were not screaming
-oh god, are they are silent? the whole gallery of them!-
Maybe they held still their shrieks,
Throat shut; mouth wide
For they are awestruck; speechless;
Left stunned entirely by the invisible beauties they've found,
The bats, I mean. They must be.

Well, I've never heard a bat before so I couldn't tell you.

Poetry

Belonging

Zachariah Parks

I lay awake as I question this curse of being struck with intersectionality that seems to be mutually exclusive

On one hand I'm an embarrassment

The other a fetish

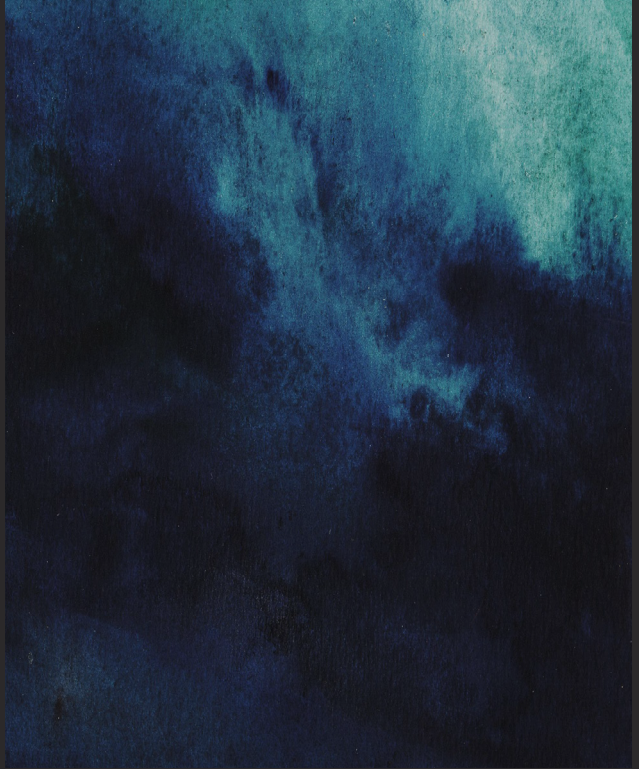
I use my remaining feet to kick myself for being so confusing

One identity being explicit while the other a surprise

I ultimately choose to embrace both

Thus being met with disdain

I was like a double agent growing up
Spending my childhood years laughing at the gay kid because I was
secretly jealous that he didn't have to come out
Spending my childhood years with my sexuality being the main topic at
the dinner table



The punchline of every joke at the cafeteria table
Spending my childhood years playing dress up in a costume that wouldn't come off
I was convinced that my costume was on the inside
That I was just confused
My parents projecting their heteronormativity on me made believe that who I am
must've been wrong
Parents don't lie, right?
I spent over a decade of my life as an actor
All just to be forced to come out like I'm a stain on your favorite shirt

Damn.

Im a burden

No ones heard of me

The black boy who wears pink because he's tried washing
away the red that comes with spilled blood

The one who sings "gonna swing from the chandelier"
because he himself is tired of seeing his black brothers
swing from a noose

To them I could be from any hood except from the one that
begins with man

I am exhausted

I spend all day seeking asylum from my people just be be
beaten down even more

The black boy who is confused with Black Lives Matter
because there seems to be a fine print

To them I could be from any hood except from the one that
begins with man



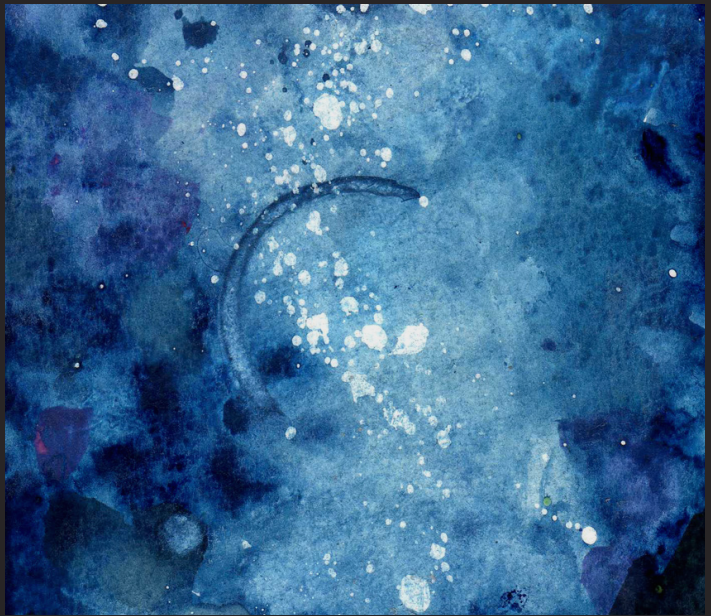
Why?

Is my very existence that much of a pain?

You're worried about being emasculated as if I'm not a man

You're worried about being emasculated as if you're not dehumaniz-
ing me

Oppression is no competition, but why bother preaching for accep-
tance if you can't accept that some people are just different



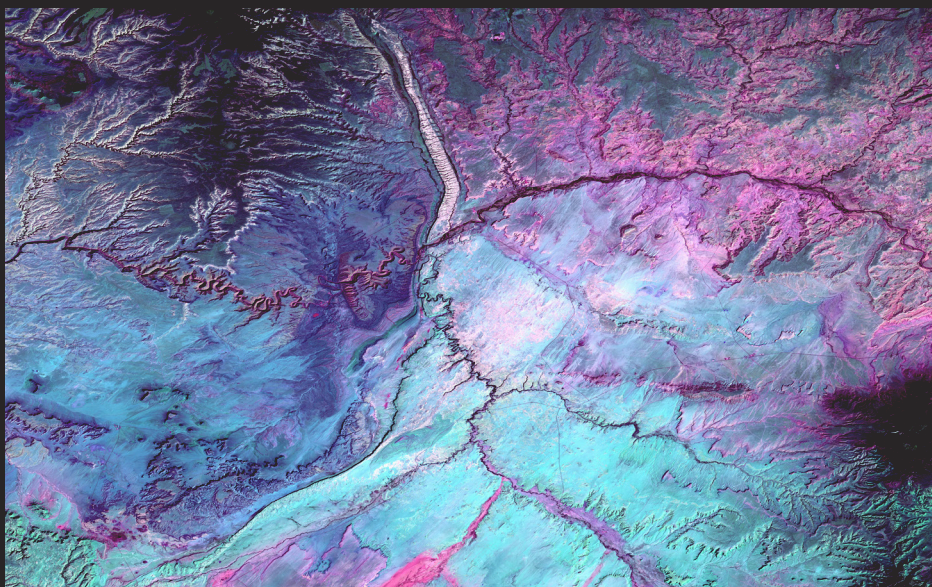
Damn.
I'm a burden
No ones heard of me
Im described as "the boy who like boys" because saying gay is just way too awkward for you isn't it?
I wasn't allowed to be religious
Entering a space of worship but feeling like the antagonist
Im constantly being told to be myself then immediately made fun of for doing just that
What do you want from me?
All of my loves have been and will always be unrequited
Because you can't be quiet about who I choose to lay with
You preach for equality unless its for those that make you uncomfortable
My sexuality isn't a choice but will choose to be happy
My impact will be more permanent than the stigma behind my existence

Damn.
Im pretty great
An anomaly
In a monopoly of irony and hate
For all the ones living with the same struggle
It is my duty to be your inspiration
If you reach for the stars then I promise that I will be your constellation

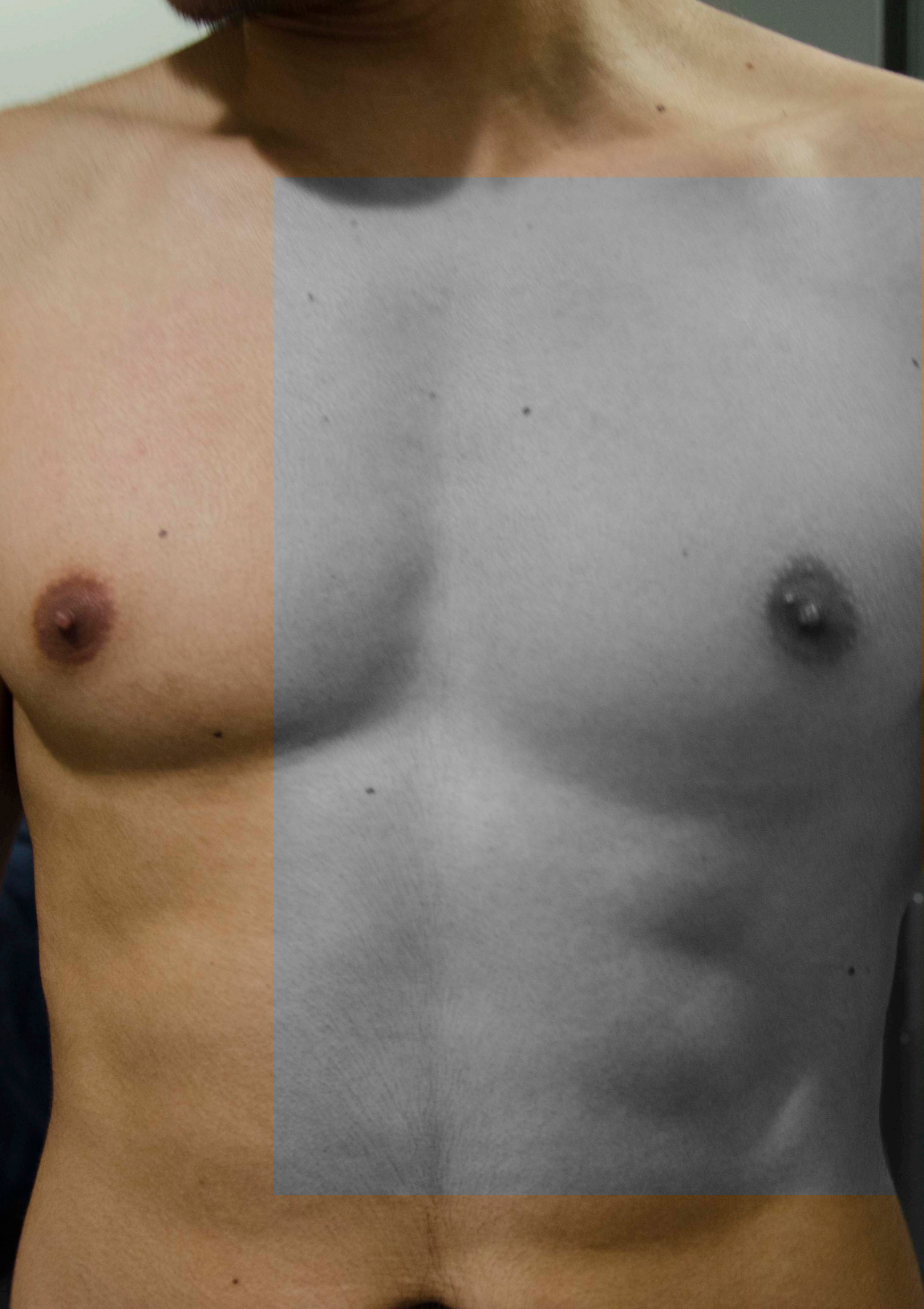
Poetry

I Shimmer in my Skin

Quinn Gruber



I shimmer in my skin / I shimmer beneath
my skin tighter than my tissue I feel / I feel each joint in relation
awareness of ligament connections / (commuters jostling
to board the subway brush against each other / I look down the metal of the traincar, which
warped perspective of my face / graffiti obscures my mirror-self)
climb outside of form / superimpose a recognizable appearance
upon the buzzing self / I trace my outline and duplicate it
so I am inside and outside myself / (I wish I could blame people calling me
not-me on the distortion of my face) / ask questions about poetic form
and answer with meaning / as if I could change myself to convey a message I want to share.





Photography (NSFW)

Concept Portrait

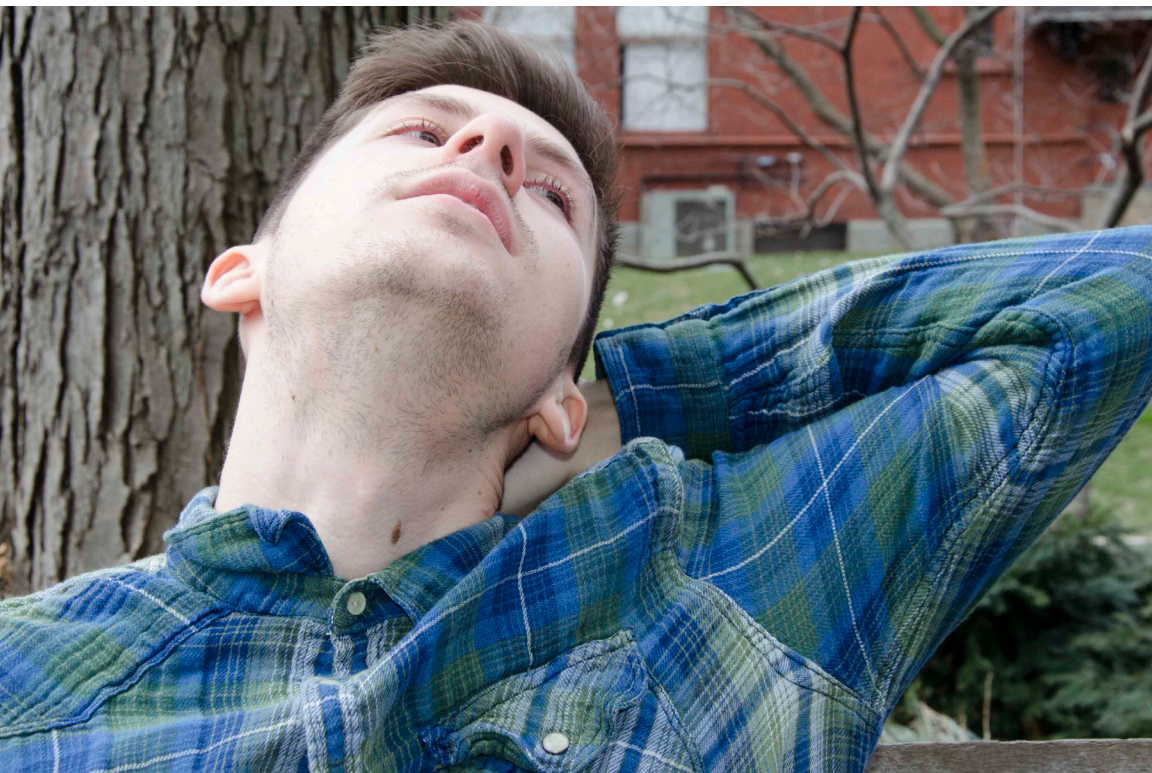
Sean Trahan

The interactions I've had with other gay men on hookup apps like Grindr have been interesting to say the very least. These hookup apps are both a source of pride and shame and for many gay men; pride and shame are two sides of the same coin. We are constantly fighting to live our lives out loud. Events like Pride show everyone that we aren't afraid to be ourselves and remind us that we don't have to be afraid of the consequences of living out loud because we're a united community. These types of events, no matter how celebratory, don't make the very real traumas of having to hide our true selves and suppressing our identity go away.

Gay men navigate these tumultuous feelings every day and it comes through on these apps. Using the apps and meeting with different men is so exciting and liberating, but I would come back and feel ashamed as if I had committed a crime. This photo series, in addition to showcasing a bunch of different gay men, is meant to show the type of profiles you might see on apps like Grindr. I met up with the men the same way you do on the app. I messaged a bunch of guys, and while I got dick pics as a bunch of responses or didn't hear back at all, a few responded seriously. Some of the men I already knew and some I didn't, but I initiated all the conversations on Grindr.









[illegible]



BLACK
Taiwanese
American

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS
MUSLIM
SWAY
LUMBER
RACIAL LEFTIST
Mixed Heritage Way

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Black Fern

FGI + QUEER

MUSLIM QUEER

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

BLACK FGLI

United Minorities Council

APOT Community Month

Intersexuality 2018

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

Identify as

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APOT Community Month

Intersexuality 2018

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Haitian

Jamaican

Chinese

Mongolian

Wendish

Jewish-Republican

Cuban

Iranian

Spanish-American

TRINIDADIAN

RED

TAIWAN

bi sexual

an optimist

human

Black

PAKISTANI

MUSLIM

Liberal Christian

ME

Photography

Philadelphia 31 Oct 2019

Luca Fontes

As a bisexual man, I am often faced with the decision of how I want to present myself. Appearing more masculine, more feminine, more queer, or more conventionally straight become decisions that change daily. And yet, navigating portrayals of sexuality and gender gets very complicated and uncomfortable: I often find myself thinking I don't look "gay enough" or "straight enough" to appear in certain spaces, feeling like an outsider wherever I am. And yet, once a year, I have the chance to exchange the performance of gender and sexuality for a different kind of performance: Halloween allows for a gender-bending expression of self through the act of dressing up in costumes.



In Philadelphia 31 Oct 2019—a series named after the metadata attached to all pictures taken that day—I staged a Halloween pre-game and invited my friends to dress up and celebrate as if it were October. All pictures followed the vernacular language of party photography, mimicking selfies, group pictures, and party photography, telling the story of a party much like all other Halloween parties. The difference lays in the fact that I switched costumes with all of my friends at least once, allowing myself dress up in clothes that portrayed multiple genders and sexualities. With the liberty that the concept of dressing up provides, I was able to explore my identity outside of social norms and push the boundaries of what I am comfortable with and how I want to present myself to the outside world.









Poetry, Photography

Cat Collective

Lovett Finnegan

[Piece formatted by author]

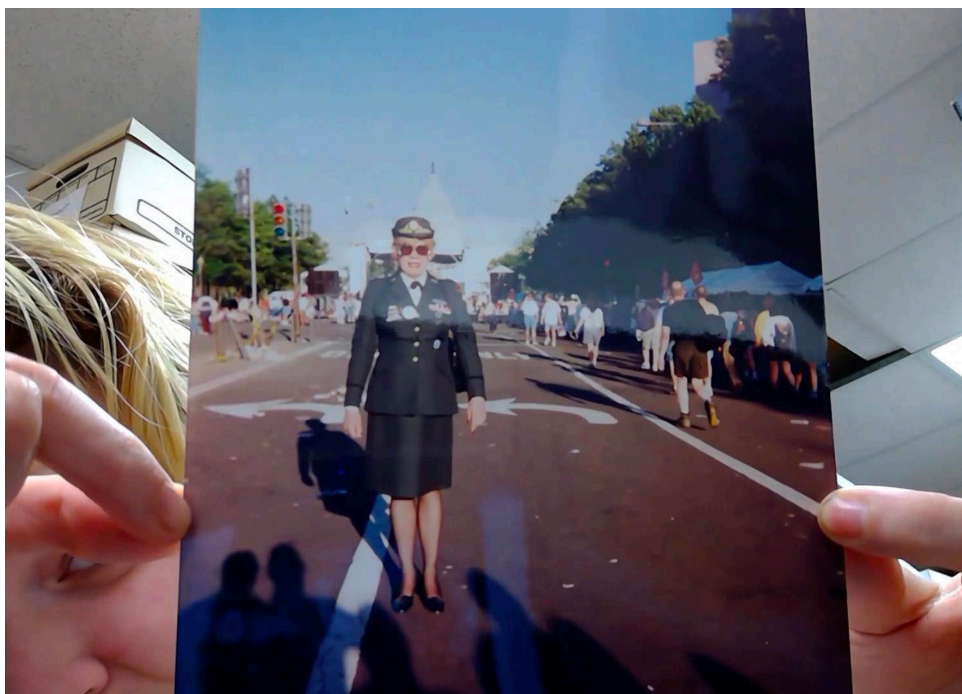
*My every thanks to John Andries, Noah Noble, Mamie Morgan, and of course
Donna Mae*





[REDACTED]/History

Don [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] icon [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] Temple
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
War [REDACTED] [REDACTED] She was decorated 25 times [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] her [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Love [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Recognized [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] denied.
She [REDACTED] [REDACTED] buried [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] C. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] P. S [REDACTED]



Meditation/to fuck

Upon a set of supermarket

Sheets, her legs cleave and

For a moment you think,

Everything in this world

Must be one and the same.

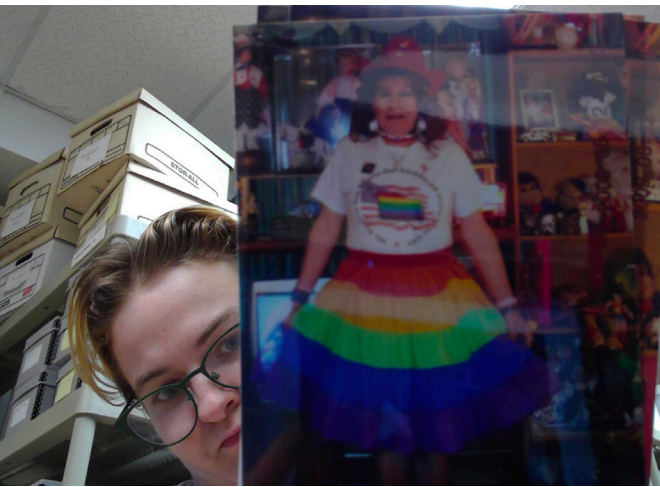
A fine film of

Love-sick sweat enshrouds where she

Ends and you begin. At last, one

Un

Scathed



From Woody's



Bus leaves at ~~8am~~ 8:30 sharp.

Sharp bus 8:30 ~~leaves~~ 8am at.

At sharp 8am ~~bus~~ leaves 8:30.

8:30 at leaves ~~sharp~~ bus 8am.

8am 8:30 bus ~~at~~ sharp leaves.

Leave 8am sharp ~~8:30~~ at bus.

Leaves, 8:30. 8am, ~~at~~. Sharp, bus.



Scope and Contents

The [redacted] collection includes thousands of [redacted]
[redacted] dresse [redacted] s many [redacted] taken [redacted]
[redacted] from bars, [redacted]
[redacted] Some [redacted]
[redacted] are identified [redacted] from [redacted]
[redacted] "Roxy's [redacted]
[redacted] Trial [redacted] at Venture Inn," [redacted]
[redacted] Most of those [redacted] identified are from [redacted]
[redacted] 19 [redacted] 20 [redacted]. A small [redacted]
[redacted] personal [redacted]
[redacted] ephemera, and two articles of [redacted]
[redacted] death.

She Was Decorated 25 Times.

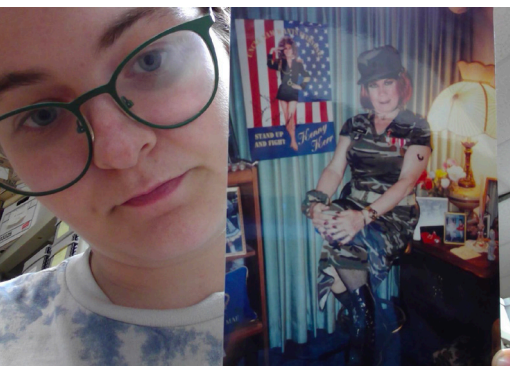
She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated.
She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated.
She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated.
She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated.
She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated. She was decorated.

Last Prayer

My brother, my	
Sons, my	Supper on
Mother, my	My last day:
Aunts-- please	A
Remember	Roast,
Your	Your rolls, and
Love	Lamb; a course
A	All spiced with
N	Nutmeg and
D	Dashed in thyme.
Make one large	



Notes: *Archeology of Knowledge*, Part III Chpt 2



THE OUTFITS seem to be THE CORE
“STATEMENT” OF most/EACH DONNA
MAE PHOTO. BUT THE
SURROUNDING STATEMENTS, THE
TV, POSTERS, ETC, STRUCTURE EACH
PHOTO’S “ARCHIVE.”

DONNA MAE’S PHOTOS ARE THE
INTENDED/core “STATEMENT” OF THE
PHOTOGRAPHS I TAKE HERE. BUT THE
SURROUNDING STATEMENTS OF ACID
FREE BOXES, SPACE/construction OF THE
ARCHIVE, MY OWN BODY CLASSIFY
THE “ARCHIVE” OF THESE



Sonnet #19d

Here I am falling apart & down again.
Every day, the same thing, the same end. I don't
want to feel like this forever. I'm crying, won't
they ever drop that final curtain?
What is it I'm supposed to remember
on nights like this? Feed the dog?
Give an offering at synagogue?
Pay the rent for November?

Stand up & fight!

we cry at last.
There'll come a time this all is past.
Fleeting, like a kiss a midsummers night.
Fuck this shit.
We'll be alright.

It occurs to me I am America. I am talking to myself again.

For Matthew Dickman, after Allen Ginsberg

It's a memory too young to claim: January, 1956. Yet somehow I know we
are that young boy again, shaking under Ginsberg's old and hairy weight. I say, we deserve
a standing ovation. Not for the slow dancing or the orange fish swallowed whole. And
not for the gleam of M's revolver so extolled. But we need credit for the illusion we reserve.
Like cosmic vibrations slipping out the tv. It can't be. We're chafing our
face across the rug again. We give him all and now we're nothing. How can we wake from this American
scream? We are always writing poems out of the right
mind. The Man wants to eat us alive. The Man's power mad. He wants to
take our hope from our garages. We're too small to reach our shoulder to the wheel. I'll say it. I hated
my time in Be
rkeley. I want to forget it. I want to just be whole. And alone. And gay.



You Are Strong Enough

Alyssa Videlock

This is something I've been meaning to write for a long time now. It's a journey with, thankfully, a good destination. To start off, my name is Alyssa and I'm a transgender woman. Let me explain what I mean by the title; you, the person reading this, are strong enough to face life's journey, even if you feel lost, stuck, hurt, or unsure of yourself.

After I started writing this piece I honestly became unsure if I was talking to future readers or myself, really. Maybe it's a mix of both. The majority of trans people can say that they've felt what I've felt, even if we live worlds apart, which shows that we share a lot of experiences. Let me start from where this began and give you an idea as to why I'm finally getting around to writing this down.

My journey to finding and understanding myself has been both a relatively short and a relatively long one. The people I look up to and admire being the best examples of that as they tend to be both older and younger than I am, and with journeys longer and shorter than mine. I personally had the potential to figure this all out when I was twelve, but due to parental and societal pressure, I couldn't. I've met people who came out when they were young and were accepted and loved almost immediately, and it fills my heart with joy to see that happen. I ended up figuring things out when I was twenty-two. I didn't start transitioning until I was twenty-seven. For five years I hid in an open closet: my parents knew but hated it, and I was too afraid and poor to do anything about it. I'm now in a position where I can feel open about myself, where I can be who I always wanted to be and it started with an internal change.

When I lost the desire to keep pretending that I was ok, everything changed, as pretending that I was a man and that that fulfilled me was incredibly painful. I had known for years what I needed to do. I couldn't go on living as the outstretched hand of my parents. So I stood up for myself: I stopped listening to their "advice" telling me to wait until they thought I was good and ready. I recognized that my feelings were real, and that what I needed was to go out and be my own person. Thanks to this realization I was able to start my journey, one that led me to meet amazing people who have taught me so much about life.

I've learned that my struggles won't just end at some perceived point, and that I'll always continue to grow. Strength to me can be any number of things, and figuring yourself out, even if that just means admitting to yourself that there's more to you than you first recognized, is something to be proud of. Some people believe that it's so much easier to be trans these days, as if all the hate we see on television, on the internet, and even from loved ones and friends just magically went away. I know that these things just aren't true; the injustices that trans people experience today are sometimes even more horrendous than when I first came out. There are so many people still afraid of losing their work, and friends, and even those closest to them.

I'm here to say that you can figure these things out, that you can live authentically and keep your loved ones close to you. There are people reading this that will probably think that their experience isn't worth sharing, that because it was so easy for them, no one will want to hear it. This is absolutely not true. What helped me be myself were the voices that exclaimed how much better they felt, how living their life, no matter how it changed, was extraordinary. There are also people reading this who probably think that the risks of transitioning or coming out outweigh the potential benefits, and that they'll never get to live authentically. A lot of transphobia we see today, especially online, is through the lens of a society that is still coming to terms with gender not being as simple as what we first expected. What you end up fearing is an internalized view of how society treats trans people, when there's a lot more respect for trans people now than there ever has been before.

What's important to remember is that you're you, and the belief that society has any control over how you feel or how you live is one made of fear. You can be whoever and whatever you want to be. Try to imagine yourself as you'd be if you were outside of society, because that is who you really are. You've begun that journey of finding yourself; believe it or not, and you are strong enough to finish it. The rest of the community and I are rooting for you.



Artwork

Touch

Ana Acevedo

Physical contact, as simple as a high five or holding hands, usually makes me aware of my feelings faster than my mind can even detect them. Touch enhances emotions, creating a desire for more.

During this period that has limited physical contact so much, I hope *Q-INE*'s first edition makes you feel closer to the LGBTQ community at Penn and reminds you: Whoever you are, you're loved and welcomed.

Call for Submissions

For any inquiries or comments, please email
qinemag@gmail.com

If you enjoyed *Q-INE*'s content and want to submit to our next edition, full guidelines can be found on our website:
<https://qinemag.wixsite.com/penn>. We showcase writing such as poetry, memoir, and interviews, as well as art like photography, experimental, and traditional. We accept submissions from the entire Penn LGBTQ+ community, including undergraduate students, graduate students, professors, and staff members.

Thank you for being a part of the inaugural edition of *Q-INE*.

